

Munuki Adventist Clinic

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Munuki Adventist Clinic was established in Juba, South Sudan, in 1981. Dr. Jerald Whitehouse was the founder of Munuki Clinic.

Brief History

The history of Munuki Adventist Clinic begins with the South Sudanese refugees of the first civil war who went to Uganda from 1960 to 1972. They included Fulgensio Ida Okayo who had studied at Masaka Technical School. While there he read the Bible twice between 1974 and 1975. His study of the Bible led him to discover the seventh-day Sabbath and he began to observe it. In the meantime, he looked for people who worshiped on that day and began to worship with them.

At about the same time, Dr. Macal Stores, a Canadian professor at Makere University, sponsored a group of South Sudanese young people to attend Bugema Adventist College (now university). They included Aventore Amure Bilal, John Itto Yanga, Muktar Ismail, Sarah Mure, John Jino, Savia Ogiza, Gordon Morjan, and Laurence Al-Haj. Some of these students also discovered the Bible truth and began to observe it.¹ God continued to work in different ways through the two exile groups until they went back home with the gospel message.²

The Addis Ababa peace agreement was signed in 1972 and many Sudanese people returned home in order to rebuild their country. From 1975 to early 1976, Fulgensio Okayo also returned home with the qualification of a technical school teacher, and he was assigned to teach at Wau Technical Institute. When he started working at the school, he also organized family worship on Sabbath in his house at Loa, and his students Okwera George and Okwera Charles Okuka met with him. The involvement of his students in worshiping with him on Sabbath resulted in his transfer from Wau Technical Institute to Torit Technical Institute. At Torit Technical Institute, Okayo did the same thing. He met with a number of young people who listened to his teaching and joined him in observing the Sabbath. These included John Moi, Kennedy Labuke, and Oluka Drakion.

In like manner, the students who had studied at Bugema Adventist College were meeting in a house for Bible study and worship in Juba. These included John Itto Yanga, Sarah Mure, Savia Ogiza, Stephen Reach Chol, and Aventore Bilal. He then influenced some of his students who joined him in keeping the Sabbath.

Mr. Okayo continued to lead the two groups (at Loa, and Juba) who worshipped in houses, and at the same time he corresponded with Church leaders such as Thomas Staples, Pastor Lusingu, and Yusuf Farak of the Afro-Middle East office who sent books to help support the two groups. These small groups would eventually emerge and form the work force of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the country, serving as pastors, physicians, administrators, and in many other capacities.

Founding of Munuki Adventist Clinic

On September 22, 1979, Pastor David Ogillo from Tanzania arrived in Juba as a missionary to support and guide the small group. He began conducting Bible studies with the group to empower and equip them. Eventually he held the first evangelistic meeting in Juba in 1980.

In December 1980, Dr. Jerald Whitehouse, who became the founder of Munuki Clinic, arrived in Juba. His wife, Judy, a registered nurse, and their three daughters followed him and arrived in May 1981. The small group, made up of the families of Pastor David Ogillo, Fulgensio Ida Okayo, and Dr. Jerald Whitehouse, formed the initial team that founded Munuki Adventist Clinic. Judy Whitehouse served as a nurse. Charles Whitter was recruited to serve as an accountant, and Peter Yugu became the medical storekeeper.³

Jerald and Judy Whitehouse worked as a team, first beginning clinical services in order to reach the surrounding community.⁴ They used the biblical method and advice from the Spirit of Prophecy, and they upheld the Adventist wholistic health approach. They trusted in the power of the Word of God that heals the hopeless, restores those who are weak, and make them whole. Guided by biblical principles and the Holy Spirit, the Whitehouses began their mission through Christ-like living, serving, teaching, and treating those who were in the surrounding community.

They first treated those who were working on the construction site which had been given to the church. Dr. John and Linda Sines led the construction team. There was no advertising of the medical services, but people learned by word of mouth. The target was to serve 60 people a day, but many times there were more than that.⁵ The medical service began in a rented house, was moved to a garage, and finally moved to a clinic. Dr. Whitehouse believed in a ministry of healing and restoring people to wholeness as was carried out by Jesus. "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them 'Follow Me.'"⁶

The Whitehouses envisioned that the humble work of the clinic would help them reach the community and open windows for mission. They wanted to serve the spiritual, physical, mental, and social needs of the people. They believed that "The peace which Christ alone can impart would restore vigor to the mind and health to the body."

⁷ In his rented home at Nimira Talata, Dr. Whitehouse began to treat and care for the sick and created

relationships with families, friends, and community as a means of providing the social support which is essential to human health.⁸ He also taught his patients to avoid practices which were harmful to them and use in moderation things which were good.

