

Perry, James Charles Hamley (1902–1993) and Muriel Albertina (Powrie) (1902–1998)

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Graeme Hamley Perry, Ph.D. (University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 2008 as dean School of Graduate Studies and associate professor of research design at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines. Born and educated in Australia he served as both educator and administrator in schools and higher education. Married to Glenys, they have two sons and a daughter. He currently edits *TEACH Journal of Christian Education* for Avondale University College.



Hamley and Muriel Perry, December 1930.

Photo courtesy of Graeme Perry.

James Charles Hamley Perry and his wife, Muriel Albertina, were partners for 16 years as pioneer missionaries for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in the South Pacific Islands, and subsequently for 18 years of pastoral evangelism in Western Australia.

Early Years

Hamley Perry was born at Hamley Bridge, SA, on October 10, 1902, the eighth and youngest child of Rachel Chynoweth Perry (née Kitto, 1861–1943) and William Perry (1853–1936).¹ William and Rachel Perry joined the SDA Church in 1911.² Soon afterward the family left their dairy farm in the Quorn district of South Australia and moved to a wheat farm at Betric, near Temora, NSW.³ This meant that the family could observe the Sabbath in a more satisfying manner.⁴

Muriel Albertina Powrie was born on August 16, 1902, at Lower Hutt, Wellington, New Zealand.⁵ She was the fourth child of John Albert Powrie (Joiner, 1871–1960) and Clara Louisa Powrie (née Johnson, 1875–1964).⁶ Clara had been baptized under the ministry of Robert Hare in 1890, and John was later baptized in 1899.⁷ After a rural life at Paraparaumu, the family moved to Sydney in 1912, where Muriel attended Chatswood Public School. She later completed training as a seamstress.⁸

College Years

Hamley studied at the Australasian Missionary College (AMC) at Avondale between 1925 and 1929.⁹ While at Avondale he was the missionary committee secretary in 1927,¹⁰ and was working as a literature evangelist early in 1929 in order to earn college fees.¹¹ It was reported by C. H. Parker, conference president, that he had “left a splendid impression” while canvassing at Mudgee, NSW.¹²

Muriel Powrie attended AMC between 1926 and 1928.¹³ There she met Hamley Perry. She and Hamley were married in the Ashfield, Sydney, SDA Church on November 13, 1930.¹⁴

Early Ministry in South New Zealand

After finishing his studies at AMC, Hamley commenced working in 1930 in South New Zealand, initially as a literature evangelist. After just two weeks he was employed as a Bible worker.¹⁵ He was located on an evangelistic team at Oamaru.¹⁶ After their marriage the couple were located in Southland, South New Zealand, where Hamley worked as part of an evangelistic team with A. I. Mitchell during 1931.¹⁷ In September 1931 at the Australasian Union Conference session they were appointed to mission service as director of the Santo district, stationed at Big Bay on the island of Espirito Santo, New Hebrides.¹⁸

The New Hebrides—Becoming Missionaries

Hamley and Muriel Perry sailed to Sydney in April 1932 and in preparation for their mission service, obtained some rudimentary medical training at the Sydney Sanitarium.¹⁹ They departed Sydney for the New Hebrides on June 9, 1932, replacing A. H. Weil and his wife.²⁰ For a year they consolidated Weil's work. They then were transferred to Tanna Island, New Hebrides, in mid-1933, again replacing the Weils, who were taking furlough in Australia.²¹ In the eight months that they were on Tanna, a church building was finished and dedicated, and a second mission station was built. Regular attendance grew by almost 100 percent to more than 100. Engaging in necessary medical work, Hamley was reported to have given “fifteen injections for yaws at one place, forty-four at another, and seventy-eight at another.”²²

Pioneering at Redcliffe on the Island of Aoba

With the return of the Weils to Tanna in early 1934, Hamley and Muriel Perry transferred to the new training school at Aore.²³ They remained at Aore for a little more than a year, at which time they were appointed to commence work on the island of Aoba.²⁴ By July 1935 it was reported by Gerald Peacock, superintendent of the New Hebrides Mission, that "Brother Perry is making good headway, and the people are cooperating with him."²⁵ Before taking furlough in July 1935, a house for the director and a church had been constructed, and a school was almost complete.²⁶ Hamley Perry returned from furlough in January 1936.²⁷ Muriel remained in Sydney until the birth of their daughter Rhonda at the Sydney Sanitarium on the same day her grandfather William died.²⁸ Muriel returned to the New Hebrides with their baby daughter, but in December at year end, Hamley, suffering from ill health, returned with his family to Sydney.²⁹ They returned to Aoba in April 1937.³⁰

In August 1940 the family arrived in Sydney for their next furlough.³¹ During this furlough Hamley was ordained in the Wahroonga SDA Church.³² They returned to Aoba in February 1941.³³ However, on their return they were hampered by ill health.³⁴ Notwithstanding, mission secretary J. E. Martin reported of Aoba that "Brother and Sister Perry have a very aggressive work started."³⁵ This assessment was later acknowledged by Algy Gallagher and Dean Giles.³⁶

The Solomon Islands, Outbreak of War and Evacuation

In June 1941 Hamley Perry was appointed Solomon Islands Mission superintendent.³⁷ With the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific on December 7, 1941, Perry, as superintendent, was responsible to ensure that plans were in place for the evacuation of expatriate personnel should such become necessary. Assignment of local leadership also had to be planned.

