

Hammond, Thomas William (1883–1964)

JOHN HAMMOND

John Hammond, Ph.D. (Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand) retired in 2010 as National Director of Adventist Education, Australian Union Conference, Melbourne Australia. Dr Hammond served the Church for 41 years as a teacher, Principal and, administrator. He is a frequent speaker at Church conventions and has conducted over 110 school Week of Prayer programs and has been featured in over 200 television broadcasts. John is married to Sue with three adult children and five grandchildren.

Thomas William Hammond was an Adventist administrator and treasurer in Australia and New Zealand who played a significant role in guiding the financial affairs of the Australasian Union Conference following the First World War, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and in the period leading up to the Second World War.

Early Years

Thomas William Hammond (commonly known as “Will”) was born in Greenwich, London, on December 19, 1883, to Henry Hammond and Elsie Jane (Nelmes) Hammond.¹

As a schoolboy, William Hammond was awarded a full scholarship to the Roan School in Greenwich. He was a boy soprano in the choir of St Paul’s Cathedral, London.² Following school, Hammond was apprenticed to his father to learn construction, but later went into finance, working at Parr’s Bank at the center of the business district in Bartholomew’s Lane, London.³

While working at Parr’s Bank, Hammond met and courted Lilian Amy Haggerty, who was born at Middlesbrough, Yorkshire, on March 8, 1887. They were married at the Devonshire Drive Baptist Chapel in Greenwich on March 15, 1910.⁴ Soon after, they migrated to Auckland, New Zealand.

New Zealand Years (1911-1920)

William and Lilian Hammond were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in January 1913 as a result of the work of a colporteur by the name of Frank Knight.⁵ William Hammond continued to work as a builder until entering denominational employment as a colporteur in Auckland in November 1914.⁶ In 1915, the family moved to the regional city of Hawera on the North Island of New Zealand where Hammond continued his work as a colporteur.⁷ The family moved to Christchurch, South New Zealand, in January 1916 when Hammond was appointed to clerical/treasury duties for the newly established South New Zealand Conference.⁸ The conference session records during this time reveal that the South New Zealand Conference was beset by severe financial shortages. Later, church reports describe the era “as a time of denominational poverty.”⁹ It was reported that the new organization commenced its career with a membership of 145, having two churches, one company, nine conference workers, sixteen canvassers and £522 surplus tithes in hand.¹⁰ With only 145 church members, the ministers in the South New Zealand Conference went without pay for six weeks.¹¹ Three of the four field staff members were sent out to canvass.¹²

Hammond was swiftly introduced to denominational financial management, preparing him for the years to follow. The South New Zealand Camp Meeting report of March 1916 recognized his financial skills by noting his promotion from clerical duties to that of conference secretary treasurer.¹³ New Zealand, like many other countries, suffered the twin ravages of the First World War and the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918. Hammond noted that “at the height of the epidemic ordinary business stopped. In some cities, coffins piled up in the cemeteries, beyond the capacity of



Thomas Hammond
Photo courtesy of the Service Files, South Pacific Division.

grave-diggers to bury them.”¹⁴

Despite the problems faced by the church membership in New Zealand, Hammond was able to report that not a single member died of the Spanish influenza and that “the finances of the Conference began to improve from the day the workers’ pay was advanced from starvation level to a modest living wage.”¹⁵

The Move to Australia

In 1920, William and Lilian Hammond and three sons, Charles (1912-2004), Wallace, (1915-2014), and Brian (1918-1998), moved to Australia.¹⁶ Hammond had been appointed assistant treasurer of the Australasian Union in Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.¹⁷ After just one year, he was promoted to treasurer of the union.¹⁸ He served from 1921 to 1936, a period of sixteen years. During this time, daughter Leonore Jean (Joan) was born in 1929. Doris Grace was born in 1937, completing the family.¹⁹

The Australasian Church faced dire financial problems at this time. Hammond penned a warning, which was published in the *Record*. He wrote the “for the past two years the financial position of the Union Conference has been a cause of anxiety...and when the balance sheet for 1920 was presented, it revealed a short-fall of nearly £10,000.”²⁰ Despite the dismal situation, he concluded on the same positive note that typified the young church. He encouraged corporate giving and finished by noting that, “we believe that the Lord will do great things for us at this time, if we are in that place where He can use us.”²¹

The isolation of the Australasian Union enabled the Church, so far removed from the General Conference in the United States, to develop independent financial strategies that were to provide long reaching and positive results. As Hammond generously described,

