

Kanye Adventist Hospital

KGOMOTSO MOKGANO

Kgomotso Mokgano (Nee Moremi) M.B.A. (National Institute of Business Management, Kerala, India), currently serves as a Principal Public Relations Officer for the Kanye Adventist Hospital. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Corporate Communications from Helderberg College, in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010. Kgomotso is married to Teto Romeo Mokgano and is a mother to their only daughter.

Kanye Adventist Hospital is a medical institution of the Botswana Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists. The hospital has over four hundred employees who are both government seconded and mission employed.

Developments That Led to the Establishment of the Institution

Four years after the failure of the first attempt to enter mainland Bechuanaland, a situation presented itself that the Seventh-day Adventist Church utilized to the maximum. The territory lacked modern medical facilities and services of qualified medical practitioners. The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers made an application to open a mission hospital in Kanye, a village with about eighteen thousand inhabitants at that time. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists appointed Dr. Arthur H. Kretchmar, a graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University Medical School in California), to undertake the task of establishing and organizing the hospital. As was the colonial government's policy, the Bangwaketse tribe residents in Kanye Village were asked for their opinion on the Adventist request.¹ They expressed interest in such a service, on condition that the doctor would have no religious affiliations with any missionary society. The community was satisfied with the London Missionary Society that operated in Bechuanaland for many years and did not wish to have a rival church in their reserve.

The colonial government advised the Adventist missionaries to send a delegation to have a word with the Paramount chief on the matter, which they did on June 13, 1922.² At the meeting the acting Paramount chief,



Kanye Hospital.

Photo courtesy of Kgomotso Mokgano.

Kgosi Sebege stressed that the doctor who wants to come here must do the work of a doctor and only that of a doctor.³ In particular, the chief asked Dr. Kretchmar to sign an understanding not to hold any church service or do any missionary work.⁴ After carefully weighing the chief's conditions, such a letter was written which in part read:

[A]s the condition of my coming into Kanye, I agree not to engage in mission work, and I will confine myself to the practice of my profession. By mission work I understand and mean, first the holding of church services. Second, the building of a church or a school or the conduction of any meeting connected therewith⁵

Permission to start medical work was granted on the June 19, 1922. A report by T. M. French says:

Dr. A. H. Kretchmar was allowed to enter Kanye, a large *stad* (native town) of about eighteen thousand. The understanding was that he do absolutely no missionary work. He held strictly to his agreement, and opened up a small hospital and dispensary. It was not long until the hearts of the people were won, and they began to urge that he teach them his faith. The situation became so critical that it was felt that the only thing we could do was to close this work, for fear of entanglements with the government. Dr. Kretchmar suggested to some of the villagers that he would have to withdraw unless different arrangements could be made. This precipitated a crisis.⁶

Dr. Kretchmar reported later how he began to share his faith:

One intelligent, educated native asked me what the name Seventh-day Adventist meant. It was a great opportunity for me, and beginning at the Garden of Eden I preached the Sabbath to him down to the new earth—and brought in health reform and the second coming of Christ in the same little speech.⁷

The tribe gave the Adventist missionaries a piece of land to build a hospital.⁸ Medical work started immediately using a rented unused goods store owned by Mr. Sharps as a temporary surgery.⁹ This also gave the chief time to assess Dr. Kretchmar's conduct before they would build permanent structures.

Founding of the Institution

The construction of the first makeshift building of the Kanye Medical Mission and dispensary began around August 1922 and was completed in December of the same year. By 1923 the operations moved to the present site, where a small hospital, a clinic, and residential houses were established.

