



Dudley Vaughn talking to an Aboriginal lady.

Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.

Vaughan, Albert Dudley (1908–1974)

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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.

Pastor Dudley Vaughan was distinguished as a pioneer worker among Aboriginal people in Western Australia for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Albert Dudley Vaughan was born on October 11, 1908, to Albert and Florence Mabel (Brown) Vaughan in Perth, Western Australia. His parents had married near Forster, New South Wales, in 1906, and moved to Perth where his father was working as a clerk.¹ There was some Indian heritage from Dudley's maternal grandmother.² He

had a difficult childhood. His mother died in 1934.³ His father disappeared. It seems he abandoned the marriage and Dudley was raised by an aunt and uncle, the McCalls, wheat farmers in the Narrogin district south-east of Perth.⁴

Dudley married Elizabeth May Martin in Bridgetown, Western Australia, on August 3, 1931.⁵ They established a general retail shop in the rural town of Gnowangerup, a little enterprise that opened its doors for business most days of the year, including Saturdays. Prior to 1935, under the ministry of Ludwig Lemke and Gordon Wilson, Dudley and Elizabeth became Seventh-day Adventists, necessitating a change that did not involve work on Saturdays. They settled at Busselton on the west coast and Dudley became an agent for the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company. He applied himself to insurance selling in the towns and farms in the south-western districts, on two occasions earning the distinction of being top salesman in Western Australia. He was known as "the man with the big smile."⁶

A Significant Change

By 1948, or a little earlier, Dudley was using his sales skills to canvass *Desire of Ages* in the same territory of his insurance exploits. He enjoyed the work and discovered many people who were interested in the Scriptures, forwarding their names to grateful evangelists in the area.⁷

West Australian Conference leaders appointed Dudley to minister in the vast Murchison district, making Geraldton his base and using a Voice of Prophecy mobile home to visit the remote cattle station homesteads and little villages once crowded with gold prospectors. Roads were sandy tracks through the clumps of triodia and spinifex bushes under a merciless sun by day and a cold and lonely moon at night. He became very familiar with the vast inland stretches, the isolated settlers and the aboriginal people who best understood their country.

In 1953 Dudley used his mobile home to usher five church leaders on a long exploration trip, searching for a suitable location to establish a permanent mission outpost for the aboriginal people. He drove through the desolate region north of Kalgoorlie to Mount Magnet and then north-west to an aboriginal community at Tuckanarra. Dudley was in familiar territory and among people who were receptive to his message. There was one lake nearby, the only one for hundreds of square kilometers, and Dudley used it to baptize Mr. and Mrs. Curley, the first aboriginal converts in Western Australia. The unusual aspect of the baptism was that despite the presence of ordained men in their company, Dudley performed the ceremony.⁸

Dudley drove the search party north to Meekatharra and beyond in order to meet a hermit from southern Europe who was using underground water to irrigate a vegetable garden and a small patch of wheat. He was happy to sell and move elsewhere. Church leaders were impressed and made plans to buy his property and request the government to allocate adjoining land for development.⁹ Government officials agreed to the plans and donated funds to establish a school, dormitories, bathrooms, a teacher's home and a garden irrigation

system and household water supply. Church members volunteered their labor to construct the buildings and amenities, beginning in April 1954. The school opened in September 1954. The local name Karalundi, roughly translated as underground crystal river, was adopted as the mission title.¹⁰

Karalundi became the elementary school in the overall mission effort for the aboriginal people. Another enterprise was begun at Mullewa for aborigines who were employed and self-supporting. Dudley was the superintendent of all the mission efforts for the aborigines. In 1957 he personally moved further east with his family to Wiluna among the semi-nomadic people and began an outpost similar to Karalundi. Its emphasis was not schooling. Instead, it was designed as a refuge for the elderly, a place where able-bodied adults could work the gardens and eat from them until they decided to go on a walkabout through their country. Dudley and Elizabeth cared for many of their pre-school children while the parents hunted and gathered their favorite native foods.¹¹

In the aboriginal community Dudley and Elizabeth became known affectionately as Daddy and Mummy Vaughan.¹² Church leaders recognized the effectiveness of his ministry with his ordination in 1961.¹³ Civic authorities honored his work among aborigines by awarding him the British Empire Medal in the 1967 Queens Birthday Honours List.¹⁴

Retirement

Dudley Vaughan retired from active service in 1973. The following year he became ill and required two major surgeries that weakened him. He died with double pneumonia on June 30, 1974. Family left to mourn were Elizabeth and children John, Peter, Barbara, Ross and Margaret.¹⁵ Elizabeth was blessed with more than two further decades of life, dying on November 19, 1995.¹⁶ They both are buried in the Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth, Western Australia.¹⁷

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