

# Barbados

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## Introduction

The island of Barbados lies south of the Greater Antilles and east of the Caribbean Islands. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the island was more valuable to the British crown than the British colonies on the North American mainland were, and it was considered the “jewel” of the royal crown.<sup>1</sup> The island has a surface area of around 166 square miles. It was first settled by Amerindian groups who had apparently migrated from the Guianas of South America’s mainland. However, when English and other European explorers arrived between the 1580s and 1620s, the last vestiges of Arawakan and Carib civilizations were quickly expunged. The English were the first and only permanent European settlers to occupy the island, and they brought their civilization’s social structures and norms. This included the Church of England of the Anglican denomination.<sup>2</sup> This church became the dominant religious organization on the island. Migrants who arrived later included Sephardic Jews from the coast of Brazil and Quakers who were permitted to erect worship houses, although they were barely tolerated. In the 1760s, Moravians were permitted to establish a mission to preach to the enslaved on sugar plantations and in towns. Wesleyan (Methodist) missionaries arrived in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After these events, a pluralist Christian culture was fully established. The arrival of Seventh-day Adventist literature in at least the 1880s marks the beginning of an Adventist missionary outreach in the region.

The narrative of Adventists’ arrival in Barbados, the wider East Caribbean, and the Guianas has been told several times in various church heritage publications. Typically, the launch of an Adventist presence is tied to the widespread distribution of church literature through the International Tract Society (ITS).

As contemporary narratives detail, in 1883, William Boynton from the ITS persuaded a ship captain trading to the Guianas and the Caribbean to distribute Adventist literature on his arrival. As George Enoch, a pioneering missionary to the Caribbean, writes, this captain simply dropped his package on a wharf in British Guiana (now Guyana). A copy of “Signs of the Times” was retrieved from that bundle by an old man, who related his find to a lady who had visited to inquire about his health. She read the paper and became convinced that Saturday was the original and still binding Sabbath. Others joined her in observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Subsequently, she sent a copy of the Adventist literature to her sister, Ana Alleyne, of the parish of St. Philip in Barbados. The

latter also accepted the Adventist message and began Sabbath observance.<sup>3</sup>

The initial church membership in Barbados, which came about through the distribution of literature that helped Adventism enter the island and region, may be traced to a certain group including Ana Alleyne that apparently met in St. Philip. Their conversion could be directly traced to the arrival of correspondence from British Guiana. The well-organized postal system in Barbados and the steamer and schooner connections to North and South America also facilitated the flow of literature from the ITS.

## Adventist Missionaries and Pioneers

In 1890, the first ordained missionary/minister to the island, Dexter Ball, and a literature evangelist, William Arnold, arrived on the island. At this time, the voluminous correspondence exchanged with the ITS pointed to a previous contact between the ITS and the island's residents. An issue of "The Home Missionary" from June 1890 contains an extract of a letter from the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of Barbados, which was closely associated with the Anglican Church: "I have to thank your society very much for forwarding to our association a package of your publications, which were much appreciated. We shall be very much pleased indeed to receive further supplies..."<sup>4</sup>

Another letter from a religious minister (possibly Anglican or Methodist) reads: "I embrace this hurried opportunity of thanking you for the very interesting literature sent me from time to time, and must acknowledge that not only myself but others have been benefited by it. I find that new light has been communicated to me." This minister enclosed a list of six persons who, he opined, would like to have some of the same literature.<sup>5</sup>

Dexter Ball also spoke about the impact of Adventist literature on Barbadians. When he arrived in November 1890 with William Arnold, they immediately began calling on those whose addresses had been given by the ITS. From this, the formal organization of Adventist work on the island began. It would be appropriate to note that Sunday-keeping churches and their roles in Sunday schools and in the wider education system contributed to the literacy that permitted Barbadians, descendants of both the formerly enslaved and their enslavers, to access the Adventist message.

