

Reid, Felix Gaylord (1913–2000) and Kathleen Ruth (Hayton) (1915–1997)

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Felix Gaylord Reid, popularly known as F. G. Reid, was an American missionary to Kenya and other countries in East and Central Africa. He was also one of the longest-serving missionaries, arriving in 1938 and leaving in 1970. He served as a minister, instructor, and later as a church administrator, eventually becoming the president of a mission field -- the Tanganyika Mission Field and two Unions -- the Zambesi Union and the East Africa Union. These Unions covered several countries in Africa.

Early Life

F. G. Reid was born in Imperial, California, on April 7, 1913.¹ He was the second of the four sons of Felix Grundy Reid (1875-1953) and Mary T. Presley Reid (1878-1966). His father, who was born in Kansas, became an Adventist in 1936 and remained in the SDA Church until his passing away in Mentone, California, in April 1953.² By the time he died, his son F.G. Reid, was the president of the Tanganyika Union.³ His other children were Elmore J. Reid, John Noble Reid, and Hubert Presley Reid.⁴

Family

F. G. Reid married Kathleen Ruth Hayton, who was born in 1915 in Los Angeles.⁵ They were married in August 1937 in Eagle Rock California. Kathleen was the third daughter of Dr. Charles H. Hayton (1869-1944) and Ruth Haskell (1873-1955).⁶ Felix and Kathleen were blessed with three children.⁷

Mission Work

In 1938, F. G. Reid and his wife served as faculty members at Long Beach Seventh-day Adventist Academy⁸ when they received the call to mission work in Africa. In 1939, they moved to Tanganyika Mission as licensed missionaries working in Ntusu, in northern Tanganyika. During that time, A. Sprogis was the director of the Tanganyika Mission.⁹ In 1940, Reid was in charge of the Ntusu Girls' School.¹⁰ They later moved to Utimbaru

Mission.¹¹ Utimbaru is located near the Kenya border to the northwest of Tanganyika among the Kuria people.¹² In 1945, Reid was appointed to the Executive Committee of Tanganyika Mission. Some other members included: James Odera, H. E. Kotz, L. D. Brown, and Yolam Kamwendo, among others. The East African Union superintendent was H. M. Sparrow, who had replaced Spencer Maxwell.¹³ F. G. Reid received his ordination in 1946.¹⁴ He returned to the United States on furlough before going back in Utimbaru in 1947.¹⁵

In 1950, H. E. Kotz replaced F. H. Thomas as the president of Tanganyika Mission, and they worked together with F. G. Reid as part of the Executive Committee.¹⁶

F. G. Reid was also a member of the Planning and Resolution Committee at the East African Union.¹⁷

President of Tanganyika Mission

In June 1951, during the Southern Africa Division Council held in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, Pastor F. G. Reid was appointed president of the Tanganyika Mission, replacing H. E. Kotz. He rapidly expanded the mission work and, at the end of that year, baptized a record 86 persons in the Utimbaru Mission.¹⁸ There was a renewed campaign of evangelism and, in 1952, Reid expected to carry out over 300 baptisms on each of his larger stations -- Suji, Majita, Utimbaru, and also at Ntusu. Reid worked with Harry Robson, who had been the secretary-treasurer under Kotz,¹⁹ and served on the Executive Committee not only for his Mission Field, but also for the East African Union Mission.²⁰ This was a period of great expansion of the Adventist mission work in East Africa.

In 1953, EAU President E. D. Hanson reorganized the Union by forming four new mission fields – three in Kenya, namely the Kenya Lake Mission (under F. H. Muderspach), the South Kenya Mission (under K. G. Webster), and the Central Kenya Mission (under R. J. Wieland). The Tanganyika Mission Field also re-organized under Reid and the Uganda Mission under M. E. Lind.²¹ The Tanganyika Mission had nine functional mission stations, with Busegwe Mission Station in Butiama near Musoma (established in 1910) being the headquarters. He was in charge of the Busegwe Mission, from where he ran the remainder of the mission stations, most of them in northern Tanganyika. There was the Heri Mission Station in Kasulu (established in 1949) with W. H. Taylor in charge, Ikizu Mission Station (established in 1919) with G. J. E. Coetzee in charge, Majita Mission Station (established in 1909) with T. F. Duke in charge, and Mbeya Mission Station (established in 1938) with G. L. van Niekerk in charge. There was also the Mwagala Mission Station (established in 1914) in Malampaka, which did not have a director just like the Ntusu Mission Station (established 1912) in Waswa (near Mwagala), which also did not have a director. There was the Suji Mission Station (established 1905) in the Pare Mountains, near Tanga with M. B. Musgrave in charge, while the Utimbaru Mission Station (established 1912) in Tarime was under J. A. Schoeman.²² There were 33 churches in Tanganyika at this time and, in them, about 7,000 members²³ worshipped and twice that number in Sabbath School members. The Kenya side of the East Africa Union had 22,000 members at that time.

