

Keino, Enock Kipkerich araap

(1901–1978)

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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*.

Enock Kipkering araap Keino was a pioneer Adventist evangelist and pastor, one of the foremost gospel workers among the Nandi people, and founder of many congregations.

Early Life

Enock Kipkering araap Keino was born in Sigot, in Nandi county, western Kenya, in 1901. He grew up as a Nandi boy under the tribal culture of the day. The Nandi community was only coming to terms with the arrival of colonial rule and adamantly rejected Christianity which they associated with colonial rule. It was not until after the 1920s that the Nandi people began to appreciate the Christian faith, albeit slowly. Enock grew up herding his father's cattle and, when he was of age, he underwent the rites of passage. He joined the provincial administration and worked as a border guard between the Nandi Reserve and the settled areas.¹ In 1937, Enock married Martha Jelimo and together they had a son named Sila Kipkurgat Kitur. The following year he married Dinah Jebiwot.

Becoming an Adventist

Two years later, in 1944, he met one of the first Nandi Adventist evangelists, Aaron Moiben Too, who shared the Adventist message with him. He immediately relinquished his position in the provincial administration to the area chief Johana araap Katonon and chose to become a gospel minister and a fulltime evangelist. He underwent two years of Bible study under Aaron and was baptized in 1946. Following the closure of Adventist schools in Nandi after a protracted action against the denomination by the local administration, the church decided that all those who were placed in baptismal classes should also be taught to read and write. This is why the classes took more than two years. Enock was diligent in his studies, would soon become literate, and could also speak Kiswahili and English.

Entry into Ministry

Following the Second World War, Enock preached in many parts of Nandi before being transferred to Kebeneti in Kericho in 1955. He was posted there to relieve evangelist Ezekiel Kimenjo araap Maswai who had worked there for five years. Kebeneti was the first center of Adventism among the Kipsigis people. Enock moved through many areas in Kericho, powerfully preaching the word of God. It was here that he planted numerous churches, among them Marumbasi, Ngariet, and others.

Translation Work

It was while at Kebeneti that Enock was associated with the translation of the lesson quarterly into the Kalenjin language. The first quarterly was released in 1957 and distributed among the Nandi and Kipsigis. The quarterly, which was printed at the publishing house at Kendu Bay, was distributed to the members in Kebeneti and Kabokyek including those at the new churches at Marumbasi and Ngariet. The first print run produced 500 lessons. These were distributed by a number of evangelists, among them Paul Siele who was given 65 quarterlies, Daniel Langat 65, Elijah Kipsigei araap Kilel 60, Enoch Keino 60, Harun (Aaron) Moiben 85, Caleb Kipkessio 85, and Silvano Ruto 80.² That is how the first Sabbath School lessons were distributed to the Kalenjins. Paul Siele and Daniel Langat distributed them in the Sotik area of southern Kericho, while Elijah Kilel took his to the Kabokyek area, Enoch Keino took his to Kebeneti, and Caleb and Ruto took theirs to Nandi.

In 1960, while still at Kebeneti, Enoch invited a number of Nandi elders to help translate the book *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White into the Kalenjin language. It was to be known as *Luget Ne O*. The elders who traveled to Kebeneti from Nandi were Philip Kili of Kapkeringon, and Job Maiyo, Jackson Kiplel Maiyo, Samuel Barngetuny, and Johana Ng'isirei of Kipsebwo, among others. A number of Kipsigis elders were also chosen so as to balance the two dialects. The secretary of the work was Pastor Robert J. Wieland. When the translation was completed, the book was published by the African Herald Publishing House at Kendu Bay.³ In due course another book *Kitinye Kapkiruog* (titled in Kiswahili *Kuna Kesi* or *We have a Case*) was also translated at Kebeneti. This time the secretary of the translation work was Pastor Jackson Kiplel Maiyo.

Medical Ministry

In 1964, while still serving at Kebeneti, Enock suggested the establishment of an Adventist medical facility in the area. Concerned by the high levels of malaria and other ailments in the area, and the long distances to a hospital, Enock thought it would be a good idea to have a dispensary at Kebeneti. The matter was taken up by the Adventist members and land was donated by Elder Stephen Biomdo who had founded the Kebeneti Church. They put together the building and it became a satellite clinic for Kendu Adventist Hospital. The officer in charge at Kendu, Dr. E. C. Kraft, would see patients at Kebeneti once a week and in 1965 a nurse was found who could

work fulltime at Kebeneti.⁴ In 1967 Enock went to Bugema and underwent ministerial training. He returned and continued his work among the Kipsigis.

Later Years

Enock served among the Kipsigis for a total of 14 years, and in 1969 he returned home and settled at Kaigat, the traditional home of Adventism in western Kenya. Here he was associated with the establishment of the Kaigat Adventist Dispensary along with his close friend Pastor Jackson Kiplel Maiyo, who at that time was the Nandi Station director. He continued to pastor in the area until 1978 when he passed away at his home in Kaigat. He was laid to rest there. He was survived by his wife Dinah Jebiwott and their nine children—six daughters and three sons. Of his six daughters, four became trained nurses, three of them at the Kendu Mission Hospital. Two trained to become teachers. Of his sons, two became pastors, while one is a public health officer.⁵

Source

Sang, Godfrey K., 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.

NOTES

1. Philip araap Kili, interview by author, June 6, 2019, Kapkeringon.
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. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. From a writeup by Edward Limo, June 5, 2019, kept in the author's private library.

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