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# Gleanings

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CARIBBEAN UNION CONFERENCE



## Evangelizing and Discipling

**The Surrogate  
Mother:  
An Ethical Dilemma**







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From the  
PRESIDENT'S DESK

*"I Will Go:  
Evangelizing and  
Discipling."*



Caribbean Union Conference  
of Seventh-day Adventists'

In this issue of the Gleanings magazine, we would like to focus on "I Will Go: Evangelizing and Discipling." It is noteworthy that God is calling us to evangelize the world and make disciples of those who follow Him.

Matthew 28:19 – 20 say, <sup>19</sup>Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <sup>20</sup>Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." That was the commission given to us centuries ago, and it is still for us today, to evangelize and disciple others for Christ.

The world we live in needs a Saviour. You would agree with me that times are getting worse and we all want to go home, but wouldn't we want to take our families and friends with us? Therefore, we have to evangelize them, teach them about God and who He is, baptize them, and then live the example so that they may follow us as we follow Christ.

Let us commit ourselves today and every day saying, "I Will Go!" How will I go? Evangelizing everyone God puts on my path and making disciples of them! There is an urgent call for workers, will you answer? The harvest is ripening, are you ready to go?

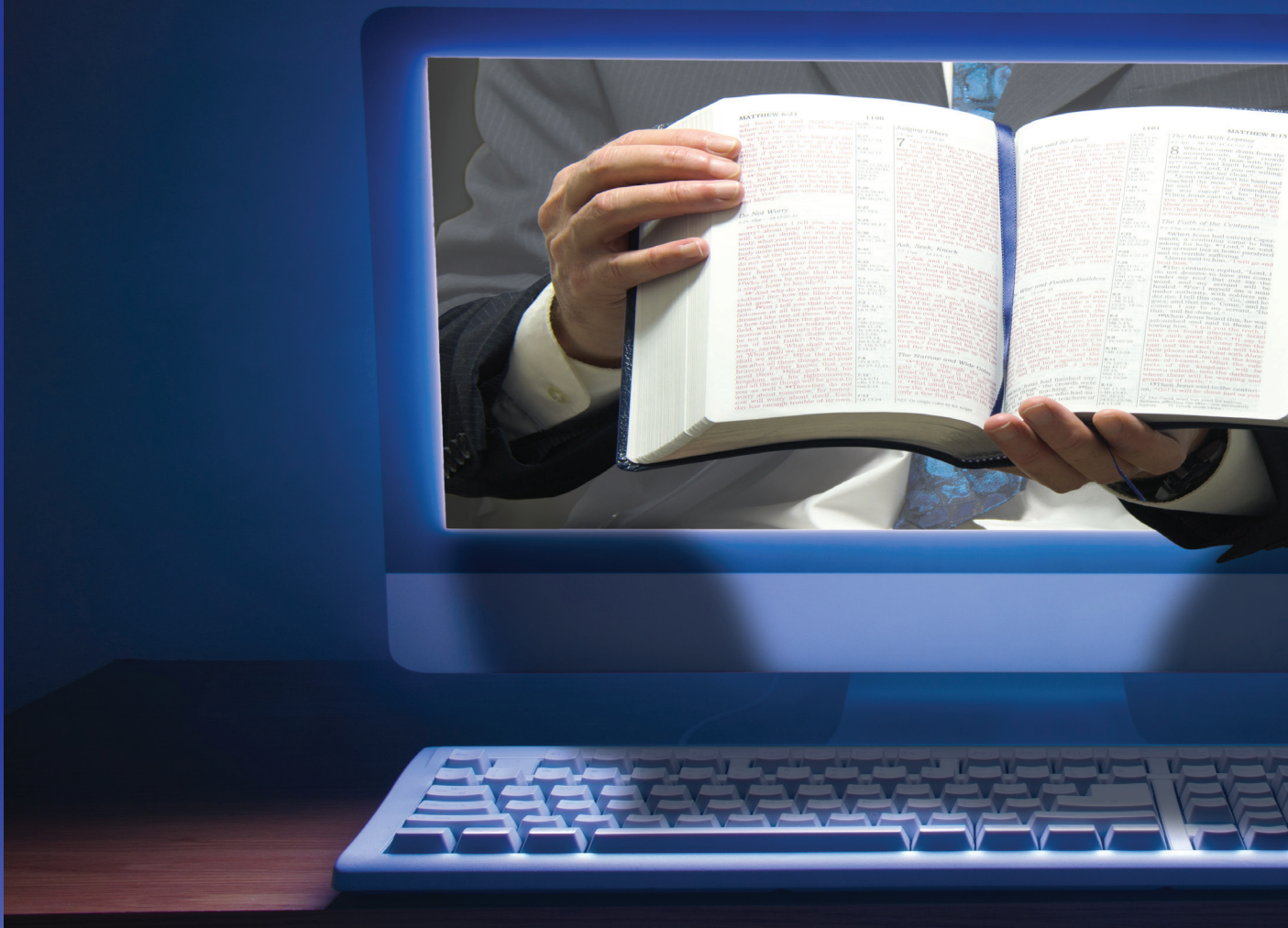
We are not going alone, God is with us!  
We are not doing it alone, God will empower us!  
And when He comes, we will not be alone,  
God will take us to be with Him forever!

I encourage us to listen to the call of the Lord and remain faithful to the Lord of the call!

Keep Faithful,

Dr. Kern Tobias  
PRESIDENT





## DIGITAL THEOLOGY

In the wake of COVID-19, the Christian community has witnessed a surge in creative adaptations. For instance, Holy Communion and marriages are now being conducted through digital platforms like Zoom. However, a fundamental question arises: How can the Christian church effectively navigate these digital challenges and fully embrace them as the new normal? Should these dynamics be acknowledged, validated, and embraced as viable alternatives for the future?

In an increasingly interconnected world, the rapid advancement of technology has not only transformed the way we communicate, work, and live, but it has also given rise to new frontiers in the realm of spirituality. Welcome to the intriguing realm of Digital Theology.

Digital Theology encompasses the exploration of how technology intersects with matters of faith, morality, and the divine in the digital age. As artificial intelligence becomes more sophisticated, virtual worlds grow in popularity, and data ethics take center stage, it is essential to contemplate the implications these developments have on our spiritual lives.

The concept of Digital Theology challenges us to consider how spirituality can thrive in the virtual realm. Can technology facilitate religious experiences, foster a sense of community, or provide new avenues for religious expression? It urges us to reflect on how AI aligns with our moral and ethical frameworks, prompting discussions on the boundaries of creation and the nature of consciousness.

Moreover, Digital Theology compels us to address the ethical implications of data-driven technologies. How do we ensure privacy, safeguard against biases, and foster inclusivity in the era of big data? How can technology be harnessed to promote social justice and collective well-being? As we navigate this uncharted territory, collaboration between theologians, technologists, and ethicists becomes crucial.





By fostering dialogue and interdisciplinary exploration, we can shape the future of Digital Theology and ensure that technology aligns with our values and spiritual aspirations. The emerging field of Digital Theology offers an opportunity to reimagine our spiritual practices, embrace innovation, and reflect on our place in the digital landscape. It invites us to ask profound questions about the nature of existence, the relationship between humanity and technology, and the ways in which our spirituality can evolve alongside technological advancements.

In this era of rapid change, let us embark on a journey of exploration and contemplation, as we delve into the ever-evolving intersection of faith and technology. Together, we can navigate the complexities of Digital Theology, harness the potential of technology for spiritual growth, and forge a future where spirituality thrives in the digital age without the church being afraid and allow itself to miss out.

*-Rayston Philbert*

#### **PUBLISHER**

The Gleanings is a multinational, bi-annual periodical of the Caribbean Union of Seventh-day Adventists with focus on issues relevant to its members throughout the Caribbean and its diaspora.

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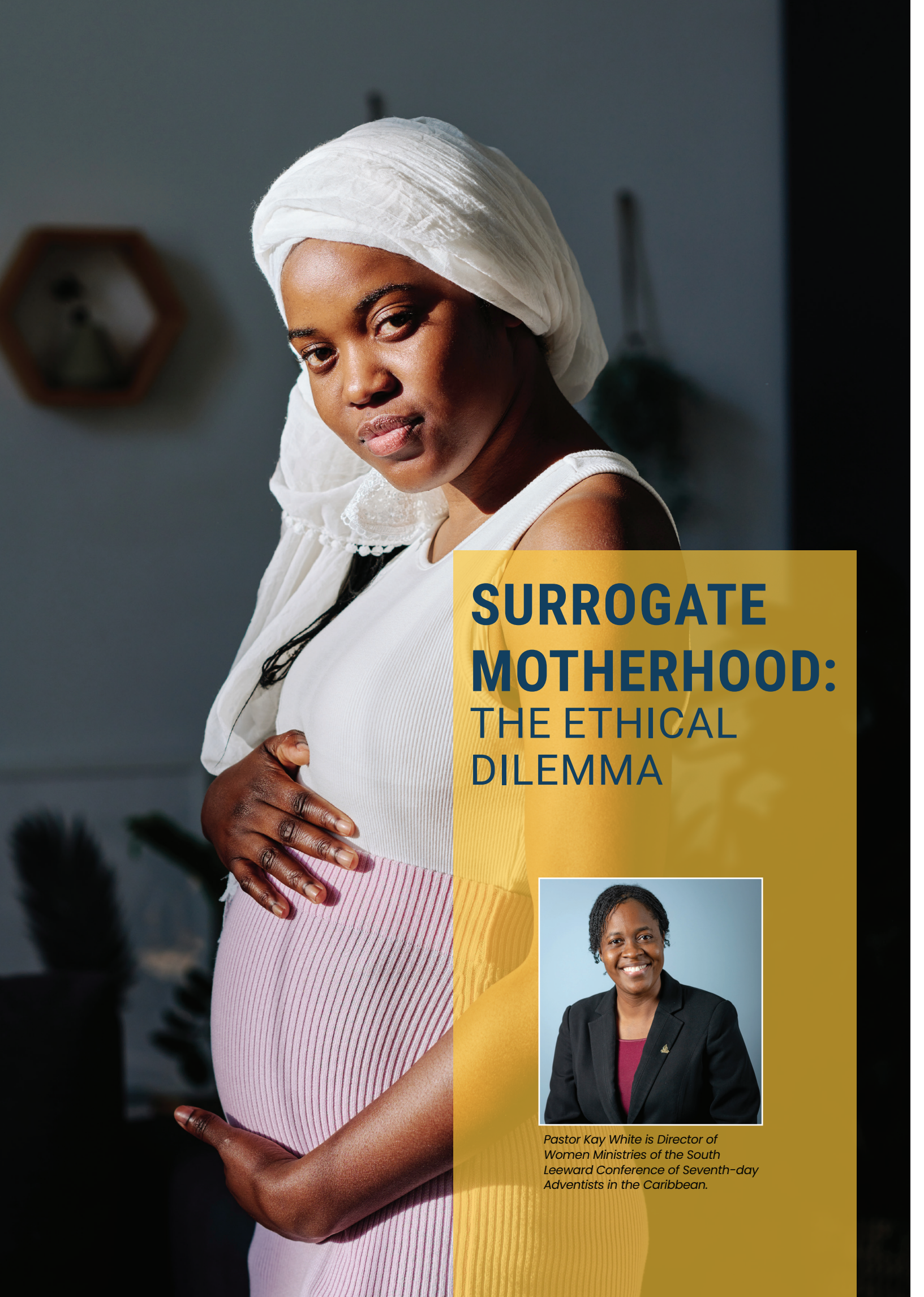
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# SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD: THE ETHICAL DILEMMA



*Pastor Kay White is Director of Women Ministries of the South Leeward Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the Caribbean.*



In an era of scientific and technological developments and advancements, a married woman who is confronted with infertility, and is desirous of conceiving a child, has several opportunities through the utilization of diverse fertility treatments, procedures and arrangements to achieve her aspiration of becoming a mother. One such fertility arrangement, which is currently spiraling worldwide, is surrogacy. With the employment of the services of a surrogate mother, a married woman can become a mother if she is incapable of conceiving a child herself, or the potential medical complications which would be associated with a high-risk pregnancy requires such an intervention. In an attempt to create the parameters for this ethical and theological discourse, the questions which guide this paper on surrogate motherhood include: Is there an ethical dilemma when a married woman decides to conceive a child through a surrogate? Can the medical and legal processes concomitant with surrogacy be termed unethical? Does the Seventh-day Adventist Church endorse surrogacy as a possible fertility option for married couples?

This paper addresses and assesses surrogacy as a fertility choice for the married woman, and the ethical arguments which seek to endorse and contest surrogate motherhood. It investigates, interprets and interrogates ethical discussions on surrogacy as it attempts to respond to the questions under examination. It explores a biblical perspective on childlessness or infertility in the Old Testament, with specific

focus on the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. This paper also discusses the Adventist Church's position on childlessness and its response to fertility treatments and alternatives including surrogacy and the ethical considerations connected to this arrangement.

### **THE IMPLICATIONS OF INFERTILITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Bible serves as the most important instruction on ethical principles within the Christian community. Hence, an examination of the subject under scrutiny through the lens of scripture, particularly the Old Testament, provides the appropriate historical context and backdrop for the debate on surrogate motherhood. Within the Old Testament culture, social stigma and stereotypical assumptions were attached to infertility, and as a result, childless women were disregarded. On the contrary, women who conceived children were recognized and respected. The problematic perception of infertility during this historical period posed a substantial challenge to the childless woman. Biblical scholars concur that women in the Old Testament were of inestimable worth because of their capacity to conceive. According to De-Whyte "fertility was power and influence which ancient women exerted." Therefore, the woman's agency and value were intimately linked to her ability to produce a child. Women who were unable to conceive were characterized as experiencing a catastrophic bodily and spiritual experience, even an existential crisis.

### **THE PROMISE: SARAH AND ABRAHAM**

The Bible is explicit in its depiction and description of God's covenant with Israel and the promise of prosperity made to them as a nation. Nevertheless, an obstacle materialized which appeared to undermine God's promise that He would "bring blessings to Abraham's son Isaac and to all his descendants." It is noteworthy that this assurance was given as Abraham's wife Sarah was challenged by infertility. However, it is recorded that Abraham and Sarah were confident that God would realize this promise. Woolsey posits that "although Abram was childless and nearly 100 years old, the Bible says he believed the Lord."

Moreover, this covenant which God created with Abraham had significant theological implications within the Old Testament and on modern society since "every individual on earth can experience the covenant promises of salvation by meeting the conditions" God prescribed. Therefore, the actualization of this promise to Sarah and Abraham was inextricably interwoven with God's inclination to exhibit His favour and accomplish His promises, even those which seem impossible.

### **A SURROGATE SCENARIO: ABRAHAM, SARAH AND HAGAR**

In the book of Genesis, the exploration of surrogacy arrangements by women who experienced infertility is documented as Sarah provided instructions to her husband Abraham, to conceive a child with their slave, Hagar. According to Genesis 16:1, 2: "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no





children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid..." Sarai's request to Abram was a socially acceptable one since within this cultural context a "concubine" was permitted to function a surrogate mother.

Nonetheless, this biblical narrative establishes that surrogacy is a convoluted remedy for infertility, and series of events which followed the conception of the child Ishmael, through Hagar, the surrogate, were undesirable. Subsequent to the conception of Ishmael there was palpable conflict between Hagar and Sarah: "And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes." Genesis 16:4. White also points out "Hagar became proud and boastful, and treated her mistress with contempt. Mutual jealousies disturbed the peace of the once happy home." Philip Yoo adds, "Hagar conceives, but whatever relationship existed between Sarah and Hagar is disrupted because Hagar, and not Sarah, is carrying Abraham's child."

The emotional ramifications of this multi-layered surrogate scenario between Abraham, Sarah and Hagar become evident as Hagar and Ismael are confronted with abandonment and isolation

from the family unit. In spite of the cultural accommodation, this surrogacy arrangement created conflict within the family and it was not consistent with the promise and plan of God. Thus, as surrogate motherhood is considered this biblical account reveals that such a decision could present complexities and complications.

#### **INFERTILITY: THE CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE**

A current surrogate storyline in US media involving American actress, Gabrielle Union places the spotlight on surrogacy as a fertility arrangement. Union's personal struggle underscores the medical obstructions which hinder a woman's ability to conceive a child and the emotional trauma as an aftermath of failed pregnancies. Union shares: "I have been through an adenomyosis diagnosis and more miscarriages than I could confidently count..." This modern surrogate narrative is worth mentioning since it challenges the stigma associated with infertility and elicits empathy for the married woman.

The social stigma historically connected with infertility is opposed and discouraged by modern media and other discourses. The Seventh-day Adventist Church also advises that "childlessness should bear no social or moral stigma, and no one should be pressured to have children with or without

medical assistance." While the Seventh-day Adventist Church is conscious of and empathize with the frustrations experienced by married couples who experience infertility, it encourages such individuals to consider fertility treatment options with caution and prayer.

#### **THE ADVENTIST POSITION ON FERTILITY TREATMENT OPTIONS**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the increase in scientific and technological advancements and recent fertility options such as in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogacy. At the same time, the church recommends that its members be wary of modern fertility treatments since "such interventions raise serious ethical questions for Christians seeking God's will on these issues."

The Adventist Church has also created clear guidelines concerning this intricate subject matter. It affirms an ideal approach to fertility treatments which should constitute the involvement of the husband and wife primarily, based on biblical instructions. The Adventist Church asserts that "Christians may seek medically assisted reproduction only within the bounds of the fidelity and permanence of marriage." Therefore, third party involvement can prove problematic and this statement by the church refers to "the use of sperm donors, ovum donors, and surrogates..."

Further, the Adventist Church emphasizes that all stages of the development of child should be treated with respect and recent fertility treatments can complicate this stance since “procedures such as in vitro fertilization require prior decisions about the number of ova to be fertilized and the moral issues regarding the disposition of any remaining pre-embryos.” Attendant with the use of in vitro fertilization or IVF is the option to discard the remaining embryos and this poses some ethical concerns.

