

Sundin, Carl

(1909–1980)

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Carl Sundin served as a minister in the Minnesota, Nebraska and Missouri Conferences prior to 25 years as an associate secretary in the Medical Department of the General Conference.

Heritage and Education

Carl Sundin was born on October 25, 1909, at Duluth, Minnesota,¹ of Swedish heritage. His parents, Karl Olaf and Hulda Elisabet (Höglund) Sundin had migrated to America early in 1909 and Karl worked as a carpenter.² He and Hulda converted to the Seventh-day Adventist church soon after arrival in Minnesota and raised their family in the faith.³ Their ten children were: Nisse (b. 1907), Carl (b. 1909), Alice (b. 1911), Elsie (b. 1914), Alford (b. 1916), Gladys Maryann (b. 1919), Robert Hartung (b. 1921), Ebba Mae (b. 1924), Paul (b. 1926) and Lloyd Daniel (b. 1930).⁴

Carl took his high school education and first year of college at Broadview Academy and College, a Seventh-day Adventist school located about 12 miles west of Chicago.⁵ He worked his way through gradually, completing his college year in 1933. Like his father, Carl was inclined to practical skills, working in the building trade and carpentry shop, auto mechanics and briefly as a cafeteria manager and hospital orderly.⁶

At Broadview he met Laura Martina Carlson, whose parents were naturalized Swedes, originally from Finland. Laura graduated from the teacher training course. She and Carl married on June 17, 1934, and together they



Carl Sundin

From the *Central Union Reaper*, September 16, 1947.

attended the fledgling Ekebyholm Mission School located north of Stockholm, Sweden. They took college studies there during the academic years 1934 through 1936.⁷

Pastoral-Evangelistic Ministry

Returning to the United States, Sundin began a ministerial internship with the Minnesota Conference in July 1936. He first assisted in an evangelistic effort at Atkin and another with the Swedish church in Duluth.⁸ He then spent a year in Minneapolis (1938-1939) as music director and assistant to Arthur L. Bietz in a major evangelistic effort. Laura Sundin also assisted with music and visitation.⁹ Sundin's talent as a builder was utilized to erect a church at Hackensack¹⁰ and then he nurtured the believers at Brainerd. It was there, in April/May 1940, that he received an appointment to overseas mission service in Persia (now Iran) but he felt committed to his work in Minnesota and did not accept the offer.¹¹ The following month, on June 29, he was ordained to the gospel ministry during the annual Minnesota camp meeting.¹²

While serving at Brainerd, Sundin held evangelistic meetings in surrounding towns such as Pillager.¹³ Before leaving the area he built a beautiful tabernacle in the center of Brainerd.¹⁴ It was also in Brainerd that the Sundins' daughter, Sandra Dawn, their only child, was born on April 20, 1941.¹⁵ Later, Elder Sundin transferred back to Duluth. There, in 1945, he was again urged to accept an appointment to Iran. He declined once again because he was in the midst of another church-building project, his largest one yet.¹⁶

In 1945 Sundin transferred to the Nebraska Conference to pastor the Lincoln City church.¹⁷ The appointment was relatively brief. He was called to the Missouri Conference in 1947 and within months was elected president of the conference, his responsibility covering 53 churches with a total membership of 3,238.¹⁸

General Conference Medical Department

In his role as conference president, Sundin showed great interest in finding suitable locations for Seventh-day Adventist medical doctors to practice in his territory. His success in this respect came to the notice of church officials at the General Conference session in San Francisco, July 1950, and he was appointed to be an associate secretary in the Medical Department of the General Conference. His specific role was to conduct a sub-division of the department titled the Medical Extension Bureau. His office was situated at the Los Angeles campus of the College of Medical Evangelists. The bureau facilitated fellowship among Seventh-day Adventist medical and dental personnel, including medical students and interns. It assisted with overseas mission appointments of medical workers and encouraged medical graduates to pioneer homeland opportunities for medical evangelism.¹⁹

