



Grave of Isaac Chester Schmidt.

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Schmidt, Isaac Chester (1887–1978)

KWEQLYS FRANKLIN CHRISTIAN SATORI, AND INGRID IDYLL M. TORNALEJO

Kweqlys Franklin Christian Satori is an ordained minister serving in Indonesia. He has served for 12 years as a voluntary missionary, Bible teacher, and field pastor in East Java Conference. He is married to Rinny Weol, a teacher and headmaster. They are blessed with two children. Satori was a student in SLA-Purwodadi from 1996 to 2003. He and his wife have served SLA-Purwodadi from 2010 to 2012 as teachers. Currently, Franklin is studying in AIAS.

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Isaac Chester Schmidt was a colporteur, pastor, teacher, church leader, school administrator, and missionary who served in Indonesia.

Early Life, Education and Marriage

Isaac Chester Schmidt was born September 17, 1887 in Bison, Rush, Kansas to father, Henry Schmidt and mother, Elizabeth Lohrey.¹ Both of his parents were born in Russia but were U.S. citizens. Schmidt was raised on

a farm, and taught the Adventist faith at a young age.² With the teachings he learned from his parents and the church school he attended, he accepted the Lord and was baptized in April 1903, by Elder J. F. Harder in Bison, Kansas.³

Schmidt studied theology at Union College from 1905-1909.⁴ He then studied at Oberrealschule, Hamburg, Germany, where he learned the German language, from 1909 to 1911. In 1911 and 1912 he studied French in Geneva, Switzerland. After presenting the work he had done in Europe, he was given his B.A. degree by Walla Walla College.⁵

On September 3, 1913, Schmidt married Marie Elsie Hardt. Marie was born March 22, 1892, in Grand Island, Nebraska, to parents Jacob Hardt and Elizabeth Pauley. Marie's parents were both born in Russia before immigrating to the United States. The Schmidts had two children, Florence Irene Schmidt, born February 26, 1917, and Clarence Chester Schmidt, born August 23, 1920.⁶ Both children were born in Batavia, Java.⁷

Ministry

Schmidt began his ministry in 1912 at a theological seminary in Clinton, Missouri, where he taught arithmetic and geometry.⁸ From 1913-1915 he taught biblical studies and the German language at Walla Walla College Place.⁹ Schmidt had worked for three summers, conducting evangelistic meetings and colportuering for one summer, which earned him two scholarships.¹⁰

Responding to a call to serve in the Netherlands East Indies, Schmidt and his wife traveled to Batavia, Indonesia, on September 15, 1915 to carry on the work of Petra Tunheim, who had started in 1910.¹¹ Schmidt served in Batavia as the director of West Java Mission from 1915 to 1922. He printed and sold literature, kept mission books, and erected mission homes during his years of service.¹² He was ordained as a minister in the summer of 1917 in Surabaya, Java, by Elders F. A. Detamore and W. T. Knox.¹³ After seven years of service in Batavia, Schmidt moved to Singapore, where he served for one year, soliciting funds for the administration building of Singapore's school unit.¹⁴

In May 1922 the Schmidts went home to Bison, Kansas, for their first furlough. They returned to Indonesia in 1923.¹⁵ Schmidt continued his ministry in Medan, Sumatra, as the director of North Sumatra Mission from 1924 to 1928.¹⁶ Within his field work, he saw the need for proper buildings wherein people could study, worship, and hold meetings. Schmidt put up plans and raised funds to build a chapel and a school.¹⁷ He did Bible work in the afternoons and evenings but set time for soliciting work in the mornings.¹⁸ He also supervised the literature work in the Malaysian Union,¹⁹ and stated that 1926 was their banner year in literature sales, reporting \$6,000 gold.²⁰ Known as an active pastor who liked to visit the congregation and local people in Medan, Schmidt also held tent meetings with an average attendance of 200 people. These meetings were reported in the Malay papers, extending their influence to other parts of the land.²¹ During these meetings Schmidt recognized the interest of the people in health reform in partnership with the evangelistic message.²²