Improvements to the makeshift shelters were made, and most of the manual work was done by the villagers who helped mould bricks. Bricks were transported from the dam to the hospital site by people lining up, handing bricks from hand to hand. Financial assistance came from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist headquarters in America and from well-wishers in South Africa. The first improved phase was officially opened on Saturday, May 17, 1924. By 1926 the medical work at Kanye was thriving as this report states: "At

Doctor Kretchmar's dispensary, a ceaseless throng waits daily for medical attention: Doctor Kretchmar is carrying very heavy responsibilities in his medical ministry, and his reputation covers an area of several hundred miles. The Lord truly is blessing the Kanye medical dispensary."¹⁰

Dr. Kretchmar was proud to report to Mr. J. Ellenberger, the resident commissioner, that since the inception of the new hospital, he had been attending to patients at a rate of 10 to 16 a day.¹¹ Due to inadequate facilities, early days of the medical work were very challenging as this report indicates:

You know it's one thing to operate in a large city hospital with every modern convenience and have no fear or worry regarding the after-care of the patient, and quite another thing to operate here in the wilds with only one nurse to assist—and she to have all the after-care of anywhere from one to a dozen patients—and nothing to work with.¹²

In 1927, Dr. H. A. Erickson arrived to succeed Dr. Kretchmar, and was received with open arms by the people, and already he won his way into their hearts.¹³

Several medical work developments took place at different intervals. One of the most important developments took place during the time of Dr. Jack Hay. The Lord blessed Dr. Hay with a rare gift of finding donors. The nurses' dormitory, the double storey building, a laundry, and several residences were erected between 1950 and 1960. Lots of new equipment was received as donations, such as the new electric plant; water systems became available. Dr. Hay raised more than £12,000 from the local storekeepers in the vicinity over a period of two years and persuaded the government to contribute £30,000 for the double storey building.

Extensive remodeling and new building projects took place in the 1980's. More than five million US dollars came from USAID, EZE, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), worldwide Adventist community, and other donor partners. Kanye SDA Hospital was the first hospital in the protectorate erected primarily for the people of Bechuanaland. It was also the first hospital to use Saline Polio vaccine, when many people denied the existence of the disease in the country.¹⁴

Medical and Evangelistic Work

As already mentioned above, from the start, Dr. Kretchmar dedicated himself to his medical work and won the confidence of the local population. But one thing was missing though in his work. According to Adventist teaching, a doctor or teacher was not only such, but was also an evangelist. It was only after June 1923, following the holding of an emergency tribal meeting, that it was unanimously agreed to allow evangelistic work to be done in the community of Kanye.¹⁵

In September 1923 Pastor W. H. Anderson began to broaden the scope of evangelistic work after he obtained permission to sell Adventist religious literature in the British Protectorate. After holding an effort, 46 gave their names desiring to join the church and were put in a baptismal class.¹⁶ T. M. French described some of those who

were converted in the effort conducted by Elder Anderson, when he wrote:

Word now comes that the queen, her daughters, and her granddaughters have begun to keep the Sabbath. The head teacher, a graduate of the Lovedale Institute, has accepted the truth as it has been presented. The granddaughter of the queen, who is a teacher and a graduate of the Tiger Kloof Training School, was one of the first to take her stand with us.¹⁷

Dr. Kretchmar also started using literature to evangelize his patients and was so successful that by the end of 1923, he had about thirty-five people who had been converted. In 1924 the church was built in mainland Bechuanaland. The church also received support from the royal house when Chieftainess Ntebang and Councillor Kgampu Kamodi were converted to Adventism.

Patients came from places like Kgalagadi, Moshupa, and Manyana. As work expanded outside Kanye Village, a need arose to have a permanent minister to take care of the spiritual needs of the people. The governing council of the African Division sent Pastor W. W. Walker to Kanye to take care of that task until he returned to the United States in April 1926 due to ill health. Immediately, Evangelist R. Glenn Morton and his wife left the South California Conference in May for South Africa to serve both as superintendent for the Bechuanaland Mission and to assume his work in Kanye, where he arrived on June 17, 1926.¹⁸ As the doctor attended to the physical needs, the pastor attended to their spiritual needs.

Moshupa Clinic

This is a satellite clinic of the Kanye Adventist Hospital situated in Moshupa Village under the care of Principal Nursing Office II.

