

Sino, Musa Kipkemboi araap

(1914–2002)

GODFREY K. SANG

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*.

Musa araap Sino was a pioneer Adventist in the Tendwo area of southern Nandi, Kenya, and the first Terik Adventist.

Musa araap Sino was born in 1914 to the Kapsigoi family among the Terik of southern Nandi! The Terik are one of the sub-tribes of the Kalenjin people of Kenya and Uganda. He grew up there tending the family livestock before joining the Works Department known among the Nandi as *Tablotii* from the abbreviation "WD." In 1939 he left his abode in Eldoret and joined the small band of Adventists at Kaigat. In 1940 while at Kaigat he was baptized by Petero Chetambe along with Aaron Moiben araap Too, and he began to actively preach the Word of God all over the area.

At the Kaigat Dispersal of 1941, Musa Kipkemboi araap Sino was assigned to do pioneer work at Tendwo, some distance from Kapsabet. Tendwo lies at the junction to Chomisia which is near the Denja shopping center along the Kapsabet-Kaimosi road. He first moved from Kaigat to Chepkoibo in southern Nandi where he tried to set up a home. He found the place not suitable to establish a church. He relocated to Kaptoroi and from there he was able to organize Tendwo church in 1942. He began evangelizing the area while supporting himself with subsistence farming. It was not easy. Many people in that place were bitterly opposed to religious work and other denominations were already established there, making it hard for Sino to establish a foothold. He was joined by his brother Johana araap Chepsol, as well as Daniel Lelmengit, Abraham araap Boen, and Jonathan araap Sing'oei. He eventually started a congregation and they constructed a small church in which to worship.

In 1954 Musa araap Sino married Zipporah Tapmining and they were blessed with eight children. Their first son, Caleb, was born 1956, followed by Milka (1959), Dorcas (1963), Gideon Kipsang (1965), Joshua Kiplimo (1968), Rael Jelagat (1970), Joel Kibet (1973), and Daniel Kiprop (1978). Joshua studied at Bugema University and found work in Eldoret. In 1957, following an appeal by Musa, the Central Kenya Mission voted Sh. 800 to roof the church at Tendwo which was badly leaking. The funds were appropriated from the Kipsigis Mission budget. The new complete structure has been used since 1958. From the work of Musa araap Sino, new churches sprang up from the Tendwo congregation including Kabaskei in Chepkumia and Koibem, which at some point failed to

become a viable church. Others included Chomisia and Ng'ataty.

Some of the early converts at Tendwo included Isaac Kipkorir araap Soro and Kiplagat araap Kichwen. Isaac araap Soro accepted the Adventist message in 1956 and was baptized in 1958 by Pastor Caleb Kipkessio araap Busienei. At this time Caleb, the first Nandi Adventist brought to the faith by David Sparrow in Eldoret, had been sent to work as the pastor at Tendwo. Soro was responsible for nurturing the congregation at Kabaskei in nearby Chepkumia which became a new company under Tendwo. Isaac araap Soro's journey into Adventism began when he worked in the European settled areas and one day as he and a friend had eaten some meat from their master's farm, they began to sing traditional songs. His friend, however, told him that he had learned to sing some of the songs of the Christians. Soro begged him to teach him some hymns, which he did. He found them quite enjoyable and soon learned all the songs by heart. He then told his friend that he was ready to join a church that did not encourage alcohol consumption. At that time, they had no idea of whether such a denomination existed. When Soro returned to his home in the Nandi Reserve, he heard that Musa araap Sino had established a church at Tendwo. Soro approached him, curious about what the new denomination taught. After speaking with him for some time, Soro was delighted to learn that the church strictly discouraged consumption of alcohol and he immediately joined the young congregation.

After a while it became necessary to dissolve the church at Tendwo and relocate it to Tuloi. The reason for moving from Tendwo to Tuloi was precipitated by its geographical proximity to the Catholic Mission at Tindinyo. As soon as the Adventists expressed their desire to start a school at Tendwo, it was immediately opposed by the colonial authorities who gave the reason that there was another school run by the Catholics less than the stipulated three miles from that of the Adventists. It was the general belief in those days that a church could not exist without a school next to it, and so it was agreed that the church should move to a new location. Musa araap Sino, along with Isaac araap Soro, Zacharia araap Tuwei, Zephania araap Morior, Jeremiah araap Biama, and Johana araap Chepsol scouted for a new location and settled on Tuloi. They moved the church there immediately. The Tuloi church was constructed right next to the new highway that connected Kapsabet to Chevakali and eventually to either Kakamega or Kisumu. It was Isaac araap Soro who would now take up the Adventist work with zeal in the new area. After his baptism, he was actively involved in building the new congregation at Tuloi. Johana araap Chepsol moved to Kabaskei, some nine miles away, where he helped organize the congregation there into a church. The church at Kabaskei was bolstered by Kipsigis migrants who had become Adventists at Kebeneti in Kericho before moving to Nandi. Chepsol would later move to Ziwa in Uasin Gishu district, some 70 miles away, and he continued being active in the church. It was in this area that the Segero Adventist School was founded.

In 1962 Musa araap Sino and Isaac araap Soro identified eight acres of land at Mwein suitable for the proposed school that had forced them to relocate the Tendwo church. The owner of the land sold it for Sh. 50 per acre which in 1962 was an enormous sum of money for the Adventists. After selling their plot at Tendwo they could only manage enough money for just two acres of land. Isaac paid for a half acre while Paul Kipnyabii bought

another half acre. The rest of the congregation raised money enough for an acre and, with the two they bought with money from their previous plot, they had four acres in all.

However, when they tried to register their new school, the colonial authorities told them that they still couldn't. It now dawned on them that the objection to their registration at Tendwo had nothing to do with the proximity of the other church. It was plain anti-Adventist sentiment among the colonial leaders.

Isaac araap Soro protested the decision to deny them the school as unjustifiable. His case went all the way to the provincial commissioner in Nakuru. The provincial commissioner ordered the provincial education officer to handle the matter. The PEO advised Soro to split the church and the school land and have them registered separately. Even after that was done, it was not until independence that objections to the school ended. They even got some 40 iron sheets from the government for the school, but when they went to construct the school, they found that the plot had been transferred to people of another denomination. This forced Isaac and Musa to protest to the district commissioner and the lands office which eventually reversed the decision. A school was built there and registered as Mwein Nursery School. It was not until 30 years later, in 1995, that Mwein Adventist Secondary School was founded there. The founding board chairman was David Osoro, an active Adventist evangelist in the area.

Musa araap Sino served for many years as the church elder in Tuloi and died in 2002 at age 88, still firm in his faith. He was survived by Zipporah and all their children.

Source

Sang, Godfrey K. and Hosea K. Kili, *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya*. Nairobi, Kenya: Gapman Publications Ltd., 2017.

NOTES

1. Note

Information in this article has been adapted from the following book coauthored by the author of this article: Godfrey K. Sang, and Hosea K. Kili, *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: Gapman Publications Ltd., 2017).

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