

CAMPUS  
EVANGELISING—  
P5

ASCO 2024—  
P9

SCOM CREATION  
CARE PROGRAM—  
P10

SCOM PCI EXIT  
WORKSHOP —  
P11



# MESSENGER

VOL. 3  
ISSUE 4

JANUARY— DECEMBER 2024

## SCOM CONFERENCES EMPOWER 8,501 STUDENTS FOR LIFE AHEAD





# Ministry **UPDATES**

## 2024 SCOM Conferences

Since 1961 SCOM remains Indigenous, Interdenominational, and a Christian Organization in Malawi that is committed to the evangelization, discipleship and training of students to help them love and serve the Lord on campus and beyond. To achieve this SCOM engages students in different activities and one its core activities are annual conferences. Through these conferences, students are drawn from all kinds of secondary schools, colleges and universities to designated centers where they are challenged through teaching of the word of God and various life transforming and character-building subjects. Students are also given chances to learn from role models and discuss among each other on different important issues affecting their spiritual, physical, as well as psychological lives.

The 2024 conferences drew 8,501 students across Malawi of which 483 were universities and colleges (UCS) students and 8,018 (3456 male and 4562 female) were secondary school students. There were 4 regional UCS

conferences and 34 secondary school conferences which left a mark in the lives of the students as some (4,209 students) committed their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior while others learned new things that changed their perception about school and life in general. Apart from the students themselves, a total of 608 Associates (369 male and 239 female) and 12 staff were involved in the planning and execution of the 2024 conferences. Also, in attendance were 240 patrons and matrons (166 male and 74 female) who accompanied the students from their respective schools as teaching members of staff. The secondary school conferences took place at the end of the second term from 29 March to 2 April, 2024 while the UCS conferences took place within the month of May.

As one of SCOM's major student outreach events, the conferences aimed at evangelizing, discipling and training of students for holistic development in order to live transformed lives and bear fruit that would



A group photo after the chitipa conference



# Conferences empower students



last and impact the society for God. Different topics (like entrepreneurship, financial management, Achieving Academic Excellence; Students and social media; How can a young person walk Upright; The cost of walking upright; Sexual Purity; Career guidance; and Emerging issues) were included on the programs in order to address every aspect of students' lives with a more concentrated focus on the transformation of the heart. In addition, students were also introduced to the "Empowered Biblical Worldview" through presentations by either World Vision staff or a SCOM associate under the

transformational youth conferences initiative which was supported by the World Vision International- Malawi Office.

Cost of all conferences was over MK150,000,000 and main sources of funds were SCOM associates contributions, students' registration and support from partners such as World Vision International (WVI), Reach Out for Christ (ROC), Operation Mobilization (OM), Future Vision and some churches. Much of the expenditure was on food which costed about half of the total budgets followed by venue charges (like accommodation) and others.



A presentation on academic excellence during the Ntcheu conference



A Group Bible Study during the conference in Salima



A presentation on Biblical Empowered World View in Mwanza by Mr. & Mrs. Chikolosa Jere



# 2024 NATIONAL UCS CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

• Regardless of fuel crisis

Students at similar previous conference (File photo)

Regardless of the fuel crisis that rocked the country through the first week of November, 408 students from different Universities and Colleges, 5 members of staff and 15 Associates flocked to Mzuzu University for the national UCS conference. The students came from three regions (East, Centre and North) as 65 students from the Southern Region failed to attend the conferences due to scarcity of fuel. The conference took place from 1st to 3rd November 2024, under the theme 'Pressing on Towards the Goal.'

Speaking on the theme, Pastor Mataka emphasized on the need for students to transform their world by responding to the mission of God and not conforming to the ways of the world. He challenged the students not to emulate everything they see without checking the origins and purpose behind the things they see or hear.

In addition to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, other key activities on the program included Bible Study, Worship and a panel discussion on three topics: Social Media & Christianity by Wanangwa Chirwa; Balancing Academics & Spirituality by Dr. Joyce Mlenga; and Biblical Perception on Sexual

Immorality Rev. In her response to some of the questions from the audience Dr. Joyce Mlenga emphasized the need for students to work hard in their studies as the grace of God does not replace the part that students have to play in order to achieve their academic goals (Colossians 3:23).

The conference was budgeted at MK11,000,000.00. However, a total amount of MK7,996,800 was spent towards food, accommodation and others. Main sources of income included, students' registration, Associates contributions and other fundraising initiatives by the students.



