

Shapa, Samuel Tambamane (1928–1986)

ESTHER MONDE SHAPA

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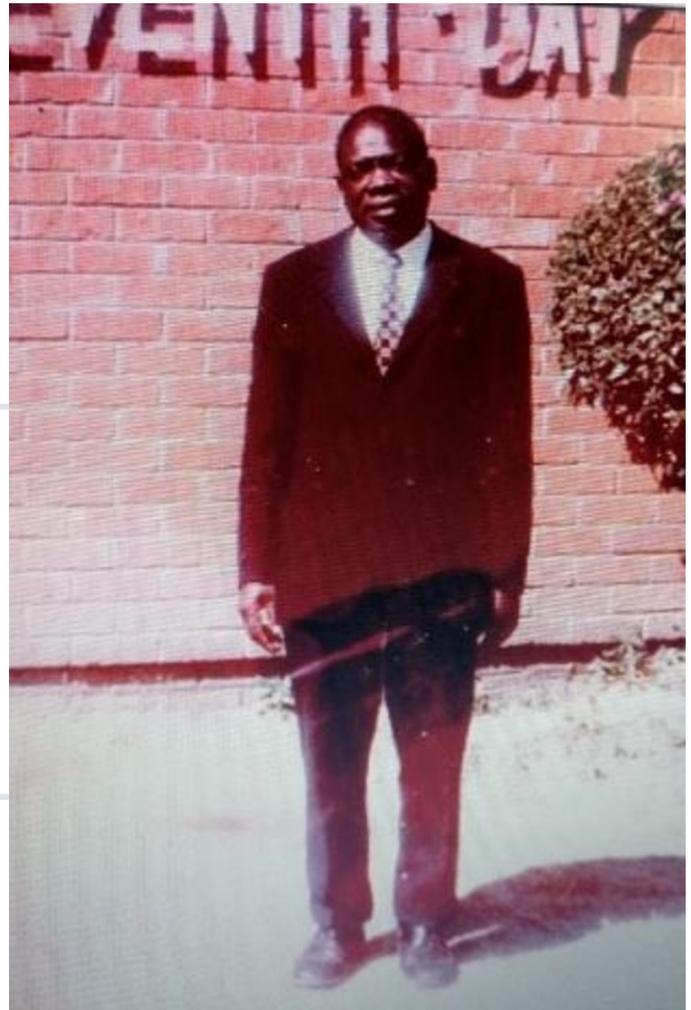
Diploma (National Institute of Public Administration [NIPA], Lusaka), is the sixth child of Pastor Shapa. She graduated from NIPA as an Administrative Assistant to serve in the Secretarial profession. Later she studied Advanced Supervision Course at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Kitwe. Esther pursued further training in Christian Salesmanship, Psycho-social Counselling, and Medical Missionary Movement.

Samuel Tambamane Shapa was a Zambian Seventh-day Adventist teacher, pastor and church administrator.

Early Life

Samuel Tambamane Shapa was born on March 16, 1916 in Kalabo district, Kandiana village. His father's name was Tambamane Simasiku Mubita. During Zambia's colonial era, most of the people shunned education because they saw no value in it. For this reason, the District Commissioner for Kalabo enacted a law requiring each parent with two or more sons to take at least one child to school or suffer punishment. For fear of facing punishment, Samuel Shapa's parents decided to take him to Liumba Hill Mission School. There he did his substandard A. While still at the mission, Shapa was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1932. By 1936 the Liumba Hill Mission School was offering education up to Standard IV under the leadership of C. E. Wheeler.¹

Shapa became a popular student among the missionaries because of his dedication and excellent academic performance. However, his parents could not provide adequate support for his education. As a result, he opted to do manual tasks for the missionaries during school holidays to raise and save funds. At that time there was no free education system in Barotseland. Those were some of the challenges he faced during his early school



Pastor Shapa at Lusaka Central Church

Photo courtesy of Esther Monde Shapa.

days until he entered the tertiary level. After completing Standard IV, he went to Solusi Missionary College (now Solusi University) in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where was trained to become a teacher-evangelist.

