



Main facade of Adventist Publishing House, Madagascar.

Photo courtesy of Lova Rafanomezantsoa.

Adventist Publishing House (Madagascar)

EDMOND CHARLES RASANDRATANA

Edmond Charles Rasandratana, M.A. (University of Antananarivo, Madagascar), is currently retired. After earning a Bachelor of Arts and Master Arts degrees in Malagasy linguistics at the University of Antananarivo from 1982 to 1988, and improving his English knowledge at the American Cultural Center from 1989 to 1990, Rasandratana worked as a Malagasy teacher at the Collège Adventiste Rajoelison Soamanandrany from 1990 to 1994. He joined the Imprimerie Adventiste Soamanandrany as chief editor from 1994, until his retirement in April 2018.

Adventist Publishing House (Madagascar) (Imprimerie Adventiste, Trano Pirinty Adventista) is owned and operated by the Indian Ocean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Developments That Led to the Establishment

Pastor M.J. Bureau, superintendent of the Madagascar Mission, shared his dream to have a church, a training school, and a printing plant on the island of Madagascar.¹ Appeals for raising \$600 to establish a printing plant in Madagascar were made among the white churches in the U.S. state of Georgia.² The publishing house was thus established in 1930 at Ambohitovo, Antananarivo, in the capital of Madagascar, by the Indian Ocean Union Mission, whose headquarters are situated at Soamanandrany, Antananarivo. The house serves six islands of the Indian Ocean, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, Rodrigues, Seychelles, and Mayotte, with a population of about 28,687,560.³

Founding of the Adventist Publishing House (Madagascar)

In 1951, the printing plant was added to the publishing house. The first mission paper was published on the official opening day of the printing plant. According to publishing house manager H.L. Henriksen (quoted by D.A. McAdams), those present at the opening ceremony were:

[Elder] Pichot – president of the Union, all European workers present in [An]Tananarive, teachers in the near-by school, the personnel of the printing plant, and the bookstore here in Tananarive, a few of the Malagasy workers, the personnel of the Voice of Prophecy Correspondence School, and a few others – about thirty in all – [who] met together in the printing plant.⁴

Elder McAdams continues,

It was a solemn moment when Brother Pichot talked about Sister White's vision when she saw rays of light all around the world beginning in the United States. Now these rays have come to Madagascar, and today we are able to print our own Adventist literature and spread it like the leaves of autumn.

A dream of many years ago about Madagascar has come true! We now have a printing plant.⁵

The publishing house began with three employees: the manager responsible for the press, a woman in charge of folding by hand, and a man in charge of the electric group. The *Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* (100 copies) and a book titled "Vavolombelona" or "Raki-pararano" (its later version) were the first works published. The workplace comprised a large workshop and two smaller offices.

The work made good progress from the start. By 1956 the plant was able to buy a stitcher, and a Chevrolet car. In 1962 a folding machine and a LINO printing machine were purchased. The sourcing of new printing equipment continued, after the development of the workshop, the laboratory, and the storage, the printing machine was replaced by a more modern machine. In 1984 computers replaced all the typewriters and the laboratory also got one at that time. In 1985 the *Conflict of the Ages* series was published, translated into Malagasy, except the book *Patriarika sy Mpaminany*, which had been translated and printed in 1958.⁶

1991 saw the computers replaced and a hymnal for children printed. In May 1993 a new modern stitcher was purchased from Germany. In 2013 and 2017 the Kord presses were replaced by a two-headed machine and an electronic trimmer. Now, the publishing house operates four presses (one Sordz, one Sormz, one GTO, and one Kord), two massicots, three stitches, and two Sulby, and employs 38 Malagasy workers. The plant serves the Indian Ocean Union Conference and its local conferences, and the Adventist Book Centres. Canvassers are supplied with books through the 20 bookshops spread throughout Madagascar.⁷ The publishing house also serves other customers outside the church.

The publishing house issues the *Sabbath School Bible Study Guides* and the mission report in Malagasy, French and English, to all age groups. The publishing house prints materials needed by the churches, schools, and the missions, such as textbooks; hymnbooks; tracts and books; and materials needed for evangelistic work.⁸

In 1993 it was decided that the publishing house should move to a larger place near the union office, into an enlarged and remodeled modern building. More houses for workers were needed as well.⁹

In 2016, literature sales amounted to AMG 1,407,386,271 (about \$439,808), representing more than 15 million pages of printed material. The publishing house continues to be an important supplier of literature for Madagascar and other Indian Ocean islands.

List of Managers

H.L. Henriksen (1950-1953); Rene Villeneuve (1953-1955); Marc Hecketsweiler (1955-1976); Robert Roeland (1976-1984); Michel Chaigne (1984-April 1991); Rajaonarison Velomanantsoa (1991-1992); John Ravelomanantsoa (1992-1993); Razafindrabe Francine Claire (1993-1995), Roger Prosper Rajaonarison (1995-2003); Raymond Razanajatovo (2003-2007); Pierre Ramamonjisoa (2008-2014); Rafanomezantsoa Arivelo Lova Tsima (2014-present)

SOURCES

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second revised edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Adventist Publishing House (Madagascar)."

Bureaud, M. J. "An Open Door in Madagascar." *Mission Quarterly*. Third Quarter, 1930.

Kneeland, B. F. "Everyone at Work in Georgia." *Field Tidings*, April 9, 1930.

McAdams, D. A. "Your Help is Needed." *Southern Tidings*, August 15, 1951.

NOTES

1. M. J. Bureaud, "An Open Door in Madagascar," *Mission Quarterly*, Third Quarter, 1930, 35.
2. B. F. Kneeland, "Everyone at Work in Georgia," *Field Tidings*, April 9, 1930, 6.
3. United Nations estimates, 2017.
4. D. A. McAdams, "Your Help is Needed," *Southern Tidings*, August 15, 1951, 1.
5. Ibid.
6. Adventist Printing House staff, interviews conducted by the author in 2003.
7. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Adventist Publishing House (Madagascar)."
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

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