

Salom, Alwyn Philip (1928–2007)

ROSS GOLDSTONE

Ross Goldstone, M.A. (Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 1998 as Senior Pastor, Avondale Memorial Church, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia. New Zealand born, Goldstone has served the Church as a pastor, Conference Youth Director, teacher, and Sessional Lecturer at Avondale College. He has authored nine books relating to Adventist history, including *The Angel Said Australia*. He is also co-author of four other books on Adventist history in Australasia. In retirement Ross Goldstone continues to research and write Adventist Church history.

Alwyn Salom was a South Australian. He was a biblical scholar with particular emphasis on New Testament studies. Much of his life was devoted to training young men and women for ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He engaged in a number of significant theological forums. In his later years he was the director of the Institute of Church Ministry in the South Pacific Division.

Early Years

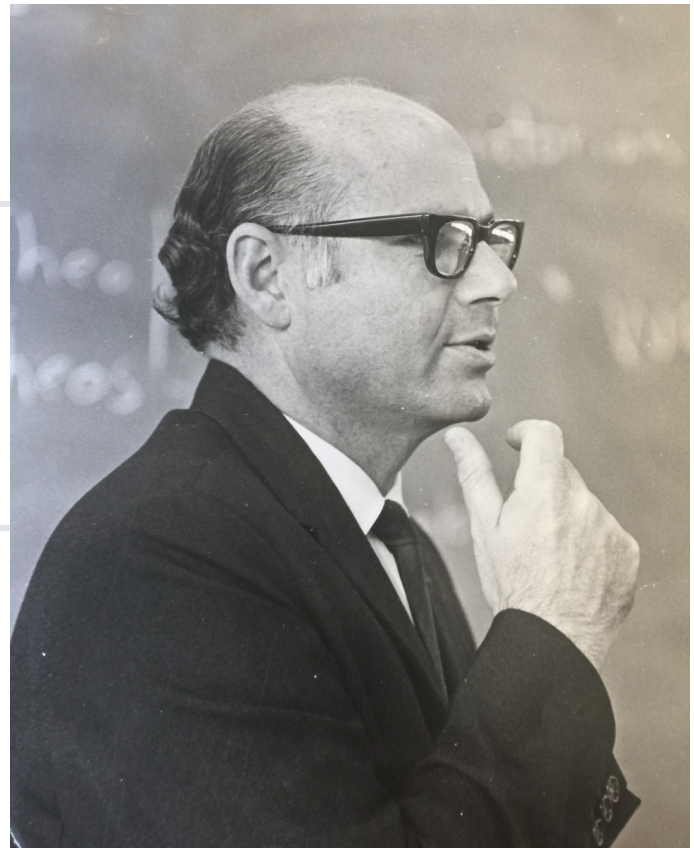
Alwyn Philip Salom was born in Adelaide, South Australia (SA), on March 23, 1928, the eldest child of Gwendolyn and Bertram Salom.¹ A younger sister, Margot, completed the Salom family. Alwyn's mother raised her children in the SDA Church.² Salom was baptized in Adelaide by Norman A. Ferris on December 19, 1943.³

Always of an academic bent, Salom was employed as a junior teacher at the Prospect SDA School in 1944 before proceeding to the Australasian Missionary College in 1945. After graduating in 1947 he worked in the Adelaide branch of the Sanitarium Health Food Company for a short time before traveling to the United States and continuing his studies at Walla Walla (BA, 1951), the Theological Seminary at Andrews University (MA, 1952), and finally at the University of Chicago where he earned his Ph.D. in 1956, majoring in New Testament languages and literature.⁴ In addition to the study of biblical Greek for eight years and Hebrew for four years, Salom studied Latin, German, French, and Middle Egyptian languages.⁵

Life of Service

After six and a half years in the United States, Salom received an invitation to return to Australia to join the Bible Department at Avondale College, working under the Pacific Union College affiliation.⁶ His initial service was as a lecturer, librarian, and registrar. During this time he and Audrey Joy Speers were married on January 17, 1957, in the Parramatta Seventh-day Adventist Church by Nelson Burns, a fellow lecturer at Avondale College.⁷ Audrey had been born at Parramatta, New South Wales (NSW), and completed a Master of Music degree.⁸ Two daughters were born to the marriage—Melissa and Amanda.⁹ Alwyn Salom was ordained to the ministry during the North New South Wales Conference camp at Eraring, NSW, on December 16, 1961.¹⁰

From 1964 until July 1967 the Saloms returned to North America, where Salom served as associate professor in the School of Theology at Walla Walla College. They returned to Avondale College in the latter part of 1967 as registrar and Bible teacher until the end of 1973.¹¹



Alwyn Salom as a lecturer at Avondale College
Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.

