



Solusi University aerial view.  
Photo courtesy of Christopher Thebe.

# Solusi University

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Solusi University is a chartered institution of higher learning owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe.

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of the School

Solusi University is situated 30 miles (50 km.) southwest of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, near the original headquarters of Chief Soluswe, from whom the university took its name. It was originally known as the Matabele Mission, but it was later renamed Solusi Mission.<sup>1</sup> The history of Solusi University goes back to the late nineteenth century. Prior to the coming of the pioneer missionaries in 1894, there was no trace of Adventist work in Matabeleland or the entire geographical area of then Southern Rhodesia, which included Mashonaland and the surrounding regions. Hence, Solusi may rightly be called “the mother and almoner of them all”<sup>2</sup> (referring to missions to Africa), being the first Adventist foreign mission to be established among the native peoples of Africa.<sup>3</sup> Its history is dotted with various achievements, amidst its many setbacks and unforeseen circumstances. Yet, its growth and development over the years is quite remarkable!

Solusi University grew out of its beginnings. The initial discussions and plans for establishing a school at Solusi were preceded by the setting up of a Seventh-day Adventist African mission station in Matabeleland. The church in South Africa was motivated to begin mission work among the native people by the General Conference President, O. A. Olsen, who visited the young church in 1893. There was need to expand the work among the non-Christian indigenous African people as was being done by other Christian denominations.<sup>4</sup> The few, faithful and dedicated Adventist members took up this challenge seriously. Notable among these were Pieter Wessels and his brother John

who jointly donated US\$15,000 to open the mission.<sup>5</sup> Equipped with this amount of money Pieter Wessels and A. T. Robinson the President of the South African Conference immediately took steps to concretize the plans.

A non-Adventist prominent name in the history of Solusi is Cecil John Rhodes. He was the Premier of Cape Colony and head of the British South Africa Company with mining operations in the Mashonaland region of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Elders Robinson and Wessels visited Rhodes in Cape Town to present their strategic plans for the envisioned mission station to be established in Matabeleland. During their conversation, Rhodes was writing something on a piece of paper, which he folded up, put it into an envelope, sealed it, and handed it to his visitors. He instructed them to give it to Dr. Leander S. Jameson, his representative in Bulawayo in Matabeleland.<sup>6</sup> In no time, this letter made its way to Bulawayo. However, the bearers of the document were not privy to its contents.

The church moved swiftly to organize a team consisting of Pieter Wessels, A. Druillard, and five others who started off for Matabeleland in May, 1894. They arrived in Bulawayo on the 4th of July 1894.<sup>7</sup> To their joy and amazement, the letter from Cecil Rhodes instructed Dr Jameson to apportion a piece of land to the Seventh-day Adventist church for free. A tract of 12,000 acres was demarcated, which became the site of Solusi Mission, the first one opened by the denomination among non-Christian peoples.<sup>8</sup>

Surprisingly, this gift of land from Cecil John Rhodes provoked a debate among the church's leadership in the United States of America. Receiving such a gift from a non-Adventist was perceived to be a violation of the principle of separation of church and state. The high-level discussions in 1895 resulted in a resolution by the General Conference committee not to accept any gift in any form, including land, from individuals or entities that are not aligned to Adventist beliefs and practices. Later, the same committee voted another action which read, "That in harmony with this resolution that the General Conference Association be instructed to pay an appropriate amount for all government land that may be secured in Africa or elsewhere."<sup>9</sup> Hence, the whole land acquisition excitement for the establishment of Solusi Mission station was thrown in a quandary.

Providentially, these voted resolutions were never implemented. Ellen G. White, who was and continues to be considered the prophetic voice of the Seventh-day Adventist church, came to know about the land discussions. Writing from Australia, on January 30, 1895, she advised the General Conference leadership not to refuse the gift that God had moved men to give for the advancement of His cause. She further convinced the Seventh-day Adventist Foreign Mission Board to proceed with the project.<sup>10</sup> That opened the pathway for the growth and development of Solusi Mission.

