

## The establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Epping

According to a brief “history” written for inclusion in the programme for the opening of the new church in 1961 by long-time elder Sydney Patrick, the first Epping Seventh-day Adventist Church was formed and soon after a church was built on Carlingford Road in the year 1903, following a mission held by Pastor Tadish.<sup>1</sup> Some members believed that the site of this building was somewhere near where the pedestrian crossing to the primary school is now.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Epping had much earlier contact with Adventists and evidence shows that the original church was further west toward Carlingford, on the northern side of the road.

### Early Activities of the New South Wales Conference

At first, all Seventh-day Adventist work in Australia and New Zealand came under the one Union, but in 1895-6 the New South Wales Conference was set up. A ‘Brief History’ of the New South Wales Conference was published in the *Union Conference Record* of July 10, 1899. This account by Pastor G. B. Starr contains a great deal of interesting information about the progress of Adventism and the commitment to and establishment of the Summer Hill Sanitarium and the Avondale ‘School’. Pastor Starr wrote: “This young Conference was called upon to consider large subjects and undertake great things.” There was regular change among the officers of the Conference and the membership, with movement interstate to the Western Australian goldfields and to missionary endeavours, and the return of personnel to the United States. M. C. Israel was elected as the first President of the New South Wales Conference but he returned to the United States and Pastor W. C. White filled the position until the next annual session. The first treasurer of the newly established conference was A. M. Jennett, who had also served on the executive committee between November 1895 and the election of officers at the adoption of the constitution in April, 1896.<sup>3</sup> The young Conference started out with six churches, a membership of 321, and an inherited indebtedness of £301, its ratio portion from the parent Conference.<sup>4</sup>

The second annual session of the New South Wales Conference was held on a camp ground at Stanmore from October 21 to November 1, 1897. The churches represented are Cooranbong, Newtown, Ashfield, Parramatta, Prospect and Kellyville. Among the delegates are some who are of interest to the Epping historian: G. Tadish from Cooranbong, R. Shannon from Newtown, and A. R. Sherwin and T. Patching and Mrs. S. Patching from Ashfield.<sup>5</sup> The first woman recorded among the New South Wales Conference officers was Miss Lizzie Gregg, appointed as secretary at this session.<sup>6</sup>

There was considerable movement back and forth across the Tasman Sea and the mission work in the Pacific and Asia also drew on the available workers. In March 1898, the *Union Conference Record* noted that Dr. E. R. Caro had returned from an absence of several months in New Zealand where he had been visiting family and friends at Napier.<sup>7</sup> He was expected to ‘push forward our medical work.’ In the same issue, there is some philosophical regret that Brother G. A. Brandstater, a ‘splendid nurse’ doing ‘excellent work’ in Sydney, and his family, had gone to New Zealand.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, ‘We learn that a commodious house of worship is being erected in Stanmore

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<sup>1</sup> Souvenir Programme, Official Opening of the Epping Seventh Day Adventist Church, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 1961.

<sup>2</sup> John Bagnall and Ken Wood, interview with Carlene Bagnall, July 6 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 7.

<sup>4</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 7.

<sup>5</sup> Union Conference Record, January February 1898, page 18. Robert Shannon was the father of Gladys Bagnall, who came with her family to Epping in 1939, and whose youngest son John Bagnall remains a member. The Patchings were the grandparents of Nerelle McIntyre, who came with her husband and daughter to Epping in 1962, and who remains a member.

<sup>6</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 8.

<sup>7</sup> Union Conference Record March 1898, page 34.

<sup>8</sup> Union Conference Record, March 1898, page 34. This is the uncle of Pastor Gordon Branster, who was born in 1896 in Tasmania. Pastor Branster’s wife and two daughters attended Epping in the 1940’s, when he was the President of the then South New South Wales Conference.

near the ground where the late camp-meeting was held. Pastor Haskell, who has this work in hand, is working energetically in behalf of the enterprise.’<sup>9</sup> Robert Shannon, who had emigrated from County Down in Northern Ireland in 1879 and was a builder who lived in the Stanmore area, had been among the first people in New South Wales to join the Adventist Church and led in this building work.<sup>10</sup>

The first written record of outreach in the Epping area is in July of 1898. At that time, what is now the suburb of Epping was more commonly known as Carlingford. The *Union Conference Record* lists those doing canvassing work in New South Wales and there was a report that A. R. Sherwin, working in Carlingford, had eighteen orders of ‘Bible Readings’, valued at £14.10.6.<sup>11</sup> He was canvassing the Ryde area with the same book, with twenty orders worth £16.3.3 in August<sup>12</sup>, and three orders worth £2.7.4 in September 1898.<sup>13</sup> A. R. Sherwin was a member of the Ashfield Church and a delegate from that church to the second annual session of the New South Wales Conference in 1897.