In Moshupa Village the spiritual program of the church was not welcomed, as the head of the area, Kgosi Gobuamang Mosielele, had a long-standing difference with the Paramount chief in Kanye. It would be years before the Adventist message would enter Moshupa Village, to establish a permanent base later in the 1940s, which continues to this day. In 1952 the Zambesi Union Mission executive committee asked Brother C. A. Shepherd, the union evangelist, to hold an effort at Moshupa, twelve miles from Kanye Mission. Brother Shepherd and Pastor M. M. Webster, with their African pastors A. Tsotetsi and P. S. Kgasa and A. Mogegeh, went over to conduct a full-scale public effort in Moshupa Village of around three thousand people.

A European missionary from another denomination went and called the whole village together for a special meeting one afternoon. But one of the Africans got up, a man who had been a leader in their church up to that time, and he said, "I did not know that we are forced to go where we did not want to go. Those people over there are preaching the Bible and the Bible only. Those who stay away are fools. I am going to them."¹⁹ After Evangelist Shepherd had preached on the key doctrines and made specific, definite calls, between one hundred sixty and two hundred people came forward in response. The attendance was running from six hundred to seven

hundred regularly, and that response to the call was most encouraging.

A clinic that was established at Moshupa served the surrounding areas of Moshupa Village. Consultations were done in small huts. This emanated from the Seventh-day Adventist belief that the medical missionary work is the “right hand of the gospel.” When the clinic was started early in 1946, there was a couple that was trained to serve the community. Mr. Sejakhumo and his wife Setilo Mookodi were among the first Adventists trained to assist the medical officer in giving injections, providing translation, and dressings. Around 1952 a medical assistant, who was generally called a dispenser at the time, was posted to Moshupa, accompanied by his wife who was a midwife, and this couple was from Malawi.

In 1965 a general nurse who was originally from Moshupa was posted to the clinic and was joined by a hospital orderly later in 1970. A new maternity wing was built together with the clinic in 1972, thereby legitimizing an increase in staffing at that time. Mrs. Pilane was transferred to Kanye Mission Hospital, while Mrs. P. L. Matlhagela was then stationed at the clinic from Kanye Hospital. Up until 1992, the clinic was the only health institution in Moshupa Village.²⁰

Nursing Education

In 1932 a native nurses training course was introduced by Sister Bain, a nurse from America who came to Kanye Hospital in November of that year. The aim of the course was to teach native nurses who would go out into the villages to teach people about modern medicine. The first Batswana nurses trained by the hospital on record were Mrs. Gomolemo Namane, Keitumetse Modise, and Miss Keboeletse Ratshosa.²¹ The hospital became the first to undertake the training of local staff in medical work in Botswana. The School of Nursing currently stands as a separate entity known as Kanye Adventist College of Nursing.

One major improvement made to the hospital, as alluded earlier, in 1954, during the administration of Dr. Jack Hay, was the completion of the plumbing of the steam to the relevant departments and the completion of connecting the hot-water system to the whole hospital from the steam boiler. This greatly eased the work of the nurses. An incinerator was also installed, and a new diesel engine and a pump-house were installed at the borehole. The hospital greatly appreciated the gift from the Governor General's War Fund, which amounted to £1,725 and was used in supplying a much-needed new borehole and water system. Money donated by the Chamber of Mines was used toward the purchase of a new 11-ton Chevrolet lorry early in the year. With funds donated by the local populace and government, a very substantial cement-brick dispensary and dispenser's house and kitchen were erected at Tsane in the crown land, 250 miles west of Kanye.²² Another much appreciated gift was the almost £430 from the Women's Auxiliary. This money was earmarked for commencing the construction of a utility block that was to contain a workshop, store-rooms, truck garage, and morgue. It was also to help in supplying the tools that were necessary and adequate to maintain the mission in good repair.²³

Main Sources of Funding

Initial financial assistance for establishing the hospital came from the General Conference in America and from well-wishers in South Africa. In September 1950, the government approved the use of £1,050 subsidy for provision of electric light in the hospital. In 1962 a new major project for a new modern hospital block was underway at a cost of R55 050.00. The protectorate government provided R34 000.00, and the church took charge of the rest of the cost. The new block added 60 beds, a delivery room, and two labor wards.

