

Campbell, Malcolm Neal (1874–1958)

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Malcolm Neal Campbell was an early Adventist pioneer who served in North America and the British Union Conference. He served as General Conference secretary; division, union, and conference president; and a district pastor.

Early Life and Career

Malcolm N. Campbell was born in 1874 on Prince Edward Island in Canada.¹ In 1890 Campbell was baptized and started working as a colporteur.² He continued working as a colporteur until 1892.³

Between 1891 and 1895 he went to Battle Creek College,⁴ and in 1897 he married Ida Lillian Frohmader.⁵

From 1904 to 1905 he served as the field secretary of West Michigan.⁶ In 1906, when he was 32 years old, he was appointed as the pastor of Battle Creek Tabernacle church.⁷ W. B. White, on one of his visits to the church, declared that the new pastor seemed to have a lot of support among the congregation.⁸ He was the pastor of the Battle Creek Tabernacle church until 1908.⁹

Between 1909¹⁰ and 1912¹¹ Campbell served as the president of the Iowa Conference.

In 1912 he became a member of the Religious Liberty Association of the General Conference.¹² At the same time, he was chair of the editorial committee of the *Canadian Union Messenger*.¹³ Because of an oversight, he initially was not issued with any credentials. This was rectified in 1912.¹⁴



Malcolm Neal Campbell

Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

Campbell was appointed as president of the Canadian Union Conference in 1912.¹⁵ The former president of the Canadian Union Conference, W. M. Guthrie, was called to serve as president for the East Michigan Conference by the beginning of September 1912,¹⁶ leaving Campbell to begin his work as the next president of the Canadian Union Conference in the same month, by recommendation of the General Conference.¹⁷ Campbell mentioned in an article that it had been his dream to come back and work as a preacher in the country of his birth. Now that the opportunity had come, he was very happy indeed.¹⁸ He relocated his family to Canada and finished his work in the Iowa Conference by October the same year.¹⁹

During his time as president of the Canadian Union Conference, he received word from the General Conference about the standing of each conference in the Canadian Union on the 15-cent-a-week fund for the first months of 1913. The news was disappointing; no conference was meeting its target. He urged all the church leaders to change this situation by increasing the mission offerings.²⁰ In addition to increasing mission offerings, his main objective was to increase the work in winning souls for God's kingdom.²¹ One way of doing this was to encourage every single Seventh-day Adventist member in his union to go out and distribute tracts and periodicals in order to reach as many people as possible.²²

From 1914 to 1916 he served as the president of the Eastern Canadian Union Conference.²³

On December 2, 1915, it was reported in the North Pacific Union *Gleaner* that the Eastern Canadian Union Conference had been requested to release Campbell in order to take up the position as president of the British Union Conference, in the United Kingdom.²⁴

The British Union Conference

In 1917 Campbell went to Great Britain to serve as the British Union Conference president.²⁵ He arrived in Britain to take up his new position on June 8, 1917,²⁶ by recommendation from the General Conference and the invitation of the British Union Conference.²⁷

His time in Britain was marked by many changes in the church. The membership had risen from 2,155 in 1912 to 3,252 in 1918; new church schools were being planned,²⁸ parts of the Kingswood Estate were sold and a new site for the BUC office was voted. In 1919 the West Midland Conference, the North British Conference, and the South British Conference were formed.²⁹

In 1921 Campbell, accompanied by L. F. Langford, traveled to Sierra Leone in West Africa to visit the mission stations there. They undertook several speaking appointments, traveled to various locations, and talked to missionaries and natives. Campbell expressed that it had been a very pleasant experience, although they suffered slightly from the heat.³⁰

Life After the British Union Conference

In 1923 Campbell started working for the General Conference as an assistant secretary.³¹ Only one year later, in 1924, he became the departmental secretary of the Bureau of Home Missions of the Eastern Division at the General Conference, a position he held until 1932.³²

Between 1933 and 1936 he served as the Canadian Union Conference president,³³ and in 1937 he became president of the North American Division, a position he held until 1940.³⁴

The End of a Career

In 1940 Campbell's work for the church came to an end. He resigned as president for the North American Division and volunteered to surrender his credentials, placing his future in the hands of the General Conference Committee. The reason for his resignation was because of indiscreet attentions to a young woman some years previously. He admitted that the rumors were true and that they had both long since repented. He was willing to surrender his credentials in order to prove his repentance. His resignation was accepted, and the Committee decided to withhold his credentials for six months. The same committee voted to approve his retirement and grant him sustentation.³⁵

Legacy

Campbell left behind a legacy of willingness to serve the church and strong faith. He worked for the church most of his life, in whatever capacity he was asked to serve, even when it meant that he had to leave his home country for a while. His dedication, faithfulness, and faith remain an example to all.

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