Because much of the mission work was going to be done on a self-supporting basis, the pioneer missionaries needed to be proactive. They were to receive no salary or any living allowance while they developed this semi-arid piece of land that required ten acres to sustain one cow.<sup>11</sup> Be that as it may, the acquisition of the farm land was a blessing in disguise. Using their little resources, the missionaries went on to purchase 200 head of cattle from the local people.<sup>12</sup> The available acreage enabled them to graze them and even reproduce without much difficulty.

Fred Sparrow who was appointed by the first pioneer missionaries to manage the farm was joined a year later by William H. Anderson and other missionaries. Together they embarked on constructing buildings and planting crops.<sup>13</sup> In spite of the many forbidding circumstances, farming became a significant aspect of the mission, so that by 1912 the mission was able to support itself from agricultural income.<sup>14</sup> This laid a firm foundation for the establishment of educational work at Solusi, which was to be typified by a wholistic development of the head, the hand, and the heart, (popularly known as the three Hs).

The pioneer missionaries were heavily involved with the development of the mission farm, the mission's infrastructure and its educational work. Nevertheless, they did not lose sight of the soul winning endeavor for which Solusi was established. The first black convert to be baptized by Pastor Fred Mead on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1900 was Jim Mayenza (correctly known as Mainza),<sup>15</sup> who later became an active literature evangelist, school teacher, pastor, and a participant in the church planting initiatives.

The story of Mayenza's baptism has been retold about how the whole mission family went down to the river to witness the baptism of Mayenza and six other boys. It is said that when Pastor Mead dipped Mayenza into the water, the other boys ran away and disappeared in the bushes. They thought the pastor was drowning Mayenza. When they came back later in the afternoon, they found Jim alive and happy. They were later baptized as well.<sup>16</sup> This single baptism led to more baptisms at Solusi and elsewhere.

Melvin C. Sturdevant is one of the prominent names popularly spoken of in the history of Solusi Mission and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe. From the time he arrived at Solusi in April 1902,<sup>17</sup> Sturdevant looked at the mission farm plot from a different perspective. During the almost 8 years of his stay at Solusi, the 30 acres of land that was being cultivated increased to more than 300 acres. On June 25, 1902, a second baptism conducted by Sturdevant yielded 21 converts. On that same day, the Solusi Church was organized with a membership of 29 by Pastor G. Reaser.<sup>18</sup>

Infrastructural development at Solusi Mission was preceded by the construction of the first church building. In 1929, with the help of pastors and the Solusi Mission School boys, Sturdevant led out in the construction of the first Solusi Church facility. They molded 84,000 bricks and burnt them to be used to erect the building. The structure, which measured 30? x 56? (9 x 17 meters) was finished in time for the visit of the former president of the General Conference, Pastor G. A. Irwin to dedicate it.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, progress of the work came to be affected by other unforeseen circumstances. The missionaries came face to face with war, disease, famine and death. These occurred in succession so that the whole project almost

stalled. The Matabele rebellion of 1896-1897 forced the missionaries to flee to Bulawayo to seek protection. Seven months later the missionaries returned to carry forward their interrupted work. The rebellion was followed by an outbreak of rinderpest that destroyed all the mission cattle, and then a severe famine led to the death of thousands of Africans.<sup>20</sup> These challenges were quite phenomenal and devastating.

To make matters worse, the missionaries themselves came face to face with death. Those who early succumbed to death were Dr. A. S. Carmichael (Feb. 26, 1898), G. B. Tripp (a week later), his young son (April 2, 1898), Mrs. F. B. Armitage (just a month later), and F. L. Mead who died two and a half years later. The first three are buried in the Solusi cemetery, while the last three are buried in Kimberley, South Africa.<sup>21</sup> To the pessimists, the whole endeavor seemed like a total failure. But this was not to be so! The missionaries took advantage of any opportunity that arose even in the face of severe challenges.

