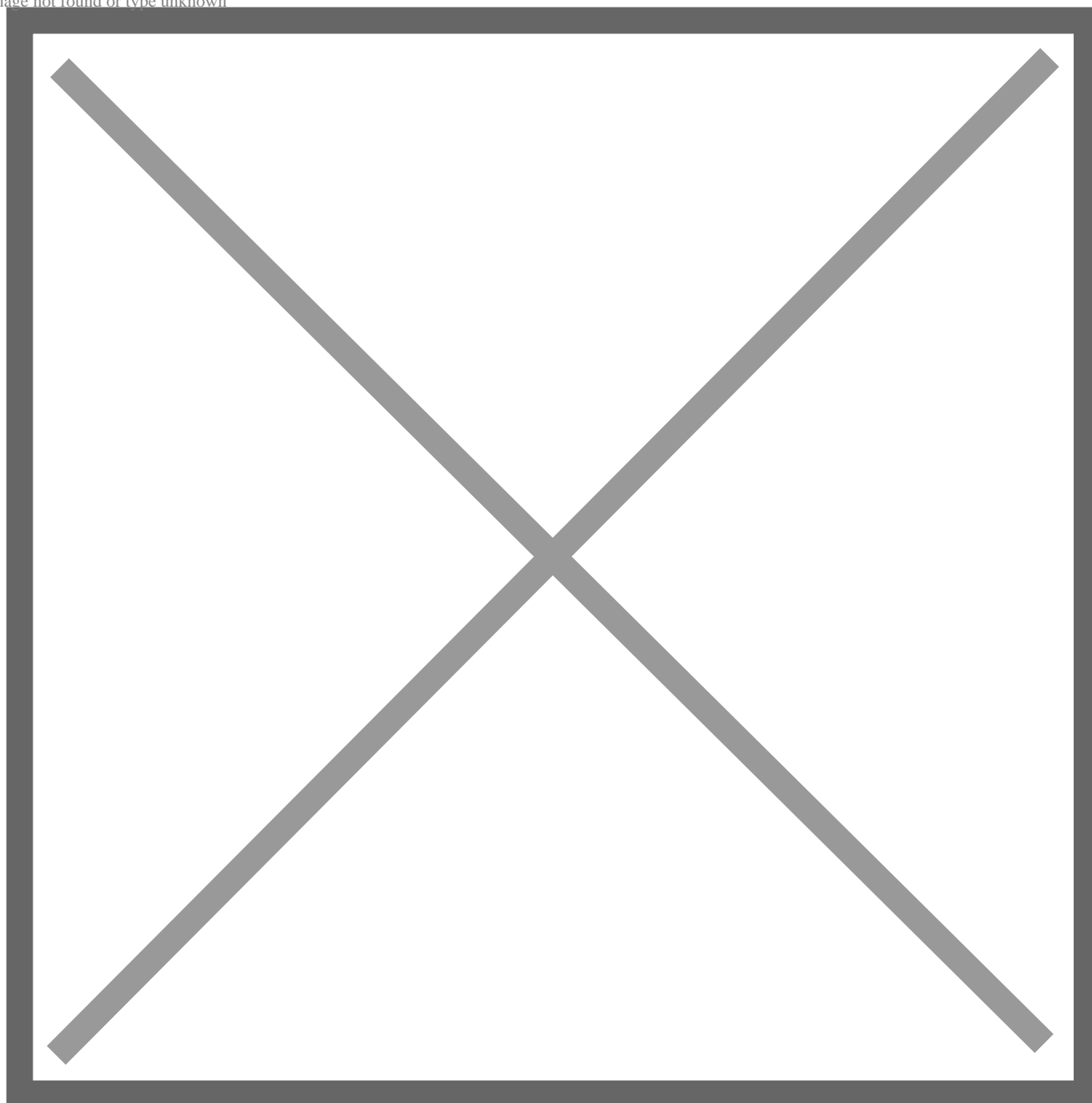


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## Aaen, Bernhard Albert (1918–1996)

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### JUDSON CHHAKCHHUAK

Judson Chhakchhuak is from Mizoram, Northeast India. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Religion degree with an emphasis in the New Testament from the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, the Philippines. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology degree from the Adventist University of the Philippines.

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Bernhard Albert Aaen was an ordained minister, missionary to Indonesia, educator, and administrator from North Dakota, U.S.A.