The third annual session of the New South Wales Conference was held in the new church at Stanmore from July 21 to 26, 1898. There was such a remarkable interest in the Conference and the ‘tent meeting’ that the latter continued afterward for over six months. More than seventy people were baptised and ‘more than fifty new members were added to the church.’<sup>14</sup> ‘The entire membership of the Conference at this time was reported at 366, with a yearly tithe of £556 15s 11d, and the debt at £258 8s 9d. At this Conference the superintendent of the medical work reported that the bath house and health home had grown to the dignity of a sanitarium, with a graduated physician in charge.’<sup>15</sup> This ‘health home’ was located at Summer Hill. Among those who are noted as being in attendance at the conference were several from Queensland: G. C. Tenney and Mrs. Tenney, and G. Tadich.<sup>16</sup> Pastor S. N. Haskell was appointed as the President of the New South Wales Conference but ‘*Owing to the call of Pastor Haskell to Queensland to take charge of that field and superintend a tent meeting and mission following the Brisbane camp meeting, the work of the conference fell on the vice-president. The Queensland work continuing to hold Pastor Haskell in that colony finally led him to resign his position, and the vice-president was called to fill that office during the remainder of the year.*’<sup>17</sup> The report of the tent mission after the Brisbane Camp Meeting shows that Brother and Sister Haskell were assisted by Brother Tadisch.<sup>18</sup> On December 14, 1898, Pastor G. C. Tenney and his family arrived in Sydney from America to ‘a hearty welcome back’<sup>19</sup> although he initially located at North Fitzroy in Melbourne.<sup>20</sup>

There was a common pattern for evangelism during these years based on the annual camp-meeting and session. A site would be chosen and the membership would be invited to rent tents on site. Large meeting tents would also be erected. All this activity would attract a good deal of attention in the local area. Curious neighbours of the site would be attracted to come and see for themselves what was happening. The big tent would remain after the end

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<sup>9</sup> Union Conference Record, March 1898, page 36. The Stanmore Church was built by volunteer labour, led by Robert Shannon.

<sup>10</sup> In 1894, Robert Shannon had been arrested for working on Sunday, thus breaking the Sunday laws, and had vigorously defended himself in court on the grounds that Sunday was not the true Sabbath. When he was convicted of the offence and required to pay a fine or spend a period in the stocks, he chose the stocks. The sentence was never carried out because there were no stocks available.

<sup>11</sup> Union Conference Record, August 1898, page 91.

<sup>12</sup> Union Conference Record, September 1898, page 99.

<sup>13</sup> Union Conference Record, October 1898, page 107.

<sup>14</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 8.

<sup>15</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 8.

<sup>16</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 10.

<sup>17</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 July 1899, page 8.

<sup>18</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 October 1898, page 108.

<sup>19</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 December 1898, page 115.

<sup>20</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 January 1899, page 8.

of the camp-meeting, with one or more of the ministry continuing to preach regularly. Often the result was the establishment of a company or church in the area afterwards.

Another evangelistic practice was based on the work of canvassers. These people would take books like *Daniel and Revelation*, *Bible Readings*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets* – lady canvassers had a book called *The House We Live In* and the *Ladies Guide* – to a country area. When an interest had been created, a tent mission with two preachers and a Bible worker would follow, and often a small company of Sabbath keepers would be established. Then the tent would be moved to another town, the Gospel preached, a company raised, and so on. Sometimes there would be a request from some isolated believers that a mission should come to their town. After one Conference session the ministers and staff employed by the Conference voted to take a salary reduction in order to fund another worker to allow teams of two preachers at each mission to man the tents.<sup>21</sup> In 1906 the President was writing of the need for a new large tent for the next camp-meeting. The last one had been used for 8 years and was now worn out with use. The new tent would cost £170 but he felt they must have it – ‘In fact, this may be the last tent of this kind we will need to get before the Lord comes.’<sup>22</sup>

Early in 1901, ‘*Brother G. W. Tadich is still working earnestly in behalf of the new church building at Bundaberg, Queensland. It has been decided to make the house somewhat smaller than at first intended, and to collect the money needed for the enterprise before building. A wise policy indeed.*’<sup>23</sup> In spite of the value of his work in Bundaberg, Brother Tadich was forced to return south in the autumn of 1901. ‘*Brother G W Tadich called at this office while on his way to Sydney from Queensland. Brother Tadich found his health failing in Queensland to such an extent that it became necessary for him to seek a more congenial climate. He expects to remain in Sydney for a few weeks.*’<sup>24</sup>

