

Matulanya, Jeremia (1948–2021)

ISAACKS MANYONYI

Isaacks Daniel Manyoni (M.A. Ed.) is an educator and church administrator who has served in both public and Seventh-day Adventist schools. He worked as a teacher and later as headmaster of Giti Adventist Primary School and Chome High School. He has held leadership roles as Education and PARL Director in the North East Tanzania Conference and as director of multiple departments in the South Nyanza Conference. He currently serves as Education, PARL, Adventist Mission, and Music Director in the South Nyanza Conference.

Jeremia Matulanya was a Tanzanian Seventh-day Adventist minister who contributed significantly to the growth and expansion of Adventism in central and northwestern [Tanzania](#).

Early Life, Education, and Marriage

Jeremia Matulanya was born in 1948 in Mashiambiti village in Maswa District, which was then part of Shinyanga Region in Tanzania. He was the eighth child in the family of Elder Matulanya Mashimba and Mama Njile Mbuga of Mashyambiti. He grew up in a traditional African rural setting during a period when Christianity, education, and social transformation were gradually expanding in many parts of Tanzania. His family background and early exposure to Christian teachings played an important role in shaping his spiritual life and later commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jeremia's childhood was marked by hard work and a strong desire for education despite the limited opportunities available in rural Tanzania during the 1950s and 1960s. His upbringing in a Christian home contributed significantly to his future dedication to evangelism and pastoral ministry.¹

Matulanya began his primary education at Igunya in Maswa District. In 1958, he joined TAPA School where he continued with the third grade. His educational journey was interrupted for some time, but in 1962, he resumed his studies at government schools, particularly Igwata Primary School, where he successfully completed Standard Seven.²

Between 1969 and 1970, he engaged in private business activities in the Shinyanga Region. Although he participated in business, his heart increasingly leaned toward Christian ministry and missionary work. This spiritual conviction led him to enroll in ministerial training related to literature evangelism. In 1970, he began pursuing the first certificate in Literature Evangelism Ministry at Malya. Literature evangelism was one of the strongest missionary approaches used by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania during that period, and Matulanya became deeply involved in this field. His dedication and commitment enabled him to continue advancing in ministerial training, and by 1973 he had attained the third certificate in Literature Evangelism at Sengerema.³

In 1971, while serving in ministry training at Malya-Kwimba, he married Ellen Kambago. Their marriage became a strong partnership in ministry and family life. Together they were blessed with seven children: Esther, Barnaba Mashimba, Milka, Rachel, Masaba, Fariji, and Yusufu. His family remained supportive throughout his years of pastoral work in various districts of Tanzania.

Ministry

Matulanya devoted most of his adult life to the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania. His ministerial journey began through literature evangelism, a ministry that emphasized the distribution of Christian literature, Bible studies, and missionary outreach.

In 1974, he moved to Geita, where he lived and ministered for four years until 1977. During his stay in Geita, he played a significant role in reviving the Geita Sabbath School branch, strengthening Church worship and fellowship among believers in the area.⁴

In 1977, the Church sent him to Mwadui to help establish and organize the Adventist work there. At that time, there were believers who worshipped during the daytime, but the Church organization was still weak. Pastor Matulanya contributed significantly to the founding and development of the Mwadui Group. He remained in Mwadui for approximately seven years, until 1983. Recognizing the need for formal pastoral training, the Church sent him in 1983 to Tanzania Adventist Seminary (TASC), where he pursued studies in Pastoral Ministry. While at TASC, he studied alongside several notable ministerial colleagues including Yusuph Mharagi, John Bomani, Bernard Mambwe, Jeremiah Mwahwago, Sadock Butoke, Ezekiel Makeremo, and Pastor Sina.⁵ His theological education equipped him with deeper pastoral and administrative skills for church leadership.