## Founding of the School

The famine that affected the villagers around Solusi Mission served as an avenue for harvesting the first crop of learners for the planned school. The school was established during the years 1896-1897, when twenty boys and ten girls formed the nucleus of the first mission school.<sup>22</sup> It may never have dawned on the missionaries what this school was going to be. They did not know they had kindled a flame that was going to spread like wild fire in Southern Africa and beyond!

This initial educational work of 1896-1897 became the first of several key historical highlights in the development of Solusi from a mission station to a fully chartered University one hundred years later. The school's growth and expansion has been attributed to the caring and loving spirit of the missionaries. Their dedication was outstanding. Notable among these pioneer missionaries was W. H. Anderson, whose was responsible for the first enrollment of the mission school students. Apart from playing a key role in the erection of buildings and the farming activities, Anderson is said to have gone door to door to canvass for students.<sup>23</sup> An increase in enrolment was anticipated because of the great interest in mission education that was generated.

Soon the student numbers swelled and overwhelmed the available facilities. There were 60 students enrolled by 1902, with as many as 200 others who had to be turned away due to lack of space, teachers, and textbooks<sup>24</sup> This was a testimony to the strong foundation that had been laid for Christian education at Solusi. The students craved for the physical, mental, and spiritual activities offered by the school. Those chosen to be teachers in the early 1900s were those who had completed Standard II (Grade 4) and a year of teacher training.<sup>25</sup> These were the initial steps of Solusi becoming a tertiary institution in later years.

The opening of other mission stations resulted from the continued growth of Solusi as a reputable educational institution. In 1901, F. B. Armitage, his wife (the former Mrs. Tripp) and a few Solusi trained helpers established the Somabhula Mission.<sup>26</sup> It was later relocated and renamed Lower Gwelo (Gweru) Mission. Lower Gwelo Mission became a Teacher Training College when this program was transferred from Solusi in 1952.<sup>27</sup> The Teacher Training College was later discontinued, leaving a thriving high school and primary school that continue to this day.

Several other mission stations were born out of Solusi Mission's endeavor for the spreading of the gospel as well as educational work. These include Rusangu Mission in Monze, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) which was founded in 1905 by W. H. Anderson.<sup>28</sup> By following a similar development path that Solusi Mission passed through, Rusangu Mission today consists of Rusangu University and Rusangu Primary and Secondary Schools. Another mission station opened through Solusi Mission's outreach work in the eastern part of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was Inyazura (Nyazura) Mission near Umtali (Mutare). Solusi Mission acquired this piece of land in exchange of its 4000 acres that were surrendered to the government in 1910.<sup>29</sup> Many other out-schools were opened in Zimbabwe through the efforts of Solusi Mission.

The first mission extensions from Solusi became the bases for later extensions, up into the heart of Africa, down toward its southernmost point, out into the territory east and west, to the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans.<sup>30</sup> As a result of this, the Solusi missionary project made its presence felt far and wide on the African continent. In Nyasaland (Malawi) Plainfield (later renamed Malamulo) Mission was opened in 1902. This was to later become the center of a system of schools and missions including a printing press and a mission hospital.<sup>31</sup> The work extended even to Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Ruanda-Urundi (Rwanda and Burundi) as well as Angola.<sup>32</sup> These mission extensions and many others took place concurrently with the growth of the work at Solusi Mission Station.

A good number of those who went through the Solusi School in earlier years became teachers in outlying schools. This notwithstanding, there was still a need to open a recognized Teacher Training program at Solusi. In 1929, the Government of Rhodesia approved and funded the setting up of such a training school.<sup>33</sup> This became a fully-fledged Teacher Training School by 1933.<sup>34</sup> Among the notable graduates from this school was the Nobel Prize winner Albert Luthuli, son of John Ntuba, the first teacher at Solusi.<sup>35</sup> Many other Solusi-trained teachers became great leaders in all spheres of life in the Southern, Central, and Eastern parts of Africa.