## Early Life, Education and Marriage

Bernhard Albert Aaen was born on August 6, 1918, to Bernhard Adolph Aaen and Lois Field in Alexander, North Dakota, U.S.A.<sup>1</sup> Bernhard attended Livingston Church School in Salem, Oregon, for his first and second grades. From grades three to eight he attended Laurelwood Elementary School. He was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church while attending this school in 1931.<sup>2</sup>

Bernhard then continued on at Laurelwood, attending the academy for his high school and graduated from there in 1936.<sup>3</sup> He went to Walla Walla College to pursue a bachelor's degree in English. He graduated in 1942 with English as his major, and Bible, journalism, and chemistry as minors.<sup>4</sup> Bernhard Aaen then did graduate studies for two years at the University of Washington.<sup>5</sup>

Aaen married Margaret Penhallurick, a fellow graduate from Walla Walla College and a student at the army radio school, on February 14, 1943, in Livingston, New Jersey.<sup>6</sup> He and Margaret had three children: Bernie Allen, Victor Joe, and Margaret Louise.<sup>7</sup>

## Ministry

Bernhard Aaen's training as an X-ray technician for three months in the Army School of Roentgenology in Memphis, Tennessee, equipped him to work in the U.S. Army as an X-ray technician. He worked in that capacity, having the rank of corporal, from October 1942 to March 1946. In the fall of 1949, Aaen started working at Laurelwood Academy. He taught English and Old Testament history, and served as librarian at the academy until 1951.<sup>8</sup>

Bernhard and Margaret Aaen received a call to serve in the Far Eastern Division, specifically in Indonesia.<sup>9</sup> The Aaens left Portland, Oregon, on November 7, 1951,<sup>10</sup> and arrived at Jakarta on November 14.<sup>11</sup> Bernhard taught science and English from 1951 to 1953 in the Indonesian Union Seminary (now Universitas Adventist Indonesia)<sup>12</sup> located at Gadobangkong, Bandung, West Java. He served as the president of this institution from 1953 to 1955.<sup>13</sup> During his presidency, the school campus was moved from Gadobangkong to Cisarua.<sup>14</sup> He incorporated manual training as part of the seminary curriculum.<sup>15</sup>

An annual meeting of February 9, 1955, voted to transfer Bernhard Aaen to the North Celebes Training School, located at Kawangkaon, Manado, Indonesia, which was suddenly left with no principal.<sup>16</sup> After serving in the Celebes for a year, Aaen returned to the Indonesian Union Seminary. He served as acting president and then was appointed president on March 24, 1958.<sup>17</sup> In 1962, per the Far Eastern Division Committee's action and by his own request, the General Conference Committee voted Bernhard Aaen to return permanently to the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Upon his return to the United States, Aaen did graduate studies, part-time, at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, in 1964 while at the same time teaching some courses.<sup>19</sup> Later in 1964, he joined the Pacific Union College as the English department chair, serving in this position till 1969.<sup>20</sup> From 1969 to 1971, Bernhard did doctoral studies at the University of Nebraska. He earned a doctoral degree, specializing in college administration and counseling, and graduated in the summer of 1971.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequently, the General Conference invited him to return to the Far Eastern Division and serve as the academic dean of Southeast Asia Union College in Singapore<sup>22</sup> (now Asia-Pacific International University)<sup>23</sup> Bernhard arrived in Singapore on September 27, 1971 and took up the academic dean's position at Southeast Asia Union College.<sup>24</sup> He served the college in that capacity for five years until his retirement on June 1, 1976.<sup>25</sup>

After retirement, Bernhard Aaen returned to the United States. He died on January 20, 1996, in Angwin, California.<sup>26</sup> He had 32.9 years of denominational service.<sup>27</sup>

## Contribution

Bernhard Aaen made a significant contribution to the Adventist educational work in the Far Eastern Division, particularly at the Indonesian Union Seminary. He led the Indonesian Union Seminary during difficult years when the country faced economic and political challenges.<sup>28</sup> He is remembered for relocating the school from Gadobangkong to Cisarua.<sup>29</sup> His emphasis on the values of manual labor, which he believed was a unique Seventh-day Adventist educational program in the country,<sup>30</sup> was his valuable contribution to the educational work in Indonesia.

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