Forty-two years since the establishment of Kanye Hospital, the institution was still growing. On July 24, 1963, a large group gathered at Kanye for the formal opening of the new 100-bed addition, making a total capacity of 220 beds. Present for the occasion were the resident commissioner of Bechuanaland Protectorate; the Honorable R. P. Fawcus and his wife; Paramount Chief Bathoen of the Bangwaketsi tribe; District Commissioner Atkins and Mrs. Atkins; J. M. Baker, treasurer of the Zambesi Union Mission; and T. M. Ashlock and Dr. M. H. Schaffner representing the Southern African Division. Also present were representatives from government and mission hospitals in the southern part of Bechuanaland.²⁴

Participating in the opening service were Pastor Mguni, the local minister; Dr. C. J. Birkenstock, medical director of Kanye Hospital; and Dr. M. H. Schaffner, medical secretary of the Southern African Division. A representative of the Asian community, which contributed generously to the new building, told of their appreciation of the services rendered by Kanye Hospital.²⁵

Historical Role and the Flying Doctor Mission Service

Kanye Hospital also extended its services to the outlying areas where the doctor was holding clinics in 17 areas, in addition to his monthly visits to Kang and Tshane. In 1969 the hospital introduced a flying doctor mission service using a Cessna plane that was donated by *The Quiet Hour* ministry. Dr. W. Muller undertook this task and later was succeeded by Dr. C. Wical. The flying doctor mission service enabled the hospital to provide medical services to far and almost inaccessible areas like Kgalagadi, which was visited two or three times a year. Kanye Hospital was the first to operate a flying mission in the country. This little plane reduced the traveling time to the desert clinics from two days to two hours.

Critically ill patients were brought to the hospital or taken outside the country for medical help. These services were also extended to Mabutsane, Khakhea, Tshane, Lokgwabe, and Lehututu villages. The flying doctor services in the far flung areas were augmented by the Kalahari Safari. For instance, in 1975 during the short relief service of Dr. Dunbar Smith, the new five-ton Bedford truck, fitted with extra-large tires, was loaded with food and water for eight days, medicines and camping equipment, and 42 people. During the eight days, they cared for more than eight hundred patients and traveled as many miles, conducting 12 clinics in such places as Sekhuma, Keeng, Lehututu, Hukunesi, Phuduhudu, and Kokong.²⁶

Kanye Hospital also pioneered the campaign to eradicate communicable diseases like small- pox, tuberculosis, syphilis, and others. On August 28, 1988, church leaders and government dignitaries joined to lead ceremonies commemorating the completion of a \$3.3 million modernization and expansion project at Kanye Hospital. The modernization entailed upgrading operating theaters, maternity and surgical wards, food service and central supply, laundry, and water and sewage disposal systems. The project was made possible by a grant from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Fund, part of the United States Agency for International Development.²⁷ By this time Kanye Hospital had become a 183-bed facility with four full-time doctors, of whom two were specialists and several other physicians served on a part-time basis.

During the commemoration ceremony, in his keynote speech, the vice president of Botswana, P. Mumsi, referred to some of the pioneering contributions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the field of health-care in Botswana. For example, the first school of nursing in Botswana was established at Kanye in 1948, and the first registered nurses to be trained in Botswana completed their courses at Kanye Hospital. Kanye pioneered the work in the Kalahari among the Bushmen and played a major role in controlling some of the devastating diseases that existed there.²⁸

Current State of the Institution

Today Kanye SDA Hospital is a 167-bed facility. The objective of the hospital is to advance, through the medical work, the cause of the kingdom of Christ, the Great Physician, by means of bettering the people's knowledge of the laws of life and true hygiene. The institution also exists to offer relief from suffering, prevention, and cure of diseases, education and training of nurses and other medical personnel through benevolent, charitable, philanthropic, and Christian work for the uplifting of humanity.

