Mulwambo, Eldad Jeremiah (1948–2013)

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Eldad Mulwambo was a minister, educator, evangelist, church planter, and administrator in Tanzania.

Early Life
Eldad Jeremiah Mulwambo was born in 1948 on Ukerewe Island, Mwanza Region, in Tanzania. Both his parents, Jeremiah Mulwambo Sakara and Perusi, were natives of Ukerewe and devoted Seventh-day Adventists. They had converted to Adventism after the Adventist teaching was brought into their village by local missionaries from Majita. Jeremiah Mulwambo had nine children: three boys and six girls of which Eldad was the second born in the family. Eldad’s father lived an exemplary life that built a firm foundation in the fear of God for other members of the family.

Education

Eldad Mulwambo acquired his primary education at Tangaza Middle School. Thereafter, he went for secondary education in Uganda. Though these schools were not Adventist, Eldad Mulwambo’s faith grew stronger despite several challenges that he encountered in those schools. From there, Eldad attended the Adventist Ikizu Ministerial College in 1975, where he received ministerial training. Pastor Mulwambo fought for his education and development. Out of his passion for further education, he attended Spicer Memorial College for his first degree in theology. Just after his graduation in 1984, he enrolled for a master’s degree in history at Poona University and subsequently a master’s degree in sociology at Nehru Social Institutes in India.

His academic achievement inspired young ministers of his day, such as Pastor Herry Muhando and Pastor Jacob Gagi, to go for further studies. It should be remembered that during this time, the church in Africa had few Africans with postgraduate education.

Early Ministry

Pastor Mulwambo joined the ministry in the Adventist Church in 1972 as a literature evangelist in Ukerewe District. He enjoyed doing this work until he was called to serve as Kisia district pastor in Bunda District, Mara Region. During this time, Pastor Mulwambo engaged in evangelism and church planting. He was an energetic young pastor with a vision and passion for ministry. He was committed to serving God and His church. After his hard work at Ukerewe and Mara Region, Pastor Mulwambo was transferred to Parane Secondary School to serve as school chaplain. He served as chaplain from 1976 to 1979. Describing the ministry of Pastor Mulwambo at Parane, Pastor Jacob Gagi, who also taught at the school, says that Mulwambo was truly a hard-working pastor. He mingled with students in a variety of activities, such as farming and fetching firewood from the forest and chopping it. During his chaplaincy at Parane Secondary School, his spirit of evangelism was kindled. In a period of four years, he conducted two evangelistic campaigns. Since then, Parane has not stopped conducting evangelistic campaigns. After his education in India, Pastor Mulwambo again ministered in Parane from 1986 to December 1988.

Marriage and Family

Pastor Mulwambo married Lucy Nyabweke Murusuri in 1976. They moved together as a team in ministry from Kisia to Parane, and from India back to Parane for two years. Thereafter, they moved to different places, including Arusha, Morogoro, Kigoma, Dar es Salaam, and finally back to Morogoro for his burial until the second coming of the Lord.

Mrs. Mulwambo worked in various capacities in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At Parane, she worked as a teacher. At the Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College, she worked as a teacher and cafeteria manager. In East Tanzania, she was the field office secretary. She was also the director of Women’s and Children’s Ministries at West Tanzania Field. She was a hard worker, adviser to Pastor Mulwambo, lovely mother of five children, teacher, and caretaker in God’s vineyard. Her contribution to the Adventist Church will never go unnoticed. Mrs. Mulwambo slept in the Lord on April 23, 2017. She was laid to rest at Mlima Kora Graves in the Morogoro municipality.

Pastor Mulwambo and his wife Lucy were blessed with five children, two boys and three girls: Mark, Mugara, Maradufu, Maria, and Mwasi. Pastor Mulwambo’s children remember their father as a loving and caring father despite his busy administrative schedule. He always found time for his children for mentoring and training, and he was a hero to them.

Administrative Roles

Pastor Mulwambo’s leadership route began in 1988 when he was called to be the principal of Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College in Arusha. In the same year, he was ordained as a minister of the gospel in the Adventist Church. During his time as principal, the seminary developed courses apart from ministerial training, such as certificate in secretarial services, diploma in business administration, and diploma in education. Apart from the academic development, some infrastructure was established, including ladies’ and men’s dormitories and one staff house. From this phase of development, Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College started on a journey that propelled it to being chartered as the University of Arusha.

