Mbuti, Zakayo Kusekwa (1928–1999)

ELIZABETH GEORGE KUSEKWA

Elizabeth George Kusekwa

Zakayo Kusekwa Mbuti was a frontline pastor, field publishing director, and Tanzania Union Mission publishing director.
Birth and Family

Zakayo Kusekwa Mbuti was born July 15, 1928, in Nasa-Ihojo village, Magu-Mwanza, and died July 18, 1999, at the age of 71. His father was Mbuti Ntogwashenji and his mother was Milembe Bushimbe. He was the second born of eight siblings. The others were Malunja, Kubunga, Manota, Buya, Maleba, Mudo, and Ntuji. He was born into the largest tribe in Tanzania, the Sukuma, which comprises about 16 percent of the country’s total population.

Kusekwa married Elizabeth Manugwa who passed away early in their marriage, leaving him with young children. Later on, in the 1970s, he married Tezira Nkondo. God blessed them with ten children in total: George, Rebecca, Dorcas, Elizabeth, Mesha, Ngole, Mbuti, Milembe, Salyungu, and Robert.

Education

Pastor Kusekwa attended Nyambitilwa Primary School in Bunda district from October 1942 to 1946. His first teachers were Samson Shuli and Petro Masenge. In October 1946, he went to Ikizu Middle School from which he graduated in 1951. While studying there he was baptized by Pastor Joram Kamwendo from Malawi. In 1952 he attended the Ikizu Teachers Training College. On October 7, 1953, Pastor Kusekwa graduated as a qualified teacher with other graduates, including Pastor Elisha Okeyo.

In 1960 Pastor Kusekwa took a course in ministerial service from Bugema Adventist College, Uganda. In 1966 he attended Solusi University in Zimbabwe.

An Enthusiastic Teacher and Evangelist

On February 7, 1954, Pastor Kusekwa started working as a teacher-evangelist in the church school at Lagangabilili in Bariadi district. He motivated the people and church members to build a school and church roofed with iron sheets. This work was done voluntarily by the people. On February 2, 1959, Pastor Kusekwa ventured into the town of Mwanza and opened several branch Sabbath Schools. Those branches included Butimba Prison, Mwanza-South, Nygezi, Mahina, Igogo, Mabatini, Airport, Kayenze, Bwiru, Butimba TTC, Kisesa, and many others. His companion in this mission was Pastor Godson Elienezza.

On July 8, 1963, Pastor Kusekwa was ordained to the gospel ministry. The ordination service was conducted by Pastor Robert Pearson, the Trans-Africa Division president. Pastor Kusekwa was a gifted speaker and evangelist to believers and non-believers. The following were some of the evangelistic meetings he participated in.

He was involved as a team member in city evangelism conducted by two well-known evangelists—Pastor Fares Muganda in 1961 and Pastor Earl Cleveland in 1963. The latter engineered the beginning of the Magomeni Church in Dar es Salaam.

In 1981 Pastor Kusekwa worked in the town of Bariadi, where his efforts brought light into the hearts of his hearers and many surrendered their lives to Christ.

In 1989 Pastor Kusekwa preached in Tarime town, where 2,500 souls were won to Christ, with 400 of them coming from a Roman Catholic background. Dr. Daniel Fariji Mtango (health ministry director of Tanzania Union) witnessed such tremendous power of the gospel preaching, he said, that after one Lutheran church elder was baptized, he brought ten other people with him to be baptized.

From May to June 1990, Pastor Kusekwa preached in Shinyanga town. More than 1,000 people were baptized. Dr. Robert Taylor (Tanzania Union Mission president) donated 1,500 Bibles and 1,500 sets of Bible lessons. Under the leadership of Joseph Bohole, about 2,121 became involved in the study of the Bible. As a result, more than half of them were baptized.

In July 1992 in Kahama town, Pastor Kusekwa conducted a three-week evangelistic meeting and 446 souls were baptized. Two of them were Roman Catholic priests, seven were police officers, and seven were Muslim Sheikhs.