Ministry (1939-1964)

The ministry of Pastor Shapa can be divided into two periods: teaching and pastoral ministry (1939-1964) and administrative ministry (1964-1980). Shapa began his teaching career in 1939 and taught for about five years. During this period he got married to Lukonga Mulowa on July 17, 1940. They had seven children: David Mwenda, Margaret Masiliso, Grace Inonge, Davison Sifuniso, John Mubita, Esther Monde and Kabukabu. In 1944, while he was working as a head teacher for Lui Wanyau School in Senanga District, he reported an experience of one farmer whose name was Mulowa, who always returned his tithe faithfully. After planting his maize crop one season, Mulowa and his wife fell ill and could not take care of their maize crop. However, the crop flourished and there was no weed in the field. When a neighbor visited Mulowa to learn what medicine he had used in his field, Mulowa told his neighbors his medicine was the Word of God and cited Malachi 3:10-12. This was his proof that God “rebuked the devourer” not to destroy the fruit of his ground.²

Shapa received a letter from the Northern Rhodesia colonial government, through the Ministry of Education, promoting him to the position of Inspector of Schools. Around that same time, he also received a letter of appointment from the Mission to become an evangelist. Shapa opted to become an evangelist and served for five years in this responsibility. In 1950 he and Pastor George Sikongo were ordained to the Gospel Ministry at Liumba Hill Mission by F. G. Thomas.³

During his ministerial career, Pastor Shapa worked in several places with the following missionaries: Sitoti Mission, with Elder Devilious, R. L. Garber, W. R. Zork and G. L. Parsley; Mongu, with Edward A. Trumper, Elder Sell, Elder Glass and Boath; Liumba Hill Mission, with Fred G. Thomas, Raymond C. Tarr and Duane Brenneman; and Zambia Union, with Albert Bristow, Elder A. E. Harms and Elder Duane Brenneman.

When he was pastoring at Sitoti Mission, under the leadership of Pastor Parsley, Pastor Shapa used to walk several miles with his camp bed on his back to evangelize and conduct camp meetings from one village to another. The only mode of transport was by foot. However, canoes were sometimes used to reach villages that could only be accessed by water.

Pastor Shapa shared testimonies of God's miraculous provisions in his life. The following are two examples as remembered by his family. One early morning in around 1950, Pastor Shapa was cycling in the Zambezi plain from Sitoti to Senanga District (Boma), when he suddenly saw what looked like two men who bore their luggage and were heading in the same direction. Due to the long grass in the plain, visibility was quite poor. Therefore, these two men would disappear and reappear after some time in the distance. Out of curiosity, Shapa got off his bike to check the footprints of the men walking in front of him. To his shock, he saw only footprints of two lions and no human footprints. Pastor Shapa quickly prayed for God's protection. After walking for several miles,

what had appeared to be two men could no longer be seen, and at this point he got back on his bicycle and rode as fast as he could until he reached Senanga Boma safely.

On another day, while conducting an evangelistic campaign he got very hungry. He started sweating as he became very desperate for food. Suddenly, he stumbled across a tree with some wild juicy fruit called Mumawa. After devouring the fruits to his satisfaction, he proceeded to the campaign site. When he later decided to pass through that same place to gather more fruits, the fruit tree was no more there. He searched the area hoping to find it but only found the seeds that he left after eating the fruit earlier that day. That is when he realized that it must have been an act of God manifested to mitigate his hunger crisis.