## Establishment of Adventist Work (1890-1906)

Dexter Ball, William Arnold, L. C. Chadwick, Andrew Palmquist, and William Sweany are the names most associated with the early formal organization of the work in Barbados. Mrs. Sweany and Mrs. H. E. Honeywell are identified as playing an important role in the developing Adventist community, especially with baptisms and a Sabbath school.<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Sweany established a school between 1901 and 1902, which ran for a few years. Mrs. Honeywell appears to have been authorized by the General Conference to travel to Barbados in 1901 as a self-supporting missionary. She might have assisted Mrs. Sweany at the school because A. J. Haysmer, another

missionary who spent some time in Barbados, mentions Mrs. Honeywell with Mrs. Sweany. In many cases over the years, ministers' wives played an important supporting role in building the church work.

With Dexter Ball and William Arnold's arrival, the work in Barbados took on a new intensity. Arnold's forte as a colporteur led to a rapid growth in the distribution of Adventist literature in Barbados and throughout the eastern Caribbean. The two men visited the various contacts whose names and addresses had been provided by the ITS. One particularly helpful contact was Mrs. Parfitt; at her home, the two missionaries met Joseph Worm. He owned a building that he allowed to be used to organize the first church company on the island.<sup>7</sup> In Ball's commentary on this early encounter, he identifies a church membership of about 12 people with others making pledges that, when they had solved problems with their employment, they would join the nucleus of believers. Albert Hall was most likely the meeting place for the church company. In 1891, a correspondent wrote to Ball, indicating that he had attended a meeting with Sabbath believers at Albert Hall, where he heard more than he could ever tell.

Dexter Ball spent almost two years in Barbados and invested time and energy building a somewhat resilient congregation in case of opposition. By the time he left the island due to his declining health in 1892, several laypeople had been trained in missionary work to lead the church in his absence. After Ball left, E. N. Rogers, a layman, led the congregation. Rogers reported that studying the "Testimonies" by Ellen G. White and other literature kept them from disappointment. Even so, news of Ball's failing health more than likely filled the believers in Bridgetown with a sense of abandonment. Still, the resilience of the new converts was also shown in the zeal with which they engaged in missionary work. Among the early converts Ball trained, W. F. Cozier, R. N. Batson, T. Crichlow, and J. Lewis became missionaries to the eastern Caribbean territories. Additionally, the work received a boost through Colporteurs A. Beans and W. Hackett as they were temporarily relocated to Barbados. Their orders from the various publishing houses led to a significant amount of Adventist literature flowing into Barbados and elsewhere in the Anglophone Caribbean.

The following formative years of the Adventist presence in Barbados was led by the second minister assigned to the island, Elam Van Deusen. Van Deusen arrived on the island on January 25, 1896. He was faced with a daunting task as his administrative responsibility extended to the islands of St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Antigua, and St. Vincent. It may also have extended to the mainland Caribbean territory of British Guiana. A report from 1898 states:

The demands have become so great upon Elder Van Deusen that it is impossible for him to answer all the calls, and Elder Morrow and wife, who have been laboring in the island of Bonacca, have been recommended to make Barbados and the neighboring islands their field of labor for the present.<sup>8</sup>

Van Deusen's efforts led to growth in the church population. On his arrival, he counted 29 people in the church's register; of these, 11 had either died, migrated, or withdrawn from the church.<sup>9</sup> However, in three years, with the assistance of visiting missionaries and local lay leaders, there was a new vibrancy. One of the missionaries

who assisted Van Deusen was James Morrow, who wrote:

It is ten years since the message was first introduced into this island, still the population is so dense that comparatively few know of our work. There are evidences of late that the message is taking on new power here as elsewhere. Eighteen have united with the church within the past ten months. This brings the present membership to sixty-six.<sup>10</sup>

One problem facing the missionaries was to locate a venue for the growing congregation. As Morrow writes, the services were held in a rented room measuring 18 by 40 feet. Van Deusen launched a search for suitable premises on which to erect a church and, in June 1900, located a desirable property. On June 5, 1900, he signed a deed of conveyance for a piece of land of 2,308 square feet. The land was purchased at a value of £50 GBP from the Kennedy family who lived in the King Street area in Bridgetown. On that parcel of land, the mother church of Adventism in Barbados was constructed. A stone building was constructed in record time, and it was dedicated for use on September 23, 1900. It may be noted that, in the absence of a formally organized church administration in Barbados, this first deed of conveyance was executed in the names of Van Deusen and his wife, Mary Elizabeth. About 33 years later, an Adventist presence was incorporated in Barbados via an Act of Parliament, which gave the church the right to own land and conduct business under its own name.

