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Alpha Adventist Primary School

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Alpha Adventist Primary school is located at Msimba sublocation in Kigoma municipality, Kigoma, western part of Tanzania in West Tanzania Field of Seventh-day Adventists which was first organized in 1990, reorganized in 2014, and renamed in 2017.

Historical Background

The Adventist work in this part of Tanzania started in the 1940s when missionaries began to penetrate different areas of the country. They established Heri Adventist Hospital as a mission-oriented institution at Mnanila, Manyovu, in Kigoma region. During the years 2010-2015 the leadership of West Tanzania Field saw a serious need for a school in the territory and decided to work on it. According to the president of the field, there were two reasons to build the school. First, the West Tanzania Field was the only field which had no school in the entire union. For many years church members sent their children to distant places outside the field to acquire Adventist education, so the school was established to reduce the cost of education to church members and to introduce the community to Adventist education. The second reason was the requirement of the union that a field cannot attain conference status if it does not have a primary school where church members can send their children in their formative years.¹

How the School Began

The school started in Mwanga SDA Church buildings, and some buildings at the field headquarters were used as hostels. While they were in those premises, they bought land and built a school which they called Alpha Adventist Primary School.² The church consulted the government in Kigoma region and sought support in the initiation and accomplishment of the project. The Kigoma regional government, under the leadership of the regional commissioner, appreciated the plan of the church to build school. It provided the needed support for breaking ground and coordinating the fundraising to start the project. From that humble beginning, the project took off. Since church members did not have money to contribute to the project, they instead provided labor, both skilled and unskilled. Members carried construction materials such as stones and bricks. They also provided food for people working on the project.³

In January 2012 the school began with 11 pupils and three teachers, but the year ended with 47 pupils. In 2013 the number increased to 130 pupils, and every year after that the number continued to increase. In 2014 the number was 220, while in 2015 there were 320 students. In 2016 the number increased to 392, while in 2017 the school had 428 students and 16 qualified teachers.⁴ As a result of this increase, the school needed more facilities since the classrooms were no longer adequate. They did not have enough dormitory rooms to accommodate every student, so they needed means to transport students to school in the morning and back home in the evening. Once again, the school and church members worked together and built more classrooms, a dining hall, and hostels. They also bought four vans which are used for transportation of students who do not live at the school. The enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is now 565, of whom 208 are Adventists and 357 are not.⁵

School Performance

As a result of the church and school working together, students in the school are doing well in national examinations. The school is one of the best in the Kigoma region as well as in the country. "In 2016 class four results, the school was the 8th out of 640 in Kigoma region while nationally it held the 774th position out of 10,627 schools.⁶ In the academic year of 2019-2020 the school performed well in their standard seven results as the National Examination Council of Tanzania states: "The school was number one out of 58 schools in the district, number two out of 418 schools in the region, and 45th out of 9,929 schools in the nation. Over all, the school is number two in the region and number 45 nationally."⁷

The School and the Mission of the Church

The school enrolls Adventist children and those who are not Adventists with the purpose of training them to be good citizens here on earth and in the world to come. So, regardless of their religious background, students learn through an Adventist system of education that enables the child to grow holistically. The purpose is not only to help students attain academic success, but also to prepare them for eternity. Kigoma municipality is populated with a large concentration of Muslims; thus, the largest percentage of students who enroll each year is mainly from the Muslim community. The school faces the challenge of sharing the Christian message with these students. Yohana states, "We have the challenge in baptizing these students. Because of their age, they cannot decide for baptism until their parents allow them and most of the parents refuse their children to be baptized."⁸

What Is Yet to Be Done

Currently the school uses solar power as its source of energy and it has proven to be inadequate. The plan is to install electric power. The school also plans to bring piped water to the campus. The church is investing much money to develop an international school that will be able to compete with other schools.

Leaders

James Christopher Mashaka (2012-2020), Kebby Kabura (2015-2019), Thomas Zacharia Kivuma (2019-present).

Source

National Examinations Council of Tanzania: PSLE 2019 Examination Results, Alpha Adventist Primary School - Ps0603108. Accessed March 11, 2020. https://onlinesys.necta.go.tz/results/2019/psle/results/shl_ps0603108.htm

NOTES

1. Benard K. Mambwe (field president), telephone interview with the author, March 11, 2020.?
2. Azza B. Nyamakababi (executive secretary, Western Tanzania Conference), interview with the author, Arusha, March 10, 2020. WTC/ADCOM/171/2014.?
3. Yohana B. Kahigilo (Alpha Adventist School), telephone interview with the author, March 11, 2020. The school is registered as KG 02/7/002. (MSINGI) and KG 02/EA 002. (AWALI).?
4. Yohana B. Kahigilo (Alpha Adventist School), telephone interview with the author, March 1, 2017.?
5. Ibid.?
6. Ibid.?
7. National Examinations Council of Tanzania: PSLE 2019 Examination Results, Alpha Adventist Primary School - Ps0603108, accessed March 11, 2020, https://onlinesys.necta.go.tz/results/2019/psle/results/shl_ps0603108.htm.?
8. Yohana B. Kahigilo (Alpha Adventist School), telephone interview with the author, March 11, 2020.?

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