For twenty-two years Shapa worked in different places and church leadership responsibilities. In 1951 he was one of the delegates to the Ninth Missionary Council of the Southern African Division held in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).⁴ Later that year he was one of the main participants at the dedication ceremony of the first church building in Barotseland, at Liumba Hill Mission where he offered the opening prayer.⁵ By 1954, while assisting Elder E. Willmore Tarr at Liumba Hill Mission camp meeting, Pastor Shapa and Pastor George Sikongo were reported to be the only two ordained African pastors in Barotseland.⁶ His ministerial work often led him to travel to other countries. In 1957 he accompanied Elder Walter Cooks as visiting speaker at Maun Camp meeting in Bechuanaland (Botswana) where he also assisted in baptizing eighteen people.⁷

While he was stationed in Mongu, the provincial capital of Barotseland (Western Province of Zambia), Pastor J. Mabuti (from southern Zambia), who was visiting Barotseland for the first time in 1958, reported that Pastor Shapa informed him that some of the Indunas (royal officials) at Lealui, the traditional capital of Barotseland, were returning tithe, reading their Bibles and keeping the Sabbath.⁸

Due to changes in the political atmosphere in Africa and as a result of some African countries' struggles for independence from colonial rule, foreign missionaries worked hard to train native workers to hold administrative positions in the church. The church sent Pastor Shapa to Solusi College for further professional studies in leadership in 1962. He was part of the first group of African workers selected to go and study leadership courses. This group comprised workers from Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

Administrative Responsibilities (1964-1980)

Upon completion of this leadership training, Pastor Shapa worked closely with Pastor Percely who was Mission Station director at Sitoti Mission, prior to Zambia's political independence.⁹

When Zambia got its independence on October 24, 1964, all foreigners holding leadership positions both in the government and the church were replaced by native Zambians. Pastor Shapa became the first Zambian to be appointed as Mission Station director for Sitoti Mission.¹⁰

Pastor Shapa became also the first Zambian to hold the position of administrative secretary during the organization of Zambia Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventists in 1972.¹¹ Pastor A. Bristow was elected union president, while E. R. Weisser was elected secretary-treasurer. At that time, except for the president, all other officers and staff of the new Zambia Union Mission were operating from Chisekesi, near Rusangu Mission, Monze, in the Southern Province. Toward the end of 1973, the Zambia Union Mission headquarters was moved to Lusaka, the capital city of the country.¹²

While serving at Zambia Union Mission, Pastor Shapa was nicknamed by some of his colleagues as “oil,” because he was instrumental in easing the administrative tensions. He occupied this position from 1978 up to the time he retired in 1980.

Retirement and Legacy

Pastor Shapa remained an active preacher after his retirement. It was for this reason that he was requested to serve as administrator at Yuka Mission Hospital, near Kalabo, not far from his retirement home. He reported for office work at the hospital twice a week for about two years. Samuel Shapa passed away on July 27, 1986 and awaits the resurrection of the righteous when Christ shall come to take His saints home.

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1. E. M. Cadwallader, "Native Education in Barotseland," *Southern African Division Outlook*, November 1, 1936, 3.
2. C. Albert Bradley, "Mulowa's Proof," *Southern African Division Outlook*, March 15, 1944, 4. See also C. Albert Bradley, "Mulowa's Proof," *Missionary Leader*, October 28, 1944, 8.
3. Cornelius M. Matandiko, *Seventh-day Adventism in Zambia*, Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Adventist Press, 2001, 121.
4. Editorial, "Representatives Attending the Council," *Southern African Division Outlook*, June 15, 1951, 32.
5. E. A. Trumper, "Barotseland's First Church Building," *Southern African Division Outlook*, November 15, 1951, 3.
6. E. Willmore Tarr, "Angola is Just Across the Border," *Southern African Division Outlook*, September 15, 1954, 4.
7. S. G. Maxwell, "Wealth in the Desert," *The Youth's Instructor*, January 8, 1957, 15, 16.
8. J. Mabuti, "Barotseland," *Southern African Division Outlook*, June 15, 1959, 9.
9. S. Shapa, "God Honors Faithfulness," *Missions Quarterly*, November 30, 1963, 15.
10. W. R. Zork, "Barotseland Safari," *Trans-African Division Outlook*, January 15, 1965, 6.
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