The aim of Sundin's work was to integrate medical work with ministerial evangelistic endeavors. To this end he traveled extensively, promoting his cause at ministerial gatherings and at the same time finding candidates for

medical mission work both overseas and in the homeland. Reports found him speaking, for example, at ministerial fellowships and retreats in various places such as North Carolina,²⁰ Colorado,²¹ Idaho,²² West Virginia²³ and California.²⁴ With similar purpose Sundin addressed the first national gathering of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Optometrists in Denver, Colorado, June 1961.²⁵ He also maintained a link with the National Association of Seventh-day Adventist Dentists by serving as their chaplain. In 1963 his department assisted with the sponsorship of a mission dentist in Blantyre, Nyasaland (now Malawi), and prepared a color movie about nutrition for healthy teeth.²⁶ His work in the medical field was essentially one that focused on the spiritual needs of patients, a balance lacking in the secular disciplines.²⁷

Last Years

Carl Sundin retired in June 1976 but for three more years he continued as chaplain for the Seventh-day Adventist dentists.²⁸ He passed away at Loma Linda, California, December 19, 1980.²⁹ Laura Sundin died in Chico, California, on March 12, 2011.³⁰

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Wade, Mildred. "Lake Union." *ARH*, May 27, 1965.

NOTES

1. "Carl Sundin obituary," *ARH*, February 19, 1981, 23.
2. "Karl Olof Sundin." *FamilySearch*, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/LVFK-8NP>.
3. "Carl Sundin obituary."
4. "Karl Olof Sundin," *FamilySearch*.
5. Established as Broadview Swedish Seminary in 1909, the school later added instruction in German and English at the secondary and junior college levels until 1933, after which it continued as a secondary school. See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev. edition (1996), s.v. "Broadview Academy."
6. Carl Sundin Information Questionnaire, February 1, 1945, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.
7. Ibid. See also Yvonne Johansson Öster, "Ekebyholm Mission School (1932–1960)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, November 28, 2021, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=8IDX>.
8. Carl Sundin Ministerial Internship Application, July 27, 1937, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.
9. Carl Sundin, "Auditorium Evangelistic Campaign," *Northern Union Outlook*, January 17, 1939, 3; Carl Sundin Information Questionnaire, March 5, 1940, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.
10. E.H. Oswald to E.D. Dick, April 8, 1940, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.

11. Carl Sundin to E.D. Dick, May 5, 1940, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.
12. Virgil E. Peugh, "Minnesota Camp Meeting," *Northern Union Outlook*, July 16, 1940, 3.
13. Virgil E. Peugh, "From the Field," *Northern Union Outlook*, March 25, 1941, 4.
14. Maynard V. Campbell, "Evangelistic Efforts," *Northern Union Outlook*, October 21, 1941, 7-8.
15. Sundin Information Questionnaire, February 1, 1945, Secretariat Appointee Files, GCA.
16. Carl Sundin to T.J. Michael, February 1, 1945, Secretariat Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 47216, GCA.
17. D.E. Venden, "Welcome," *Central Union Reaper*, June 19, 1945, 5-6.
18. "Introducing Missouri's New President," *Central Union Reaper*, September 16, 1947, 1-2; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* for 1949, 34.
19. Theodore R. Flaiz, "Our Medical Extension Bureau," *ARH*, November 23, 1950, 19.
20. Carl Sundin, "Carolina Medical-Ministerial Fellowship," *ARH*, August 21, 1952, 20.
21. Carl Sundin, "Colorado Workers' Meeting," *ARH*, October 8, 1953, 17.
22. Carl Sundin, "Upper Columbia Medical-Ministerial Retreat," *ARH*, October 14, 1954, 20.
23. Carl Sundin, "West Virginia Medical-Missionary Meeting," *ARH*, January 20, 1955, 26.
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27. Carl Sundin, "Hospitals' Spiritual Aspects Are Being Discussed," *ARH*, February 5, 1976, 21.
28. "Carl Sundin obituary."
29. Ibid.
30. "Laura M. Sundin obituary," *Pacific Union Recorder*, May 2011, 31.

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