In 1991 Pastor Mulwambo was called to serve as the president of the East Tanzania Field, headquartered in Morogoro. By that time, the field covered the government administrative regions of Mtwara, Lindi, Pwani, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, and the islands of Unguja and Pemba of the Zanzibar Archipelago. During this time, the Adventist mission work was still in its beginnings in most of those places. Pastor Manento describes these years as years of toil, sweat, and heat. There was a scarcity of financial and human resources. Despite all these challenges,
the church in the East Tanzania Field managed to establish a dispensary on Pemba Island, which has a predominantly Muslim population.

During the union session that took place toward the end of the year 2000, Pastor Mulwambo was elected president of the West Tanzania Field. The West Tanzania Field covered the government administrative regions of Kigoma, Kagera, Tabora, and Singida and Mpanda District, which at that time was in the administrative region of Rukwa. In those days, traveling by road was extremely risky. But Pastor Mulwambo traveled through West Tanzania Field territory without fear. Pastor Mngwabi, who once worked with him in West Tanzania Field, gave a testimony about being one of the passengers who were terrorized by armed robbers as they were traveling to visit churches. But God was good, for Pastor Mulwambo was not harmed.10

While serving as president of West Tanzania Field, Pastor Mulwambo and his team started to construct a new office building. This project was started by faith because there were no funds. But he managed to mobilize the members, and they started constructing the new building. By the end of 2005, the office building, though not completely finished, had enough rooms to allow all West Tanzania Field workers to use as its new place of work.11 He had the rare opportunity of being a delegate to the General Conference Session of 2005 that was held in Saint Louis, Missouri, United States of America. Furthermore, Pastor Mulwambo served on the Tanzania Union Executive Committee for 21 consecutive years. This was possible because, for all those years, he served either as president of a field or as a head of a union institution. According to the church procedures, both positions qualified him to serve as a member.

As a member of the Tanzania Union Executive Committee, he served with the following union presidents: Dr. Robert Taylor, Pastor Yohana Lusingu, Pastor Lameck Mwamukonda, Pastor Geoffrey Mbwana, Pastor Magesa Bina, and Pastor Joshua Kajula. He also worked closely with Elder Eliamani Kachua, the business manager of Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College; Pastor Mangi Fadhili Manento, a secretary-treasurer of the East Tanzania Field; Mr. Mathias Mavanza, a secretary-treasurer of the East Tanzania Field; Elder Julius Rulanyaga, a secretary-treasurer of the West Tanzania Field; Pastor Joseph Mngwabi, the secretary of the West Tanzania Field; and Denis Wairaha, the treasurer of the West Tanzania Field.

Later Years of Ministry and Death

After serving as president of West Tanzania Field (2001–2010), Pastor Mulwambo was called to serve as Ilala district pastor in Dar es Salaam in 2011. By this time, Ilala District had four churches, including the Mzizima church, which had no permanent building for worship. Pastor Mulwambo found ministering to the members of this church to be uniquely challenging. Its membership comprised students from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam Technical College, and the Institute of Finance Management as well as regular church members who came from all over the city of Dar es Salaam.

Before his sleep in the Lord, Pastor Mulwambo was transferred to Morogoro, Misufini District, where he pastored six churches. His last years of ministry were full of hope of Christ’s soon return. He slept in the Lord on September 26, 2013.

Legacy

Pastor Eldad Jeremiah Mulwambo will be remembered for his sense of humor, hard work, good administration, and commitment to evangelism and a church planting spirit.

Source


NOTES


2. Felix Mulwambo, phone interview by author, March 5, 2019, Musoma, Mara Region.

3. Eldad Jeremiah Mulwambo Service Record Card.

4. Jacob Gagi, phone interview by author, March 9, 2019, Handeni, Tanga Region.

5. Eldad Jeremiah Mulwambo Service Record Card.

6. Mugara Mulwambo, phone interview by author, March 8, 2019, Dodoma Region.

7.
Ibid.; Eldad Jeremiah Mulwambo Service Record Card.


11. Ibid.