

Teasdale, George

(1868–1967)

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D. Graham Stacey, Ph.D. (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, the United States) retired in 2018 as the associate dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, Loma Linda University. Graduate qualifications in family therapy, clinical psychology and bioethics, enriched by experience as pastor, psychologist, lecturer and administrator – permitted a full career in Australia and the United States. Published research on the statistical analyses of student performance has given way in retirement to research of family history.

Born in England, George Teasdale lived for 98 years, serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a missionary, pastor, administrator, teacher, college principal, and business manager. Teasdale spent the majority of his professional life in the Australasian Division and is buried in Australia.

George Teasdale was born to George Wilkinson

Teasdale (1837–1924) and Mary (Gunson) (1840–1923) in Backbarrow, Lakes District (Lancashire), England, on July 17, 1868.¹ George, his father (a cooper by trade), mother, and five of his siblings emigrated to New Zealand via Melbourne on the *Cuzco* in 1882, settling in Newton Road, Auckland.²

In 1887, 19-year-old Teasdale and his family attended an A. G. Daniells evangelistic series conducted in a large tent in Auckland, New Zealand.³ With his commitment evident, he was offered the job of tentmaster immediately upon his identification with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He also served as a charter member of the Ponsonby church.⁴ Early involvement in literature ministry came with a short term at the Echo Publishing Company in Melbourne, Australia. Two years of literature evangelism followed, between Albury and Goulburn, New South Wales.⁵ His success was significant, and “sales of 1,000 copies of *GC (Great Controversy)* in 1890 were recorded.”⁶

The search for an “Adventist” education led Teasdale to Healdsburg College, California, and then Battle Creek, Michigan. During this 1891–1894 preparation and study, he worked in college printing offices and attended camp meetings with fellow workers Lacey, Hare, Skinner, and Paap.⁷ Returning to Australia in August 1894, he



George Teasdale when he was a missionary in Java, 1907.

Photo courtesy of Graham Stacey.

taught for the Australian Bible College (Melbourne).⁸ Significant service as pastor, evangelist, writer, camp meeting preacher, workshop presenter, and conference delegate defined the successes in his ministry.⁹

In the midst of all this professional activity, Teasdale and Martha (Mattie) Lawrence married at Launceston, Tasmania, in January 1895.¹⁰ Two sons, George Lawrence (1895) and Lilford Leonard (1897), were born into the family. Acknowledging the commitment to service and the associated personal demands experienced by worker families, George Teasdale later wrote from Queensland: At the beginning of next year Mrs. Teasdale and Lilford are going to Avondale to live. This will make the sixty-seventh move we have had in the 17 years of our married life."¹¹

In 1906 the Teasdales accepted an appointment to Java. After a farewell to his Australian parish,¹² Teasdale, accompanied by his family and sister Helena Teasdale, settled into his work.¹³ Progress was difficult and slow, complicated by limited support, cultural differences, and scarce resources. Coincidentally, another sister, Margaret, and her husband, Gustave Wantzlick, worked at the same time in neighboring Sumatra.¹⁴

While in Java, their son Lawrence died of malaria. Helena and Martha also suffered with malaria, but survived.¹⁵ Teasdale told of his son's last hours. "Lawrence gradually became delirious. . . . His moaning all day was heart-rending. . . . He looked at us so pleadingly. . . . Our poor poor boy suffered so much and we could not help him. . . . At half past five he breathed his last, suffering intensely."¹⁶ Teasdale remained in Java after his son's death. However, in March 1908 he, Martha, and 10-year-old Lilford withdrew to the United States for mental and physical rehabilitation.¹⁷ By 1909 Teasdale was back to work in Australia. Martha stayed longer with her parents in Alabama, and eventually returned to join the family.¹⁸ The records suggest Martha never recovered emotionally from this devastating assault.¹⁹

During his years of denominational service, Teasdale embraced several administration opportunities. He was the second (1900–1901) and seventh (1910–1912) president of the Queensland Conference.²⁰ In contrast to the successes associated with his leadership, during his later term the conference established health clinics in Brisbane and Rockhampton offering massage and hydrotherapy. Sadly, they failed to sustain early promise, and were deemed too costly to continue.²¹ In addition to his administrative skills, he was also a competent writer. In 1912 he wrote a book that was to be widely used called *Armageddon*.²² While serving this term in Queensland, because of his identified administrative skills and his brief period teaching at the Bible school, Teasdale was invited to transfer from Queensland to assume the role of principal and business manager of the Australasian Missionary College (AMC) in Cooranbong, NSW.²³