## The Work of Laymen (1909-1939)

With the departure of Morrow in 1900, Van Deusen in 1901, and Sweany in 1909, the church witnessed its laity's work over the next 30 years. Among several men and women was Charles Cave.<sup>11</sup> From 1908 to 1939, the year of his untimely death, Cave represented the face of Adventism to most Barbadians and, perhaps, to several people throughout the Caribbean region.

Cave accepted the Adventist message after reading some Adventist literature. He was baptized as an Adventist in 1898 and promptly fired as a teacher in a Methodist school. Following this, he was employed for a while in the fledgling Adventist school, which had been established in 1898 by Mrs. Haysmer. Cave went to the United States between late 1899-1900 to pursue a nursing diploma. At J. H. Kellogg's encouragement, he pursued a medical degree and graduated in 1907. Cave was among a small group of black Barbadians to graduate from a major educational institution with a medical degree during that time. It appears that his intention was to establish an Adventist medical institution upon his return to Barbados.

The pioneer in medical evangelism was G. F. Enoch, who had established a center offering massages, hydrophatic treatments, and applied electricity in Westbury Road in the Bridgetown suburbs. Enoch advertised these services, claiming qualifications as a trained nurse and masseur. Enoch's venture was short-lived as he died of yellow fever just over a year later during a visit to Trinidad. D. E. Wellman, a missionary, apparently ran the clinic after the death of Enoch. Andrew Palmquist, another medical missionary, is also associated with an

early Adventist medical missionary presence in Barbados. In 1899, he wrote of his work in Barbados: "Some of the merchants not only allow me to sell health foods and literature in their stores, but recommend them to their friends. Some of the doctors and druggists patronize me."<sup>12</sup>

Cave prepared for his medical venture in Barbados. He began to establish credibility in articles published in various journals before graduating with his MD degree. He also requested funds from his contacts in the United States for his medical work in Barbados. A notice in the local weekly newsletter indicated that "all those who made pledges at the Hastings Camp-meeting to help Dr. Charles Cave start the medical work in Barbados will pay them as soon as possible. The Doctor expects to return to Barbadoes soon and desires to have the money before going."<sup>13</sup> Cave expected his innovations for Barbados to arouse the suspicion if not opposition of medical practitioners on the island. Thus, he sought to establish the scientific validity of his methodology through a series of published articles.

With Cave's wife, Eudora, and her sister, Mabel, both qualified nurses, Cave established the Hastings Sanitarium, which became a major gain to the Adventist work in Barbados. His name became a byword in Barbadian society. His clientele also came from nearby territories and included patients from the Hispanic Caribbean. Additionally, as a licentiate of the General Conference from 1908 to 1939, he was seen as an administrator of the Adventist work on the island. During the first evangelistic tent meeting in 1917, he was a lead administrator who coordinated the preparatory work. At the end of this effort at which Evangelist M. B. Butterfield preached, over 70 people were baptized.<sup>14</sup> Cave's and his wife's presence at these meetings was deemed important to its success.

