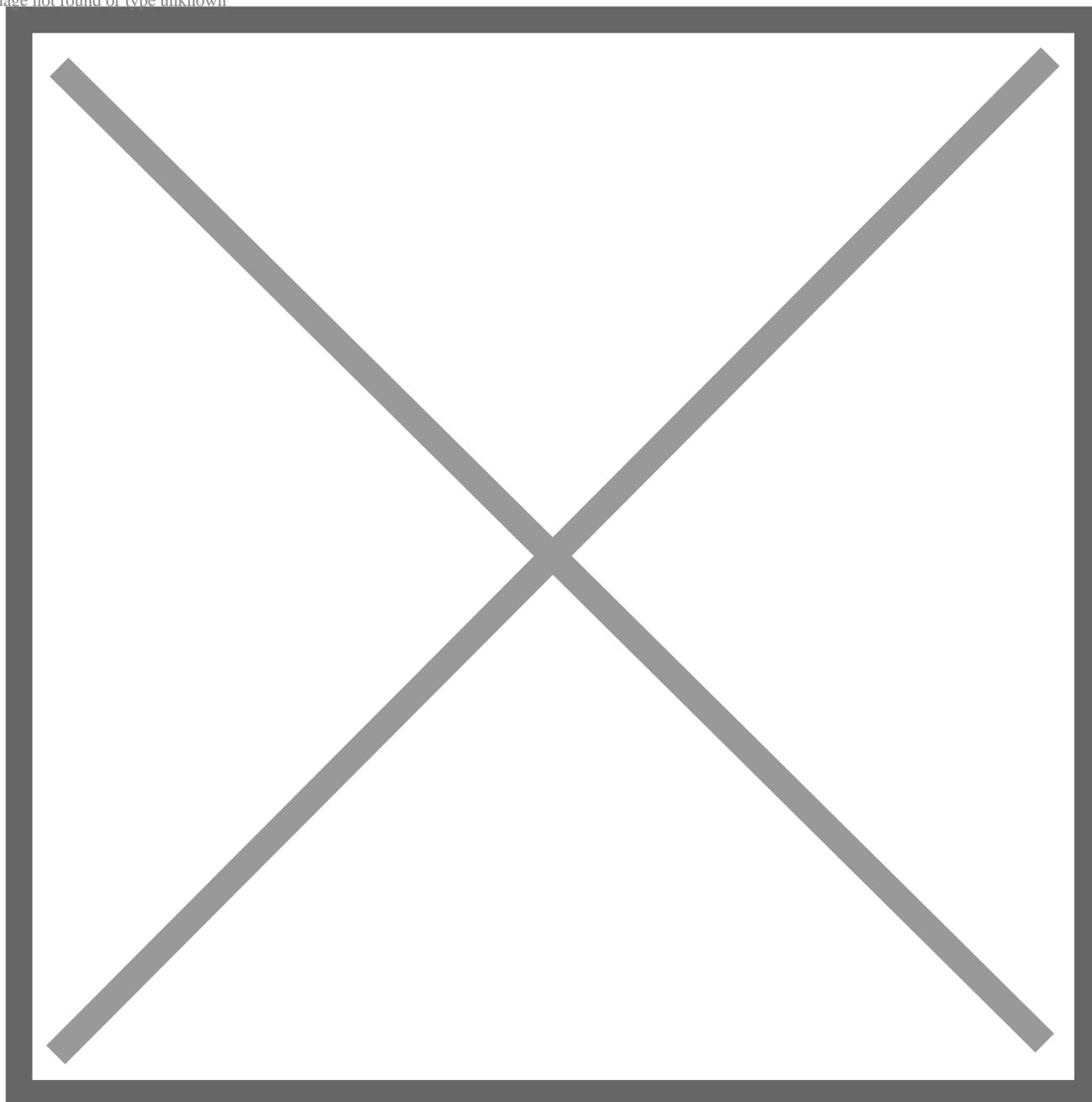


Image not found or type unknown



# Gray, Cornelius Alexander Augustus (1934–2017)

---

**LAURA GRAY**

Laura Gray

---

Cornelius Alexander Augustus Gray was a pastor, evangelist, administrator, and teacher from Jamaica.

Cornelius Alexander Augustus Gray was born December 10, 1934, to parents Francis and Anne McFarlane Gray in Comfort Castle, Portland, Jamaica. He joined five siblings—Walter, Lena, Cyril, Mertella, and Theophilus. He attended the local elementary school where he quickly displayed an aptitude for academia!

