

# Tanzania

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Tanzania is officially the United Republic of Tanzania. It borders Uganda to the north; Kenya to the northeast; Comoro Islands in the Indian Ocean to the east; Mozambique and Malawi to the south; Zambia to the southwest; and Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, is in the northeastern part of Tanzania. In 1964 a federation was created by the union of Tanganyika (independent since 1961) and Zanzibar and Pemba (independent since 1963). Tanzania is the 13th largest country in Africa and the 31st largest in the world, covering 947,303 square kilometers (365,756 square miles).<sup>1</sup>

The population of Tanzania is now estimated at over 61.4 million.<sup>2</sup> The country has one of the highest birth rates in the world and more than 44 percent of the population is under the age of 15. The average fertility rate is 4.8 children born per woman, which is the 16th highest of any country.<sup>4</sup>

The work of the SDA Church in Tanzania is organized under two unions, Northern Tanzania Union Conference with headquarters in Arusha, and Southern Tanzania Union Mission with headquarters in Dar es Salaam. The number of SDA churches for the two unions is 3,186 with a combined membership of 733,382. Statistics for the local conferences are as follows: Mara Conference: 466 churches, 173,861 members; North East Tanzania Conference: 448 churches, 84,743 members; South Nyanza Conference: 800 churches, 219,282 members; Western Tanzania Conference: 471 churches, 83,444 members; East Central Tanzania Conference: 338 churches, 64,024 members; South East Tanzania Conference: 164 churches, 47,550 members; Southern Highlands Conference: 499 churches, 60,482 members.<sup>5</sup>

The country was a German colony (German East Africa) from 1891 to 1919, then a territory mandated by the League of Nations to Great Britain, then a republic.<sup>6</sup> Agriculture is a principal occupation, the chief products being maize, peanuts, sisal, coffee, cotton, and cashew nuts. Diamonds and gold constitute the only minerals exported in quantity. The climate tends to be dry. Dar es Salaam, an ancient Arab city lying on the Indian Ocean, is the business capital of Tanzania, while Dodoma is the official capital of Tanzania. Zanzibar and Pemba are islands in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa, approximately six degrees south of the equator.<sup>7</sup>

## Beginning of the SDA Work

In 1903, Ludwig Richard Conradi (German), president of the European Division had a vision of reaching East Africa with the Adventist faith. By that time the Adventist population worldwide was about 77,554. Among them, 9,547 were from Europe.<sup>8</sup> Germany alone had about 3,400 Adventists. Ludwig Richard Conradi encouraged Germans to donate funds for the mission in Africa and, as a result, \$5,000 was contributed to sending missionaries to East Africa.<sup>9</sup>

The church in Germany chose two missionaries, A. C. Enns and Johannes Ehlers, to pioneer the Adventist faith in East Africa. A. C. Enns was a vegetable gardener who had received a ministerial diploma from Friedensau University in Germany. Johannes Ehlers was employed painting buildings at the mission in Germany. The two missionaries began their journey to East Africa on October 22, 1903. Ehlers had married Ester but, because of his commitment to missionary work in East Africa, she was forced to remain in Germany. Enns had a fiancée who had to remain in Germany as well. They arrived on November 9, 1903, at the coast of Mombasa with a letter to the governor of Tanganyika. The Mombasa governor directed them to the coast of the safe harbor (Dar es Salaam), to which they traveled for three days.<sup>10</sup>

They arrived in Dar es Salaam and were received by the German governor of Tanganyika. He invited them to dinner in his office. The two missionaries explained their reason for coming to Tanganyika. Since the coast of Dar es Salaam had already been occupied by Muslims and some Christians, he directed them to South Pare Mountains where there was no denomination presence. The missionaries then traveled by train through Tanga to the Korogwe area. From Korogwe, they traveled on foot until they reached Giti and decided to settle there and make it their home. On November 25, 1903, they sent a message by phone that they had arrived safely and that they had been given South Pare territory by the governor of the German state. At Giti, they bought 25 acres of land from Chief Sekimanga at a cost of 100 German rupees.<sup>11</sup>

