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MESSENGER

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SCOM MINISTRY COVERAGE



Group photo for the Southern Region UCS Conference at the College of Medicine

Editorial

Dear readers,

After a year without the SCOM Messenger, we are delighted to share with you updates of what God has done in and through the ministry of SCOM over the past year. In this edition, we will share 2023 ministry highlights, covering a period of nine (12) months from January to December. The updates shared in this edition do not include the on-going branch visitations and leadership development programs done by the Associates in different zones.

The year 2023 was full of challenges which had a negative effect on ministry operations. For example, we had Cyclone Freddy which affected student outreach programs in the Southern and eastern regions as schools had to be closed, and consequently, student conferences which were scheduled to take place at the end of the second term had to be cancelled. Conferences are the major platform which SCOM uses to evangelize and equip students to become effective witnesses of Jesus Christ in their campuses, as such, cancelling conferences affected the total number of students that were reached by the end of the year. Though some zones organized student conferences at the end of the third term, the number of students reached, and impact were not the same many students missed the conferences due to the differences in days for finishing MSCE and end of term exams. Again, holding the conferences in July meant that the zones had to cancel the School Leavers' Retreats, which in turn affected the overall number of students that were to be reached and impacted.

Despite the Cyclone Freddy and other challenges such as limited resources, shortage of secretariat staff coupled with few numbers of committed of committed Associates against the ever-increasing student population, we are grateful to God for his continued faithfulness and grace that enabled the ministry to register some notable achievements within the year as highlighted in the next few pages. We are also grateful to everyone who spared their time and resources to make sure that students are reached with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are hopeful that 2024 will be more successful as we trust God for more opportunities for ministry and fruitfulness.

Enjoy reading.

SCOM Ministry Coverage

Student Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM) operates in 83 Universities and colleges and 1, 230 secondary school campuses countrywide; serving a student population of over 100, 000, against the total student enrolment of 485,650 (secondary schools alone) from over 1,700 schools as reported by the ministry of education in the year 2023. In 2023 alone, SCOM reached a total of slightly above 50,000 through branch visitations, campus crusades/ evangelism campaigns, conferences and retreats, joint meetings and boy/girl empowerment seminars. This number is too small compared to the overall student enrolment in our secondary and tertiary learning institutions. We are therefore appealing to SCOM members at all levels to be vigilant in our efforts to reach students through various initiatives.

Geographically, SCOM operates in all the 28 districts which are divided into 4 regions: North, Centre, East and South with a national office in Lilongwe, 4 regional offices in Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre, and 3 District Offices in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Kasungu. It has 13 staff working in all offices, and a total of 1,197 Associates (though about 50% are active) who are organized in 42 zones across Malawi. The number of staff and active Associates is too small compared to the total number of students that need to be served. It is our hope and prayer that in 2024, God will send more labourers into the harvest field and empower those that are available to do more for his glory.

Ministry **UPDATES**

STUDENT CONFERENCES

Between March and October, 2023 SCOM held a total of 37 student conferences; 32 for the secondary school section and 5 for the universities and colleges section. The secondary schools section reached to 8, 636 students (3,299 M; 5, 337 F), whereas the Universities and Colleges section reached 1, 815 students (939 M; 876 F). Out of these, 1, 207 made fresh commitments to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.. For the first time in four years, Mangochi District had a conference at the Police Cottage which was attended by 132 students from 11 secondary schools. Students from other schools failed to attend the conference due to floods (Cyclone Freddy) which had affected part of the district. The conference was organized by the national office with support from Reach Out for Christ (ROC) ministry, a

few Associates, and other well-wishers.

Total expenditure for all the conferences was over MK60,000, 000. 00 (over \$35, 000. 00). Associates raised most of the resources for the conferences, in addition to the financial support received from World Vision Malawi, Reach Out for Christ, a few churches and other well-wishers.

During the secondary schools, 1745 students received New Testament Bibles (with Psalms and Proverbs), courtesy of the Bible Society of Malawi (1000 bibles) and Gideons International (745 bibles). The Bibles came at the right time considering that most of those who had committed their lives to Christ did not have bibles of their own.



Group photo for one of the secondary school conferences in Mangochi District, Eastern Region, and some of the students holding the bibles which they had received.

