

Hunter, Donald Walter (1905–1996)

CHERYL CHRISTO HOWSON

Cheryl Christo Howson earned a graduate diploma in computer aided interior designing at the Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women in Pune, India. She co-founded an interior design company in Sri Lanka and worked as a copywriter. She contributed to the morning devotional published by Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the *Shepherdess International Journal* magazine, and the *Adventist Review*. She has written several plays. Currently (2020), she lives in Hosur, India while preparing for a piano exam.

Donald Walter Hunter was a pastor, department director and church administrator whose ministry and administrative skills extended to every level of church polity from local church to the General Conference, and who has left an indelible mark in the training and development of workers in Southern Asia Division where he served as president of three Union missions before he completed his denominational career as two-term associate secretary of the General Conference.

Early Life

Donald W. Hunter was born in Hickory, NC, USA on November 11, 1905 to an American mother and a British father. He had one brother, Leroy E. Hunter. Having grown up in a Seventh-day Adventist home, he was baptized at the age of 12.¹ In his boyhood, Donald's ambition was to become a baseball player. However, when attending Southern Junior College (Southern Adventist University) he became convinced to become a gospel minister,² a calling to which he was faithful to the rest of his life.

While he was doing Bachelor of Arts degree at Emmanuel Missionary College (Andrews University), Berrien Springs, Michigan in 1927,³ he met Mary Catherine Neafus, a fellow student. The two eventually married on June 8, 1929. They had two daughters: Barbara Jean born in the USA, and Marjorie Ott born in India.⁴

Between 1938 and 1941 Donald took post-graduate classes at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (Andrews University).⁵ Besides his work, Donald also enjoyed various hobbies, such as painting, printing and baking.⁶

Career and Ministry

Hunter entered denominational service in 1923 at the age of 18 as a licensed minister in Parma City, Florida.⁷ For the next three years, he served as a singing evangelist and pastor in Alabama and Kentucky, after which he took time off to complete senior college in 1927 before returning to evangelistic work in East Michigan (1928-1930).⁸ Here he was ordained for the ministry.⁹

Called to be missionaries to Southern Asia Division,¹⁰ the couple landed in India, July 25, 1930.¹¹ They were assigned to the Telugu Mission where they learnt Telugu, the local language.¹² Soon Pastor Hunter served as an evangelist (1930-1933) and then did administrative work (1934-1937).¹³ His years of service in the Telugu-speaking Andhra field are noted for his endearing friendship with and pastoral commitment to workers and church members in the field, particularly for the sustaining efforts he undertook to support and encourage promising young people to attend Flaiz Memorial High School at Narsapur and later to Spicer Memorial College, thus contributing to the development of trained teachers and pastors to Andhra field.

After seven years of service in India, the family returned to the United States in 1937, when Hunter was appointed chaplain and Bible Teacher at the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital in Takoma Park, MD. In 1941 he became the Missionary Volunteer and Temperance Secretary in the Michigan Conference until 1946.¹⁴ Afterwards he volunteered to be a chaplain stateside as needed during World War II.¹⁵

In 1946 the Hunters moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, where Pastor Hunter served as Missionary Volunteer Secretary of Lake Union Conference till 1951. Then the couple accepted a call to return to India where Pastor Hunter was appointed the president of the Northwest Union.¹⁶ After a brief travel to the United States for some medical attention¹⁷ Hunter was appointed president of the new Northwestern India Union,¹⁸ amalgamating two Unions—Western Union and Northwest India Union with the office moving from Delhi to Bombay (Mumbai) where the family lived until 1953, when they were transferred as president of the Northeast Union with headquarters at Karmatar, north of Kolkata (Calcutta).¹⁹

After attending the 1954 General Conference Session, the Hunters returned permanently to the United States and joined the Georgia-Cumberland Conference where Pastor Hunter worked as the Missionary Volunteer secretary until 1957.²⁰

