

Greater Upper Nile Field of Seventh-day Adventists

MARK IGGA MONA ODOLOPRE

Mark Igga Mona Odolopre

The Greater Upper Nile Field (GUNF) is a constituent of South Sudan Attached Territory (SSAT) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its headquarters is located on Assosa Extension block 8, house number 01, in the city of Malakal, which is the capital city of Central Upper Nile State in South Sudan. The territory comprises the former states of Unity, Upper Nile, and the northern part of the former Jonglei state.¹

As of 2018, the Greater Upper Nile Field had twenty churches with 11,886 members amidst a general population of 3,705,397 inhabitants in the territory.² The field has thirteen regular workers, seven contract workers, twenty-one Global Mission pioneers, six Gospel Outreach workers supported by Gospel Outreach Canada, and four locally funded pioneers.³

Institutions and Services of Greater Upper Nile Field

The Greater Upper Nile Field operates three schools.

Malakal Adventist Secondary School was established in 2012 to serve the entire field. At the time over 200 students enrolled, however the eruption of civil war in Malakal in late 2013 suspended operation of the school. It was expected to reopen in 2020.⁴

Malakal Adventist Primary School was established by the local Malakal church as early as 2005 to meet the education needs of the growing number of Adventist children in the city of Malakal. The school also served as a mission school as the majority of the pupils were non-Adventists. In 2013, 450 pupils were studying at the school when it closed due to the civil war in the country. It was expected to reopen in 2020 as peace slowly returned to the country.⁵

Bentiu Future Adventist Primary School was established in the year 2005 through the efforts of the local church in the town of Bentiu in the Northern Liech state. In 2013, enrollment had reached 500 when the school's operation ended due to the civil war. However, in 2015, the school reopened as a displaced school in the UN Protection of Civilian sites (POCS) in Bentiu. In 2018, the school was operating in the POCS with over 300 pupils.⁶

The Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Greater Upper Nile Region

The Seventh-day Adventist message was first introduced to the Greater Upper Nile region in 1972 at Nasir through the effort of Ret Chol,⁷ who was converted while studying at Middle East University in Beirut, Lebanon. This small beginning later grew into a large church when Paul Gatluak introduced the Adventist message to the city of Malakal in 1985. The first official missionary to South Sudan, Pastor David Ogilo, was able to conduct a baptism in Nasir during his visit to Upper Nile region in early 1980s.⁸

Significant Events in the Organization of Greater Upper Nile Field

Before its organization into a mission field, the Greater Upper Nile Field was part of the Sudan Field, a constituent of the Middle East Union (MEU) and the Trans-European Division (TED).⁹ The MEU constituency session, conducted at Ras El Khaima in United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May 2011, voted that the Greater Upper Nile region become a mission field.¹⁰ Before the implementation of the union action, South Sudan became an independent country on July 9, 2011. Consequently, the General Conference aligned South Sudan with the East-Central Africa Division (ECD). As a result, in January 2012 the leadership of ECD, in a constituency session conducted in Juba, organized South Sudan into three mission fields, one of which was the Greater Upper Nile Field.¹¹

Mission and Strategic Plan of the Greater Upper Nile Field

The mission statement of the GUNF parallels that of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is to “call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels’ messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare the world for Christ’s soon return.”¹² The GUNF fulfills its mission statement through conducting public evangelism in all the districts of the field, personal ministry, training of pastors and teachers, empowering women and children, training and empowering the young people, and through radio ministry. The field also achieves its mission by recruiting Global Mission pioneers, Gospel Outreach evangelists, and other local mission pioneers to minister to the unreached in the territory.¹³ Its schools contribute to the achievement of the church’s mission. Every year many students are baptized as a result of missionary activities, such as weeks of prayer and Bible study programs, in the schools.¹⁴

The strategic plan of the GUNF seeks to achieve financial stability through tithe promotion, spiritual maturity through vibrant worship services, effective Sabbath School ministry, and personal ministries. The field also plans to train more pastors through a bursary program provided by SSAT as well as budgeting for the training programs. Since there are many people groups in Greater Upper Nile that have not been reached by the gospel

message, the GUNF plans to send more lay evangelists and Global Mission pioneers to these groups. Moreover, the field's radio station, Al Rajaa FM, is scheduled to begin broadcasting in early 2020. It is expected to enhance the evangelistic activities of the field.¹⁵

List of Executive Officers

The following people have led the field since it was organized:¹⁶

President: Lewis Ojowi Ondiek (January 2012-May 2014); Mark Igga Mona Odolopre (June 2014-)

Executive Secretary: Gak Ngaw Nyoat Doak (January 2012-)

Treasurer: Maqsood Yaqub (January 2012-May 2014); Kubach Giel (June 2014-June 2017); James Mathew (October 2017-April 2018); Martin Chepchos Kibet (July 25, 2019-)

SOURCES

Bentiu Future Adventist Primary School records for 2018, Bentiu Future Adventist Primary school, Northern Liech, South Sudan.

Greater Upper Nile Field Strategic Plan, voted in 2017. Greater Upper Nile Field records, Malakal, Sudan.

Official record of the Greater Upper Nile Field, 2019, Greater Upper Nile Field records, Malakal, Sudan.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011-2014.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015-2019.

Sudan Field Midyear Executive Committee Minutes, 2011, Egypt-Sudan Field records, Cairo, Egypt.

Werner, Roland, et al. *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church across 2000 years*. 2nd ed. Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010.

NOTES

1. "Greater Upper Nile Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 69.

2. Ibid.

3. Official record of the Greater Upper Nile Field, 2019, Greater Upper Nile Field records, Malakal, Sudan.

4. Information from former school record of 2013.

5. Ibid
6. Bentiu Future Adventist Primary School records for 2018, Bentiu Future Adventist Primary school, Northern Liech, South Sudan.
7. Roland Werner, et al, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years*, 2nd ed. (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010), 364.
8. Ibid.
9. "Sudan Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011)
10. Sudan Field Midyear Executive Committee Minute 2011, Egypt-Sudan Field records, Cairo, Egypt.
11. South Sudan Fields session minutes January 2012, Egypt-Sudan Field records, Cairo, Egypt.
12. "Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2019), 9.
13. Official workers record of the Greater Upper Nile Field, 2019, Greater Upper Nile Field records, Malakal, Sudan.
14. Malakal School activity report of 2013, Malakal, Sudan.
15. Greater Upper Nile Field Strategic Plan, voted in 2017, Greater Upper Nile Field records, Malakal, Sudan.
16. "Greater Upper Nile Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2011-2019).

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000