In early 1942 it did become necessary, first to evacuate expatriate women and children. The safe arrival in Australia of a group including Muriel Perry and Rhonda was announced in the *Australasian Record* of February 9, 1942.³⁸ Meanwhile Perry and a group of SDA missionary colleagues, including Archibald Barrett, Jim Cormack, David Ferris, John Gosling, John Howse, and Charlie Tucker, left the Solomon Islands aboard the mission vessel *Melanesia* on January 27 and arrived safely in Bundaberg, QLD, on February 18.³⁹ Their arrival in Bundaberg caused a great deal of excitement and made an impact on the community.⁴⁰ Kata Ragoso was left in charge of the work of the church in the Solomon Islands. He later described the scene as the missionaries departed Batuna.⁴¹

Service During World War II

While in Australia during the war years, Hamley and Muriel Perry were appointed to serve in the South New South Wales Conference.⁴² Together with Robert Abbott they engaged in pastoral and evangelistic work at Bowral.⁴³ Their thoughts continued to be with the work of the church in the Solomon Islands. A friend from the

Marovo Lagoon in the western Solomon Islands assured them that Kata Rangoso was showing courage in managing the work of the church under great difficulty.⁴⁴

Return, Restoration, and the Need for Both Boats and Reequipping

In July 1943 Perry was appointed superintendent of the New Hebrides Mission.⁴⁵ The family, however, continued in pastoral work until the birth of their son, Graeme Hamley, at the Sydney Sanitarium.⁴⁶ On settling in at mission headquarters at Aore, they encountered many challenges. They were particularly in need of vessels so that the missionaries could move around the many islands.⁴⁷ Missionary A. D. Pietz reported that he and his family had been isolated on one small island for more than 12 months.⁴⁸

In 1947 Perry documented a number of experiences of missionary life.⁴⁹ On July 14, 1947, the Perry family arrived in Sydney with the intent of sailing a new mission vessel back to the New Hebrides. They were accompanied by five New Hebrideans, who were to be the crew for the journey.⁵⁰ After delays the vessel was dedicated on October 2.⁵¹ The vessel sailed for the New Hebrides on October 7 with Captain Reece in command, J.C.H. Perry (chief officer), C. Tucker (engineer), and the five crew.⁵² In the New Hebrides Perry continued his role as mission superintendent while Muriel and the family remained in Wahroonga.⁵³ He finally returned to Sydney on February 13, 1949.⁵⁴ He had been appointed to the Western Australian Conference after 16 years of mission service.⁵⁵

Building, Campgrounds, Churches, and Church Membership (1949–1967)

The Perrys commenced service in Western Australia at Albany, Denmark, and Mount Barker (1949–1953). He then transferred to Mount Lawley and Osborne Park (1954–1957); Queens Park, South Perth, and Victoria Park (1958–1959); Manjimup and Kulikup, Bridgetown and Bidellia/Donnelly (1960–1963); Moora (1963–1965); and Narrogin (1966–1967).⁵⁶ During these years Perry used his practical skills in the building of three churches: Denmark,⁵⁷ Mount Lawley,⁵⁸ and Victoria Park.⁵⁹ He assisted in building Welshpool campground facilities (1950)⁶⁰ and Karalundi Mission.⁶¹ He also served as camp superintendent for some of the period.⁶² Muriel's participation included supporting congregational hospitality, assisting church fund raising "stalls" by organizing, baking, sewing items for sale, and effecting sales on the day.⁶³

Retirement Recruitment

Hamley and Muriel Perry retired from active service on December 9, 1967.⁶⁴ In August 1969 they commenced a period as caretakers of the Wahroonga Mission Hostel, supporting many missionaries in their mission service.⁶⁵ In 1971 Hamley was the secretary of the Retired Worker's Association.⁶⁶ On moving to Cooranbong, NSW,

Hamley, as a member and elder of the Avondale Memorial church, visited seniors, delivering *The Record*. He strongly supported the annual *Appeal for Missions* fund-raising effort and spent some time as caretaker of Ellen G. White's home *Sunnyside* and the South Seas Museum.⁶⁷ Muriel maintained her life ministry of communicating, dressmaking, friendship, and hospitality.⁶⁸

Hamley Perry died on October 30, 1993.⁶⁹ Muriel Perry died on March 6, 1998.⁷⁰ Both are buried in the Avondale SDA Cemetery.⁷¹

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