

Ufunuo Publishing House

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Ufunuo Publishing House (UPH) in Morogoro, Tanzania, began as a printing plant prompted in 1969 by the need to produce Voice of Prophecy lessons for the Tanzanian Mission Field.¹

Humble Beginnings

Using a small secondhand offset press bought in Nairobi, Kenya, R. H. Henning, then president of the Tanzania General Field headquartered at Misufini in Morogoro, began the printing in his own home. Helping him were Paul Horton from North America, Anyawile Mwalubandu, a machine operator, and Abrahamu Lukinga, an assistant operator.² Later on, George Moses and Agustino Gakuba joined them. Initially the Tanzania General Field fully funded the project.³

Steady Growth

In 1971 the staff moved the printing press to the then Voice of Prophecy building at the same Morogoro–Misufini mission station, a major step toward having its own facility.⁴ With the mission reaching a membership of more than 15,000 by 1970,⁵ the need for more publications than just the Voice of Prophecy lessons increased.

The Tanzanian churches especially wanted the Sabbath School quarterly then translated and printed in Kenya by the African Herald Publishing House at Kendu Bay.⁶ Literature evangelists also imported books from Kenya, especially those in Kiswahili, the Tanzanian national language. When the Tanzanian government questioned the printing of Kiswahili books in another country, the executive committee of the Tanzania Union Mission decided to establish a press in Morogoro, a step completed at the end of 1974.⁷

In 1975 the new publishing house completed the first building for the printing press and moved the machines from the Voice of Prophecy into it. That year the entity acquired the name Tanzania Adventist Press and Toffy Kinkoro, a competent machine operator, and Charles Mabela, the first treasurer, joined its staff. At this time, the printing of the abridged quarterlies began as the press acquired the rights to do so from the Kenyan African Herald Publishing House. Printing of other lessons for health and temperance known as “Maisha Bora” (Better Life) also started.⁸

Responsibilities for the press increased from printing quarterlies to small books that would now be very instrumental for the struggling literature evangelist program in Tanzania. Soon the press began printing all church publications and supplies within the country.

Under the treasury leadership of Russell Thomas, who later held the managerial position, the press constructed its second building in 1981, giving it more room for its new larger machinery.

By 1987 the press acquired its first computer for the layout work previously done in Dar-Es-Salaam, about 200 kilometers distant. Now, through the use of Adobe Page Maker version 1.0, the layout process took place at the press and resulted in the production of the first book title, *Homa ya Dunia*.⁹

During 1990 the facility added more computers, including some laptops, and the staff received training on how to use them. Under Neal Scott and Ghuheni Mbwana as instructors, the press became known as a center for computer training for Adventist workers in the Tanzania Union.

Foreign missionaries guided the press until 1994. The next year saw the press under the leadership of nationals. Ghuheni Mbwana became the manager and Eliamani Kachua the treasurer. By this time, the press could print 16-page signatures.¹⁰

Change of Name and Becoming a Publishing House

Between 2002 and 2015 the press added still more machines. It now had computerized typesetting, laser printers, a darkroom, three Heilderberg offset presses, a two-color printing machine, a four-color "Lithrone 40 Komori Machine," and a full bindery for stitched and perfect bound paperback books.

Two church commissions visited Tanzania Adventist Press at the request of the Tanzania Union Mission.¹¹ General Conference associate director of the publishing department Wilmar Hirle led the first one in March 2014. The final commission came from the East-Central Africa Division that same year in September under the direction of Elkana Kerosi, the then division field secretary, and it made the final recommendation that led to the division's approval for the press to be a full-fledged publishing house. It was initially suggested that it be called Nuru Publishing House, but after consultation with the Tanzanian government's registering agency for industries and institutions, leaders decided to adopt another name to avoid a close similarity with an already existing institutional name. Hence, after a wider involvement of church members within the Tanzania Union, administration chose the Kiswahili name "Ufunuo" ("Revelation"). It embodied the mission of the publishing house to proclaim the end-time message as in the book of Revelation.