Although much educational work was going on at Solusi, it only offered up to junior secondary school level plus teacher training. There was still a need for senior secondary school work. Finally, the continued growth and expansion of Solusi Mission saw the introduction of a secondary school in 1948.<sup>36</sup> This was a most significant step toward the setting up of tertiary education at Solusi. Those who had completed senior secondary education needed

an institution of higher learning to further their education.

## History of the Development of the School into an Institution of Higher Learning

The coming of Dr. C. Fred Clarke to Solusi in 1954 was a great milestone. His visionary endeavors and philanthropic initiatives resulted in Solusi becoming a senior college. Clarke was able to convince church leadership in the then Zambesi Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists to make some major decisions. In a board meeting in December 1957, he was given the mandate and partial funding to turn Solusi into a full senior college. In addition to that, the ownership of Solusi College was to be transferred from the Zambesi Union Mission to the Southern African Division.<sup>37</sup> This was to foster the provision of tertiary education at Solusi Mission.

The immediate tasks assigned to Clarke and his team were quite demanding. There was a need to build appropriate classrooms and dormitories befitting a senior college; a college curriculum needed to be developed. Specially qualified staff needed to be recruited who were familiar with the South African educational system.<sup>38</sup> In addition, a suitable church building was needed. Thus, the cornerstone for the current Solusi Church building was laid in 1959, paving the way for the construction work to begin. Two years later, a dedicatory service was held, with R. R. Fighur, President of the General Conference present to preach the dedicatory sermon.<sup>39</sup> Time was short, but the collaborative efforts of college and division leadership worked for the progress of the work.

The academic plans were followed with much enthusiasm and focused attention. Two individuals who accepted the call to bring the college program to life are worth mentioning because of the respect that they earned at Solusi. The first one is Ruth Gorle who became a good match for the arts (humanities) program.<sup>40</sup> She spent her last eighteen years of teaching at Solusi giving strong leadership in many departments.<sup>41</sup> Many of those who went through Solusi College during that time remember her for her selfless dedication to duty.

Another well-known name in the history of Solusi College is Russell. L. Staples. He was at that time completing his studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., USA.<sup>42</sup> Not only did he initiate and give strong leadership in the theology department, but he later went on to replace Dr. C. F. Clarke as Principal of Solusi College.<sup>43</sup> He also gave outstanding service to Solusi College, including spearheading and overseeing the bringing of water from Mananda Dam to the Solusi campus.<sup>44</sup> Mananda Dam, situated about 20 kilometers from Solusi, continues to be the main source of water for Solusi to this day.

When the 1958 school year opened, seven college students from several African countries enrolled — four majoring in theology and three majoring in education.<sup>45</sup> From then on, Solusi never looked back in terms of offering tertiary education. Later, in 1969, a two-year business diploma course was introduced.<sup>46</sup> This curriculum has expanded over the years to include various degree programs up to a master of business administration degree offered currently at Solusi University. There are concrete plans that have been put in place to introduce doctoral degrees in business and other areas of study such as education.

A detailed analysis of the history of Solusi would be incomplete if no mention were made of the various industries on campus. A wide variety of vibrant industries was introduced where students worked and learned practical skills while raising money for paying their tuition fees. This enabled the development of the three Hs to be realized in a productive manner. Nevertheless, in recent years, the operation of these industries has taken various twists and turns due to unforeseen circumstances.<sup>47</sup>

Chief among the industries that were thriving at Solusi was the farm. Crop production was done on a large scale to supply food for the students and workers. Wheat production stole the limelight for some years. As a result, the college bakery was able to supply wholesome and tasty bread. The supply of bread extended to the surrounding communities and the city of Bulawayo. Unfortunately, the bakery is no longer effectively functioning as wheat farming has declined significantly over the years.<sup>48</sup>

In the past few years Solusi University has been able to acquire two center pivot irrigation systems utilizing water from the nearby Mananda Dam. This farming activity is being done on an additional piece of land located near the dam. The negative economic forces have seen production becoming quite erratic although currently the university administration is trying to reignite the fire. Overall, students who were fully involved in each one of these industries were able to complete their education.<sup>49</sup>