So, for many years, this field was not in close touch with headquarters; and consequently developed, among other things, a financial system and organization that was probably not duplicated in any other part of the Adventist world. We were fortunate in having as head of the denomination for many years a man of varied gifts, not the least of which were organization and finance. Pastor C. H. Watson had the ability to gather together the loose cords of the work and plait them into a strong rope.²²

Australasian Conference Association

Hammond had an extended relationship with the Australasian Conference Association (ACA)²³ While treasurer of the Australasian Union Conference he was also treasurer of the ACA (1923-1926), secretary/ treasurer of the ACA (1926-1930), and general manager of the ACA (1930-1936). In 1936, he became the full-time general manager of the ACA and remained in that role until 1941.²⁴ In his nineteen years working with the ACA, Hammond was pivotal in refining its operation.²⁵

In May 1934, the executive committee of the Australasian Union Conference gave five men the task of working out a scheme whereby all church employees could make weekly payments to prepare for adequate care during times of sickness. Those men were T. W. Hammond, R. E. Hare, G. T. Chapman, R. H. Adair, and G. S. Fisher. Thus, started the ACA Medical fund (then known as the Union Conference Medical Policy Fund) which continues today as a medical fund provider in the South Pacific Division.²⁶

Solomon Islands Land Issues

As the work of the church expanded in the Pacific Islands, the problem of land ownership arose in some regions, particularly the Solomon Islands. The work in the Solomon Islands had made great progress and the Church had purchased a number of land leases. This success angered some groups within other religious communities who laid claim to the land occupied by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Australasian Union Conference took action to send two representatives to the Solomon Islands to defend the ensuing court case. W. G. Turner (president) and T. W. Hammond (treasurer) sailed to the Solomon Islands. The court ruled in favor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.²⁷

Ordination and the Approach of World War II

In recognition of his commitment to advancing the Church, Hammond was ordained as a minister on October 6, 1934, during the Parramatta, New South Wales, camp meeting.²⁸

In his roles as union treasurer and general manager of the ACA, Hammond was closely associated with the growth and organization of the Sanitarium Health Food Company. With the approach of World War II, he was sent, traveling by Sunderland flying boat, to London to protect the interests of the Sanitarium Health Food Company, particularly as it pertained to “Marmite,” a wheat extract product used as a sandwich spread.²⁹ Reflecting later, Hammond said:

When war was declared in 1939, the Australasian Union Conference officers immediately sent one of their number to

London to arrange for Marmite supplies for they remembered that when World War 1 broke out the British Government promptly took over all Marmite stocks. That was the first time a worker from this territory flew all the way to London and back. It took thirteen days to get there and twelve days to return.³⁰

Later Years

Hammond's work as Australasian Union Conference treasurer ended in 1936,³¹ although he continued as the ACA general manager until 1941.³² He then spent six weeks as the Sanitarium Health Food factory manager in Cooranbong.³³ Following that temporary appointment, Hammond accepted a position in pastoral ministry, initially in Port Macquarie in the North New South Wales Conference and then in Kempsey in the same conference.³⁴

The church in Kempsey was meeting in the local Returned Serviceman's League building and the smell of stale beer and cigarette smoke every Sabbath morning encouraged Hammond to turn his energies and building skills to building the first Seventh-day Adventist church in Kempsey. Hammond's wife, Lilian, who had been a publishing director when they lived in South New Zealand, canvassed the town, selling books and helping to establish a core of faithful church members.³⁵ The North New South Wales Conference president noted,

In Kempsey, where Pastor T. W. Hammond has been labouring for about two years, the believers are working enthusiastically for a church building. A very substantial amount has been raised, a suitable building site purchased, and sufficient funds are in hand to warrant the preparation of definite plans to proceed with the work. Our work has made steady progress in the conservative centre of Kempsey and district. Quite an encouraging number of new believers have been added to the church, and the prospects for further additions are excellent. The Lord has greatly blessed the earnest and faithful labours of Brother and Sister Hammond.³⁶

In 1946, Hammond was invited back into administration. He was appointed president of the Victorian Conference, a position he filled until early 1951.³⁷ Following his presidency in Victoria, and in anticipation of his intended retirement at Cooranbong, he was appointed superintendent of the building program at Avondale College.³⁸ He retired from active service at the end of 1952, but remained in Cooranbong.³⁹

Church records indicate that Hammond was still consulted on financial matters within the Australasian Division.⁴⁰ His image continued to appear in group photos of delegates to the union and division sessions, but he no longer sat in the front row. As indicated by the meticulous records he kept in the fly leaf of his Bible, he preached hundreds of sermons in many local churches near his home in Cooranbong and in different conferences until his health began to fail.⁴¹

Thomas William Hammond died, aged 80, in the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital on January 23, 1964, after a short illness. He was buried in the Avondale Cemetery at Cooranbong.⁴² Lilian Amy Hammond died on December 20, 1968.