Additionally, within the official statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, married couples are advised to be economically prepared for the financial costs involved as “some forms of technology are very costly. Couples seeking reproductive assistance should give thoughtful consideration to the expenses involved.” The married couple could encounter exorbitant financial obligations and must be ready to responsibly navigate this entire fertility process

**THE SURROGATE MOTHER: AN ETHICAL DILEMMA**

There are also ethical considerations regarding the surrogate mother who is often marginalized in the process of surrogacy and these must be addressed. According to Mueller, it is problematic that some women choose to become surrogate mothers for financial reasons. Surrogacy can be regarded as a thriving business, and this industry is a “form of exploitation of underprivileged women.” There are moral concerns which arise when women who are experiencing poverty use surrogate motherhood as a form of economic survival. The exploitation of the surrogate

mother diminishes her culturally accepted role and in the “process of surrogacy, especially commercial surrogacy, the birth mother is reduced and diminished to a reproductive machine.”

Also, the physical and emotional effects attached to surrogate motherhood must be measured. During this comprehensive medical process there are significant health risks which “include complications during pregnancy and delivery, and, in the worst-case scenario, the loss of the mother’s life.” Moreover, emotional and psychological trauma can be experienced by the surrogate mother as she must emotionally detach and disengage from the child whom she carried for nine months. Surrogacy is a legal transaction which requires surrogate mother to abandon the child at birth. In such cases, the surrogate is simply the birth mother but not the “genetic mother.”

While fertility treatment options and arrangements in contemporary society may provide opportunities and possibilities for married women to become mothers in spite of their infertility, there are ethical conundrums and potential consequences closely connected to such decisions and these must not be discounted. Surrogacy, for example, is clouded by several ethical dilemmas which Christian couples should carefully consider are they explore the most appropriate fertility procedure for the conception of their child and the establishment of their family. A married couple confronted with infertility must prayerfully seek the will of God since the biblical story involving Hagar, Abraham and Sarah demonstrates that a decision which disregards guidance of God destabilizes His plan and purpose.

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# SLC QUADRENNIAL SESSION SETS THE TREND FOR THE LENGTH OF CONSTITUENCY MEETINGS IN CARU

May 8, 2023 | St. Johns, Antigua || CARU Staff



Dr. Leonard Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Division and Sir Clair Roberts, Deputy Governor General for Antigua and Barbuda were among representatives who participated in the opening ceremony of the First Quadrennial Session of the South Leeward Conference (SLC). Dr. Johnson gave the devotional message at the start of the session. Image By SLC Media Representative Joseph Jones

On Monday May 8, 2023, the Bible Speaks Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed 219 constituency meeting attendees, including delegates who represented the islands of Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat. Nestled in Creek Side, St. Mary, on the island of Antigua, this church was selected to host the Second Quadrennial Session of the South Leeward Conference (SLC).



As at most constituency Sessions, Pathfinders carried the flag of the representative territories of the South Leeward Conference during the opening ceremony. Image By SLC Media Representative Joseph Jones



Representatives from the five islands of the South Leeward Conference creatively welcomed the delegates at the start of the session. Image By SLC Media Representative Joseph Jones

Dr. Leonard Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Division, inspired and exhorted attendees, during the opening ceremony, and adeptly interspersed the Session's theme, "Surpassing the Challenges: Together We Work, Together We Hope". Drawing from the story of the paralytic, in Mark chapter 2, Dr. Johnson emphasized reliance on God, who has been powerfully leading the Church through the last years of earth's history. Acknowledging challenges faced by the Church during these last years, he reminded delegates, "Your situation is not permanent ... This is God's Church - let us do God's work in a dignified way."

Sir Clair Roberts, Deputy Governor General for Antigua, and Sir Malwyn Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation, and the Environment for Antigua who is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, were among the invited leaders of government. "Leverage the creative strengths to achieve your goals," said Sir Clair Roberts, to the delegates. His response alluded to a stirring and culturally diverse welcome presented by a group of youth who represented the SLC field.

The SLC Session moved away from the conventional midweek to weekend schedule, and is hosting a two-day constituency meeting in May 2023. This historic and unique move is being observed by leaders from the wider organization, Caribbean Union (CARU) Conference officers, and leaders from the ten fields and various entities of the Caribbean Union Conference.

"Adjusting time for the sessions had been a recommendation from the Church in the Inter-American Division," said Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union



*Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union Conference extends greetings to the delegates during the morning session of day one of the South Leeward Conference session. Image By SLC Media Representative Joseph Jones*

Conference. "We commend the South Leeward Conference for the historic move." Due to the reduced timeframe of the session, the agenda was intentionally organized to ensure that all session business meetings would be completed in time for an installation ceremony on Tuesday evening, May 9, 2023.

Delegates voted some congregations into the sisterhood of churches: The More Sure Word of Prophecy SDA Church in Antigua (organized in 2010) and the Faith in Emmanuel SDA Church in St. Kitts (organized in 2001). It was also noted that the Faith in Emmanuel SDA Church is one of the fastest growing congregations on the island of St. Kitts. To God be the glory!

The President's Report, delivered by Dr. Carson Greene, highlighted the thrust of the Church as it embraced ministry to the constituency during the COVID-19 pandemic, the reach of the program "Let's Talk" hosted by Dr.

Carson Greene, and the impacting ministry of Seventh-day Adventist health professionals who assisted the Church to navigate the height of the pandemic. Dr. Greene added, "We are always one step ahead. The pandemic gave rise to several conspiracy theories. It challenged the financial stability of the conference that required workers to accept a 30% reduction in salary. Through it all the Church was able to recover, embrace its challenges and move to its preferred future. More Adventist Youth Societies are functioning after COVID than before. We are trending in the right direction - to the Glory of God. Surpassing the challenges - together we work, together we hope."

Dr. Greene invited delegates to join in celebrating the six church buildings dedicated during the quadrennium, and investments in infrastructure development across the field. "We continue to trust the leadings of God amidst the challenges," he concluded.



## WE ARE CHRIST'S HAND AND CHRIST'S VOICE



**T**he first quadrennial session of the South Leeward Conference drew to a close on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 providing nothing short of a worshipful and inspirational opportunity for the 219 delegates from across the five islands of its territory.

Amongst the delegates gathered for the business meeting were retired business manager of the Antigua Seventh-day Adventist School Brother Calvin Josiah, his son Pastor Delroy Josiah and his two daughters now teachers at the Antigua Seventh-day Adventist School Sherry-Ann Josiah-Henry and Estherlyn Josiah-Foster.

This missionary family as referred to by many, is just a representation of the 10,856 mission-driven disciples spread across 50 congregations in five islands. As the session drew to a close, it marked the end of a historic yet unique decision that will affect the future of the Church in the Caribbean.

Four years ago-May 1-3, 2019, the South Leeward Mission transitioned to the South Leeward Conference with a promise to manage its financial resources, pursue leadership development, and embrace the mission to get people ready for the coming of Jesus. Four years after, the church through its strategic approach has weathered the pandemic landscape as it provided meaningful and relevant ministry while advancing its technological blueprint.

The two-day meeting, which was streamed live on the internet, included a guest speaker from the Inter American Division in the person of Executive Secretary Dr. Leonard Johnson who described the meetings as a “truly a worship service intended to call us all to faithfulness.”

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

After 12 years of existence, which included our first four years as a Conference, the South Leeward Conference continues to make significant progress through

the strength and power of God. Executive Secretary Dr. Wayne Knowles gladly reported the church adding 1401 members during the period under review. “For this reporting period, we averaged approximately 223 baptisms per year, with the highest baptism recorded in 2022 and the lowest in 2020. It is interesting to note that our baptisms in 2022 more than doubled those of 2020.” With a membership of 10, 856 the south leeward Conference now boasts of one in every fifteen persons in the territory associated with the Adventist Church. This remarkable feat is “commendable” said executive secretary of the Inter American division Dr. Leonard Johnson. The church in Barbuda was singled out as moving from 58 to 90 by the end of 2022.

Though there is significant room for growth, the Adventist church is well represented among the populations in each of our islands. The 2011 census has the Seventh-day Adventist church as the second largest Christian

denomination in Antigua and Barbuda (12.4%), fifth largest in Montserrat (10.5%), and eighth largest in St. Kitts and Nevis (4.7%).

“Membership books are reflecting more accuracy as all churches are now enrolled in the church’s official platform software to manage and audit local church memberships,” said Knowles. “Audits across churches are ongoing to ensure that members who have not been found, passed away or transferred to other congregations are cleared from the books.”

### CHURCH FINANCES

Funds coming into the church continue to grow in Conference, not just because the membership is growing but because tending to the spiritual needs of the member, leading towards discipleship through a personal and transforming relationship with Christ has been the focal point in the growth. “God continues to bless our Conference” reported treasurer Dr. Krista Moore.

Leaders expressed thanks to all our workers who agreed to a reduction in salaries during 2020 and 2021 to ensure the church survives the financial crisis of COVID-19. “Your patience and willingness to support



the recommendation was commendable,” stated Dr. Moore.

Creating a spiritual environment that leads the church member to seek God daily and share the message of Gospel, is what can directly influence the behavior of the church member to finance that mission, referenced Moore. “It is evident the church members in South Leeward Conference are very faithful. Their commitment with the financing of the mission of the church is indisputable.”

“We must recognize that the times in which we are living force us to use resources strategically so that the mission of the church will not be affected,” said President Dr. Carson Greene.

### RESPONDING TO COVID

“It would have been good if the ending of the pandemic meant

the end of all the associated challenges. That was definitely not the case reported Dr. Greene. “There is the issue of church attendance after persons have become accustomed to the convenience of staying home, the challenge of economic recovery, the issue of growth and membership retention, and the whole question of relevance in a new era. Notwithstanding the trend of more Adventist Youth Societies functioning after the pandemic is worth celebrating for the conference.

Following two days of meetings in which, the music, fellowship, and worship brought appreciation to all, delegates to the movement’s first quadrennial Conference Session heard words of thanks and a challenge from the church president, Dr. Carson Greene. “We as a people, we have been entrusted with a message of hope. We have to tell the world that this loving, caring Savior is soon returning. And we have been given the responsibility of bringing this to the world. This is our primary task.”

“Now is not the time for anyone to be a spectator, to grow too comfortable with the church pew in which he is sitting,” Caribbean Union Conference President Dr. Kern Tobias said. “Now is the time ... to step fully onto the stage and take up our role as Christ’s hands







and Christ’s voice as a world that needs healing and feeling of his touch.”

For Brother Calvin Josiah, he does not know what the future holds. Sensing the elaborate use of technology and the direction of the church, he is hopeful that the mission will always be fulfilled through the ministry of those appointed. “we still have much to do”

The session concluded with the appointment of officers for the next quadrennium

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. President – Dr. Carson Greene  | 7. Family Life & Stewardship – Pastor Stanton Adams          |
| 2. Executive Secretary – Dr. Wayne Knowles  | 8. Education – Dr. Eulalie Semper                            |
| 3. Treasurer – Dr. Krista Moore   | 9. Auditor – Rachael Knowles                                 |
| 4. Ministerial & Communication – Dr. Mark Braithwaite   | 10. Publishing – Pastor Carl Hastings                        |
| 5. Sabbath School & Personal Ministerial – Pastor Kay White   | 11. CURF – Dr. Krista Moore                                  |
| 6. Youth & Chaplaincy, Community Services/ADRA & Assistant to President with an emphasis on Evangelism – Pastor Sherwin A. E. White | 12. Public Relations & Religious Liberty – Dr. Carson Greene |



# EMPOWERING SAFETY OFFICERS: ADVENTIST CHURCH IN THE CARIBBEAN UNION ENHANCES SAFETY MEASURES

June 30, 2023 | Port of Spain, Trinidad || CARU Staff || Kerwin Felix



The workshop was facilitated by Rocio Roberts, Adventist Risk Management Account Executive for the Inter-American Division. Mr. Kerwin Felix Safety officer for the church in the Caribbean Union Conference; Debra Felix, H. R. Director at Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Deborah Williams Adams, Accountant for CURF department participated in the safety officers meeting.

**O**n Thursday, June 22, 2023, leaders from the Adventist Church in the Caribbean Union Conference congregated virtually for a crucial safety officers meeting. The training session facilitated by Rocio Roberts, Adventist Risk Management Account Executive for the Inter-American Division, ADRA Territories, and Columbia Union, comes at a time when the Caribbean region faces the threat of an active 2023 hurricane season.

“We want to equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to minimize or eliminate risks and enhance safety in churches and activities sponsored by the church,” said

Rocio Roberts in her opening statements. “By focusing on the role of church safety officers, we are taking proactive measures to prevent major accidents and protect the well-being of the church, its ministries, mission, and institution.”

The Caribbean region is no stranger to the threats posed by natural disasters, particularly hurricanes. In 2017, Hurricanes Maria and Irma devastated several islands in the Caribbean Union Conference, leaving church buildings, homes, communities, and institutions in shambles. Rebuilding efforts are still ongoing in some of the islands.

Recognizing the vulnerability of the territory, the Church in

the Caribbean Union is placing significant importance on safeguarding life and property. “We must heighten the awareness,” said Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union Conference to those attending. “It is very important for this time. We must minimize, eliminate and enhance all our safety measures across the region.”

The safety officers’ training served as a vital platform to address various risks that can challenge the ministry of the church. They include natural disasters, physical injuries, financial loss, criminal actions, and damage to personal reputation.

Leaders were made aware that risks within ministry encompass a



# GRENADA ORDINATION SERVICE OF PASTOR MARLON PANCHOO AND PASTOR MALON PETERS

On Sabbath, December 17, 2022 Pastor Marlon Panchoo and Pastor Malon Peters were set aside to the Gospel Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventists World Church by the laying on of hands in ordination. The ordination service took place at St. George's Church. Present from the Caribbean Union were the president Dr. Kern Tobias and the ministerial secretary Pastor Ammaran Williams.

May God richly bless the ministry of Pastor Panchoo and Pastor and Sister Peters.



wide range of potential hazards and if not adequately addressed, can have severe consequences. "By taking a proactive approach, can ensure the well-being of the institution is protected and we are providing an environment conducive to worship, growth, and service, said Roberts. "We thus provide timely, real-world insurance products and innovative risk management solutions for minimizing risk within Adventist ministries at all levels. We recommend best practices to eliminate oversights that can lead to costly accidents."

Given the geographical location of the Caribbean Union, the threat of natural disasters is ever-present. She stressed the importance of preparedness and provided safety officers with valuable information and strategies to minimize the impact of hurricanes and other calamities. By implementing a disaster management structure and plan, "churches can significantly reduce the potential for harm and

provide essential support to their communities in times of crisis.

Leaders were equipped with knowledge on creating safe environments, identifying potential hazards, and implementing preventive measures. Addressing Issues such as slippery floors, inadequate signage, and faulty equipment, can create a secure atmosphere for worshipers, minimizing the risk of accidents and injuries.

She emphasized the implementation of structural internal controls, financial transparency, and accountability measures. "By adopting these practices, we can safeguard the church's assets and ensure the responsible stewardship of resources entrusted to them," said the training officer. The structure places the union as the responsible entity followed by the local field and the local church. "We all have a part to play."

Additionally, leaders were guided on implementing strategies to mitigate the risk of misconduct, improper behavior, and other actions that could tarnish the church's image. "By maintaining high ethical standards and promoting a culture of accountability, we are preserving the integrity and reputation of the Adventist Church," she concluded.

"Through ongoing training and collaboration, the church in the Caribbean Union is committed to upholding its mission while prioritizing the safety and security of its members," said Mr. Kerwin Felix Safety officer for the church in the Caribbean Union Conference. He emphasized the need for leaders to embrace the online safety officer's certification program detailed by the church to educate and enhance the quality of their ministry.

# SAMLALSINGH LEADS OUTSIDE-THE-BOX STEWARDSHIP WEEK, ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP

May 12, 2023 | Federiksted, St. Croix || CARU Staff



Scores of members responded to the appeal to rededicate themselves for service to God and to His church. The prayer was done by Pastor Desmond James, President of the Conference.

The Caribbean Union Conference's (CARU) Stewardship and Trust Services Director Dr. Gandalal Samlalsingh surprised his audience during the recently concluded Stewardship Impact week presentations when instead of tackling the customary Ts of stewardship — time, talent, and treasure — he introduced the seven Ps: praise, proclamation, productivity, preservation, prayer, pride, and prosperity. From April 15 to 22, Samlalsingh expounded the virtues of offering profuse praise to a worthy God; of proclaiming the gospel of peace with intentionality; of being a productive Christian since God has no room for idlers; of preserving the love and interrelationships that allow us to survive and thrive; of experiencing the privilege and power of prayer with a God who loves us; of sidestepping the perils of pride; and of discerning the purpose of prosperity in the overflow of blessings.

"I view stewardship from a different perspective," Samlalsingh said. "I'm tired of the 4T's and the 5T's. I have

discovered that stewardship has more to do with lifestyle, and when the lifestyle is transformed, then we will see faithful stewards in the church — ones who have accepted the lordship of Jesus Christ and are walking in partnership with God and acting as God's agents to manage his affairs on earth," he said. "There's no greater authority in the life of a Christian than to know that we are in a perpetual relationship with the true and living God," Samlalsingh said. "And that we can know God and have Him with us."

"This fresh perspective coming from a different perspective was powerful and impacting," President of the North Caribbean Conference Desmond James said of the live-streamed meetings viewed nightly by an average of 600 persons, and more than 800 on the final Sabbath.

Martha Nelson, a member of Central Church, expressed her appreciation for the messages: "Wonderful job. Sir. Thank you for coming to Central SDA," she posted. "Thank you Lord for this wonderful Stewardship Week.

Thank you Lord for the speaker. Help us to be good stewards and good Christian members."

Another online viewer, Myrtle Edwards, posted: "I will never be the same again with God's help."

While Samlalsingh welcomed the strong online attendance, he was adamant that church members should be present in the house of worship. "I can't understand how a human being in their right mind will keep away from this place," he said. "There is no online worship in heaven. Amen. So come to the place of worship. Those of you online, that is for persons who are not members of the church, so we share the link with them. But those of you who are members, God expects you to come to this place of worship," he urged, gently reminding the audience in inimitable Trinidadian vernacular that "iz you who ask me to come."

The NCC stewardship impact series coordinated by Stewardship Director Pastor Danny Phillip was the first of its kind to be staged in all four districts on the island of St. Croix.



President of the North Caribbean Conference Pastor Desmond F. James was present to participate in the service. He gave the consecration prayer to conclude the Sabbath morning worship service.





