



Renovated old Sitoti Clinic built in 1956 by Elder W. R. Zork.

Photo courtesy of Warren Suya Simatele.

Sitoti SDA Mission Rural Health Center

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Sitoti SDA Mission Rural Health Center is owned by the West Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventists, and is operated through government grants and donations.

Overview

Sitoti Mission Station is the home of Sitoti SDA Mission Rural Health Center (RHC) in Sioma district, Western province of Zambia. It is situated on the western bank of the Zambezi River along the old Senanga-Sesheke Road. It is 30 kilometers from Senanga town, where there is a district referral hospital, and it is approximately 65 kilometers from the Sioma District Health Office. Adventist missions in the Western province (formerly Barotseland) began in 1928. B. M. Heald and S. M. Konigmacher left Kalimbeza Mission, in Southwest Africa (now Namibia), at the request of Pastor Gladstone Ishee Inyiwe,¹ son-in-law of the paramount chief of Barotseland, to open the Liumba Hill Mission in Kalabo district on the western bank of the Zambezi River.²

Developments that Led to the Establishment of the Institution

Because of the long distances and difficulty of travel across the vast Barotseland sands, the Barotseland Mission territory was divided into two mission regions in 1946: Northern Barotseland, with Liumba Hill Mission as the headquarters, and Southern Barotseland, with Sitoti Mission (opened in the 1930s) as the headquarters.³ It was the plan that a general headquarters would be established in Mongu, the provincial capital, when funds became available,⁴ and this happened in 1948.⁵ The northern region had 11 outlying schools administered from Liumba Mission station, while the southern region had eight schools which were connected to the Sitoti Mission. The two regions were administered by European missionaries who were assisted by African evangelists.⁶

To meet the educational needs of young people south of the Zambezi River, a self-help school⁷ was opened by the community in 1931 at Nakatoya village, three kilometers from Sitoti Mission, with Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe and Robert Njekwa Wamulume as the first teachers.⁸ By 1933 there were 150 pupils at Sitoti.⁹ The school was relocated on August 24, 1945, to a new mission site in the Naluwe area, where it is today.¹⁰ The following year, James de Villiers, the mission treasurer from South Africa, built a house at the mission station.

Founding of the Rural Health Center

The coming of Elder W. R. and Shirley Ann Zork in 1954, as directors of Sitoti Mission,¹¹ marked another achievement in the growth of the work at Sitoti Mission station. To meet the medical needs of the pupils, Mrs. Zork, a missionary nurse, opened a dispensary in their home, because the government clinic at Litambya in Senanga town was too far from Sitoti.¹² Later a measles outbreak at Sitoti School prompted Mrs. Zork to coordinate medical services with Litambya Clinic in Senanga. These efforts led to the birth of Sitoti Dispensary in 1956, and Ms Mwangala Mukela of Nakabunze village in Sioma district became the first casual daily employee

(CDE) to work with Mrs. Zork. About this same time, two additional employees, Joseph Chipindu, a clinic officer from Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and Benson Imataa, a CDE, joined the Sitoti Clinic workforce.

Closure and Reopening of the Rural Health Center

In 1962, when both the Zork family and Joseph Chipindu left Sitoti Mission permanently, the clinic closed down. Six years after its closure, in 1968, community leaders who were negatively impacted by the clinic's closure urged the government of the Republic of Zambia, then led by President Kenneth D. Kaunda, to reopen the clinic.

¹³ The administrators of the Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventists also sought counsel from the doctor at Yuka Adventist Hospital, situated near Liumba Hill Mission in Kalabo district, regarding the possibility of "re-opening the dispensary on the understanding that the salary expense would be met by the government."⁴

After the government agreed to this proposal, the dispensary was reopened in 1969, and Kennedy Kalyata Katongo, a CDE from Yuka Adventist Hospital, was sent there to be in charge. The Zambia Field Mission sponsored the construction of a staff house at Sitoti Mission station under the supervision of Dr. L. Wical and Pastor Ernest H. B. Siamaundu, the Sitoti Mission station director. The name of Sitoti Dispensary changed in succeeding years to Sitoti Rural Health Center (RHC), in keeping with government requirements for service deliveries in rural areas. The current building of the Sitoti RHC has a ten-bed capacity with more than 40 patients coming to the clinic on a daily basis. Construction work on the existing building began in 1995, using church funds and community contributions, and was completed in 1996.¹⁵