Apart from Cave, other laypeople are associated with spreading the Adventist message all over Barbados in collaboration with pastors. To the north, beginning early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, laymen including some who had embraced the colporteur mission were responsible for preaching, giving Bible studies, and generally spreading Adventist doctrine. In September 1904, the work spread as far north as Speightstown. The following year, eight people were baptized with more to follow. In 1906, a report stated: "Brother J. G. Dasent who has been labouring since March at The Gardens, Barbados, reports the organization of a Sabbath school of twenty-two members. Several await baptism here also."<sup>15</sup> Also, a layman from the parish of St. Andrew sold "the *Caribbean Watchman*, and [used] *The Family Bible Teacher* quite successfully. Thus the work is opening up eastward."<sup>16</sup>

Baptisms began in the north after the initial establishment of a church in Bridgetown. The seeds sown from this were to bear a bountiful harvest for years to come. In 1933, about 30 years after Van Deusen preached in the northern Speightstown area, church workers launched a missionary outreach in the same area, resulting in the establishment of an Adventist church in Speightstown.

Another contribution to the growth of Adventism in the north came through Robert Batson, a layman colporteur. He began his missionary work in 1896 selling books in the parish of St. Lucy. He also held Bible studies, and some of his Bible students eventually became Seventh-day Adventists. In 1898, a group of believers

held regular meetings at the home of the Bowen family. By early 1905, the group was recognized as a company, making it the second collective Adventist membership in Barbados after the first was established in King Street, Bridgetown. Batson's efforts also helped establish Grape Hall Church. As he sold books in St. Lucy in the 1890s, Batson invited Pastor Van Deusen to come to the north. As a result, the Bowen and Babb families became pioneer members of Grape Hall Church in 1898.

By 1919, as the new church's membership grew, it had to move to larger accommodations in Connell Town, St. Lucy. Here, Julian Johnson, who later became one of Cave Hill Church's leaders, joined the church after hearing the Adventist message from Pastor Wellman from the Harlem neighborhood in New York. As some elderly members recall, Johnson used to walk from the Oxford district in the parish of St. Peter to Connell Town in St. Lucy to meet the new believers. Early members included Euphemia Boyce, Lilian Corbin, and Missie Greaves who walked from Pie Corner to Connell Town to attend services. By 1902, baptisms began. After meeting in the Bowen family home for some years, the church relocated to Connell Town, to Durhams, and then to an area called "The Risk." In the 1960s, the church's building was constructed where it now stands.

From the year of the first tent campaign, 1917, to the 1930s, the church in Barbados experienced steady, robust growth. This saw the emergence of strong laymen and most success. Christopher M. Greenidge demonstrated intense activity largely in the north, although he also worked strenuously in other areas of the island. He was largely responsible for the launch of Checker Hall Church in St. Lucy.

The establishment of Checker Hall Church led to important developments. From 1926 to early 1927, Wrensford Greaves from the newly-established congregation shared his newfound faith with his friend, Oswald Walker, a joiner by trade and resident of Mile and A Quarter in St. Peter. The books he used were supplied by C. M. Greenidge, who traveled the north of the island selling Adventist literature. Greaves operated a blacksmith's shop at the junction of Mile and A Quarter, Benn Hill, and Rose Hill, and Walker passed by often on his way to and from work. Walker accepted an invitation to attend a church-sponsored picnic and also visited the Checker Hall Church congregation. As a result, Walker converted to the Adventist faith.

The Mile and A Quarter Church was a later development. Walker also became a dedicated layman committed to the Adventist cause, as was relatively common in that era. He later entered full-time ministry in the Adventist Church and was ordained as a pastor on January 11, 1936, at a Leeward Islands Conference session held in Government Hill Church. This church was the largest Adventist church in Barbados at the time.

Charles Gibson was also reported to have traveled 12-14 miles on foot, four or five times a week. Apparently, a benefactor purchased a secondhand bicycle for him to ride, which encouraged him to expand his journey by another six miles. He lacked suitable clothes and asked God to supply his need. The members of a new Adventist church in a central location at Government Hill purchased cloth, and another church member made him a suit. His heavily-used Bible needed to be replaced as well, and he was once again assisted in obtaining a

new one. This intrepid layman's sacrifice bore fruit; by 1936, he succeeded in planting an Adventist church near Oistins in the southern parish of Christ Church, Barbados. This is more than likely the current Cane Vale Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Adventism's Place in the Country

