



Angola Publishing House.

Photo courtesy of Isaac Figueiredo Caculo.

# Angola Publishing House

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Angola Publishing House is an institution of the South Western Angola Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.

## Developments that Led to Establishment of the Publishing House

The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s work in Angola dates back to May 3, 1924, when the first Adventist missionary, William H. Anderson, conducted the first worship service at Bongo Mission<sup>1</sup>. However, according to Lawrence Henderson’s feature story published in a special magazine produced for the 75th anniversary of the Adventist presence in Angola, Anderson made his first visit to the country in 1922<sup>2</sup>. Thereafter, a request for opening the Seventh-day Adventist Church work in Angola was made by W. H. Anderson, T. M. French, and J. D. Baker on June 12, 1923,<sup>3</sup> and received the following response:

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the request of the American missionary James Delmer Baker, sent with the Official Letter 2.453/63, of the 25th of September, was granted, in which the applicant requests authorization to establish a religious mission in the village of Bongo, of the Civil District of Lépi, which His Excellency the Government Official launched in the aforementioned application of space that I transcribe: Granted under the terms of the law, with the legal obligations and in compliance with the instructions in force.

10/24/1923.

(Signed) M. A. Santos<sup>4</sup>

Following this, the group of missionaries who attended the first worship service held at Bongo Mission included W. H. Anderson, James Delmer Baker, and O. O. Bredenkamp.<sup>5</sup>

## The Need for Publications

Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, had earlier written:

[A]t various points in missionary lands publishing houses must be established. To give character to the work, to be center of effort and influence, to attract the attention of the people, to develop the talents and the capabilities of the believers, to unify the new churches, and to second the efforts of the workers.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, since the beginning of the Adventist missionary work in Angola, the need to have a permanent supply of literature for the spiritual nourishment of the newly born church was felt.<sup>7</sup> Isaac Paulo and Pastor Vasco Cubenda reveal that the problem of supplying literature in vernacular, mainly Sabbath School Bible Study Guides and Missionary Report Bulletins, was being resolved by using a duplicator.<sup>8</sup> The need for producing literature locally was also motivated by the scarcity of literature in the Portuguese language, in a continent dominated by English and French speaking African countries. This scarcity of literature in the Portuguese language was also felt during the penetration of the Seventh-day Adventist message in Brazil and other Latin American countries, where the literature initially used was in the German and English languages, and this was also the case in Portugal.<sup>9</sup>

In 1937 Alexandro Justino shows that the total Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in Angola was 2,488, comprising 722 baptized members and 1,766 Sabbath School members.<sup>10</sup> By 1947 the Seventh-day Adventist Church worship attendees were 3,961, comprising 2,084 baptized members and 1,877 Sabbath School members. The number of baptized members was almost three times that of 1937.<sup>11</sup> As a result of this rapid growth of membership, the church acquired a small Multigraph Press.<sup>12</sup> But the idea of establishing a local publishing house would come ten years later in 1947. This had to be done because of the insufficient production of the small Multigraph Press. It therefore became necessary to acquire another printing machine to achieve greater production.<sup>13</sup> During the ten years of using the Multigraph Press, production focused on Sabbath School

quarterlies, newsletters, textbooks, and hymnals.<sup>14</sup>

## Founding of the Publishing House

The decision to establish a publishing house was voted in 1951, during the Angola Union Mission executive committee meetings as recorded in the following statement:

At the Union Committee Meeting, which took place at its headquarters in Nova Lisboa [Huambo], from February 8 to 15, 1951, the union voted to establish a publishing house to be administered by Pastor Everette Lavern Jewell. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the license and all the required documents, it was decided that the aforementioned publishing house should [be] an extension of the Portuguese, in the first phase, and be annexed to the publishing house existing in Mainland Portugal, whose name would be “Publicadora Atlântico, Limitada, Angola Branch.”<sup>15</sup>

During this period, the church growth statistics showed that Adventist believers were 7,017, comprising 3,839 baptized members and 3,178 Sabbath School attendees.<sup>16</sup> Hence, the committee decided that a publishing house should be established in Nova Lisboa, at the union headquarters, under the charge of the union chief financial officer.<sup>17</sup> However, the printing house ended up being established at Bongo Mission.<sup>18</sup> The reason for the change of location was to equip students at Bongo Mission with knowledge in graphic arts<sup>19</sup>. The other reason, of an economic nature, was that the use of student labor would reduce the production costs.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, “in 1957, the construction began on the Bongo typography building, which was officially inaugurated in 1958, with José da Silva Botelho as superintendent” and this building was equipped with a small Vitoria Press machine, an electricity generator, other equipment for composition, printing, folding, and binding.<sup>21</sup>

