



William Wallace Christensen family.

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Christensen, William Wallace (1903–1967)

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William Christensen and his wife, Doris, were missionaries to Myanmar.

Early Life, Education and Marriage

William Wallace Christensen was born in Fresno, California, United States,¹ on November 16, 1903,² to Lawrence William Christensen and Sarah Ann Morton.³ He had three siblings.⁴ William Christensen was baptized in 1916.⁵

Christensen attended Lodi Academy from 1919 to 1920,⁶ before completing his high school education at Fresno Academy in 1922. He was inspired to become a missionary by the stories of John N. Andrews and F. H. Stahl. Christensen graduated from Pacific Union College with a bachelor's degree in theology⁷ in 1928 and a master's degree in 1946.⁸ He attended the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (at that time located in Takoma Park, Washington, District of Columbia) from 1937 to 1938.⁹ He also learned four languages: Spanish, Greek, Hebrew, and Burmese.¹⁰

On August 27, 1929, Christensen married Doris Bernice Meyers, who was a dentist by profession.¹¹ They were blessed with three children, a boy and two girls, Virginia Ann, John William, and Vivian June, all of them were born in Myanmar.¹²

Ministry

In 1924, Christensen began his career as a teacher at the Spanish Mission School in Stanford, California.¹³ From 1928 to 1930, he taught at the Principal Junior Academy in Nevada.¹⁴ He also briefly pastored the church at Fallon, Nevada,¹⁵ before being called to Burma (now Myanmar). The Christensen family arrived in Rangoon (now Yangon), Myanmar on November 4, 1930.¹⁶

As he studied the Burmese language, Christensen began to work as pastor evangelist in the Yangon area. Meanwhile, his wife, Dr. Doris Christensen, set up a dental clinic to support her husband. In addition to serving as a pastor evangelist, Christensen was director of publishing ministries of the Burma Union Mission from 1933 to 1937.¹⁷

Christensen was ordained on January 9, 1937, by W. H. Branson and N. C. Wilson in Pune (Poona), India.¹⁸ He became a credential minister on January 15, 1937.¹⁹ From 1937 to 1942, Christensen served in the Burma Union Mission as pastor and evangelist in the Yangon (Rangoon) city area.²⁰ He was among those who escaped the Japanese bombardment by walking over the hills to India in 1942 during the Second World War in Myanmar (Burma).²¹

Between 1942 and 1958 the Christensens spent two periods of service in Africa. From 1942 to 1943, W. W. Christensen served as native evangelism was on a preacher-training program at Solusi Mission in Northern Rhodesia, Africa.²² After their first two years in Africa, the Christensens spent five years of sick leave in the United States, during which time W. W. Christensen obtained his master's degree at Pacific Union College. The Christensen family returned to Africa in 1949 and remained until 1958.²³

Christensen and his family returned to Myanmar in 1959 to supervise the Chin Hills area of the Central and Upper Myanmar Section.²⁴ From 1960 to 1965, he was the director of the seminary training program in the Myanmar Union Mission while simultaneously serving as the union ministerial association secretary.²⁵

Later Life

In 1965, Christensen's health failed and he was forced to return to the United States in September.²⁶ He passed away at St. Helena, California, on January 2, 1967.²⁷ His wife and children survived him. At the time of his death, his daughter Virginia Ann was a registered nurse working at Paradise Valley Sanitarium. His other daughter, Vivian June, who had been a missionary in Africa, was then teaching at Grand Ledge Academy in Michigan.²⁸

Legacy

Since W. W. Christensen was fluent in Burmese, the fruit of his missionary work in Myanmar extended the length and breadth of the country. As a result of his effective ministry, he was later appointed ministerial association secretary at the union level. Doris Myer Christensen made significant contributions through her dental medical missionary work.

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1. "William Wallace Christensen obituary," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1967, 23.

2. William Wallace Christensen, Worker's Service Record, Myanmar Union Mission archives, Dagon, Myanmar.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "William Wallace Christensen," *ARH*, March 2, 1967, 29-30.
8. Worker's Service Record.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. "William Wallace Christensen obituary," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1967, 23.
12. Worker's Service Record.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. "President's Report of the First Biennial Period of the Nevada Conference," *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 14, 1930, 6.
16. "William Wallace Christensen obituary," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1967, 23.
17. Worker's Service Record.
18. Ibid.
19. "Eastern Tidings," *Southern Asia Tiding Diamond Jubilee*, June 1, 1965, 17.
20. Worker's Service Record.
21. "Eastern Tidings," *Southern Asia Tiding Diamond Jubilee*, June 1, 1965, 10.
22. Worker's Service Record.

23. "William Wallace Christensen," *ARH*, March 2, 1967, 29-30.

24. Burma Union Committee Minutes, Action No. 59-28.

25. *Ibid.*, 60-32; 60-45; 63-6.

26. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966), s.v. "Burma Union Bible Seminary." See also "William Wallace Christensen obituary," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1967, 23.

27. "William Wallace Christensen obituary," *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1967, 23.

28. "William Wallace Christensen," *ARH*, March 2, 1967, 29-30.

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