



Korean Publishing House

Photo courtesy of Korean Publishing House.

Korean Publishing House (Sijosa)

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Soo Myung Nam studied law at Seoul City University. He graduated from the Graduate School of theology at Sahmyook University and obtained his M.Div. degree from AIIAS. He worked as a local pastor and Youth director in Southeast Korean Conference for 21 years. From 2014 to 2020 he worked in Korean Union Conference as an associate secretary. In January 2021 he was elected as president of Korean Publishing House.

Korean Publishing House (Sijosa) is a publishing organization with its own printing facilities, operated by the Korean Union Mission at Seoul, Korea. It issues Seventh-day Adventist books and the following periodicals: *Sijo* (*Signs of the Times*, Korea); *Kyohoe Jinam* (*Church Compass*); *Home and Health* (*Ka Jeong Koa Keon Kang*); senior,

early teen, and primary Sabbath School lesson quarterlies; and the *Sabbath School Helper*. Located at Emoonro 1 gil 11, Dongdaemoon-gu, Seoul, the publishing house has a staff of six pastors and 39 additional employees as of July 2021.

Founding of the Publishing House

The Korean Adventist Church, organized in 1904, established an educational institution in 1907 and then a medical facility in 1908. At the same time, the mission's leaders began formulating plans for a publishing program. They discussed their plans in detail at The First General Session of the Korean Mission, meeting in Soonan on November 8, 1908, at which they decided to start publishing activities as soon as possible, initially with an eight-page monthly periodical. In addition, the session appointed William Smith to oversee publishing activities.¹

In March 1909, the Japan Mission sent some Korean-language type fonts along with a George Washington Hand Press to begin the publishing efforts of the Korean Mission. William Smith installed the printing press in a classroom of a school built in Soonan.² When Smith briefly returned to the United States to attend a General Conference Session, Mimi Scharffenberg assumed charge of editing the forthcoming monthly periodical. The mission had sent Seung Won Kim and Kyu Hyuk Kim to the Japan Mission in 1905 to learn the printing trade. When they returned to Korea, they helped to prepare several publications and the Sabbath School lessons that came off the press in July 1909.³

History

During the summer of 1909, the publishing house and the Korean Mission office moved to Seoul, the capital of Korea. For a time, the publishing program operated there in rented quarters outside the West Gate. After the transfer of the printing office to Seoul, Scharffenberg and staff focused on creating evangelistic magazines as well as the monthly periodical. As a result, the house released a missionary magazine, *The Special Message*, on July 1, 1910, and the first monthly periodical, *the Gospel for the Last Days (Malsebogum)* began in September 1910. The monthly periodical changed its name to *Secheonsa Gibyul (Three Angels Messages)* and had its first issue under the new title on October 20 of that year, which became the predecessor of *Sijo (Signs of the Times, Korea)*.⁴

Late in 1912 the Korea Mission found a permanent location for its institutions at Hoegi-ri, near the East Gate of Seoul. The buildings it erected there included a publishing office, and in January 1913 the first printing work commenced in the new plant. In 1916, the publishing house started a new monthly magazine, *Church Compass (Kyo Heo Jinam)*, just for church members. It would report news about the Korean Adventist Church. The existing evangelistic monthly magazine, *Secheonsa Gibyul*, changed its title to *Sijo Wolbo*. At that time, the publishing company adopted the name *Sijowolbosa*⁵ and began extensive publishing of Ellen G. White's books in

Korean: *Patriarch and Prophets* (1919), *Evangelism* (1922), *Gospel Workers* (1923), *Desire of Ages* (1932), *Testimonies for the church*, vol 1 (1933), *Great Controversy* (1934), *Step to Christ* (1936), *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (1937). The publishing house has actively supported the distribution of Ellen G. White's writings.⁶ In 1923, *Siho Wobo* became *Sijo*, and *Sijowolbosa* now operated under the name *Sijosa*.⁷

On January 24, 1930, a fire of unknown origin destroyed the publishing house building.⁸ With the support of the General Conference, the Korean Adventist Church reconstructed the headquarters of the Chosen Union Mission and the publishing house in December of that year. The *Sijosa* employed the latest technology in the new building, including American printing presses, German cutters, and Japanese monotype casting machines. And in October 1931, the Korean Adventist Church celebrated its twentieth anniversary in the auditorium on the second floor of the publishing house.⁹

During the 1940s *Sijosa* came under persecution from the Japanese Government. In April 1941, the two monthly magazines, *Sijo* and *Church Compass*, ceased publication. After the dissolution of the Korean Advent Church in December 1943, authorities sold *Sijosa* to the Maeil Shinbo Corporation. But in August 1945 Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule, and the Korean Adventist Church regained the publishing house.¹⁰

Sijosa suffered damage during The Korean War, which broke out on June 25, 1950, inflicted damage on *Sijosa*, but the house was again able to rebuild, beginning in 1952. In that year, *Sijosa* bought such equipment as large presses and type castings from Japan to increase its printing capability. By 1958 the publishing company had 28 employees. On September 11, 1963, it dedicated a new German Heidelberg automatic cylinder press.¹¹ In 1965, administrators renamed *Sijosa* as the Korean Publishing House (KPH).

