

Family Ministries in the Caribbean Union Conference

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Ammaran Williams, Master's in developmental psychology and counseling, is an ordained minister who serves as the ministerial and family ministries director of the Caribbean Union Conference. He served as a minister in the Virgin Islands and the islands of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Barbados for about 39 years. He is married to Ann and has three daughters.

Family ministries in the Caribbean Union Conference can trace its formal development to North Caribbean Conference (NCC) when, in 1983, Pastor Jansen Trotman, NCC executive secretary and stewardship director, developed a series of stewardship ministries titled "Stewardship of the Family." The positive response highlighted the need for a greater focus; hence, in 1985, Pastor Trotman was named director of family life.

The growth and development of family ministries was primarily fueled by the needs felt in the Caribbean Union Conference's congregations. Several leaders sought to respond to such needs but lacked specialized skills to adequately address issues faced by families. This objective was realized through Pastor Jansen Trotman's initiative when a relationship was forged with Family Life Workshop (renamed Family Life International) of the North American Division. Many of the pastors and lay leaders in the Caribbean used this joint venture to receive training and certification as family life educators. The level of participation from the Caribbean was so significant that arrangements were made to convene some of the modules for certification in the region.¹

Following NCC's lead, the Caribbean Union Conference established its own family life department in November 1988 with Pastor Cyril Horrell as its director. After this, the Caribbean Union Conference gave priority to the area of family life. All the conferences and missions throughout its territory established their own family life departments and named directors. In 1991, Pastor Clyde Thomas was named family life director of the Caribbean Union Conference and given the responsibility of building on what was started. He was followed by Pastor Trotman in 1993. Pastor Andrew Farrell succeeded him in 1995 and, as of 2018, has gained the distinction of serving the longest as director.²

In addition to the training opportunities offered to leaders in the Caribbean by overseas entities, family life materials were mainly sourced from outside the region as well. A number of these materials were also developed by individuals from within, such as the "Family Life Lessons and Evangelism" series by Gordon Martinborough, the "Pre-Marital Workbook" by Jansen Trotman, and the "Family Life" tracts by Nord Punch.³

Whereas the Seventh-day Adventist Church's family ministries department can trace its beginnings to over 100 years ago, the history of family ministries in the Caribbean is fairly young. However, the richness and passion associated with this ministry in the Caribbean Union Conference outweigh its relatively short history.

NOTES

1. Jansen Trotman and Clyde Thomas, interview by Ammaran Williams, Port of Spain, Trinidad, July 3, 2019.
2. Andrew Farrell, interview by Ammaran Williams, Port of Spain, Trinidad, August 13, 2019.
3. Jansen Trotman and Clyde Thomas, interview by Ammaran Williams, Port of Spain, Trinidad, July 3, 2019.

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