

Paul, Elisha (1925–2017)

ROZAMA

Rozama was born at Tahan, Kalay Town, Upper Myanmar. He received a B.A. in religion from Myaungmya Adventist Seminary and an M.A. in education from Adventist International Institute of Advance Studies, Philippines. He has served as a pastor and evangelist, Sabbath School/Personal Ministries director, and executive secretary in the Upper Myanmar Mission. He and his wife Vanlalthani have four grown-up children.

Elisha Paul was an Adventist pastor, evangelist, and administrator in Myanmar.

Early Life, Education, and Marriage

Elisha Paul was born at Shwedaw Village, Taungngu District, Bagu Region, Central Myanmar, on April 24, 1925. His parents were Paul Myet Mai and Ruby. The family lived at Tungyin Village for much of Elisha Paul's life. He had six brothers and six sisters. The Karen language was his mother tongue, but Elisha Paul also learned to speak Burmese and English. He was baptized in 1940.¹

Elisha Paul attended high school and passed the 9th standard at Taungu Town, Bagu Region, Central Myanmar in 1942.² He continued his education at Myaungmya Adventist Seminary in 1960 and 1961, where he earned a ministerial certificate for ministry.³

On May 10, 1953, Elisha Paul married Ma Phyu, a nurse who was born at Shwe-daw Village, Hpa-An Township, Karen State, South East Myanmar, on January 27, 1925. She was baptized in 1938. Ma Phyu also taught school. They had five children, a daughter, Naw Ruby Paul, and four sons, Saw Kapaw Htoo, Saw Kapaw Say, Dwight Paul, and Kennedy Paul. They also adopted a son named Saw David Paul.⁴

Ministry

Elisha Paul began his career on January 1, 1954, as an evangelist at Shwe-nyaung-bin Village in Central Myanmar. At the time, the Central Mission and the Upper Myanmar Mission were combined into one mission. In 1956-1957, he was transferred to Kywe-phyu-daung in the same mission, and in 1958 he moved yet again to Taungu. Elisha Paul returned to Myaungmya to further his education in 1959-1960. It was in January 1959 that Elisha Paul conducted evangelistic meeting in Kokkogone Village near Toungoo, in which nine out of eleven candidates were baptized.⁵

In 1961, Elisha Paul moved to Taungu where he served until 1964. He was ordained as a minister of the gospel on January 12, 1963.⁶ At Burma Union High School, located in Kyauktaing near Taungoo, Elisha Paul baptized a

total of thirty-eight students.⁷ In 1965, he served as evangelist in Myitkyina, Kachin State, in Upper Myanmar. He moved to Tedim, Chin State, in 1966 where he served as Chin Hills director.⁸ It was also in 1966 that, by the direction of P. A. Parker, Elisha Paul visited a Buddhist monk, Aye Pe, residing in Win Tho Village near Katha Town, Kachin State. Their meeting resulted in the Buddhist monk and several others, taking off their yellow robes as they accepted Christ's salvation and were baptized into the Adventist Church. Aye Pe later became a colporteur in Rangoon.⁹

In 1967, Elisha Paul became president of the Upper Burma Section.¹⁰ The following year, he transferred to the South East Mission where he also served as president until 1973.¹¹ This appointment was made at for Tenasserim Section during the December 16-17, 1968 in the Burma Union constituency session held in Rangoon.¹² It was in 1973 that Elisha Paul reported baptizing ninety-four people in the Upper Myanmar Mission, among them were a fortune teller, a hospital matron, and members of the Hakka tribe of the Chin State.¹³ In January 1974 he returned to the Upper Myanmar Mission as president. His tenure lasted until December 1976.¹⁴ From January 1977 to June 1978, Elisha Paul worked in Kyauktaing Village, Central Myanmar Mission, until June 1978.¹⁵

Later Life

At the age of 52, after twenty-four years of active service, Elisha Paul retired on July 1, 1978,¹⁶ while he was at Kyauktaing, Taungngu District, Central Myanmar Mission. He passed away on June 23, 2017, in Tungyin Village at the base of Mount Zwaykapin, Pa-An Township, Pagu Region, Myanmar.¹⁷

Legacy

Elisha Paul's commitment to the church in Myanmar left a significant legacy. To establish churches in certain frontier areas, he walked miles on foot. In the history of Adventism in Myanmar, approaching a Buddhist monk is rare; however, Elisha Paul not only conversed with monks in their monastery, but baptized several of them. Elisha Paul truly loved people for Jesus Christ's sake.

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NOTES

1. Ruby Paul, daughter of Elisha Paul, interview by author, October 10, 2017.
2. Ibid.
3. Worker Service Record of Elisha Paul, Union Adventist Seminary (MUAS) Academic File (1961), Myaungmya, Myanmar.
4. Worker Service Record of Elisha Paul, File of the Employing Organization, Myanmar Union Mission.
5. P. A. Parker, "How We Solved Our Kokkogone Problem," *Southern Asia Tidings*, May 15, 1959, 5-6.
6. Burma Union Committee Minutes, Action No. 62-104; 63-5; "Six Ordained in Burma," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1963, 2.
7. P. A. Parker, "Toungoo Treasures for God," *Southern Asia Tidings*, February 1, 1963, 7.
8. *Worker Service Record*, File of the Employing Organization, Myanmar Union Mission.
9. P. A. Parker, "VOP Wins Buddhist Priest," *Southern Asia Tidings*, August 1966, 3.
10. Burma Union Committee Minutes, (Voted 1967-6); "Upper Burma Section," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1968), 221.
11. Burma Union Committee Minutes, Action No. 68-260; 70-278.
12. "Section officers appointed at the Burma Union constituency session held, December 16 and 17..." *Southern Asia Tidings*, February 1969, 15.
13. "Burma Combined Committees," *Southern Asia Tidings*, September 1973, 12.

14. Burma Union Committee Minutes, Action No. 73-247.

15. Worker Service Record of Elisha Paul, File of the Employing Organization, Myanmar Union Mission.

16. Ibid.

17. Ruby Paul, daughter of Elisha Paul, interview by author, October 10, 2017.

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