A new two-story addition to the main building, occupied in May 1966, housed offices, a library, a chapel, and an expanded manufacturing plant. New German Heidelberg automatic one-color offset presses arrived in 1965 and 1969. In 1974 the factory installed a Japanese Sha-Ken photocomposing press. However, a fire broke out in 1969 and destroyed part of the publishing facility, but insurance enabled its restoration. The following year, in October 1970, the KPH celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. In 1972, the house republished the Korean SDA Hymnal.¹²

As the KPH's publishing work became more specialized, it upgraded its manufacturing technology, purchasing the German Roland Record in 1980¹³ and the West German Miller Tp 375 double-sided press in 1984.¹⁴ Such development required a new building, and in December 1988, the publishing house constructed the current KPH facility.¹⁵ Since that time, printing has become computerized, calling for additional expansion. Korean Publishing House built an additional four-story company building at its Paju estate in 2016.¹⁶

Historical role

The main role of KPH has been to support the Korean Adventist Church's evangelistic outreach. Thus, early in its publishing program it began the evangelistic periodical now known as the *Sijo* (*Signs of the Times*). The church's official magazine, *Church Compass*, commenced about 1916. Besides more than 60 translations of Ellen G. White's books, the house has continually published evangelistic books, church hymnals, and the *Church Manual*. In 1990 the Korean Publishing House also began printing *Home and Health* magazine, Sabbath School lesson quarterlies, and the *Sabbath School Helper*.¹⁷

In 1973 the Korean Publishing House received a certificate from the Ministry of Culture and Information of Korea in honor of *Sijo* (the *Signs of the Times*, Korea), the oldest continuously published magazine in Korea, in both religious and secular fields. In 1974 the Korean Publishing House printed more than 40,000 copies of *The Great Controversy* in a special paperback edition. In 2008, it produced a ten-volume edition of the Conflict of the Ages series in conjunction with the Korean Union Conference.¹⁸ In 2016, the publishing house delivered more than one million copies of *The Great Hope* translated into Korean in a special paperback edition.

In 2017, *Sijo* received the "Seoul Future Heritage Award" from Seoul Metropolitan City.¹⁹ For more than 100 years *Sijo* has contributed to education, health habits, and spiritual life of Korea.

In 2018, the Korean Publishing House launched "Channel 21." It promotes the writings of Ellen G. White as well as other religious books and magazines to church members on its website.

Outlook

Since 2020, the publishing world has rapidly shifted from print media to electronic or other formats. In keeping pace with this transformation, the Korean Publishing House seeks to keep pace by obtaining electronic books and other media-based publications through platform building and application development. The publishing house believes that it can share the gospel with more people through additional avenues and methods. KPH especially wants to distribute Ellen White's writings to other countries.

Managers / President Chronology

C. L. Butterfield (1909-1910); Seung Won Kim (1910-1912); Frank Mills (1912-1914); Brownie R. Owen (1915-1917); L. I. Bowers (1917-1923); Earl L. Woods (1923-1927); W. E. Gillis (1927-1928); H. A. Anderson (1928-1929); Chang Uk Pak (1929-1930); W. E. Gillis (1930-1940); James M. Lee (1940); Chang Uk Park (1940-1941); Chang Chip Kim (1941-1943); G. W. Munson (1947-1950); Donald S. Lee (1950; Korean War); C. A. Williams (1952-1954); V. E. Adams (1954-1958); Tae Hyuk Chung [acting] (1958-1959); R. L. Sheldon (1959-1966); H. R. Kehney (1966-1970); C. C. Lee (1970-1971); P. W. Im [acting] (1972-1973); Ki Cho Han (1973-1978); Pyung Duk Chun (1978-1982); Bo Duk Lee (1982-1992); Dong Jun Kim (1992-1995); Young Bong Joo (1996-2001); Kyu Cheol Shin (2002-2009); Si Young Kim (2010-2011); Byeon Geun Choi (2012-2013); Gwang Soo Park (2014-2015); Gil Soo Um (2016-.2020);

Soo Myoung Nam (2021-).

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1. I. H. Evans, "Our Work in Korea," *ARH*, January 14, 1909, 16.
2. William R, Smith, "Report at General Conference," *ARH*, July 1, 1909, 14.
3. C. L. Butterfield, "Korea," *ARH*, September 9, 1909, 12.

4. C. L. Butterfield, "First Magazine Campaign in Korea," *ARH*, May 30, 1911, 16.
5. Man Kyu Oh, *History of One Hundred Years of Korean SDA, 1904-1945* (Seoul: Korean Publishing House, 2010), 350.
6. *Church Compass*, October 1939, 8.
7. *Sijo* (*Signs of the Times*, Korea), June 1923, 1.
8. *Church Compass*, March 1930, 32.
9. *Sijo* (*Signs of the Times*, Korea), January 1931, 2-4.
10. Kuk Heon Lee, *A History of Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Seoul: Sahmyook University Press, 2020), 148, 172.
11. *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, October 1961, 9.
12. *Church Compass*, April 1972, 9.
13. Minutes of the 27th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1983).
14. Minutes of the 28th General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 1987).
15. Minutes of the 29th General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 1991).
16. *Korean Adventist News Center*, February 15, 2016.
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