*Dr. Gandadal Samlalsingh ministering to the church on the final sabbath of the stewardship program. During the week he introduced the seven Ps: praise, proclamation, productivity, preservation, prayer, pride and prosperity. Image by Central SDA Church Media*

“Many of our church members are going through difficult times through the global crisis of the pandemic,” Philip said. “There’s so many who have lost their jobs, are struggling with the loss of their loved ones, and many of them may feel like distancing themselves from God and the church, while others during moments of crisis cling to God. So, we believe this is the right time to encourage them spiritually with God’s promises of protection and blessings.”

In addition to the nightly meetings, Philip hosted two advisories: one for stewardship leaders, their assistants, head deacons, and the finance committee chairman, and another for pastors and Bible workers.

As part of the closing ceremony on Sabbath afternoon, members rededicated themselves to being God’s faithful stewards, as articulated in NCC Treasurer Sanida McKenzie’s charge: “As stewards, we are blessed to be a blessing. We vow to use all of our gifts or the gifts we have been given to serve our church and others to be faithful stewards to the honor of God.”

## REVITALIZING PRISON MINISTRY: A TESTAMENT OF RESILIENCE

St. Croix, USVI || Berle Wallace

In the wake of the pandemic’s formidable impact on organizations, few have faced greater challenges than Prison Ministry. Casting our minds back to that fateful day in March 2020, when the prison’s security officer somberly relayed the indefinite suspension of all services, it was a blow that struck the very core of our mission.

For over 30 months, we found ourselves in a state of wistful reflection, longing for the days when vibrant Sabbath School programs and enlightening sermons reverberated within the correctional facility’s walls. The image of inmates dissecting weekly lessons with the acumen of seasoned theologians remained etched in our memories. Regrettably, we also mourned the passing of two cherished individuals – stalwarts of our Sabbath services and weekday Bible classes – their final farewells unattended due to COVID-19 restrictions.

As the pandemic’s grip gradually loosened, a ray of hope emerged through the invitation to participate in services orchestrated by the prison’s Chaplain – Easter, Christmas, Mother’s Day, and more. Now, we stand renewed, resuming our regular services with newfound vigor. A dedicated group of 27 individuals from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, after completing rigorous training, have stepped into their roles as dedicated ministers within the prison’s confines. Their impact is undeniable, positioning us as



one of the most effective groups fostering transformation behind bars.

Yet, this phase is one of evolution for Prison Ministry. On the broader scale of Union and Conference levels, a constitution is taking shape, outlining the formation of federations across the Caribbean Union. Here on St. Croix, we’re primed for a transformative weekend from August 18-20, 2023. At its core, this event boasts a dual purpose: a retreat facilitated by a seasoned expert, designed to breathe new life into our ministry, enriching both membership and the quality of service we provide. Concurrently, our focus will extend to tending to the families of incarcerated individuals, as well as those affected by acts of violence. With unwavering commitment, we will distribute essential school supplies to these families, nurturing hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

We extend an earnest call to action, rallying the support of all SDA members to help manifest our visionary plans. Echoing the timeless wisdom, “...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,” we embark on this journey to uplift, transform, and illuminate lives that have known darkness for far too long.

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Berle Wallace is the Prison Ministry Coordinator on St. Croix.

# THREE ICONIC CARU STALWARTS EXIT THE STAGE OF ACTIVE MINISTRY

December 16, 2022 || CARU Staff



**A**t an impressive retirement function, the Caribbean Union Conference Administrators and Executive Committee members celebrated the outstanding service of three leaders, who are scheduled to retire during the fourth quarter of 2022. The guests of honor included: Dr. Hilary Bowman and his wife Verina Bacchus-Bowman, whose last service portfolio was with the Education Department of the Caribbean Union Conference; Pastor Robinson Danforth Francis, former President of the East Caribbean Conference; and Pastor Dermoth Baptiste, who transitioned into retirement from the presidency of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Mission. The retirement celebrants basked in the loving support of their spouses, families, friends, and former coworkers who gathered for the memorable occasion at the Hilton Hotel in Barbados.

“Three iconic stalwarts” was the phrase fondly used by the President of the Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dr. Kern Tobias, to

describe his retiring colleagues. His retirement message honoured their journeys of exemplary leadership, “I feel privileged to signal appreciation for the years of sacrifice that these individuals have given to the work of God. They have given monumental service. A total of 188 years of sacrificial service to the Church. We applaud you – while expecting Jesus to applaud you one day. Thanks for your faithful service to God and to His Church.”

## DECADES OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

Dr. Hilary Bowman began his ministry with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in October 1977, as a teacher at the Mountain View Adventist Academy in St. Vincent. During the span of his forty-two-year ministry in the Caribbean Union Conference, he served as principal of the Mountain View Adventist Academy in St. Vincent, Education Director of the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, and as President of the University of the Southern Caribbean from 2016 to 2021.

Dr. Bowman’s commitment to Christian education was unwavering as he led the Caribbean Union Conference’s Education Department – with responsibility for 53 schools within the territory. Dr. Bowman served as an education administrator in the Caribbean and the United States. His passion for the field of education and his achievements have been lauded. He received the prestigious Ellen G. White Award from the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. His service to Trinidad, Tobago and the wider Caribbean was marked by an award from the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Trinidad and Member of Parliament (MP) for the Tunapuna region in Trinidad. Dr. Bowman also founded and managed a private school in Leesburg, Florida. His contribution to education, and more so Christian education in the Caribbean and beyond, made him an education icon among educators of rank, and have certainly left a legacy for others to emulate.

Dr Bowman has been happily married to Verina Bacchus-Bowman for 47 precious years and they have two adult children: Dr Kurt Bowman (who practices medicine in Florida, USA) and Karen Swan. They have been blessed with five grandchildren.

“The Lord has been most magnanimous to me throughout my life. It is His amazing grace that has sustained me and my ministry through thick and thin. I have found Him to be faithful and utterly trustworthy”, said Dr Bowman.





**LEADERSHIP THAT TOUCHED  
DISTINCT ETHNIC GROUPS**

At the age of 29, Pastor Dermoth C. Baptiste began his denominational service on September 1, 1980, as a ministerial intern in the East Caribbean Conference. Over the years, he served as a district pastor in the Central, Marriagua, North Windward and the Northern Grenadines districts in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He also served on the island of St. Lucia as a district pastor.

From September 30, 1997, to August 4, 2001, he served the East Caribbean Conference (which was then comprised of Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) as Personal Ministries Director.

As life would have it, he did not stay at one stage and the constituency saw it fit to appoint him as the Executive Secretary of the East Caribbean Conference on August 5, 2001, with St. Lucia being omitted from the configuration. He held the post until December 31, 2007; he was then asked to serve as President of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) Region from January 1, 2008, to July 15, 2011.

At the Fifteenth Quinquennial Session of the Caribbean Union Conference, Pastor Baptiste was asked to serve as the Stewardship Director and its first vice president. He remained in these two offices for a short stint, from July 16, 2011, to November 6, 2012,

and God had much more for him to do.

As the SVG Region moved from the infancy stage, she was bursting out of her newborn onesies and needed to be placed in toddler wear. The Caribbean Union acknowledged that growth and the SVG Region achieved Mission status on November 7, 2012, with Pastor Dermoth C. Baptiste becoming the first indigenous president. He served the Mission as President and Education Director for just under 10 years. As with everything in life, there must be an end; so, with 42 years and 1 month of service to the Lord, Pastor Baptiste officially retired from active denominational service.

**A MINISTRY THAT SPANNED THE  
GLOBE**

Pastor Robinson Danforth Francis began his pastoral ministry in the Suriname Mission in 1979, where he served as district pastor, Lay Activities Leader, Stewardship Leader, and Sabbath School Director. During this period of service, he was ordained to the Gospel Ministry on April 2, 1983. This first appointment set the tone for a life of mission, and he served in multiple capacities, in each country to which he was called.

His service continued on the island of St. Vincent in 1986 and speaker for the New Life Broadcast was added to his responsibilities. In 1989, he returned to Barbados as a district pastor and in 1991 became the Church Ministries, Stewardship and Youth Director of the East Caribbean Conference. In 1992, he was called to the Indian Ocean Mission, and served as the Communication, Personal Ministries and Stewardship Director. His service extended to youth ministries where he was instrumental in directing the



translation of resource materials into French and Malagasy.

Pastor Francis was called to serve as President of the Seychelles Mission, Mauritius Conference, and the West Africa Union Mission in 1996. There, he toiled to promote the expansion of the work of the gospel, improved governance, and promoted evangelism through training in lay leadership.[1]

In 2003, Pastor Francis headed to the West Central Africa Division where he served in various capacities until 2011. He was Field and Ministerial Secretary, Coordinator of Extra-Ordinary

(tithe fund projects), Global Mission Coordinator, Director of Office of Leadership, and Director of Office of Effectiveness and Assessment. He worked assiduously to ensure the growth and development of the fields and territories, as well as to assist ministers in honing new skills.

Pastor Francis returned to the Caribbean Union Conference in 2011 and was selected to serve as Director of Personal Ministries; he embraced this responsibility and introduced innovative strategies which encouraged new advances in evangelistic outreach and energized the departments within his purview. In 2013, Pastor

Francis was elected to be the President of the East Caribbean Conference and held this position until his retirement.

Reflecting on their service to the Church, Pastor Johnson Frederick, Executive Secretary of the Caribbean Union Conference, said, "They have been an enormous blessing to God's worldwide Church family. Their constant focus on mission and their emphasis on Christian leadership have been appreciated greatly. Their congenial and positive spirit will be missed. It has been a great privilege to work with them for these past years, and we wish them God's richest blessings in their continued witness for the Lord and His soon coming."

Their service to the Church is a distinct privilege and we are sure they are deeply humbled. Whatever plans the Lord inspired them to do, they followed through to the best of their abilities. Human accomplishments are in the dust – all glory goes to the Lord.



## SURINAME: SDA PASTOR INSPIRES YOUTH MINISTRY AT HIS CHILDHOOD SAFE HAVEN FOR GYD-2023

March 24, 2023 || Paramaribo, Suriname || CARU Staff || Vanessa Draaisma

Scores of Adventist youth from the Suriname Mission deserted comfortable pews on Saturday, March 18, 2023. In a practical demonstration of the Global Youth Day (GYD) 2023 theme, Love is a Verb, the young people from the Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church spent quality time with the children and adolescents at the Saron Children's Home.

The annual GYD ministry, which is approved by the Adventist World Church, encourages Adventist youth to portray the love of Jesus through community-based activities, as determined by local leadership. Heeding a call from the Suriname Mission's Youth Director to collaborate with existing, service-oriented entities within the church's district, youth from the Smyrna SDA Church gave expression to the

commandment of John 15:19 to love one another.

Shane Loseng, Smyrna's youth leader, shared an inspiring devotional thought with the children which underscored love and forgiveness. Bible games kept the children engaged for hours; the day's theme was also depicted through art, craft, and other projects. "The plan is to adopt the Saron home," said



Shane Loseng. “We want to realize our vision by creating an environment where young people feel relaxed and safe. We want to put this into practice by offering aid programs, [educational opportunities], meetings, workshops, and re-creative and artistic activities - completely selflessly. It was not the first time for the young people of Smyrna to visit children’s homes. Some of the children of a home they adopted have already begun attending church services,” said Shane.

The joy of Smyrna’s ministry was a magnet that attracted youth from the Bethel SDA Church and this team was led by Tamanisha Van Engel. Nelson Loseng and his cell group, Adullam, also joined the Smyrna Church. In this way, our young people felt connected to each other and used their time in a positive way.

“The young people from the Bethel and Smyrna churches are showing that Global Youth Day is not just a day but a lifestyle. They have truly embraced this year’s theme – Love is a Verb. They make sure to not only speak about love but also to act on it. As the Youth Director of the Suriname Mission, I stand 100% behind this and give this effort my blessing and support,” said Pastor



Team members are supervising members of the home while they are engaged in arts and craft. Image credited to GYD team and used with permission by management.

Chester Hinds, Youth Director of the Suriname Mission.

Interestingly, Pastor Roël Blackman, who shepherds both Smyrna and Bethel churches, has a unique bond with Saron Children’s Home which was a refuge for seven years of his life. Young people are close to his heart, and he likes to work with them. The youth leaders of the district reported that Pastor Blackman’s advice is always welcome, and they are grateful for his transparency. He often provides training for the youth of Smyrna and Bethel on how to have a godly influence on their peers outside the church and these training courses are highly effective.

After their impacting experience of ministering to the children, the

Smyrna youth chose the Saron Children’s Home as the venue for the Youth Week of Prayer. “The young people feel that they do not want to stay in the church to follow the prayer readings, but to put love into practice by being with the children of the home, going through the topics of the prayer week with them, giving them space to express themselves and responding to their questions,” said the youth leader. “We are really proud of our youths,” said Pastor Guno B. Emanuelson, President of the Suriname Mission.

The facility houses approximately forty children and is a haven for children of school age, whose home conditions are unhealthy for development. Saron Children’s home was founded in 1910 and is operated by the Moravian Church.



Team members are supervising members of the home while they are engaged in arts and craft. Image credited to GYD team and used with permission by management.



Children at the home are engaged in Bible activities on Global Youth Day led by Adventist Youth coordinating the ministry. Image credited to GYD team and used with permission by management.



## CARU BOOSTS CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSES ACROSS REGION

February 3, 2023 || CARU Staff

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Caribbean Union (CARU) has called on its leaders in the ten fields across its territory to break the silence about all types of abuse to protect its children so that the church is a safe place for them to grow. The renewed call came from Rocio Roberts, Adventist Risk Management Account Executive for the Inter-American Division, during a virtual child protection certification training sponsored by the CARU Children Ministries Department.

“The church is an easy target for sexual predators because they believe church people are naïve,” Roberts said. “They know that church members are still saying it cannot happen in our churches. She advised leaders to regularly refer to the “Five-point Rule” which includes the open-door policy to strengthen safety responses to children at risk of abuse. Referencing the policies already outlined in the church manual, she encouraged leaders

to “screen volunteers who are responsible for the care of our children.”

Presenters agreed that because churches welcome people from all backgrounds, knowing the signs acts as a deterrent against people with harmful intentions who may choose to attend church because it might give them easy access to children.

“Child abuse thrives in secrecy and the time has come for us to talk about it in our congregations, in our schools and in our communities” said Women, Children & Adolescents Ministries Director of the Caribbean Union, Debra Henry.

She said the training seminar is proof of the church’s commitment to child protection and gives administrators, pastors, teachers, children ministries leaders and youth leaders from across its ten fields the tools needed to implement the Child Care & Protection Plan as

supported by the various laws in the individual territories.

Youth Director of the Caribbean Union Pastor Marvyn Smith also emphasized the Caribbean Union Child Protection protocols which are based on the Seventh-day Adventist World Church’s overarching child protection policies and practices, outlined by Adventist Risk Management and local procedures required by such laws. Smith expressed that by enhancing awareness and providing proper training, our endeavors to safeguard our children will be significantly strengthened.

President of the Caribbean Union, Dr. Kern Tobias, wholeheartedly endorsed the training exercise, emphasizing that the issues presented have a profound impact not only on the church’s membership but also on the broader community. He further commented that recent media reports have highlighted distressing situations where some



children are being denied the chance to live, and those who do survive often endure various forms of abuse.

Telisha Williams, an attorney-at-law affiliated with the Childcare and Protection Agency of the Ministry of Social Protection in Guyana, stated that it is essential for leaders and members to follow the principles of the Child Care and Protection policies, as endorsed by both the church and the state. She emphasized the significance of education and sensitization in achieving this goal. "If there is an allegation of abuse, parents, guardians or caregivers are expected to immediately report the matter to the relevant authorities," she said. Training facilitator Dr. Dolstan Morian underscored the need to "still commit to spiritually assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding church professionals and church lay leaders accountable for maintaining their personal behavior as is appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual



leadership and trust."

Director Henry acknowledged that meeting these standards might seem challenging. However, she emphasized that the church firmly adheres to the principle that "the Bible unequivocally condemns child sexual abuse." She stated that any form of sexually abusive behavior that seeks to undermine personal, generational, or gender boundaries is a severe violation of one's individuality. Director Henry made it clear that both the

leadership and members of the SDA church strongly condemn such actions.

The Caribbean Union Conference Church is the administrative headquarters for the Adventist Church in ten fields throughout the region. Its membership comprises over 247,638 church members worshipping in 731 congregations and 128 companies. The church oversees fifty-one primary and secondary schools, a university and two hospitals.



# STARTING YOUR CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

# ADVENTIST INITIATIVE SEES 400 ST. LUCIA YOUTH GRADUATE FROM CRIME REDUCTION PROGRAM

May 17, 2023 | Castries, St. Lucia || CARU Staff



President of the St. Lucia Mission, Pastor Rioger Stevens leading the devotional charge during the afternoon program.

**F**our hundred students from six secondary schools and six communities across the St Lucia Mission recently graduated from the “Project STOP ‘n’ THINK” crime reduction program instituted by the Seventh-day Adventist church and facilitated by crime reduction specialist Dr. Neals Chitan. The three-month initiative concluded April 22, 2023.

The “Project STOP ‘n’ THINK” program is the Adventist Church’s response to assisting the St Lucia government in addressing the growing crime rate on the island. The program aimed to educate and sensitize individuals, especially young people, about the consequences of their actions and the impact of crime on society.

In mid-March, after a series of homicides occurred in the town of Vieux Fort in the southern part of the island, government implemented round-the-clock police patrols in response to seven gun-related murders, to engage civil society and business leaders in brainstorming possible solutions to the problem, even as neighboring islands called for peace on the island.

Joachim Henry, Minister of Equity, Social Justice, and Empowerment had, in 2022, called on members of the faith community to “get off their pews and get involved” in social transformation of their island nation in light of the steep rise in homicides. In 2021, St. Lucia registered seventy-four murders, a record at that time. The increase in 2022 to 76 murders meant that the country broke its homicide record for a second consecutive year.

“We had to do something to support our communities,” said Dr. Caius Alfred, Family Ministries director of the St. Lucia Mission. “Realizing the state of crime in our community, President Roger Stevens requested that we as a church respond in supporting



Some of the graduates for the “Project STOP ‘n’ THINK” initiative sponsored by the St. Lucia Mission of Seventh day Adventist, 400 individuals graduated from the program to the delight of the many of the correctional officers.

the state in addressing the crime situation on the island,” he said. “The church is not only concerned about the salvation of individuals but in the holistic development of every human being and as far as possible we partner with non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the government to help make a difference.”