History of Munuki Adventist Clinic

In March 1981 the Whitehouse family moved from the house in which the clinic was operating in Nimira Talata, to the 17-acre plot of land in Munuki, block one, given by the regional government to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Here the medical work was begun. In May 1981 the first patients came to the multipurpose building which had been turned into a clinic. The number of visiting patients increased daily. Charles Okwera Okuka, who was trained at the Kendu Bay Hospital in Kenya, served as laboratory technician. There were times when the Whitehouse daughters assisted until more nurses were hired. Florence Dada and Catherine Moi, who had been trained in Kampala, joined the staff. Hillary Geraty Ogwong took medical histories, translated, and assisted in the examination room. Eventually additional workers were hired: Elizabeth Keji, Caesar Sikia Didi, and Philip Kay Moi (husband to Catherine) became cashiers and assisted with ordering medical supplies. Later, Dr. Mary Anne McNeilus and her husband Marnelle and their sons joined the team as relief physicians. They came for two-month sessions to support the feeding program for malnourished children and to assist with medical needs in the clinic.⁹

Chris Savage, a nurse, and Dr. Kenneth Sturdevant and his wife, Evelyn, were part of the team which joined them. A British professor from Juba University, Beatrice Gune, assisted, as did Jeanne Yamashiro. John Lubari was an efficient and capable receptionist and medical records keeper. One of the notable patients treated was Filly Geraty Ugwong, a Ugandan, who was helped at Nirmira Talata, where the clinic work began in a rented house. She was hired as a translator and examining room assistant. The need for medical services kept escalating. A waiting room hut was built adjacent to the clinic to give shade to the large number of patients who arrived at the clinic at dawn. Dr. Jerald Whitehouse began to work in the new building in May 1982, and there he was able to arrange pharmaceuticals in the newly painted shelves, according to Judy Whitehouse.¹⁰

Prior to the clinic hours each day, Charles Okwera Okuka would arrange the patients so that the most urgent cases would be seen first. He would distribute 60 numbered blocks, and those who didn't receive a block would have to return another day. The constancy of the neonatal tetanus epidemic led to the decision to allow mothers with tiny babies to stay in the waiting room overnight. Timothy, the faithful night watchman, would awaken the mothers during the night to give sedatives and breast milk, via a nose gastric tube, to their infants; and due to God's power, a large percentage of those babies survived. The malnutrition and dehydration of so many children necessitated building another building. The Mother Child Health (MCH) house of feeding was headed by Alba Okwera. Regina Okwera and Raffaila Okayo faithfully cleaned both the clinic building and the MCH.¹¹

After the clinic was finished, the work intensified, so the following local people were employed to lead out in the work: Florence Zachariah, a nurse from Uganda; Catherine Philip, also from Uganda; Alba Agal Okwera, a nutrition assistant; John Lubari, a receptionist who was later trained to become a laboratory assistant; Betty Achan, cashier and receptionist; Philip Leju Andrew, medical storekeeper and cashier; Oliver Soma, laboratory technician; Professor Woodroof from Juba University, Dr. Tony, and Dr. Micay volunteered in the clinic; Rafa Bhakit, a janitor; Regina Anyek, cook; Susan Gune, laboratory assistant; Beatrice Gune, laboratory trainee; and Elizabeth Musono, cook. In March 1985 Filipino nurse, Yolanda Aaron, replaced Judy Whitehouse as nurse and manager of the clinic. In September 1985 the Whitehouse family adopted orphan twins, Rebecca and Rakilly, from the local community when they took a permanent return home.¹²

The clinic experienced a change in administration from 1986 to 1988, when the missionaries left due to the escalating civil war in the country, according to an interview with Pastor Milla Longa, who himself served as manager and storekeeper with the help of two medical assistants from the government.¹³

Dr. Mincay took the place of Dr. Whitehouse when the civil war escalated and the missionaries were evacuated. Dr. Mincay was assisted by local Sudanese, Catherine Moi and Florence Dada, who had been nurses in the clinic since the time of Dr. Whitehouse. There were also non-Adventist personnel who worked at the clinic.¹⁴ Charles Okwera Okuka worked as a laboratory technician until 1985 and he was assisted by John Lubari. Mr. Lubari first worked as a receptionist before he was trained as a laboratory technician. Later, Beatrice Gune also served as laboratory technician along with Charles Okwera Okuka. When Okwera was fully occupied by pastoral work, Dr. Ceasar Hezekiah Dada Sikia, who was trained as a medical assistant from Malawi, had finished his studies and returned around September 1987; he worked as medical assistant in charge of the clinic. After Caesar many government medical assistants worked at the clinic. They included Benjamin Amoko and Luka, who became the longest serving medical personnel at Munuki Adventist Clinic.¹⁵

Later on, Rubano Oliha, Evaristo Otego, Daniel Christopher Loguya, and Isaac Bunduki served as clinical officers from 1994 to 1997; while Rose Nabian and Hellen Mereny served as nurses, Tabitha Abusai served as a laboratory technician, Manash served as pharmacist, Clement Koma served as cashier and medical storekeeper, Rejina Anyek worked as a janitor, and Adil Elias and Paul Izaru served as administrators of the clinic, according to a report by Clement Koma.¹⁶

Work of ADRA at the Clinic (2005-2014)