Currently, with 46 employees and more than 32 machines, the publishing house owes a lot to the General Conference publishing department together with a former manager of Ufunuo Publishing House, Russell Thomas, for their role in coordinating the shipping of the printing equipment all the way from the USA to Tanzania in 2016.¹²

Challenge With Distribution

For about 14 years after 1994, Tanzania Adventist Press had book centers under it for distribution of church publications. However, due to the strained logistics pertaining to responsibilities of both printing and distributing church materials, the supervision of the literature evangelists, as well as managing Adventist Book Centers (ABC), the Adventist press concurred with the establishment of the Home Health Education Services (HHES), which since 2008 has taken care of the Adventist Book Centers and, of course, the literature evangelists in one major Tanzania union.¹³

However, as a result of the progress of mission work in Tanzania, the country has two unions: the Northern Tanzania Union Conference and the Southern Tanzania Union Mission organized in 2014. The Ufunuo Publishing House caters for both of them as far as church publications are concerned. With the population of more than 50 million Tanzanians and a church membership of more than 730,000 in the two unions, the need for printed matter is definitely great. So, regardless of the eight-strong editorial department personnel under an experienced chief editor, Mussa Mika, the coverage of the work including translation, editing, and manuscript processing, still requires more additions to meet the church's apparent needs.

Mission Work

As part of the preparation for the Second Coming, the publishing house staff have also actively participated in distributing books to their neighbors in Morogoro. Other publications have gone to prison inmates, and some are given in public meetings. In the same vein, the publishing house has participated actively in the Total Member Involvement (TMI) thrust. Ufunuo Publishing House conducted evangelistic meetings that resulted in 26 individuals joining the church through baptism on July 1, 2017.

Outlook

Ufunuo Publishing House is currently working toward moving to a new site for a better and more spacious facility. UPH is also planning to acquire new machinery that will enable it to produce better quality products and in even larger quantities to enable the union to reach a membership of at least 220,000.

Leadership Chronology

Managers: Paul Horton (1971-1974); Benny Salzman (1975-1980); Toffy Kinkoro (1980-1981); Jack Tunner (1981-1981); Dennis Mercill (1982-1987); Russell Thomas (1988-1988); Neal Scott (1989-1994); Ghuheni Mbwana (1995-2010); Rahisi Mande (2011-2012); Samweli Bukuku (2012--2018); E. Chaboma (2018-)

Treasurers: Benny Salzman (1975-1976); Charles Mabela (1976-1977); Gideon Makondo (1978-1981); Mzanyuma Tenga (1982-1983); Russell Thomas (1983-1988); Daudi Mkenga (1989-1991); Jack Manongi (1991-1993); Eliamani Kachua (1994-2004); Koheleth Manumbu (2005-2010); Dickson Matiku (2011-2012); Samwel Bukuku (2012-2013); Mathias Mavanza (2013-2014); Farida Mika (2014-2018); Mashauri G. Chiruma (2019-).

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. *Seventh Day Adventist Encyclopedia*, sec. rev. ed. (1996),s.v. “Tanzania Adventist Press.”
2. Personal Interview with Abrahamu Lukinga and Anyawile Mwalubandu via telephone, March 10, 2019.
3. Personal Interview with Ghuheni Mbwana on March 12, 2019 at UPH, Morogoro, Tanzania)
4. Interview with Toffy Kinkoro on July 4, 2017, at UPH, Morogoro, Tanzania.
5. Statistics from the Secretariat of the Southern Tanzania Union, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania.
6. Elisha A. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania* (Tanzania Adventist Press, Morogoro, Tanzania, 2014), 157.
7. Personal Interview with Ghuheni Mbwana and Charles Mbwana, March 12, 2019, at UPH, Morogoro, Tanzania.
8. Personal Interview with Ghuheni Mbwana, March 12, 2019, at UPH, Morogoro, Tanzania.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid
11. Personal Interview with Samuel Bukuku, March 10, 2019, at Morogoro.
12. Personal Interview with Russell Thomas, October 10, 2016 at Morogoro
13. Interview with Esther Israel and Koheleth Manumbu via telephone March 14, 2019.

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