According to Dr. Chitan, the intervention program targeted most of the communities deemed unsafe due to gang violence and crimes, including addressing the root causes of crime - poverty, lack of education, and unemployment and focused on promoting positive behavior, building self-esteem, and providing job training and placement opportunities.

“We unlock strategies to help individuals, families and communities to deal with a number of behavioral issues and criminal tendencies,” Chitan said. “There is a grave danger that the occurrences may become accepted as the norm. There is insufficient outcry in our communities. There appears to be even amusement at times in social media by some misguided individuals. What the Adventist church is doing must be commended,” he said.



Representatives from civic organisations and government department responsible for crime intervention were present during the afternoon program to lend their support and give voice to the initiative of the St. Lucia Mission to deal with the crime situation on the island.





*The contingent of the pathfinders from the Haitian Union attending the Inter-America's 5th Pathfinder Camporee in Jamaica.  
Image by CARU Media*

## PATHFINDERS TO STORM JAMAICA LIKE GIDEON

April 5, 2023 || Trelawny, Jamaica || CARU Staff

**F**ireworks lit the skies of Jamaica's Trelawny Stadium as part of the opening ceremony for 11,700 registered Pathfinders attending the 2023 Inter-American Division (IAD) Pathfinder Camporee - the first in a non-Spanish-speaking island of the IAD.

On Tuesday, a vast gathering of Pathfinders filled the cricket stadium in the hometown of the legendary sprinter Usain Bolt. They enthusiastically embraced the mission to spread throughout Jamaica's parishes, engaging in community service projects and various evangelistic outreach activities. The one-week program follows the Gideon model and aims to make a positive impact on the local communities. In a country with a population of 2.8 million people, the Pathfinders were presented with the challenge of making a significant impact. They were to take inspiration from the Bible character Gideon and his three

hundred men who achieved a resounding triumph against a much larger army, despite being outnumbered.

"Fantastic!" was the word President of the Caribbean Union Conference (CARU) Dr. Kern Tobias used to describe the launch of the camporee. Tobias, along with Pastor Bertie Henry, leads the over-one thousand strong delegation of Pathfinders from the Caribbean Union. President of the IAD Dr. Eli Henry who heads a cadre of leaders supporting Adventist youth in their quest of becoming confident men and women of purpose, promised, "You will succeed." Henry's words were similar to that of the Jamaican Union President Pastor Everett Brown who reminded them that "Everything is going to be alright."

Convened every five years, the camporee was declared open by Youth Director of the IAD and main organizer Pastor All Powell

who, just before the start of the program, noted, "I have never been so physically exhausted, but I have never been happier to be this tired. We really care about and value our young people," Powell said. CARU Youth Director Pastor Marvin Smith expressed his delight with the turnout, saying "It's the largest delegation [ever] and we are happy to be here."

From April 4 to 9, tens of thousands of Seventh-day Adventist youth and their friends will participate in community service projects, attend nightly spiritual programs, and earn honor pins and patches for their service and learning activities.

"I decided to come because I heard it was fun," said Amethyst Richardson, a 14-year-old pathfinder. "Everyone told me it's a fantastic experience with great memories, and you also grow closer to God. However, I must admit, the food has been quite challenging," she concluded.



Pathfinders from the South Caribbean Conference quite engaged during the opening ceremony of the IAD Pathfinder camporee Inter-America's 5th Pathfinder Camporee in Jamaica. Image by CARU Media



Pathfinders from the East Caribbean Conference quite engaged during the opening ceremony of the Inter-America's 5th Pathfinder Camporee in Jamaica. Image by CARU Media

"It has been kind of challenging," said Salie Charles- Palme, a youth leader from the Grenada Conference who brought her daughter to her first Pathfinder camporee. She observed that since most club members arrived, walking long distances between venues has been trying for some. For others, the challenge is settling down to a meal that is not homemade.

Several club leaders agreed that the key to enjoying the camporee

is simply for Pathfinders to interact with each other, so club directors are restricting electronic use to cameras only while organizers consider disabling internet connections. At the international camp city Monday night, Pathfinders played games on their phones while they waited for the evening meal, some taking advantage of internet packages offered by local companies.

"I want them to be a team,"

Pastor Smith said. "When they're playing games, they're not talking to each other, experiencing things, exercising, teasing each other—things kids do."

Still, Kenneth Serrant, director of the Pioneer Pathfinder Club in St. Maarten, is optimistic that Pathfinders are fulfilling the objective of the camporee, which is to listen each other and learn to persevere like Gideon. "The Lord always comes through," he said.

## AN APPEAL TO ADVENTIST YOUTH "DON'T BE COMMITTED TO THE SYSTEM."

April 7, 2023 || Trelawny, Jamaica || CARU Staff

**D**o not fall in love with the system. Fall in love with the Savior." Those were the words of the President of the Caribbean Union Conference to the almost one thousand youths from the Caribbean Union Conference online call Thursday morning, April 5, 2023, at the 5th Inter-American Division Pathfinder Camporee.

Dr. Kern Tobias' comments were

prompted by the sheer number of young people gathered in one consecrated space at a time when youth are leaving the church in masses. Many are committed to the events and the programs of the church and not to Jesus. "Everywhere, the Seventh-day Adventist Church experiences high loss rates and chances are that some of you here today may not be around soon," he said.

Tobias reminded his audience that times will come when disappointment and uncertainties arise to make them feel discouraged. However, "if you are in love with Jesus, you can weather the storm... But if you are in love with the system, it will fail you," he said.

"The president's message was on point," said Marvin Smith, youth director of the Caribbean Union. "He used the language of the





Dr. Kern Tobias speaking to the almost 1000 youth from the Caribbean Union during the morning devotions during line call at the camporee in Jamaica. All nine fields across the territory were present. Drone image by Raphael Dowe.



Youth Director of the world church Busi Khumalo challenging young people not to trust in themselves. He reminded them that it does not help to rebel. Image by Raphael Dowe

young people to communicate a relevant message. This is where it has to be said. We have the majority of them here.”

Onessa Hughes, a Master Guide from the South Caribbean Conference delegation, said it was “a message for the time and this is the place for it.” Hughes, who has been personally impacted by the increasing attrition, said that while she grew up in church with at least sixteen other young people, she is now the only one left of her peers.

Youth Director of the world church Busi Khumalo that same

morning echoed the message to the Pathfinders during devotions when he encouraged them to surrender to God. “Don’t trust your feelings,” he said. “Yes, church can be boring sometimes. Yes, as a youth you can feel lost in church. God’s church is not perfect; no one is sinless [but] as Ellen White says, though God’s church is defective, it is heading to heaven.”

According to the statistics, 62.5 percent of those who leave the church, leave when they are young adults (Trim, 2022).

Smith said that it is crucial then that the church is not “complacent as we consider the eternal implications of losing our young people. There must be, no doubt, an administrative response to youth attrition, but the best place to start, I believe, is with

each of us caring for children or grandchildren by spending time worshipping with them.”

Tobias ended his discourse by encouraging his audience to rise to their God-ordained life purpose. “God worked through young people to establish this [Adventist] movement on solid ground and move it forward with energy, dedication, and enthusiasm,” the CARU president said. “He is still calling and using youth today and He has amazing plans for your life!”

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Pastor Bertie Henry, Treasurer of the Caribbean Union (7th from left) Dr. Kern Tobias (8th from left) Pastor Marvin Smith (9th from left) are with nine Youth Directors from the fields of the Caribbean Union after the morning line call in Jamaica. Image by Michelle Dowe





## NON-ADVENTIST PATHFINDER BAPTIZED AT JAMAICA CAMPOREE

Royston Philbert

**B**aptism during a Pathfinder Camporee has been a long-standing tradition and a revered place for one to announce to the world her decision to follow Christ. That was the undergirding motivation for Saraiah Knight, one of three persons from the East Caribbean Conference (ECC) who was baptized by the youth director, Pastor Miguel Denny, on Sabbath, April 8, 2023, at the InterAmerican Division (IAD) Camporee held in Jamaica.

Saraiah, who is a member of the Good News Community Conquerors Pathfinder Club at the Kings Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in Barbados, said: “I decided to get baptized because it was Holy Saturday, and it would be good memory of the camporee for me to get baptized and get closer to God.”

“We had just completed the honor [requirement], Small Group Bible Study, with one of the topics being baptism,” Marcelle Best, her club director said. “That study helped to cement her

decision, adding that she had witnessed significant growth in Saraiah’s Christian development over the past year. She has been in the Club and her mother and teachers have also commented on how she has matured.” They credit the Club for her growth.

“It is always a delight when youth and children give their hearts to Jesus,” said Pastor Miguel Denny. “What I love to see even more is the support of their peers in making such a decision. It was heartwarming to see counselors and Pathfinders coming out to support these young ladies in their public declaration of siding with Jesus. It shows that our youth know Jesus, want to walk with Him, and are willing to help their friends to do the same.”

Saraiah and her two friends responded to the call for baptism as Andres Peralta, Youth Ministries associate director for the General Conference, spoke at the end of day three of the camporee in Jamaica’s Trelawny Stadium.

“I have a burden in my heart tonight,” said Peralta. “I want one person who came to this camp, who is not an Adventist and is not baptized, to come forward, and I will pray for you.” One person responded, then another and, after a few minutes, more than 120 had come from their seats.

“It is these moments that give us hope,” said Pastor Marvyn Smith, Youth Director for the Caribbean Union. “There is a future, a good future with good young people. In a such moment we feel both strong and weak - strong because we know we are not alone in this, and weak because we feel how utterly dependent, we are upon the grace and guidance of our Almighty God.”

In all, Saraiah is one of twelve persons from the Caribbean Union who celebrated their conversion at the camporee and Pastor Denny said that he not only thanks God for her decision but is also “grateful that we were able to celebrate with her.”



# ONE MORE YOUTH FOR JESUS

April 14, 2023 | Trelawny, Jamaica | CARU Staff

Jaden Cyrus from the Carmel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guyana was among the hundreds of Pathfinders and senior youth who responded to the call of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Youth Ministries Director Busi Khumalo at the Trelawny Multipurpose Stadium in Jamaica, on Sabbath, Apr. 8, 2023.

Khumalo's call to service resonated with one Jaden had heard two years before at the 2019 Adventist Layman Services International (ASI) held in Guyana. Now the seventeen-year-old has joined the ranks of the millions of young people in the Adventist Church who have promised: "I will go."

"It is not enough to be baptized. You need to be involved in the mission of the church," Khumalo said to the assembly on the final day of the Inter-America

Division's (IAD) 5th Pathfinder Camporee. Using his personal experience from South Africa to illustrate the boldness of Jotham in the biblical story of Judges chapter 9, Pastor Khumalo stated that "if young people are given a good cause to live and die for, they will do wonders. If you do not engage them in mission, if you are making them just march and drill, that is not the end. This is just a means to the end. The end is to be involved in the mission of the church. Our theme demands that we be involved in the mission of the church," he said.

Because of his passion for Information technology, Jaden regularly volunteered in the communication department. But now he is embracing a more mission-minded perspective as he anticipates the upcoming the Guyana Conference opening session.



*This is Jaden proudly displaying the flag of Guyana at the pathfinder camporee in Jamaica. He responded to Pastor Busi Khumali, youth ministries director of the General Conference, to be actively involved in the mission of the church. Image by CARU media*

He said he is looking forward to being "part of the mission of the church... and to go on God's errands and to be a missionary on my street, in my neighborhood, abroad, overseas, at school, at work, everywhere," Jaden said. "Church leaders around cannot reach my friends and peers or speak the youth language. We are the right people to tell others that Jesus loves us in our own style, our own way as a young person today."

The Sabbath morning service climaxed a week of spiritual messages and activities inviting IAD youth to embrace the opportunity to be on mission for God. Pastor Samuel Telemaque, Director of Mission in the Inter American Division is convinced that God is "birthing new leadership in this division and young people are part of it. I expect to see an evangelism explosion in the IAD led by Christ-centered, Bible-believing, Spirit of Prophecy-following young people and others who are consecrated to God's last-day proclamation of the three Angels' Messages since



*Part of the group of Pathfinders and youth leaders who moved to the stage in response to Pastor Busi Khumali, youth ministries director of the General Conference, to be actively involved in the mission of the church. [Photo: Daniel Gallardo/IAD]*



Jaden Cyrus from the Carmel Seventh day Adventist Church in Guyana is standing with Makeda Perreria- MasterGuide Director (Emerald Masterguide Club) and his brother Neron Cyrus at the pathfinder camporee in Jamaica. Image by CARU media

faith development, authentic connections, and ministry engagement. Tobias along with Treasurer of the Caribbean Union Conference Pastor Bertie Henry, traveled to Jamaica to be with the pathfinders for the camporee.

Just as the camporee theme, "Pathfinders In Mission," challenged youth to be fearless, godly young men and women of wisdom, Pastor Khumalo's invitation underscored the world church's emphasis on missions and encouraging young people to be bold for Jesus because "through mission work, they develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their relationship with God, and their purpose in life," he said.

Jesus is coming soon," Telemaque said.

"Mission is our culture as an Adventist Church," stated Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the

Caribbean Union Conference, "and to see young people start the mantle and publicly declare the intention to become missionaries is heartwarming," particularly as this action fosters

## IAD SALUTES 3 YOUTH LEADERS AT GUYANA CONFERENCE SESSION FOR 125 YEARS OF SERVICE

April 21, 2023 | Georgetown, Guyana || CARU Staff || Lennox Jason

Plans for the Seventh Quadrennial Session of the Guyana Conference intentionally etched time to honor the sacrificial tenure of three outstanding youth leaders, during the Installation Service. On April 15, 2023, Derill Gittens, Lawrence Percy, and Enid Luard received commendations for more than 125 combined years of committed volunteerism. The ceremony took place during the Installation Service at the Guyana National Cultural Center, where hundreds of members had gathered for constituency worship.

Appropriately, Dr. Eli Henry, President of the Inter-American Division (IAD), personally presented the Presidential Medal of Service to each

leader. Additionally, he took the opportunity to address the constituents privately, encouraging everyone to remain steadfast in their faithfulness until the Savior of the world returns.

Pastor Al Powell, Director of Youth Ministries at the Inter-American Division, introduced the awardees and praised their devotion, "We are happy to celebrate their service, their commitment. They have served with dedication and selflessness. They gave all they had to the Pathfinder and Youth Ministry departments of our church. They are your people here in the Guyana Conference. It is the most distinguished award that we have for service."

Officers of the Caribbean Union

Conference and the Guyana Conference acknowledged that the youth leaders had earned their stripes and lauded their achievements. Dr. Kern Tobias (President of the Caribbean Union Conference), Pastor Marvyn Smith (Youth Ministries Director of the Caribbean Union), and Elder Lennox Jason (Youth Ministry Director of the Guyana Conference) affirmed the recipients as they received their medals.

Brother Derill Gittens has been a youth club administrator for more than 38 years and has been involved in the uniform programs of the Church in every county of Guyana. Most recently, he reorganized the Master Guide and Pathfinder ministries in the Essequibo district. Brother Gittens





*Pastor Bennette Bascome accepts the award from Dr. Eli Henry on behalf of Lawrence Percy for his leadership in the upper Mazaruni district of Guyana, for more than 40 years. Image by TEADSDA Guyana.*



*Dawn Archer accepts the award from President of the IAD Dr. Eli Henry on behalf of Enid Luard for 49 years of service to the Adventurer ministry on Guyana. Image by TEAMSDA Guyana*



*IAD President Dr. Eli Henry is about to bestow on long standing youth leader Derill Gittens his gold medal for his contribution to youth ministry in Guyana. He has given over 38 years of service to the ministry. Image by TEAMSDA Guyana*

is still active in ministry, and he is regarded as a committed and faithful youth leader.

Lawrence Percy's youth leadership had a profound impact in the upper Mazaruni district of Guyana for over 40 years. He gained recognition for his dedication to assisting Pathfinder clubs, often hiking along perilous trails and over mountains. As a result, he would be away from home for weeks at a time. Additionally, he frequently utilized boats as a means of transportation to organize youth congresses and Pathfinder camporees within the territories of Guyana and Venezuela. Pastor Bennette Bascome received the award on Brother Percy's behalf.

Enid Luard is credited for being instrumental in the success of the Adventurer program in Guyana. Over her 49 years of active service, she was involved at all levels of the local church and also served as a district and national coordinator for Adventurers. Dawn Archer accepted the award on behalf of Enid Luard.

"The contribution [of each] individual is just amazing," said Dr. Kern Tobias. "It is one that speaks of hope and sacrifice for young people; the extent that

people will go to see the youth ministry of our church survive is [refreshing]. I celebrate them and I am happy to identify with them." Dr. Tobias was the recipient of a similar award at the Fifth Inter-American Pathfinder Camporee. In addition, at the IAD Camporee hosted in 2023, Dr. Tobias and scores of Church leaders (including youth ministries leaders) who served within the Inter-American Division for 50 or more years, were honored with the Presidential Medal of Service for outstanding ministry.

The Pathfinder ministry in Guyana is preparing to commemorate its 70th anniversary and recognize the significant investments of youth leaders which led to the mammoth growth of this Junior Youth Ministry. "The growth of the youth movement is testament of a cadre of selfless and dedicated youth leaders," said Elder Jason. "As a result of their faithful service, there are now 277 Adventurer, Pathfinder and Master Guide clubs operating in the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. And, based on annual statistics, this number will continue to increase over the years to come. We were extremely happy when the Inter-American Division made the decision to recognize three of our

youth leaders. We rejoice with them for being worthy recipients of this prestigious award."

One awardee, Derill Gittens, expressed his deep appreciation and responded, "After working in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in particular the Youth Ministries department, it's great to understand that my church relishes the services and sacrifices that I have made to the organization – over 35 years, serving in all [areas] of the Youth Ministries (Adventurer, Pathfinder, Master Guide and AYM) at the church, federation, and conference levels. Receiving this award should say something to a young leader – that the church recognizes . . . contributions, and I am not finished!"



*President of the Caribbean Union Conference Dr. Kern Tobias is happy to extend congratulations to Derill Gittens on behalf of the Caribbean Union Conference. Image by TEAMSDA Guyana*



East Caribbean Conference administrators and family of Mr. McIntyre Hypolite and his wife during the handing over ceremony.

