

Mutani, Wiliam Bukoli (1950–2007)

MAZARA EDWARD MATUCHA

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Wiliam B. Mutani was a pastor, acclaimed youth departmental leader, union conference executive secretary, and field president.

Early Life

Wiliam B. Mutani was born on August 8, 1950, to Mutani and Rebecca Bukoli in Nyasimo, Bunda district, Tanzania. He was the sixth of twelve children. His family recalled that, while his older brothers spent their time fishing in Lake Victoria, Mutani would sneak around the school and start to memorize what the other students were being taught. At the age of six, he entered elementary school in Nyasimo after a year of learning the alphabet and numbers at home. Although he was the youngest in his class, he did much better than his older classmates. In one incident, it was told that he was asked by his teacher to help an older boy; so, he climbed on top of the school desk in order to reach the boy's ear and pinched it. The class teacher believed that the embarrassment to the older boy would encourage him to work harder and get better grades.¹

During those days, there were district-wide examinations at the end of grade four and only the best went to grade five. While the others were placed in carpentry and tailoring classes, Mutani easily cleared his fourth grade exams and entered the fifth grade in 1962. At the end of the next four years, he had to take national grade eight examinations to qualify for secondary school education.²

Education and Marriage

Musoma Alliance Secondary School in Mara, where Mutani acquired his secondary education, was among the best in Tanzania. The teachers were well-qualified, dedicated, and loved their work. The curriculum was rich and English language proficiency was strongly emphasized. Anyone caught speaking a language other than English was to wear a belt with the words "I shall remember to speak English." An unfortunate belt bearer would be out to hunt for another culprit in order to hand over the belt to someone else before sunset. Sleeping with the belt earned some punishment the following day.³ Unlike his primary education, Mutani's secondary education was full of exposure to real life. At Musoma Alliance Secondary School, there were students from all over the country, with a wide variety of backgrounds. The school was also at the center of the then booming city of Musoma. This

community also exposed Mutani to Islamic culture for the first time. Mutani was amazed to see Muslims praying in various postures, standing, kneeling, and bowing forehead all the way to the floor.⁴ On September 23, 1973, Mutani married Hodia Musalika.⁵

Ministry

In 1972, William Mutani was among four people called to pioneer missionary work in Nyang'ombe. They had the difficult work of building a mission house. The poles were available at a place five miles away from the building site. They had to cut down the poles and carry them to the building site themselves. After erecting the structure, they fetched grass for thatching as well as applying mud to the walls. In 1974, Mutani became district pastor in Nyabungona in Ukerewe, Mwanza. He served for two years before he was transferred to Mugango, and then Kisorya.⁶ In 1978, he was called to the Tanganyika General Field in Morogoro where he became youth ministries director. In 1980, he was called to the Tanzania General Field as youth and education director. In 1985, he was appointed Tanzania Union executive secretary. Thereafter, he served as ministerial secretary of the union. It was after this that Mutani enrolled at Spicer Memorial College earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in theology. He also completed a Master's degree in education. In 2005, Mutani was appointed president of the South-West Tanzania Field.⁷

Death

During Mutani's presidency, opposition to women in ministry caused turmoil in the South-West Tanzania Field. He worked tirelessly trying to clarify the issue and restore unity. In his final attempt, while he was on the way home from Tunduma where he had gone to resolve a conflict which involved a district pastor who was almost beaten by church members, he was involved in a tragic car accident that claimed his life in 2007.⁸ William Bukoli Mutani was noted for his love for education, hard work, excellent leadership, cheerful spirit, commitment to the Adventist faith, and marriage counseling skills.⁹

SOURCES

William Mutani. Service Record Card. 2019. Southern Highlands Conference.

NOTES

1. Mutani Hodia, interview by author, February 21, 2019, Iganzo, Mbeya, Tanzania.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. William Mutani, Service Record Card, 2019, Southern Highlands Conference.
8. Mutani Hodia. interview by author, February 21, 2019, Iganzo, Mbeya, Tanzania.
9. Cosam Mwambeta, telephone interview by author, April 12, 2019.

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