Contribution

Thomas William Hammond was part of the second generation of church administrators who gave structure to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific during the early part of the twentieth century. A foundational training in the banking industry, combined with practical building experience, enabled him to take a visionary approach to his treasury responsibilities and to transform the financial operations of the Australasian Union.

His thirty-eight years of exemplary service to the church added significant financial security to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific during periods of national and international financial stress.

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Turner, W. G. "Thomas William Hammond obituary." *Australasian Record*, March 2, 1964.

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NOTES

1. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Biographical Information Blank;" Original family documents held in the personal collection of the author including original birth certificate of Thomas William Hammond, original birth certificate of Lilian Amy Haggerty, and original marriage certificate of Thomas William Hammond and Lilian Amy Haggerty.?
2. The John Roan School is a secondary comprehensive school in Greenwich, Royal Borough of Greenwich, south-east London, established in 1677.?
3. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Biographical Information Blank." Established in 1865, the name of the bank was changed in 1892 to Parr's Banking Co. and the Alliance Bank, Ltd., [https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Parr's_Bank.?](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Parr's_Bank.)
4. E. J. Johanson, "He Counted Sacrifice as Gain," *Australasian Record*, March 2, 1964, 13.?
5. Ibid.; Lilian Amy Hammond Diary, held in the personal collection of the author.?
6. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Hammond, Thomas William."?
7. Ibid.?
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9. "The sad news was conveyed...", *Australasian Record*, February 10, 1964, 8.?
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11. Henry Wallace Hammond, interview by author, October 19, 2005.?
12. T. W. Hammond, "A Giant in the Making," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, July 11, 1960, 1.?
13. W. W. Fletcher, "The South New Zealand Camp Meeting," *Australasian Record*, March 6, 1916, 4.?
14. T. W. Hammond, "A Giant in the Making," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, July 11, 1960, 1.?
15. Ibid., 2.?
16. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," Document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
17. C. H. Pretyman, "Meetings of the Australasian Union Conference Committee," *Australasian Record*, November 29, 1920, 8.?
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19. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
20. T. W. Hammond, "Some Facts You Need to Know," *Australasian Record*, February 20, 1922, 6.?
21. *Ibid.*?
22. T. W. Hammond, "A Giant in the Making (Continued)," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, July 18, 1960, 10.?
23. See Australasian Conference Association Limited.?
24. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," Document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
25. See for example, T. W. Hammond, "A Giant in the Making (Continued)," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, July 18, 1960, 10.?
26. "ACA Health: 82 and going strong," *IntraVic News*, July 2016, 19.?
27. "The Annual Council 1923," *Australasian Record*, November 12, 1923, 2.?
28. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
29. Henry Wallace Hammond, interview by author, October 2015.?
30. T. W. Hammond, "A Giant in the Making (Continued)," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, July 18, 1960, 11.?
31. Thomas William Hammond Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
32. *Ibid.*?
33. Thomas William Hammond Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," document: "Weekly Rates."?
34. Joan Landgren (Hammond), telephone interview by author, December 1, 2019.?
35. *Ibid.*?
36. W. J. Westerman, "North New South Wales Conference," *Australasian Record*, April 23, 1945, 4.?
37. Thomas William Hammond Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Hammond, Thomas William," Document: "Weekly Rates."?
38. *Ibid.*?
39. *Ibid.*?
40. "Reports from Australasian Inter-Union Conference Annual Council and Related Meetings Held at Wahroonga, November 30 to December 7, 1952," *Australasian Record*, January 19, 1953, 4.?
41. Thomas William Hammond's Bible, held in the personal collection of the author.?
42. W. G. Turner, "Thomas William Hammond obituary," *Australasian Record*, March 2, 1964, 15; E. J. Johanson, "He Counted Sacrifice as Gain," *Australasian Record*, March 2, 1964, 13.?