



Ron A. Carey the manager of the Advent Press with Literature Evangelists in 1932. They are holding a copy of the newly released book *Vita Kuu*, the Kiswahili translation of *The Great Controversy*. Yuda Odongo is seated on his left while Ezekiel Kimenjo the pioneer evangelist among the Nandi people is seated to the right. Standing on the extreme left middle row is Caleb Kipkessio, pioneer Nandi Adventist.

Photo courtesy of the British Union Conference.

Carey, Ronald Alexander (1908-1978)

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*.

Ron Carey served the Church for nearly 50 years in various capacities, including as a missionary, publisher, administrator, and denominational leader.

Early Life

Ron Carey was born in Stockwell, London, on July 17, 1908. He was one of the three children of Alexander Carey (1882-1970), who was a long-serving secretary-treasurer of the British Union Conference (BUC).¹ His father, who was also born in London, became an Adventist in 1915 when Ron was seven, and moved his family to Stanborough Park in 1920, joining denominational employment.

In 1924, Ron joined the Stanborough Press at the age of 16 and apprenticed in the printing trade. In 1930, he married Winnifred Grace Uffindell. Winnifred was born in Edmonton, Middlesex, England, on June 10, 1903.² She was the daughter of Edith and Roland C. Uffindell. She graduated from Stanborough College in May 1929, and was a classmate of Ron's sister Hilda.³ Also in the same class were future missionaries to Kenya Matthew Murdoch and William Raitt.⁴

Leaving for Africa

On January 9, 1932, the boat carrying Carey and his wife sailed from Southampton for Genoa on the first leg of their journey to Africa.⁵ Here, they made the connection to Mombasa on another boat that also carried A.W. Allen and his wife as well as Pastor J. J. Strahle.⁶ Pastor Strahle was the Publishing secretary of the Northern European Division, and Allen was to take over the Colporteur ministry in Kenya. By this time, the Northern European Division had recognized the place of literature in deepening the gospel work, and so this was a high-power team whose primary duty was to expand the literature work.

Arriving later that month, they took the train from Mombasa for Kisumu and eventually to Gendia, where the Advent Press was based. They were warmly received by F. H. Thomas, who set about handing over the press to Carey as he was moving to take over the work at the Kanyadoto Mission. Thomas had been in charge of the work since he arrived in 1925.⁷ Carey and Thomas had been colleagues at Stanborough Press. In 1930, Thomas changed the name to "The Advent Press".⁸

Work at the Advent Press

In 1924, the BUC conducted a campaign that raised £433 (equivalent to £27,003.16 in 2021)⁹ to purchase new equipment for the Press at Gendia. The equipment purchased included a Wharfedale Demy Power Press, a Davis Typecaster, a Petters Paraffin Engine, and a Brehmer Wire Stitcher for pamphlets, tracts, and small books.¹⁰ The Stanborough Press also donated an assortment of consumables and other equipment. Thomas arrived at Gendia with the equipment early in 1925, but then a critical part had been damaged in the power press, forcing him to improvise. His solution worked perfectly well, and indeed the literature was soon flying off the press!¹¹

Carey now came to work with this equipment, and there were already a number of workers who had been very well trained on how to handle the delicate equipment. By this time, a beautiful house had been constructed for

the Press manager, so Carey and his wife moved in. Carey's first duty was to expand the selection of literature produced by the Press. Under Thomas, the Press produced literature in Dholuo, Kiswahili, Ekegusii, Luganda, Kipare (Chasu), Kisukuma and Kinyarwanda. Lesson quarterlies were only available in Kiswahili, Luganda, Dholuo, and Ekegusii. Carey added more languages to those available. He also added the Kiswahili translation of E. G. White's classic *The Great Controversy* (known as *Vita Kuu*).

Now with Allen in charge of colporteur work, Carey recruited hundreds and trained them to carry out the work across Kenya. The first recognized fulltime literature evangelist in Kenya is Yuda Odongo, a Luo worker who took his books all over South Nyanza in Kenya.¹² It was Carey who recruited him and sent him out. Carey was also keen on recruiting literature evangelists from unentered areas. He trained Ezekiel Kimenjo and Caleb Kipkessio, both of them Nandi. They went back to the unentered Nandi and Luhya countries and beyond. In 1933, they brought to the faith Petero Chetambe, a Luhya who would go on to become the foremost Luhya evangelist.¹³ Carey and Allen ran colporteur institutes in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, which helped deepen demand for the literature they were producing. They beat the odds during the Depression years through persuasive literature evangelists. African literacy was also rising fast, and with it, the demand for publications soared. In the first half of 1933, they sold over 1,000 books.¹⁴

