



Adventist Book Centre/HHES, Malawi.

Photo courtesy of Mariana Soza Banda.

# Adventist Book Centre/HHES, Malawi

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## MARIANA SOZA BANDA

Mariana Soza Banda, B.B.A. (Malawi Adventist University, Lakeview, Ntcheu, Malawi), M.B.A. (Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya), currently serves as the business manager of the ABC. She was born in October 1964 in Mpanda village, Nsanje district, Malawi. She attended Malamulo Secondary School (1981-1985), and she did her primary school education in Malawi between 1973 and 1981.

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The Malawi Adventist Book Centre and Home Health Education Services (ABC/HHES) is a subsidiary organization of Malawi Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of the ABC/HHES

The Adventist Book Centre (ABC) and the Home Health Education Services (HHES) in Blantyre, Malawi, were organized in 1950 at Kabula Hill. The two institutions were organized by the South East Africa Union (SEAU) director, Pastor Fred Wilson and the union publishing director, George Wilson. When the need arose to spread the word rapidly and effectively, the leaders organized the ABC/HHES. Both the church members and the general public benefitted from the colporteur ministry which was supported by these organizations. Before the ABC became independent, all operations were conducted by the Malamulo Publishing House (MPH) situated in Thyolo district. As the ABC expanded its resources and operations, it became independent. There are no records of the number of books sold, the books in stock, or the value of the inventory when Malamulo Publishing House was the supplier of all the books.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the organization of the ABC/HHES, Yokonia Nankumba was appointed as the first national manager and Peter Kamanga as the accountant.<sup>2</sup> The office was in Blantyre where the union office was at that time. In 1985 the ABC office was transferred to Lilongwe, the country's capital city, and Yokonia Nankumba resigned as director. Thomondo, who was then the ABC accountant, was appointed as ABC manager and served until 1993. John Kholowa took over from 1994 to 1999 as manager. The office moved back to Blantyre during his tenure. John Kholowa separated the ABC from the Malamulo Publishing House and set up separate accounting systems. In 1998 the ABC acquired its first vehicle. The literature evangelists now received their commissions on time, and the stock of books was increased when the ABC started procuring books from the Stanborough Press in England.<sup>3</sup>

In 2002 Juston Nkumba was appointed as ABC manager. He is remembered for promoting trade books among Seventh-day Adventist churches. Then Harold Chimombo was the ABC treasurer. In 2005 Jaston Nkumba retired and Harold Chimombo became manager until he died of high blood pressure in 2009. Juston Musama was appointed as the new ABC manager, and he is remembered for his zeal and determination to maintain a large supply of books in the warehouse at all times. He initiated the idea of selling the Literature Ministries Seminary building to the Malamulo College of Health Sciences for MK140,000,000. Proceeds from the sale was used to buy land and construct buildings for the new Literature Ministry Seminary. Mariana Soza was the accountant while Juston Musama was manager of the ABC. In 2019 Pastor Halifax Nkhata took over from Jaston Musama as ABC manager. Since 2019 there has been no scarcity of books to sell.

In 2021 Mariana Soza Banda was appointed as business manager. She is trying to minimize costs to avoid bankruptcy. In June 2019 the ABC changed the accounting system from the old Sun System to the New Sun Plus 6. Currently the ABC accountant is Annie Matemba. For many years the book suppliers for the publishing work in Malawi were Stanborough Press in United Kingdom, Safeliz in Spain, and Malamulo Publishing House.

## The Historical Role of the ABC/HHES

The ABC has 17 sub-depositories countrywide. There are eight in the southern region, another in the central region, and eight in the northern region. In all the three regional entities (conferences), there are publishing directors and their assistants. The number of books sold in the southern region was 17,625; in the central region was 13,532 books, and the northern region was 11,983. The most popular books are: *A Walk Through the Bible* (devotional), *Coloring Book for Kids Story of Jesus*, *Eating for Life* mega book, *Encountering God's Grace* (devotional), *Enjoy Life*, *Bed Time Stories*, *Healing Wonders of Plants Set 2*, *Healthy Body*, *Healthy Juices*, *Holy Bible-Elders Bible*, *Holy Bible-Pathfinders*, *Women's Bible*, *God Can*, *Disciples' Bible*, and *The Great Controversy*.

There are many stories of conversions and baptisms resulting from the distributions of these books countrywide. The number of colporteurs who are selling the books in the three regions are as follows: northern region 108, central region 215, and southern region 475. The number of colporteurs in each region has increased over the years.

## Publishing Directors

A. Bristow (1950-1956); S. Salhaney (1957-1960); R. A. Forbes (1966-1970); George Wilson (1971-1975); Jimmy Ziyenda (1975-1978); T. E. Ntata (1979-1983); Jimmy Ziyenda (1984); Milton Y. Sosola (1985-1995); Aron Yesaya (1996-2005); Wesley Molton Banda (2006-2015); Levison Kandoje (2015-2021); Luke Limbithu (2021-present)<sup>4</sup>

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### NOTES

1. M. W. Banda, interview by the author, Kasungu, March 10, 2019.
2. P. Kamanga, interview by the author, Blanytre, March 27, 2022.
3. J. Kholowa, interview by the author, Blanytre, February 20, 2022.
4. J. B. Musama, interview by the author, Blanytre, November 21, 2018.

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