

Calkins, Glenn Alwin (1887–1962)

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."

Glenn Alwin Calkins was born May 5, 1887. As the third president of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Calkins served in the position for two distinct terms: 1941-1947 and 1951-1954.¹ Prior to coming to this region, he held various administrative leadership positions within the North American Division. Elder Calkins accepted the Adventist faith in 1919, gave up his business, and soon thereafter enrolled at Pacific Union College.

Following graduation, he entered denominational work. He initially was business manager of the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital; then vice president of the South California Conference in 1927; followed by becoming president of the South East California Conference during 1927-1930; and then comptroller of the College of Medical Evangelists, 1931-1934.²

Calkins succeeded Elder Grant A. Roberts as president of the Inter-American Division. He was elected division president at the May 1941 General Conference Session held in San Francisco, California,³ just before the U.S. entered World War II. He had to quickly plan the relocation of the division headquarters which had been located in the U.S. Canal Zone almost from the division's inception.

Elder Arthur H. Roth wrote about Calkins' leadership and impact in the May 1962 edition of the *Inter-American Division Messenger*. He said, "Elder Calkins was a leader of clear spiritual vision. The prayers he lifted to the throne on behalf of the members, the workers and God's cause moved many a heart to deeper consecration



Glenn Calkins, IAD President 1951-1954

From *Changing Lives in Inter-America, 1922-1997, 75 Years of Miracles* (Miami, FL: IAD Publishing Association, 1997).

and dedication...."⁴ Calkins also sought to increase the division's efforts to conduct the most ambitious evangelistic meetings using goals that had never been used before. Early in his leadership of the division he felt that more lofty goals should be set to motivate the ministers and the laity to work to increase the division's membership. He wrote in the February 1943 edition of the *Inter-American Division Messenger*, "...instead of 5,000 baptisms a year, we should be baptizing 15,000 or 20,000 or even 25,000 new members each year. I believe this is a goal towards which we should bend every effort in the days that still remain in which to labor for the salvation of souls."⁵

Adventist historian Floyd Greenleaf, who carefully reviewed Elder Calkins' presidential tenure, observed, "...It was Glenn Calkins six-year presidency beginning in 1941 that formed the setting for Inter-America's transitional years. When he resigned in 1947 to get some rest, he pointed with noticeable pride to his accomplishments—a tripling of the number of secondary and training schools, two medical institutions, nine doctors on the denominational payroll and 42,000 baptisms." Greenleaf continued, "...For the record he could have added more to his list—the transfer of the Division headquarters two times and the formation of the British West Indies Union."⁶ The growth of the church membership was outstanding across the division with members worshipping in approximately 800 churches.⁷

Calkins became seriously ill in late 1947 and his doctors suggested he resign—which he did. Consequently, Elder E. F. Hackman became president and served for three years before Calkins resumed his role as president between 1951 and 1954.⁸ After Elder Calkins' presidency, he served as a General Conference field secretary from 1955 until his retirement in 1958. He passed away on April 11, 1962, in Loma Linda, California.⁹

SOURCES

"Glenn Alwin Calkins." *ARH*, July 5, 1962.

Greenleaf, Floyd. *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin American and the Caribbean*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second revised edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Glenn Alwin Calkins."

NOTES

1. Floyd Greenleaf, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin American and the Caribbean* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), 2: 138, 260.
2. "Glenn Alwin Calkins," *ARH*, July 5, 1962.

3. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, second rev. ed. (1996), s.v. "Glenn Alwin Calkins."
 4. "Elder Glenn Calkins," *Inter-American Division Messenger*, May 1962, 3.
 5. Greenleaf, 142.
 6. *Ibid.*, 140.
 7. *Ibid.*, 260.
 8. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1947, 116.
 9. "Glenn Alwin Calkins," *ARH*.
-

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