School Leavers' & Graduands Retreats Prepare Students For Life Ahead

In July and August, 2023 SCOM held 20 school leavers' retreats in the Northern, Central and Eastern Regions, and one graduands retreat, respectively. School Leavers' Retreats are meant to prepare students who are finishing secondary school and tertiary education for the life ahead in terms of career paths/progression, relationships and marriage, and how they can stand firm in the faith regardless of the pressures they may face. These retreats are also used as a platform for recruiting Associates into the SCOM Associates Fellowship, as such, one of the areas of discussion is about SCOM and how they can be part of the movement. 1, 541 school leavers (688 M, 853 F), and 29 graduands (18 M, 11F) were reached during the school leavers and graduands retreats, respectively. Some have already joined the graduates' ministry and have been duly trained.



Some of the graduands pose for a photo with the facilitators, at Nkhotakota Safari Lodge (26 August, 2023)

SCOM For The Protection Of Marriage And Family



SCOM, on 13th July 2023, joined the faith community in Malawi in peaceful demonstrations against homosexuality, whose case was yet to be decided in the high court of Malawi.

SCOM Holds 2nd National Leadership Conf. For Its Universities & Colleges Section (UCS)

For the second time in the history of SCOM, a total of 42 student leaders from different universities and colleges across Malawi came together for a national leadership conference, which took place at the Baptist College in Lilongwe from 18 to 20 August, 2023. This was a great improvement from the previous year's conference where 24 student leaders attended. The aim of the conference was to equip student leaders with skills and instill in them values for effective leadership which will help them to impact others in their respective spheres of influence while on campus and beyond. This is in line with the SCOM vision which seeks *"To be a vibrant student movement on every campus capable of impacting the whole society for God."*

Held under the theme: ***"Raising a generation of impactful leaders for SCOM and beyond,"*** the

conference covered topics like transformational leadership, ethical leadership, leadership in SCOM, best practices of effective leaders and devotional life of a leader. The main speakers at the conference were Pr. Victor Mughogho (Executive Director for Global Leadership Network Malawi), Mr. Warmzman Jeremia (Board Vice Chairperson), Mrs. Ellen Napala (SCOM General Secretary), Mr. Abednego Kavumba (former Vice Treasurer and active Associate) and Mr. Madalitso Bula (senior staff). In attendance was also Mr. Duncan Chiyani, the Associate Regional Secretary for IFES-EPISA, Southern Africa. Student leaders appreciated the opportunity granted to them that they could sit down and learn from such great leaders, and they committed to practice the skills for the benefit of SCOM and society at large.



Group photo of student leaders with their facilitators

DOMASI COLLEGE OF EDU. HOSTS SCOM UCS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Every year the Universities and Colleges Section (UCS) gather together for a national conference. These conferences are aimed at deepening their spiritual life through prayer and study of the Holy Scriptures as well as coming together into Christian fellowship with each other in serving the needs of all students and of the world. The 2023 conference brought together 393 (132 males, 134 females) students from across the country under the theme Raising An Upright Generation from 27th to 29th October 2023. The UCS family has a tradition of rotating its annual national conferences across the four regions of Malawi and this time around it was the turn of the Eastern Region who opted for the Domasi College of Education. The conference was budgeted at 8,759,190 and a significant percentage of this was to be raised through students conference registration fees.

To achieve its objective, the conference organising team lined up carefully selected topics such as Overcoming Deception facilitated by Apostle Caswel

Mkanda, SCOM awareness by Prof. Levison Chiwaula & Mrs Maggie Chiwaula. Other activities included a Bible Study led by Mr. Duncan Chiyani, Panel Discussions on Stewardship, Academic Excellence, and Relationships & Sexual Purity which were facilitated by DR. W. Changadeya, Dr. C. Manthalu and Dr. and Mrs. Simbeye respectively. Speaking on the thematic message Pastor David Gondwe challenged the students that to become an upright generation students should first of all recognize and understand their identity in Christ. If they do not understand their identity, they will always look down on themselves and worldly things will excite them.

In her address to the gathering, the general secretary of SCOM Mrs Ellen Napala reminded the students that SCOM is for all students. She said that the first aim of SCOM is to reach all students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is able to transform their lives, and ultimately be able to impact the whole Malawi through the witness of everyone who has been impacted through its work.



ASCO 2023 Treats Delegates To A Variety Of Prtinent Messages



It was yet another successful gathering of the associate members of SCOM who converged at Thope Lodge in Mponela from 13th to 15th October 2023. Popularly known as ASCO the conference was organized under the theme “Raising an Upright Generation” and brought together 148 associates (90 males, 58 females) from across Malawi. The whole conference costed K6,648,000.00.