After completing his studies in 1986, Pastor Matulanya returned to Mwadui in Shinyanga. Later that same year, he was appointed assistant Publishing Department director, stationed at Bariadi. He served in this capacity from 1986 to 1988, helping coordinate literature evangelism and publishing ministry activities within the church territory. On March 10, 1988, he was transferred to Maswa Street District as district pastor. At that time, the district covered a vast territory including present-day Mwagala District and Sola District. Pastor Matulanya served in Maswa for nine years and ten months. During his leadership, several churches were renovated, a church office was constructed, and church property was expanded through the acquisition of land at Nyalikungu in Maswa.⁶

Pastor Matulanya was ordained to the gospel ministry on December 20, 1989, at Bupandagila. The ordination service was officiated by Robert Taylor and Elisha Okeyo from the Union leadership.⁷ His ordination recognized many years of faithful pastoral labor, evangelistic commitment, and dedication to the mission of the Church.

In October 1997, Matulanya was transferred to the Nkilo District, presently known as the Mkula District. He served there from 1997 to 2005. At the time of his arrival, the district included churches such as Mwamagigisi,

Malili, Mwangika, Ngasamo, Kijereshi, Rutubiga, Chabhutwa, Mkula, and Chiseza. Under his pastoral leadership, the district experienced substantial expansion, and additional churches were established, including Niniga, Nyagili, Lukalangwa (Malamate), Ngunga, Mwasugongwa, Malangale, and Mwamulenge. In June 2005, Pastor Matulanya was transferred to the Meatu District, where he served until 2011 after assuming leadership responsibilities from Pastor Samuel Majenga. While serving in Meatu, he contributed to the establishment and strengthening of Isengwa Church, Makao Church, and Mwanzagamba Church.⁸ His ministry continued to emphasize evangelistic expansion and pastoral care.

In August 2011, he was sent to Bukombe to open a new evangelistic zone and serve as assistant Publishing Department director for the Ushirombo Zone. He ministered there until 2014, when he officially retired from active ministry.

Later Life

Following his retirement, Pastor Matulanya continued to be respected as a senior Church leader and spiritual mentor. Although he was no longer actively involved in district administration, he remained connected to Church activities and continued encouraging younger ministers and Church members. His long experience in evangelism, literature ministry, church planting, and pastoral leadership made him a valuable source of wisdom within the Adventist community. In 2019, he shared important details of his life and ministry during an interview conducted by Isaacks Manyonyi. The interview preserved valuable historical information concerning the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in various parts of Tanzania, especially within Shinyanga, Geita, Bariadi, Maswa, Mkula, Meatu, and Ushirombo areas.⁹

Pastor Jeremia Matulanya passed away on August 2, 2021. He was laid to rest on August 5, 2021. His death marked the end of a long and faithful ministerial journey that had spanned several decades of Adventist mission work in Tanzania.

Legacy

Pastor Jeremia Matulanya is remembered as a committed evangelist, church planter, pastor, and administrator whose ministry contributed significantly to the expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania. His work in literature evangelism strengthened missionary outreach during a critical period of church growth, while his pastoral ministry helped establish and stabilize congregations in many districts.

One of his most enduring contributions was his involvement in organizing and developing Church districts such as Mwadui, Maswa, Mkula, Meatu, and Ushirombo. Through his leadership, new churches were planted, church buildings were renovated, new congregations were established, and church properties were acquired for future mission work. His ministry combined practical leadership with spiritual dedication. His life remains an

inspiration to pastors, literature evangelists, church leaders, and Adventist believers in Tanzania.

SOURCES

Records and oral historical accounts from Seventh-day Adventist Church workers in Central Tanzania. In the author's private collection.

Personal ministry history of Pastor Jeremia Matulanya as preserved by family members and church associates.

NOTES

1. Interview with Pastor Jeremia Matulanya conducted by Isaacks Manyonyi, 2019.
2. Personal ministry history of Pastor Jeremia Matulanya as preserved by family members and Church associates.
3. Records and oral historical accounts from Seventh-day Adventist Church workers in Central Tanzania.
4. Interview with Pastor Jeremia Matulanya conducted by Isaacks Manyonyi, 2019.
5. Records and oral historical accounts from Seventh-day Adventist Church workers in Central Tanzania.
6. Records and oral historical accounts from Seventh-day Adventist Church workers in Central Tanzania.
7. Interview with Pastor Jeremia Matulanya conducted by Isaacks Manyonyi, 2019.
8. Personal ministry history of Pastor Jeremia Matulanya as preserved by family members and Church associates.
9. Interview with Pastor Jeremia Matulanya conducted by Isaacks Manyonyi, 2019.

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