By May, Pastor Tenney had come to Sydney and was leading in evangelism here. The *Union Conference Record* reported: ‘*Meetings are held in 8 different localities in Sydney each Sabbath. Pastor Tenney finds many honest souls searching for light, and reports that missionary work is being revived and a better spiritual condition prevails. He has baptized 5 persons within the past few weeks.*’<sup>25</sup> Pastor W. A. Colcord, in the President’s Report of the New South Wales Conference, stated that there were 10 churches in the conference, including Norfolk Island, in July 1901, with a membership of 572, plus an additional 30 isolated Sabbath-keepers. Two churches and 109 members had been added in the previous two years.<sup>26</sup> ‘*We have been thankful indeed for the presence and help of Pastor Tenney in Sydney. And we rejoice that God has been sending us some good, strong, faithful young men. **The Lord has been greatly blessing Brother F. W. Paap in his labours at Lismore, and Brother Tadich at Epping; and Brother McGowan has also had some success at Goulburn. We rejoice at all this.***’<sup>27</sup>

From this, it is reasonable to say that Brother Tadich began to work in the Epping area about April or May, 1901, following up the canvassing efforts of A. R. Sherwin in the winter of 1898. There is further evidence in the *Union Conference Record* that Brother Tadich’s mission was bearing fruit: the Quarterly Sabbath School Report for the quarter ending June 30, 1901 shows forty Sabbath School members meeting at ‘Carlingford’ and giving offerings and donations to missions.<sup>28</sup> There were 21 Sabbath Schools in the state, and only Avondale, Hamilton, Ashfield, Petersham and West Maitland have a larger membership than Epping at this time.

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<sup>21</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 October 1903, page 3.

<sup>22</sup> Union Conference Record, 17 September 1906, page 11.

<sup>23</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 February 1901, page 15.

<sup>24</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 May 1901, page 15.

<sup>25</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 May 1901, page 15.

<sup>26</sup> Union Conference Record, 24 July 1901, page 41.

<sup>27</sup> Union Conference Record, 24 July 1901, pages 41-42. My bold type.

<sup>28</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 September 1901, page 10.

In the succeeding Quarter ended September 30, 1901, Epping's Sabbath School membership is 35, with a 'total contribution of £2.9.6, tithes from school 5 shillings, donations to missions £1.10.0.' By comparison, the largest church in the conference at Stanmore had 74 members and made a total contribution of £4.8.6, with tithes from the school 8 shillings and 10pence, and donations to missions £2.1.4.<sup>29</sup>

The sixth annual session of the New South Wales Conference was held in the Stanmore Church, Petersham, from August 8 to 11, 1901. The ten churches of the Conference were represented by forty seven delegates and there was a good attendance of other members in addition.<sup>30</sup> Brother G. W. Tadich is listed among those who were to attend.<sup>31</sup>

Pastor W. A. Colcord, after two years as President of the New South Wales Union, '*severed connection in harmony with the recommendation of the Union Conference, to labor in the Queensland Conference.*'<sup>32</sup> Brother James Hindson was elected secretary and treasurer of the New South Wales Conference, and was to be engaged largely in colporteur and Bible work. Brother W.M. Crothers took Brother Hindson's place as general canvassing agent for New South Wales. The session report in more detail lists Elder G. A. Snyder as President, G. C. Tenney as Vice-president, Field Agent W. M. Crothers. The Executive Committee consisted of G. A. Snyder, G. C. Tenney, J. A. Burden, J. Hindson and J. J. Paap. There had been one camp-meeting and one Sabbath School Convention during the year and the church membership had risen to 640 with 55 isolated Sabbath-keepers. Tithe had risen to £1418. '*The membership of the Sabbath-schools is 834, a gain of 141 during the year. Seven new schools have been formed, and the donations to missions have largely increased.*' It seems likely that one of these 'new schools' is the Sabbath School at Epping. '*Credentials were granted to Pastors W. A. Colcord, G. A. Snyder, G. C. Tenney, and W. Woodford. Licenses were granted to F. W. Paap, G. W. Tadich, and W. J. McGowan. Missionary licenses were granted to J. Hindson, G. G. James, A. E. Pearce, and E. A. D. Goodhart.*'<sup>33</sup>

Brother Tadich's work at Epping was progressing well and drew favourable comment. Under the heading, 'The Field' for New South Wales, there is this entry in the December 1, 1901 issue of the *Union Conference Record*:

*'At Epping, near Sydney, where Brother Tadich has been laboring for some time, quite a strong company have embraced the truth, and from last reports the interest was widening to the surrounding districts. This appears to be a very promising field, and we hope to be able to report the organization of a church there before long.'*<sup>34</sup>

Further, the *Union Conference Record* has mentions of Epping Church in two issues in 1902. From these it is clear that the Epping Church was established and housed in its own church building before the end of June 1902. In the July 1 1902 issue, G. C. Tenney wrote, under the heading "In and About Sydney":

*'Within the city, and a short radius from it, the larger portion of our churches and people in New South Wales is located. This includes the churches of Stanmore, Ashfield, Parramatta, Kellyville, Prospect and Epping. Regular Sabbath services are held at nine different points. The past year has brought trials to all these companies, in some respects severe and searching. Our faith in God's message has been repeatedly put to test, and a few have given over the battle. Some with whom we have 'taken sweet counsel' walk no more with us. But I am glad to say that with nearly all the friends of the truth, the bonds which bound them to God's cause and the ties of Christian brotherhood have been strengthened, even by the efforts of the enemy.*

*'During the period mentioned, the church at Epping has been established and a house built. During this time I think I have administered baptism to not less than thirty-five persons. A good degree of unity, and a disposition*

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<sup>29</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 December 1901, page 9.