Main topics discussed at the conference include the thematic message, “Raising an Upright Generation,” which was handled by Rev. Mc Glyns Nyalubwe. There were other sessions like Marriage Seminar facilitated by Dr. Diston & Dr. Asiyatu Chiweza; Singles & Youth Seminar by Mr. & Mrs. M. Chiweza; Where is God when it hurts: Dealing with God’s Silence by Mr. BBC Nyirenda, Bible Study and a Workshop on three other topics. Apart from these sessions, delegates had the privilege to get reports and ask questions about the ministry’s departments

performance in the previous year. From the reports, it was clear that the ministry was not doing well in the area of resource mobilization, and a resolution was made to have Associates who would commit to be giving a minimum of K10,000 every month towards the secretariat operations. We are grateful to God that by December, 2023, 60 people had joined the initiative and we are hoping that the number will keep growing as many people become aware.

However, available funds for the function were not enough to cover all conference expenses, as such the conference program was cut back by half day to avoid any deficits. Some of the delegates suggested that going forward, there may be need to consider holding the ASCO at an affordable venue to cut down the budget but also attract more Associates to attend. To this extent delegates emphasized the need to consider using the SCOM Centre in Lilongwe as possible alternatives.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY DATES THE MEN'S WING OF LILONGWE SCOM-AF



On 6 May 2023, the General Secretary and the Lilongwe SCOM-AF men interacted over breakfast where she reminded and encouraged them on their respective roles in the family, SCOM and society at large. She was accompanied by one of the senior ladies in the ministry. Commonly known as the “Men's Breakfast” the grouping brings together SCOM married men to discuss different topical and family issues.

SHIFTING EDUCATION LANDSCAPE •A Call For More Innovations

The education landscape has significantly changed over the past two decades. Previously most secondary school campuses used to have only one stream of students. In the afternoon, the campuses were almost free for other extracurricular activities. This is no longer the case nowadays. While some secondary schools are having two streams, almost every, if not all, government and grant aided secondary schools have open day students. The school premises are always busy with every classroom occupied for lessons both in the morning and afternoon. There is minimal time for extracurricular activities and interaction between students. On the other hand, the universities today have significant populations of students who are not accommodated on campus. In some cases, there are more students who are

accommodated outside the campus than on the campus.

This shift in the education landscape has resulted in a situation where most SCOM branches are not able to accommodate all students who are willing to participate in their campus fellowship programs and activities. Branch visitations by either staff or Associates have become less effective as there is usually not enough time for interaction with the SCOM members and chances of missing some students during such visits are also high. This therefore calls for continuous reflections and innovations, on the part of staff and Associates, on the most effective ways of reaching and impacting students. Branch leaders should be empowered to explore cost effective ways of reaching non-residential students outside the traditional on-campus fellowship meetings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Creation Care Season
2. Annual secondary school student conferences – March 28 to April 1
3. 4 Regional University Students Conferences – Between April and June
4. Elective National General Council meeting – April 28
5. National Generosity Month (resource mobilization) - May
6. Thanksgiving Dinner – May 31
7. School Leavers' Retreats – 18 to 21 July

HELP US Pray

- ◆ For the success of all the events.
- ◆ That more students will be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ and that many will be saved.
- ◆ That the fundraising initiatives will yield positive results.
- ◆ That the election process for the new Board will be guided by God and that the new Board members will commit to their responsibilities.

SCOM National Office Wears New Face



In a bid to improve publicity and visibility of SCOM the national office has installed a sign post. This has since improved the face of the national secretariat.

