



South Sudan Attached Territory headquarters

Photo courtesy of Daniel Ogwok.

# South Sudan Attached Territory

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## DANIEL OGWOK OJWAN DENG

Daniel Ogwok Ojwan Deng, M.A. in Islamic studies (Middle East University, Beirut, Lebanon). Ogwok is an ordained minister and has served as a global mission pioneer, church district leader, field departmental director, and field president. Currently he is the executive secretary of South Sudan Attached Territory. He is married to Akouch Orach, who has supported his ministry for 26 years. They have two sons and three daughters.

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The South Sudan Attached Territory of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SSAT) is a constituent of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) of the General Conference. It was organized in 2015. Its headquarters is located at Bilpam-Gudele Roundabout, plot no., 1, Block 2; Hai-Kuwait, Munuki; Juba; South Sudan.<sup>1</sup>

## Current Territory and Statistics

The South Sudan Attached Territory functions as a corporation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan, registered under the non-governmental organization Act, 2003, on February 14, 2013.<sup>2</sup> The territory of the South Sudan Attached Territory comprises the Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Equatoria, Greater Upper Nile Fields, and recently added Eastern Upper Nile Station.<sup>3</sup>

In the *2018 Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, the South Sudan Attached Territory was listed as an attached field, having three constituent fields which had a total of 62 organized churches and 195 companies. Church membership at the end of 2017 was 34,326.<sup>4</sup> The church had 174 active employees. The total tithe received for the attached territory in 2016 was US\$377,381. Its tithe and offering per capita were US\$15.07.<sup>5</sup>

## Institutions and Services of the South Sudan Attached Territory

*Juba Adventist Secondary School* was established in 2017<sup>6</sup> due to the high demand for a church school in the capital city, Juba. While the major objective was to serve the children of the church workers and members, the school is also a means of reaching the children of the unreached, with hope that through the children the parents will come to know the Bible truth.<sup>7</sup>

*Munuki SDA Clinic*: "The operation of the clinic started outside the church compound in 1980. The treatment started with those who came to work at the Munuki compound of the SDA Church, particularly the builders. This happened after the arrival of the missionary doctor, Jared Whitehouse. Because there was no building in the church compound, they started working from a rented premise.<sup>8</sup> Later, in May 1982, the building of the clinic was completed which marked the official opening of the operation of the Munuki clinic in the church compound, according to Judy Whitehouse.

*Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)*. ADRA "started in Southern Sudan as SAWS, in 1980 at the arrival of Dr. Jerald Whitehouse."<sup>9</sup> Later, in 1983, it was registered as Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Khartoum. The first country director was David Taylor. Dr. Whitehouse was the mission director, with headquarters in Juba; as such he oversaw the work of ADRA as well. In 1983 the civil war started. When the war reached the Equatoria region, it forced many citizens to run to the neighboring countries as refugees; and some were also displaced to the northern part of the country, forcing the SDA headquarters to be relocated to Khartoum. By 1989 the war had become so intense that it required the restructuring of the work in Sudan. Thus, ADRA South Sudan was created and headed by Jerry Lewis, and the South Sudan Section of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was created and headed by Faustino Capailitan. However, when the comprehensive peace agreement was signed in 2005, ADRA South Sudan was relocated to Juba at the current Munuki compound. Eventually, the section which grew into South Sudan Field, was approved for relocation to the Munuki Compound, Juba, South Sudan, in 2009;<sup>10</sup> and this was implemented in 2011. This is where the South Sudan

Attached Territory currently operates.

## Origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan,

The Seventh-day Adventist message came at a time when the country was still united as one Sudan. There were several attempts to bring the gospel into the country. “An exploratory survey was made as early as 1927, when Sudan was part of the assigned territory of the European Division. SDA workers, including colporteurs, visited the country.” Northern Sudan was assigned to the Middle East Division at its organization as a division in 1951. Then, in 1953, an Egyptian licensed minister, Farris Basta, and his family moved to Khartoum.