Martin Phiri (outgoing UCS treasurer receives a hand shake and a certificate from Mr. Lameck Kasonda (Training Secretary East)



# EVANGELIZING CAMPUSES THROUGH SCHOOL VISITATION

In an effort to help revive dying SCOM branches and establish new ones within areas where SCOM-AF was not active, a team 4 and 5 staff from the secretariat went on a school visitation program for secondary schools around Golomoti and Ntchisi district, respectively. The school visitation program was made possible with financial support from various supporters through the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) and generous contributions from some Associates within and outside the country. A total of 6,274 (3,121 M; 3,153 F) students from 31 secondary schools in Golomoti and Ntchisi were reached in 7 days and 4,713 gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

The program for Golomoti run for two days from 22 to 23 February, 2024 followed by a Joint meeting at Mtakataka Secondary School on 24 February. 11 schools were targeted but 9 were visited as the other 2 schools (Emmanuel Private and Khola CDSS) were closed due to close of business and disciplinary grounds respectively. A total of 1, 579 students (947 boys & 632 girls) were reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ and 963 students committed their lives to Christ as Lord as Saviour. The Joint meeting at Mtakataka brought together 64 students from 4 schools and 56 students made fresh commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to live sexually pure lives.

The visitation program for Ntchisi took place from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 followed by a joint meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March. A total of 4, 695 students (2174 M, 2521 F) from 22 secondary schools were reached with the gospel resulting in

3,750 students and some teachers committing their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The joint meetings took place in centers as namely, Gwangwa CDSS, Mpherere CDSS, Mbomba Secondary School, Chinthembwe CDSS and Kasakula Day Secondary School and they brought together 904 students from 14 schools in the district. A team of 10 Associates from Lilongwe, Mponela and Kasungu joined the staff to minister to the students during the joint meetings.

The school visitations focused on evangelism and raising SCOM awareness, while the joint meetings aimed at establishing the students in the faith and equipping them for a life of service and impact both on campus and beyond. Apart from preaching the Gospel, students were also encouraged in other areas such as academic excellence and career talks, skills development, behaviour change (with emphasis on sexual purity), and the place of God in their studies – depending on the amount of time allocated to the speakers which ranged from 40 to 80 minutes.

Both visitation programs and the joint meetings costed K1,542, 600 (not including the cost of fuel used by the Associates who participated in the joint meetings) in staff meals, accommodation and transportation. The outcomes of the programs were worth every penny spent as many students found hope and salvation through Christ, dying SCOM branches were revived and new SCOM branches were established in some schools, work relationship with some schools was enhanced and SCOMAF operations were also rekindled in the two visited areas.





# SCOM Observes a Generosity Month

In response to persistent financial challenges at the Secretariat, SCOM planned to have the month of May 2024 as a Generosity Month in order to give chance to members, churches, former members, well-wishers and the general public to appreciate the work of SCOM in Malawi over the years and to take part in its work through generous giving. The specific objective of the generosity month was to raise funds that would help in student outreach activities and maintenance of SCOM National Secretariat office in Lilongwe. The activity targeted to raise MK10,000,000 and MK4,988,700 was raised through individual contributions and dinner tickets. The shortfall could be attributed to the fact that this was happening for the first time and there was inadequate awareness and publicity.

The generosity month was crowned with a thanksgiving dinner on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at Sunbird Lilongwe Hotel. 25 people attended the dinner and some of the notable people were Hon. Owen Chomanika MP., Principal Secretary Dr. Esmie Kainja, Principal Secretary for Economic Planning and