Bible Printing

In 1933, the British and Foreign Bible Society requested Carey print the Book of Genesis in the Luo language.¹⁵ The translation of this important work had been started by A. A. Carscallen, a pioneer missionary to Kenya. In 1935, Carey wrote,

The work has gone forward here with great strides and God has been with us and helped over all our difficulties. The publishing work here is not only one of spreading the Gospel but also of tuition, to our colporteurs it is still quite a new form of employment, and it has been very hard teaching them to be faithful in money matters, but with Brother Allen's co-operation and efficient handling, our men are learning to be honest and are not falling back into debt. Today we have not a bad debt in our books.¹⁶

He also reported that during both 1933 and 1934, the publishing house had recorded a profit of over £50 for both years, placing them on firm financial footing.¹⁷ This was quite remarkable given that most firms were closing down during the Depression.

Through the Advent Press, Carey also produced school literature and textbooks. The books were primarily for the Adventist schools, but then other educational institutions run by other missionary societies also began to appreciate Adventist school textbooks and purchased them in large numbers. The work of producing the textbooks fell on E. Roy Warland, the principal of the Kamagambo Training School. The production of textbooks, in all the taught subjects of the school curriculum, proved quite lucrative for the Press.¹⁸

In 1935, the circulation of the Lesson Quarterly in Dholuo and Kiswahili reached 2,000 copies apiece.¹⁹ Each quarterly sold for sixty cents (1 EA shilling made up of 100 cents, while 20 shillings was the equivalent of one pound sterling).

Carey oversaw the construction of a modern printing building which was completed in 1937. The project was the beneficiary of the 1937 Missions Extension Fund as well as contributions from members of the Church. The arch at the main entrance gave the building the name "Rainbow House."²⁰ The building is still in use.

Carey then embarked on the Kiswahili editions of the Prophecies of Daniel, which were eventually produced just before the outbreak of World War II. Needless to say, work became very difficult for the Advent Press during the war. During that time, they faced supply shortages in printing paper, quality inks, and other consumables. Despite the difficulties, they continued to push on. In 1944, L. A. Vixie took charge of the colporteur work from Allen and, together with Carey, held colporteur institutes in East Africa.²¹

Return to England

In February 1946, Carey completed his mission term and returned to England. He arrived in time to attend the session of the British Union Conference held in the Watford Town Hall.²² He chose to remain in England and served as the Circulation manager for the Stanborough Press, working with his brother-in-law J. H. Craven²³ who was the general manager.²⁴ During his absence from Gendia, the Press remained without a manager for a year until February 22, 1947, when R. L. Wangerin arrived from America to take over.²⁵

Return to Africa

Carey remained in England for two years and returned to Kenya on March 7, 1948.²⁶ He was appointed the secretary-treasurer of the Kenya Mission field, working under Elder E. W. Pedersen. He was primarily based at Crauford Road, Nairobi, where the offices of the Kenya Mission were based. Carey also carried the responsibility as the secretary for Sabbath School.²⁷

One of the important developments that Carey presided over was the formation of the Maxwell Adventist Academy, which was founded in 1949 on the Crauford Road campus.²⁸ His daughter Beryl was one of the first students there. The school provided education for the children of missionaries and, in 1986, they moved to a new campus just outside Nairobi.²⁹ The former campus remains an important part of the Adventist Church in Kenya, hosting the East Kenya Union offices and also the Nairobi Central Church. Also on the campus is the Literature Ministries and Services (LMS), which is concerned with the sale of literature, a hostel owned by the LMS as well as a health facility the Better Living Hospital, a school, and the Hope Channel Kenya (TV).³⁰ Crauford Road was renamed Milimani Road after Kenya's Independence in 1963 and has since been renamed Jakaya Kikwete Road. The campus was secured in 1937 when the East Africa Union moved its head office from Nakuru

to Nairobi,³¹ and from there, the Kenya Mission Field joined them.

Carey was in charge of the Kenya Mission Field at a time of unprecedented growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Between June 1950 and September 30, 1952, there were 9,531 baptisms in the Kenya Mission Field alone.³² This brought the numbers of the Kenya Mission Field to 34,329 baptized members.³³

In 1953, Carey was appointed the provisional secretary-treasurer of the Kenya Lake Mission under the presidency of F. H. Muderspach.³⁴ Later that year, the Kenya Mission Field was restructured, and in its place, three new Missions were established. These were: the Central Kenya Mission under Robert J. Wieland and Miss Margaret G. Clarke as president and secretary-treasurer respectively; the Kenya Lake Mission under F. H. Muderspach and Ron Carey as president and secretary-treasurer respectively; and the South Kenya Mission under K. G. Webster and Maurice W. Cuthbert as president and secretary-treasurer respectively.³⁵ With the new appointment, Carey moved out of Nairobi to work in Gendia, where the Kenya Lake Mission office was located.