### Early 1930s

The laymen's activity is captured in one of the most significant events in the Barbadian church's history – the 1932 petition to incorporate the Seventh-day Adventist Church under Barbadian laws with the title, "Leeward Islands Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." By this time, Leeward Islands Conference had been established 30 years prior to 1932, and the church had a presence in Barbados for over 40 years. They informed the Barbados House of Assembly on December 1, 1932, that a major reason for seeking to be incorporated was to solve the problem of acquiring a title to church property. It seems that the church had become well-established and won the respect of the decision-makers of Barbados. Thus, on that day, H. W. Reece, a member of the House of Assembly, presented the petition from Leeward Islands Conference requesting the House of Assembly to pass an act to incorporate the conference and allow Adventists to own property in Barbados.

The petition was received and read. In a short time, the Adventist Church received formal, official recognition, leading to the maturing of the Adventist presence in Barbados. Sadly, within a few years, Dr. Charles Cave, the respected Adventist medical practitioner and one of the petitioners, would be laid to rest after a brief illness. Cave was one of the first to witness the Adventist Church's entry into Barbados and was an active participant in the spreading of the word. His funeral in 1939 was one of the largest ever witnessed on the island.

### Late 1930s to 1950s

In 1937, the Adventist church in Barbados had a membership of 988.<sup>17</sup> Between that date and the end of the 1940s, the maturing of the Adventist church in Barbados was evident in the coverage that the church received in local media. Thus, in a 1938 article in Barbados's main newspaper, the "Barbados Advocate," the headline read, "Seventh-day Adventists Commemorate 94<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Two New Churches Dedicated." The article commented on the work that the church had carried out in the island and stated that the new churches would "add materially to the growth and permanency of the work of the Adventist Church in their respective districts..."

<sup>18</sup> In this case, the reference to the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary was clearly referencing the existence of the worldwide church and not just the church in Barbados.

In 1939, the church in Barbados was reported to be planning a major evangelistic thrust that would target some 20,000 homes with up to 13 documents each, summarizing the beliefs of the Adventist Church. This report was presented at the Home Missionary Institute in Barbados with representation from the island's 12 churches. One of the newer churches at Government Hill organized an eight-week series of evangelistic meetings that started

on May 14, 1939. On September 24, after this series and a Sabbath school class, 63 were added to the church membership.<sup>19</sup>

Hillaby SDA Church in the northeast of the island was dedicated in late 1939, and it held a series of evangelistic meetings that led to 41 baptisms and more additions to the church membership. Although this was the picture of success and growth, opposition to the church's message was still rampant. During the baptisms at Hillaby SDA Church, it was reported that one new member, originally a Sunday school teacher and choir member from a different church, narrowly escaped death by her husband.<sup>20</sup> Although these signs of opposition were in play, from the 1940s to the 1950s, the Adventist Church continued its advance in Barbados.

As the church entered the 1950s, new challenges faced church members and the Afro-Barbadian population. In Barbados, political changes brought new expectations in the 1940s. Economic problems faced the working class population, who mostly worked in the agricultural sector for low wages. Church members' responses to this challenge varied. Some sought new opportunities abroad in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in Canada, and elsewhere in the Caribbean. The migration of church members among other islanders did not dent the enthusiasm for evangelism. Thus, on August 20, 1950, the largest single baptism at the time was reported to have 77 new converts. More baptisms were expected that year, bringing the number to over 100.

In 1952, signs of steady evangelism continued to surface. A woman church member continually bemoaned the fact that, in the rural parish of St. Thomas, there was no Adventist church. She apparently bombarded the lay and administrative leadership with letters for action. Thus, a series of meetings held by two laymen, Owen Phillips and Richford Codrington, led to the establishment of a new Sabbath school and unorganized church.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that this eventually led to the establishment of Jackson SDA Church.