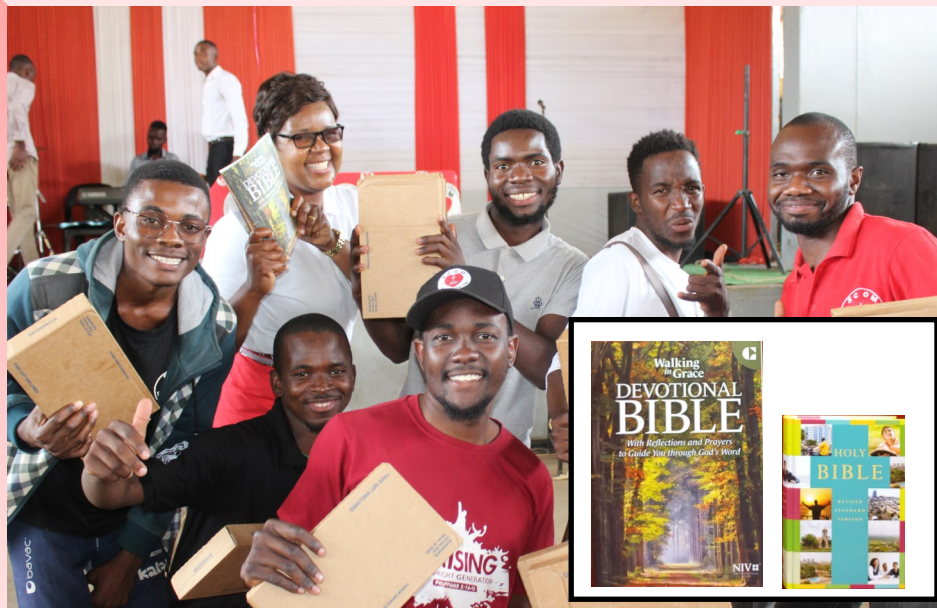
Development Dr. Jacob Mazalale, Deputy General Secretary for the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, Rev. Jaleck Kachipanda, SCOM National Executive Committee Chairperson Dr. Felix Lombe and many more. The program, which involved speeches, a documentary and fellowship over dinner, was directed by Mr. Martin Kalima.



**The SCOM office in Lilongwe under renovations with resources from the generosity month**

# SCOM Donates Bibles to students

SCOM's second aim is to deepen the spiritual of students through Prayer, Bible Study, and Worship. To ensure that students have access to the Word of God for personal study, SCOM started distributing Bibles in October 2024, to both secondary school and college students with support from World Vision International and Light of Scriptures (Israel) who donated 600 and NIV study Bibles and 8,000 RSV Bibles respectively. The NIV study Bibles were being distributed to college students while the RSV Bibles were being distributed to secondary school students. SCOM is grateful to WVI and Light of Scriptures for the donation which came at the right time when demand for Bibles was already high among students.





# 2024 - 2025 SCOM THEME LAUNCHED

The 2024 to 2025 SCOM national theme was launched in a spectacular fashion on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Bwila secondary school. The theme “Pressing on Towards the Goal” was taken from Philippians 3:13 – 14: ***“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” - (NIV).*** The theme aims at challenging complacency and mediocrity which are so prevalent among many believers, and encouraging SCOM members at all levels to pursue excellence in every area of life as they strive to achieve their spiritual, academic, and professional goals.

The main event on this day was scheduled in the morning hours where the invited guest of honor was the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Greshan Ruben. Students from surrounding secondary schools and universities in the city of Lilongwe, SCOM associates, Secretariat staff and representatives from partner organizations like African Enterprise attended the event. Key activities on this day



8



Part of the audience during the launch



# SCOM theme launch and open day

 7

included student displays speeches, and Bible distribution for the morning part whereas the afternoon session was marked by various sporting activities between students and associates and staff to encourage maximum interaction between and among them.

The key note address was given by Dr. Felix Lombe, the SCOM National Executive Committee Chairperson. He challenged the delegates that those who know the power of Christ cannot easily be discouraged in face of challenges as they pursue their goals. He emphasized that challenges are opportunities where the greatness of God is manifested.

In her remarks, the General secretary of SCOM, Madame Ellen Napala, said that SCOM is interdenominational, bible based, student oriented, and evangelical. Being a student focused organization, SCOM does its things in order, promotes academic excellence, and encourages good conduct among its members. She appealed to SCOM members to desist from inviting speakers that disregard the

school rules and the interdenominational nature of SCOM. She however, lamented the lowering standards of education which, to some extent, makes it difficult for SCOM to effectively deliver its messages to students as many students have problems understanding English yet SCOM materials are in English.

Taking his turn, the guest of honor acknowledged the great job that SCOM is doing in complementing the Ministry of Education in transforming the lives of students, adding that most of the well-behaved students in schools are affiliated to faith-based organizations such as SCOM. He encouraged SCOM to maintain its identity and heart of not wanting to be served but to serve. Quoting Mark 10:35 – 45, he called upon SCOM to keep doing good always as an assignment from God.

At the end of everything, the organizing chairperson of the event Mr. Steven Banda, thanked everyone for their commitment, availability, and support.



Part of the audience during the launch



Guest of honor along with SCOM National Executive Committee chairperson distributing bibles to students



Various sporting disciplines were on the card in the afternoon



# Associates Gather in Mangochi for ASCO 2024

**S**COM Associates Conference (ASCO) 2024 was one of the highly attended in over five years. Held along the lake in Mangochi, the gathering attracted 268 (69 female 199 male) Associates from different generations. The conference was held from October 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Malawi College of Fisheries, under the theme 'Pressing on towards the goal.'

