

Nyamongo, Jonathan (1898–1997)

GODFREY K. SANG

Godfrey K. Sang is a historical researcher and writer with an interest in Adventist history. He holds a B.A. in History from the University of Eastern Africa Baraton and a number of qualifications from other universities. He is a published author. He is the co-author of the book *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya*.

Jonathan Auma Nyamongo was a pioneer teacher, pastor, and administrator in Kenya.

Early Life

Jonathan Auma Nyamongo was born in 1898 in the Bonyunyu village in Kisii, Kenya, to Mzee Nyamongo Manono and Mama Boyani Nyamongo.¹ He received his early education at Bonyunyu, where he learned to count numbers and read letters. Later, he attended Nyanchwa Esegita for his college education. Jonathan was baptized on August 25, 1928, at the Isonto River in Nyambunche. He married Dinah Buyeke Ogoti, who was a farmer and businesswoman, in 1927.²

Career

Jonathan started working as a teacher in 1928 at Miobo. He later worked at Nyabonge in Bogetutu, where the Nyabonge Society is currently situated. In 1931, he was posted to Magwagwa. From 1932 to 1933, he worked at Ntana and then at Tonga from 1935 to 1938. Jonathan returned to Ntana Esegita in 1940 where he served to 1942, and then he went to Magwaga from 1943 to 1944. He later worked at Bonyunyu from 1944 to 1949.

As a pastor, Jonathan served at Tonga, Kea, and Sironga from 1950 to 1954. He then served at the Kiabonyoru Church from 1955 to 1956 and at Tombe, Nyaikuro, and Ikonge from 1956 to 1962. He later served at Kenyenia, Kiabonyoru, Nyakeore, Sironga, Nyachogochogo, and Makairo from 1963 to 1966. By this time, he was a credentialed missionary, one of only four in the South Kenya Field. The others included S. Nyachieo, I. Omwega, and J. Siika.³ Jonathan then served at Kea, Magwagwa, Nyamusi, Getari, and Gekonge from 1967 to 1969.⁴

Family

Jonathan and Dinah had ten children: Naftal Nyamongo, Teresa Kwamboka, Jemiah Bosibori, Joseph Onsongo, Abner Masanda, Florah Nyakerario, Sabellah Kemunto, Machaka Nyakundi, Gideon Mecha, and Dr. Caleb Manyaga. Some of his children held senior positions in society, including Naftal Nyamongo, who was a clinical officer at the Kisii District Hospital and retired in 1986, and Dr. Caleb Manyaga, who was a finance manager at

the Kenya Pipeline Company before he retired in 2009. Dr. Manyaga was recently elected as an independent director for the giant utility firm of Kenya Power.

Legacy

Jonathan's Auma's highest achievement was establishing many churches in Nyamira County, resulting in many people joining the Adventist faith. He retired in December 1969 due to ill health and then passed away on October 5, 1997. He was survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren.

SOURCES

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association. Various years.
<https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

NOTES

1. From a write-up by Dr. Caleb Manyaga generously shared with the author on January 22, 2024.
2. Ibid.
3. "South Kenya Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1965-66 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 256.
4. Ibid.

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