RHC Leadership after the Reopening

In 1970 Patrick Chindungu Mazhilo, the longest serving CDE at the clinic, arrived from Yuka Adventist Hospital to replace Kennedy Kalyata Katongo, who was going to Mwami School of Nursing the following year for training. Mazhilo served as the officer-in-charge of the clinic until 1980 when a trained male nurse, Mr. Mulenga, took over leadership. Mulenga continued working with Born Namawa until 1988 when another male nurse, Preston Mwiinga, took over leadership. In 1990 a clinical officer named Ndalela Simate assumed oversight of the clinic with the assistance of an environmental health technician (EHT) named Konoso Kabelela. Samweemba Sifuba, another male nurse, followed in 1994 and served until 1999, when clinical officer, Chikote Ngombo, arrived. Ngombo worked with the following female nurses: Alice Simasiku, Nagy Mabuku, Mwendabai Nyoka, and Sinyama Lilonda (an EHT). From 2007 until the present, a nurse-in-charge, Mrs. Nalukuyi Muyangwa Mwiya, has provided leadership at the clinic with the help of Mulenga Davis (an EHT); Edith Ngoma, who is a certified midwife; and Lipalile Kwaleela, a registered nurse.¹⁶

Type of Medical Services Offered at the Rural Health Center

Sitoti Rural Health Center is accredited by the Zambian government and offers various services, including family planning, an expanded program on immunization (EPI), baby delivery, antenatal and postnatal care, voluntary medical circumcision, HIV testing, viral load collection, and tuberculosis examination. Clinic officers, nurse midwives, environmental health technicians, and community health-based volunteers constitute the medical and non-medical staff serving at Sitoti RHC over the years, who have contributed to the center's work. In 2001 and 2016, the clinic received the District Health Office award for long service and good performance in the community.

Future Outlook

The Sitoti Rural Health Center is funded through government grants and donations from well-wishers, and it is a member of the Churches Health Association of Zambia, which provides most of the medical supplies, though not always enough, and some supplies come from the government. The consequence of receiving insufficient supplies of essential drugs, coupled with the high turnover of trained health practitioners at the clinic, has reduced the efficiency of the clinic's service. There is an increasing need for health workers (clinical officers, midwives, nurses, and EHTs) to deal with clinical care and environmental health services, improve conditions of service for the staff, increase medical supplies, and promote community outreach evangelism.¹⁷

Early Mission Station Directors

R. L. Garber (1946-1950), Raymond C. Tarr (1951-1954), Warren R. Zork (1954-1960), G. L. Pursley (1961-1963),¹⁸ Samuel T. Shapa (1964-1967), Earnest H. B. Siamaundu (1968-1971), Larsaw D. Raelly (1972-1974), Joel Lisaka (1974-1975).

Rural Health Center Leaders

Patrick Chindungu Mazhilo (1970-1980), Mr. Mulenga (1980-1988), Preston Mwiinga (1988-1990), Ndalela Simate (1990-1994), Samweemba Sifuba (1994-1999), Chikote Ngombo (1999-2007), Nalukuyi Muyangwa Mwiya (2007-present).

SOURCES

Beach, W. R. "From Home Base to Front Line." *ARH*, November 10, 1960.

Burke, Delmar T. "Barotseland Needs the Gospel." *ARH*, March 17, 1949.

Elliott, H. T. "Recent Missionary Departures." *ARH*, August 15, 1954.

Garber, R. L. "Southern Barotseland, Africa." *ARH*, April 25, 1946.

Heald, B. M. "Another New Mission." *ARH*, October 18, 1928; Quoted in Cornelius M. Matandiko, *Seventh-day Adventism in Zambia*, Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Adventist Press, 2001).

Ishee Nyuwe, Glastone. "Letter From Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe." *The Church Officers' Gazette*, October 1930, no. 10, 12.

Moore, Roscoe W. "New District Leader Arrives." *ARH*, September 28, 1964.

Mote, R. M. "Sitoti Church." *ARH*, May 15, 1933.

Trumper, Edward A. "Barotseland Mission Field." *ARH*, September 23, 1948.

