

Butuk, Peter Kipkemboi araap

(1924–1994)

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*.

Peter Kipkemboi araap Butuk was a pioneer Nandi teacher, evangelist, district pastor, and church administrator.

Early Life

Peter Kipkemboi araap Butuk was born in 1924 in Songhor in southern Nandi, Kenya, to Kibutuk araap Terer. He began his early education at local schools before proceeding to the Government African School Kapsabet where he studied to sit for the Primary School Examination in 1942, in the same class as one who would later become President Daniel araap Moi.¹ He trained as a teacher at Kapsabet and became a teacher in government schools. He first taught at Kosirai School and then moved to Ngechek. It was from the invitation of his friend and former schoolmate Jackson Kipler Maiyo that he attended the 1953 camp meeting at Kaigat. It was there that he became an Adventist and was baptized that same year. The following year he married Rael Jemesunde at the church in Kaigat and together they had eight children, five sons and three daughters.

Going into Ministry

Shortly after his marriage, Peter quit government service and began to teach in church schools. He taught first at Chebwai Adventist School, then went to Karura Adventist School, and then to Kabokyek Adventist School. He taught between 1954 and 1962 at which time he was ordained a minister. He then went to Bugema Adventist College to study for the ministry from 1963 to 1964. There he obtained a diploma in pastoral ministry. In 1960, while still a teacher, he helped translate the book *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White into the Kalenjin language. It was known as *Luget Ne O*.

When he returned from Bugema, he became the mission director at Kaigat, taking over from Pastor Jackson Maiyo in January 1965. In 1969 he moved to Kabokyek in Kericho as the mission director. He preached in many places, was the main speaker at many camp meetings, and baptized many into the church. He returned from Kericho in 1972 and became a district pastor in Eldoret where he helped establish the Eldoret Central Church

and various other churches in the area. He moved to Kitale where he established the Kitale Central church.² These churches have since spawned many more churches and Sabbath Schools.

Later Life

He retired in 1990 and lived on his farm in the Kabiemit area in northern Nandi. Even in retirement he participated in many ministerial meetings and was a trusted advisor in the church. He was an avid reader and helped correct many doctrinal issues based on his wide understanding of denominational history and research. He passed away in 1994 and was laid to rest at his farm in Kabiemit.³ One of his sons, Dickson Butuk, followed him in the ministry.

SOURCES

Godfrey K. Sang, Kili, and K. Hosea, *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya*. Nairobi: Gapman Publications Ltd., 2017.

School Records at Kapsabet High School, admission file number 727, Kapsabet, Kenya.

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1. From School Records at Kapsabet High School, admission file number 727, Kapsabet, Kenya.
2. Godfrey K. Sang, Kili and K. Hosea, *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya* (Nairobi: Gapman Publications Ltd., 2017).
3. Pastor Dickson Butuk, interview by author, July 23, 2015.

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