Solusi also owns a large orchard with various types of fruit trees. At one time choice grapes were produced and supplied the entire Adventist community in Zimbabwe in terms of supplying the grape juice used for the communion services. A larger supply of grape juice went to the city shops and supermarkets. Unfortunately, the grape juice is no longer being produced. Currently oranges remain the main fruit being produced servicing mainly the cafeteria and the workers on campus. Students continue to participate in the education with a production program made possible through the Solusi orchard.<sup>50</sup>

Livestock production was done on a very large scale especially during the days of Solusi College from the 1950s. This herd consisted mainly of the beef and dairy cows numbering up to 500 cattle grazing in the paddocks within the farm. Students were involved especially in herding the cattle. Currently the stock has reduced drastically and needs rebuilding. An attempt has been made to rear a marketable breed of goats, but this is a project that is still developing. Poultry production has been done on a small scale to supply a relatively small market including the supply of eggs to the cafeteria. A large incubator and hatchery have been installed to bring about mass production once the market

forces stabilize.<sup>51</sup>

The maintenance department was another industry that was able to carry out large construction projects in the past. These include the building of hostels such as the Mhoswa Cottages and the Mayenza Hostels. Other infrastructures were also developed that required ongoing maintenance work. Students on the work education program have, over the years, been trained in such skills as construction, painting, plastering, electrical work, janitorial work and even security services. Unfortunately, many of these opportunities have been put on hold until a more conducive environment develops in the future.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the strong emphasis that Solusi used to put on developing the three Hs (the head, the hand, and the heart) developed uniquely capable students. Many of them acquired skills and a work ethic that have proved helpful in their ministry or place of service even years after they left. This made Solusi so popular that it attracted students from all over Africa both Adventist members and non-Adventists.

## The Move Toward Attaining University Status

The curriculum at Solusi College continued to expand over the years. As early as 1962 R. L. Staples set his heart on arranging for an affiliation program with Andrews University, another Seventh-day Adventist institution in Michigan, United States of America.<sup>53</sup> This took twenty-two years to be realized. In 1984, under the administration of Dr. Roland Mackenzie, Solusi College became affiliated with Andrews University and started offering internationally recognized degrees.

Once that happened, the relationship with Andrews University aided Solusi College in preparing for university status. During the ten-year period between 1984 and 1994, enrollment at Solusi increased by more than 500 percent. Apart from Zimbabweans, this enrolment included students from Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. This was accompanied by curricular innovations and a concurrent increase in faculty and staff members also from several nationalities and continents.<sup>54</sup> From 1992, Solusi College administration and church leadership started engaging government officials to negotiate a transition from college to university status. A key person in this process was Professor Norman Maphosa who had recently been appointed principal/vice chancellor.

Finally, July 1, 1994, Solusi College was granted a University Charter by the Zimbabwean government through a Presidential Proclamation. His Excellence the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe officially presented the charter on 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1995. He also became the first graduate of the new university when he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. Then on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1995, the first Solusi University graduation ceremony was officiated by the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Ignatius Chombo. The government began issuing educational grants and loans to Zimbabwean students registering at Solusi University.<sup>55</sup>

This granting of the charter was done with the understanding that it would be accompanied by infrastructural development. Several structures were later erected on the Solusi University campus. This came as a result of the vigorous fundraising efforts of Professor Norman Maphosa (then vice chancellor) and the late Mr. Absalom Makota Mhoswa (then director for Development and Public Relations). In addition, there was much support from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe, the entire Eastern Africa Division and the rest of the Adventist world Church. All these together wanted to see the full realization of the dream for Solusi to become a reputable university in the world.<sup>56</sup>

The number of buildings and other structures that came up on the Solusi campus grounds tremendously changed the outlook of the college. The ten-year affiliation with Andrews University had laid a good foundation for this. The construction of the administrative building (Exley Hall) was completed in 1989, thus creating more space for faculty offices in the old main college building popularly known as the "College Block." These two buildings provided the initial facilities for the university and they are still in use to this day.<sup>57</sup>

