

Muganda, Fares Masokomya (1920–1974)

SIMON S. MOLLEL

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Fares Masokomya Muganda was a pastor, evangelist, and church administrator from Tanzania.

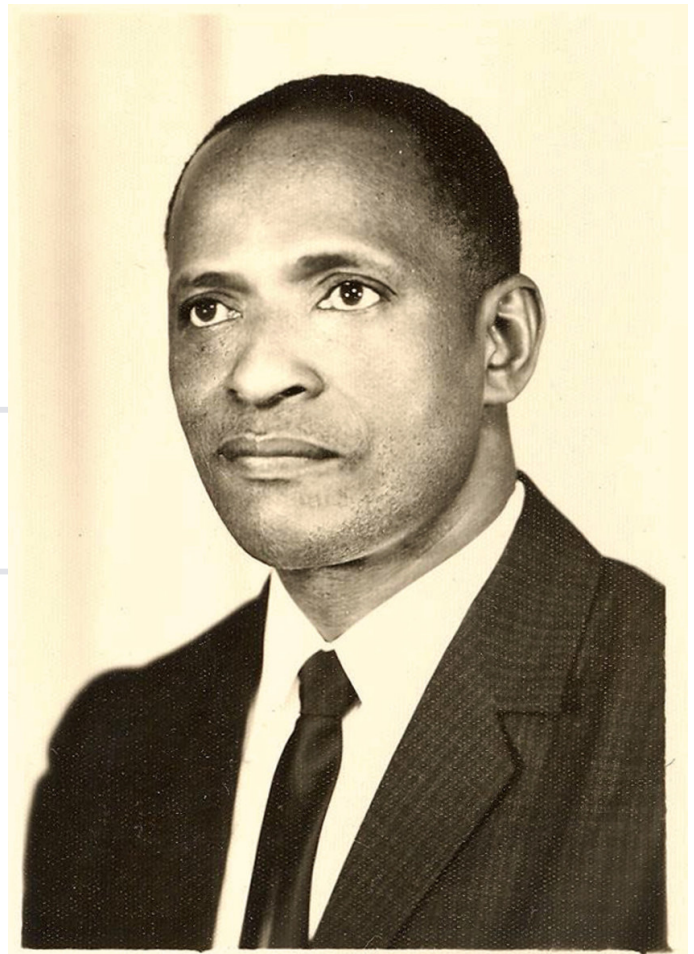
Overview and Background

Since 1903 when the Adventist work began in Tanzania, there have been some notable pioneers who made great contributions to expanding the work of God in this country and beyond. One of those was Pastor Fares Masokomya Muganda, who was a dynamic preacher and an Adventist minister and leader in Tanganyika and in Tanzania after the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar which happened in 1964.¹ He became a pastor in 1951, ministering in districts such as Ukerewe, Mibungo, and Busegwe. He was president in the Bwasi Field (1963-1964) and a department director in the Tanganyika Mission Field and the Union Mission in Tanzania (1969-1974).²

Education and Family

Fares Muganda took a course in theology between 1950-1951 at Bugema College, and he studied for a bachelor's degree in theology at Solusi College in Zimbabwe from 1965-1969. He was among the few people and pastors who could speak good English in those days in Tanganyika.³

He had a wife, Lois (born January 10, 1925, in Musoma),⁴ and five children. Among the children is Baraka Muganda who was a General Conference Youth Director for 15 years. Lois died in 2017 and the remaining children are Baraka, Ruth, and John.



Fares Muganda

Photo courtesy of Baraka Muganda.

Fares was appointed as the first Tanzanian publishing director in the Tanganyika Mission Field in 1952 and his duty was to organize the department, though Stefan Hoeschele in his book identifies Paulo Kilonzo as the first director.⁵ Literature evangelists around the field had the goal of spreading the message of good tidings through books for those who were able to read.⁶ The aim was to witness for Jesus and explain what was in the books, thereby preparing souls for an evangelistic campaign. He organized teams to reach people in towns and in remote places in the mountains and plains in Tanganyika. At the time the Tanganyika population was about nine million and the total number of literature evangelists was 22.⁷ As a result of this work, churches were opened in cities such as Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Singida, and Mtwara.

