

Williams, Cecil Arthur (1920–?) and Amanda Wilma (Tetz) (1925–1985)



C. A. Williams during missionary period in Korea, 1950-1967.

Photo courtesy of Kuk Heon Lee.

KUK HEON LEE

Kuk Heon Lee graduated from Sahmyook University (B.A.), Newbold College (M.A.), and Sahmyook University (Ph.D.). From 1990 to 2009, he served as a pastor at Korean Union Conference. In 2010, he joined Sahmyook University as a lecturer and professor at the Theology Department. His research and teaching interests are in Church History. He wrote several books and published several papers on the subject. Currently, he is also the Dean of Planning at Sahmyook University.

Cecil A. Williams and his wife, Amanda Wilma, have served as missionaries in Korea for 18 years, from January 1950 to December 1967. He served as the secretary and director of the Publishing Department, the Mission Department, the Relief Service Association, and the Religious Liberty Department of the Korean Union Mission (KUM). He also served as the president of the KUM for six years until he left for the Okinawa Mission in Japan.

Background

Cecil Arthur Williams was born February 23, 1920. His early life is not well known, but after marriage he entered the path of a ministry at the Adventist Church with his wife, Amanda Wilma (Tetz) (born June 29, 1925). In 1944 he began his ministry with his wife as a Licensed Missionary at the Southern Union Conference.¹ He served in the Department of Industry at Southern Missionary College. He was trusted as a Credential Missionary at the Southern Union Conference in 1947 and continued his service at an educational institution.² Then, in 1949, he was called as a Korean missionary and came to Korea with his wife on January 20, 1950.³

Ministry in Korea

As soon as he came to Korea, C. A. Williams served as secretary of the Publishing Department of the Korean Union Mission. From June 4, 1950, he held a week-long Literature Evangelist training meeting to guide literature evangelists' missionary activities.⁴ However, on June 25, the Korean War broke out, and he fled to Japan with other missionaries. While staying in Kyoto, Japan, he conducted literature missions for Koreans living in Japan.

When the war entered a lull, missionaries who returned to Seoul held the 16th General Meeting of the Korean Union Mission in May 1952, where C. A. Williams was reappointed as the secretary of the Publishing Department. In addition, he was appointed as the general manager of the Korean Publishing House (*Sijosa*),⁵ leading the overall publishing work. While serving as the secretary of the Publishing Department of the Korean Union Mission, he joined the group of the ordained pastors after being ordained as the pastor at the 13th General Meeting of the Central Korean Mission held in March 1953.⁶

At the 18th General Meeting of the Korean Union Mission held in December 1957, C. A. Williams was appointed as the secretary of the Mission Department along with the Publishing Department.⁷ Williams, who served as the secretary both of the Publishing Department and the Mission Department, became in charge of the secretary of the Mission Department alone at the 19th General Meeting of the Korean Union Mission held in December 1959. In addition, the secretary of the Publishing Department was delegated to R. C. Thomas. In particular, C. A. Williams concurrently served as the vice-director of the newly established Public Information Office and was in charge of external public information.⁸

C. A. Williams, who was in charge of the Mission Department, concurrently served as the director of the Relief Service Association, which was the most active activity at the time. When the Relief Service Association was organized in 1957, the director was concurrently serving as president of the Korean Union Mission, C. H. Davis. However, after Pastor Davis returned to his home country, C. A. Williams, the secretary of Mission Department, was in charge of the relief service. This Relief Service Association was organized as part of the relief mission of the General Conference, and in Korea it has become a key department for active relief activities for those affected by the Korean War. As a result of this activity, C. A. Williams was awarded the Order of Public Interest by the Korean government in August 1963.⁹

C. A. Williams was appointed as the president of the Korean Union Mission at the General Meeting of the Far Eastern Division held in Baguio, Philippines, from November 25 to December 2, 1963.¹⁰ He succeeded C. H. Davis as president of the Korean Union Mission. Pastor Davis was appointed president of the Korean Union Mission in 1958 and led the ministry of the Korean Adventist Church for five years before returning to his homeland at retirement age.

