

Origin of Adventism in Embu East

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Embu East is a county in Kenya. Adventism started in Embu East at a place known as Runyenjes at a social hall built by Chief Mugucu wa Makathwa. It is the cradle of Adventism in the northeast part of Kenya that today has 24,897 church members who worship in 369 organized churches.¹

Historical Background

In December 1962, Pastor Perminus Nduke and Solomon Ngoroi from Kirinyaga County were invited by two elders from Embu County, namely Njue Kubuta and Hiram Murage, to conduct a two-month evangelistic campaign.² On the last day of the crusade, the grandmother of retired Pastor Samuel Njeru Namu (North East Kenya Field) was invited by an unknown woman to attend the closing meeting of the crusade.³ Rahab Waita Samuel was told by that lady, "Please, I beg you to get into the social hall and see people who have a very good and special message for you." Rahab Waita with her grandson, Samuel Njeru Namu, agreed to her request and went to the meeting in the hall.⁴ The two pastors conducted a series of prophetic Bible studies from the Books of Daniel and Revelation from morning to noon. Pastor Nduke made an appeal, asking if anyone present wanted to accept Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior. However, nobody responded. Afterwards, he made a second call, this time asking whether there was anybody who was willing to be visited in his/her home. Rahab was moved by the Holy Spirit, so she raised her hand. The pastor took down her details concerning her cradle land⁵

First Adventists in Embu

The next day in December 1962, the two Adventist members went to visit Rahab at her home in Gachuki-Kigaa-Embu County. They taught Rahab and her grandson Samuel Njeru the word of God. Later, the elder brother of her husband Douglas Nduti joined them. Tirelessly, Ngoroi and Perminus taught the word of God the entire day. The Sabbath doctrine was presented, and Rahab Waita and her grandson decided to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was a great sacrifice for the men of God for they slept on banana leaves for the whole week. On the Sabbath Day, they rested with them at their home. In 1963, one of Rahab Waita's close relatives Samson Njue Nduti also decided to join Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁶

Elder Douglas Nduti gave a place to worship God under a “Mugumo” (Fig) tree at his shamba Gachuki–Kigaa. From 1962 to 1966, none of the converts to Adventism were baptized. This was because of the influence of Pagan practices like witchcraft, use of tobacco, and polygamy, all of which were very deep-rooted in those days.⁷

Further Effort by Douglas Nduti

In 1965, Douglas Nduti started a door-to-door and market-to-market evangelistic campaign, and several people were converted. By the end of December 1965, Hiramur Murage and Njue Kubuta, who had received the Adventist message through the effort of Pr. Fredrick Wangai in Nairobi, the largest city and capital of Kenya, heard the good news that their own people had accepted the Adventist message at Gachuki–Kigaa.⁸ Joseph Mwaniki proposed that all the converts should move from worshipping under the “Mugumo” Tree to the Kigaa Village.

In 1967, Nduti continued praying and singing in public while performing his missionary work. The Lord blessed the Church with souls, and the Gospel spread in Embu both in the east and west.⁹

Church Organization

In 1967, the members organized themselves at Gachuki Kigaa Village and started worshipping under a “Muringa” tree where they fenced the place with Kikuyu Grass. Unfortunately, Paul Ngiciria the assistant chief, chased them away, so they moved to another tree, namely a “Mukuyu” (Sycamore), and they worshipped there for a while.¹⁰

Three of the converts–Nephat Njeru, Joseph Mwaniki, and Douglas Nduti–donated plots of land for the church building that is now where Kigaa SDA Church is currently built. In 1973, the Kigaa SDA Church was organized and became the headquarters of all Adventist churches in the Embu East and West provinces.

SOURCES

“North East Kenya Field.” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2021).

<https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=143007>.

NOTES

1. “North East Kenya Field,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2021), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=143007>.

2. Samuel Njeru Namu, interview by author, May 1, 2021. Samuel Njeru Namu is a retired pastor.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Loise Wanjira, telephone interview by author, May 1, 2021. Loice Wanjiru is a member of Runyenjes Church.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Fredrick Wangai, interview by author, Nairobi, May 1, 2021. Dr. Fredrick Wangai is a retired Adventist Church administrator.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

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