Apart from preaching and Bible study on the theme, other topics tackled during the conference were: 'Dealing with life issues/ challenges: Loving the God we don't Understand' (by Mr. B.B.C. Nyirenda), Kingdom Living: Spirit of Excellence 360 degree (by Dr. Frank Dalitso Chozenga), Effectiveness in Youth Ministry (by the SCOM GS, Mrs. Ellen Napala) and Unquenchable Quest: Pressing Towards the Goal (by the former SCOM GS, Mr. Patrick Kaudzu). The thematic message was handled by Pastor Mapunda Ngwira, while the Bible Study was facilitated by Mr. Herbert Mwalukomo. Other activities included recreation, Singles and marriage seminars and presentations from the Secretariat and the three operating arms of SCOM namely: Students and Associates Outreach, Resources Mobilization and Social Development.

Total expenditure for the whole conference was MK10,927,500.00 against the overall budget of MK11,301,000.00.





# Social DEVELOPMENT

## 2663 TREES PLANTED DURING CREATION CARE SEASON

• **Chitipa zone, the most resourceful & planted highest number**

Tree planting is one of the activities under SCOM's Creation Care Program. Every year, from January to March, SCOM carries out different activities that aim at coordinating the collective efforts of SCOM members at all levels in fulfilling their divine mandate as stewards of God's creation. The 2024 creation care season supported SCOM's annual theme, "Raising an Upright Generation," by instilling in the hearts of students and Associates values of responsibility and compassion towards the environment. A total of 2663 tree seedlings were planted in Lilongwe, Mzuzu, and Chitipa with Chitipa emerging as the most resourceful zone having planted the highest number of trees (1746). The tree seedlings were donated by the Lilongwe City Assembly, Chitipa District Forestry Office and some

individual Associates.

SCOM's 2024 Creation Care season commenced with an active participation of staff and Associates in the Lilongwe City Assembly Tree Planting Exercise along with other stakeholders from the public and private sectors within the city. The exercise took place around the Area 18 Interchange and along Presidential Highway on 26 January 2024. In fulfillment of SCOM commitment to raise a generation that appreciates and cares for God's creation, the Social Development Coordinator, Mr. Madalitso Bula, exhorted to students who participated in the tree planting exercises to not only plant trees, but also ensure that the trees were properly taken care of. He quoted Genesis 2: 15 which says, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (NIV) and challenged students that the exercise of planting trees started with God. He said that God made sure He had created a complete eco system which could support man's life. Therefore, the duty given to man was to work and care for what was already planted. But due to human bad practices, the ecosystem has been disrupted and it will take humans to care for and restore the environment to its original state.

Headteachers in the schools where trees were planted were very thankful to SCOM for the initiative. During the planting exercise at Nchesi CDSS, the head teacher was happy to see that there were fruit trees among the seedlings. Taking a nutrition point of view, the headteacher said that children in the city do not easily have enough fruits unless they are bought from the market. Their school, she said, receive many less privileged students who, in future, will benefit from the fruits.



A teacher takes her time to get involved in the tree planting exercise



# SCOM PCI PROJECT EXIT BUNDA

Since 2019 SCOM has been implementing a project titled 'Transforming Students' Lives Through Educational Support' at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) Bunda Campus. Presbyterian Church in Ireland supported the project with a grant of 4500 pound every year for four years. A total of 20 less privileged students benefited from the grant from their first to fourth years. The project was designed to increase the proportion of students with access to affordable meals and accommodation. Apart from meals and accommodation the project had a skills development component within which equipped the students with skills for survival on campus and after campus.

As the beneficiaries were coming to the end of their studies SCOM organised an exit workshop which took place on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Its objective was to equip the students with skills for life after campus. Key topics tackled included, emotional intelligence, career progression and entrepreneurship, and preparing for a lasting marriage.

In his opening statement, the Bunda Student Council President, Praise Izinza Mwale emphasized on analyzing and identifying all available resources in the university campus. He said that students need to bear in mind that the university campus, being an academic institution, also provides students with opportunities to exercise their skills. He was quick to point at business opportunities that the campus environment provides. Mr. Duncan Chiyani who facilitated the Practical Christian Living session pivoted his presentation around Jeremiah 4 where the Israelites in exile were given false hopes for a soon return to Jerusalem. However, a true word from God was that they were to stay in exile for a longer period and therefore needed to be practical in their day-to-day affairs to sustain their long stay. He said life is about practical living. During the Emotional Intelligence session, Mr. Chikondi Chabakha posited that fellowship or relationships are very key in life. How we treat each other today matters in future as could be seen in 2 Samuel 9. In this bible passage, Mephibosheth was crippled but ended up living in the king's palace because King David wanted to return favor to someone for the favors he received back in his life.