OBITUARY

Within the year, the SCOM lost the following people

1. Ms. Towera Msiska – Associate (Lilongwe)
2. Mrs. Joyce Makawa – Veteran Associate (Ngabu)
3. Prof. Kings Phiri – Mzuzu
4. Sister Brenda Kalinde – Associate (Machinga)
5. Psalm Chinyamu – Former NEC Member and Associate (ZA)
6. Tenganao – student leader (Mikolongwe DAPP, Chiradzulu)

...so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe (Philippians 2:15 NIV)

Social ENGAGEMENT

TRANSFORMING STUDENTS' LIVES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

SCOM is currently implementing a one-year grant with support from Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI). The grant, which runs up to May 2024, seeks to increase the proportion of students with access to affordable meals and accommodation by supporting 19 less privileged students (9 on accommodation, 10 on meals and 1 on both) at the Bunda campus of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). While the project has been providing accommodation and meals to the beneficiary students it also provided life transforming, stress management and leadership training sessions to ensure transformation of the whole being. The initiative has so far contributed to the students in that their academic journey has been sustained. Very significant achievements in particular can be mentioned of two students. Praise Mzinza Mwale made big achievement by being elected as the institutions Student Union President. Speaking to SCOM project coordinator, Praise said he owes it to the SCOM project initiative which highly contributed to his welfare on campus without which he would have found it tough through his academic journey. This goes into records in that SCOM had indeed contributed to the making of a student union leader by making efforts to intervene to possible challenges that would have reduced his chances for continuing with academics.

In September 2023 Alfred Malimwe, another beneficiary student, was among a cream of 114 students from LUANAR's four campuses who had scooped distinctions for the past two consecutive semesters. They were hosted to a breakfast with the institution's Vice Chancellor. In his motivation speech guest of honor who is also Airtel Malawi's Managing Director Charles Kamoto



Some of the meals beneficiaries take their meals at the designated restaurant



Some of the beneficiaries take a photo on campus

Project beneficiary among Luanar best

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said Malawi needs to motivate the students by supporting their goals for the betterment of the country. He urged the star performers to always aim high to effectively contribute to the national development. The institution's Vice Chancellor professor Emmanuel Kaunda said they were proud of the students, and they would motivate them further.



Some of the accommodation beneficiaries, pose for a photo



Alfred Malimwe (left) with the Vice Chancellor when he hosted the best performing students.

THE FIRST EVER SCOM DAY OUT & AEROBICS

In what could be classified as an amazing display of innovation and creativity the SCOM family and other members of the society were treated to what was called a SCOM Day Out coupled with Aerobics in effort to generate resources for the ministry. Organized in the cities of Blantyre Lilongwe and Mzuzu the day started with aerobics where professional aerobic trainers were mobilized to take participants through fitness exercises very early in the morning. In Lilongwe, the aerobics were conducted at the Area 18 Memorial Tower. This was followed by a Day Out of which in Lilongwe the Botanic Gardens were the destination for all those who planned to participate. The day out was characterized with lots of fun, out doors competition games sale of food items and many more.

Being the first of its kind, the event did not attract many participants as expected due to delays in publicity being some of the factors. It managed to raise K1,230,250.00 and after paying all expenses the organizing team had a profit of K692,715.00



A Thank You Note

To everyone who supported the work of SCOM in 2023 we are saying, THANK YOU SO MUCH AND WE PRAY THAT GOD will continue to BLESS YOU RICHLY AND ATTEND TO YOUR NEEDS SO THAT YOU WILL NEVER LACK RESOURCES TO GIVE BACK TO HIM. Specifically, we are grateful to the following for their efforts and contribution towards the work of SCOM in 2023: SCOM leaders at all levels, Individual Associates within and outside Malawi, World Vision Malawi, Reach Out for Christ (ROC), Operation Mobilization (OM), Future Vision, Cornerstone Ministries, Transworld Radio, Bible Society of Malawi, Gideons International Individual Churches and Mother bodies (MCC and EAM), Mournie Presbyterian Church (Ireland), and Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI). We do not forget Guest speakers and facilitators and the management of various secondary schools and university campuses that hosted our conferences, retreats, and joint meetings. We believe that your contribution was not in vain as “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people (through SCOM) and continue to help them” (Hebrews 6: 10 – NIV).

Supporting SCOM

For SCOM to operate effectively and fulfill its mandate to the students, it needs the continuous support of its members, churches and all stakeholders from across the nation and beyond. You can support SCOM by:

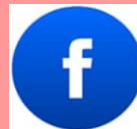
- ♦ Praying for the organization
- ♦ Taking part in its various programs and activities
- ♦ Contributing resources towards its operations (e.g. venues, talents/ skills/ services, equipment/ materials, money, etc).

Those who are interested to support SCOM but do not know how can contact the Secretariat for guidance. All cash contributions can be channeled to SCOM through the following account details:

SCOM COUNCIL	COUNCIL OF SCOM	SCOM SALARIES
9100002877926	1908502	2863437
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