Kanye Hospital operates as a district referral level hospital situated in the village of Kanye, which is the administrative center of the Southern District. The hospital is 90 kilometers west of Gaborone, the Capitol city of Botswana. It serves eight clinics in Kanye area and over 30 health posts in the rest of its catchment area. The target population of this hospital is now over one hundred thousand.²⁹

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement: Kanye Seventh-day Adventist Hospital promotes and provides complete health services through preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and spiritual care.

Vision Statement: Model of excellence in health services, 100 percent satisfaction, uplifting Christ's ministry.

Motto: The hospital believes that every human being regardless of circumstances is a child of God and is of infinite value to God and thus deserving respect and dignity.

Excellence: Providing clinical care that is safe, reliable, efficient, and patient centered.

Timeliness: The hospital pledges to provide a high standard of timeliness in all its services.

Unity: The hospital staff stands united in purpose. We believe each one of us is gifted with something and therefore important in the diverse activities of this institution.

Commitment: The hospital staff pledges total commitment to duty. We believe this constitutes true service to all our clients.

Ministry: The mission hospital pledges to lift up Jesus Christ through the noble ministry of healing.

Services

Kanye Adventist Hospital provides the following ambulatory services: accident and emergency; dental clinic; eye clinic; social welfare; out-patient department services with specialized clinics; psychiatric clinic; antenatal clinic; sexual reproductive health; physiotherapy; infectious disease control center; dietetics; public health; radiology; medical laboratory; pharmacy; and theater.

Inpatient services: Male Medical Ward, Surgical Ward, Private Clinic and Ward, Female Medical Ward, Pediatric Ward, and Obstetric and Maternity Ward.

Administrative services: transport, Human Resources, information technology, accounts and finance, public relations, secretarial services, biomedical, mortuary, security, medical records, food Services, housekeeping and laundry, supplies and procurement, and maintenance.³⁰

Memorandum of Agreement Between Government and Hospital

The first Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Botswana and the hospital was entered into in the year 1975. The government's agreement with the hospital is for offering services to the citizens of Botswana at a Government Gazetted fee and (the government) will in turn support the institution with financial aid. That partnership is still existing to date. The partnership brings with it human resources too. Thus, the government supports the hospital with financial and personnel.³¹

Years of Service Commemoration

In the year 2015, the hospital held an event to commemorate 93 years of service. The former president of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, graced the event along with other distinguished delegates. The assistant minister of agriculture for Botswana, Honorable Patrick Ralotsia, was the guest speaker. On that day doors were opened to the community at large to come and learn more about services offered. Stalls of each unit were set up for the day.

Hospital Awards: Moshaga–presidential awards for excellence; Minister Of Health special award for nurses' project; Eye Clinic excellence award; Netball champions; Soccer champions; Volleyball champions

List of Medical Directors/Hospital Administrators/CEOs

H. Kretchmar (1921-1927); H. A. Erickson (1928); A. Huse (1930-1932 A. N. Tonge (1933); J. Janzen (1934 to 1935); D. H. Abott (1936 to 1937); E. G. Marcus (1938-1941); C. P. Bringle (1943-1947); R. W. Royer (1948 to 1949); J. A. Hay (1950-1960); C. J. Birkenstock (1961-1965); K. Seligmann (1966-1968); F. J. Innocencio (1969 to 1970); C. L. Wical (1971-1973); K. Seligmann (1973-1979); M. Westermeyer (1979 to 1980); R. F. Snide (1980-1982); B. Moahi (1980-1983); R. H. Hanson (1982 to 1983); B. Robinson (1982 to 1983); B. Smit (1983-1986); A. Rockwell (1984-1986); F. D. Solivio (1986-1988); Antonio do Couto (1988 to 1989); D. A. Brueske (1989-1992); Allan Fowler (1992-1994); A. Lasta (1992-2012); B. Moahi (1994-2012); B. Sikwa (2012-2015); I. N. Mungandi (2016-2018); B. Tombs (2018-Present).

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