



Southern Tanzania Union Mission headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Southern Tanzania Union Mission.

# Southern Tanzania Union Mission

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The territory of Southern Tanzania Union Mission (STU) comprises the southern half of the Tanzania mainland with 13 government administrative regions, namely, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Pwani, Lindi, Iringa, Mbeya, Songwe, Njombe, Ruvuma, Mtwara, Rukwa, and Katavi; and one administrative district, namely, Kiteto district in Manyara region.<sup>1</sup> The union mission is also responsible for the entire territory under the revolutionary government of Zanzibar which has five administrative regions: three on Unguja Island (Unguja Kaskazini, Unguja Kusini, and Mjini Magharibi) and two on Pemba Island (Kaskazini Pemba and Kusini Pemba)<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, the union had three constituent conferences, namely, East-Central Tanzania Conference, South-East Tanzania Conference, and Southern Highlands Conference,<sup>3</sup> and one mission field, namely Central Tanzania Field, with a total membership of 172,052 who worship in 1,001 churches and 963 companies.<sup>4</sup> The union serves a population of 25,881,858.<sup>5</sup> At the end of 2018, the union and its sub-entities had a total of 806 active employees and 1,036 literature evangelists.<sup>6</sup>

## Organizational History of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission

Early Adventist Mission Stations in Tanzania: The first Seventh-day Adventist Church unit to be organized in Tanzania was the Germany East Africa Mission Station which was organized in 1903 with headquarters at Giti Mamba-Miamba.<sup>7</sup> The mission station was under the official supervision of the German Union Conference. This was followed by the establishment of a second mission station in 1909 at Busegwe, in the Lake Province, 20 miles (50 kilometers) east of Musoma.<sup>8</sup>

After World War I, when Tanganyika became a protectorate of Great Britain in 1919, Tanganyika was assigned as a mission territory to the British Union. In 1933 Tanganyika was organized into a mission field called Tanganyika Mission Field. In 1940 Tanganyika Mission Field was put under the care of the Southern Africa Division. From 1943 to 1960, Tanganyika Mission Field was put under the care of East African Union Mission in the same division.<sup>9</sup>

## Organization of the Tanzania Union Mission

In 1960, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and Pemba were organized into Tanganyika Union Mission with headquarters at Busegwe. After Tanganyika and Zanzibar united to form the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964, Tanganyika Union Mission was renamed Tanzania Union Mission. In 1970 Tanzania Union Mission was put under the administration of the Afro-Mideast Division, with headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1976 the headquarters of Tanzania Union Mission was moved from Busegwe to Njiro, Arusha. Afterwards, Tanzania Union was put under Eastern Africa Division (EAD), with headquarters in Harare, Zimbabwe.<sup>10</sup>

In 2003, the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, was organized and Tanzania Union Mission, with membership of 307,604, became part of the new division. At that time the Tanzania Union Mission had five conferences (Mara Conference, South Nyanza Conference, Eastern Tanzania Conference, and Southern Highlands Conference) and one field (West Tanzania Field).

## Splitting Tanzania Union Mission into Two Unions

In 2009, Tanzania Union Mission sent a request to the East-Central Africa Division asking to be organized into a union conference. The request was not granted because the division observed that the union needed to

improve in certain areas. In 2012, Tanzania Union Mission sent another request to the division asking that the union be split into two separate unions. The reorganization was to have one union conference and one union mission.<sup>11</sup> ECD granted the request and recommended the same to the General Conference for consideration. The General Conference sent a survey team in mid-2013 to assess the readiness and viability of splitting the Tanzania Union Mission into two unions. The team did its work and sent their reports to the 2013 Annual Council.