Sensing a need to gain experience as a church pastor, Salom accepted an invitation in 1974 into pastoral ministry in the North New South Wales Conference, where he was instrumental in the opening of the new Port Macquarie church.¹² In 1976 he transferred to the Greater Sydney Conference, where he pastored the Wahroonga and Castle Hill churches, working in this conference until the end of 1980.¹³ These years in pastoral ministry enriched his teaching; in 1981 he returned to the Theology Department at Avondale College where, as department head, he was directly involved in shaping the curriculum to train clergy for the SDA Church.¹⁴

During these years he also worked to develop the theological acumen of pastors in the field. He had been involved in the first Australasian Bible Conference in December 1979 and was the convener of the Avondale Church Growth tours that commenced in 1985 and were held over a number of years into the early 1990s.¹⁵ He also had a burden for a trained laity, and to this end ran Bible study seminars both in Australia and New Zealand.¹⁶

Contribution to Biblical Understanding Within the Church

As a lecturer in the classroom Salom was known for his penchant for thoroughness and accuracy. It was these very qualities that saw him become recognized as an authority in New Testament studies within the SDA denomination. He was the author of many articles in the denomination's publications.¹⁷

His interests extended beyond theology into the more practical life of the church. He gave wise counsel on the practice of worship.¹⁸ But it was when theological controversy arose within the denomination that Salom's scholarship was called upon. For example, when within Australasia issues surrounding the biblical teaching of righteousness by faith became divisive, Alwyn Salom was one of the scholars appointed to a study group that issued a defining statement on the subject.¹⁹ Later when the General Conference took issue with Desmond Ford over his teachings on the sanctuary, Alwyn Salom was appointed as one of the committee to review Ford's submissions and attended the Glacier View meetings, involving himself in the discussions and in the aftermath of those meetings. His contribution particularly related to issues in the book of Hebrews.²⁰

At the South Pacific Division session held in 1990 Salom was appointed associate director of the South Pacific Division Department of Church Ministries, with lay activities as his special interest.²¹ In this responsibility Salom was able to utilize his skills and experience across the region and contribute to the health and growth of the church until his retirement in January 1996. As part of his responsibilities he established a South Pacific Institute of Church Ministry. Andrews University had previously set up an Institute of Church Ministry with the purpose of "meeting the challenges of a variety of issues in the contemporary world."²² Salom adapted that objective to the context of the South Pacific. He traveled widely in this role, consulting with churches and the wider community.²³

Retirement

Retirement in 1996 did not end Salom's contribution to the development of the church in the South Pacific. He continued to visit widely and, as a result of his research and experience as director of the Institute of Church Ministry, wrote a book for wide community consumption entitled *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia*.²⁴

It was while on a visit to Brisbane in Queensland that Salom was taken ill and unexpectedly died on February 18, 2007.²⁵ His legacy has been the hundreds of ministers and others who owe their understanding of and commitment to Scripture to Alwyn Salom. Many of them have proceeded to advanced study in a range of theological disciplines and have occupied positions of church and community leadership.

SOURCES

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1. Alwyn Philip Salom Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: “Salom, Alwyn Philip”; Document: “Biographical Information Blank”).?
2. Alwyn Philip Salom Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: “Salom, Alwyn Philip”; Document: “Worker’s Biographical Record”).?
3. Salom Biographical Records (“Worker’s Biographical Record”); Salom Biographical Records (“Biographical Information Blank”).?
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6. “Brother Alwyn P. Salom . . .,” *Australasian Record*, July 11, 1955, 16.?
7. N. C. Burns, “Salom–Speers marriage,” *Australasian Record*, March 4, 1957, 15.?
8. Alwyn Philip Salom Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: “Salom, Alwyn Philip”; Document: “Salom, Alwyn Philip”); “Brother Alwyn P. Salom. . .,” *Australasian Record*, July 11, 1955, 16.?
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19. "Christ Our Righteousness," *Review and Herald*, May 27, 1976, 4–6; "Christ Our Righteousness," *Australasian Record*, May 31, 1976, 1–3.?
20. William G. Johnsson, "Overview of a Historic Meeting," *ARH*, September 4, 1980, 10; "Participants and Committees," *Ministry*, October 1980, 24; see also "Ta Hagia in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5, no. 1 (1967): 59–70. This document was reprinted with permission by Frank Holbrook in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 219–227.?
21. "Avondale Shuffle," *Australasian Record*, September 22, 1980, 4, 5.?
22. "Institute of Church Ministry," accessed January 28, 2019, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/icm.>?
23. Alwyn P. Salom, "Why People Do Not Go to Church," *Australasian Record*, November 30, 2002, 6; "Dr. Salom Travels 3500 Kilometers in NZ," *Australasian Record*, September 16, 1995, 4.?
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