The missionary work extended to Lake Victoria zone. In 1921 E. B. Phillips was appointed to reestablish Busegwe Station. For a time it operated on the old site, but in 1938 new buildings were erected on a new site a short distance away. Majita Station (opened 1909) had three churches by 1913, but after the war, in 1921, only ten members could be found out of a former membership of 78. Under the care of a number of missionaries and African workers, the work subsequently prospered. In 1960 the Majita area was organized into the Majita-Ukerewe Field under African leadership—S. D. Otieno, president, and N. Elisa, secretary-treasurer. The name of the field was changed in 1967 to Central Nyanza Field.<sup>12</sup>

It was in northeastern Tanganyika, in the Pare area, that the first SDA mission stations—Friedenstal (Mamba), Kihurio, and Suji—had been established. Shortly before World War I, H. Kotz, with the help of Petro Risase, had completed the translation of the New Testament into Chasu, which was published by Advent-Verlag in Hamburg with the approval of the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>13</sup>

The missions in the Pare Mountains suffered less than those in west Tanganyika as a result of World War I. Some of the German missionaries had remained at their stations until the British came, and before being interned they had ordained elders in all churches. Despite the fact that public meetings had been forbidden, Christians continued to gather for worship in their huts. The African workers, although bereft of the White missionaries and deprived of all financial support, were not idle. S. G. Maxwell, on arriving in 1921, found fully prepared candidates who had been waiting for baptism for six years. He also found that of the 277 members in 1914, 246 were still practicing SDAs. In 1926 the first camp meetings in Tanganyika were held in the Pare area, and the first Seventh-day Adventist Africans of that section were ordained to the ministry (P. S. Kilonzo and E. Manongi). In 1930 a clinic was opened at Suji, and the school there conducted a strong industrial program. A number of the Pare workers went out as pioneer missionaries throughout East Africa. For example, when S. G. Maxwell went to open work in Uganda, P. Risase and A. Mweta accompanied him; later A. Msangi also went to Uganda and died there. P. Risase later pioneered the work on Mombasa Island. Pare missionaries held responsible positions in different parts of the East African and Tanganyika Unions.<sup>14</sup>

In 1960 the Pare area was organized into the North-East Tanzania Field, under African leadership, with Y. Lusingu as president and T. Samuel as secretary-treasurer.<sup>15</sup> Ntusu Station (opened 1912) in the Usukuma country, where R. Lusky was an early missionary, had 300 pupils and ten baptized believers before the war came. It was here that the four Pare teachers mentioned earlier stayed on at their schools without salary. W. Cuthbert arrived at Ntusu in 1922, and H. Robson arrived in 1924 and remained until 1939. Ntusu was the site of the first girls' school established in that country. In 1960 this area was organized into the West Lake Field, with R. E. Dale as president and S. Okongo as secretary-treasurer.<sup>16</sup> In 1963 S. Magembe and S. Okongo were elected president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. The name of the field was changed in 1967 to South Nyanza Field.<sup>17</sup>

After many missionaries came and went, Muderspach was again director of this mission at the time of his death in 1960. In that year Arthur L. Davy was elected the first president. This later became the East Nyanza Field headquarters, with M. Rutolyo, president, and A. Fue, secretary-treasurer. Mwangala Station (opened before World War I) was a difficult station for Europeans to operate because of its isolation and its unhealthful climate. E. B. Phillips directed it from 1927 to 1931, and then W. C. S. Raitt was director until 1934. Later the station was put under African leadership, and with its district formed part of the South Nyanza Field, administered from Ntusu. Mbeya Station (established in 1938 under R. Reider)<sup>18</sup> is situated within 1.5 miles (four kilometers) of the town of Mbeya. The climate is cool because of the high elevation. Progress has been slow because of frequent changes in missionary personnel.