<sup>30</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 October 1901, page 8.

<sup>31</sup> Union Conference Record, 31 July 1901, page 96.

<sup>32</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 September 1901, page 15.

<sup>33</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 October 1901, page 8. Credentials are issued to ordained ministers, and licenses to those not yet ordained but authorized to preach. Missionary licenses indicate church employment.

<sup>34</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 December 1901, page 13.

to work has come into our churches, and some good work is being accomplished in various lines of missionary effort. A great deal of Christian work awaits the hands of God's people in this most interesting field. As we arouse to meet the situation in the Master's strength His blessing will more fully rest upon us'.<sup>35</sup>

The second mention of Epping Church is in the November 1, 1902, *Union Conference Record* in the column "Reports from the Field" on page 4:

*The seventh annual session of the New South Wales Conference was held in connection with the Burwood camp-meeting, October 9-19. The twelve churches of the conference were represented by fifty delegates. A large number of other members was also in attendance. Pastors G. A. Irwin, J. A. Burden, and Dr. D. H. Kress of the Union Conference were present. Nine meetings of the conference were held.*

*Three new churches were admitted into the conference. These are located at Epping, Corndale, and Goulburn. The Goulburn Church was organised after the close of the conference year. Church buildings have been erected at Epping and Corndale. During the fiscal year ending June 30, fifty were received into the conference by baptism and four by vote, making the membership at that date 656.<sup>36</sup>*

### **G. W. Tadich and his work as an evangelist**

The *Union Conference Record* has a number of references to G. W. Tadich which round out our picture of him, and he himself wrote regular accounts of his church work. These take 'Pastor Tadish' from simply a name in Sydney Patrick's history to a real man, and one of conviction and compassion.

Guiseppe William Tadich was born at Richmond, Victoria, in 1878<sup>37</sup>, the older son of Nicholas Michael Tadich and his wife Anna Maria Blair Harper, who had married there in 1876<sup>38</sup>.

The earliest record of G. W. Tadich in an Adventist connection so far found was as one of the first students of the 'Avondale School'. There is 'one G. W. Tadich listed as -First year 1895 Industrial student' and 'there is also another entry in the Student registrar as: (May 1, 1897 to March 16, 1898) G W Tadich. Address c/- Queensland Tract Society, George St, Brisbane. Enrolled in the Advanced Department. Financial conditions: Resident. Arrived May 7. Date of leaving Oct.28.'<sup>39</sup> It appears that he left the Avondale School to assist the spread of the Gospel in Queensland, and that this must have occurred while he was a student. The *Union Conference Record* of October 15, 1898, states that the Brisbane Camp Meeting was followed by a tent mission led by Brother and Sister Haskell, 'assisted by Brother Tadisch'.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it was a final practical part of the course for theology students at Avondale. He was twenty years of age.

His interest in Avondale continued after he had left. Ellen White wrote "Christ's Object Lessons" while she was in Australia and all the royalties from its sales worldwide were to benefit the 'schools' operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the Australasian Union, as it was then known, money raised in this way was to benefit Avondale School. Each church was allocated a quota of the books to sell; some sold more than their quota, others less. It was promoted very widely in the *Union Conference Record* with reports of how sales were going.<sup>41</sup> On the weekend of August 22 and 23, 1903, the West Maitland Church held a "Christ's Object Lessons" Jubilee. On the Sunday afternoon, 'First the book was brought to their attention, its nature, and its relation to the Avondale School, and why we as a people are pressing the sale of it. Next an interesting account of the pioneer work of the

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<sup>35</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 July 1902.

<sup>36</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 November 1902, page 4.

<sup>37</sup> Victorian BDMs 1837-1888, birth reg. number 4789.

<sup>38</sup> Victorian BDMs 1837-1888, marriage reg. number 4515. This gives Nicholas Tadich's birthplace as Italy. It is possible that this was a second marriage, and that there were several half-siblings as well as a full sister Antoinette May born in 1882 and a full brother Nicholas Andrea born in 1885.

<sup>39</sup> Email from Rose-Lee Power to Carlene Bagnall, 3 October 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 October 1898, page 108.