The basement of Exley Hall houses the offices of the Information and Technology Center (ICT) as well as four computer laboratories. The ground floor houses the registrar's office in one wing and the finance and operations office in the other wing. The upper wing houses all the senior administrators' offices including the vice chancellor's office and a board room. Exley Hall had a main assembly hall that was later subdivided into administrative offices.<sup>58</sup>

Subsequent to the granting of the charter, the need to add more hostels (student housing) became obvious in anticipation of an increase in the enrollment. Sweden House, a female residence hall was ready for occupation in 1997 while Raelly Hall for male students followed immediately in 1998. There were later additions to student accommodations because enrollment continued to rise. Mhoswa Cottages, a block of semi-detached apartments, were constructed in 2002 to accommodate 350-400 female students.<sup>59</sup>

Later, the male hostels were increased by the refurbishment and extension of Mayenza Hall to include Mayenza North, South, East and West. The old Mayenza hostels were totally transformed and given a new look. Three other apartments namely Tshabangu, Mlevu, and Kamwendo were added to the male hostels. These accommodate an average of 43 students in each hall.<sup>60</sup>

Apart from student hostels, further construction work was done to increase faculty and staff housing. Some semi-detached apartments were constructed at the same time of the construction of the Mhoswa Cottages. These accommodate some twenty families all together. There were also eight houses that were constructed at the former Solusi airstrip to accommodate eight families.<sup>61</sup>

The university administration also made great strides in terms of water provision during the years 1998-1999. A water reticulation system was developed to ensure the supply of safe water for the Solusi community. At the same time the Mhoswa Dam was constructed to provide a source of water supply within the vicinity of the university. This has continued to serve as a water catchment area just in case the Mananda pipeline malfunctions.<sup>62</sup>

The need for a bigger university assembly hall led to the construction of the Beit Hall in the years 2000-2001. This hall was so named because it was constructed using funds donated by the Beit Trust. This hall seats up to 3,000 people. Apart from serving as an assembly hall, Beit Hall also provides office space in its wings. Beit Hall was immediately followed by the construction of a new library, the Ralph Watts Library in the years 2002-2003. The old Solusi College library was converted into classrooms, laboratories and some offices for the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Department.<sup>63</sup>

The bulk of the funding for the new library came from the family of Ralph S. Watts. Watts had been instrumental in the transformation of Solusi from a junior college to a senior college in the 1950s. He was president of the Trans-Africa Division during the period from 1950-1958.<sup>64</sup> The Ralph Watts Library continues to receive books, online sources, and modern equipment for raising the profile of the university.

The latest addition to the new buildings at Solusi University is the first phase of the School of Business. It was commissioned in 2015 by Dr. Hudson Kibuuka, associate director of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This two-story building has brought more relief and extra space in terms of classrooms, computer laboratories and some offices. It is planned that once the other phases have been completed there will be more useful facilities such as a lecture theater and extra offices. Another recent addition is the expansion of the Solusi University dining hall which makes it possible for the institution to feed a more students at a time. This was made possible by a special projects' mission offering raised by the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide.<sup>65</sup>

The communication system in the university also continued to improve significantly ever since the granting of the charter. One can now phone directly to and from Solusi University without a problem. The advent of the cell phones led to the erection of three network booster towers. In addition to that, internet is readily accessible. The laying of a broadband cable directly to Solusi greatly increased the speed of the internet. This has also improved online research and lesson delivery.

The pace at which infrastructural development was moving has been slowed by the nationwide negative macro and micro-economic forces. The enrollment graph, which had over the years been steadily going up has suddenly began going on a downward trend. The highest enrollment of 1600 students was realized in 2008. But the situation changed in 2009 due to the adverse economic situation in the country. The enrollment figures went down to as low as 400 students in 2018.<sup>66</sup>

As a strategy to counter the downward trend of enrollment, the university administration introduced external learning centers. Campuses were opened in the cities of Bulawayo, Chegutu, Harare, Mutare, and Victoria Falls. The most recent center to be opened is in Plumtree southwest of Solusi. In addition, there is on-going curriculum innovation.

