Capman, Elmer Howard (1919–1968)

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Elmer Howard Capman was an Adventist pastor and administrator in the United States and the Philippines.

**Early Life**

Elmer Howard Capman was born on April 26, 1919, in Picton, Ontario, Canada, to Howard Joseph Capman and Mabel Flora Eaton Capman. Howard J. Capman was a gospel minister and administrator in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in the United States. The family lived in New York during Elmer Capman’s early years, residing in Utica, Albany, Buffalo, and Brooklyn. He was baptized in 1931 by his father in Albany, New York, at the age of 12.

**Education and Marriage**

Capman studied at South Lancaster Academy, Massachusetts, in 1932-1933. Due to the nature of his father’s work as a pastor and missionary, the family moved frequently. In 1933, he transferred to Buffalo Bennet High School, New York, where he stayed for a year. He then attended Greater New York Academy in 1934-1936 where he finished high school. He was the junior class president at Greater New York Academy and proved himself to be one of the outstanding students.

In the summer of 1937, Capman took a machinist course at Keating School of Linotype in Chicago, Illinois. He pursued a B.A. degree in Bible at Atlantic Union College (AUC) from 1937 to 1941. Among other languages, he studied Latin (2 years) and German (3 years). While still a student, he demonstrated leadership skills. He was the graduating class treasurer during his college senior year in 1941. During the class night exercises, he presented the class gift to AUC President G. Eric Jones. His leadership skill can be attributed to growing up with a father who was also a leader in God’s ministry.

On August 24, 1941, Capman married Vera Arleen Griswold in Elmira, New York. Vera Griswold was born on November 25, 1918, in Elmira, New York, to Howard Augustus and Ida Lilian Lawrence Griswold. Elmer and Vera met at AUC during their college years and they graduated in the same year. She was very supportive of her husband’s ministry, and wherever he was called, she worked as a teacher, secretary, and typist. The couple was blessed with three children: James Howard and twins Cheerie Lou and Linda Capman, twins.

**Ministry**

After graduation in 1941, AUC hired Capman to be an assistant instructor in printing. His wife became AUC’s commercial and music teacher. A year later, in 1942, he was called to serve Washington Missionary College as a linotype operator/machinist until 1944. In addition to this task, he became a licensed minister in the Potomac Conference and the first pastor of the Damascus, Maryland, church until 1945.

On December 23, 1946, the General Conference approved a call from the Review and Herald Publishing Association for Capman to serve as a linotype operator/machinist. This took effect on the first of April 1947. However, he did not completely leave Washington Missionary College in 1944. Instead, he served as a composing room foreman after being a machinist in 1947.

In 1948, Capman was called to the Inter-American Division where he became industrial manager and teacher for the school in Sto. Domingo. The call was discussed and approved during the General Conference Committee meeting in July 1948.

With his wide experience in the work of the publishing house, Capman was called in August 1951 to serve the Far Eastern Division (FED) as a superintendent or manager of the largest publishing house outside of the United States, the Philippine Publishing House (PPH) in Manila, Philippines. The Review and Herald released him from service upon the action made by the General Conference Committee. He accepted the call to serve the FED and, with his family, moved to Manila, Philippines.

While serving as a superintendent of the PPH, the Capmans returned to the United States on furlough, visiting family and friends, and attending camp meetings where they gladly shared their missionary experiences. The Capmans worked with the Bedwells at PPH. After a few years serving the PPH, the Capman’s returned to Takoma Park, Maryland, and continued their ministry. Elmer Capman died on May 19, 1968, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

**Legacy**

Elmer Capman dedicated his life to the ministry using the talents and gifts God gave him. His life was characterized by a willingness to go where the Lord led without complaints. He possessed a spirit of humility and dedication. The Capman family was among those who were served the Adventist denomination from generation to generation. During his lifetime, three generations of his family were actively involved in the gospel ministry—his grandfather Joseph, father Howard, and himself.
SOURCES


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NOTES

1. Elmer Howard Capman Biographical Information, General Conference Employee Service Record.


4. Ibid.; Elmer Howard Capman Biographical Information.

5. Ibid.; “Fifty-fourth Annual Commencement…”


11. General Conference Committee Minutes, December 1946, accessed October 12, 2020,


12. Ibid.; Elmer Howard Capman Biographical Information.

13. General Conference Committee Minutes, July 15, 1948, accessed October 12, 2020,


16. General Conference Committee Minutes, August 2, 1951, accessed October 12, 2020,


21. "Camp Meeting Highlights."