<sup>41</sup> Email from Marian de Berg to Carlene Bagnall, 9 October 2002.

school was given by Brother G. W. Tadich, one of its first students. One of the present students gave an account of the school as it is at present....<sup>42</sup> A month later, in the *Union Conference Record* dated October 1 1903, there is an article entitled 'Jubilee Service' written by G. W. Tadich about the special meetings at Maitland Church, although he does not mention his own participation. The members had already exceeded their quota of 170 by selling 200 copies, and they were now ready to help other churches sell "Christ's Object Lessons".<sup>43</sup>

Epping Church was also involved in these sales. Writing under the heading "'Christ's Object Lessons' Work in New South Wales", F. W. Reekie commented: 'In looking over the books we find that out of the quota of 5000 allotted to New South Wales about 3,550 have already been sold.... We are pleased to report that some of our churches are taking hold of this work in earnest, and have determined to complete it. The Epping Church has taken quite a number of orders.'<sup>44</sup> There is a mention of the church members at Wahroonga but no other churches are individually named.

G. W. Tadich also supported the establishment of the hospital. A list published in July 1899 of those who had pledged money towards 'a fund for the erection of a Sanitarium in the vicinity of Sydney, New South Wales', included 'G. Tadisch £2.0.0', a substantial amount for a young man who had not long left the Avondale School and who was shortly to be married. Another on the same list was Dr. E. R. Caro who pledged £25.0.0.<sup>45</sup>

A paragraph in the Personal column on page 15 of the November 1, 1899 issue of the *Union Conference Record* records that

*'Brother G. W. Tadish and Sister Georgina Jennett were united in marriage, Tuesday, October 3. The ceremony was performed by Pastor W. A. Colcord at the home of the bride's parents in Petersham, NSW. The happy couple left immediately by boat for Queensland, where Brother Tadish will engage in ministerial labour.'*<sup>46</sup> The entry for this marriage in the NSW Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, shows the marriage as being between Guiseppe W Tadich and Georgina Mary Jennett, who was the daughter of Abraham Martin Jennett and his wife Helena Augusta. This is the same A. M. Jennett who was the first treasurer of the New South Wales Conference. The register also has entries of the births of three children to Guiseppe and Georgina, Annie H, in 1901, Vincent M in 1903, and Norman J in 1909, all registered at Petersham.<sup>47</sup>

There are some indications that Brother Tadich had a significant and active interest in young people. In October 1901 he contributed an article to the *Union Conference Record* entitled 'What can We Do to Save the Children and Youth in Our Sabbath-schools.'<sup>48</sup> At the New South Wales Camp-Meeting held in 1902, he was in charge of the Young People's Meetings, while his wife looked after the Children's Meetings.<sup>49</sup>

After his mission and the successful establishment of the Epping Church in the first half of 1902, Brother Tadich went to the Wollongong area. He began work there in February, and by July, 1902, he had 'a little company of twelve adults, and two Sabbath Schools of twelve members each'.<sup>50</sup> On August 12, 1902, he wrote of the difficulty of the work in the area and then an account of an incident at a mine at Port Kembla Heights. Two newly converted men were dismissed from their jobs at the mine when it became known that they would not work on the Sabbath. Others who were interested in the truth fell away. After trying unsuccessfully to find other work, the men re-applied to the mine but were again dismissed for refusing to work on Sabbath. Brother Booth told a mine official that 'he was working against God and would have to take the consequences.' The two families were re-

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<sup>42</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 September 1903, page 5.

<sup>43</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 October 1903, pages 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 July 1905, pages 4-5.

<sup>45</sup> Union Conference Record, 31 July 1899, page 17.

<sup>46</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 November 1899, page 15.

<sup>47</sup> NSW Register of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Historical Indexes.

<sup>48</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 October 1901, page 12.

<sup>49</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 October 1902, page 4.

<sup>50</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 July 1902, page 7.

settled at Corrimal and soon after there was a major explosion at the mine. More than ninety men were killed. *'How thankful then were those brethren to God for His kind protection that they had been dismissed from the mine. At times our experiences may be bitter, but "the Branch" always sweetens. All work together for good to those love and trust.'* A few hours after the explosion, Brother Tadich arrived at the mine. He wrote feelingly of the anguish of waiting and the grief and distress as the bodies of the dead miners were brought out. *'The main consideration now is to help the women and children so suddenly deprived of their supporters. Although the miners' accident fund makes provision for those dependent on the men killed, the sum will have to be supplemented by private charity, and if any of my readers will kindly assist these bereaved ones, much or little will be thankfully received, and we promise a careful and faithful disbursement.'* He concludes by reminding the readers of other disasters around the world and the need for a closer walk with God *'for BLESSED are those whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching'*.<sup>51</sup>

The November 1, 1902 issue of the *Union Conference Record*, records that at the Conference Session in 1902, "Licenses" were granted to F. W. Paap, G. W. Tadich, W. J. McGowan, along with "Credentials" and "Missionary Licenses" to various men and women.<sup>52</sup> At the Union Conference held at Avondale in 1903, the New South Wales delegates are: W. Woodford, Mrs. Hindson, F. W. Paap, M. Hare, A. Davis, J. J. Stuckey, E. C. Chapman, P. B. Rudge, H. E. Minchin, G. W. Tadich.<sup>53</sup> S. M. Cobb was appointed President of the New South Wales Conference at this Union Conference.<sup>54</sup>

