

# Greater Equatoria Field of Seventh-day Adventists

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The Greater Equatoria Field (formerly the South Sudan Field under the Trans-European Division) was reorganized in 2012 under the East-Central Africa Division. At the time of the reorganization the membership was 12,000, but it grew to 19,726 by second quarter of 2019. There are thirty-six churches and seventy-six companies. The workforce includes fourteen ordained ministers, six ministerial licensees, and three ministerial interns. The territory covers eleven of the thirty-two political states of South Sudan, including Kapoeta, Torit, Jubek, Jonglei, Terekaka, Gbudwe, Boma, Yei River, Amadi, Maridi, and Tambura.<sup>1</sup>

## The Origin of the Greater Equatoria Field (GEF)

The Greater Equatoria Field was carved out of the Sudan Mission. It started as a section eventually growing into the South Sudan Field headquartered in Arua, Uganda. When the South Sudan civil war, which started in 1983, engulfed the country it forced many South Sudanese citizens to flee to Uganda as refugees. Among the refugees who fled were several church members. At first, they were mainly in the Koboko, Arua, and Adjumani districts of Uganda. Later they went as far as the Kiryandongo and Kyangwale districts. It was challenging for the Uganda Union of Seventh-day Adventists to continue ministering to the exiled multi-ethnic believers.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a section was organized for them in August 1993 in Koboko, North West Uganda.<sup>3</sup> The first section leader was Faustino Capilitan, with Ercoph Bongomin as secretary/treasurer. In 1994, the Middle East Union under the Trans-European Division established a section office.<sup>4</sup> In 1995, the section office was moved to Nairobi, under the leadership of Timothy Scott and Ercoph Bongomin, secretary/treasurer. Andrew Churuma replaced Bongomin in 1996 as the treasurer.<sup>5</sup>

## The Field in Diaspora

The work of the Church continued to grow in the refugee camps, and in the rebel-controlled territory. The section was reorganized into the South Sudan Field in 1999,<sup>6</sup> and the headquarters was transferred from Nairobi to Arua in northwest Uganda. The first constituency session was held on February 12-14, 1999, under

the Middle East Union. Sven Jensen was then president of the Middle East Union and William Olson was secretary/treasurer. The officers of the field were Beat Odermatt, executive director/president and Ursula Odermatt, accountant. Later, Carl Koster became the secretary/treasurer. During this time the membership continued to grow. Michael Collins, who served from 2006-2011, replaced Odermatt.

## The Field Headquarters Moves to South Sudan

Clement Joseph Arkangelo Mawa became president of the South Sudan Field in 2011. That same year the field headquarters were transferred from Arua to Juba. Following the independence of South Sudan on July 9, 2011, the Seventh-day Adventist churches in South Sudan were attached to East-Central Africa Division in 2012. At the time of the reorganization, there were two fields: the Sudan Field based in Khartoum and the South Sudan Field based in Juba. After the separation, the majority of the members moved to South Sudan, resulting in the establishment of three fields in 2012.<sup>7</sup> The Greater Equatoria Field was one the three. The unaudited membership of the Greater Equatoria Field as of the second quarter 2019 was 19,823. The officers for 2016-2020 were Jacob Frungus Rango Bani, president; Paskwale Pacoto Okeny, executive secretary; and Kubach Giel Gatluak, treasurer. Though the Greater Equatoria Field has undergone several reorganizations, the membership is continuing to grow.

## The Institutions

The field operates twelve primary schools in nine districts. Some of these schools are operating in temporary structures of mud walls and plastic canvas roofs, while others are in semi-permanent structures of mud wall and iron sheet roofs. A few are in permanent structures. There are two secondary schools: Eyira Adventist Vocation Academy, in Maridi (EAVA) State, and Yambio Secondary School.<sup>8</sup>

The field also operates Salvation FM radio, which was established in 2012 under the Juba Central church. However, since 2017 it has been handed over to the Greater Equatoria Field.<sup>9</sup> The radio broadcast reaches an area of about 100 square kilometers surrounding Juba from where the radio station operates. At the time of writing, plans are underway to open another Salvation FM radio station in Jonglei Station.

## Significant Events

The territory of the Greater Equatoria Field is very large, covering eleven states, and the work is growing. The Greater Equatoria Field took action in year-end meeting 2018 to organize two missions.<sup>10</sup> Jonglei Station was organized on July 27-28, 2019, with the head office in Bor, and Western Equatoria was organized on August 16, 2019, with the head office in Maridi.<sup>11</sup> The officers for Jonglei were Joseph Dut Aleu, leader; Jacob Chol Maleith, recording secretary; and Gabriel Chol Abeir, accountant.<sup>12</sup> For Western Equatoria the officers were Nelson Negib

Peter, leader; Alison Kabi Mamur, recording secretary; and Emmanuel Miskin Simon, accountant.<sup>13</sup>

## Mission and Strategic Plan of Greater Equatoria Field

The mission of the Greater Equatoria Field is to make disciples of Jesus Christ from all the tribes, languages, and nations in the Greater Equatoria Field and to prepare them for the kingdom of God according to Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 24:14, and Revelation 14:6-7. The strategy of the field is to reach up, reach in, and reach out in four dimensions: mental, physical, social, and spiritual. The objective is to develop the spiritual resources, human resources, financial resources, material resources, and regulatory resources of the Church for the continuity of God's work in making disciples and preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Officers of the Section the Field: 1993-2019*

South Sudan Section (1993-1998)<sup>15</sup>

Leader: Faustino Capilitan (1993-1994), Timothy Scott (1995-1998).

Secretary/Treasurer: Ercoph Bongomin (1993-1995), Andrew Churuma (1996)

Accountant: Fay Scott (1997-1998)

South Sudan Field (1999-2011)<sup>16</sup>

Presidents: Beat Dermott (2000-2005), Kare Kaspesan (January 2006-May 2006), Michael Collins (June 2006-February 2010), Acting Leader: Amoli Thomas (March 2011-May 2011), Clement J. A. Mawa (June 2011 to December 2011)

### *Greater Equatoria Field 2012-2020*<sup>17</sup>

Presidents: Clement J. Ar. Mawa (2012-2015), Jacob Frungus Rango (2016- )

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