NOTES

1. "PASTOR GLADSTONE,' as he is commonly called, is the only native ordained minister we have in the Upper Zambesi Mission. His wife is a granddaughter of Luwanika, a former Barotse king. The present paramount chief, Yeta III, is her uncle. The word "Ishee" in Pastor Gladstone's name means "Consort to a princess." Doubtless this relationship was a help to him in his efforts to secure permission to locate what is now called the Liumba Hill Mission, as referred to in the second paragraph of his letter. Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe, "Letter From Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, October 1930, no.10., 12.
2. On April 20, 1928, the duo travelled on a mission boat propelled by 13 peddlers and soon it would be named "Angel Barge" as villagers would run along the Zambezi River bank and call on the boys to sing on! The boys would pick up a song, "Hurry, God is calling you," B.M. Heald, "Another New Mission" *ARH*, October 18, 1928, 8- 9. Quoted in Cornelius M. Matandiko, *Seventh-day Adventism in Zambia*, Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Adventist Press, 2001), 131.
3. At the time of writing his report in 1946, R. L. Garber described Sitoti mission "a babe. . . born only last August, but it is surely, though slowly, growing up. Actually it was on August 24, 1945, that the district commissioner and W. R. Vail, acting superintendent of the Zambesi Union Mission, and I went to lay out the new mission site," R. L. Garber, "Southern Barotseland, Africa," *ARH*, April 25, 1946, 19.
4. Ibid.
5. Elder Trumper served as first president of the united Barotse fields in 1948, which until then were operated as unattached missions under the direction of the Zambesi Union Mission, Edward A. Trumper, "Barotseland Mission Field," *ARH*, September 23, 1948, 14.
6. The author T. Burke served as President of Barotseland Mission when he wrote his report for the Review and Herald; Delmar T. Burke, "Barotseland Needs the Gospel," *ARH*, March 17, 1949, 16.
7. Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe writes about a Mwala, a man who went to Pastor G. L. Willmore in Katima Mulilo to report that Induna Kamutumwa and his people "have already gathered the materials to put up a schoolhouse and teacher's house" the response was that "We

are still waiting to hear from the district commissioner of Nalolo, then we could proceed on to help these people." Pastor Gladstone, "Letter From Pastor Gladstone Ishee Nyuwe" *The Church Officers' Gazette*, October 1930, no. 10, 12.

8. Sourced from Zephaniah Imasiku Wamulume, son to Robert Njekwa Wamulume, one of the first two teachers when Sitoti was yet a community school at Nakatoyo village in 1931. Zephaniah Wamulume later became an evangelist and pastor at Sitoti Mission after his training at Solusi College in 1959-1960. He then went for teacher training in 1965-1966 and twice served as class teacher at Sitoti Primary School first from 1966-1967 and from 1970-1971 as head teacher.
9. R. M. Mote, "Sitoti Church," *ARH*, May 15, 1933, 7.
10. Garber, "Southern Barotseland. . .," *ARH*, April 25, 1946, 18.
11. "Elder and Mrs. Warren R. Zork and their small son Douglas, of St. Louis, Missouri, sailed from Montreal, August 2, on the S.S. Empress of Australia. Elder Zork is to be director of the Sitoti Mission in Barotseland," H. T. Elliott, "Recent Missionary Departures," *ARH*, August 15, 1954, 24.
12. Mrs. Shirly Ann Zork had a B.S. degree from the Union College School of Nursing and has had considerable experience in obstetrical nursing; W. R. Beach, "From Home Base to Front Line," *ARH*, November 10, 1960, 22.
13. Induna Robbert Iiswaniso Nyimba, Induna Abraham Mumonaliya and the Ward Councilor Mr. Kamutumwa Muyangwa were the key community leaders who advocated for the reopening of the Rural Health Center.
14. "To seek counsel from the Yuka Doctor regarding the possibility of re-opening the Sitoti Dispensary on the understanding that the salary expense would be met by the government;" committee members included J.F. Muyoba, L. H. Makeleta, D. Lufungulo, J. Mwanamuchende, F. G. Thomas (President), M. B. Musgrave, W. R. Zork, J. Mabuti, S. Shapa, A.S. Muunyu, A.S. Walubita, N. K. Momba, E.H. B. Siamaundu and D. E. Robinson. Northern Rhodesia Field of the Seventh-day Adventist, "Minutes of the Northern Rhodesia Field," Chisekesi, Northern Rhodesia: Sitoti Dispensary Action no. 202, January 13, 1969.
15. Sourced from Mrs. Nalukui Muyangwa Mwiya, the current nurse-in-charge of the Clinic; has served two different terms at the clinic (1987-199 and 2007 to date).
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., the current Nurse-in-charge of the clinic
18. Roscoe W. Moore, "New District Leader Arrives," *ARH*, September 28, 1964, 4.

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