

Bacon, Alfred Eli

(1878–1938)

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Alfred Eli Bacon served the church as an administrator, mission and conference president, and as a local pastor.

Early Years and the Beginning of a Career

Alfred Eli Bacon was born to Alfred and Jessie Maria Bacon on April 26, 1878, in Islington, North London.¹

Ten years old when his mother became a Seventh-day Adventist, Bacon was educated in England until the age of 15. Then he went to study at the Seventh-day Adventist South Lancaster Academy, the forerunner of Atlantic Union College, in the United States.² After returning to England, he worked from 1898 to 1903 as assistant bookkeeper and shipping clerk in the International Tract Society in Holloway, North London. Entering the ministry 1903, he worked for two years in Portsmouth, Brighton, and then Catford. In 1905 Alfred married and received a call to work in the Scottish Mission, being ordained in Nottingham in 1908.³

During a specially convened session of the Scottish Mission held at Glasgow, August 29 to September 1, 1908, the South Scotland Conference formally organized, electing Bacon as its secretary.⁴ The seventh session of the British Union Conference held at Stanborough Park in Watford, July 28 to August 2, 1910, however, decided to approve the request of the South Scottish Conference to re-unite with the North Scottish Mission, thereby becoming the Scottish Conference.⁵



Alfred Eli Bacon

Photo courtesy of Alan Conroy.

The tenth session of the British Union Conference, held at Aston, Birmingham, then elected Alfred as president of the Scottish Conference on August 4, 1912.⁶ He remained in the position until 1914, when the Welsh Conference at its annual meeting, March 13 to 15, chose him as its president.⁷

North England Conference and His Commitment to Missionaries

On August 20, 1920, Bacon became president of the North British Conference at its annual meeting held in Leeds.⁸

For two decades Bacon had the responsibility to support the British men and women who went out as missionaries. When he retired from those duties in March 1923, the missionaries sent a note of appreciation for his work, published in an editorial in *The Missionary Worker*.

Brother Bacon has been like a father, we might almost say a mother, to our missionaries for many years, attending to all their requirements and ordering all their supplies of building materials, tools, books, foodstuffs, clothing, etc. Only the person who has such a job has any idea of the time and patience it requires.⁹

A year later Adventists around the country celebrated 50 years of foreign mission service. Bacon wrote in *The Missionary Worker* that "as we contemplate what has been accomplished, and the wonderful providence of God in opening up the dark regions of the earth for this last closing message, and the abundant success for the efforts put forth, we may well exclaim, What hath God wrought! The story of missions is most fascinating and touches our hearts and our pockets as we become acquainted with it."¹⁰ Mission work was a cause that continued to remain close to his heart.

Visiting the various churches was another important task for Bacon. For example, the Hull and Leeds churches had the pleasure of a visit from Bacon in 1924 during which he met with new believers, interested people, and church members.¹¹

While president of the North British Conference Bacon placed a strong emphasis on evangelism. On September 10, 1926, he wrote in *The Missionary Worker*,

Within the conference we have 341 cities and towns of over 10,000 inhabitants. In 264 of these we do not have a single Seventh-day Adventist. Probably no other conference throughout the world presents such a striking appeal for men and means to do the work of evangelization, and we pray that this appeal may not go, unanswered. As we stated at the Conference, we believe that a turn in the tide has come in the evangelism here in the north, and, under the blessing of God, we are looking for great things in the days to come.¹²

Bacon served as president of the North British Conference until the British Union Conference Session in Birmingham, July 30-August 2, 1928.¹³

Final Years and Legacy

Following his terms as president, Bacon returned to the pastoral ministry, serving in Bristol and the surrounding area. During his time there he also began the church work and evangelistic efforts in Weston-super-Mare.¹⁴ In 1932 he received a call to the Hampshire District, and 1936 went to the North London area, before finally going to the South-Eastern District and Southend.¹⁵

On Friday evening May 6, 1938, aged 60, Bacon died suddenly in Southend while still working as a pastor.¹⁶ He was laid to rest in his parent's grave in Chingford Cemetery, Essex.¹⁷

Alfred E. Bacon left a legacy of service to the church, dedication to evangelism, and loyal support of missionaries and their work.

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NOTES

1. Alan Conroy, Alfred E. Bacon's grandson, email message to assistant editor Paul Lockham, April 7, 2020.
2. R. S. Joyce, "At Rest," *British Advent Messenger*, June 10, 1938, 8.
3. Ibid.
4. Alfred E. Bacon, "Secretary's Report" *The Missionary Worker*, September 16, 1908, 148.
5. Edith Chapman, "Secretary's Report," *The Missionary Worker*, August 17, 1910, 122.
6. "Minutes of the Tenth Session of the British Union Conference," *The Mission Worker*, August 19, 1912, 121.
7. Alfred E. Bacon and Aubrey E. Armstrong, "Welsh Conference Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Worker*, April 6, 1914, 51; "British Union Conference–Welsh Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1914), 86.
8. F. W. Goodall, "North British Conference: Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Worker*, September 1, 1920, 3; "British Union Conference–North British Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1920), 127; M. N Campbell, "The President's Page," *The Missionary Worker*, July 21, 1920, 1.
9. A. S. Maxwell, "The Editors Page," *The Missionary Worker*, March 9, 1923, 8.
10. Alfred E. Bacon, "Missions Jubilee Offering," *The Missionary Worker*, August 8, 1924, 2.
11. Alfred E. Bacon, "Hull and Leeds," *The Missionary Worker*, June 13, 1924, 4.
12. Alfred E. Bacon, "An S.O.S.," *The Missionary Worker*, September 10, 1926, 1, 2.
13. A. S. Maxwell, "In Heavenly Places," *The Missionary Worker*, August 24, 1928, 2.
14. O. M. Dorland, "Notes from the President," *The Missionary Worker*, October 18, 1929, 2.
15. R. S. Joyce, "At Rest," *British Advent Messenger*, June 10, 1938, 8.
16. *Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), 157.
17. Ibid.

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