

# Uttley, Stuart Morris (1909–1987)

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## ROSS GOLDSTONE

Ross Goldstone, M.A. (Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 1998 as Senior Pastor, Avondale Memorial Church, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia. New Zealand born, Goldstone has served the Church as a pastor, Conference Youth Director, teacher, and Sessional Lecturer at Avondale College. He has authored nine books relating to Adventist history, including *The Angel Said Australia*. He is also co-author of four other books on Adventist history in Australasia. In retirement Ross Goldstone continues to research and write Adventist Church history.

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Stuart Uttley worked in his early years of ministry in public evangelism, and the later years in local conference and union conference administration.

Stuart Morris Uttley immigrated to Australia from England as a teenager and became a Seventh-day Adventist while working on the Arrawatta Estate near Inverell in New South Wales. Following his baptism in 1926, he worked as a literature evangelist for two years before training for the ministry at the Australasian Missionary College. There were two eras in his years of ministry: the early years in public evangelism, and the later years in local conference and union conference administration.

## Early Life

Stuart Morris Uttley was born in Sheffield, England, on July 20, 1909, to Charles Uttley, an English school teacher, and his Australian-born wife.<sup>1</sup> He received his early education at King Edward VII College.<sup>2</sup> Following World War I, there was an extreme shortage of farm workers in Australia and the “Dreadnought” boys, who immigrated to Australia, received passage assistance provided they took up initial employment on designated farms.<sup>3</sup> Sixteen



Stuart M. Uttley

Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre, Australia.

year-old Uttley landed in Sydney on August 1, 1925, and began his farm training on the Arrawatta Estate near Inverell, New South Wales. Mr. Brennan, one of his instructors, was a Seventh-day Adventist who awakened the young Englishman's interest in the Bible. Uttley attended the Inverell church and was very impressed with Pastor C. J. Reynolds who held more Bible studies with him.<sup>4</sup> He was baptized in February 1926 during the Wallsend, New South Wales, camp meeting.<sup>5</sup>

Following his baptism, Stuart Uttley and his close friend, David Brennan, worked as literature evangelists in the North New South Wales Conference throughout 1926 and 1927.<sup>6</sup> In 1928, Uttley spent the year on Christian Rosendahl's farm near Wauchope, New South Wales. Rosendahl had been business manager at Australasian Missionary College in Cooranbong, New South Wales, prior to taking up farming and doubtless was an influence in Uttley enrolling as a ministerial student at the college in 1929, from which course he graduated in November 1932.<sup>7</sup>

## Years of Evangelism

Stuart Uttley's first appointment was to Perth in Western Australia where he labored from 1933 until 1935.<sup>8</sup> It was here, on April 7, 1934, that he married Cora Lyndon in the Perth church, the youngest daughter of Pastor and Mrs. F. E. Lyndon, converts of Pastor A. G. Daniells from his Napier, New Zealand, evangelistic campaign.<sup>9</sup> The Lyndons were missionaries in Tahiti where Cora Lyndon was born in 1910. Ten months after their marriage, the Uttley's first son, Lyndon Stuart Uttley, was born.<sup>10</sup>

At the 1935 Australasian Union Conference annual council, Stuart Uttley was transferred from Perth to Tasmania, where daughter Noreen was born on December 3, 1936.<sup>11</sup> In this small conference, he worked part time in evangelism and part time for the youth. W. M. R. Scragg became president of the Tasmanian Conference in 1938 and, recognizing that Uttley could not fulfill his potential with the limited conference funds available, recommended that he be given opportunity elsewhere. Subsequently Uttley was transferred to South New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> Successful evangelistic meetings led to Uttley's ordination on January 13, 1940, at the South New Zealand annual camp meeting.<sup>13</sup> The Uttleys then moved to the North Island where Stuart Uttley ran a three-year evangelistic series in Auckland before moving back to Perth in Western Australia.<sup>14</sup> Morris Charles, the Uttley's second son, was born in Auckland in 1944.<sup>15</sup>

In 1946, plans were made to bring Clifford A. Reeves, a leading city evangelist from America, to run evangelistic series in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney, supported by a team of evangelists and ministers from within Australia. It was determined that Uttley would, in August 1947, join the Brisbane series in association with Reeves.<sup>16</sup> The program was an outstanding success, as were those in Melbourne and Sydney. Uttley was appointed to follow up with interested persons in Brisbane.<sup>17</sup>