In 1959 Pastor Ernesto Ferreira was appointed as director and editor of the publishing house,<sup>22</sup> and a legal company (S.A.R.L.) was formed with its headquarters in Nova Lisboa<sup>23</sup>. The first materials to be produced were the Sabbath School Quarterly and Missionary Bulletin report books in Portuguese, Umbundu, and Tchokwe languages, and a newsletter called Boletim Adventista (Adventist Bulletin), which was to convey church news in Angola. When the publishing house began its work in 1958, the church membership stood at 10,662.<sup>24</sup>

## History of the Publishing House, With Emphasis on Important Events and Periods

Angolan Publishing House produced several publications. These were: *Umbundu-Portuguese Hymnal* (1961); *Tchokwe-Portuguese Hymnal* (1961)<sup>25</sup>; *Degraus da Vida Cristã*<sup>26</sup> by Ellen G. White (1962)<sup>27</sup>; *Vida de Jesus* by Ellen G. White (1962); *Dom de Profecia* by C. B. Haynes (1962); *O Nosso Lar* by Ernesto Ferreira (1964); *Manual de Culinária* (1964)<sup>28</sup>; and a newsletter titled *Boletim Adventista* from 1963-1976.<sup>29</sup>

## The Impact of the Publications

Much can be said about the impact the publications produced by the Angola Publishing House. However, a statement made by a Portuguese researcher of the Center for Political and Social Studies of the Overseas Investigations Board of the Portuguese Colonial Government by the name of José Júlio Gonçalves<sup>30</sup> sums up everything when he said:

It is interesting to note that Bongo Mission has been, since the beginning of its activity, an institution of great dynamism. *Thanks to effective propaganda through adequate literature*, direct preaching, the example of solidarity that its enormous assistance task shows, Bongo is today, it can be said, an anthropogeographic framework of Protestant costumes.<sup>31</sup> (Emphasis added)

The impact of the publications may also be seen through the great need for the Sabbath School Quarterly and the Missionary Bulletin report books that were of great importance in the doctrinal education of the members. Currently, the publishing house supplies the church 160,000 Sabbath School Quarterlies annually and a series of Spirit of Prophecy books.<sup>32</sup>

## Changes in Names and Places

For over fifty-seven years, the publishing house was called Casa Publicadora Angolana (Angolan Publishing House).<sup>33</sup> However, today it is called Livraria e Editora Adventista (Adventist Library and Publishing Company), S.A.<sup>34</sup> The changing of the name was made by the Union Publishing Committee that was held on September 22, 2016, in which the situation of the Angolan Publishing House was found to be negative due to the poor financial condition. The company's negative financial situation resulted from the financial and economic crisis<sup>35</sup> that has plagued the country of Angola since 2014<sup>36</sup> and the split of the Angola Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists into two,<sup>37</sup> that is, South-western Angola Union Mission and North-eastern Angola Union Mission respectively.

However, it should be noted that before becoming the Angolan Publishing House, it was called Atlantic Publishing House Branch Limited,<sup>38</sup> a name adopted at its founding, due to its delayed legalization.<sup>39</sup> In that same year (1951), under the initiative of Pastor Ernesto Ferreira, the then president of the Angola Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, a legal society known as "Angolan Publishing House" was created.<sup>40</sup> Then, on November 4, 1960, the publishing house began to be managed as a public limited company, called "Angolan Publishing House (SARL)," created for an indefinite period of time, with capital shares subscribed in \$50,000.00 cash, in shares of \$100.00 each, represented by 500 shares, of which each partner subscribed \$50.<sup>41</sup>

The partners of this endeavor were: "Ernesto Ferreira, Armando Alcino do Nascimento Pires, José da Silva Botelho, Victorino Chaves, António Alexandre Valente, Carlos de Ascensão Esteves, José de Sá, Américo de Jesus Rodrigues, António da Cruz Coquenão Lopes, and Manuel da Assunção Lopes Paiva."<sup>42</sup>