A Powerful Leader in Publishing Ministry

Pastor Kusekwa was also known as a successful leader of literature evangelists in Tanzania. Pastor Steve Bina said Pastor Zakayo Kusekwa had a passion for the work he did and he never settled for less than his best. He knew his work and loved it and its results were seen. He left a legacy in the publishing work in Tanzania.

Dr. Mpoki M. Ulisubisya, an ambassador of Tanzania to Canada, said, “I remember him as a committed servant of the Lord that had so much zeal for the Publishing Ministry that the ministry was almost synonymous with his big name. He was a good motivational speaker; he sang the best songs on Publishing Ministry with pathos and conviction in the Master he served.”

In 1986 Tanzania General Field sent Elder Yohana Lukwaro to Zanzibar as a literature evangelist. Elder Kusekwa maintained regular communication with him. In 1989 Elder Lukwaro had to come back from Zanzibar. So Elder Ibrahim Alex Juma was sent from Mwanza to Zanzibar to replace him. Elder Juma met a lot of challenges in this Muslim land, but Pastor Zakayo Kusekwa encouraged him to persevere and not give up. Elder Juma said Pastor Kusekwa loved soul winning any time, and the first person was baptized secretly during the night time by Pastor
Pastor Zakayo Kusekwa never discriminated against anyone in the literature ministry. He loved them all from the bottom of his heart. His house in Arusha was frequently filled with literature evangelists who came to visit him. He also visited them in their homes. Amina Kikula, a retired literature evangelist, said when Pastor Kusekwa visited his home in Dar es Salaam one time, he ate with them, which made an everlasting impact on him and his wife. He loved people the way they were. In addition to his ability to sell books, he was a prolific writer. He wrote such books as: *Mwongozo Katika Matengenezo ya Aifya na Ulaji wa Nyama* (Guidance on Healthy Reformations and Meat-eating), *Sayansi ya Kikristo ya uuzaji wa vitabu* (Christian Science on Selling Books), *Visa Na Matendo ya Wainjilisti Wa Vitabu* (Testimonies and Acts of the Literature Evangelists).

He led the publishing department for more than 30 years: Tanzania General Field (1960-1963; 1968-1971), Majita-Ukerewe Field (1964-1965), South Nyanza Field (1972-1974), and Tanzania Union Mission (1975-1995). Because of his hard work, he was nicknamed *Scania*. He organized meetings and conducted many seminars to equip literature evangelists throughout the country. His frequent seminars were designed to inspire and motivate the literature evangelist army. He empathized and sympathized with the literature evangelists and he always encouraged them to move on. The literature evangelists were equipped with skills in selling and in winning souls, and with knowledge in the Spirit of Prophecy and other topics. One of the most remembered meetings was the one in Dodoma in 1976. It was attended by more than 600 literature evangelists from all over Tanzania and publishing department leaders from the General Conference to the local level.

Pastor Kusekwa will be remembered for his visionary leadership in the establishment of a Literature Ministry Seminary in Mwanza (cost Tsh. 34 million) whose foundation stone was laid by R. L. McKee, the General Conference associate publishing director on October 29, 1989, and which was inaugurated on September 26, 1993, by Pastor Campos, General Conference publishing department director. Since the seminary never progressed as was intended, the union sold the building to the South Nyanza Conference.

Later Years

Pastor Kusekwa officially retired on February 28, 1996, after 41 years of service. His last presentation was to the 1995 Tanzania Union Session. He narrated the story of the development of the church from its beginning to the time of his retirement. He courageously read 2 Timothy 4:7-8, NIV: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” He commended the efforts of his beloved wife, who was his secretary.

In January 1996 Pastor Zakayo Kusekwa Mbuti shifted from Arusha to Mwanza, residing in Nundu in Nyakato area. He was busy in different activities within and outside the church until he rested in the Lord, due to cancer, on July 18, 1999. He was laid to rest on July 21, 1999, on the Nyakato Seventh-day Adventist Church premises in Mwanza. Pastor Joshua Kajula, publishing director and ministerial secretary of the union, conducted the funeral service. He commended Pastor Kusekwa as a hero who defended his faith and was committed to God’s work with his whole heart.

Sources

*ARH*, September 13, 1990.


Notes


4.


17. Hoschele.

18. Elisha.