Williams, who was appointed the president of the Korean Union Mission, held the 21st General Meeting of the Korean Union Mission in February 1964 and celebrated the growth of the Korean Adventist Church. In particular, 1964 was a meaningful year for the Korean Adventist Church to mark the 60th anniversary of its mission. Therefore, on February 9, when the General Meeting ended, a service and ceremony were held to

commemorate the 60th anniversary of the mission of the Korean Adventist Church.¹¹ C. A. Williams published an article titled "To Mark the 60th Anniversary of Missionary Work" in the October issue of *Church Compass*, which celebrated the growth of the Korean Adventist Church.¹²

When C. A. Williams served as president of the Korean Union Mission, it was the time when the Korean Adventist Church developed the most rapidly. However, this period was also a period of crisis in several ways. The first crisis was the time-limited eschatological movement, which was rampant in the 1960s. Some Adventists promoted eschatological faith by carrying out radical health reform movements and rural-life movements. By this situation, Pastor Williams warned of the dangers of the time-limited eschatology and strongly appealed for the Adventists to pursue a healthy religious life.¹³

Another crisis is that the Korean Adventist Church faced a rapid missionary slump. As already explained, in the early 1960s, the Korean Adventist Church experienced remarkable growth. There were several factors for the growth, but the most important factor among them was active relief service activities. However, in the mid-1960s, relief-service activities shrank. And as a result, the growth of the church slowed. At the end of 1965, the number of the Sabbath School members of the KUM exceeded one hundred thousand. However, in 1966, about fifteen thousand members decreased.¹⁴ Since then, the Korean Adventist Church has experienced a rapid decline in the number of church members.

To make matters worse, several missionaries returned to their home countries during this period. Among them was Pastor Williams, the president of the KUM. On May 12, 1966, Cecil and Amanda Williams temporarily returned to the United States in the sabbatical year.¹⁵ They returned to Korea after attending the 50th General Meeting of the GC (June 16-25, 1966). During his stay in the United States, Pastor Williams promoted policies such as reduction of ministers to normalize the ministry of the shrinking Korean Adventist Church.

Innovative policies to revitalize the missionary work of the Korean Adventist Church were created at the 23rd General Meeting of the Korean Union Mission held in September 1967. At this General Meeting, Pastor Williams concurrently served as director of the Religious Liberty Department.¹⁶ This decision formed his last ministry career in Korea. But he couldn't carry out the position very long.

At the General Meeting of the Far Eastern Division held in November 1967, C. A. Williams was appointed as the president of the Okinawa Mission in Japan, and W. L. Wilcox was appointed as the president of the Korean Union Mission.¹⁷ With this decision, Cecil and Amanda Williams finished their ministry in Korea and moved to Okinawa, Japan.

Later Life

The Okinawa Mission was organized in 1953 and consisted of 983 church members from 10 churches. Since 1968, Pastor Williams has served as president of the mission, as well as was responsible for the Education

Department and Mission Department.¹⁸

In 1972 he was appointed as the director of the Stewardship Department of the Far Eastern Division and moved to Singapore with his wife, Amanda.¹⁹ From 1973 to 1975, he concurrently served as the secretary of the Trust Services of the Far Eastern Division.²⁰

C. A. Williams was appointed the director of the Stewardship Department of the Canadian Union Conference and moved to Canada in 1976.²¹ Having served for two years there, he was appointed associate director of the Stewardship and Development Department of the General Conference in 1978 and moved back to Washington, D.C., U.S.A.²² After serving there for about two years, he retired from his official ministry in 1980. Amanda Williams passed away March 26, 1985.

SOURCES

Church Compass. July 1950; July 1952; June 1953; February 1958; February 1960; December 1962; September 1963; February 1964; March 1964; October 1964; July 1966; November 1967.

Far Eastern Division Outlook, February 1950; February 1958; January 1968.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, various years.

NOTES

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944), 56.
2. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1947), 61.
3. *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, February 1950, 9.
4. *Church Compass*, July 1950, 16.
5. *Church Compass*, July 1952, 51-53.
6. *Church Compass*, June 1953, 29.
7. *Church Compass*, February 1958, 37. *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, February 1958, 5-7.
8. *Church Compass*, February 1960, 43, 44.
9. *Church Compass*, September 1963, 12.

10. *Church Compass*, February 1964, 36.
11. *Church Compass*, March 1964, 36.
12. *Church Compass*, October 1964, 3.
13. *Church Compass*, December 1962, 3.
14. Sang Do Kim, "The Reality of the Korean Adventist Church and Our Awakening," *Church Compass*, July 1966, 3.
15. Ibid.
16. *Church Compass*, November 1967, 48.
17. *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, January 1968, 12.
18. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1969), 132.
19. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1972), 153.
20. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1973), 153.
21. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1976), 37.
22. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1978), 16.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000