In the *Union Conference Record* dated 15 October 1903, there are two mentions of Brother Tadich in relation to his new mission work. The Conference President, S. M. Cobb, reported that *'Brethren W. J. McGowan and G. W. Tadich took a tent with them to Blayney, about 160 miles inland from Sydney, on the Western line, with Sister T. A. Chapman as Bible worker.'* Other workers would go to Taree and Orange, and all three tent missions *'in territory which has not been worked hitherto by the minister'*.<sup>55</sup> Brother Tadich in fact preceded his co-workers, who left Sydney on October 5, with their families.<sup>56</sup>

In reference to their tent meetings at Blayney, Brother Tadich wrote: *'We have had a good attendance, about sixty or seventy every night. Brother McGowan and I visited the three ministers of the town, and had a very pleasant conversation with each. Many are deeply stirred. We have found one Sabbath-keeper, and another family, I understand, intend to keep this coming Sabbath. The rain has interfered somewhat, but not very much. We are all of good courage in the Lord.'*<sup>57</sup> A later account describes that there is *'a very good interest for the size of the town'*. *'Brother Tadich spoke to a good congregation last night ... Sister Tadich sang "Look for the Waymarks"'. There had been opposition from the ministers of the town, particularly the Methodist minister. 'We are expecting to go to another place soon if all is well.'*<sup>58</sup> Pastor G. B. Starr, whose labors had been in Sydney and suburbs, visited them and wrote: *'At Blayney Brethren McGowan and Tadich and their wives and little children, and Mrs. Gertrude Chapman and her child, are all comfortably situated in a large cottage in the same lot with the tent, in the very centre of town.'*<sup>59</sup>

In December the opposition in Blayney turned nasty. Mr. D. Steed was brought from Bathurst to expose Seventh-day Adventism. There was a wild meeting. The Seventh-day Adventist case was well-made, the local papers gave *'very fair reports'* and most people were sympathetic. *'Although persecuted we are not discouraged,'* wrote W. J.

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<sup>51</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 September 1902, pages 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 November 1902. Credentials are issued to ordained ministers; licenses are issued to non-ordained ministers; missionary licenses are issued to those employed by the SDA Church.

<sup>53</sup> Union Conference Record, 11 September 1903, page 1.

<sup>54</sup> Union Conference Record, 22 September 1903, page 24.

<sup>55</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 October 1903, page 3.

<sup>56</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 October 1903, page 7.

<sup>57</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 November 1903, page 8.

<sup>58</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 December 1903, page 7.

<sup>59</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 December 1903, page 8.

McGowan, G. W. Tadich and Mrs. T. A. Chapman in a joint communication.<sup>60</sup> The team moved on to Milthorpe. Sister Chapman reported a 'very small attendance' and wrote that "*Brethren McGowan and Tadich are working the country districts and hope to hold meetings soon among the farmers.*"<sup>61</sup>

The 1904 New South Wales Camp Meeting was held at Bathurst. There was rain after a serious drought, but there were twenty-nine family tents and 152 of 'our own people' were present.<sup>62</sup> There was a fresh distribution of labour. '*Brother Tadich returned to Blayney to do a little work there, after which he is planning to visit his father in Melbourne. He will then return, and will be placed in that part of the field that at that time seems best for the work.*'<sup>63</sup> The work that was found for him to do was at Ermington.

This is G. W. Tadich's own account:

*'A series of tent meetings was begun Friday evening, June 17, in Ermington, an orchard district on the Parramatta River between Ryde and Parramatta.*

*'We pitched a 30 foot circular tent on an enclosed lot fronting the main road, and fitted the tent to seat 100 persons. The rostrum looked very pretty with the ferns, plants, and flowers round about. The tent is well warmed these cold nights with two stoves.*

*'The Epping church has helped much in the singing, adding much to the interest of the services. The night services have been fairly well attended, while the Sunday services have been well attended. Last Sunday night the subject presented was the "Eastern Question and the Russo-Japanese War Cloud". Several after the service stated that we were correct in the position we took.*

*'An interest is surely being developed, and we hope to report soon that some have embraced the message. Pray for us.'* G. W. Tadich.<sup>64</sup>

He wrote another report of the mission at Ermington, which was published in the August 15, 1904, *Union Conference Record*:

*'Since my last report to the RECORD, the work in this vicinity has been gradually developing. The great storm which swept over these parts blew down our tent, but without doing much damage. We thought it better, as the weather was so changeable, not to erect the tent again. We rented a building, fitted it for meetings, and the interest continued.*

*'As usual with the development of the work, we had to meet opposition. Last Sunday one of the ministers publicly denounced our work. Being told that the meeting was in the afternoon, I attended, but for some reason unexplained, the special subject was postponed till the night service, when I had to conduct my own meeting. Our brethren attended, taking notes, and at the close announced a full review, and publicly invited all, especially the minister.*