On October 16, 2013, the General Conference Annual Council voted to split Tanzania Union Mission into two unions.<sup>12</sup> The first union was the Northern Tanzania Union Conference (NTUC) comprising the administrative regions of Mara, Mwanza, Simiyu, Shinyanga, Kilimanjaro, Kagera, Kigoma, Geita, Tabora, Singida, Arusha, Manyara, and Tanga. The second union was the Southern Tanzania Union Mission (STUM), comprising the administrative regions of Dar es Salaam, Pwani, Morogoro, Dodoma, Mtwara, Lindi, Iringa, Ruvuma, Rukwa, Katavi, Mbeya, Njombe, and Songwe. Islands of Zanzibar with administrative regions of Kaskazini Unguja, Kusini Unguja, and Mjini Magharibi; and Pemba, comprising the administrative regions of Kaskazini Pemba and Kusini Pemba, naturally became part of the Southern Union.<sup>13</sup> In 2018 the district of Kiteto in Manyara region was removed from the Northern Tanzania Union Conference and added to the Southern Tanzania Union Mission territory.<sup>14</sup>

## Church Administrative Units and Institutions

At the time of the split, Southern Tanzania Union Mission inherited two church administrative entities: Eastern Tanzania Conference and Southern Highlands Conference. However, despite the split, some institutions remained under the jurisdiction of the entire SDA Church in Tanzania; they include Tanzania Adventist Media Channels, Ufunuo Publishing House, and Home Health Education Services. Nevertheless, STUM became the caretaker of the institutions since their headquarters were in the territory of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission territory.<sup>15</sup>

## Organization of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission

The extended executive committee of the East-Central Africa Division that convened on November 5, 2013 at ECD headquarters in the city of Nairobi, with representatives from Southern Highlands Conference and Eastern Tanzania Conference, chose the first leaders of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission. Those who were chosen were as follows: Magulilo John Mwakalonge, president; James Chacha Machage, executive secretary; and Jack Nathaniel Manongi, treasurer.<sup>16</sup>

## Impact of Southern Tanzania Union on Mission

After splitting the former Tanzania Union Mission, the first visible impact was the construction of a new office for the headquarters of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission at Mbweni in the Kinondoni district in the city of Dar es Salaam. Apart from the increase in the church's infrastructure, STU which started with two conferences, Southern Highlands Conference and East Tanzania Conference, created a third conference in 2015 by splitting East Tanzania Conference into East-Central Tanzania Conference and South-East Tanzania Conference, and on March 1, 2019, Southern Tanzania Union Mission inaugurated a new field called Central Tanzania Field with headquarters at Dodoma, the capital city of Tanzania. Moreover, the union was organized in 2013 with 95,000 church members. By the end of the fourth quarter of 2018, the membership of the union stood at 172,052.<sup>17</sup>

## Mission Strategies

A large percentage of the territory of the union is comprised of Muslims who are not reached by the regular methods the church uses in evangelism. Despite the efforts to evangelize the southern parts of the country since the 1930s, there has not been much success. Thus, the union has within its territory, 994 out of 1,690 wards (sub-locations) that have no Adventists.<sup>18</sup> That is to say about 58.8 percent of the STUM territory has no Adventist presence. This calls for creativity and study to develop methods to bring a lasting evangelistic impact. To address these challenges, the Adventist Church in the southern Tanzania territory has in place several mission strategies as delineated in the following paragraphs.

### A network of educational institutions

Southern Tanzania Union Mission, through its conferences and mission fields, operates a network of primary schools and secondary schools in its territory as a mission strategy to reach the communities with the Adventist message. There are two primary schools in the South-East Tanzania Conference, namely, Temeke Adventist Primary School and Kongowe Adventist Primary School. There is one primary school and one secondary school in the East-Central Tanzania Conference, namely, Agape Primary School and Kitungwa Adventist Secondary School. There is one primary school and two secondary schools in the Southern Highlands Conference, namely, Mbeya Adventist Primary School, Ndembela Secondary School, and Mbeya Adventist Secondary School. There is one secondary school in Central Tanzania Field, namely, Iringa Adventist Secondary School. Through these educational institutions, the Southern Tanzania Union Mission reaches the population within the territory with the saving message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As another mission strategy, the union leadership has considered starting a tertiary institution and the church members have bought into the idea. At the time of the split in 2013, the Tanzania Union Mission had one university, the University of Arusha. By virtue of its location, it fell under the jurisdiction of the Northern Tanzania Union Conference. Realizing the value of an institution of higher learning to the mission of the Church, especially in a territory such as ours, the union Executive Committee which met on May 11, 2016, at Mbweni, in Dar es Salaam, decided to erect a university.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, a special task force under the leadership of the union

education director has been put in place to work on the necessary details for presentation to the committee, after which the request will be sent to the division for approval.<sup>20</sup>