Move to South Africa

In 1955, Carey was called to South Africa to work as the registrar of the Bethel Training College in Esdabrook, Transkei. The institution, founded in 1928, was primarily designed to serve the African students in South Africa. He worked under Principal S. W. Beardsell, who had also just moved to South Africa from Kenya, having headed Kamagambo School near Kisii.³⁶ Mrs. Carey became an instructor in the school. In 1960, Carey was host to Pastor Spencer G. Maxwell, who was at Bethel to conduct a "Leadership Course" for the North and South Bantu fields of South Africa.³⁷ By this time, W. A. Hurlow had replaced Beardsell as the principal.

Return to England

Just before he left South Africa, Carey was ordained as a minister. He then returned to England in 1962 where he took up a job as auditor in the British Union Conference. He worked under J. A. McMillan and Colin Wilson, who were president and secretary-treasurer, respectively.³⁸ In 1965, he moved to Newbold College in Bracknell, Berkshire, where he served as the business manager. He worked under the college President V. Norskov Olsen.³⁹

Move to America

Carey continued at Newbold until 1970 when he moved to America to work as the assistant manager at the San Francisco Office of the ESDA Travel Service.⁴⁰ The ESDA Travel Service was established in 1956 and was based at Eastern Avenue, Washington, D.C. They also had an office in London. Carey worked under the manager of the San Francisco office, R. G. Mote.⁴¹ ESDA was a procurement organization designed to provide goods and services for various denominational organizations and institutions at competitive prices.⁴² It had served the

denomination since 1920 and the travel service which Carey worked with, having been established in 1956. It was while he served in America that his father died on December 17, 1970.⁴³

Return to England

In 1972, he returned to England and settled at Grantham, Lincolnshire, 127 miles north of London.⁴⁴ He served at the Northern European West Africa Division in the Treasury until 1971.⁴⁵ West Africa (comprising of Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Togo, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta [now Burkina Faso], and Dahomey [now Benin]), was part of the Northern European Division and accounted for almost half of the Division's membership.⁴⁶

Final Years

At the end of 1974, Carey retired from denominational service, spending his retirement in Grantham. He passed away in Grantham on October 9, 1978, after a brief illness. He was 70 years old. He was laid to rest at the Grantham Cemetery during a service conducted by J. A. McMillan, former BUC president, and C. T. Bannister and W. Raitt, both of whom had worked with him as missionaries in Kenya.⁴⁷ He was survived by his wife Winnie and their three children, daughter Beryl (Mrs. Puccinelli) and sons Graham and Brian.⁴⁸ Winnie passed away in 1998 in North Dakota, U.S.A.⁴⁹

Legacy

Ron Carey gave 15 years of his life to the Africa Herald Publishing House, which continues to serve the Adventist Church as the premier publishing house and remains the largest Adventist publishing house in East and Central Africa. He remains the longest-serving manager in its 108-year history, and his tenure saw the establishment of its foundations of their sustainability over the years. He instituted literature evangelism as a career, which not only brought thousands into the faith, but also helped the publishing house remain profitable. Today, thousands of literature evangelists continue to move literature as they did when Carey first arrived in 1932. The Maxwell Adventist Academy, founded during his tenure, continues to flourish.

SOURCES

Astleford, D. L. R. "East African Publishing House." *Trans-Africa Division Outlook*, February 15, 1964.

Bartlett, W. T. "News from Kenya." *The Advent Survey*, April 1, 1937.

Bannister, C. T. "Puccinelli, Beryl (Obituary)." *British Advent Messenger*, February 29, 1980.

Carey, R. A. "In and Out and Roundabout." *The Advent Survey*, June 1, 1935.

Carey, R. A. "The Advent Press, Gendia, Kenya Colony." *The Advent Survey*, November 1, 1935.

Carey, R. A. "The Advent Press." *The Advent Survey*, May 1, 1938.

"Closing Exercises at Stanborough College." *Missionary Worker*, May 31, 1929.

Emmerson, W. L. "The Conference Convenes." *British Advent Messenger*, August 9, 1946.

"General News Notes." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, May 1, 1948.

Hanson, E. D. "Constituency Meetings in East Africa." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, November 15, 1953.

Harker, J. "Strengthening our Work in Kenya." *Missionary Worker*, December 26, 1924.

Maxwell, A. S. "Editorial Notes." *Missionary Worker*, January 29, 1932.

Maxwell, S. G. "Leadership Course." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, April 15, 1960.

Maxwell, S. G. "The East African Union." *The Advent Survey*, November 1, 1933.

McMillan, J. A. "Pastor Ronald Alexander Carey (Obituary)." *British Advent Messenger*, October 27, 1978.