*'As usual this aroused a greater interest. Many who were bitterly opposed, and would not attend our services, came to hear both sides. On the first night of the review the hall was crowded. Some came to break up the meeting, and kept interrupting, but every so-called objection caused the truth to shine brighter.*

*'On the last night of the review, the minister was present. The hall was crowded, many having to stand. I appealed to the people to hear me through, and the opportunity would be given at the close to ask questions. The Lord's Spirit was present in power, and the people listened as point after point was made. At the close I invited questions. The minister was asked by his people if he would speak. He answered, No, and walked out. The meeting was closed with a public triumph for the truth.*

*Two new Sabbath-keepers met with the Epping Church last Sabbath, another living some distance away kept her first Sabbath. Many are in the "Valley of Decision".'*<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 January 1904, page 6.

<sup>61</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 February 1904, page 7.

<sup>62</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 April 1904, pages 2-3.

<sup>63</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 May 1904, page 3.

<sup>64</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 July 1904, page 4.

<sup>65</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 August 1904, page 2.



This is the last time Brother Tadich was mentioned or wrote an article for the *Record*. There is evidence that G W Tadich and his family lived in the Sydney suburb of Petersham from 1909 to at least 1932,<sup>66</sup> and that his wife's parents lived in the house in which Georgina and Guiseppe were married in 1899 in the same suburb until 1909.<sup>67</sup> His brother Nicholas Andrea Tadich also settled in Petersham,<sup>68</sup> and Tadich Ltd., Boot Manufacturers & Importers, is listed in the Sands Directory from 1914.<sup>69</sup> There is no known obituary in the *Australasian Record* or *Review* for G. W. Tadich.<sup>70</sup> However, given that he raised churches in Bundaberg, Wollongong, Wallsend and Epping, he must have been a significant force in the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.

### **Activities of the SDA Church in the early years of the Twentieth Century**

The churches did not have a pastor appointed to each one, as there were few credentialed ministers in the NSW conference and those there were, plus the licensed preachers like Brother Tadich, were occupied with missions and outreach. However, the believers found their own ways to unite in worship and fellowship, as is shown by this report written in 1903 by one S. Mason under the heading 'A Union Meeting'.

*'On Sunday, February 15, an all-day meeting was held in the Parramatta Church, the members of Prospect, Kellyville, Epping and Auburn churches, meeting with us. At the morning meeting, which opened at 10.30 with devotional exercises, addresses were given by the elders of the different churches, the same subject being dealt with by each one, as all had selected the same text for the subject of their remarks, not knowing that the others had done likewise, the text being Phil. 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Before the close of the meeting, a social meeting was held, in which nearly all present took part. There followed an intermission for lunch, which was partaken of in picnic fashion, in family groups, in the church grounds.*

*The afternoon meeting began at 2.30. This was essentially the children's meeting. The building was well filled. A profitable and entertaining programme was carried out by the children. Recitations, dialogues, duets, quartettes, were rendered by the scholars of the different Sabbath-schools, a special feature being a recitation of Scripture texts on trust in God, given by the members of the Auburn Sabbath-school.*

*At the evening meeting, which took the form of a regular preaching service, Pastor Snyder gave a stirring address on progression. During this service excellent music was furnished by members of the different choirs. This being Pastor Snyder's last visit to this district prior to his departure for America, the meeting closed with the hymn, "God be with you till we meet again."*

*The visitors expressed their satisfaction and pleasure, and hoped another meeting of the same kind would soon be held in some of the other churches.'*<sup>71</sup>

Canvassing was very widespread. From time to time, familiar names from Epping appear among the list of the canvassers in rural New South Wales, quite apart from the sterling work done in selling *Christ's Object Lessons*. In August 1904, there is a report of F. E. Sonter canvassing *Daniel and Revelation* at Newcastle. He had logged 221 hours for 48 orders to a value of £33.8.6.<sup>72</sup> In June 1905 F. E. Sonter is selling *Daniel and Revelation* at Grafton, with seventeen orders valued at £11.7.0 from 122 hours' work, while Mrs. Mobbs and Mrs. Rudge were selling the *Ladies Guide* at Berry, with respectively six orders, value £6.0.6, from 26 hours' work, and 7 orders, value £7.15.0 from 27 hours' work.<sup>73</sup> During the late autumn and June of 1906, E. A. Keeler canvassed Trangie,

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<sup>66</sup> Sands Directories, 1909, 1914, 1915, 1918 and 1932-33.

<sup>67</sup> Sands Directories, 1899 and 1909, show A M Jennett at 2 Fisher's reserve, Petersham. The deaths of Abraham M Jennett in 1920, Helena A V Jennett in 1930 and Kathleen Augusta Jennett, Georgina Tadich's sister, in 1939 are all registered at Petersham.