As principal, Teasdale also served as secretary of the board, and his minutes recorded the everyday workings of the college.²⁴ Recruiting trips to the conferences, decisions on tuition charges, hire of typewriters for nonbusiness students, building septic tanks and flushing toilets, assessing boarding costs (12 shillings and 6 per week), compensation for casual work (7 pence per hour), and the confirmation of the principal's salary (70 shillings, or 3 pounds 10 shillings, per week)—were all recorded.²⁵ Other sources suggested all was not well, and

Teasdale’s principalship lasted only two years.²⁶ A succession of board meetings tell the story. In 1914 the April 22 board, under the chair of J. E. Fulton, proceeded without controversy: the September 30 meeting included Teasdale by invitation only, the October 1 meeting granted him two weeks leave with full pay, and by November 21 Teasdale’s involvement at AMC had ended. On February 14, 1915, a board minute recorded “that under the existing circumstances, George Teasdale’s charge of 8 pounds (expenses from Brisbane to Avondale in 1912) be allowed.”²⁷ Whether connected to or separate from the preceding events, Teasdale’s service record (undated), immediately after the AMC history, reported that “Mrs. Teasdale is confined to [an] insane asylum.”²⁸

After his term as AMC principal, Teasdale returned briefly to pastoral work, preaching, visiting, and evangelism (1915–1916). On January 31, 1916, in a report on the distribution of labor, Teasdale was requested to “take up literary work under the direction of the union conference committee.”²⁹ The last reference to him in the *Australasian Record* while in active employment referred to another book he had written, *Beyond Death’s Barriers*, which was used to raise funds for mission work.³⁰ There does not appear to be a record as to when Teasdale resigned from denominational employment. However, in March 1923, in an obituary for his mother, the writer refers to him as “the only son, known to many of our readers in the past as Pastor G. Teasdale.”³¹

Some years later, on January 6, 1926, Teasdale married Charlotte Harrison in Epping, NSW.³² From 1930 until 1933 he and Charlotte lived in Epping and Bankstown, NSW, and from 1934 to 1967 they made Brisbane, QLD, their home. Teasdale spent the rest of his professional life writing and advocating for health and wellness. Martha Teasdale, Teasdale’s first wife, died on October 26, 1959, in Orange, NSW.³³ Teasdale died on June 23, 1967, just three weeks short of his ninety-ninth birthday.³⁴ Charlotte Teasdale died on May 25, 1969.³⁵

Teasdale’s contribution was recognized in a life sketch.³⁶ “Throughout his life, George Teasdale was dedicated to the proclamation of the health reform message, and ardently practiced what he taught. He possessed a keen mind and a body remarkable for its vigor, but most of all he had a liberality of soul that was an example to all who knew him. Three weeks before his death he is known to have emptied his bank account and to have directed the money toward our mission and health programs.”³⁷

Summary of Service

1894	August, teacher; Australian Bible College (Melbourne, VIC) Evangelism (Launceston, TAS) November 12, received ministerial credentials (camp meeting, Ashfield, NSW)
1895	Evangelism; tent missions (Toowoomba / Ipswich, QLD)
1896	Evangelism (Rockhampton, QLD)
1897	Auckland, New Zealand
1899	Auckland, New Zealand
1900	Elected second president of Queensland Conference

1901	Reelected president of Queensland Conference (camp meeting, QLD); appointed but did not go to Sumatra, Dutch East Indies
1902	Pastor, Tasmania
1903	Education secretary, Tasmanian section of Victoria / Tasmania Conference
1904	Vice president for Tasmania in Victoria / Tasmania Conference
1905	Pastor, Auckland, New Zealand
1906	November 5, departure for Java with Martha, two sons, and Helena Teasdale
1907	September 14, report on the death of son Lawrence, Java, Dutch East Indies
1908	March 23, Martha Teasdale, with son Lilford, leaves for Alabama, USA George travels to USA to visit family
1909	Evangelism, Auburn, NWS October 4, Pastor, VIC December 6, Evangelism, Brighton, VIC
1910	March 7, elected as one of two conference vice presidents in Victoria Seventh president of Queensland Conference, Brisbane, Queensland
1911	September 18, reelected President of Queensland Conference
1911	Religious Liberty secretary of Australasian Union Conference (in addition to other work)
1912-1914	President and business manager of Australasian Missionary College
1915	Pastor, Sydney, NSW
1916	January 31, requested to "take up literary work under the direction of the union conference committee"
?	Withdrawal from denominational employment

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