



Charles James Boulting

Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Center, South Pacific Division.

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## Boulting, Charles James (1884–1974)

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### LESTER DEVINE

Originally trained as a secondary history teacher, a career long Adventist educator, Lester Devine, Ed.D., has taught at elementary, secondary and higher education levels and spent more than three decades in elected educational leadership positions in two divisions of the world Church, NAD (1969-1982) and SPD (1982-2005). He completed his forty years of denominational service with a term as director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre at Avondale University College in Australia where his life-long hobby of learning and presenting on Adventist heritage issues became his vocation.

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Charles Boulting pioneered in Adventist radio broadcasting in Australia in the 1930s.

Charles James Boulting was born in Margate, England, on January 3, 1884.<sup>1</sup> As a young man, he studied medicine, working at the renowned Guy's Hospital in London as part of his study program. However, most of his family worked in the theatrical world, and eventually he abandoned his medical studies in favor of a career in show business. Initially, he joined the J. C. Williamson Company and later took a contract to tour Australia with an opera company. However, while still on the ship traveling to Australia, he became disillusioned with the shallowness of theatrical life, and once his ship reached Melbourne, he resigned from his position in the show business world.<sup>2</sup>

Finding work in Queensland, Boulting learned dairy farming, and one of his duties was to travel to Boat Mountain, near Murgon, and there purchase supplies from a young Adventist widow, Mrs. Lamplough, who as a single parent, was running a small shop to support herself and her five children. She always added tracts or copies of the *Signs of the Times* when boxing up the groceries Charles had bought. After a time, she asked him whether he was reading any of them. On being told he did not understand what he was reading, Mrs. Lamplough arranged for a layman, Brother Dingle, to travel to Boulting's home and give him Bible studies. As a consequence, Charles was baptized, something his family back in Britain fiercely opposed. The family disinherited him, even holding a Jewish funeral for him.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, he married Minnie (James) Lamplough, who had been born at Baulkham Hills, New South Wales, on December 28, 1879.<sup>4</sup> To this union a son, Charles Henry James, was born at Murgon on March 19, 1915.<sup>5</sup>

Toward the end of 1924, Boulting entered denominational employment when he was appointed to the Australasian Union Conference headquarters, where he became the manager of the purchasing department, known as the Buying Agency.<sup>6</sup> After 10 years in the purchasing role, he was appointed as a literature evangelist in Victoria.<sup>7</sup> There he worked for a short time in the Hamilton District.<sup>8</sup> In 1937, he was assigned to a ministerial position located in the Mallee District of Victoria at Manangatang.<sup>9</sup> However, by November that year, they were located in Mildura, Victoria, and Charles Boulting was broadcasting on radio station 3MA each Sunday morning at eleven o'clock.<sup>10</sup> This was possibly the first Seventh-day Adventist radio program in Australia, and his voice soon became well-known throughout the region.<sup>11</sup> This innovative new ministry must have impressed church leaders, for in 1938 regular denominational use of the airwaves began, with Pastor Laurie Naden speaking on seven stations in five states.<sup>12</sup> The accompanying Bible correspondence courses were effective, and the resulting home visitation by pastors led to significant numbers of people joining the Church.<sup>13</sup>

Charles Boulting was ordained on June 12, 1943, in Victoria.<sup>14</sup> Then, in 1945 he was appointed to pastoral work on Norfolk Island, where he served until he officially retired on March 20, 1950.<sup>15</sup> On his return to the mainland, he received medical advice that he should retire, but he felt he still had something to offer. So, as energy permitted, he gave physiotherapy treatments and massages in health clinics operated in those days by local churches around Sydney.<sup>16</sup> Later, he did visitation in the Newcastle area before moving to the Kressville

retirement village near Avondale College. There he continued helping others and supported the fundraising for the new Avondale Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church across the street.<sup>17</sup>

Minnie died on March 8, 1959.<sup>18</sup> On December 8, 1960, Charles married Miss Wanda Niebuhr.<sup>19</sup> Miss Niebuhr had spent 36 years in the teaching ministry in Australia, New Zealand, and Papua.<sup>20</sup> Together they continued to promote the cause of Christ and serve in the Cooranbong community until Charles Boulting died on April 24, 1974, at the age of 90 after a fall and subsequent stroke.<sup>21</sup> As one writer commented at the time, “The greatest tribute that can be paid to such a life is for us to live as faithfully and consistently as he did.”<sup>22</sup>

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## SOURCES

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———. “Life Sketch of Charles James Boulting.” *Australasian Record*, June 10, 1974.

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“The Victorian Camp Meeting.” *Australasian Record*, February 15, 1937.

“You may have heard . . .” *Australasian Record*, December 6, 1937.

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## NOTES

1. Charles James Boulting Biographical Information, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Boulting, Charles James," Document: "Biographical Information Blank."
2. L. C. Coombe, "Life Sketch of Charles James Boulting," *Australasian Record*, June 10, 1974, 11.
3. Ibid.
4. Charles James Boulting Biographical Information, "Biographical Information Blank."
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "Appointments to the Colporteur Work," *Australasian Record*, September 16, 1935, 6.
8. P. G. Foster, "Dedication of the Hamilton Church," *Australasian Record*, October 28, 1935, 6.
9. "The Victorian Camp Meeting," *Australasian Record*, February 15, 1937, 6.
10. "You may have heard . . .," *Australasian Record*, December 6, 1937, 8.
11. E. H. Guilliard, "Missions in Victoria," *Australasian Record*, June 13, 1938, 6; Coombe, "Life Sketch," 14.
12. "The Message on the Air," *Australasian Record*, August 15, 1938, 8.
13. Elaine Fletcher, "Public Evangelism," in *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885–1985*, ed. Noel P. Clapham (Warburton, Victoria: Signs Publishing Company, n.d.), 52.
14. Charles James Boulting Biographical Information, "Biographical Information Blank."
15. Charles James Boulting Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Boulting, Charles James," Document: "C. J. Boulting."
16. Coombe, "Life Sketch," 14.
17. Alma Coombe, interview with the author, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia, July 25, 2017. Mrs Coombe remembers Charles Boulting setting up a "treatment room" downstairs under his retirement unit at Kressville and other residents and community people making appointments with him for physiotherapy type treatments and massages.
18. Charles James Boulting Sustentation Records, "C. J. Boulting."



19. H. W. Hollingsworth, "Boulting-Niebuhr," *Australasian Record*, January 30, 1961, 14.
  20. Charles James Boulting Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Boulting, Charles James,"  
Document: "Schools Where I Taught."
  21. L. C. Coombe, "Charles James Boulting obituary," *Australasian Record*, June 10, 1974, 15.
  22. Coombe, "Life Sketch," 14.
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