#### 1950s to 1960s

From the 1950s well into the 1960s, the socio-cultural footprint of the Adventist Church became more entrenched in the life of the island. An event that contributed to the visibility of the church was the opening of Barbados SDA Secondary School on September 21, 1953. Of particular significance was the island's first Afro-Barbadian Premier, Grantley H. Adams, who would later become Sir Grantley Adams and the first and only Prime Minister of the British West Indies Federation. His presence marked another recognition for the church when, at the opening ceremony, he stated: "I welcome this new venture of yours. Any endeavor on the part of any organization to provide education for the people of this island meets with support from the government."<sup>22</sup> His remarks represented one of the few official acknowledgments of the presence of the church on the island. The school faced problems later, not least of which was public examinations being held on Saturdays. After several petitions to the British authorities, examinations were eventually rescheduled to accommodate Adventists.

Another aspect of the church's growing impact on the island lay in the island's entry into the age of modern communication. Electricity, telegraph, and telephone services had been introduced into the island relatively

soon after their introduction in Britain and the United States. The first submarine telegraph cable had been laid in the Caribbean as early as 1859.<sup>23</sup> Cable links facilitating communications with Europe and North America were in place by the time the first Adventist missionaries arrived. Shipping and air service links in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had further extended the reach of the island and the church. In the 1930s, Radio Distribution, a British company, installed the first wired radio service in Barbados. In the late 1940s, Radio Distribution was renamed "Barbados Rediffusion Ltd." By the 1950s, Rediffusion was broadcasting Adventist messages via the "Voice of Prophecy" radio program. The growth of the Adventist population in Barbados to 2,600 members by the late 1950s reflected the cumulative effect of earlier evangelistic efforts and of multimedia communications to the population. The Inter-American Division leaders commented on this growth in their report: "The growth of Adventism in such places as Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados has almost become an Adventist legend."<sup>24</sup>

The church entered the 1960s with enthusiasm and optimism. Its evangelistic programs had led to sustained growth in membership. Moreover, as more families joined the church, the youth component of church membership offered potential for further development of an Adventist culture on the island. A new class of locally born pastors, some of whom aspired to graduate degrees, was beginning to emerge.

Of the generation of pastoral leaders in the 1950s-1960s, a few contributed in ways that significantly impacted the church's program. Pastor Eric Greaves was the first native Barbadian pastor to assume leadership of East Caribbean Conference in Barbados in 1961, and Roy L. Hoyte's powerful influence let him later become president of the same conference. Another Barbadian who served as a leader of this conference and reached the pinnacle of Adventist leadership in the world field was G. Ralph Thompson.

Two other Barbadian ministers whose ministry began in the 1960s were Kemberton S. Wiggins and Everette Howell. In the case of Wiggins, following his entry into the ordained ministry of the church, he quickly demonstrated outstanding skills as an evangelist and, into the 1970s and 1980s, saw thousands of new converts enter the church as a result of his preaching. Howell demonstrated early promise as an administrator. He began his work with the church as a teacher in the 1960s and, after his entry into the ministry, quickly became the youth director of East Caribbean Conference by the early 1970s.

At this time, the women of the church wished to launch their own public evangelistic tent effort with one of their own, Veteran Bible Instructor Irisdeane Francis, as the speaker. Francis was indeed a legend in her own right. As one of the first Barbadian women trained at the Adventist college in Trinidad, she had labored for the cause in several Caribbean territories, even in some cases being the only face of the church administration to be located in some areas. Francis is also credited with nearly doubling Sabbath school membership in Barbados.<sup>25</sup> It was, therefore, fitting that she would be asked to deliver the sermons. The resulting evangelistic effort strengthened Black Rock Seventh-day Adventist Church, which was then just over a year old.

By the late 1960s, church membership was almost 4,000, a clear result of the work of ministers and laity and of the spread of the Adventist message through electronic media and SDA publications.

## 1970s to Present Day

By the 1970s, the Adventist Church had become recognized as a solid partner in building the nation. The island had gained independence from Great Britain in 1966, and it proceeded to invest heavily in its citizenry. Thus, Barbados's political administration established an education system that was heavily subsidized by state funds. Students could attend institutions that taught from primary up to university level education with fees that were either eliminated or heavily discounted by the state.