<sup>68</sup> Sands Directories, 1914, 1915, 1918. After 1915, both G Tadich and N Tadich are shown at the same address, 7 Regent Street Petersham.

<sup>69</sup> Sands Directories, 1914 and 1915.

<sup>70</sup> Marian de Berg, email to Carlene Bagnall, SDA Research Centre, Avondale College.

<sup>71</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 April 1903, page 6.

<sup>72</sup> Union Conference Record, 1 August 1904, page 7.

<sup>73</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 June 1905, page 5.

Bourke and Cobar, totaling 120 hours and 109 orders to the value of £50.9.6.<sup>74</sup> His name does not appear in the report for July, but he is back in August 1906, with 20 orders valued at £10.2.0 from 45 hours at Parkes.<sup>75</sup> The financial importance of the work done by canvassers is shown by statistical reports for the Conference. In the Quarter ending June 30 1905, the total tithe for the New South Wales Conference was £425.6.10; Sabbath School Offerings £43.13.4; and the retail value of books sold £822.1.9.<sup>76</sup>

In 1907, L. Mobbs was canvassing at Gunnedah, in March selling 12 orders valued at £18.0.0 and in April reporting a mammoth 136 hours for 41 orders valued at £100.10.0.<sup>77</sup> In Narrabri in May he took 41 orders worth £62.10.0 from 97 hours of work.<sup>78</sup> In Moree, he had 22 orders valued at £36.10.0,<sup>79</sup> and at Boomi, 31 orders valued at £52.<sup>80</sup> August found him at Walgett, canvassing *Home Hand Book*, with 6 orders worth £9.10.0 from 20 hours of canvassing.<sup>81</sup> It is not altogether surprising to find this reference to him: '*The SS Airlie, which sailed on Sabbath, February 1, for the East Indies, carried two more of our young people for that field: Brother Louis Mobbs, who has been connected with the canvassing work in New South Wales, and who goes there to engage in this work, where it has already been demonstrated that there is a wide-open door for the circulation of our literature by this means.*'<sup>82</sup>

In his book *An ABC of Epping*, Alex McAndrew includes two stories from Leonard Owen Sonter, then a resident in the retirement village at Cooranbong. He was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1909, and died on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2003, in Charles Harrison Nursing Home, Cooranbong. In his obituary, his son Allen Sonter wrote: 'Len will probably be best remembered for his work in literature ministry during the 1930s and for his management of the Avondale orchard and poultry department between 1944 and 1952. He lived a long and active life, and now awaits the return of his Lord.'<sup>83</sup>

This is the way Len Sonter described how their family became Seventh-day Adventists:

*I, Leonard Sonter, born Epping in 1909, am the last surviving member of my family of seven children. My mother Deborah was originally an Anglican and my father Frank a Methodist. Around 1910 a Seventh Day Adventist preacher, Pastor Taddy and his team were holding public meetings in the district which my parents attended and appreciated. They later held studies in our farm homestead (now No 143 Ray Road). At the time my sister Lucie was dangerously ill with pneumonia and whooping cough. It was feared that she would die. Pastor Taddy had two doctors in his team, Mr and Mrs Caro<sup>84</sup>, who offered to help with the ailing child. My parents were desperate and agreed. The doctors stripped Lucie and wrapped her in a sheet that had been wet in cold water but wrung out. They then enveloped her in a blanket and put her to bed. My parents were frantic at the idea. Father prayed for her recovery. It seemed like a miracle. Lucie recovered fully and went on to live beyond 90 years of age. It goes without saying that the family became devout Seventh Day Adventists. \*Interview with author.<sup>85</sup>*

<sup>74</sup> Union Conference Record, 28 May 1906, page 6; 9 July 1906, page 4; and 6 August 1906, page 6.

<sup>75</sup> Union Conference Record, 21 October 1906, page 5.

<sup>76</sup> Union Conference Record, 15 September 1905, page 7.

<sup>77</sup> Union Conference Record, 10 June 1907, page 5; 17 June 1907, page 4.

<sup>78</sup> Union Conference Record, 8 July 1907, page 5.

<sup>79</sup> Union Conference Record, 5 August 1907, page 6.

<sup>80</sup> Union Conference Record, 2 September 1907, page 4.

<sup>81</sup> Union Conference Record, 7 October 1907, page 4.

<sup>82</sup> Union Conference Record, 17 February 1908, page 7. The other to go was Sister Edith Ward, recently come from New Zealand, who had been involved in church-school work

<sup>83</sup> Australasian Record, 8 November, 2003, page 30.

<sup>84</sup> Arthur L. White: Ellen G. White: The Australian Years 1891-1900, pages 97-98. Mrs. Caro was a dentist and attended Ellen White professionally in New Zealand in 1893, before she and her husband came to Australia.

<sup>85</sup> Alex McAndrew: *An ABC of Epping, A Handbook for Residents*, page 293. The interview was by telephone and this may explain the variation in the names.