## Development of the Organization

From 1903 to 1913 all SDA mission work in Tanganyika was under the direction of the German Union Conference. From mid-1913 to the outbreak of the war in 1914 it was under the new European Division, with headquarters in Hamburg. By 1912 the Tanganyika missions had been divided into two general sections—the South Pare Mission Field in the east and the Victoria Nyanza Mission Field in the west, along the shores of Lake Victoria, with general headquarters for all German East African missions at Shirati, on Lake Victoria. When the country became a British mandate after World War I, the British Union was asked to administer the territory and rebuild the mission program. Tanganyika and Kenya were formed into the British East African Mission, directly responsible to the British Union Conference executive committee. W. T. Bartlett was the first president, and his headquarters was at Gendia Mission in Kenya. In 1922 the mission was enlarged to include Belgian East Africa and was named the East African Combined Mission. In 1923 the administration of these areas passed to the European Division and, in 1928 when the European Division was split four ways, the East African Union Mission was assigned to the Northern European Division. In 1933, at the request of the Central European Division, Tanganyika was reassigned to that organization and became the Tanganyika Mission. When it became impossible for the German Union to support and administer missions immediately before and during World War II, Tanganyika became part of Section II of the Central European Division, which was fostered by the General Conference. In 1940 this mission was made part of the Southern African Division. Then from 1943 to 1960 the Tanganyika Mission Field was part of the East African Union Mission in the same division.<sup>19</sup>

Tanzania, with a membership of 13,237, was organized into five fields: North-East Tanganyika (Suji), Majita-Ukerewe (Majita), West Lake (Ntusu), East Lake (Utimbaru), and Tanganyika General. The last named included all areas not allocated to the other four fields, and also Zanzibar and Pemba. The Tanzania General Field (organized 1960) embraced mostly the unentered territory and therefore was administered from Busegwe by the union. In 1967 the headquarters for this field was moved to the town of Morogoro, Tanzania, which was a more suitable location from which to administer the rapidly growing membership. Colporteurs pioneered in its towns, selling books and establishing branch Sabbath schools. These were followed by resident ministerial graduates who carried out a house-to-house visitation program in Tabora, Tanga, Iringa, Morogoro, and Dar es Salaam. City evangelistic meetings were held in Morogoro (1959), Dar es Salaam, and Tanga (1961) by two African evangelists. In Dar es Salaam, the capital city, E. E. Cleveland, from the General Conference ministerial department, conducted an evangelistic campaign in 1963 that served the double purpose of winning converts and providing evangelistic training for a team composed of workers from several unions. The continued rapid growth in Tanzania through the 1980s and 1990s precipitated other organizational changes. The union headquarters moved to Arusha in 1974. One of the reasons was that the city had an international airport and desirable communication facilities. By this time all the local conferences and fields were under national leadership. This was also true of the union leadership.<sup>20</sup>

The first baptism conducted in 1908 involved six people: Andrew Senamwaye, David Chambega Masumba, Abraham Salim Seivunde, Yohana Kajembe, Phillip Mmbaga, and Lazarus Omari. Later, some of those who were

baptized became evangelists and were sent to the Lake Zone and launched the Bupandagila Mission. The first Tanzanians to be ordained as pastors were Paul Kilonzo and Elisa Manongi. The ordination was held in 1932 and both of them were from South Pare.<sup>21</sup> Tanganyika had a total of 192 schools owned by the Adventist Church between 1905 and 1963.<sup>22</sup> During the First World War, several German missionaries who had come to establish work in Tanganyika retreated and went back home. This act weakened the growth of Adventism in the region. Later the Church sent missionaries from England to continue the work initiated by German missionaries. Upon arrival, they established special missionary centers in strategic places such as Ikizu, Majita, Bupandagila, and Utimbaru. In the Pare Mountains, they moved Giti Center to Suji, Kilimanjaro region.