In June 1928 the Schmidts returned to Bison, Kansas for their second furlough. From 1929 to 1931²³ they served in Semarang, Java, where he was recognized as an evangelist and educator, in charge of the 350-pupil mission school.²⁴ Schmidt wrote about their work in Semarang in an article for *Ministry* magazine:

During our last term of service, we conducted a small clinic in connection with a mission school in Semarang, Java. It was a necessary part of the school with its more than three hundred Chinese children. We taught the teachers fundamental health principles and how to give fomentations.²⁵

This article reflects that the service of Pastor Schmidt in Semarang was not only as an educator but also as a health promoter. From 1931 to 1933, Schmidt served in the department work of the union mission in Bandung, Java.²⁶ Schmidt together with Petra Tunheim pioneered the Adventist work in Bandung by selling Malayan tracts to the Chinese relatives of a church member from Sukabumi. These efforts later resulted to the conversion of Thang and Tan among the relatives through the follow-up work of Pastor P. Drinhaus and M. E. Diredja.²⁷

Schmidt served as the principal and a teacher of the training school in Tjimindi, Java, from 1933 to 1935, where he taught ten subjects annually.²⁸ Schmidt came to Tjimindi to continue the work of L.M.D. Wortman, who was transferred to Semarang.²⁹

In March 1935 the Schmidts went back to the United States for their third furlough.³⁰ From 1936-1941 Schmidt served as district leader except for one year when he served as secretary of the home missionary and Sabbath School department of the Missouri Conference.³¹ In 1941 Schmidt was called back to Indonesia, then part of the Netherlands East Indies, to be director of the East Java Mission.³² However, his return was hindered due to the turmoil caused by World War II.³³ Schmidt continued to serve from 1942 until 1943 as district leader of the Southeastern District of the Missouri Conference. From 1943 to 1945 he served as teacher of Malay language at Walla, Walla College.³⁴

Finally, when the war was over, the Schmidts sailed from the United States in December 1946. On January 14, 1947, Schmidt finally landed in the East Indies to serve the East Java Mission. He was elected educational secretary for the union mission in May 1947.³⁵

Schmidt was called to serve as the third president of the Netherlands East Indies Training School when it reopened in 1948 as Indonesia Union Seminary of the Seventh-day Adventists.³⁶ The school reopened with only 45 students, and started to offer a two-year ministerial course. The following year a full middle-school program was added, and then a junior college program was offered at the seminary.³⁷ Schmidt served the institution for only one year.

Towards the end of 1949, after 35 years of mission service, the Schmidt made a permanent return to the United States.³⁸ A. M. Bartlett took over his responsibility as principal of the seminary.³⁹

Later Life

On May 27, 1950, Isaac and Marie Schmidt returned to College Place, Washington with the intention to retire permanently from their long endeavors in Indonesia.⁴⁰ However, they accepted the call to go back to Indonesia in 1953, to help in soliciting funds for the new hospital project of the Indonesian Union.⁴¹ They returned again to the United States in 1954.⁴²

Schmidt died May 23, 1978 in San Bernardino, California, age 90.⁴³

Legacy

The Schmidts' work is reflected in the two articles Marie Schmidt wrote for *Ministry* magazine, *Medical Approach in Netherlands East Indies* and *Islam's Challenge to Christianity*.⁴⁴

The missionary couple left a great legacy to the people of Indonesia through their commitment and selfless service for the cause of the gospel. In spite of the unfavorable working conditions, the Schmidts ministered to the need of the people in Batavia (Jakarta). They were known for their friendship and compassion as they made Jesus known through Bible study groups, health teaching, evangelistic meetings, and sharing literature. The works of I. C. Schmidt were recognized by the Indonesians in various places such as Jakarta, Medan, Semarang, Bandung, and Surabaya. His capacity as a missionary, accountant, pastor, health promoter, leader, and educator became a great instrument for the ministry in Indonesia, especially West Indonesia Union Mission. Schmidt became the gate opener for Indonesia Union Seminary of Seventh-day Adventists, now Universitas Advent Bandung. His efforts in the development of education in the Indonesian Union were not only seen through his teaching but also in the opening of several schools in East Java, South Sumatra, Bandung, and elsewhere.⁴⁵

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