

Kigundu, Ndwiga (1926–2021)

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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*.

Ndwiga Kigundu was a pioneer Adventist teacher, evangelist, and pastor in Kenya.

Early Life

Kigundu was born in 1924 in the picturesque Ngariama location of Kirinyaga County on the foothills of Mt. Kenya. He was the son of Kigundu Karuenji and Mumbi Kirogo. He began his educational journey at Ngariama Elementary School, where he laid the foundation for his academic pursuits.¹ Later, he continued his education at Karura Mission School, the premier Adventist school near Nairobi. His passion for teaching led him to the Kamagambo Training School, where he obtained his qualifications as a Primary School teacher.

In 1954, he obtained his credentials to serve as a church school teacher, granted to him by the East African Union Mission.² He then returned to Central Kenya where he taught for a number of years. Not stopping there, he went on to earn his diploma in Theology from Kamagambo College, equipping himself for a life of spiritual service.

Elder Kigundu's spiritual journey began when he became one of the earliest converts to Adventism through the work of Pastor Justus Kange'the and Elisha Matumu Njagi, who had conducted evangelism work in Ngariama, which touched his heart and inspired his faith. After teaching for a while, he felt called to the pastoral ministry.

Ministry

After teaching for several years, he joined departmental work in the Central Kenya Field. In 1975, he was appointed the Lay Activities, Sabbath School and Education director (all of them were under one department) in the Central Kenya Field.³ He took over from Pastor Nathan Oyiengo.

In 1976, the Stewardship and Church Development areas were added to his responsibilities, making it one of the largest departments in the CKF.⁴ It was during his tenure that some of today's premier Adventist institutions came into existence. One of them was the Segero Adventist School, organized in 1976 and today is the largest secondary school system in the Adventist Church with several campuses.⁵

In 1978, Pastor Kigundu's department was re-organized to include the Youth docket in Education while Lay Activities went to Pastor J. K. Maina and Sabbath School and Stewardship went to Pastor S. Were. In 1979, the Central Kenya Field moved its offices from Chalmer's Square (Shauri Moyo) to Karura along Red Hill Road, where it remains to this day. Pastor Kigundu's offices also moved there. In 1981, the Communication area was added to his Education and Youth department.⁶ Communication was previously held by Pastor J. K. Maina. In 1983, he retired from departmental work, and Pastor Reuben Theuri took over from him.⁷ He now returned to district pastoring.

Between 1992 and 1995, Elder Kigundu ventured into Murang'a County, pastoring various churches. In 1996, he retired from active service, but that didn't mark the end of his involvement with the Church. He continued to be an active participant in the church community, working closely with the gospel workers to conduct evangelistic campaigns in his home area.

Family and Later Life

Elder Ndwiga Kigundu was married to Margaret Wangare. Together, they were the parents of Jean Mwakwari, Ruth Mburu, Mary Muriithi, Esther Nyakio, Anne Murimi, Pastor Kigundu Ndwiga, and Kamau Ndwiga. His son, Kigundu Ndwiga, joined him in the pastoral ministry and currently serves as chaplain at Kenyatta University. Elder Kigundu enjoyed a well-deserved retirement, spending his days at his tranquil home near Gatumbi in Kirinyaga County. He passed away in October 2021. He was laid to rest at his home on October 29, 2021.

Legacy

One of the most admirable aspects of Elder Kigundu's character was his deep faith and courage. During the turbulent times of the Mau Mau insurgency, he firmly stood by his convictions, refusing to take the Mau Mau oath even when it meant risking his life. His dedication to spreading the Word of God became a lifelong endeavor. As a proud product of Adventist education, he made substantial contributions to the field of education, dedicating 32 years to teaching in schools across Kirinyaga, Machakos, and Nairobi counties. He also made a strong case for the expansion of the Adventist school system and helped establish many church-sponsored schools. He worked tirelessly to establish the Seventh-day Adventist church in Central Kenya and planted several churches. His enduring commitment to his faith and his community remains an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him.

SOURCES

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1. Frederick K. Wangai, *The Power of the Word, A History of the Seventh-day Adventism in Central Kenya* (Grandmaster, 2021), 101.
2. "East Africa Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1955), 152.
3. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1976), 106.
4. "Central Kenya Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1977), 108.
5. Godfrey K. Sang, Kili, and Hosea K., *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church came to Western Kenya* (Gapman Publications, 2021), 166.
6. "Central Kenya Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1982), 80.
7. "Central Kenya Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1984), 83.

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