When he was still a teenager, the Seventh-day Adventist Church held a series of evangelistic meetings in Comfort Castle. The young Cornelius gave his heart to the Lord and was baptized by Pastor Talbert Shaw. His eldest brother, Walter, had been a member of the SDA Church, so Cornelius had some rudimentary knowledge of the teachings of the church. However, through companionship with the McPhersons from Ginger House (the adjoining district), he met and became best friends with their teenage son Simms McPherson.

When Simms decided to attend West Indies College in Mandeville, Manchester, Cornelius decided to attend as well. His friend matriculated almost immediately, while he started his classes at a later time. His education at the West Indies College (WIC) started in third form of the high school division. Nevertheless, he graduated proudly in 1963 with a bachelor of theology degree. During his long sojourn as a student at WIC, he became an accomplished baker, successful colporteur, and a good debater—one who was interested in and supported the growth and pride of the student body.

After his graduation from WIC in 1963, he was employed as an intern by the Central Jamaica Conference, under the leadership of Pastor H. S. Walters. While serving as an intern in the Browns Town district of churches with senior Pastor Stanley Grant, he would sometimes assume many of the senior pastor's duties in Grant's absence, as Grant also worked at the conference office in Spanish Town. He was then transferred to Clarendon, St. Ann, to work with senior Pastor Basil Henry. There he honed his skills as a preacher, pastor, counselor, church builder, and fundraiser?

He was next assigned to the hills of Clarendon where he pastored eight churches and three companies. It was in this district that he met a young lady named Laura Hind, who was visiting with her friends, the Scotts. The two married and remained married for 49 years. Their union produced three children: Camille, Karlene, and Dean.

In 1968 Cornelius was transferred to the Old Harbour district of churches. In this district he became a centurion, baptizing more than 100 precious souls. During this time, Cornelius began attending extension classes from Andrews University being offered in Mandeville. After attending the classes for a while, he and his wife decided to apply for admission to Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.

At Andrews University, Cornelius completed a Master of Divinity degree and a Doctor of Ministry degree. He subsequently enrolled in the Claremont School of Theology in California, where he completed a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. The topic of his dissertation was "The Biblical and Ethical Elements in the Preaching of Martin Luther King Jr.: A Theology of Black Hope."

Despite having lived in the United States for years, Cornelius longed for home. When Central Jamaica Conference called him home to work, he gladly accepted and left the United States on the last day of 1977. Cornelius immediately started pastoring in the May Pen district of churches. He also served briefly in Manchester, before he was voted into office as president of the Central Jamaica Conference (CJC).

While he was CJC president, the church grew like never before through his emphasis on soul winning, financial responsibility, and empowerment of lay preachers, both men and women. After three terms as president (nine years), he returned to the field as a local pastor, pastoring the St Ann's Bay district of churches. Thereafter he was assigned to the Riversdale/Glengoffe SDA district of churches in St. Catherine, where he served with love, humility, and distinction.

In 1991, Dr. Gray returned to the United States. In January 1992, Pastor William Kirlaw, founder of Maranatha SDA Church, requested that he take leadership of a 14-member group called PemMar, worshiping at Sea Castle Elementary School in Miramar, Florida. Pastor Gray graciously accepted the task and relocated the group to two classrooms at the Walter C. Young Middle School in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Pastor Gray constantly recruited members. Through his consistent efforts the group increased in number and soon relocated to the mini gym that had a capacity for 150 people. Many Sabbaths the gym was filled.

In 1993 the Florida Conference commissioned Pastor Gray to lead the All Nations Church in St. Petersburg, Florida. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and with cooperation of the members, the church grew and purchased a new building. After five years in St. Petersburg, Pastor Gray was reassigned to the PemMar Church.

Upon his return to PemMar, he served as senior pastor for the Kendal Church, Hollywood Church, and Zion Mission. As a result of his leadership and evangelistic efforts, more than 125 members were added to the PemMar church and many more to the other churches.

In 2005, Dr. Gray returned to Jamaica where he lectured at his beloved alma mater, now Northern Caribbean University. He loved teaching and loved his students even more, grooming many young people and young pastors for ministry. When Alzheimer's began to manifest itself, his family took him back to Florida where he spent the rest of his life, until he died on June 20, 2017.

Source

*Eulogy of Cornelious Gray: Celebrating His life; Cherishing His Memories*, by Laura Grey, and children Camille, Karlene, and Dean, July 9, 2017. In the author's private collection.

## NOTES

1.

This article is based on the author's knowledge as wife of Cornelious Gray and *Eulogy of Cornelious Gray: Celebrating His life; Cherishing His Memories*, by Laura Grey, and children Camille, Karlene, and Dean, July 9, 2017.?

2.

Ibid.?

---

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

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