"News Notes." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, March 15, 1947.

Read, W. E. "With Our Missionaries - An Awakening in Northern Abyssinia." *The Advent Survey*, October 1, 1929.

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

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Institutional Services/ESDA."

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Kenya."

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Maxwell Adventist Academy."

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Vine, R. D. "Alexander Carey (Obituary)." *British Advent Messenger*, January 15, 1971.

Vixie, L. A. "Colporteur Work in the East African Union." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, December 11, 1944.

Watts, R. S. "Reorganization of the Kenya Mission Field." *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, February 1, 1953.

"Winifred Grace Uffindell." *Ancestry.com*. Accessed June 18, 2021.
<https://www.ancestry.ca/genealogy/records/winifred-grace-uffindell-24-bzpwwh>

1. R. D. Vine, "Alexander Carey (Obituary)," *British Advent Messenger*, January 15, 1971, 15.
2. <https://www.ancestry.ca/genealogy/records/winifred-grace-uffindell-24-bzpvwh> (accessed June 18, 2021).
3. "Closing Exercises at Stanborough College," *Missionary Worker*, May 31, 1929, 3-4.
4. Ibid.
5. A. S. Maxwell, "Editorial Notes," *Missionary Worker*, January 29, 1932, 8.
6. Ibid.
7. W. E. Read, "With Our Missionaries - An Awakening in Northern Abyssinia," *The Advent Survey*, October 1, 1929, 3.
8. It began as the "Kavirondo Press" (1913-1920) before it changed its name to "South Kavirondo Press" (1920-1930) then the "Advent Press" from 1930 to 1956 when it became the "East Africa Publishing House." In 1963, it became the Africa Herald Publishing House, which it remains as to date.
9. www.in2013dollars.com/uk (accessed June 18, 2021).
10. J. Harker, "Strengthening our Work in Kenya," *Missionary Worker*, December 26, 1924, 1.
11. *The Advent Survey*, October 1, 1929, *op cit*.
12. D. L. R. Astleford, "East African Publishing House," *Trans-Africa Division Outlook*, February 15, 1964, 3.
13. Godfrey K. Sang, Hosea K., Kili. *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church came to Western Kenya*, Gapman Publications, 2017.
14. S. G. Maxwell, "The East African Union," *The Advent Survey*, November 1, 1933, 3.
15. Ibid.
16. R. A. Carey, *The Advent Survey*, June 1, 1935, 8.
17. Ibid.
18. R. A. Carey, "The Advent Press, Gendia, Kenya Colony," *The Advent Survey*, November 1, 1935, 5.
19. Ibid.

20. R. A. Carey, "The Advent Press," *The Advent Survey*, May 1, 1938, 5.
21. L. A. Vixie, "Colporteur Work in the East African Union," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, December 11, 1944, 2.
22. W. L. Emmerson, "The Conference Convenes," *British Advent Messenger*, August 9, 1946, 2.
23. Married to Ron's sister, Hilda.
24. "Publishing Houses – British Publishing House, The Stanborough Press," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1947), 291.
25. "News Notes," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, March 15, 1947, 8.
26. "General News Notes," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, May 1, 1948, 8.
27. "Kenya Mission Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1949): 175.
28. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Kenya."
29. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Maxwell Adventist Academy."
30. "East Kenya Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), 48-49.
31. W. T. Bartlett, "News from Kenya," *The Advent Survey*, April 1, 1937, 3.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. R. S. Watts, "Reorganization of the Kenya Mission Field," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, February 1, 1953, 4.
35. E. D. Hanson, "Constituency Meetings in East Africa," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, November 15, 1953, 4.
36. "Bethel Training College," *Adventist Yearbook* (1956), 200.
37. S. G. Maxwell, "Leadership Course," *Southern Africa Division Outlook*, April 15, 1960, 6.
38. "British Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1963): 157.
39. "Newbold College," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1965/66), 318.
40. "ESDA Travel Service," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1971), 19.

41. Ibid.

42. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Institutional Services/ESDA."

43. R. D. Vine, "Alexander Carey (Obituary)," *British Advent Messenger*, January 15, 1971, 15.

44. Ibid.

45. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1973), 520.

46. "Northern European Division," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1971), 199, see map on page 198.

47. McMillan, J. A., "Pastor Ronald Alexander Carey (Obituary)," *British Advent Messenger*, October 27, 1978, 7.

48. C. T. Bannister, "Puccinelli, Beryl (Obituary)," *British Advent Messenger*, February 29, 1980, 7.

49. <https://www.ancestry.ca/genealogy/records/winifred-grace-uffindell-24-bzpwvh> (accessed June 18, 2021).

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000