Tanzania Union Mission Evangelist for Cities

Pastor Fares Muganda, after completing his theological degree at Solusi, returned to Tanzania. There he was assigned to be a union evangelist and work especially in the cities. Early in 1970 the union committee assigned A. Kiboko, S. Boi, and Baraka Muganda, under the leadership of Fares Muganda,⁸ to preach in cities such as Mbeya, Iringa, Tanga, Mwanza, Moshi, Arusha, and Bukoba.⁹

The outcome of these evangelistic campaigns was great. In Mbeya city 75 people were baptized and in Tanga there were 50.¹⁰ Dr. Godwin Lekundayo, the current president of the Northern Tanzania Union Conference, is the product of Pastor Muganda's evangelistic meetings in the 1970s. Pastor Muganda was among "the first generation of African leadership beyond the local level and therefore represented the development of Tanzanian post-independence Adventism as a national church identity."¹¹

Reasons for Evangelistic Campaigns in the Cities

The establishment and change of direction for evangelism strategies was motivated by the upgrading of work from the Tanganyika Mission Field to the Tanganyika Union Mission in the 1960s whereby leaders of that time emphasized preaching in cities and towns. Since the work was established in Tanganyika, it was a tradition to establish churches in the country.¹² Perhaps they followed only the first part of Ellen G. White's direction that "It is God's design that our people should locate outside the cities, and from these outposts warn the cities, and raise in them memorials for God."¹³ It seems that our pioneers primarily settled in rural areas and forgot to go back to the cities.

The formation of Muganda's team to evangelize cities was appropriate. Mission to the cities was also motivated by the evangelistic campaign held in Dar es Salaam in 1963 which included a workshop for evangelists and pastors by the facilitator from the General Conference, Pastor E. Cleveland. Pastors and evangelists from East and Central Africa were delegates. In that evangelistic campaign 300 people accepted Jesus and were baptized!¹⁴

Tools used for evangelistic ministry included films, Voice of Prophecy tracts, and special booklets. They also used picture rolls to attract their potential listeners as they gathered in open public places. Meetings were held in tents and halls in cities and towns. Buses and trains were used to move from one location to another.¹⁵ Meetings lasted three to six weeks, though some went on for three months, such as that of Cleveland in Dar es Salaam city.¹⁶

Administration and Church Structure during Muganda's Time

In the Tanganyika Mission Field and later on the Tanganyika Union Mission in the time of Fares Muganda, the work was led by people from abroad at the union level. For example, in the Tanganyika Mission Field from 1951 to 1955 the president was F. G. Reid, and the secretary/treasurer was H. Robson. From 1956 to 1958, J. D. Harcombe was president and M. W. Curthbert was secretary/treasurer. During Fares Muganda's city evangelism campaigns, the union leadership was Leonard Robinson as president and H. Salzmann as secretary/treasurer (1969-1975).¹⁷ National workers held department responsibilities during this period as Hoeschele testifies, "in the 1970s most Union departments were staffed with nationals."¹⁸

In those days the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the only Christian denomination which actively participated in public evangelism in the cities. Churches such as the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches acquired members by providing social services such as schools and hospitals and by providing for other basic needs in the community.¹⁹

Fares Muganda had an opportunity to be an international preacher from Tanzania when he went to preach in the Egyptian capital city, Cairo, between 1971 and 1972. His son John testifies that in that evangelistic campaign in Cairo about 22 adult Arabs accepted Jesus as their Saviour and were baptized.²⁰

Contribution

Fares Muganda will be remembered for his contribution to church expansion in Tanzania, especially in cities. He was an evangelist and pastor who used his spiritual gifts and personality to attract many to love Christ and join His church. The growth of churches in cities like Mwanza, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Bukoba, Iringa, Mbeya, Arusha, and Moshi are witness to the great work of Pastor Fares Muganda and his impact on the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania. He was one of the pioneers in the history of our church in Tanzania. His example teaches us how we should dare to take initiative and be creative for the sake of God's work and the gospel. Ellen G. White suggests "Let proper persons, who have never revealed the selfish, grasping spirit which withholds the means that ought to be used in the large cities, be selected to carry forward the work, because God acknowledges them as His chosen ones. . . . In these cities the truth is to go forth as a lamp that burneth."²¹

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Stephen Bina, Retired Communication Director, East-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, interview by author, Arusha, August 27, 2018.
2. John F. Muganda, son of Pastor Fares Muganda, Dar es Salaam, interview by author, Arusha, August 28, 2018.
3. Ibid.
4. "Joseph Muganda," *My Heritage*, accessed August 27, 2018, https://www.myheritage.com/names/joseph_muganda.
5. Stefan Hoeschele, *Christian Remnant—African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania 1903-1980* (Leiden: Boston, Brill, 2007), 532.
6. Elisha Ago Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania, Historia ya Kanisa 1903-2013* (Morogoro: Tanzania Adventist Press, 2014), 158.
7. Ibid., 161.
8. Ibid., 211.
9. John F. Muganda, interview.
10. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 211.
11. Stefan Hoeschele, *Christian Remnant—African Folk Church*, 249.
12. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 210.

13. Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).
14. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 212.
15. Stephen Bina Interview.
16. Ibid.
17. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 248-249.
18. Stefan Hoeschele, *Christian Remnant—African Folk Church*, 250.
19. Elisha Ago Okeyo, retired pastor and church officer, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Interview by the author, Arusha, Tanzania, August 27, 2018.
20. John F. Muganda, interview.
21. Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

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