In 1957 the Hunters moved to Mount Vernon and served as the president of the Ohio Conference until 1964.²¹ He was then appointed the president of the Pennsylvania Conference until 1966.²² At the 1966 General Conference session in Detroit, Michigan, he was appointed an associate secretary of the General Conference,²³ and served in that position until the 1975 Vienna session of the General Conference when he chose to retire from active service.²⁴

Contribution and Legacy

After serving the church he loved for over half a century in varied positions from local church to the world headquarters of the church, Donald Hunter retired in 1976 and settled in Riverside, California.²⁵ Even retirement could not take away his love and enthusiasm for his church. While living in California, Hunter served as the General Conference representative on the Loma Linda University campus, where he assumed the responsibility of recruiting medical and dental personnel for the ever growing needs of the world field.²⁶ On October 2, 1996 the old warrior quietly passed away.²⁷

SOURCES

- Ashlock, J. F. "Union Leadership Changes." *Eastern Tidings*, May 15, 1953.
- Bunch, T.G. "Changes in Michigan." *Lake Union Herald*, December 24, 1946.
- "Donald Walter Hunter." *Service Records*, Southern Asia Division Archives, Hosur, TN, India.
- "Elder D. W. Hunter Elected President of Ohio Conference." *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 7, 1957.
- "Fourteenth Business Meeting." *General Conference Bulletin No. 8*, July 24, 1975.
- Franz, Clyde O. "God of Miracles and Wonders." *General Conference Bulletin No. 3*, April 21, 1980.
- "Further Partial Report of Nominating Committee." *General Conference Session: Bulletin Number 5*, June 22, 1966.
- "Obituaries: Neafus, Harriet Beeler." *Southern Tidings*, October 1, 1980.
- "Obituaries: Hunter, Donald W." *Lake Union Herald*, December 1, 1996.
- "Ohio Conference." *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*. Accessed May 2019.
<https://www.adventistarchives.org/ohio-conf>
- "Pennsylvania Conference." *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*. Accessed May 2019.
<https://www.adventistarchives.org/pennsylvania-conf>
- "Personal Profiles: Elder Donald W. Hunter." *Columbia Union Visitor*, June 5, 1958.
- Roth, D. A. "C.V. Anderson Retires; D.W. Hunter Appointed." *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 14, 1957.
- Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1976. Accessed June 17, 2019.
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1976.pdf>

NOTES

1. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*, Southern Asia Division Archives, Hosur, TN, India.
2. "Personal Profiles: Elder Donald W. Hunter" *Columbia Union Visitor*, June 5, 1958, 9.
3. D. A. Roth, "C.V. Anderson Retires; D.W. Hunter Appointed," *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 14, 1957, 1.
4. Ibid.
5. "Personal Profiles: Elder Donald W. Hunter."

6. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
7. "Personal Profiles: Elder Donald W. Hunter."
8. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
9. Roth, 1.
10. "Personal Profiles: Elder Donald W. Hunter."
11. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
12. J. F. Ashlock, "Union Leadership Changes," *Eastern Tidings*, May 15, 1953, 8.
13. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
14. Roth, 1.
15. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
16. Ashlock, 8.
17. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
18. Ashlock, 8.
19. "Donald Walter Hunter," *Service Records*.
20. "Elder D. W. Hunter Elected President of Ohio Conference," *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 7, 1957, 3.
21. Ibid.; "Ohio Conference," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed May 2019, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/ohio-conf>
22. "Pennsylvania Conference," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed May 2019, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/pennsylvania-conf>
23. "Further Partial Report of Nominating Committee," *General Conference Session: Bulletin Number 5*, June 22, 1966, 3.
24. "Fourteenth Business Meeting" *General Conference Bulletin No. 8*, July 24, 1975, 16.
25. "Directory of Workers", *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1976, accessed June 17, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1976.pdf>.

26. Clyde O. Franz, "God of Miracles and Wonders" *General Conference Bulletin No. 3*, April 21, 1980, 9.

27. "Obituaries: Hunter, Donald W." *Lake Union Herald*, December 1, 1996, 22.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000