The work continued to grow. The church organized major crusades in the cities of Arusha, Moshi, Mwanza, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, and Iringa in the year 1960. The missionary who conducted the crusade campaigns was E. E. Cleveland, assisted by local Tanzanians who were Pastor Fares Muganda, Pastor Gabriel Mbwana, Pastor Elizafan Wanjara, and Pastor Nyagabon.

## Work in the Southern Zone

The southern corridor is made of two administrative regions which are Mtwara and Lindi. Mtwara comprises five districts which are Masasi, Nanyumbu, Newala, Tandahimba, and Mtwara Rural. Lindi also comprises five districts, namely, Nachingwea, Liwale, Ruangwa, Kilwa, and Lindi Rural. The gospel work entered the southern corridor amidst many difficulties caused by poor infrastructure as well as the resistance of the targeted groups, namely the Makua, Yao, Makonde, Mwera, and Ngindo. The work in this area started at Tunduru. From Tunduru it went to Newala, then Mtwara, then Lindi, then Nachingwea; then from Nachingwea to Masasi, then Nanyumbu, Kilwa, Ruangwa, Tandahimba, etc. The man who supervised the work in these areas from its beginnings and gave it a significant push was Pastor David Dobias. He built churches at Mtwara, Newala, and Nachingwea. The work was then placed in the hands of Pastor Joshua Kajula who supervised the areas of Lindi, Mtwara, Newala, and Masasi, as well as the areas of Nakarara, Mchauru, and Luatala, while Nachingwea was placed under the leadership of evangelist Amalema.<sup>23</sup>

In 1972 a church was started at Nachingwea. Believers were meeting in the home of a member by the name of Pathami. The earliest believers at Nachingwea were, Elder Chilemba, Elder Kalembo, and Elder Beno, N. K. The church at Masasi started in the market place then moved to the RTC building. The first believers here were Douglas Nampesya, John Mtokambali, Chikuo Nyuchi, and Mzee Chimika. In 1989 Mpindimbi SDA Church was started with a few members, namely Dominick Chipembe, Owen Joseph, and Sauli Chigamba.<sup>24</sup>

## Institutions

The two unions of the SDA Church in Tanzania own and run several institutions which include the University of Arusha located between the snowcapped Mount Kilimanjaro on the east and Mount Meru on the west, Ufunuo

Publishing House (UPH) in Morogoro, Voice of Prophecy in Morogoro, and Tanzania Adventist Media Center (TAMC) in Dar es Salaam. The media links include Morning Star, Hope Channel Tanzania, and Adventist World Radio. The unions also have institutions they own and run apart from those they run jointly. They run primary and secondary schools, health centers, dental clinics, etc. Southern Tanzania Union Mission plans to establish a university in its territory.<sup>25</sup>

Since the Church needs print media, TAMC has established a Swahili newspaper, Sauti Kuu, to be owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tanzania. The newspaper is intended to serve as the Church's evangelistic tool as well as a platform for public relations. The newspaper will contain articles related to Bible doctrines, health, family life, entrepreneurship, development, technology, etc., as well as covering religious events that are of public interest.

## The Impact of Adventism on the Tanzanian Society

The Adventist Church in Tanzania has made a positive impact in the country through education<sup>26</sup> health programs, and the media. The Adventist Church is one of the organizations which built schools where there had been none. Many highly placed individuals in government studied at Adventist schools and many are Seventh-day Adventists. The other area where it has made a difference is health. In some areas the only health center one can find is that of the Adventist Church. When it comes to the media, Adventist World Radio has been effective in programs such as family life issues that have impacted the country. Not only has it been used effectively to advance the mission of the church<sup>27</sup> but to influence the Tanzanian society in a positive way.

It is reported that 35 percent of mainland Tanzania is Muslim<sup>28</sup> but the percentage increases to 98 percent on the Island of Zanzibar.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, there are large portions of the country, especially in the south, where people have never heard of the Adventist message.

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