## ADRA-DOMINICA PRESENTS FAMILY OF FIVE KEYS FOR A NEW HOME

April 21, 2023 | Georgetown, Guyana || CARU Staff || Lennox Jason

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dominica, through its humanitarian affiliate the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), continues to make good on its promise to support victims whose homes were devastated by Hurricane Maria in 2017. At a mini ceremony on Monday, January 31, 2023, ADRA agents, municipal officers and SDA Church representatives presented the Hypolite family, of five, with keys to a home which was recently constructed in the village of Laplaine, Dominica.

The Category 5 hurricane caused the deaths of dozens of people and damaged roads, bridges, and the ecosystems. The storm left residents without access to potable water, food, electricity, and communication systems – it also destroyed commercial and personal properties. Destruction of buildings depleted available housing – particularly for the most vulnerable.

From 2018 to 2019, ADRA-Dominica embarked on a re-roofing and repair program through local funding partnerships with other organizations such as International Organization for Migration (IOM), Red Cross, Rotary, the North-Eastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the USA, and the Caribbean Union Conference fields (namely the South Caribbean Conference, the South Leeward Conference, and the East Caribbean Conference).

“While we will admit that significant development has taken place in the country, visible to locals and visitors alike, however, some people are still grappling with the impact of that major disaster,” said the ADRA Director in Dominica, Priscilla Prevost. She added, “Since the major need, post-Hurricane Maria, was housing, ADRA mounted a rebuild project in three phases. This handing over is part of the third phase, which is rebuild and

repairs, funded by ADRA-UK and the East Caribbean Conference. It is hoped that through this partnership [scores of] families will be helped. Although we encountered a setback in obtaining approval for structural plans for some of the structures, we were happy to deliver keys to this family of five. ADRA-Dominica was happy to assist the family with 50% of the cost of the



Mr. McIntyre Hypolite and wife after the handing over ceremony



existing structure, to the tune of \$78,000 EC.”

Dr. Alexander Isaacs, the ADRA Director for the Caribbean Union Conference, stated, “It has been a very exciting period for ADRA in Dominica, especially when we have been able, through this intervention, to make a significant difference to people’s lives, and to help them strengthen their resilience to natural disasters.”

The President of the East Caribbean Conference, Pastor Anthony Hall, shared, “Moving vulnerable families into better dwellings has given them security and comfort, and a better way of life. There are still many challenges, and we have a long way to go in our work to reach out to vulnerable and marginalized households, but we are working on it.” He also emphasized, “We are stronger together. This is more evident than ever as ADRA-Dominica, local Adventist churches, and many other supporters and partners have come together to respond to this crisis.”

Attendees at the mini ceremony included dozens of supporters, family, friends, the Chair of the Laplaine Village Council, Donabel Pierre, and architect of the project, Phillip Matthew. The East Caribbean Conference was represented by: Pastor Anthony Hall – President, Pastor Terrance Haynes – Executive Secretary, Sister Valrica Dottin – Treasurer, Sister Priscilla Prevost – ADRA Director, Sister Vernella Hilaire-Williams – ADRA Treasurer, and Pastor Maurice Morancie – Ministerial Secretary and Island Coordinator.

Local leaders indicated that ADRA-Dominica always seeks opportunities to improve living conditions in communities. Work already commenced on



*The new home handed over to My Hypolite and family.*



*ADRA Director in Dominica, Priscilla Prevost stands with Treasurer of the East Caribbean Conference Valrica Harrison- Dottin as she presents the keys of the new house to Mr. McIntyre Hypolite and his wife.*

a structure in the village of Portsmouth and another home is scheduled to be built in the village of Marigot. The design of the home structures prioritizes sustainability; the homes are built with a resilient, concrete roof, three bedrooms, and related amenities.

Leaders of the East Caribbean Conference, and the island constituency express gratitude to ADRA-UK and the many persons including the members of the

Hypolite family who worked and volunteered to make the project a reality.

ADRA is the international, humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, serving in 118 countries. Its work empowers communities and changes lives around the world by providing sustainable community development and disaster relief. ADRA’s purpose is to serve humanity so all may live as God intended.



Nine Adventist Community Services Volunteers receive their certificates for completing the training necessary to carry on the Volunteer Assistance Mealtime Program. Among them is Community Services Director of the East Caribbean Conference, Pastor Dayle Haynes. Image from Barbados Today News.

## ECC BEDSIDE MINISTRY POSITIVELY IMPACTS QE HOSPITAL'S CAREGIVER CRISIS IN BARBADOS

June 27, 2023 | Bridgetown, Barbados|| CARU Staff || Dayle Haynes

**A**n urgent request from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in Barbados, for volunteers to assist its staff of caregivers, received an immediate response from the Adventist Community Services of the East Caribbean Conference. The request is under the purview of the hospital's Clinical Nutrition Services and is known as the Volunteer Mealtime Assistant Program. While this significant program addresses the crucial issues of food loss and waste at the healthcare facility, it ensures that patients receive the nutrition they need during recovery. Volunteers are taught how to feed patients and are given basic instructions on bedside care.

The President of the East Caribbean Conference, Pastor Anthony Hall, placed the Church's response into perspective. He said, "The Adventist Church has been partnering with the community in the East Caribbean Conference on numerous projects and initiatives, at a conference level and on a church level, while promoting the healthy lifestyle the Church promotes. Dozens of interventions have been conducted to benefit the population in general, but this was an opportunity to reach [people] in a time of need. It is a testament to the transformative power of community involvement and the meaningful impact that can be achieved when hearts and hands unite."

Twenty-nine volunteers from several Seventh-day Adventist churches registered to be included as volunteer caregivers at the island's main hospital. These compassionate volunteers underwent rigorous preparation which equipped them with skills and knowledge to fulfill their roles, effectively. Their commitment to enhancing the hospital-experience for patients is unwavering.

Pastor Dayle Haynes, the Community Services Director of the East Caribbean Conference, stated that nine individuals were already trained by the hospital and are available for patient care. Leading by example, Pastor Haynes also engaged in the



training exercise. He commented, "As a Church, that is who we are and we are happy to step up to the plate and make a difference. We are very thankful to have partnered with the hospital to assist so many in vulnerable and needy circumstances. The nine volunteers are just the first cohort, comprised primarily of senior members. The next group will include teens and young adults. We are committed to reflecting who God is, serving, and offering the best for His children. Their presence brought a new ray of hope and comfort to the patients during their mealtimes. With their warm smiles, gentle words of encouragement, and attentive care, they created a nurturing environment that enhanced the healing process for those in need."

He also underscored that the goal of the action taken by the Adventist Church was to express solidarity with hospitals, health workers, and members who are all stretched beyond capacity and supplies during this time. Pastor Haynes added, "We fully understand that in the face of



*Pastor Dayle Haynes, the Community Services Director of the East Caribbean Conference receiving his certificate in completion of the bedside volunteer program. Image from Pastor Dayle Hynes*

the enormity of the situation, this support is the proverbial drop in the bucket, but it is a pivotal thing, and it is a delight for us to be doing this at the QEH. Government leaders explained that with limited personnel in the health system, there is need for assistance with feeding patients [which aids] the reduction of food loss. We could not allow that call to go without doing something. It was an opportunity to connect with the community and to give back to our community."

Church leaders emphasized the importance of ministering to people as Christ did. They agreed that support, though modest, for the health emergency was right - given the overwhelming crisis facing the population and, by extension, those in need.

Stories of gratitude and transformation have begun to emerge, and they paint a beautiful picture of the impact made by the East Caribbean Conference's bedside ministry. Patients shared how the volunteers' presence brightened their days - making their hospital stay more bearable. Families expressed deep appreciation for the assistance and compassion shown to loved ones when they were most vulnerable.

Beyond the hospital walls, this ministry also inspired others to get involved. Witnessing the selfless acts of service, members of the community found renewed motivation to give back. The Volunteer Mealtime Assistant Program became a catalyst for change and ignited a spirit of volunteerism that spread everywhere.



*Certificates were distributed by acting Dietitian Kerri-Ann Best (left) and Minister of state in the Ministry of Health and Wellness with for QEH, Dr. Sonia Browne (right). Image from Pastor Dayle Hynes*

# WOMEN OF PRAYER AND PURPOSE ARE A FORCE FOR GOOD

March 31, 2023 || Georgetown, Guyana || CARU Staff || Edmira Walker

**H**undreds of women in the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist were recently challenged to heighten their spiritual experience by discovering and living their purpose. The call was made on International Women's Day of Prayer March 4, 2023. This annual Women's Ministries Conference was held at the Berbice High School Auditorium under the theme, "Transformed through Prayer."

According to Pastor Carolyn Brandon, Women's Ministries director and main organizer of the gathering, the theme is a reminder that women are loved by God and poised to achieve His great purpose when they pray. "When women find their purpose in Jesus they can be used by the church with greater impact because they are living that purpose," she said.

The main presenters Candace Fraser and Shabekie Vyphius further challenged the women to commit to stirring and enriching the lives of other women in their congregations. "God has put in your heart a special passion and energy to do what you do for the Lord," Fraser said. "You represent a very important force that perhaps is not as appreciated as it should be, but you are all important and have a place in God's plans."

In one of the prayers sessions when participants were divided into small groups, each with its own prayer objective, God's working became evident. Ms. Abiola Dowridge responded to the invitation to approach the throne of God and fully



*Ms. Abiola Dowridge responded to the invitation to approach the throne of God and fully surrendered her life to Christ in baptism. Women's Ministries' Director of the Guyana Conference, Pastor Carolyn Brandon was happy to lead the ceremony. Image by Women's Ministries staff.*

surrendered her life to Christ in baptism. "Today God brought an end to an unforgettable experience. He has relieved my anxiety and has shown me that transformation is possible when we pray," she said.

Personal testimonies relating to the power of faith-filled prayer made it possible for the participants to appreciate the practicality of the Prayer Conference. Many could relate to the reality that there are, at times, similarities among their struggles; but, even in the face of disparities, God empowers them to be triumphant.

Additionally, the women were exposed to literature that promised to aid in the navigation of their prayer-focused journey.

"All of us are chosen... in spite of our strengths and weaknesses so we can be a light in our communities," said Sister Debra Henry, Women's Ministry Director of the church in the Caribbean Union (CARU). "You are chosen to be a disciple, chosen to bear fruits of mission, love and service... We want women in the church to be strengthened and nurtured. When prayer is incorporated into the lives of our women, transformation will take place in our homes and in our churches," Henry said.

Along with Henry, Brandon celebrated the notion that women's ministry is strong in the Caribbean Union and the retreat empowered committed women to continue their robust service.





Women attending the Guyana Conference annual Women's Ministries Conference at the Barbice High School Auditorium on March 4, 2023. Image by Women's Ministries staff.

"The women are actively engaged in many community outreach activities, in evangelistic campaigns and in Church planting where there is no Adventist presence," Brandon said, but this initiative will inspire them to reach even more this year, she added. "We look forward to these sessions where together we can

be empowered and transformed for service."

As part of the one-day exercise, several women were recognized for their stellar contributions to, and notable sacrifices made for the benefit of their communities. Among them were Madam Winifred Benjamin, Mayor of the

Municipality of New Amsterdam, Berbice, as well as the current headmistress of the Berbice High School Ms. Colleen Liddell who contributed more than 35 years of impeccable service to the teaching commission. In all, more than 50 Seventh-day Adventist women were inducted into the Hall of Faith.



Madam Winifred Benjamin, Mayor of the Municipality of New Amsterdam, Berbice, receiving her recognition award from the Women's Ministries Director of the Guyana Conference, Pastor Carolyn Brandon. Image by Women's Ministries staff.



# ECC EXPANDS POSSIBILITY MINISTRIES, HEARING IMPAIRED ELDERS ORDAINED TO SERVICE

May 5, 2023 | Bridgetown, Barbados || CARU Staff



*Pastor Deborah Spooner of the East Caribbean Conference is presenting the ordination certificate to newly ordained Elder Anthony Pile. He currently holds the office of First Elder, Men's Ministries Leader and Assistant Sign Language Coordinator.*

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church in the East Caribbean Conference (ECC) for the first time ordained two elders and a deacon from the hearing-impaired membership in Barbados. The ordination service drew church leaders, volunteers and more than thirty-five hearing impaired persons to the ECC center on March 11, 2023, to witness this historic occasion.

Brother Anthony Pile and Sis Sandra White-Belgrave were ordained as elders while Brother David Oliver was ordained as a deacon in an impressive service

in which attendees waved their approval in unison during the call and response ritual.

Pastor Jason Peters in his homily challenged the new leaders to become servant-leaders who provide for the physical, social, and spiritual needs of its most vulnerable church members —widows, orphans, sick, poor, elderly, single parents, unemployed, bereaved, physically and mentally handicapped, substance abusers, homeless, and battered and abused victims.

The ordination service comes at a time when the church is

placing renewed emphasis on the Possibility Ministries movement and intentionally including individuals with special needs into its fellowship. Accordingly, Pile has been invited to sit on the conference's Possibilities Ministry Committee where the needs of that demographic can be articulated. "We want them to function with a sense of pride, dignity and self-worth," said ECC President Pastor Anthony Hall. "In the East Caribbean Conference, we are aware that the message of God is for every person and, as a church, we have the responsibility to deliver this message of salvation using all of the means





*Pastor Jason Peters offering the prayer of ordination for all the elders ordained during the service. Included in the group are elders from the sister church in the district*

available so that they all can understand and accept it in their lives.”

Deaf Ministries began in the ECC about 30 years ago with Elder Earlwaine Cumberbatch who desired to see the gospel spread to the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. Over the years, considerable progress was made from initially having only a Sabbath School program to acquiring company status to being fully established as a church in 2004.

After achieving church status, they worshipped in a classroom at the Seventh-day Adventist Secondary school for several years. Then, in May 2017, with the approval of the East Caribbean Conference and under the guidance of Elder Beresford Hunte and the pastoral care of Deborah Spooner, they relocated to more spacious and improved premises, formerly known as the Cave’s Nursing Home.

The newly minted First Elder Pile holds additional offices as Men’s Ministries Leader and Assistant

Sign Language Coordinator. Sister White-Belgrave holds the offices of Associate Elder, Assistant Head Deaconess, Assistant Sabbath School Superintendent and Communications Leader. Deacon Oliver holds the coveted designation of being the first ordained Deaf Deacon in the ECC.

“It is a high honor to participate in the service,” said Spooner

who assisted in distributing the ordination certificates. “This fills a great need in our population, thanks to God,” she said.

Pile agreed. “There is a great need for ministry to the deaf community and this ordination service has brought additional meaning to our lives as a deaf community,” he said.



*Pastor Deborah Spooner presenting certificate to Bro. David Oliver. Bro. David Oliver, was one of the deacons ordained in the service. He is the first ordained Deaf Deacon in this conference.*





Students and instructors of Philipsburg SDA Church Adult Education Class. Image by Jacqueline Barry

## THE PHILIPSBURG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

July 14, 2023 || NCC Staff

The Philipsburg Seventh-day Adventist Community Services Department on St. Maarten embarked on a mission to empower community and church members, with essential soft skills to support their families in these economically challenging times. What unfolded was an eight-week adult education program that transformed lives and fostered hope in the hearts of those who participated.

“We recognize the pressing need to address social issues affecting families,” said Jacky Barry, Community Services Director of the Philipsburg Adventist Church. “We firmly believe in empowering families. We sought to assist homes, especially those who are experiencing difficulties to become self-sufficient.” Barry reported that sixty-two

individuals including sixteen non-members registered for the program.

The program aimed to equip participants with a diverse range of soft skills that would not only provide them with employment opportunities but also instill a sense of pride and confidence. Basic skills training encompassed areas such as car oil change, basic sewing, massage therapy, computer skills, graphic design, cake decorating, and pastry making.

“Through this initiative, participants gained practical knowledge and expertise that would open doors to new possibilities and avenues for personal and professional growth,” stated Pastor of the church Pastor Vashni Cuvalay.

Community Services Director in the North Caribbean Conference Pastor Hesketh Matthew shared the conviction that God has blessed the Church with enormous skills and motivations. “It is my belief that sharing these blessings with others would contribute significantly to improving living standards and



Students in the Baking Class



fostering community building. By investing in the education and empowerment of the community, we envisioned a brighter future not only for individuals but for the community and the church as a whole."

The graduation ceremony which culminated the activity was attended by the Minister of Education for the island of St. Maarten, Rodolphe E. Samuel who challenged participants to continue the journey, stating, "you are never too old to learn."

Participants not only forged lasting friendships throughout their journey but invested in themselves and their abilities. Their newfound skills became instruments of change, not only for themselves but also for their families and communities. The wide display of cakes, clothing, and pastries at the end of the eight-week program is testimony to the remarkable transformations that took place.

Sis Gloria Powell who taught the sewing class volunteered her services for the first time and indicated that the class has transformed her life and instilled in her the desire to continue the ministry.



Students of the Sewing Class are using their learnt skills together. Image Jacqueline Barry

This initiative is part of a wholistic approach geared to minister to the community with the love of God. "A drive by soup delivery by the local community services department to addicts and homeless individuals is part of the plan to invest in the community," said Jacky Barry, "That is having a positive impact on the community."

The impact of this ministry reached far beyond the confines of St. Maarten, serving as a beacon of inspiration for other communities. It has motivated churches around the conference

to replicate the program's success and invest in their community.

Adventist Community Services is a humanitarian relief and individual and community development ministry involving social action ministries that's important to the mission of the church because they reveal a belief that faithfulness to Jesus Christ includes compassion for the poor, the hurting, and the victims of injustice. The ministry demonstrates hope that will eventually make a practical contribution to church growth.



Students of the Graphic Design Class listens attentively to Raphael Dowe as he instructs. Image by Jacqueline Barry

# CARU SELECTS DR. MAGLOIRE TO LEAD THE EDUCATION MINISTRY

December 2, 2022 || CARU Staff

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Caribbean Union Conference voted the appointment of Dr. Daphney Magloire to oversee Adventist education for primary and secondary schools, across its territory. On November 24, 2022, Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union Conference, officially welcomed Dr. Magloire via videoconference. 'We pray that, together, with God's help and your team, you can serve and benefit the Church and its mission. Dr Magloire brings broad experience and expertise to the role, which will be a real blessing to Adventist education into the future,' said Dr. Tobias as he warmly introduced her as Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, during the year-end executive committee meeting.