South Sudan remained within the territory of the Northern European Division until 1955. On April 22, 1961, a third convert, a South Sudanese from a pagan background, was baptized.<sup>11</sup> In 1974 a South Sudanese named Ret Chol, a graduate of Middle East University, was appointed to direct the work; even so there was not much progress. Another attempt was made in the 1970s, and in 1979 the work started officially with the coming of Pastor David Ogillo with his family from Tanzania and Dr. Jerald Whitehouse, the mission director, with his family from America. In 1982 they established Munuki Clinic in Juba.<sup>12</sup>

## Significant Events in the Organization of the South Sudan Attached Territory

Before separation of the country, there were two fields in Sudan. One was the Sudan Field based in Khartoum, and the other was the South Sudan Field which was based in Arua, Uganda, but moved to Juba in 2011. After the split of Sudan into two countries, Sudan and South Sudan, the majority of Seventh-day Adventist members who had received the message while in exile moved to South Sudan, which is administratively near the East-Central Africa Division. Due to this fact, South Sudan was restructured to come under the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) instead of under the Trans-European Division (TED), headquartered in London. The two fields in South Sudan—the Greater Equatoria Field with headquarters in Juba, and the Greater Upper Nile Field with headquarters in Malakal—became part of ECD in November 2011.<sup>13</sup>

In the same meetings ECD decided to call a joint session for South Sudan to reorganize the territories of the two fields by creating a third entity called the Greater Bahr El-Ghazal Field, headquartered in Wau.<sup>14</sup> The East-Central Africa Division appointed the South Sudan Oversight Committee, composed mostly of members from the ECD departmental directors and the three field presidents.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the South Sudan fields were attached individually to ECD.<sup>16</sup> The recommendation went to the ECD Executive Committee on November 3, 2015, to organize the South Sudan Fields as an attached territory to the East-Central Africa Division under the name of South Sudan Attached Territory (SSAT), and this was approved by the officers.<sup>17</sup>

## Mission and Strategic Plan of the South Sudan Attached Territory

The South Sudan Attached Territory follows the worldwide Mission Statement of the SDA Church which is to “Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels’ Message in preparation for His soon return (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev 14:6-12).”<sup>8</sup>

The South Sudan Attached Territory fulfills its mission statement through various activities that include training and ordaining pastors at all field levels and increasing the workforce in order to have regular workers. It seeks to conduct evangelism in all of the ten former states once every year to increase membership by 80 percent, with emphasis on discipleship as a core of mission. It also seeks to organize churches at field levels, create retention and nurture committees in all fields and mission stations and churches, introduce prayer ministry in all churches throughout the South Sudan Attached Territory, and conduct camp meetings in all churches.

SSAT plans to reach all unreached tribes and people groups by:

Sending local missionaries, and training all pastors, Global Mission workers, evangelists, and church members to be faithful in handling tithes and offerings;

Encouraging all fields and churches to carry out yearly children’s programs, Vacation Bible Schools, Bible correspondence courses, and other children’s activities by 2020;

Carving out a financial independence plan for fields and mission station, training church members to be financially independent, and auditing all the fields and the local churches throughout the South Sudan Attached Territory;

Conducting a minimum of one Pastors Kids’ Convention and one Shepherdess Training Meeting each year;

Ensuring that all pastors’ and members’ children are registered in school;

Introducing image change for all church buildings throughout the territory;

Planning and opening one secondary school in the Munuki compound and encouraging all organized churches to open SDA schools at their level;

Encouraging fields and mission stations to open at least one secondary school;

Striving to register the Adventist University of South Sudan as an affiliate of the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

As the South Sudan Attached Field is faced with the challenge of a high rate of illiteracy among women, there is need to incorporate a formal and informal education system for women. SSAT needs to work on the establishment of FM stations in its territory through the help of ECD and AWR. At the state levels, the SDA Church needs to advocate for peace and reconciliation messages among our communities.<sup>19</sup>

## Executive Officers

President: Clement Joseph Arkangelo Mawa (November 2015-present).

Executive Secretary: Daniel Ogwok Ojwan Deng (November 2015-present).

Treasurer: Dani Harelimana: (2016-present).

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## SOURCES

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## NOTES

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2. Republic of South Sudan Non-governmental Organization Act, (2003), 1.

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5. Ibid., 32.
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7. Ibid.
8. Judy, Whitehouse, letter sent April 19, 2019, to Lagu Charles, Juba, South Sudan.
9. Roland, Werner, William, Anderson and Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment. The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years* (Pauline Publication Africa, 2010), 364.
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