Busegwe, which was one of the oldest mission stations in Tanganyika, had been the traditional headquarters of the Tanganyika Mission. Reid also served on the board of the Ikizu Training School, which was the flagship institution of the Tanganyika Union, alongside F. E. Schlehuber.²⁴ Other than being president, F. G. Reid served as the departmental secretary in the Educational, Temperance, and Voice of Prophecy Department.²⁵ This was in response to the staff shortage in the rapidly expanding work in Tanganyika. It was during this time that his father, Felix Grundy Reid, passed away in the United States.

It was Reid who celebrated the jubilee of the mission work in Tanganyika (1903-1953), with celebrations held in the traditional site of the work of German missionaries John Ehlers and E. C. Ehlers, who commenced the work among the Pare people.

By 1953, Tanganyika was recording rapid growth, with 196 paid workers and 146 unpaid workers. Each of the paid workers averaged a remarkable 68 baptisms.²⁶ The number of Sabbath School members went up by 4,667 in the two years Reid was in charge, to stand at 15,975.²⁷ Some of the leading evangelists in Tanganyika included pastors Daudi Kisusi, Danieli Yangwe, Nikudiwe Mauya, Enok Katondo, and Fares Masokomya.²⁸

Moving to Zambesi Union

In 1955, F. G. Reid was appointed the president of the Zambesi Union Mission, taking over from S. G. Maxwell.²⁹ He was now based in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (which is now Zimbabwe). At the Zambesi Union, he doubled up as the secretary to the Temperance and Religious Liberty department.³⁰ He served at Bulawayo when the SDA Church in Southern Rhodesia was undergoing tremendous changes. At the Zambesi Union, he immersed himself in deepening the gospel work.³¹ In 1956, he was in the United States on furlough and, while there, he was authorized to attend the officers' meeting at the General Conference Autumn Council held in Washington, D. C., in October 1956.³² During that Council, Southern Africa Division President R. S. Watts and Secretary W. D. Eva represented the continent. F. G. Reid, F. Unger, W. A. Hurlow and B. E. Sparrow attended on behalf of their various unions.

In 1960, F. G. Reid reported tremendous progress in the evangelism work at the Zambesi Union. Throughout the year, 126 evangelistic efforts were held, involving the direct participation of 467 workers and laymen. In his annual report, Reid highlighted the successful efforts of Pastor R. L. Staples in Lusaka, with the support of ministerial students from Solusi despite facing strong opposition. Additionally, three evangelistic campaigns among the Europeans of Zambesi Union were held, and four youth-led initiatives were also held. The results in terms of the number of converts was very encouraging.³³

In July 1960, Pastor Reid was at the Inyazura Mission Station in Southern Rhodesia as it celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The grand celebration was attended by mission veterans Pastor and Mrs. R. H. Pierson, Pastor and Mrs. E. A. Trumper, among others. Also attending were pioneer evangelists Pastor E. D. Mlalazi and Brother

Mberi, both of whom were students under founding missionary Pastor M. C. Sturdevant at Inyazura 50 years earlier. Numerous workers and church members from the Inyazura Mission District also participated. The event received many telegrams of greetings and congratulations from former staff, mentioning notable names such as C. Robinson, W. C. Tarr, J. N. de Beer, F. B. Jewell, and H. M. Sparrow, who had significantly contributed to the early development of the mission's work in Inyazura.³⁴

Development of Leadership

It was under F. G. Reid that Solusi College began offering degree courses. In 1961, three individuals—Joshua Gwalamubisi, Joseph Kyale, and Thomas Liso—successfully completed the diploma in Theology program.³⁵ This qualification was equivalent to a B.A. degree and was an entry qualification for graduate studies at Andrews University. These individuals were the first to complete a four-year post-high school course at Solusi.

By 1961, Solusi was experiencing significant growth, with record enrollment. Solusi became a training place for church leaders with the introduction of the “Leadership Course.” Each of the seven Unions in the Southern Africa Division sent three selected workers to participate in this specialized course. Mrs. Ruth V. Gorle initiated the course with an English Review study, and it was followed by Miss M. I. Sather teaching Health and Hygiene. Several of the Division officers, along with elders Reid and Ashlock from the Zambesi Union, taught classes on topics such as policies, plans, principles, and problems, Bible doctrines, church history, finance, and organization.³⁶ This course helped improve the quality of leadership in the rapidly growing SDA Church and prepared African workers to take up greater responsibilities in the Church.

After taking these courses, Pastor S. B. Dube and Pastor J. Muyeba were elected vice presidents for the Southern and Northern Rhodesia fields respectively. At the same time, Pastor R. Ndhlovu was appointed the assistant Missionary Volunteer secretary for the Union while Pastor A. Habenzu became the Union Church Development secretary.³⁷ These were milestone changes.

