

Manuel, Percy Wilfred (1910–2002)

GLENN O. PHILLIPS

Glenn O. Phillips, Ph.D. (Howard University, Washington, D.C.), although retired, is actively writing, researching, lecturing, and publishing. He was a professor at Morgan State University, Howard University, and the University of the Southern Caribbean. He has authored and published numerous articles, book reviews, and books, including "The African Diaspora Experience," "Singing in a Strange Land: The History of the Hanson Place Church," "African American Leaders of Maryland," and "The Caribbean Basin Initiative."

Percy Wilfred Manuel was a Canadian educator, pastor, and administrator who served as president of both Caribbean Union College (now University of the Southern Caribbean) in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Kingsway College in Ontario, Canada.

Between 1950 and 1957, Manuel was the first Canadian to lead the junior college in Trinidad and its seventh administrator, the second to hold the title of president.¹ Upon his return to Canada, Manuel served as president of his alma mater, Kingsway College. He was a visionary educator and administrator, and a dedicated Adventist pastor who was highly respected for his courage and commitment to Christian Adventist education.

Manuel was the eldest of eight children born on April 11, 1910, to Beniah and Lula (Percy) Manuel in Brantford, Ontario, Canada. He attended and graduated from Oshawa Missionary College Academy (now Kingsway College) in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. His desire to continue his Christian education led to study at Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) where he prepared to enter the Adventist ministry. After his graduation, he pastored in the Potomac Conference serving primarily in Virginia. Manuel married Lulu E. Leech in 1937 and to this union were born two children, Carol and Kenneth.² Subsequently, Manuel served as



P. W. Percy

From Glenn Philipps, *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College 1927-1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977).

a Potomac Conference administrator.

In 1947, Manuel accepted a call from the Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists with headquarters in Trinidad to serve as the union's secretary for its Home Missionary, Sabbath School, and radio departments.³ His passion and vision to help move the work forward across the region quickly became evident to the union's leadership team. In 1950, Manuel was elected to the leadership of Caribbean Union College located in the Maracas Valley. The institution had recently attaining junior college certification from the Inter-American Division Department of Education as well as the Office of Education at the General Conference in Washington, District of Columbia.

During Manuel's tenure, the campus was completely transformed, new buildings were constructed, old buildings demolished, and several other buildings expanded or reconfigured. He became the heart of the growing academic and spiritual climate on the campus. In August 1954, he also hosted the first extension school conducted by instructors from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. The extension school was attended by the college's theology students as well as young ministers from around the eastern Caribbean.⁴ Equally significant was his leadership in expanding the growth potential as well as improving the academic standards of the college for which he was highly regarded throughout his years of leadership. His service at Caribbean Union College was most innovative and continued to lay the foundation for the institution becoming a senior college with the construction and expansion of various buildings, the first theological extension as well as the change in the school's name to Caribbean Union College in 1956 that remained for the next fifty years, 1956-2006.⁵

On returning to Canada in 1957, Manuel was elected to lead his alma mater, Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ontario,⁶ before retiring from administrative work. In retirement, he continued to pastor congregations in the United States concluding in Hendersonville, North Carolina. In his later years, Manuel lived near his daughter in Massachusetts where he died on March 28, 2002. His funeral was held at the Sterling Adventist church in Sterling, Massachusetts. Manuel was predeceased by his wife and son, leaving his daughter, Carol Hawley, son-in-law, Richard, and their family, two sisters, his four grandchildren, six great-grand-children, as well as other relatives and many co-workers.⁷ Manuel's ministry spanned four decades and among other things his work significantly strengthened Adventist Christian education in both the North American Division and the Inter-American Division.

SOURCES

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"Obituary of Percy Wilfred Manuel." Funeral Service for Elder Percy W. Manuel at the Sterling SDA Church, Sterling, Massachusetts. In the author's personal collection.

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"Percy Winfred Manuel obituary." *Caribbean Union Gleanings*, First & Second Quarter 2002.

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1. Eric J. Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891-1981* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1981), 86, 113, 132, 179.
2. "Obituary of Percy Wilfred Manuel," Funeral Service for Elder Percy W. Manuel at the Sterling SDA Church, Sterling, Massachusetts.
3. "Caribbean Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 132.
4. Glenn O. Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College, Caribbean Union College 1927-1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977), 53-57; "Caribbean Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 132.
5. Glenn O. Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College, Caribbean Union College 1927-1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977), 53-57.
6. Obituary at Sterling SDA Church Service, Sterling, Massachusetts.
7. "Percy Winfred Manuel obituary," *Caribbean Union Gleanings*, First & Second Quarter 2002, 16; "Percy W. Manuel obituary," *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, June 2002, 24.

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