Wrigley, Charles Albert (1886–1976)

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist* the Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.
Charles Albert Wrigley was a pastor and missionary.

Charles Albert Wrigley was born on March 8, 1886, in the village of Mossley at the foothills of the Pennines, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom. As a teenager he worked in a textile mill in Delph, a village to the south of Mossley. When he was twenty-two years of age he migrated to New Zealand, finding work as a journalist in Clinton, a small community in the south of the South Island. He happened on a copy of *Great Controversy* and after reading it he was led to search out a seminary where he might train for the ministry. Dunedin with its many churches seemed to be the best place to begin his search. During his 1913 visit to Dunedin he heard Leonard Paap preach from Daniel 2. The topic thrilled him. He travelled to Australia to learn more about Seventh-day Adventists, attending the 1914 camp meeting at St Leonards, Sydney. There he met Arthur Daniells who persuaded him to attend the Australasian Missionary College in order to train for the ministry. He studied for three years, 1914 through 1916.

**Ministry**

Charles Wrigley showed promise as a preacher and was given a start in the Victorian Conference without graduating from his course of study. He began his work as a member of an evangelistic team in Melbourne in 1917. Later he assisted with a similar crusade in the rural town of Daylesford.

On September 22, 1920, Charles married Isabel Beatrice McLeod in the bride’s family home in Manly, suburban Sydney. Elder Reuben Hare performed the ceremony. Isabel had been matron of the Sanitarium Health Food Company’s Sydney Cafe. Just prior to their wedding they had received an appointment to mission service in the Solomon Islands. They sailed from Sydney on October 6.

Charles and Isabel Wrigley located at Ughele on Rendova Island. A day school of approximately forty students was conducted in addition to regular worship services. They were provided with a launch which enabled them to cross the Blanche Channel and visit several outstations such as small communities on Raro Island, Tava Island and Kaka Island. Early in their experience they began to suffer malarial fever attacks. On one occasion they were confined to their sick beds and their condition sank so low that the local people became very concerned and sent a distress message by a chain of canoes to mission headquarters. Jack Radley, captain of the “Melanesia,” hurried to their assistance. Under normal circumstances Radley could not sail at night because the treacherous reefs could not be seen. However, in the fading evening light he set out, thinking to go as far as he could and weigh anchor during the night. After sunset a welcome thunderstorm broke overhead and the incessant lightning flashes were sufficient for him to forge ahead without disaster. On arrival he discovered the Wrigley’s were in dire need of medical attention so he ferried them to headquarters to have them nursed back to health.

After three years of intermittent malarial attacks their health was severely damaged. Wrigley eventually succumbed to the often fatal black water fever so they took leave and hurried back to Sydney by steamer, arriving on September 16, 1923, to have specialist treatment.

Wrigley made a full recovery but church officers concluded it was wiser to appoint him to the Queensland Conference for homeland evangelism rather than risk a relapse. In 1924 he briefly ministered in Boonah and then transferred to Ayr and the Home Hill region until 1927, gathering sufficient believers to organize and build the Ayr church in 1926/1927. During his public crusades Charles Wrigley was assisted by a choir of aboriginal members who had been nurtured at Mona Mona Mission. In recognition of his soul-winning Charles was ordained to the ministry on Sabbath, August 28, 1927, at the Queensland camp meeting in Brisbane.

Towards the end of 1927 Wrigley was appointed to transfer to the North New Zealand Conference for further ministry. During the course of a decade he served at various churches including Gisborne, Palmerston North and Wellington. After his term in New Zealand he moved to the Yorke Peninsula district in South Australia. His final assignment involved visitation in the rural region of New South Wales, extending from Dubbo through West Wyalong and Temora to Wagga Wagga in the south.

**Retirement**

Charles retired in 1951 and Charles and Isabel Wrigley sailed to the United Kingdom, spending time at the World Youth Congress in Paris en route. It had been forty-two years since Charles had left his homeland and there were many happy reunions with his surviving relatives. Returning to Australia, they settled in Dubbo near their only child, Jean, and her husband Dudley Webster. In 1976 they moved to Canberra and there Charles passed away on November 18, 1976. He was interred in the Avondale Memorial Cemetery, Cooranbong, New South Wales. Isabel found care in the Parklea Nursing Home (now Adventist Aged Care, Kings Langley), suburban Sydney. She passed away on January 29, 1980, and was laid to rest alongside Charles in the Avondale Memorial Cemetery.

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NOTES


2. Ibid.


10. “In writing to have his address…” *Australasian Record*, August 18, 1924, 8.


15.
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