



Goldie Down

Photo courtesy of Michelle Ward.

Down, Goldie Malvern (Scarr) (1918–2003)

KENDALL K. DOWN

Kendall K. Down, M.A. (Newbold College), a pastor, was brought up by missionaries in India. When sent to Wales, he learned Welsh and is the only Adventist pastor to preach in Welsh. He was responsible for publishing *Steps to Christ* in Welsh. A life-long innovator, he was the first Adventist to run a correspondence course over the internet and an internet TV channel. Author of more than 20 e-books, he continues his father's interest in Biblical archaeology with the website www.diggings.co.uk.

Goldie Down was an author and missionary to India. With twenty-three published books and hundreds of stories and articles, Down was often acclaimed the foremost Adventist woman writer in Australia.

Early Years (1918-1944)

Goldie Malvern Scarr was born on June 26, 1918, in Sydney, Australia, the first child of Violet (Knox, 1892-1965) and Herbert William Scarr (1888-1949). She had two sisters, Lee (Jasper, 1921-2012) and Shirley (Thoresen, 1929-).¹ In 1922 the family traveled by steamer to Lismore, in north New South Wales, and soon after their arrival Goldie contracted pneumonia, resulting in a lung ailment that plagued her all her life. In 1925 Pastors Mervyn Whittaker and Alex Campbell held a tent mission on the corner of Keen and Magellan Streets, close to the Scarr home. Violet was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) and became a charter member of the Lismore SDA church. Herbert was baptized later on and the three Scarr girls grew up in the Lismore SDA church environment.²

The Scarrs left the church temporarily after some disagreements within the congregation. They moved to nearby Casino in 1934 for Herbert's work, first as a traveling salesman and later as an insurance agent. When Goldie was seventeen years old she spent six weeks in the Casino hospital fighting double pneumonia. Her recovery was protracted and the doctors suggested a change of climate. George Rollo, recently graduated from Avondale, was canvassing in the area and suggested she attend the Australasian Missionary College. She did so, was baptized in 1940, graduated from the business course in 1942, and took up work in the Newcastle office of the Sanitarium Health Food Company.

In 1944 Goldie met David Down, a young minister in Lismore, and two years later they were married by Pastor Harold J. Myers on September 8, 1946. David was employed by the church as an evangelist and sent to New Zealand where their first two children were born – Kendall (1949) and Glenda (Quin, 1950). After four years in New Zealand the family returned to Gympie, Australia, where Michelle (Coltheart/Ward, 1952) was born.

Missionary Service (1953-1973)

After a year in Gympie the family was transferred to India, arriving in Bombay on April 23, 1953. Their appointment was to Calcutta where Goldie wrote her first book, *Missionary to Calcutta*, which described their early impressions as young missionaries in a foreign land.³ David's work as an evangelist was assisted by Goldie's skill as an artist, for she painted many of the large canvasses with which he illustrated his sermons. The four beasts of Daniel 7, painted on 8' x 4' plywood, made a deep impression on all who watched them rise slowly out of the painted sea. She also ran public courses in vegetarian and healthy cooking.

The Downs served in Calcutta, Shillong, and Patna, where Edward (Ted, 1957) was born, before embarking in 1958 on an overland trip from India to England and back again via important archaeological and Biblical sites in the Middle East. Their historic trip was by jeep and a homemade caravan. Goldie cooked, washed, and coped

with four children, one of whom was barely a year old. The hazards and adventures of this trip were written by Goldie in her second book, *21,000 Miles of Adventure*.⁴ She wrote the book as they traveled, sometimes perched on ruins with her trusty typewriter on her knees.

On their return the family was posted to Ranchi, where Richley (1959) was born, and then back to Calcutta. For their second furlough the family traveled to Australia in 1964 and settled in Cooranbong for a year. David joined the theology faculty at Avondale College and Goldie attended teacher education classes as an observer, as she wanted to improve her teaching skills. The family returned to India and lived in Saharanpur where they adopted a young Indian girl, Selina (Laben, 1955), who became part of the family and later followed them to Australia. They also lived in Roorkee, Dehra Dun, Hubli, and Bangalore.

Later Years (1974-2003)

The family returned permanently to Australia in 1973 and until David's retirement served in churches in Sydney. Goldie busied herself by volunteering as a Pink Lady at the Sydney Adventist Hospital, mostly in the library, and writing. She was persuaded by Maisie Fook to teach creative writing at the Strathfield Chinese Church, which also inspired her to teach up to five classes a week in government night schools for adults. Consequently, she wrote her own textbook, *There's no Magic Formula: A writing course for students*,⁵ which went through three editions before her death. After David retired he founded the news journal *Diggings*⁶ and then the full-color magazine *Archaeological Diggings*,⁷ of which Goldie contributed many articles. In 2000 she wrote the biography of Gordon Moyes,⁸ the head of the Wesley Methodist Mission in Sydney. Bob Carr, the Premier of New South Wales, attended the book launch and the book went through three printings.

Although doctors had predicted that Goldie would not live beyond thirty, she lived into her eighties, though in her final years emphysema caused her to be increasingly short of breath. She fell asleep one afternoon while watching David mow the lawn and died quietly the following morning, December 19, 2003.⁹

Accomplishments

Goldie never went beyond Grade 6 in school, yet she home-schooled her children using lessons from the Blackfriars Correspondence School in Sydney, and to her credit all her children became professionals in their chosen fields. She also founded an Adventist school in Saharanpur, which is still in operation. Despite her numerous duties, Goldie managed to find time to write books, stories, and articles, which in those days involved a typewriter and multiple carbon copies on thin paper - no word-processors or spell checkers! She wrote so much that at times she used a pseudonym, Gloria Malvern. Often the subject of her stories would be Indian students or struggling pastors, in which case she gave them remuneration. Goldie wrote mostly for Adventist publications, but also had articles published in newspapers and secular magazines. She published her articles

and stories in the following magazine and journals: *Alert: The National Magazine of Better Living, Family Life: Britain's Number One Family Journal, Good Health: Australasia's Premier Family Health Magazine, Herald of Health, Junior Guide, Literature Evangelist, Primary Treasure, Record, Signs of the Times, Winner, Your Life and Health, and Youth's Instructor.*

Junior Guide Stories

Year	Stories	Year	Stories	Year	Stories	Year	Stories
1959	3	1965	10	1971	8	1977	5
1960	6	1966	7	1972	10	1978	0
1961	6	1967	11	1973	1	1979	5
1962	13	1968	13	1974	11	1980	3
1963	10	1969	11	1975	11	1981	0
1964	5	1970	17	1976	4	1982	2

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NOTES

1. Much of the information in this biography is from the personal knowledge of the author, eldest son of Goldie and David Down.
2. Goldie M. Down, *God Plucked a Violet* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1968).
3. Goldie M. Down, *Missionary to Calcutta: City of Contrasts* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1959).
4. Goldie M. Down, *Twenty-One Thousand Miles of Adventure* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1964).
5. Goldie M. Down, *There's No Magic Formula: A Writing Course for Students* (Melbourne, Australia: Longman Cheshire, 1991).
6. David. K. Down, *Diggings* (Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia: David Down, 1985).
7. David. K. Down, *Archaeological Diggings* (Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia: David Down, 1994).
8. Goldie M. Down, *Gordon Moyes: The Man, the Media, the Mission* (Adelaide, South Australia: Openbook, 2000).
9. Bruce Manners, "Goldie Down: Her Last Story," *Record*, February 7, 2004, 7.

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