Geoffrey Pomaleu was an Adventist pastor, departmental director, and mission president whose culminated as president of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission.

**Early Life**

Geoffrey Pomaleu was born on December 8, 1961, in Nonga Hospital, Rabaul, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea. The eldest of five siblings and one of a set of twins, he was born to Job Pomaleu Kepo and Martha. They were teachers at Rugen Harbor school, near Kambubu at the time. His twin sister, Julian Sevua, died on June 14, 2012.

Pomaleu began his elementary schooling in 1966 when his father was serving in the Baining Mountains in the southeastern part of East New Britain Province. After a period of two years, the family moved to Kambubu High
School in 1967. His father assisted with the construction of the new college at Sonoma. He completed grade 6 in 1974 and commenced high school at Kambubu in 1975.

In 1977, the family transferred to Omaura Bible School in the Eastern Highlands Province. With his three sisters Julian, Glender, and Julie, and his two brothers, Ivan and Max, Geoffrey Pomaleu worked for a short time with his father on the farm and then moved to Manus to experience life in the village for three years. Pomaleu moved to Bougainville in 1983 and then to Port Moresby in 1984 and 1985. During those years of instability, between 1977 and 1985, he worked at various times at building construction, in a second-hand shop, and at a take-away food shop in Port Moresby.

Ministry and Service

Despite being considered a failure by the education system at that time, Pomaleu maintained his faith and faithfulness in church programs taking leadership roles when and where he was needed. Much of Pomaleu’s involvement was with the youth department of the local church. Following his return to Manus in 1985, he was convinced by his parents to return to Omaura to do a Level 1 Bible Study program in 1986. The months that followed gave Pomaleu a sense of career. Up until that time he had not really considered ministry as a career choice.

Following his graduation from Omaura Bible School, Pomaleu was invited by the Morobe Mission to be a church pastor. After two years of pastoral ministry in 1988 and 1989, he applied to study for a Diploma in theology at Sonoma Adventist College in East New Britain. He was surprised to be accepted. There he met and married Jochabed Sonos whose family came from Mussau Island, New Ireland Province. He graduated with a Diploma in theology in 1992. His first-born son, Nathan, was born at Sonoma. While at Sonoma, he assisted with the establishment of a new church in the Baining Mountains where he had visited many times as a child.

Following his graduation, Geoffrey and his family was appointed to the Sepik Mission where he served as a Chaplain for Passam National High School and a church pastor for the nearby village church. He also conducted religious instruction programs for Passam primary school from 1993 to 1994. In 1995, Geofffrey was accepted to enter the degree program in Theology at Pacific Adventist University. While studying at Pacific Adventist University Jochabed and Geoffrey had two more children: Joan and Geoffrey Jr. He graduated with a Bachelors of Arts in Theology in 1998.

The following year, Geoffrey and his family were appointed to serve in the Biala District, West New Britain Province. He served just one year in Biala and at the end of 1999 he was appointed to serve in Madang as the Youth Director for the Madang Manus Mission where he remained until 2003. While working in Madang he attended his first summer school at Avondale University College in Australia.

Significant Events

In 2001, Pomaleu was ordained to the ministry as a pastor of the Seventh day Adventist Church by the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) president, Wilson Stephen, and the Madang Manus Mission president, John Wawa, at the Madang town church. While serving in Madang Manus Mission in 2003, Pomaleu was debilitated with a serious illness that almost cost his life. After recovering, he was appointed to serve in PNGUM as the youth director in 2004. He was reappointed in 2005 and remained until 2008. He graduated with a Master’s degree in youth ministry in 2006.

In 2009, Pomaleu was invited to serve the Morobe Mission as the general secretary. After serving as the general secretary from 2009 to 2011, he was invited to serve as the president of Morobe Mission taking over from Piuki Tasa who was retiring. In 2015, he was appointed president of the PNGUM.

Pomaleu took up his duties as union president in September of 2015. But within just a few months his health condition started deteriorating and he found himself under continuous medical care. On July 4, 2016, he died in the Angau General Hospital. Left to mourn were his wife and three children. Jochabed Pomaleu continued to be the children’s ministries director for the PNGUM.

Contribution

Geoffrey Pomaleu’s leadership skills enabled him to relate to all classes of people. In 2000, he led the Madang Manus youth to a congress held at Wom Memorial Beach in Wewak Town. In 2005, while he was serving as the PNGUM youth director, he organized a successful country-wide youth congress at Kambubu High School. In 2007, he and his team led the largest ever delegation of Pathfinders from Papua New Guinea to a South Pacific Division Pathfinder Camporee, and then hosted a PNGUM camporee at the end of the year in Manus. While serving the local mission in Morobe, Pomaleu also helped expand the Morobe Mission’s infrastructure. A multipurpose hall was constructed, primary schools were developed, a secondary school was opened in Ragiampun Markham district, and donations were given to assist smaller missions.


NOTES

1. Unless otherwise credited, the information in this article comes from the personal knowledge and experience of the author, eldest son of Geoffrey Pomaleu and his wife Jochabed.