The first board of directors consisted of the following: Ernesto Ferreira (president), Armando Alcino do Nascimento Pires, and José da Silva Botelho (superintendent), with a three-year term.<sup>43</sup> Its “fundamental object [was] the publishing activity of books, magazines and other publications, and operating a trade bookstore, with books either published by the society or with books published by other publishers.”<sup>44</sup>

## Challenging Times

The Angolan Publishing House (S.A.R.L) faced its most difficult moments after the proclamation of Angola’s independence in 1975. There was an eruption of a civil war among the three independence freedom movements; namely, MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA, from 1975 until 2002. This long civil war terribly affected the country.<sup>45</sup>

Two other important moments in the history of the Angolan Publishing House may be mentioned. The first one took place at a time when the church membership stood at 49,040, needing spiritual feeding, mainly with the literature produced by the printing house then situated at Bongo Mission, operated by the Angolan Publishing House.<sup>46</sup> A terrible incident occurred on May 19, 1981, when the vehicle carrying six workers of the Seventh-day Adventist printing office ran over a landmine that killed all the passengers and consequently caused a stoppage of work at the printing plant for a whole year.<sup>47</sup> Eugenio Jaime said that the vehicle was going to Alto-Catumbela, where they were going to purchase printing paper from a paper factory there.<sup>48</sup>

The second incident, which had the severest impact on the publishing work in Angola, occurred in 1985 when the church membership stood at 70,935. This happened on June 31, 1985, when the printing house was totally destroyed by fire caused by grenades, possibly put there by rebel guerrilla fighters. The printing master recorded a list of all the equipment that was destroyed that day.<sup>49</sup> Pastor Pedro Balança de Freitas, who was the union mission president at that time, figuratively called this tragedy the “National Death of Adventists” because the printing house that produced literature for Angolan Adventist members, including São Tomé and Príncipe, was destroyed.<sup>50</sup>

## Important Developmental Steps

The first of these important events took place when the leadership of the union mission, represented by Pastors Balança de Freitas (president) and Isaac Diamantino Tadeu (treasurer and secretary) sought to enable the printing work to continue by calling six other workers in 1981 to replace the group that had perished in the landmine accident. Three of those workers who were called were Pastor João Valério, Pastor Vieira Banda, and Pastor Antunes Filipe. Lay workers were also called from different sectors, including two from the education sector; namely, Mário José and Eugénio Jaime.

The only worker who survived the tragedy was Sampaio Félix. He did not travel on the day of that vehicle accident that killed six people.<sup>51</sup> When the leadership of the union mission provided training for the new workers, Sampaio was not included. The pastors were sent to Gráfica Kilamba, somewhere in the neighborhood of São João, Huambo; and the two lay workers went to a printing company in Cáala, known as Graphic Cartoonagem Offset.<sup>52</sup>

According to Jaime, “the print shop was rebuilt in 1982, with the following workers: Pastor Vieira Banda (as manager), João Valério (editor and translator) and Mário José (binder), Eugénio Jaime (printer) and Sampaio Félix (laboratory or assembly), assisted by a group of workers, including some students of the theology course. In this new phase, production yielded Sabbath School Quarterlies, missionary bulletins, hymnals, and other books in Portuguese and Tchokwe languages.

Another decisive decision made by the union mission leadership for the preservation of the publishing work was the decision announced on October 8, 1985, to move the printing house from Bongo to Huambo. This came as a result of the Union Mission officers’ visit to Bongo. Pastors Balança de Freitas, Vasco Cubenda, and Isaac Tadeu visited Bongo to evaluate the security situation and decide to secure the future of the printing house. The union mission leaders began to move the institution from Bongo because in 1982 some expatriate Adventist missionaries were kidnapped from Bongo Mission.<sup>53</sup> “Therefore, all four printing house workers were invited to go to Huambo to restart work there.”<sup>54</sup>

