

Woldegiorgis, Aleka Mitiku (1881–1956)

MANDEFRO ALEMAYEHU

Mandefro Alemayehu

Aleka Mitiku Woldegiorgise was a pioneer teacher and evangelist in Ethiopia.

Early Life

Aleka Mitiku Woldegiorgise (known as Mitiku) was born to Woldegiorgis Abdurehman in 1881, in Argobba, Waghemra zone, Dehana district, Ethiopia. Mitiku had one brother and three sisters.¹ He married Lakech Reta in 1921 before he became a Seventh-day Adventist. He and his wife had four daughters and one son. His son, Redie, followed the footsteps of his father and became an Adventist pastor and served the church actively and faithfully until the end of his life.²

Joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Ministry

Mitiku accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and was baptized at Asmara Seventh-day Adventist Church in Eritrea in 1922. To reach the place where he would be baptized, he traveled about 350 kilometers north on foot. He found the truth through his father, whose former name was Abdulkader, and who was a new convert from Islam to Adventism.³ Further Bible instruction was given him by Pastor Ogbazgy and by G. Gudmundsen, a Swedish missionary.

Aleka Mitiku Woldegiorgis attended school in Asmara for a short time, where he gained a working knowledge of reading and writing. In 1928 he went back home to Argobba, north of the Tekeze River, and opened primary schools in Kolan, Lama, and Argobba. He continued teaching until 1938. In the meantime, those schools received government recognition.⁴ In addition to opening schools, he also evangelized the area and established churches in those three places.⁵

One day bandits came and plundered the Adventist community in Argobba, leaving nothing behind. They arrested Aleka Mitiku, who was the leader in the village, tied his hands behind his back, and were taking him away from his village to be shot. His brother-in-law, Ato Negash Desta, pleaded with them to spare Mitiku's life in exchange for his. In response to his plea, they shot and killed Ato Negash and released Aleka Mitiku.⁶ This event made a deep impact on Mitiku, who resolved to continue his ministry with even greater fervor. He reopened the schools and churches in Kolan, Lama, and Argobba and continued his ministry, serving God

faithfully, producing hundreds of gospel workers and teachers, and winning many souls to God's kingdom. He rested in peace at the age of 75 on February 16, 1956.⁷

SOURCES

Nigussie, Birhanu. *Sheik Zekariasan Ethiopian Prophet*. N.p., 1992. A copy in the author's private collection.

Woldeselassie, Truneh. *Adventism in Ethiopia: The Incredible Saga of the Beginning and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Work in Ethiopia*. N.p., 2005. A copy in the author's private collection.

NOTES

1. Meselu Mitiku (daughter of Mitiku), interviewed by Mandefro Alemayehu, Dessie, Ethiopia, March 22, 2020.
2. Ibid.
3. Birhanu Nigussie, *Sheik Zekariasan Ethiopian Prophet* (n.p., 1992), 33.
4. Truneh Woldeselassie, *Adventism in Ethiopia: The Incredible Saga of the Beginning and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Work in Ethiopia* (n.p., 2005), 223.
5. Meselu Mitiku (daughter of Mitiku), interviewed by Mandefro Alemayehu, Dessie, Ethiopia, March 20, 2020.
6. Woldeselassie, 204.
7. Meselu Mitiku (daughter of Mitiku), interviewed by Mandefro Alemayehu, Dessie, Ethiopia, March 22, 2020.

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