Dr. Samuel Telemaque expressed commendation on behalf of the Education Department of the Inter-American Division. He emphasized, 'The mission at hand is to source excellent, innovative professionals with Christian values, affirmed with the Adventist philosophy [and] ready to serve God, country, and the world. Dr. Magloire is one of those.' Dr. Telemaque serves as Sabbath School Director of the Inter-American Division.

Dr. Hillary Bowman, who will retire from denominational service on December 31, 2022, expressed delight at the appointment of his successor. He commented, '[Dr. Magloire] is committed to Adventist education. Having served the East Caribbean Conference, she will bring great insight and wisdom to the role. I wish her God's richest blessing.'

Dominica nurtured her early years and allowed her passion for education to crystallize into a vocation, which has been guided by God's call for more than four decades. Dr. Magloire's career in educational management began in the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at the Bense Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, where she served as a principal from 1981 to 1995. In 1996, she was called to serve the Dominica Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School as a principal. Then in 2009, she was selected to serve the conference in the capacity of education director. Dr. Magloire is regarded as a transformational leader and has 41 years of experience directing the work of Christ-centered education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As an astute academic supervisor, she is committed to excellence and to raising scholastic standards. She believes every child can learn – once given the appropriate learning environment. She is known for creating innovative learning solutions, visionary methodologies, and for building relationships with key stakeholders.

In her acceptance remarks, Dr. Magloire stated, 'Any organization that wants to make



Education Director of the Caribbean Union, Dr. Daphney Magloire.

a change must do it through the school. I am happy to be a part of the mission to improve the school system so the Church can move on. I am excited and humbled by this opportunity to serve and lead. I thank Dr. Bowman for the role he played in helping to shape my profession, from the days of leadership at the primary and secondary schools, and as Education Director of the East Caribbean Conference for 13 years.

After the vote, thanks were extended to a special search committee which was chaired by Dr. Colrick Wilson, President of the University of the Southern Caribbean. That search committee had been tasked with conducting interviews and evaluating candidates for the position, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Caribbean Union Conference which gave overwhelming support to the appointment of Dr. Magloire.



Dr. Kern Tobias addresses the Executive Committee at the appointment of the Education Director.





Students from the Antigua and Barbuda Seventh-day Adventist Secondary school display their identity banner as they march through the streets of St. Johns Antigua. The march was held to promote the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist church and support Seventh-day Adventist Education. Image supplied by Dr. Eulalie Daly Semper

# EDUCATION FOR LIFE: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION A POSITIVE SOLUTION

May 31, 2023 | St. John's, Antigua || CARU Staff

**M**ore than 1,000 persons participated in a march through the capital city of Antigua on April 29, 2023, to promote the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist church and support Seventh-day Adventist education.

Themed a Fundamental Beliefs March, the students from the four schools supported by pathfinders and Adventurers took to the streets of St. Johns shouting beautiful choruses while sharing memorized Ellen G. White Writings that captured the core fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

“Students worked on a fundamental belief banner that reflected the impression of an identified fundamental belief” said Education Director of the South Leeward Conference Dr. Eulalie Daly Semper. “This type

of activity seeks to encourage students to celebrate the beliefs of the church, and to foster a sense of belonging to the students who study in our schools and attend our churches.”

The students and teachers from the two primary and secondary schools were joined by church leaders in the three-hour march that led them down several streets in the city. While a band played, the students shouted and passed out flyers and books to onlookers.

“This march demonstrated the Christian values held high, showing that our school is based on the philosophy of the Bible,” said Dr. Semper. “Students worked hard, creating banners and posters and illustrations with their own hands and proclaimed with dignity core beliefs of the church.”

This march was one of the many activities planned to highlight Christian education across the Conference, according to Dr. Semper.

“The schools were supported by Pathfinders, Adventurers, church leaders, parents and supporters of the school,” she added. “Teachers and students worked together on banners that displayed the fundamental Beliefs of the church. These banners captured the beliefs of the church in Colorful and fun ways and people on the streets eagerly asked questions about the beliefs and some even join just to be a part of the celebrations.

The preschoolers were excited to travel in the truck as they shared their Bible verses. Proud parents marched alongside them dressed in t-shirts that had the open Bible as the logo. The displayed Bible

verses captured the attention of many. It was an absolute pleasure to see all the non-Seventh-Day Adventist parents marching along with their children to share the Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs," said Dr Semper

A student from the school said he was glad to be participating in the march.

"I am not a Seventh-day Adventist yet, but I'm very proud to be in a school where God is placed number one," he said.

According to church leaders, Adventist education in Antigua (South Leeward Conference) is now an eighty-nine-year journey. Every activity planned by the office of education will help to promote the value of the Christian education to the community. This activity has taken them a long way forward.

"The best publicity that an Adventist school can do is to show its community the distinctive characteristic of the Adventist education," said



Top leaders from the South Leeward Conference were among those who supported the initiative the sabbath afternoon. Executive Secretary Dr. Wayne Knowles, Treasurer Dr. Krista Moore and Community Services Director of the Conference Pastor Fredrick Alfred are identified in this image. Several other pastors and church attended the march. Image supplied by Dr. Eulalie Daly Semper

President of the South Leeward Conference, Dr. Carson Green. "The Bible claims a dominant place in our schools, and we have to proclaim it. It is the essence of our fundamental beliefs. The smiling faces of the children and young people accompanied with musical bands and creative banners impressed even the most insensitive of hearts."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Leeward Conference has over 10, 660 church members worshipping in 44 churches and congregations. It also operates educational institutions in Antigua and St. Kitts. Second Advent Radio station located on Antigua helps to support the ministry of the church to the community.



Parents and students of the Antigua Seventh-day Adventist Primary school were out in their numbers to support christian education during the march. More than 1000 individuals took part in the march through the streets of St. Johns Antigua. Image supplied by Dr. Eulalie Daly Semper



# GRENADA SDA SCHOOL RECEIVES A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED, MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR FACELIFT

June 6, 2023 | Mount Rose, Grenada || CARU Staff

Steady efforts are underway, by the government of Grenada, to fast-track a revamp of the country's educational entities, so students may be best prepared to successfully contribute in a technologically advanced, global marketplace. Thursday, June 22, 2023, marked the culmination of refurbishments at the Grenada Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Comprehensive School. Adventist Church leaders, government officials, staff, students, and members of the community gathered at the school's main campus in Mount Rose, St. Patrick, for a long-awaited dedication ceremony.

The \$8.3 million (ECD) transformation project will expand the school's services and highlight the power of education to strengthen and support the Church's mission of sharing the gospel with everyone. Funding was made possible through a grant from the Caribbean Development Bank and represented another installment

in the mutual goodwill between the SDA Church in Grenada and the government.

Adventist leaders agreed that the project breathed new life into the school which now includes a state-of-the-art multi-science block and an impressive administrative wing. The refurbished facility allows for extensive research into several branches of science. Curriculum expansion and development of subject areas such as clothing and textiles are among the school's short-term goals.

The Honorable David Andrew, Minister of Education for Grenada, and the Honorable Dennis Cornwall, Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick East, were present to mark this historic milestone. As he presented the keys for the new blocks to Principal Kimlyn De Coteau, the Honorable David Andrew said, "Government understands education and its importance to the socio-economic development of Grenada, and therefore,

continues to invest in the sector."

The Honorable Dennis Cornwall was delighted with the progress of school modernization in his district, and he added, "This handing over dovetails with the social outreach programs provided by the government and its emphasis on education as a priority in its transformation agenda."

Dr. Clinton Lewis, President of the Grenada Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, stated, "When I see this building, I can just say 'Praise God!' This project has its foundations in our faith in Jesus Christ. It started with faith from all of us and though we had some challenges, we are glad that it has come to an end."

Dr. Daphney Magloire, Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, reflected on God's blessing, extended to the Grenada constituency. She said, "The focus is God Himself who provided the means to get the job done and the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to Him."

"The development at the Grenada SDA Comprehensive School represents a turning point in the pursuit of educational excellence, not only for the institution but also for the entire community," said Mrs. Clara Bholá, Education Director of the Grenada Conference. "With these enhanced facilities, students will now have access to cutting-edge resources and a conducive learning environment, which will empower them to reach new heights of academic achievement."



Grenada SDA Comprehensive School, Block B, to the left is part of the new addition to the school. a two-storey, L-shaped, reinforced concrete building. At the ground floor level is one classroom; a Textiles, Clothing and Fashion room; a multipurpose lab and a building technology lab. On the first floor of the new block is an administration section with a staffroom, principal's office and secretary's office; a technical drawing lab and a multipurpose lab. Each technical space includes a teacher's office and storeroom, with the multipurpose lab being equipped with living material storage and a preparation room. Image by Ministry of Education, Government of Grenada.

The Grenada SDA Comprehensive School is a parochial learning center which offers secondary level courses from traditional fields of study such as humanities, math, and science. Other practical electives (including home economics, woodwork, and industrial art (drafting)) are among career-oriented subjects taught. Currently, the school prepares students to take the CSEC Examination.

In September 1958, the school opened its doors, with nineteen students enrolled. It operated under the name Mount Rose Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School and was housed at the Mount Rose Seventh-day Adventist Church. This refurbishment project is one of several collaborative efforts initiated by the local government in support of Adventist Christian education. In July 1972, the Grenada government formally donated the land on which the school now stands, and excavation was well underway in September 1972. A generous gift from the British government



*Principal, Kimlyn De Coteau; Sen. the Hon. David Andrew; Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick East, Hon. Dennis Cornwall, and a student cut the ribbon, signifying the handing over of the refurbished and expanded facilities. Image by Ministry of Education, Government of Grenada.*

ensured that construction was completed by May 1973, for student occupancy, and that building is still in use. The name was then changed to Grenada Seventh-day Adventist Comprehensive School. It is one of three educational entities operated by the SDA Church in Grenada.

The holistic approach of Adventist Christian education continues to positively impact the community and influence scores of families and influence scores of families to seek the services of the school on behalf of hundreds of children. Many 'Week of Prayer' sessions have been conducted at the school, and scores of students have made decisions to accept Jesus as their Savior.



*Education Director for the Grenada Conference, Mrs Clara Bhola; President of the Grenada Conference, Dr. Clinton Lewis; Minister of education for the Government of Grenada Honorable David Andrew; Executive Secretary for the Grenada Conference, Pastor Oliver Scott; Principal of the Grenada Seventh day Adventist School, Kimlyn De Coteau pose for a photo moment in at the handing over ceremony. Image by Ministry of Education, Government of Grenada*



# STATE-OF-THE-ART SCHOOL UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN DOMINICA; TO RECEIVE 13TH SABBATH OFFERING FUNDING

February 24, 2023 || Roseau, Dominica || Ursula Leslie and CARU Staff

Seventh-day Adventists on the island of Dominica recently broke ground on the new Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Primary School and Resource Center - a modern, wheelchair accessible three-story building to be outfitted with ten classrooms, computer lab, resource room, auditorium, principal's office, staff room and kitchen.

Today, following several fundraising activities from 2017 which netted the \$850,000.00 needed to pay off the building site, the project is poised to receive special infusion from next year's Thirteenth Sabbath offering, thanks to Dr. Daphney Magloire, Education Director of the Caribbean Union. During her tenure as education director of the East Caribbean Conference

(ECC), Magloire submitted a successful proposal to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, requesting that a portion of the 2024 Thirteenth Sabbath offering should go to the school building project.

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering represents a special day of celebration when churches all around the world put aside their local needs to give to the construction of the school," explained Pastor Samuel Telemaque, himself a Dominican and director of both the Sabbath School Department and the Adventist Mission in the Inter-American Division.

Now the project is working out to be the biggest undertaking from a determined constituency to promote Christian education

on an island where the influence of Christian education has made an immense impact, according to Principal Ursula Leslie (formerly Ursula Edwin), who also leads the fundraising committee.

Faced with growing enrollment in limited space, Principal Leslie expressed determination that the school should move from the basement of the Roseau SDA Church to a structure that could be called its own. "This monumental edifice in the city of Roseau will be a testament to Adventist presence on the island. This is our project. We are the arm of God, and He will see it through to the end," Leslie said.

ECC Education Director Andrea Hudson-Hoyte was pleased that the school "will be able to accommodate more students



Honorable Mirium Blanchard (first from left) President of the East Caribbean Conference Pastor Anthony Hall (third from left), Principal of the school Ursula Leslie (fourth from left), Treasurer of the East Caribbean Conference Valrica Harrison-Dottin (fifth from left) and Executive Secretary of the East Caribbean Conference Terence Haynes (sixth from left) participating in the ceremonial ground breaking for the new school. Image by East Caribbean Conference Communication Department.



in conditions that are more conducive to learning. That is important for Christian education in Dominica,” she said.

ECC President Anthony Hall, who was among the many participants at the January 29, 2023, ceremony, said that leaders were “delighted to share in this groundbreaking ceremony in which so many people have contributed so much to make it a reality. This will not be just another academic building, but one that will daily, remind us to follow God’s command as we prepare people to save souls and serve others,” Hall said.



*The Honorable Mirium Blanchard, minister for Labor, Public Service Transformation, Social Partnership, Entrepreneurship and Small Business as well as the Parliamentary Representative for Roseau North Constituency standing with President of the East Caribbean Conference Pastor Anthony Hall after the ground breaking ceremony. Image by East Caribbean Conference Communication Department*

The original primary learning center was the vision of the pioneering Devorce Alexander, Beatrice Barron, Liege Jerome and Akma Trocard and, under the leadership of its first principal, Pastor Mozart Serrant, the school was organized in 1976.

Plans for the construction of the new school were introduced in 2010 during Pastor David Beckles’ tenure as president of the East Caribbean Conference. “He envisioned it not just as a school, but also as a resource center for the island church,” Leslie said.



*Principal of the school Ursula Leslie is joined by students to participate in the ceremonial ground breaking for the new school. Image By East Caribbean Conference Communication Department.*

The Honorable Mirium Blanchard, minister for Labor, Public Service Transformation, Social Partnership, Entrepreneurship and Small Business as well as the Parliamentary Representative for Roseau North Constituency, presented remarks on behalf of the Dominica government.

There are 23 Adventist churches and five companies, three primary schools (Ebenezer Primary, Western District SDA Primary, and Temple SDA Primary), and one secondary school, (Arthur Waldron SDA Academy).



*Students from the Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Primary School choir singing during the ground breaking ceremony. Image by East Caribbean Conference Communication Department*



# CARU SCHOOLS REMAIN HEALTHY AND VIBRANT ON MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

May 31, 2023 | Port of Spain, Trinidad || CARU Staff



CARU education directors attended an advisory in Miami in February this year. The meeting equipped participants with strategic thinking and strategic planning skills. Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference Dr. Daphney Magloire led the team. Image supplied by Dr. Daphney Magloire.

In response to a call for continued faithfulness to the Mission, Adventist education administrators and coordinators of the Caribbean Union Conference assented wholeheartedly. This appeal resonated from several inspiring presenters at the mid-year Board of Education committee meeting hosted, virtually, on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Committee members approved strategies, plans, policies, and events to expand and improve the educational landscape of the Church across the Caribbean Union.

Dr. Ivan H. Omaña, Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, said, “We are to stand in the place of faithfulness. When you face the winds of faithfulness there is nothing that will move us. We still have a great mission to fulfill in our schools. . . as such there is an alarming need for qualified

individuals to be able to conduct the delicate work of chaplaincy in our schools. Those needs include the spiritual health of students and employees of the church’s educational system. We must focus on the school chaplains and their ministry to the schools.”

“This is a great moment of education for our territory because it points us to opportunities within our church organization that are in need of stronger services,” emphasized the Caribbean Union Conference President, Dr. Kern Tobias.

Six months into her role as Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, Dr. Daphne Magloire has repositioned the department to achieve stated goals. She gave a comprehensive review of achievements and outlined strategic priorities determined from a SWOT analysis, completed

by the department, which included: Providing a quality teaching and learning experience in the 21st century, promoting a strong Seventh-day Adventist ethos, adopting robust research and data-driven decision-making processes, and marketing Seventh-day Adventist education. “. . . It is about refocusing on the distinctiveness of Seventh-day Adventism at the schools and [encouraging] the church members to embrace Adventist education,” said Dr. Magloire.

The President of the University of the Southern Caribbean, Dr. Colwick Wilson stated, “The success of our primary schools would speak to the success of the university. Together, we should aim for one education mission that involves all of us to foster the mission of God’s cause in the Caribbean.”

The board and the administrative

team acknowledged the great sacrifice that all employees made and will continue to make as a new future is forged. Leaders expressed thanks for workers who devoted thousands of hours to work and pray, which guided the successes attributed to Adventist education in the Caribbean Union. The board also voted on other significant recommendations which required approval from the Caribbean Union Conference Executive Committee. Key among them was the new strategic plan for the department; the need to upgrade salary scales was identified as an ongoing challenge.

Church leaders celebrated the department’s plan to include grant writing among the certification modules for employees, from at least seventy-five schools, by December 2023. The thrust of the initiative is to develop sustainable income through which the technical, vocational, and technology opportunities can be expanded in schools. Already, each of three schools (St. Lucia SDA Academy,

Arthur Waldron SDA Academy, and Temple SDA Primary School) secured a grant of US\$10,000.00 to develop aquaponics, STEM education and agriculture. The first cohort of educators will begin the newly designed, self-directed Teacher Certification program during the summer of 2023. The autonomous solution will help the department achieve its goal of increasing the number of certified teachers in the system by 50% as of August 2026.

An advisory for CARU education directors, hosted in Miami, in 2022, was a hallmark of achievement for the leaders. They worked hard as they sought to shape the direction of education for the quinquennium and found time to rejuvenate. Under the theme, “I Will Go, Excellence in Leadership,” the advisory equipped participants with strategic thinking and strategic planning skills.

As top educators, church administrators and leaders concluded the business meeting, Dr. Magloire noted, “We are

faced with challenges. With hard work and stronger, deliberate initiatives and activities, we will achieve. We want to take into consideration the short and long-term needs of our system and make adjustments to help us accomplish our mission. We look forward to where God is leading us.” Transforming educational institutions into centers of mission and taking responsibility for ensuring that these halls of learning fulfill their objectives, will be the single-hearted focus of CARU educators.



*Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference Dr. Daphney Magloire addressing the board of education meeting on May 18, 2023. Six months into her role as Education Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, Dr. Daphney Magloire has re-positioned the department to achieve stated goals.*



*Education leaders from across the caribbean gather for their virtual meeting on May 18, 2023. Among those who met for the special board of education meeting are President of the Caribbean Union Conference, Dr. Kern Tobias and Education Director Dr. Daphney Magloire. Image by CARU Media*



# BUILDING BRIDGES: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS WITHIN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Ian Green

In this article, building bridges has to do with reaching across to others outside of one's community of faith – it is about engagement with others. Building bridges is about the engagement of Adventist personnel with public officials, government departments, civil society organisations, religious leaders, members of the academic community, and other individuals of influence in the interest of promoting and protecting religious freedom for all, resolving conflicts, upholding justice, and improving the quality of life of individuals.

Although many Adventists identify the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Department essentially with addressing issues that members face in the workplace and in schools and educational institutions regarding the right of Sabbath observance, the reality is that the department is concerned with much more than Sabbath privileges for Adventists.

When one considers the annual Caribbean Religious Liberty Association (CARLA) Congress, the importance of Public Affairs becomes clearer.

One of the reasons for hosting the annual CARLA Congress is to provide capacity- building training for PARL directors and council members, and local PARL association members

\* in inter-church and inter faith relations

\* as ambassadors for the Adventist Church in their interaction with public officials and other influential individuals in



the pursuit of religious freedom for all, resolving conflicts, promoting justice, and improving the quality of life of individuals.

PARL directors are essentially ambassadors of the Adventist Church in the public realm. They are to ensure that the church has visibility in the public sphere. The PARL directors represent the Adventist identity, and strive to ensure the relevance and credibility of the Church. See [www.adventistliberty.org](http://www.adventistliberty.org)

In its engagement with public officials, PARL leaders are concerned with communicating that the Church is here to make a positive difference in addressing some of the issues faced in the society.

Here, in the Caribbean, there are several areas of public affairs that require our attention. These include:

- The issues of crime, gangs, and recidivism. See Adventist Review, May 24, 2023 for an article on the STOP 'n' THINK Crime Reduction initiative of the St Lucia Mission
- The issue of gender-based violence
- Parenting in the twenty-first century
- The Health and Wellbeing of

the people of the territory of the Caribbean Union Conference.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

There are several matters that require intervention. Adventists need to become more involved in addressing the Health and Wellbeing challenges of the region through involvement in health-promoting organisations, smoking cessation clinics, and advocacy for policies and guidelines to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs). See Childhood Obesity Prevention Scorecard at [healthycaribbean.org](http://healthycaribbean.org)

The April 2023 five-part You Tube series, NCDs: The Christian's Response, in the LET'S TALK programme hosted by South Leeward Conference President and PARL Director, Dr Carson Greene, was an excellent example of public education on the NCD crisis facing the region.

There are tremendous opportunities for building bridges through the expansion of Adventist involvement in public affairs in the territory of the Caribbean Union Conference.

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Ian Green is a member of the CARLA Executive.



The official representation of the Caribbean Union Conference Conference Film Festival scheduled for July 18-20, 2024, on the beautiful tropical island of Trinidad & Tobago. The Film Festival was created and is sponsored by the Caribbean Union of Seventh-day Adventists to nurture young filmmakers in their craft and career development across the region.

## CARU CONTENT CREATORS BOND TO FILM THE BEATITUDES

June 23, 2023 | Port of Spain || CARU Staff

On June 1, 2023, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Caribbean Union Conference launched preparations for a territory-wide film festival, based on the Beatitudes of Jesus. The festival hopes to bring content creators together and celebrate ministry through their skills. The event is expected to elicit participation from church members, media teams, and entities within the Caribbean Union territory and beyond. Two film producers Cheryll Lynda Wilson of the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Simon Victor of the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will direct the production.

The President of the Caribbean Union Conference, Dr. Kern Tobias, affirmed the ministry. He said, "It is incredible how young people in the Church are so involved and are excited because they see how this type of initiative is an opportunity to share the gospel. The fact is when

the Church opens spaces for young people who have so much talent in the audiovisual world, it opens a new door so they can be useful for others to learn about the message of hope that we have."

"The fact that this event will motivate persons who are not necessarily professionals in communication or cinematography (who are church members, pastors, administrators in local fields eager to learn new techniques and involved in such initiatives) is a wonderful step in advancing the gospel to an audience that needs the only hope," said Abel Márquez, Executive Director for Hope Channel Inter-America.

"We are breaking paradigms with this film festival," said Pastor Royston Philbert, Director of Communication for the Caribbean Union. "The film festival is set to include inspiring and impressive cinematography - a first for the region - and will feature short films based on the Beatitudes

of Jesus. The aim is to nurture young filmmakers in their craft and career development, across the region. It is important to hold the film festival to present the message of salvation in a different way. This is all part of allowing teams to gain experience and develop talent; [also] it gives a boost to our intention to establish production centers across the territory."

More than fifty-four participants including communication directors, script writers, actors, editors, and other personnel attended the virtual launch.



The beatitudes of Jesus are found in the book of Matthew 5:1-11 as illustrated. Free image from Shutterstock.com



# NCC RADIO REACH POSITIONED TO SURGE AFTER DEDICATION

January 27, 2023 || CARU Staff



this ministry and was delighted to collaborate with the conference at the dedication. The president of Adventist World Radio, Dwane McKey, and his wife, Kathy, traveled to St. Thomas to attend the historic service. Themed, From Vision to Victory, the celebration recognized those who contributed to the development of the station, including its original owner – Mr. Reynold Charles. Administrators and directors of the NCC swelled the ranks of attendees.

**R**adio ministry in the North Caribbean Conference (NCC) was formally re-launched during a community-wide, hybrid dedication service held on December 11, 2022, on the island of St. Thomas, in the United States Virgin Islands. This successful evangelistic ministry

has been reaching out to the culturally diverse population of the ten-island NCC territory through the powerful WGod (97.9 FM) Radio station, which broadcasts with 10,000 watts of power.

Adventist World Radio (AWR) was integral to the expansion of

The NCC President, Pastor Desmond F. James, and Kathy McKey had the honor of cutting the ribbon; this was a ceremonial declaration that the radio station was ready to continue serving as a licensed entity in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands – and beyond. WGod (97.9 FM) Radio operates under

Creators were invited to produce video clips focused on a short film or documentary, and to register for the celebration which is scheduled to be hosted at the University of the Southern Caribbean in Trinidad, from July 18 to 20, 2024.

Wilson and her team developed an online site to share information related to the festival and to generate enthusiasm among creators as they collaborate. “We want to motivate and inspire people to be engaged as we move to the event one year from now. Attendees will have the opportunity to mix and mingle with filmmakers, actors, writers, and producers in an open and relaxed atmosphere at the University of the Southern Caribbean,” said Cheryl Wilson.



*The festival promotes the inspiration found in the Beatitudes. The stories place raw human experience at the forefront, allowing each short film to unfold the Beatitudes' significance to provoke personal reflection.*

Church leaders plan to make the festival an annual event and Pastor Philbert concluded, “We are challenging them to continue producing a message that can share hope and salvation. We know that the world is moving faster toward destruction, and

it is necessary to be creative in our methods to reach different persons.”

To participate in the film festival, please use this link to register: <https://events.northeastern.org/carufilmfestival#/?lang=en>



the umbrella of North Caribbean Conference Broadcasting Corporation.

“This gospel cannot be blocked,” said Dwane McKey. “This gospel, through the means of radio, is going to the ends of the world. Let us work together to reach the people here in the Caribbean, for the Lord Jesus.”

The President of the Caribbean Union Conference, Dr. Kern Tobias, also shared congratulatory remarks. “This dedication ceremony speaks to your commitment of sharing the message of the Church to your community, as well as other communities,” he conveyed in a letter, read by the Communication Director of the Caribbean Union Conference, Pastor Royston Philbert, during the dedication ceremony. Pastor Philbert added, “We see how the radio must continue reinventing itself to expand its reach, to be

innovative and to create more content adapted with new narratives, new technologies and new audiences – striving to adapt to a convergent ministry.”

During his commendation speech, Pastor Desmond James provided some historical highlights. He said, “At the beginning of January 2021, the North Caribbean Conference announced its ownership of WGOD (97.9 FM) Radio, and its intent to launch an enhanced radio ministry. After months of planning and upgrading [we, with the help of] Adventist World Radio ... arrived at an agreement for the purchase of the radio station. This acquisition could not have come at a more opportune time, when the Church in the North Caribbean Conference is remodeling its media ministry to be more diverse, more inclusive, and more relevant as we give urgency to the proclamation of our message, and the powerful fulfillment of your mission.”



Early in 2022, Mr. Samuel Gregory Molyneux, Resource Engineer for AWR, traveled to St. Thomas to meet with Pastor Danhugh Gordon, WGOD Station Manager, and prepare for the dedication ceremony. Pastor Gordon and his team completed assessments, installed new equipment, remodeled the interior of the building, and painted the exterior, and enhanced the visibility of the logo that branded the inauguration of WGOD (97.9 FM) Radio. A new antenna will be installed to maximize the reach of the station.

Pastor Jerry Languedoc, who leads St. Thomas, District #2, and his dynamic team planned and executed the dedication program; for many of these team leaders, this act of service was a personal statement of gratitude to a radio station which positively impacted their lives, over many years.

“The radio ministry is one of the strategic initiatives of the North Caribbean Conference. People here really want to hear from the Word of God. If we use radio, we can reach them,” said Pastor Wilmoth James, the NCC Executive Secretary and Chair of the NCC Strategic Planning Committee.

According to the NCC Communication Director, Pastor Leriano Webster, the station will offer local programs, 24 hours daily to the United States Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, Saba, and Anguilla.

In addition to a worldwide audience, the radio station will continue to serve approximately 250,000 people, spread across the geographic region of the NCC, including a Seventh-day Adventist audience of about 16,000 members.



# A HEART FOR MINISTRY

May 23, 2023 | Port of Spain, Trinidad || CARU Staff

**W**e must all have a heart for the ministry. That must include a personal ministry program destined to share a book, a pamphlet, or a tract with neighbors, friends, and coworkers." That was the charge given by Dr. Clive Dottin, Field Secretary of the Caribbean Union as he addressed the mid-year meeting of the Caribbean Union publishing ministry board meeting on Wednesday, May 17, 2023.

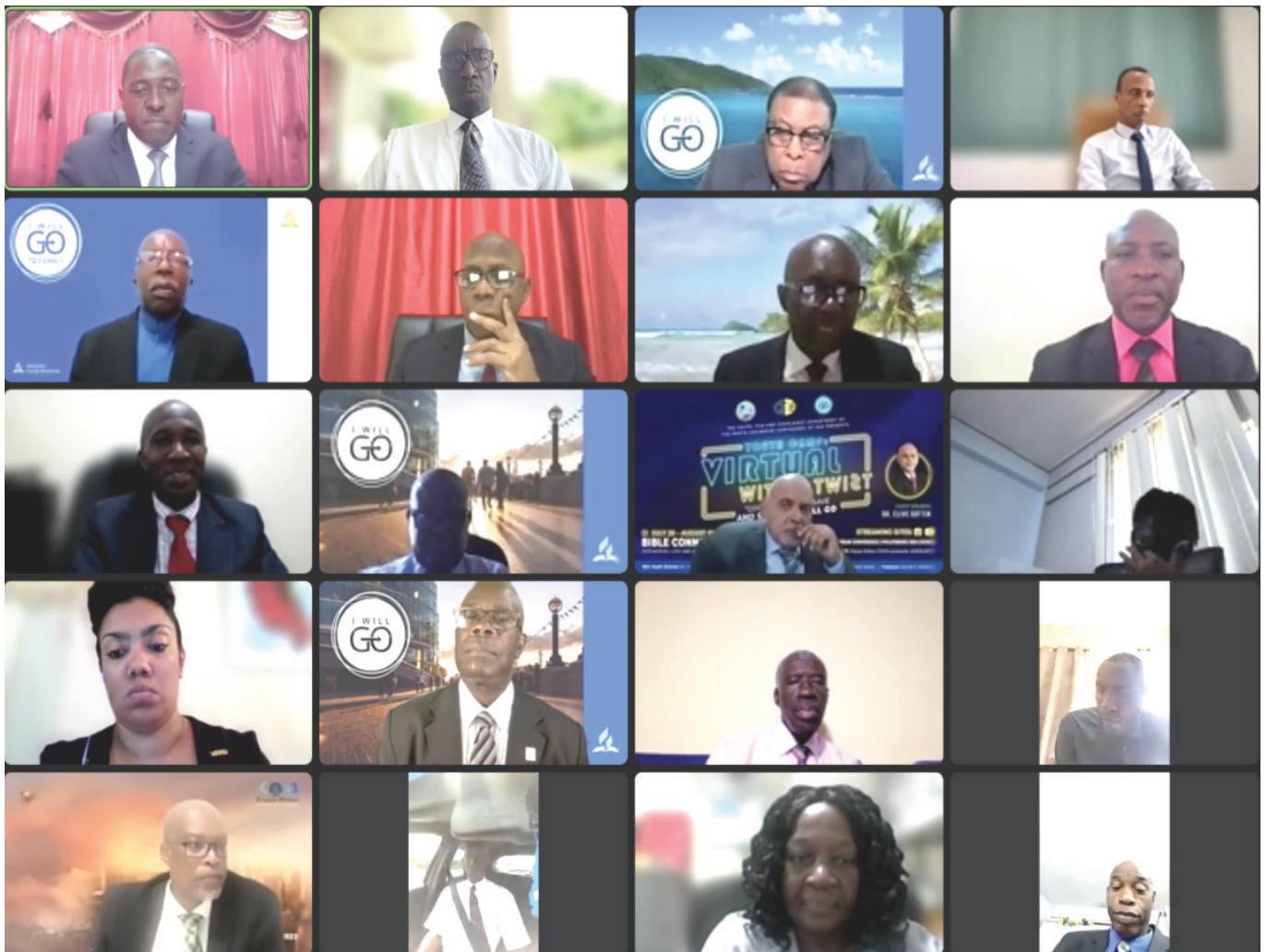
Publishing directors and administrators from across the

Caribbean Union met, virtually, to review the ministry, appoint new directors and make plans to strengthen literature distribution in the territory.

"There are some challenges that must be surmounted" said Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union Conference. "We must go beyond the comfort zone and have a heart for the mission, in this case the publishing ministry since this ministry has contributed so much to the growth of the work in the region."

Leaders emphasized that something moved these people to elevate the publications and as such committed themselves to do "everything to move the ministry back to glory days." "We are committed to give our best for it is in crisis we see the resilience and resourcefulness as those called," concluded Dr. Tobias.

From the Tract Society established in 1870, to the establishing of colporteur or literature evangelist work in 1882, to establishing student literature evangelist program in 1900, to organizing intentional projects for



*Publishing leaders from across the Caribbean Union territory attending the virtual publishing ministries meeting on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. Listed in the meeting are President of the Caribbean Union Conference Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Guyana Conference Pastor Exton Clarke, President of the North Caribbean Conference Pastor Desmond F. James and President of the St. Lucia Mission Pastor Roger Stephen and other publishing board members. Image by CARU Media.*



*Pastor Bertie Henry, Treasurer of the Caribbean Union Conference, addresses several matters relating to policy and literature evangelists.*

mass distribution of missionary literature through church members in 2006, publishing ministries has grown to the distribution of millions of pieces of literature thanks to dozens of publishing houses operated by the church today. “More member involvement is essential to finishing the work of reaching the lost” said Pastor Ashton O’Neil, Publishing Ministries Director for the church in the Caribbean Union Conference.

Leaders received reports of the Union participation in the Great Controversy: Book of the year three-year project sponsored

by the world church and voted their participation for yet another year. “It’s about getting back to mobilizing church members to distribute Adventist literature all around” said Publishing ministry Director for the church in the East Caribbean Conference.

Every year in April a new missionary book is massively distributed around the world. The books are printed at a very low cost so that church members can afford them and distribute them in their communities. Leaders in several fields applauded administrators for helping to absorb the cost so that thousands

of books can be offered free of cost. The plan with the missionary book is to give members an opportunity to get involved, be encouraged, and become missionaries of the printed word.

The meeting affirmed the poetry contest coordinated by the publishing ministry and opted to do everything to strengthen the initiative as a positive association with the ministry that it offers.

Leaders voted the appointment of two new field directors from the Guyana Conference and the South Leeward Conference to the board. “It is hoped that with all fields having supporting directors it will help to give attention to recruiting and encouraging more Literature Ambassadors to distribute our truth-filled literature,” said Pastor O’Neil.

Since taking office the director spent the past almost 5 months of 2023 intentionally learning, investigating, and connecting with Publishing Directors and Literature Evangelists to better embrace the challenges and plan for the mission going forward. A special day, October 28, 2023, was set aside to celebrate literature evangelists across the territory.

A comprehensive overview of the state of the ministry was given by the director. He emphasized the resurgence of the student colporteur program and the contribution they make to the distribution of the printed page.

“In spite of the challenges that we have seen, the Lord continues to provide resources for our literature evangelists,” concluded Pastor O’Neil.



*Dr. Kern Tobias, President of the Caribbean Union Conference addressing the publishing board at their virtual meeting on May 17, 2023. Dr. Tobias encouraged leaders to go beyond the comfort zone and have a heart for the mission, in this case the publishing ministry since this ministry has contributed so much to the growth of the work in the region.*





*IAD President Dr. Eli Henry, North Caribbean Conference President, Pastor Desmond F. James and InterAmerican Division Publishing Association President Pastor Saul Ortiz officiated at cutting of the ribbon to declare the facility opened on April, 23, 2023. Image by Hester Griffin*

## ST. THOMAS ABC BOOKSTORE RE-LOCATES TO LARGER SPACE, ADDED RESOURCES

May 5, 2023 | St. Thomas USVI || CARU Staff

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Caribbean Conference celebrated the relocation of its new InterAmerican Division Publishing Association (IADPA) Bookstore on St. Thomas during a special ceremony on April 23, 2023. The relocated IADPA Bookstore is a 1200 square foot space which includes a newly-added children’s reading corner, a compendium of books in Spanish, French and English, and a wide variety of vegetarian foods.