Adventist students who attended Barbados SDA Secondary School could have part of their school fees paid for by the state under this bursary system. However, while significant numbers of Adventist students attended this school, the majority of Adventist families sent their children to state schools. In any case, whether Adventist students attended state-funded secondary and tertiary level institutions or institutions elsewhere in the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom, the island's signature cultural marker was an emphasis on educational achievement. One identifier of progress in the growth and development of the Adventist church in Barbados was the emergence of church members who could be successful locally, regionally, and internationally. The rise of Barbados-born members in the local Adventist church and their eventual placement in the international Adventist movement represent the strength of the Adventist church in Barbados.

By the beginning of the 1970s, the Adventist population in Barbados had reached over 4,000 baptized members with an increase to almost 10,000 by the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>26</sup> This growth in church membership reflected the effects of family consolidation and of the evangelistic thrust of the Adventist mission. From 1960 to 1990, East Caribbean Conference invested heavily in mass evangelistic efforts, importing popular Adventist evangelists largely from the United States. The success of this method was highlighted in 1967, when Caribbean Union Conference reported a baptism of over 3,000 new members, including members from East Caribbean Conference and Barbados.

From the 1970s into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mass evangelistic efforts continued to be the major method of drawing large numbers to the SDA message. Thus, the island welcomed evangelists from the United States – George Rainey, Don Crowder, and Charles D. Brooks – as well as the most successful lay evangelist in the Caribbean, Fitz Henry from Jamaica. Brooks's evangelistic effort following the successful airing of the "Breath of Life" telecast ended with a baptism of over 520 people and the establishment of the Breath of Life SDA Church. Other evangelistic efforts led by Pastor Claudius Morgan and others increased Adventist membership on the island. Collectively, these efforts and several other crusades conducted by local pastors and laymen brought in over 3,000 new members. By 1999, the membership on the island had increased to over 14,000. Further increases were recorded between 2005 and 2016 with the membership reported at 16,900 and 19,436, respectively. It is estimated that current membership exceeds 20,000.

The increasing Adventist membership in the population of Barbados, which rose from about two percent to roughly eight percent currently, is also paralleled by a greater social contrast in church membership. In the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the distribution of Adventist literature was the primary tool to attract interest. Some members of Barbados's upper classes with above average literacy skills were among the first to show interest in this new message. However, the pressure of losing their social status within their groups left many unmotivated to make the required changes. The bulk of church membership up to the 1950s, therefore, tended to be working-class members who were often artisans that could afford to not work in plantations.

As major socio-political and economic reform in the 1940s impacted social and political freedoms, the population's expectations grew, particularly as did freedom from rural plantations. With its emphasis on education and its appeal to the intellect, the Seventh-day Adventist Church slowly attracted more of the professional classes. As the island's economy became more diversified and the educational status of its population improved under the state's provision of educational opportunity to its citizenry, the church could enhance its capacity to attract people who could command respect in various social class elements. Some Adventist members occupied senior positions in the decision-making matrix of Barbados, proving the impact of such reform.

## Adventists in Senior Positions on the Island

Between the 1970s and the present, several of Barbados's premiere institutions listed Adventists among their supervisory staff. A list of principals of the island's 80 state-funded primary schools showed about 12 Adventists. Adventists are also principals at the church's schools. All of these principals have at least a master's degree.

In the legal profession, Adventists have also occupied senior positions. Three of the island's magistrates over the past 15 years have been drawn from the ranks of the church. Emerson Graham has served as a magistrate and has served on several state committees and the executive committee of East Caribbean Conference.

The island's fire service is run by an Adventist, Chief Fire Officer Errol Maynard. Adventists also serve as insurance executives, medical doctors in management posts of health-care institutions, senior civil servants, and members of the political administration. Adventists have served as chairs of various state committees and in leadership positions in various private companies. In summary, the church has been accepted as a full partner in the successful development of the nation.

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