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**Davis, Clarence Henry (1895–1978) and
Elsie Mary (Morgan) (1893–1915); later
Beatrice (Amy) Collins (1911–1975)**

A. Barry Gane, Ph.D., has served the church on three continents over a period of 45 years. He has been a youth director at union and division levels, a university professor, chaplain, and pastor. Gane has earned two doctorates, both in the area of Youth Ministry and Leadership. He is married to Marilyn and they have two adult children, Daniel and Kymberley, and are blessed to have five grandchildren. He retired in 2015 as the head of the School of Ministry and Theology at Avondale College of Higher Education. Gane continues serving as an advisor to doctoral students and teaches in the areas of both Leadership and Youth Ministry.

Clarence Davis was an Australian who was better known outside of his homeland. He became a pioneer in Asia and did much to establish the colporteur ministry in China, as well as planting numerous churches and establishing schools in that country. He worked in the Far East for all but two of his 50 years of service.

Early Life

Davis was born in the country town of Canowindra in New South Wales, Australia, on March 16, 1895.¹ He became a Seventh-day Adventist in his mid-teens in the town of Lithgow and almost immediately became a colporteur selling the book *The Great Controversy*.² Before he was 20 he had met and married Elsie Mary Morgan, also a new convert, in Lithgow. Elsie Morgan had been born in Lithgow on June 21, 1893, and became an Adventist just a few months before her marriage.³ Early in 1915, the General Conference invited the young couple to go to Nanking (Nanjing), China to learn the language and then set up a program to train local men and women as colporteurs. But within six weeks of arriving in China on September 30, 1915,⁴ Elsie died on November 12, 1915, after a very brief illness that lasted just ten hours.⁵ She was the first missionary sent by the Australasian Union Conference who died in China.⁶

Life Service

Although heartbroken, Davis stayed in Nanking and did the work he had been charged with. Three years later he returned home to Australia on furlough and during this time he met Beatrice (Amy) Collins.⁷ Amy's family was from Laidley in Queensland. She was the daughter of Thomas Kingston Collins. Her mother and four sisters had become Adventists at the Laidley camp meeting in 1904, where Nellis Quinn and C. V. Bell had conducted meetings.⁸

Clarence and Amy were married on August 18, 1918 in Laidley, and a very short time after their wedding they traveled to China.⁹ Davis continued his work training colporteurs for a total of eight years until he was asked to become the president of the Honan (Henan) Mission where he remained for seven years.¹⁰ He then became president of the Hupeh (Hubei) Mission for two years; director of Sabbath School and Lay Activities for the Central China Union for four years; and president of the North Fukien (Fujian) Mission for more than five years.¹¹

When on furlough in the United States during World War II, Davis was asked to return to China¹² to care for the work of the Church in the South China Union, with provisional headquarters in Laolung (Laolong).¹³ He remained there until the Japanese took over. He escaped with the American Air Force when they abandoned Kweilin (Guilin), reaching Chungking on the Yangtze River in southwestern China. There he became president of the West China Union.¹⁴

In 1946 he returned to the United States to rejoin Amy and the family who had stayed there during the war. In 1946 they went back, this time to Hong Kong, where he served as president of the South China Union. When the Communists took over on the mainland, he reorganized the South China Island Union, with headquarters in Taipei, Taiwan, which then included Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. The family went to the United States on furlough in 1956-1957, returned to Taipei for a while, and in 1957 he was asked to go to Korea, as president of the Korean Union Mission. He remained in Korea until 1964. To the people of China and Korea, the two countries where he spent most of his working life, he was better known by his Chinese name, Dai Tiande (???), and his Korean name, Tae Bee Soo.¹⁵ In 1964, on the advice of Clarence's doctor, the Davis's returned to the United States permanently, having given a total of 49 years to mission service.¹⁶

Summary of Service¹⁷

N. S. W. Conference	Colporteur	January 1914-June 1915
China	Language Study	July 1915-August 1916
Honan Mission	Publishing Secretary	September 1916-June 1924
Honan Mission	President	July 1924-May 1931

Hupeh Mission	President	June 1931-June 1933
Central China Union	SS and HM Secretary	July 1933-June 1937
North Fukian Mission	President	July 1937-December 1942
South China Union	President	January 1943-August 1944
West China Union	President	September 1944-March 1946
South China Union	President	April 1946-April 1949
South China Island Mission	President Furlough	May 1949-November 1954 December 1954-December 1955
Taiwan Mission	District Leader	December 1955-November 1957
Korean Union Mission	President	December 1957-November 1963
Korean Union Mission	Department Director	December 1963-May 1964

Clarence and Amy had two sons, Alwyn K. Davis M.D., and Milton J. Davis; and two daughters, Violet M. Bates, and Phyllis M. Edwards.¹⁸ Clarence continued to serve as pastor of two churches in California well into his retirement!¹⁹ Amy died May 30, 1975, and was buried in the Bega Cemetery, New South Wales.²⁰ Clarence Davis died August 26, 1978, in Loma Linda, California.²¹

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. "Life-Sketch of Pastor C. H. Davis," *Australasian Record*, February 19, 1979, 11.?
2. Ibid.; "Colporteurs, N.S.W., 1914," *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1969, 4.?
3. James E. Schultz, "Another Worker Fallen," *Australasian Record*, January 31, 1916, 2.?
4. Ibid.?
5. Ibid.; James E. Shultz, "Elsie Mary Davis Obituary," *Asiatic Division Mission News*, December 1, 1915, 3.?
6. Ibid.?
7. A. J. Gilbert, "Davis, Beatrice," [Obituary Citation], *Australian Record*, August 11, 1975, accessed June 27, 2019, https://encore.andrews.edu/iii/encore/record/C__Rb3794212__SDavis%2C%20Beatrice__Ff%3Afacetlocations%3Asdaob%3Asdaob%3ASDA%20Obituary%20In.?
8. W. G. Turner, "Thomas Kingston Collins obituary," *Australasian Record*, May 20, 1929, 5.?
9. "Brother Clarence Davis . . .," *Australasian Record*, April 22, 1918, 8; E. G. Davis, "In America: Australians Celebrate Golden Wedding," *Australasian Record*, July 22, 1968, 11.?
10. Clarence Henry Davis Sustentation Records; South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives; Folder: "Davis, Clarence Henry;" Document: "Weekly Rates."?
11. "Life-Sketch of Pastor C. H. Davis," *Australasian Record*, February 19, 1979, 11.?
12. E. D. Dick, "Sending Forth Reapers: Missionary Sailings in 1943," *ARH*, April 20, 1944, 10.?
13. "Life-Sketch of Pastor C. H. Davis," *Australasian Record*, February 19, 1979, 11.?
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15. Bruce W. Lo, email message to author, June 4, 2019.?
16. Ibid.?
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20. Gilbert, "Davis, Beatrice," [Obituary Citation].?
21. Clarence Henry Davis Biographical Records; South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives; Folder: "Davis, Clarence Henry;" Document: "Weekly Rates;" "Life-Sketch of Pastor C. H. Davis," *Australasian Record*, February 19, 1979, 11.?