The move also offers more parking to better serve the immediate surrounding community on the tiny US Virgin Island where space itself is at a premium.

Inter-American Division President

Pastor Elie Henry, who officially opened the store, was pleased with the progress being made in the publishing ministry of the church through the IADPA bookstore.

“As I travel from place to place, it is good to see the support and progress that the publishing ministry has received and is making throughout the IAD,” Henry said. “Books are the way by which the church went to many places. The message came to many regions by publications. Publishing Ministries share what we receive. We must share our experience with others, and the ABC is a starting point for us to spread the word.”

Henry pointed out that, in an age where many are going online

to download, we may think that we are losing ground in publishing. But “books are still being published and we will pray that this center on St. Thomas is a place where we can find the Word of God and find God, and this is where the health message is associated with publishing,” he said.

Pastor Desmond F James, president of the church in the North Caribbean Conference, also expressed support for the initiative. He referred to the relocation of the Adventist Book Center (ABC) as the “continuation of a 50-year legacy of ministry to the community of St. Thomas. It is a great moment to celebrate the vision of great leaders such as William Hamm who was a driving force in the opening of

the book center and the late William Strickland who was the first manager of the ABC. We are looking to bring back the glory of the former years," he said.

The new store serves an Adventist community of more than 5,000 church members and a population of more than 42,000 across St. Thomas/St. John.

Clara Spengler, IADPA Bookstore's regional director, was convinced that "we have so many books that will help the community to deal with those things that we are trying to prevent. An Adventist bookstore is a light wherever it is

located and may the light of this bookstore shine on each person," she said.

"What we are doing is not just about selling a book," said Phil Rogers, manager of the IADPA Bookstore. "But when someone comes to our store, it must be an experience - which is the ambience, the product, and the people. Our aim is to impact the islands of St. Thomas and St. John," he said.

The upgraded facilities now offer a comprehensive collection of reading materials that cater to the needs of church members

and the wider community. These resources not only promote a healthier lifestyle but also enhance their understanding of the world's eschatological position. In his remarks, Pastor Saul Ortiz, President of IADPA made a plea for prayers for those who are experiencing religious persecution, asking that we "take the opportunity to distribute our literature and may God bless us to bring spiritual reform through our books and magazines" as we advance in the overall mission and focus of the church, which is to impact the lives of the people it serves.



*Inter-American Division President Pastor Elie Henry speaking to the leaders, members and supporters at the opening of the relocated InterAmerican Division Publishing Association (IADPA) Bookstore on St. Thomas. Image by Hester Griffin*



*Clara Spengler, IADPA Bookstore's regional director sharing about the bookstore and its offerings to the leaders of the Conference and constituency during the opening ceremony of the relocated bookstore. Image by Hester Griffin*



*Pastor Noel James District, Pastor Glendon Cross, Ministerial Publishing and Family Ministries Director NCC, Pastor Jerry Languedoc President of the North Caribbean Conference, Pastor Desmond F James, Pastor Kendrick Glasgow, Associate District Pastor, President of the IAD Dr. Eli Henry, Phil Rogers National Manager IADPA, NCC, Pastor Pierre Rene Joseph District Pastor, InterAmerican Division Publishing Association President Pastor Saul Ortiz, Clara Spengler, IADPA Bookstore's regional director, Desree Doyle, Regional Manager IADPA and NCC, Pastor Danhugh Gordon, District Pastor and Manager of WGOD Radio*



**FEATURE REPORT**



# **FOOT SOLDIER**

*MATT 28:19*

**ELDER COSMOS EZEKIEL AIRD**



# GRENADA PIONEER LITERATURE EVANGELIST

For 30 years Bro. Aird traversed Grenada, on foot, presenting Christ to the people in their homes, schools, churches, businesses, marketplaces, and at the prisons. Armed with SDA literature and prayer, with simplicity and humility, he faithfully carried out his daily mission, often assuming the role of teacher, storyteller, counsellor, preacher, intercessor, psychologist and social worker.



## BIRTH OF FIVE CONGREGATIONS

Church planting defined the early years of his ministry when Bro. Aird pioneered the start-up of five congregations – Beaulieu, New Hampshire, Grand Mal, Mt. Moritz and Westerhall congregations, now churches.

Bro. Aird recounted with triumph the birth of the Grand Mal SDA church when the leader of the Fire Baptized congregation in the village of Grand Mal accepted the SDA message and influenced All of his followers to do the same. A structure to house this new congregation was then erected

on the site of the former Baptiste mourning ground.

## COMBAT

During the period of the People’s Revolutionary Army, Bro. Aird canvassed with holy boldness. He recalled that on one occasion when he was patted down for ammunition, he pulled out his AK-66, the B-I-B-L-E. Many of the then revolutionaries are now active members and leaders in the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

## SABBATH OBSERVANCE

“I marveled at his consistency regarding preparation for THE Sabbath. All of my life I witnessed dad’s punctuality. Every Friday evening for over two thousand Sabbaths, Dad was always on time to usher in the Sabbath. He guarded the borders of the Sabbath and absolutely kept the sacred hours of the Sabbath, holy.”

On Sabbath mornings, he arrived at church about 8:00 a.m. and



Grand Mal S.D.A. Church



Mt. Moritz S.D.A. Church



Beaulieu S.D.A. Church



New Hampshire S.D.A. Church





remained till sunset. Between the morning service and AY service he could be seen counselling and coaching those who chose to stay at church with him. To dwell in the house of the Lord Ps. 23:6. This was his creed.

**FAITHFULNESS IN SICKNESS**

During the period of his illness, he never gave up on God. In the midnight and wee hours of the morning, he could be heard praying for the work of the Church, the Grenada Conference, the Caribbean Union, the InterAmerican Division, and the General Conference. We wept as he sang “God leads his dear

Children along ...all thru the blood” and “Oh for a Faith that will not shrink though pressed by many a foe.”

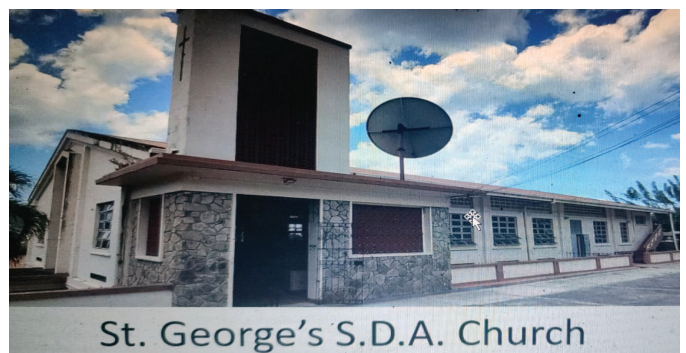
**WITNESS IN SICKNESS**

In the last 24 hours of his life, Almighty God paused death long enough to allow Bro. Aird to do what he loved the most – witnessing and the saving of souls. He autographed and handed over the book THE MINISTRY of HEALING, to a special nurse. Later, he beckoned one particular resident to his side and sang to her -as she recounts it- in strong rich clear tones, the song – Pow’r in the Blood and

then he prayed for her. Yet a few hours later he entered into his rest on the Lord’s Day of Rest, Sabbath Morning of 11 March 2022.

**LIFE MISSION – MATT 28:19**

Bro. Aird never lost sight of his life’s mission. In response to the question why he worked so hard walking across Grenada, up hills, down vales carrying heavy books. He waved his hand dismissively and said softly - “I never worked a day in his life, it was all joy and love for others.” He pledged allegiance to the Lamb and bore the cross so that one day he might attain the Crown.



## NOTICE OF SESSION

The South Caribbean Conference Executive Committee on August 9, 2022 voted to approve the conduct of the 44th Session for the South Caribbean Conference.

Notice is here given of said Session as outlined...

**Date: August 9, 2023**

**Venue: University of the Southern Caribbean**

**Registration: August 9, 2023**

**Registration Time: 2:00 p.m.**

**Paul Philbert**  
**Executive Secretary**

## NOTICE OF SESSION

The Grenada Conference Executive Committee voted to approve the conduct of the 7th Session for the Grenada Conference.

Notice is here given of said Session as outlined...

**Date: August 23, 2023**

**Venue: St. Georges Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Archibald Avenue**

**Registration: August 23, 2023**

**Session Convenes: 2:00 p.m.**

**Oliver Scott**  
**Executive Secretary**



*Elder G. Ralph Thompson*



# ELDER G. RALPH THOMPSON LAID TO REST

Hayden McKenna

On May 20th, 2023, Elder George Ralph Thompson, finished with the troubles of this world, was called to rest. The administration, faculty and staff, students, alumni and friends of the University of the Southern Caribbean express our deepest condolences to the family, relatives, ministerial colleagues and many friends of Elder Thompson. We also join in the celebration of the life of one of our favourite alumni sons whose long, distinguished and praiseworthy tour of duty and service in this world, will long be remembered and brilliantly historicized by our church.

George Ralph Thompson, the son of George Gilbert and Edna Thompson, was born on March 20, 1929, on what was then the British colony of Barbados, (now the Republic of Barbados). His early life was nested in the hamlet of Connell Town in St. Lucy, Barbados' rugged northernmost parish. His parents, members of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, raised G. Ralph as a protestant Christian. In his youth, G. Ralph displayed noble qualities and tremendous promise that did not go unnoticed by members of his community. Young G. Ralph apprenticed as a tailor in nearby Checker Hall with Mr. Fred Greaves who was a member of the Checker Hall Seventh-day Adventist Church. Fred Greaves gave a copy of *The Great Controversy* to the lad. The inquisitive young man read the book and was intrigued.

When A.R. Tucker the then principal of Caribbean Training

College (CTC) - a Seventh-day Adventist boarding school in Maracas Valley on the island of Trinidad, visited Barbados on a recruiting expedition, he, abetted by Fred Greaves prevailed upon young G. Ralph Thompson's parents to send the intellectually curious young man off to CTC.<sup>1</sup>

On March 22nd, 1946, George Ralph Thompson entered CTC.<sup>2</sup> It was in this fertile valley, that lifts its eyes on the south-face of El Tucuche that his preparation for a historic, five-decade long career with the Seventh-day Adventist Church germinated. It was on the CTC campus that G. Ralph Thompson was baptized by A.R. Tucker and became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was at CTC that he was exposed to a fourteenth-grade curricula that prepared him for entry into the gospel ministry. In Elder Thompson's own words:

It is here that my educational horizons were opened up, and apparent impossibilities became challenging and intriguing realities... I can say today with absolute conviction, all that I am, and whatever I might have been able to achieve, I owe to that school in the Maracas Valley in Trinidad.<sup>3</sup>

It is at CTC too that a youthful G. Ralph Thompson also found the time to dabble in constructive extra-curricular activities that deepened his affection for Adventist culture and contributed valuable addenda to his preparation for ministerial service. For instance, he was a member and one of three first tenors in an

outstanding male vocal ensemble called the College Heralds. Their debut performance was held in the College Auditorium in January 1950. Donned in impressive livery, they opened with a memorable rendition of *Where are the Boys of the Old Brigade*.

G. Ralph Thompson had two graduations from Caribbean Training College. He graduated from the twelfth-grade - the equivalent of secondary school completion - in 1948. Two years later, with advanced schooling, he graduated again having completed a two-year diploma course in Theology,<sup>4</sup> which qualified him, by the standards of the time, for entry into the gospel ministry.

Elder G. Ralph Thompson began his long and fruitful career as a minister of the gospel in the La Brea and Point Fortin areas of southwestern Trinidad as an intern pastor under the supervision of Pastor Samuel L. Gadsby. His devotion to God, teachability, genuine love for people, giftedness as an evangelist, and staunch commitment to the mission and unique message of the church quickly attracted pastoral success. Throughout G. Ralph Thompson's remarkable denominational career, he remained steadfastly loyal to these helpful character traits and aptitudes.

In the 1953 to 1954 academic year, Elder G. Ralph Thompson briefly joined the faculty of CUC as a teacher in the secondary school division of the college. This may have been an institutionally organized pre-requisite to



availing an opportunity for him to study abroad at Atlantic Union College (AUC) in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, USA. In 1954, he left for AUC, where he completed his Bachelor's degree in 1956. After his graduation, he was employed as a pastor and teacher in the Lake Region Conference in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

In 1959, he returned to CUC as a member of the faculty. In August of that very year, he was ordained to the gospel ministry in the College Chapel.<sup>6</sup> On June 14 1961, Elder Thompson left for Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA to complete a Bachelor of Divinity degree at the seminary.<sup>7</sup> He returned to CUC in 1962 and between 1962 and 1964, he rose to the status of the Head of the Theology Department and Pastor of the College Church. As head of the Theology Department, he was careful to ensure that the Ministerial Association (the fraternal society for ministerial students) was always vibrant, keenly engaged in public evangelism and spiritual formation activities. One memorable public evangelism campaign of the period, was a series Elder Thompson conducted on Jackson Street in Curepe, Trinidad. In this effort he was supported by his eager students.

Elder Thompson also taught a famous history class of the campus titled "European Survey" which had an elegantly paginated tome for a textbook. This class was famous for its demanding intellectual rigour and its fine tutelage.

Elder Thompson was also a cherished mentor to his students and members of his pastorate. He would succinctly, yet eloquently share ways of seeing and being that would inspire his students to be accomplished but humble. One of the many

students he taught, led to Christ and baptized, recalls him advising that when one receives a promotion one should "step up humbly" and at its end, one should "step down graciously".

The prodigious progress of Elder Thompson as an extraordinary evangelist, pastor and teacher was carefully followed by the Adventist constituency in Barbados and by extension the eastern Caribbean. In 1964, the thirty-five-year-old Elder Thompson, was asked to serve as the President of the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Barbados.<sup>8</sup> Permitting no one to despise his youth, Elder Thompson stepped up humbly to this important assignment. He served the East Caribbean Conference as its president for two consecutive triennia.

The demands of the presidency did not attenuate Elder Thompson's passion for the public proclamation of the gospel. In April of 1967, he established the Faith for Today Radio Broadcast. It aired locally in Barbados and to the islands of the eastern and southern Caribbean.<sup>9</sup>

A flight of denominational elevations would pursue Elder Thompson's outstanding work and preternatural devotion to service. In 1970, he was elected to the presidency of the Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Among the many duties that came with this new role was the chairmanship of the Board of Trustees of his alma mater, dear old CUC. Through his steadfast obedience to God's leading, he acquitted himself well at Rookery Nook.<sup>10</sup>

In 1975, Elder Thompson was asked to serve as one of the general vice-presidents of the

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In 1980, in the midst of theological commotions in the world church, Elder George Ralph Thompson was elevated to the position of Secretary of the General Conference. In this position, he served for four consecutive quinquennia, and towards the end of his tenure, briefly acted as President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His two decades as Secretary of the General Conference spanned the presidencies of Elders Neal C. Wilson, Robert S. Folkenberg and part of that of Elder Jan Paulsen. Elder Thompson's twenty unbroken years in this office, makes him the longest serving Secretary of the General Conference in the history of the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was also the first person of colour and undiluted subaltern heritage to serve in this esteemed position.

Early in his tenure as Secretary of the General Conference, Andrews University conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on this worthy recipient in 1983.

The world church experienced institutional development and tremendous membership growth during Elder Thompson's long stewardship as Secretary of the General Conference. In his report to the 57th General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada in 2000, (his last report as secretary of the world church) he shared that in 1999, an average 2,989 persons joined the church each day or 2.08 each minute of that year.<sup>11</sup>

As high as God elevated his trusted Barbadian servant, he never lost the common touch, his love for people, and his distinct Caribbean personality. There are countless stories of his official and unofficial visits to the

Caribbean especially to Barbados and Trinidad and his stubborn habits of visiting and conducting devotions at the major Adventist institutions there, and making house calls to old friends and colleagues. He manifested none of the trappings of pride and power distance that high office could easily summon. Elder Thompson retired in 2000 after five decades of exemplary denominational service. Even after his retirement, he remained an asset to the church, serving as a field representative for the Ellen G. White Estate and delighting and inspiring congregations with the word, on the special occasions he took to the pulpit. Elder G. Ralph Thompson was also the devoted husband and father. He married Imogene Clotilde Barker (also a Barbadian) on July 19th 1959 in New York, USA. Imogene Thompson was an alumna of CTC and studied at the college from 1948 to 1951. She is remembered as a “strong singer” on the campus. Imogene Thompson, had an accomplished career as a graduate nurse who worked in Barbados, Trinidad, New York and Washington D.C.

He and his Imogene were partners in long life, ministry and in parenthood. Together they lovingly raised three children: Carol Jean, Gerald Randolph, and Linda Mae. They were also grandparents to four girls. Imogene preceded Elder Thompson in 2018.

On July 10th 2023 Elder G. Ralph Thompson’s body was laid to rest in Naples, Florida, USA. Heaven has marked the spot of his interment for disturbance on that great day. May the long life and rich legacy of this extraordinary servant of God to humanity, inspire us to go beyond excellence like Elder George Ralph Thompson managed to do in his lifetime.

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Written by:  
Hayden McKenna

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Caribbean Training College (CTC) began as the Eastern Caribbean Training School (ECTS) in 1927. ECTS was renamed CTC in 1928. CTC was renamed Caribbean Union College (CUC) in 1956. CUC was renamed the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) in 2006.

<sup>2</sup> College Tidings, Commencement Special, 1961

<sup>3</sup> Elder G. Ralph Thompson (as quoted in 100 Plus Distinguished Alumni of Caribbean Union College published in 2005)

<sup>4</sup> In 1947, CTC received junior college status from the Association of Adventist Colleges which allowed it to offer two-year courses in Theology, Teacher

Training and Business and Secretarial Science at the 14th grade level The Making of a Christian College Caribbean Union College 1927 – 1977 by Glenn O.L. Phillips p. 46. Prior to 1947, some of these courses especially Teacher Training were offered by CTC.

<sup>5</sup> College Tidings, Commencement Special, 1961

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> At that time, the East Caribbean Conference, headquartered in Bridgetown Barbados, included the British islands of Anguilla, Antigua, Barbados, Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevis, Saba, St. Bartholomew, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Martin and the British and US Virgin Islands.

<sup>9</sup> Elder Thompson continued the Faith for Today Radio Broadcast even after he was elevated to the presidency of the Caribbean Union Conference in 1970.

<sup>10</sup> The headquarters of the Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is located at Rookery Nook, Maraval, Trinidad and Tobago.







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