

# Jacobson, Arthur Gerald (1908–1992)

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## LESTER DEVINE

Originally trained as a secondary history teacher, a career long Adventist educator, Lester Devine, Ed.D., has taught at elementary, secondary and higher education levels and spent more than three decades in elected educational leadership positions in two divisions of the world Church, NAD (1969-1982) and SPD (1982-2005). He completed his forty years of denominational service with a term as director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre at Avondale University College in Australia where his life-long hobby of learning and presenting on Adventist heritage issues became his vocation.

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Arthur Jacobson was a pastor, missionary, administrator, and evangelist for 44 years in Australia, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Tonga, and New Zealand.

Arthur Gerald Jacobson was born in Napier, New Zealand, on July 30, 1908.<sup>1</sup> When he was three years old, his mother died, and his aunt, Esther Anderson, who was the deputy matron at the Sydney Sanitarium (now Sydney Adventist Hospital) in New South Wales, Australia, resigned from her position and returned to New Zealand to care for him and his older brother, Howard.<sup>2</sup>

After attending the New Zealand Missionary College from 1924 to 1926, Jacobson completed his education at the Australasian Missionary College and graduated from the ministerial course in 1929.<sup>3</sup> In January 1930, he began his ministerial career in North Queensland, Australia, and pastored churches in Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Charters Towers, and on the Atherton Tablelands.<sup>4</sup>

While a student at Australasian Missionary College, Arthur Jacobson had met Norma Isabelle Woodgate, who had been born in Brisbane, Australia, on January 16, 1912.<sup>5</sup> After her graduation as a teacher from Australasian Missionary College, she taught music at the West Australian Missionary School near Perth.<sup>6</sup> Arthur and Norma were married by Pastor T. R. Kent in Mackay on January 16, 1933.<sup>7</sup> Their first child, Brian Arthur Jacobson, was born in Townsville.<sup>8</sup>



Arthur Gerald Jacobson.

Photo courtesy of Lester Devine.

In January 1935, Arthur and Norma Jacobson commenced service in Fiji, where Arthur was appointed as a district director.<sup>9</sup> In November 1937, Arthur was appointed as the president of the Cook Islands Mission, which post he held until June 1941.<sup>10</sup> While serving in the Cook Islands, the Jacobsons experienced some difficulties in their marriage. Norma's intention to continue to live on Rarotonga in separate accommodation from her husband was not acceptable to denominational leaders.<sup>11</sup> The family was returned to Australia, where Arthur was engaged in pastoral work in the South New South Wales Conference.<sup>12</sup> However, the family was there for just four months before they were transferred to Adelaide in South Australia.<sup>13</sup>

Jacobson was ordained to the gospel ministry on March 22, 1942, in Adelaide.<sup>14</sup> The Jacobson family members remember Arthur as a kind, compassionate, and gentle man, and it is suggested that his ordination immediately after the family left behind the difficulties of the Cook Islands experience was an endorsement of his contribution.<sup>15</sup>

With Arthur and Norma reconciled, the Jacobson's daughter, Betty Joy, was born in Adelaide in 1942.<sup>16</sup> The family moved to North Queensland and remained there from October 1942 until October 1943, when they returned to Fiji.<sup>17</sup> Arthur worked as a district director in Fiji until the end of 1948.<sup>18</sup> During this time, the marriage ended, and from 1949 until January 1956, Arthur was engaged in evangelistic work in North New Zealand.<sup>19</sup> On September 25, 1952, in Auckland, Arthur married Lois Joan Stevenson.<sup>20</sup> In time, three sons were born to this union: Martin, Brett, and Craig.<sup>21</sup>

Jacobson was invited to be the president of the Tonga Mission, and the family commenced a term of service in Tonga in February 1956.<sup>22</sup> On his return from mission service, Arthur pastored for 10 years in New Zealand until he retired on July 28, 1973.<sup>23</sup> Upon retirement, Arthur had completed 44 years of denominational service, including 19 years as a missionary in the South Pacific.

In retirement, the Jacobsons built a family home in Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, near Avondale College. In their later years, Arthur and Lois moved to a family property in Widgee, Queensland.<sup>24</sup>

Pastor Arthur Jacobson died on October 10, 1992, at the age of 84.<sup>25</sup> Survived by his wife, Lois, and four of his five children, Arthur was buried on the family property at Widgee.<sup>26</sup>

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## SOURCES

Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald." Document: "Biographical Information Blank."

Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald;" Document: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald."

Arthur Gerald Jacobson Sustentation Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald." Document: "Weekly Rates."

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"Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, September 21, 1931.

Judge, A. G. "Jacobson-Stevenson marriage." *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1952.

Kent, T. R. "Jacobson-Woodgate marriage." *Australasian Record*, February 20, 1933.

"Missionary Life Is Honoured." *Record*, January 30, 1993.

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## NOTES

1. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald," Document: "Biographical Information Blank."
2. "Missionary Life Is Honoured," *Record*, January 30, 1993, 12.
3. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, "Biographical Information Blank."
4. Ibid.; "Missionary Life Is Honoured," 12.
5. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, "Biographical Information Blank."
6. "Distribution of Labour," *Australasian Record*, September 21, 1931, 4.
7. T. R. Kent, "Jacobson-Woodgate marriage," *Australasian Record*, February 20, 1933, 7.
8. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, "Biographical Information Blank."
9. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald," Document: "Weekly Rates."
10. Ibid.
11. Norma Jacobson to E. B. Rudge and A. G. Stewart, South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale University College, Cooranbong, N.S.W., Box: 413, Folder: "Arthur Jacobson."
12. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Sustentation Records, "Weekly Rates."
13. Ibid.

14. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Folder: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald," Document: "Jacobson, Arthur Gerald."
15. Bronwyn Jacobson, telephone interview with author, July 21, 2019, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.
16. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Biographical Records, "Biographical Information Blank."
17. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Sustentation Records, "Weekly Rates."
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. A. G. Judge, "Jacobson-Stevenson marriage," *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1952, 7.
21. "Missionary Life Is Honoured," 12; Craig Jacobson, telephone interview with author, July 29, 2019, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.
22. Arthur Gerald Jacobson Sustentation Records, "Weekly Rates."
23. Ibid.
24. "Missionary Life Is Honoured," 12.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

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