Mrs. Ellen Napala finalized the sessions with a discussion that the purposes of marriage are, companionship, procreation, creating a conducive environment for raising of Godly children and to demonstrate the relationship between God and man. It was therefore pointed out that mistakes made when choosing a marriage partner could be very detrimental to the fulfilment of God's purpose for marriage in one's life.

The project made a significant impact in the lives of the students both socially and academically. For example, there was a general improvement in the overall academic performance of the students. The other impact made was the notable change in behavior and lifestyles among the beneficiaries as some of them found Christ along the way and also as a result of skills development workshops. For example, after going through the survival on campus skills, one student was motivated into do more in entrepreneurial initiatives and in the process, he became self-reliant and asked to have his place given to another deserving student.

The contribution which the project has made in the lives of those who benefited from it was very significant and life transforming, and it helped to lessen the burden of the university office of having to look for sponsors for deserving less privileged students. This was confirmed by Mr. Ntholo, a Warden who represented the institution at the capacity building and exit workshop




Group photo of some of the participants after the exit workshop



# Campus Testimony

# My Journey with SCOM

## Yamikani Pasiya



I am writing to share my heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable support SCOM provided me throughout my university journey all the way from my second year through fourth year. Before SCOM's assistance which was funded by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), my academic pursuits were heavily burdened by financial constraints. The constant worry about affording rent and meals significantly impacted my focus and academic performance.

SCOM's generous support alleviated this immense pressure, allowing me to dedicate myself fully to my studies. The consistent assistance with rent not only ensured I had a stable living environment but also provided me with the necessary nourishment for sustained academic effort.

The impact of SCOM's support extends beyond the financial. It instilled in me a sense of hope and belief in myself. Knowing that I had the support of SCOM empowered me to overcome academic challenges and strive for excellence. I am confident that the opportunities provided by SCOM have played a crucial role in my successful graduation.

I am deeply grateful for the transformative impact of SCOM's support on my life. I am now a graduate with second class(credit), equipped with the knowledge and skills to contribute positively to society.



# 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                   |
| Standard Bank<br>Capital City | National Bank<br>Lilongwe | National Bank<br>Lilongwe |

MPAMBA: 0887208016

## UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Creation Care Season
2. Annual secondary school student conferences – 10 to 14 April
3. 4 Regional University Students Conferences – Between April and June
4. SCOM PCI Regional Leadership Conferences
5. National Generosity Month (resource mobilization) - May
6. School Leavers' Retreats—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.

# APPRECIATION

SCOM is grateful to all partner organizations, Associates (within and outside Malawi), Churches, and other well-wishers for their financial, material and intellectual support which enabled SCOM to carry out its operations and achieve most of its planned activities for the past one year. Of special mention are the following:

- i. Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) for the LUANAR - Bunda campus project.
- ii. Mourne Presbyterian Church for the Chaplaincy project at Livingstonia.
- iii. Capital City Baptist Church – consistent financial contribution towards secretariat operations
- iv. Transworld Radio – donation of airtime for the inside SCOM Program
- v. African Enterprise – Support towards Conferences in Lilongwe.
- vi. Nkhoma University – Support towards Lilongwe Conference
- vii. Future Vision – support towards conferences in the Eastern Region.
- viii. World Vision Malawi – financial support towards 18 conferences across Malawi and donation of 600 NIV Study Bibles.
- ix. Reach Out for Christ (ROC) – financial support towards Neno conference.
- x. Operation Mobilization – support towards the UCS Conference in the Southern Region.
- xi. Light of Scriptures (Israel) – donation of 8000 RSV Bibles.
- xii. Evangelical Association of Malawi – sponsorship for Executive Leadership Training for secretariat staff.
- xiii. Lilongwe City Assembly – donation of tree seedlings for the Creation Care season
- xiv. Chitipa District Forestry Office – donation of tree seedlings



**SCOM Office**  
P.O Box 657 Lilongwe  
+265 887 208016



**Tsabango Road, Chilinde 1,**  
**Plot No 21/1795**  
**scommalawi@gmail.com**  
**www.scommalawi.org**