In 1949, Uttley conducted his own evangelistic series, based on the Reeves model, in Perth with outstanding success.<sup>18</sup> He followed this successful series with a second one in 1952, also in Perth, this time partnering with choir master Wal Hammond.<sup>19</sup> In 1955, the Uttley-Hammond campaign moved east to the city of Adelaide where again the chosen venue was packed with an eager congregation enjoying the music as well as the lecture.<sup>20</sup> Beginning each meeting with sacred music, both vocal and instrumental, Uttley ran repeated campaigns in some of Australia's main cities, drawing capacity attendances on each occasion.<sup>21</sup>

## Years of Administration

The second phase of Stuart Uttley's years of service commenced in 1956 when he was appointed to the presidency of the South New South Wales Conference. New responsibilities demanded new skills and he quickly developed into a highly respected administrator.<sup>22</sup> In succeeding years, Uttley was appointed president to three Conferences—South New South Wales (1956-1958), Queensland (1959-1961), and Greater Sydney (1962-1967).<sup>23</sup> On commencing leadership of the South New South Wales Conference, Uttley indicated his determination to lead by example. During Ingathering season in 1959, together with three of his departmental leaders, he visited the work camps of Eaglehawk, Island Bend, Jindabyne, and Adaminaby of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, a hydroelectricity and irrigation project of the Australian government.<sup>24</sup> Under Uttley's administration, the South New South Wales Conference expanded the number of new schools and churches built, including the Canberra National Church, which was opened on November 8, 1958.<sup>25</sup>

Having been involved with the Reeves Crusade in the 1940s, Uttley was no stranger to Brisbane, nor was he a stranger to Queenslanders. When a vacancy occurred due to the transfer of Pastor Sibley, the Queensland Executive Committee immediately invited Uttley to fill the vacancy.<sup>26</sup> Under his leadership the new Queensland Conference office was built.<sup>27</sup> Following three years of leadership in Queensland, Uttley was transferred to the presidency of the Greater Sydney Conference. "Camellia Court," the conference home for the elderly was one of the projects completed in Uttley's time as president of the Greater Sydney Conference.<sup>28</sup> His ongoing love for public evangelism was apparent as he shared the public platform with evangelist John Coltheart in his 1962 Parramatta evangelistic series.<sup>29</sup>

With the retirement of John B. Keith as president of the Trans-Commonwealth Union Conference at the end of 1966, Uttley was appointed incoming president.<sup>30</sup> His territory now covered a major part of the Island continent of Australia. The conferences of West Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and South New South Wales constituted the union conference. The institutions in the union were the Warburton Sanitarium and Hospital, Lilydale Academy in Victoria, and Carmel College in West Australia.<sup>31</sup>

One of his greatest challenges was to meet the financial demands of these three union institutions. With the opening of Lilydale Academy, the enrollments of boarding students at Carmel College dropped alarmingly, resulting in unsustainable deficit budgets. Desperate needs required desperate responses and for a time

Carmel was threatened with closure, much to the dismay of West Australian Adventists.<sup>32</sup> This issue was resolved in 1982 when Carmel Adventist College became a local conference institution with initial financial support from the union four years after Stuart Uttley's retirement.<sup>33</sup>

Uttley announced his retirement at the South Pacific Division annual meetings held in Wahroonga, November 23-25, 1977. He was 69 years old.<sup>34</sup> His farewell, held on November 30, was a sad occasion for staff members who had been associated with him over the years. One pleasant surprise at the function was the presence of Frank Hedley, Stuart Uttley's life-long friend from Inverell, New South Wales.<sup>35</sup>

## Retirement

In retirement, Stuart and Cora Uttley initially took up residence in Wahroonga, but eventually moved into the Avondale Retirement Village in Cooranbong. Stuart's health declined and he died on October 13, 1987. His funeral service was held in the Avondale Memorial Church. A guard of honor comprised of forty ministers accompanied his body to the grave site in the Avondale Adventist Cemetery.<sup>36</sup> Cora Uttley later married John Howse, a minister and a family friend, in 1989. She died on January 31, 1998, and was buried alongside Stuart Uttley in the Avondale Adventist Cemetery.<sup>37</sup>

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