#### Media outlets

The church uses its media institutions in a more deliberate way to evangelize its territory. The Adventist Church in Tanzania owns one television station (Hope Channel Tanzania based in the city of Dar es Salaam), two FM radio stations (Morning Star FM Radio based in Dar es Salaam City and Rock FM Radio station based in Mbeya City), and one Adventist World Radio (AWR) studio based in Morogoro that produces Swahili and Maasai programs that are broadcast through a short wave AWR radio station based in South Africa reaching the entire territory of Tanzania and neighboring countries. The radio and television stations are used to broadcast the Adventist message to almost the entire country of Tanzania as well as the neighboring countries in east and central Africa. In addition to these media facilities, the Adventist Church in Tanzania shares the gospel through Voice of Prophecy lessons, both regular and advanced courses. Recently, the Southern Tanzania Union voted to start a newspaper called *Sauti Kuu*. The newspaper, which will be sold by street newspaper vendors, will serve both as a public relations platform and as an evangelism tool.

#### A network of medical facilities

Southern Tanzania Union Mission, through its three conferences and one field, operates 12 medical facilities as the right arm of the gospel. Two of them are Temeke Dispensary (Dar es Salaam) and Mtwara Dispensary (Mtwara-Mikindani), which are located in the South-East Tanzania Conference. Others are Misufini Dispensary (Morogoro), Zanzibar Dispensary (Zanzibar), and Pemba Dispensary (Pemba), which are in the East-Central Tanzania Conference. The Iganzo Dispensary (Mbeya), Mwakaleli Dispensary (Mwakaleli, Mbeya), Kyela Dispensary (Kyela), Njombe Dispensary (Njombe), Sumbawanga Dispensary (Rukwa), and Mpanda Dispensary (Katavi) are part of the Southern Highlands Conference. Additionally, the newly created entity, Central Tanzania Field, has one dispensary, namely, Zoisa Dispensary (Zoisa-Dodoma). These institutions contribute immensely to the mission of the church in southern Tanzania.

#### Centers of influence

The Adventist Church in the Southern Tanzania Union Mission utilizes its Centers of Influence to reach the surrounding communities. The best-known facilities of this kind are in Pemba and Zanzibar. These are currently used to deliver medical and primary healthcare services as well as counseling sessions. Apart from these facilities, the church has a center of influence at Kwembe in the city of Dar es Salaam which is managed by the Magomeni SDA Church.

#### AMR program

Southern Tanzania Union Mission has in place a strong Adventist Muslim Relations (AMR) program for educating church members in the territory regarding the best methods for relating to their neighbors. This prepares them

to meaningfully share their faith with the local community, the majority of whom are Muslims. At each level of the church, from the union to the local church, there is in place an AMR coordinator who is trained in Muslim evangelism. These in turn teach church members the best methods for reaching Muslims with the gospel. They also use their knowledge in biblical and Qur'anic studies to protect the church and the members by clarifying theological issues that, from time to time, are advanced by Muslims to demean Christian beliefs.

#### Global Mission Initiatives

In addition to the aforementioned mission strategies, STU has put in place a plan to send out 100 Global Mission pioneers per year with the purpose of reaching 100 wards every year.<sup>21</sup> This means that by the year 2029, all the territory covered by Southern Tanzania Union Mission will have been reached at least at the ward (sub-location) level.