Prior to the arrival of peace in 2005, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) moved its headquarters to Juba and became involved in running some projects to support the clinic. The agency did this until South Sudan received her independence on July 9, 2011. One of the projects they ran was Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health, centered at the Munuki Clinic. The program was designed to educate, train, test,

counsel, and treat youth regarding sexual diseases. It was funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and was officially launched by His Excellency, Michael Laila Daudi, Minister of Health, Central Equatoria State, at the clinic on December 2, 2008. The people who ran the program were James Voya, project manager, and Joseline Foni, clinical officer. They conducted outreach, disseminated information, and provided services on reproductive health. Through the program, adolescents and youth were provided with information that helped them to avoid risky behavior associated with sexuality. The program is perceived to have lowered maternal mortality, helped the young people to know their status, and assisted those who were found with disease to get timely treatment.¹⁷ The ADRA leader at that time was Clement Joseph Arkangelo, associate country director, and the team he worked with included Emmanuel Chigogora and Eric Owusu. Clement was replaced by Awadia Ogillo who served as associate country director; Cliff Momanyi, finance director; Becky Giraff, program director; and Isaac Bunduki, health coordinator.¹⁸

Historical Role of Munuki Adventist Clinic

Munuki Adventist Clinic is known for conducting excellent laboratory services around Juba and serving the community with Christlike sympathy and affordable services. Many hospitals, including Juba Teaching Hospital, refer patients to the clinic. This was reinforced by the arrival of Dr. Ellen Valenciano, who specialized in internal medicine;¹⁹ and two young men, James Kawesa, who was a clinical nurse, and Charles Okello Dickens, a lab technician; and Flora Luko, who served as a janitor beginning in March 2015.²⁰ Helen Prisky replaced Flora.²¹ Helen served for a short time and was replaced by Victoria Dawa Samson who is still working there.²²

It was during this time that the sign for the clinic labeled it “Munuki Adventist Medical Center.” On July 14, 2016, Dr. Ellen and James Kawesa left Juba due to a conflict. However, Charles Okello Dickens, a laboratory technician, remained active in his service and continues there. Victoria Dawa Samson also continues at the clinic as janitor. When James Kawesi left, Greater Equatoria Field (GEF) administrators replaced him with a young man, Francis Limo, who serves as registration clerk and manager of the clinic. Rapa Lenin Quinto served as a nurse from 2017 to early 2018.²³ The annual report for 2018 shows the number of outpatients to be 1,602, which reflects an average of five patients daily.²⁴

Outlook of the Munuki Adventist Clinic

With the increasing population of the city of Juba, the clinic has great potential for increased ministry. Nevertheless, it will need trained personnel and a modern building that matches the rest of the clinics in the area. Even though there are several large hospitals and clinics around Juba, many patients still prefer to go to Munuki Adventist Clinic. There needs to be a fulltime doctor and an expanded maternity ward and dental services to meet the needs of the community.

List of Clinic Leaders

Dr. Jerald Whitehouse (1981-1986), Pastor Milla Longa with the support of the following medical personnel: Dr. Micay, Charles Okwera Okuka, and Dr. Ceasar Dada Sikia (1987-1993); Rubano Oiha (1993-1994); William Kabi Oliver (1994-1997); Isaac Bunduki Yose, Josephine Foni, and James Voya (2005-2014); Dr. Ellen Valesciano (2015-2017); Oyet George Arnold (2017-2020).

SOURCES

Employment Agreement provided by Greater Equatoria Field from March - December 31, 2016. Greater Equatoria Field archives, Juba, South Sudan.

Greater Equatoria Field Administrative Committee meeting minutes. Greater Equatoria Field archives, Juba, South Sudan.

NOTES

1. Aventore Amure Bilal, a former student at Bugema College, telephone interview by author, September 18, 2019.
2. Fulgension Okayo Ida, a pioneer of the Adventist Church in Sudan, interview by author, Juba, August 22, 2019.
3. Ibid.
4. Judy Whitehouse, a nurse and wife of Dr. Whitehouse, telephone interview by author, June 25, 2019.
5. Judy Whitehouse, who worked as a nurse, email message to author, May 6, 2019.
6. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 143.
7. Ibid., 77.
8. Judy White, email to author, received August 25, 2019.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Charles Okwera Okuka, who served as laboratory technician and pastor, interview by author, May 28, 2019.

13. Ibid.
14. Milla Longa, a former clinic store keeper, interview by author, July 15, 2109.
15. Ibid.
16. Clement Koma, a former medical store keeper and cashier for the clinic, interview by author, Munuki, Juba, September 17, 2019.
17. Munuki Adventist Clinic Annual report for the year 2018.
18. Simon Namana, ADRA programs director, interview by author, Munuki, Juba, July 25, 2019
19. Ellen Valeciano, a missionary doctor from the Philippines, interview by author, April 21, 2019.
20. Greater Equatoria Field Administrative Committee meeting minutes, March 4, 2015, GEF ADCOM, 25-27.
21. Greater Equatoria Field Administrative Meeting minutes GEF ADCOM 2015, 112.
22. Employment Agreement provided by Greater Equatoria Field from March - December 31, 2016.
23. Greater Equatoria Field Administrative Meeting minutes GEF, ADCOM 2017, 51, 168.
24. Charles Okello Dickens, Greater Equatoria Health Annual Report for the year 2018.

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