

Aligo, Noel (1971–2018)

RICHARD LASU

Richard Lasu

Noel Aligo was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and administrator from South Sudan.

Early Life and Education

Noel Aligo was born June 15, 1971, in the clan of Mluteng, Gimunu Payam. He is a son of Charles Were of the Mluteng clan and Esther Leo from the Gbiryang clan of Pakula Payam.¹ He was born in Kasese, Uganda, when his parents were refugees due to the Anyanya guerrilla movement of 1955-1972. His parents returned to South Sudan and settled in their home area of Gimunu where he grew up as a strong young man who was very responsible. There were three daughters and three sons in the family and Noel was the third child.

During that time, children frequently made slow progress in getting through school. Most of their time as children was spent taking care of goats and sheep, helping their parents in the garden, and hunting in the nearby bush. Noel attended Gimunu Primary School from 1980 to 1987. It took him eight years to finish the primary level of six years. He studied at Gimunu Intermediate School from 1987 to 1989.

After he finished intermediate school, the war started to intensify around the Gimunu and Yei area, so the family hid for their lives; but conditions worsened to the level where they decided to leave the village and go to the so-called “liberated area” of Kaya, a small town on the border with Uganda. Before Aligo left the village, he was joined by one of his brothers who came from Yei town to seek refuge in the village. The brother came to share the Adventist message with those in the village, and Aligo and his other brother accepted the message. The Aligo brothers left their village and went to Kaya with the Adventist faith. They were baptized in Koboko, a border town inside Uganda, by a Ugandan pastor named Gasper Andama in 1991.

Becoming Refugees Again

After a short stay in Kaya, the government forces advanced to recapture Kaya from the SPLA (rebel) forces in August 1993. Aligo and his father’s family ran to Uganda as refugees and settled in the Koboko transit camp, waiting to be taken to a settlement where they could be given land for cultivation. In the Gbeng transit camp, he attended Nyangilia Secondary School from 1994 to 1997. After finishing secondary school, he left his parents in the Mariaba refugee camp and studied at the Adventist Seminary in Bahr Naam, Maridi county, South Sudan,

from 1999 to 2001, while also doing evangelism. After finishing the seminary, he was accepted by Middle East University, from 2003 to 2010, to study for pastoral ministry at the off-campus site in Arua, Uganda.²

Marriage and Pastoral Ministry

After finishing his studies and finding employment, Aligo married Talata Jerisa from the Rurudji clan of Mundu Payam, Kupera County, Yei River state, on October 10, 2006.³ They had four children—three daughters and one son.

Noel demonstrated in his life his love for God, and he practiced the knowledge he received from attending the Adventist Seminary in South Sudan by joining the ministry as a Global Mission worker on March 23, 2001. He worked in Yei for one year and on May 4, 2002, he was elected as a district leader and a youth director and sent to the Kajokeji district of the South Sudan Field with its headquarters in Arua, Uganda.⁴

He was posted to Yei as a district leader from 2005 to 2006. From 2007 to 2010 he was given a new assignment in Arua, Uganda, where he was director of the Bible Correspondence School. When the field office was transferred to Juba, the Bible Correspondence School was closed and he was sent to Lainya as the district pastor in 2011.

Aligo served the church faithfully for a period of 12 years as an intern and finally he was ordained to the ministry. Dr. Blasious Ruguri, the president of the East-Central Africa Division, ordained him and others on December 19, 2015, in Juba.⁵

The Third Exile and Death

In 2016 he was displaced from Lainya by the war that broke out on July 17, 2016, in Juba and extended to Lainya. Life became hard for him and the people of the area, and for this reason he left the area and went as a refugee to Uganda. He settled in Koboko town and was assigned to be the district pastor for the Rhino and Bidbidi refugee camps. With all the trauma of displacement by war, coupled with the hard life in the refugee camp, Aligo developed high blood pressure. Noel Aligo passed away on October 18, 2018, in Koboko, Uganda.⁶

SOURCES

Nole Aligo's Employee File. Greater Equatoria Field Archive, Juba, South Sudan. (Accessed October 8, 2019).

South Sudan Field Session Minutes, 2002. Session-6, May 4, 2002. Arua Uganda. Greater Equatoria Field Archive, Juba, South Sudan. Accessed October 8, 2019.

Greater Equatoria Field ADCOM Minutes. Greater Equatoria Field ADCOM 2015, December 19, 2015. Greater Equatoria Field Archive, Juba, South Sudan. Accessed October 8, 2019.

NOTES

1. Emanuel Mingo, nephew of Noel Aligo, interviewed by Richard Lasu, Juba, October 8, 2019.
2. Noel Aligo Employment File, GEF archive Juba, South Sudan. Accessed by author October 8, 2019.
3. Talata Jerisha, Noel Aligo's widow, interviewed by Richard Lasu, Juba, October 8, 2019.
4. South Sudan Field Session minutes, 2002 Session-6, May 4, 2002, Arua Uganda. GEF Archive Juba, South Sudan. Accessed October 8, 2019.
5. Greater Equatoria ADCOM Minutes, GEF ADCOM 2015, December 19, 2015. GEF Archive Juba, South Sudan. Accessed by author October 8, 2019.
6. Hakim James, Noel Aligo's brother, interviewed by Richard Lasu, Juba, October 8, 2019.

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