#### A nurture and retention (discipleship) program

As a mission strategy, the Adventist church in southern Tanzania has put in place a nurture and retention program in which a special committee has been created at each level of the church from the union to the local church to follow up on the nurture and retention work as outlined in the guidelines developed by the East-Central Africa Division. The program is intended to help new members stay in the church once they are baptized.<sup>22</sup>

## Executive Officers Chronology

Presidents: Magulilo John Mwakalonge (2013-2015); Mark Walwa Malekana (2015-)

Executive Secretaries: James Chacha Machage (2013-2015); Rabson Ntambala Nkoko (2015-)

Treasurers: Jack Nathaniel Manongi (2013-2017); Athanas Sigoma (2017-)<sup>23</sup>

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## NOTES

1. The author is grateful for the assistance he received from Mrs. Navoneiwa Lebabu and Mrs. Saumu Kukome Letta, the administrative secretaries in the office of the executive secretary, and Dr. James Machage, the founding executive secretary of Southern Tanzania Union.
2. Southern Tanzania Union Mission of the SDA Church, Operating Policy, 2018 Edition, Article IV.
3. "Southern Tanzania Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2018), 60-61.
4. *Southern Tanzania Union Mission Secretary's Statistical Report*, First Quarter 2019, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
5. "Southern Tanzania Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 60.

6. *Southern Tanzania Union Mission Secretary's Statistical Report*, Fourth Quarter 2018, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
7. Stefan Hoschele, *Christian Remnant-African Folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903-1980* (Leiden: IDC Publishers, 2007), 178-186.
8. "Tanzania," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, second revised edition, vol. 11 (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), 746.
9. "Kanisa la Waadventista wa Sabato Mkutano Mkuu wa Kwanza wa Union ya Kusini mwa Tanzania," Southern Tanzania Union Mission (STU) First Constituency Meeting Schedule, December 4-7, 2013, 3-5.
10. Ibid.
11. Tanzania Union Mission Executive Committee Minutes, Action Number 226, "Splitting TUM," dated October 4, 2012.
12. "Reorganization for Church Territories," Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist News Network, accessed April 6, 2019, <https://news.adventist.org>.
13. There were two General Conference actions that affected the creation of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission.

The first action was a recommendation from the 2013 Annual Council to the 2010 GC Session.

136-13GS TANZANIA UNION MISSION—REORGANIZATION

RECOMMENDED, To reorganize the Tanzania Union Mission in the East-Central Africa Division into a union conference and a union mission, as follows:

- a. The North Tanzania Union Conference with constituency from Mara Conference, North-East Tanzania Conference, South Nyanza Conference, and West Tanzania Field, with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, effective no later than December 31, 2013; and
- b. The South Tanzania Union Mission with constituency from East Tanzania Conference and Southern Highlands Conference, with headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, effective no later than December 31, 2013.

The second action, is the actual vote at the 2010 GC Session:

125-15GS NORTHERN TANZANIA UNION CONFERENCE AND SOUTHERN TANZANIA UNION MISSION—NEW UNION CONFERENCE AND NEW UNION MISSION

VOTED,

- a. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Tanzania Union Mission into a union conference and a union mission known as the Northern Tanzania Union Conference and the Southern Tanzania Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.
- b. To accept the Northern Tanzania Union Conference (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



c. To accept the Southern Tanzania Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The wording of these actions was sent to the author by Pastor Hensley Mooroooven, General Conference Undersecretary, through an email message on April 11, 2019.

14. Seventh-day Adventist Church Executive Committee Minutes Action Number STU/EXCOM/058/2017 dated May 18, 2017.
15. Constitution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tanzania, 2014 Edition, Article IX.
16. Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist News Network, "Reorganization for Church Territories," accessed April 6, 2019  
<https://news.adventist.org>.
17. *Southern Tanzania Union Mission Secretary's Statistical Report*, Fourth Quarter 2018, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
18. Southern Tanzania Union Mission: Adventist Presence Analysis Form per sub-location report, 2017, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
19. "Southern Tanzania Union Mission Executive Committee Minutes, Action Number STU/EXCOM 103/2016," dated May 11, 2016, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
20. "Southern Tanzania Union Mission Executive Committee Minutes, Action Number STU/EXCOM 104/2016," dated May 11, 2016, Southern Tanzania Union Mission.
21. Pastor Herbert Nziku, STU Global Mission Coordinator, interview by author, Southern Tanzania Union Mission Headquarters, December 12, 2018.
22. Nurture and Retention is crucial because the church loses many of the members it wins through evangelistic activities.
23. The author of this article served at the Southern Tanzania Union Mission since the inception and hence was aware of these facts.

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