All the undergraduate degrees are being changed from general to honors status in order to fall in line with other universities in Zimbabwe. There are also more new programs that have been introduced with approval from both the government and the church accrediting bodies. These are the BSc (Honors) degree in Nursing, the BEd (Honors) degree in Early Childhood Development and the BSc (Honors) degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. The government has authorized collaboration between universities to enable each university to access programs that have been approved in other universities. More programs are soon to be introduced as a result of this arrangement.<sup>67</sup>

Looking at these significant trends discussed above, it is amazing to note how Solusi has grown from a small junior college to a modern university. After receiving the university charter with only three faculties in 1994, today (2019) there is a total of 7 faculties. These are: Faculty of Agriculture and Technology, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Theology and Chaplaincy, and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Solusi University was established to provide opportunities for students to develop higher qualities of character that will enable them to maximize their service to God, the church and society. Solusi University strives to maintain an environment favorable to the spiritual, intellectual, social, vocational, civic, and physical development of its students. Further Solusi University aims to lead each student to a total dedication of life in selfless service to God and man and to guide in the formation of a character marked by integrity, self-discipline, responsibility, tolerance, loyalty, and spiritual leadership.

Today there are many people who feel proud to have gone through Solusi in their educational pursuits and later employment in various capacities. All these people owe their professional recognition to Solusi, in its being the key contributor to their lives in one way or another. The rich history of Solusi must be told and retold over the years that have elapsed since its inception. Solusi's numerous alumni bear testimony to the wide range of educational services offered from primary school to university.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, Solusi University has not abandoned its primary role of taking the everlasting gospel to the world. The Faculty of Theology runs a Field School of Evangelism each year using the pastors in training. These go out under the supervision of one or two faculty members to participate in evangelistic campaigns in villages and towns within Zimbabwe and the neighboring countries. This has resulted in mass baptisms taking place on an annual basis, thereby fulfilling the primary mission of Solusi. There are several companies of believers and organized churches that stand today as a testimony to the wonderful contribution of the Solusi University Field School of Evangelism.<sup>69</sup>

## What Remains to be Done to Enable the School to Fulfill its Mission

Despite the prevailing adverse economic challenges, there is still potential for improvement at Solusi University to grow and develop to higher levels. Such development must include the provision of adequate accommodation for workers. The work force has increased and may continue to do so if more programs continue to be added. Student facilities must also be given priority. Notable among these is a student center, sports facilities, and modernized student accommodation. As the curriculum evolves, there is a critical requirement for funded research to raise the university profile to higher levels.

## List of Principals/Vice Chancellors

### Solusi Mission (1894-1932)

G. B. Tripp (1895-1898); F. L. Mead (1899-1901); W. H. Anderson (1901-1903); M. C. Sturdevant (1904-1909); W. C. Walston (1910-1919); H. M. Sparrow (1920-1924); W. C. Flaiz (1925-1926); H. M. Sparrow (1927-1928).

### Solusi Training School (1932-1954)

W. B. Higgins (1929-1942); R. A. Mote (1942-1944); C. E. Wheeler (1945-1946); J. R. Siebenlist (1946-1954).

### Solusi Missionary College (1954-1994)

C. F. Clarke (1954-1961); R. L. Staples (1962-1967); Daniel Walther (1967-1969); T. V. Gorle (1969-1971); J. T. Bradfield (1972-1983); R. L. McKenzie 1984-1988; M. S. Muze (1988-1991); Norman Maphosa (1992-1994).

### Solusi University (1994 to Present):

Norman Maphosa (1994-2011); Joel Musvosvi (2012-2018); Ephraim Tobela Gwebu (2018-to Present).

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## NOTES

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