

# Mbeya Adventist Secondary School

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Mbeya Adventist Secondary School is a coeducation school owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania under the Southern Highlands Conference in the Southern Tanzania Union Mission. It is located in the city of Mbeya, about 1.5 kilometers south east of the Mbeya Regional Referral Hospital along the Dar Es Salaam-Tunduma main road. It was officially registered on March 14, 2014, by the government with a registration number S.4765 and thereafter as an Examination Center by registration number S.5235.<sup>1</sup>

## Brief History of the Adventist Work in the Area

The Adventist work in this area started in 1938 when Pastor Reider arrived in Mbeya, at the Iganzo area, and began the missionary work. That year he established a church which could be used as a school and constructed a teacher's house. The first baptism took place in Mbeya on June 3, 1944, which made it an important year in the history of the SDA Church in Mbeya. The people who were baptized in that first baptism were Joram Mwakigobe and George Mwangosi.<sup>2</sup> Since then the work of God has expanded so that in 1982 the West Tanzania Field was organized with Pastor Elizaphani Wanjara as the first president of the field (1982-1991). Later the South West Tanzania Field was organized with Pastor Jocktani Kuyenga becoming the president (1991-1995). In 2008, the South West Tanzania Field became the Southern Highlands Conference.<sup>3</sup>

## Events that Led to the Establishment of the School

In June 2013 there was a crisis. The Ndembela church school was invaded by the Rungwe district council leaders and Ndembela villagers, who claimed that the school belonged to them. Rather than fight with the community leadership, the leaders of the church decided to start another school, now Mbeya Adventist Secondary School. The leaders of the conference at that time were Pastor Joseph F. Mngwabi (president), Stephen Letta (executive secretary), and Kossam D. Mwambeta (treasurer). They worked with the administrators of Ndembela Secondary School, the school which had been taken over by the community, including Jacob Bernard (headmaster), Enock Rabieth (treasurer), and Brown Oswald Bukuku (second master). The executive committee of the conference (SHC) met on June 17, 2013, and July 8, 2013, to start building a new school on Plot of Forest block M2414 (1.49 hectares) that had been bought by the South West Tanzania Field under S. Bukuku (secretary-treasurer). Other committee members who were involved in one or both of the above mentioned meetings for planning the new

school are E. Chamboma, K. Mwasomola, F. Mwanga, A. Youze, H. Mutani, H. Kikiwa, D. Bambaganya, M. Biseko, S. Baravuga, C. Mtweve, D. G. Ndembela, L. Mwakasweswe, M. Chodota, E. Mwaigombe, S. Ngusa, L. Pesambili, and H. Kilonge.<sup>4</sup>

In the first year of the school's operation (March 7, 2014, to April 7, 2015), it was under the administration of the Ndembela Secondary School, led by Jacob Bernard (headmaster), Enock Rabieth (treasurer), Gwakisa Sibale (second master), assisted by Emmanuel Chambua (second master in Mbeya Adventist), and Hiden Kashililika (academic master in Mbeya Adventist). On March 15, 2015, the Southern Highlands Conference executive committee meeting voted to split the two schools and provide them with different administrators. On April 7, 2015, Emmanuel Chambua Mchome became the headmaster and Lauteli Pesambili Kanoni became the treasurer of Mbeya Adventist Secondary School.<sup>5</sup>

## Founders of the School

The Southern Highlands Conference officers, executive committee members, and Ndembela Secondary School administrators facilitated the establishment of this school. They are Joseph Mngwabi (president), Steven Letter (executive secretary), Deogratiuous Kosam Mwambeta (treasurer), Abraham Youze (education director), Flavian Masole (Mbeya church member; Mbeya City Council land registrar), Jacob Bernard (school headmaster), Enock Rabieth (school treasurer), Brown Oswald Bukuku (school second master), Edward Mwaipopo (retired government educational officer who facilitated the project write-up of the school and school registration procedures and follow up).<sup>6</sup>

## Reasons for the Location

The school was established in the chosen area because of the availability of social services like electricity, water, hospitals, roads, and other governmental services. The church administrative offices were near for supervision of the construction work. Availability of rental houses for the workers was another reason. Finally, there was a large population to supply the needed students. Construction started on November 18, 2013, after being permitted on November 14, 2013, by the government of United Republic of Tanzania. Sadick Mwakanyelenge was the construction supervisor on behalf of the church.<sup>7</sup>

## Early Sources of Funding or Subsidization

Construction was facilitated by contributions from church members in Southern Highlands Conference and from different church institutions such as Ufunuo Publishing House, Eastern Tanzania Conference, Southern Highlands Conference, and Ndembela Secondary School.

The school was officially registered on March 14, 2014, and started its operations on April 7, 2014, with nine employees and 56 students, and by the end of the year there were 12 employees and 79 students. There were 13 classrooms that were used for different purposes: two were used as classrooms, two as boys hostel, one as chapel, one as a food store, one as a laboratory, one as a library, one as a staff room, one for administration, two as dining halls, and one as a general store.

The mission of the school is to proclaim the three angles' messages to students and to the surrounding community, so as to prepare them to be ready to receive the coming King of kings.<sup>8</sup>

Students are from both SDA and non-SDA families. The school offers 12 subjects as accepted by the government, which include Bible knowledge, civics, English, Kiswahili, history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, basic mathematics, commerce, bookkeeping, and computer studies as an optional subject.<sup>9</sup>

## Impact on Church and Society

The school has built a good relationship with the district, region, country, and the people surrounding the school, by being involved in social activities such as road construction, cleanliness, supporting the sick people in the referral hospital, supporting construction of buildings in the referral hospital, and sharing the good news of the second coming of Jesus.<sup>10</sup> The school has contributed to the economic status of the community by providing employment to people and buying produce from the local farmers, like vegetables, fruit, beans, maize, rice, and many other things.

The school has witnessed to the more than 140 students who are not Adventists and also to the community. As of March 26, 2019, more than 300 people have been baptized since the school was established!<sup>11</sup>

## Leaders of the School

E. C. Mchome (April 2015-January 2020); K. M. Fungo (January 2020-present).<sup>12</sup>

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### SOURCES

Hoschele, S. *Christian Remnant-African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903-1980*. Leiden: IDC Publishers, 2007.

Southern Highlands Conference Executive Committee Minutes, SHC/EXCOM/12/2015. Southern Highlands Conference archives, Mbeya, Tanzania.

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### NOTES

1. Brown Bukuku, interview with the author in Mbeya on April 23, 2019.
2. Stefan Hoschele, *Christian Remnant-African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903-1980* (Leden: IDC Publishers, 2007), 65.
3. Brown Bukuku, interview with the author in Mbeya on April 23, 2019.
4. Emmanuel Chambua, telephone interview with the author on April 23, 2019.
5. Southern Highlands Conference Minutes, SHC/EXCOM/12/2015.
6. Kashililika, telephone interview with the author on April 23, 2019.
7. Joseph Mngwabi. telephone interview with the author on February 19, 2020.
8. Lautel Pesambili, interview with the author in Mbeya on April 23, 2019.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.

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