## Two Alternative Publishing Solutions

To cater for the spiritual nourishment of the members, during the transitional period, the union mission leadership resorted to importing Sabbath School Study Guides, newsletters, magazines and other books from Portugal, and sometimes from Brazil. The Angolan Union Administrative Council arranged with the Angolan Airline Company (TAAG Linhas Aéreas de Angola) to transport four tons of Sabbath School Quarterlies, with the understanding that the payment condition for two tons should be in kwanzas and the other two tons in the Portuguese currency (Escudos). The Euro-Africa Division was asked to study the possibility of paying for the two tons in Escudos, the Portuguese currency.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, the union mission also sought to reactivate the printing work in Huambo, in order to produce leaflets, Bible study lessons,<sup>56</sup> Umbundu, Kimbundu, and Tchokwé Hymnals<sup>57</sup>; membership record books<sup>58</sup>; Sabbath School Quarterlies, baptismal maps<sup>59</sup>; fund entry blocks<sup>60</sup>; Bible Correspondence School Courses<sup>61</sup>; individual file for baptized members<sup>62</sup>; etc.

## Adapting to the Changing Publishing Industry

The printing office's first adaptation to the changing publishing industry occurred in 1989, when it received some printing machines from Portugal. These included a sewing machine, a guillotine, a printer, a stapler, a folder, an assembly machine, and a contact pressure machine. Although some of these machines are no longer in good working condition, the cutting machine (guillotine) and the contact pressure machine (plate burning) were still in use today.<sup>63</sup>

With these machines came a trainer by the name of José Luís Bernardino dos Santos, who came to assemble the machines and to teach local workers how to use the equipment.<sup>64</sup> According to Jaime, at that point in history, the Adventist printing house changed from being a typography and became, in fact, a press with the offset system.

While they were trying to foster the printing house, the literature supply in the Angola Union Mission continued to be supplied mostly through the support of the division.<sup>65</sup> According to the Administrative Council minutes of the Angolan Union Mission, magazines were being received from abroad, such as The Signs of the Times magazine,<sup>66</sup> Afrivoz Magazine,<sup>67</sup> Spirit of Prophecy,<sup>68</sup> printing paper,<sup>69</sup> Sabbath School Quarterlies,<sup>70</sup> Bible Correspondence School lessons,<sup>71</sup> and Church Manuals.<sup>72</sup>

## Historical Role of the Publishing House

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's publishing ministry played a major role in the church's expansion, both in such places as America and beyond. According to George R. Knight, publications were crucial in reaching other territories, and in some instances they were the only means that made it possible to spread the Adventist message in those territories.<sup>73</sup> Knight observes, "Having started with an antimission philosophy, they [Adventist pioneers] later passively admitted to the direction of their mission development to follow the guidance of those in other lands who read Adventist publications and then asked a church representative to visit them."<sup>74</sup> In other words, the reading of Adventist tracts in these distant lands opened the way for the presence of a representative of the church to be sent, as requested by readers through the address found in the tract.

Ellen G. White made a collective and individual appeal to each believer to give importance to the method of distributing publications in fulfilling the mission of the church, when she wrote, "When church members feel the importance of circulating our literature, they will devote more time to this work. Magazines, tracts, and books will be placed in the homes of the people, that they may preach the gospel in their various sectors."<sup>75</sup>

## List of Managers of the Publishing House

William H. Anderson (1924-1935); C. W. Curtis (1935-1941); Peter Stevenson (1942-1950); Everet Lavern Jewell (1951-1957); Ernesto Ferreira (1958-1968); Juvenal Gomes (1969-1975); Joaquim Sabino (1976); Belavista Félix (1977 and 1978); Agostinho Jorge (1979-1983), João Valerio (1984-1988); Agostinho Jorge (1989-1991) Antunes



Filipe (1992-2006); João Luís (2007-2015); Isaac Jeremias Caculo (2015-2020); Alcides Samuel Gando Rodrigues (2020- ).<sup>76</sup>

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## NOTES

1. Alexandre Justino, *Pregoeiros da Verdade Presente: História da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Angola (1924-2004)* (Portugal: Relgráfica, 2007), 116.

2. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, "Início da Igreja Adventista em Angola," in *75º Aniversário: Factos e Imagens da Presença da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Angola*, 1999, 3.