Moving to the East Africa Union

In 1965, during the end-year Southern Africa Division Committee, important changes in leadership took place. Pastor F. G. Reid was proposed to head the East Africa Union following Pastor P. H. Coetzee's inability to move to Kenya due to problems with his passport.³⁸ At this time, sanctions against South Africa and its citizens were beginning to bite. Pastor Coetzee had been president of the Transvaal Conference before being proposed to move to Kenya as the Union president to replace M. E. Lind. This was not to be. Lind, a Norwegian national, was appointed the secretary at the Division. F. G. Reid instead replaced Lind while Kenyan-born missionary F. G. Thomas replaced Reid at the Zambesi Union.

Reid came to Kenya at a time of many changes following their gaining independence in 1963. The East Africa Union was comprised of the nations of Kenya and Uganda and also the Seychelles. Tanzania had already separated itself under its own Union, and P. G. Werner, formerly of the Central African Union, took up the position as union president, replacing F. G. Thomas.

While president of the East African Union, Reid quickly got down to expanding the mission work and, as one of the first duties he carried out, included the opening of an Adventist clinic in (known as the Nairobi Surgery) in Kenya's Industrial Area, south of Nairobi.³⁹ This was in addition to a number of clinics while the main hospital remained the Kendu Adventist Hospital at Kendu Bay on the shores of Lake Victoria. The busy clinic was run by Mrs. E. Barton, R.N., who was seeing over 40 patients each day. In Western Uganda, an earthquake in 1966 created significant damage to denominational property. Thankfully, no lives were lost, although many church members lost their homes. The Mitandi Mission station was brought down to ruins.⁴⁰

In April 1966, the first Adventist television program *Faith for Today* was aired by the Kenyan national broadcaster "Voice of Kenya." These programs were aired weekly. Under Reid, more than 32 new churches were dedicated in diverse places in the Union, including in Mombasa and Kisumu and also at the Ankole Mission Hospital in Western Uganda. Some active soul-winning in the Seychelles was carried out by Pastor J. Caleb Bru.⁴¹ There was already a church of 130 members on one of the large islands, Praslin.

Reid worked at the EAU with W. M. Webster as the secretary-treasurer.⁴² In 1967, Reid led the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Adventist Church in Uganda. Pioneer African missionary Pastor Petero Risasi was present at Nchwanga, which is where he first began the gospel work in 1927 with Pastor S. G. Maxwell. Also present at the event were pioneer converts Pastor S. Golola and Pastor H. Guwedeko. The SDA Church in Uganda had grown to over 10,000 adherents at that time, spread over 51 churches. The Uganda Field was headed by Pastor Dennis K. Bazarra.

In 1969, sanctions against the minority regime in Rhodesia made it difficult for the East Africa Union to remain in the Trans-Africa Division, which at that time was headquartered at the Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe). Reid had the EAU declared an "unattached territory," and its affairs would be directed from the General Conference.⁴³

In 1970, the East African Union was attached to the Afro-Mideast Division and, also in that same year, Reid was replaced by African American Coleridge D. Henri. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Seychelles were the African countries that were attached to the Afro-Mideast Division based at Beirut Lebanon. To overcome the sanctions, the Trans-Africa Division had two offices – Blantyre in Malawi and the old offices in Highlands, Salisbury, Rhodesia.⁴⁴

Return to America

After C. D. Henri took over the EAU, the Reids returned to the United States. Reid was the last of the white missionaries to manage the EAU. He then worked for the Greater New York Conference in the Atlantic Union Conference.⁴⁵ In 1975, he became their secretary and the director of Trust Services while working for the Greater New York Conference.⁴⁶

Death and Legacy

F. G. Reid retired in 1982 from the Southern Union Conference.⁴⁷ He settled in North Carolina before eventually moving to Orlando, Florida. F. G. Reid passed away on January 11, 2000, in Orlando, Florida, in the United States.⁴⁸ He was 86 years old at the time. Kathleen had predeceased him on July 24, 1997. After her death, he married Vera, who survived him, together with one son, John, four daughters including Nancy Torontali, Jeannette Hayes, Dorothy Becker, and Margie Lynes, together with nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was laid to rest in the Shepherd Memorial Park, Naples, North Carolina.⁴⁹

The Reids were some of the longest serving Adventist missionaries in Africa, arriving long before independence and remaining after large portions of Africa had left colonial rule. His extensive service in various leadership roles across multiple African missions underscored his dedication to the SDA Church's mission work, sometimes working in very difficult areas. His involvement in educational, medical, and administrative missionary work significantly contributed to the growth and development of the Church's presence in Africa.

Throughout his career, Reid exemplified commitment, leadership, and a pioneering spirit, leaving a lasting impact on the communities he served and the broader mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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