

Voth, David (1875–1968)

MILTON HOOK

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.

David Voth served as a teacher, pastor, and evangelist and, for more than 35 years, in administrative leadership roles within the Southwestern and Pacific Union Conferences.

Heritage

David's parents, Abraham Jacob Voth and wife, Maria, were born and married in Russia. About 1874 they migrated to America where they farmed in Turner County, southeastern South Dakota. Abraham and Maria had 13 children: Cornelius (b. 1858), Heinrick (b. 1860), Maria (b. 1862), Daniel (b. 1864), Abraham (b. 1866), Peter (b. 1867), Johann (b. 1869), Jacob Abraham (b. 1872), David (b. 1875), William (b. 1878), George (b. 1880), Bernard (b. 1881) and Elizabeth (b. 1883). Peter and George died in infancy. David, their first child after entering America, was born on May 10, 1875, at Yankton, the nearest main town to the Voth farm.¹

Early Ministry and Training

When David was 18 he enrolled at Union College, Nebraska. He took the German course of instruction at a time when the college was offering academic programs in German, Swedish, and Danish-Norwegian, as well as English, to prepare students for mission service in Europe and to the large immigrant population in the United States.² David was baptized by Eugene Farnsworth during his first year at Union. He interspersed his college experience with some canvassing and school teaching in South Dakota, completing his studies in 1897. Then he joined the ministerial team in South Dakota, 1897-1898. In 1899 he entered the nursing class at Battle Creek Sanitarium, graduating in 1901.³ Albertina Boo, a Swedish young lady, was in the same class.⁴ They married in Chicago on August 11, 1901.⁵

After their marriage David and Albertina were appointed as missionaries to Europe. They began with some nursing and evangelism in Switzerland, 1901-1903, with David serving as chaplain at Basel Sanitarium. He was ordained in Switzerland, July 29, 1903, by Elders Julius Boettcher, Jakob Erzenberger and Louis Conradi. Voth was transferred to Hamburg in the East German Conference, but after eight months, ill health forced a return to

America.⁶

On his return to the United States Voth settled in the Oklahoma Conference where two of his brothers were employed. He began teaching church school in West Cooper in 1904, then engaged in evangelistic work from 1905 through 1909. He also continued teaching and even supervised church school work in the small conference for part of this time.⁷

Administrative Leadership

Voth's first administrative role occurred in August 1909 when he was elected as the president of the Oklahoma Conference. After four years in that position he returned to evangelistic work, first in Chicago, 1913-1915, and then in Denver, Colorado, for a year, 1915-1916.⁸ He returned to an administrative role in 1916 when he was elected as the president of the North Texas Conference. By 1921 his territory included 28 churches with a baptized membership of 1,137.⁹

In 1922 Voth accepted a different administrative role, that of Home Missions secretary for the Pacific Union Conference. He held the position for a decade.¹⁰ In March 1932 he was elected to the presidency of the Central California Conference, a constituency of 69 churches and 5,663 members.¹¹ In 1936 he transferred to the presidency of the Southern California Conference (SCC), remaining in the position until 1949. Of all the local conferences in North America the SCC held the largest membership which, at the end of 1948 numbered 13,250.¹² For most of these years he was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital. Following his retirement from the conference presidency, Voth continued in ministry for two years as pastor of the Azusa church east of Los Angeles.¹³

Combining his service in South Dakota prior to his marriage with the long years after marriage, David Voth devoted more than five decades to the Seventh-day Adventist cause. He passed away on August 3, 1968, in Glendale, California, at the age of 93. His wife Albertina had preceded him in death on February 24, 1960. The couple's only child, Dr. Florence Ostendorph, died in 1982. David and Albertina rest alongside each other in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, California.¹⁴

SOURCES

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NOTES

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4. "Albertina Boo Voth obituary," *ARH*, May 26, 1960, 26.
5. "David Voth," *FamilySearch*.
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7. Ibid; David Voth, "Church School at West Cooper, Oklahoma," *Southwestern Union Record*, January 3, 1905, 4; David Voth, "West Cooper, Oklahoma, Church School," *Southwestern Union Record*, January 23, 1906, 1-2; Andrew Nelson, "Notice," *Southwestern Union Record*, October 23, 1906, 6;
8. Voth Biographical Information Blank, July 17, 1934, GCA; "David Voth obituary," *ARH*, March 6, 1969, 24.
9. "North Texas Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* for 1921, 71-72.
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11. "Central California Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist* for 1933, 51.
12. D.H. Thomas, "Southern California Conference Constituency Meeting," *Pacific Union Recorder*, March 14, 1949, 1.
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14. "Albertina Boo Voth obituary"; "David Voth," *Find A Grave*, Memorial ID 85540259, February 22, 2012, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/85540259/david-voth>.

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