3. Ibid.



4. Justino, 113.
5. Ibid., 116.
6. Ellen G. White, *The Publishing Ministry, the completed Published Writings* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1983), 42.
7. Ibid., 287.
8. Vasco Cubenda, *75o Aniversário: Factos e Imagens da Presença da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Angola*, 1999, 17.
9. Anabela da Silva Marques, *A Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia numa perspectiva de difusão geográfica no território português*, p.39 em <https://estudogeral.sib.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/19942/1/Tese%20-%20Anabela%20Marques.pdf>, consultado no dia 16.07.2020; Richard W. Schwarz e Floyd Greenleaf, *Portadores de Luz- História da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia* (São Paulo: Unaspres, 2009), 220 .
10. Justino, 195.
11. Ibid., 195.
12. Isaac Paulo, *Obra Médica e Missionária Adventista em Angola, os Parsons e a Missão do Bongo* (Portugal, 2013), 161.
13. Ibid., 287.
14. Paulo, 161.
15. Justino, 288.
16. Ibid., 196.
17. Paulo, 161.
18. Ibid.; Justino, 288.
19. According to the authors of *Light Bearers*, the knowledge of graphics arts was crucial for the mission workers in Angola, just as it was in South America and in many European countries (pages 209, 232).
20. Ibid., 288.
21. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, *75º Aniversário: Factos e Imagens da Presença da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Angola*, 17.
22. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, 17; Justino 288.

23. Paulo, 161.
24. Justino, 196
25. Cubenda, 18.
26. A Portuguese translation of *Steps to Christ* by *Ellen G. White* was translated into local languages like Umbundu and Tchokwe. The translators were Levi Agostinho (Tchokwe), Alexandre Justino (Umbundu)
27. Cubenda, 18.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. José Júlio Gonçalves was the first assistant appointed by the Mission to study African missiology. He was assigned to visit the African Portuguese colonies and conduct a study on the impact of the Protestant churches.
31. José Júlio Gonçalves, "Protestantismo em África," in *Estudos de Ciências Políticas e Sociais* (Lisboa: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Centro de Estudos Políticos e Sociais, 1960), 92-93.
32. Livraria e Editora Adventista do Sétimo Dia, Relatório Contabilístico Anual, 2019.
33. Justino, 288-289.
34. Certidão Alfredo Felo Sachiliva, *Ministério da Justiça e Dos Direitos Humanos*, September 26, 2016, 4; *Diário da República, Órgão Oficial da República de Angola*, III Série- N<sup>o</sup> 133, July 2016.
35. The crisis caused the devaluation of the Angolan currency, which increased the overall cost of publication and slowed down the sales of books and other printed materials. The crisis also greatly contributed to dismemberment of the Angolan Union of Seventh-day Adventists, which, among other reasons, rendered the maintenance of the Angolan Publishing House unfeasible.
36. "Quando e como começou a crise económica em Angola?" published in February 19, 2021, in <https://canalk.com/quando-comecou-a-crise-em-angola/> accessed in 09.08.2021
37. The realignment of the Angolan Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists resulted in the Angolan Publishing House's liabilities being left with the South Western Angola Union Mission.
38. A Branch of the Portuguese Casa Publicadora Atlântico.

39. Ibid., 289.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 290.
42. Ibid., 289.
43. Ibid., 290
44. Ibid.
45. Pedro Balança de Freitas (1975-1990); Vasco Cubenda (1991-2001) ; Teodoro Elias (2001-2010),
46. Justino, 197.
47. Eugénio Jaime, interview by the author, Huambo, August 5, 2020.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.; Justino, 290.
50. Eugénio Jaime, interview by the author, Huambo, August 5, 2020.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, "Acta do do Conselho Administrativo," March 28, 1989.
56. Ibid., January 21, 1992.
57. Ibid., May, 29, 1991.
58. Ibid., October 10, 1991.
59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., June 1, 1992.
62. Ibid., May 7, 1992.
63. Ibid.
64. Justino, 292; Eugénio Jaime, interview by the author, Huambo, August 5, 2020.
65. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, "Acta do Concelho Administrativo," March 28, 1989.
66. *The Signs of Times* came to be dedicated as a means of evangelism, as confirmed by the preamble of the 189/89 vote: "Considering that literature is a very effective means for the work of evangelization in Angola and São Tomé", Minutes from the Council held in Luanda on February 10, 1989.
67. União Angolana dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia, "Acta do Concelho Administrativo," March 28, 1989.
68. Ibid., May 29, 1990.
69. Ibid., April 17, 1989.
70. Ibid., March 28, 1989.
- 71.
72. Ibid., October 28, 1990.
73. George R. Knight, *A Brief History Of Seventh-Day Adventists*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2015), 147.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., 7.
76. According to *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

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