



Kembleton S. Wiggins

From his memorial service program held on July 12, 2020.

Wiggins, Kembleton S. (1938–2020)

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."

Kembleton Samuel Wiggins was a charismatic Barbadian evangelist, pastor, teacher and counselor for over thirty-five years, serving in the eastern Caribbean and the United States. In the late 1960s he developed innovative methods of public evangelism that introduced insightful social and psychological concepts that transformed the conducting of evangelistic crusades.

Early Life and Education

Kembleton Samuel Wiggins was born on October 24, 1938 in Bridgetown, Barbados as the eldest son of five children to William H. and Eudine (Carver) Wiggins. His St. Lucian born father was a naturopathic doctor. From his youth Kembleton excelled in his studies. He attended the St. Giles Boys School in St. Michael, before almost completing his high school education at Combermere, one of the colony's elite secondary schools in Bridgetown. His final year of high school was at the newly established Barbados Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School. He became one of its first graduates in June 1954.¹ It was during his time at Barbados Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School that he decided to become an Adventist minister.

In September of 1957 he enrolled at Caribbean Union College (now the University of the Southern Caribbean) in Maracas Valley, Trinidad. He graduated in 1959 with an associate degree in Theology. For his ministerial internship he worked in St. Lucia with Elder C. J. Quashie, and then continued his studies at West Indies College (now North Caribbean University) in Mandeville, Jamaica receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology in 1962.

On July 7, 1962 Wiggins married Valerie Marguerite Raymore, a fellow 1962 graduate of West Indies College and a talented singer. Together they became an impressive evangelistic team and to this union came two sons, Christopher and Peter.²

Ministry

After completing his studies in Jamaica, Wiggins returned to the eastern Caribbean and taught at the Carrot Bay Adventist School in Tortola, the British Virgin Islands. However, by the autumn of 1964, he received an invitation to join the staff of the Barbados Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School near Bridgetown, Barbados. Wiggins taught the Bible classes as well as other classes where he introduced his students to critical thinking through his book *Straight and Crooked Thinking*. During these years he also felt a call to return to public evangelism and began using new methods in conducting these public meetings. His new methods proved to be remarkably successful, resulting in many baptisms in Barbados.

G. Ralph Thompson, president of the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists invited Wiggins in 1967 to be one of the district pastors in Barbados. Immediately, Wiggins held frequent crusades attracting larger audiences than had been the norm and established many new congregations across central Barbados. In the

summer of 1969, he was ordained and continued to lead the East Caribbean Conference in soul winning. Pastor Wiggins also shared his methods with his fellow pastors and laymen in evangelistic workshops and conference meetings.

During the 1970s Elder Wiggins' evangelistic methods used by him and other evangelists produced remarkable results across the Caribbean Union. Each year the increasing numbers of pastors and laypersons used Wiggins' methods. They were recognized as "centurions" because they baptized hundreds of people. In 1972 Elder Wiggins was appointed evangelist for the Caribbean Union Conference and continued conducting city crusades and workshops across the region. In 1973 his crusades resulted in 1,065 converts including one crusade in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad that concluded in 265 new Adventists.³

In 1975, Elder Wiggins conducted one of his most extensive crusades in Georgetown, Guyana that attracted thousands of attendees and resulted in the baptism of 345 converts. Chartered buses had to be used to get all the candidates to the site of the baptism. His success caught the attention of church leaders around the world.

Elder Wiggins continued his formal education at the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan beginning in the fall of 1975 to further study his successful public evangelism methods and examine the psychological innovations that he had introduced in his approach to evangelism. He also prepared a twelve-chapter narrative that carefully detailed his methods. This innovative instructive guide entitled *Soul Winning Made Easier: The Psychology of Getting More Decisions* was published in 1975 by the Pacific Press Publishing Association. He completed his doctoral studies in Ministry with an emphasis on Social Psychology in 1978.⁴

Elder Wiggins and many church leaders believed that his methods would also be effective across the Inter-American Division and in other parts of the world. Nevertheless he also desired to dedicate his years to training the youth of the Church in the Caribbean and was appointed as professor of Theology at his alma mater, Caribbean Union College. From 1978 to 1984, Dr. Wiggins taught a wide range of college courses in the Department of Theology that ranged from Greek to various Bible courses, Public Evangelism and Public Speaking. Additionally he held evangelistic meetings and mentored many students.

With the desire to have his methods reach a wider and more international audience, in the summer of 1984, Dr. Wiggins accepted a call to be pastor/evangelist for the Texas Conference in Austin, Texas.⁵ While serving there he also preached at numerous congregations across the United States and conduct public evangelism workshops.

In 1986 Dr. Wiggins accepted his last pastoral assignment in Keene, Texas. He soon established his counseling and consulting company and continued to preach and conduct seminars as well as mentor many young Adventists.

Demise and Contribution

Kembleton Samuel passed on May 26, 2020 in Keene, Texas having had his wife predecease him on April 29, 2019.⁶ Two memorial services were held in his honor. The first was held on June 20, 2020 by his immediate family in Keene, Texas. The second was conducted on July 12, 2020 by the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Bridgetown, Barbados. During both memorials, numerous of his friends, former students, family members, fellow evangelists and pastors expressed their deep appreciation for the lasting evangelistic legacy of Dr. Wiggins.

During his over 40 years of church service in the East Caribbean Conference and the Caribbean Union of Seventh-day Adventists, he was highly respected for his charm, intellect, unique abilities, and faithful commitment to the spread of the Three Angels Message.⁷

His soul winning methods attracted hundreds of non-Adventists to his evangelistic crusades and resulted in many baptisms across the Caribbean Union of Seventh-day Adventists, from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Guyana in South America. During 1973 he baptized over one thousand converts and was the leading soul winner across the Inter-American Division.⁸

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Beverley Wiggins-Fleming email to Glenn Phillips, July 12, 2020; "Dr. Kembleton Wiggins," obituary, *Cleburne Times Review*, published May 29, 2020, accessed April 14, 2021, <https://obituaries.cleburnetimesreview.com/obituary/dr-kembleton-wiggins-1079284841>.
 2. *Caribbean Union College Bulletin* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1972), 71.
 3. G. Ralph Thompson, "K. S. Wiggins Union Evangelist and Ministerial Secretary," *Caribbean Union Gleanings*, First Quarter, January 1972, 4.
 4. *Andrews University Alumni Today* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: College Press, 2013), A119.
 5. Beverley Wiggins-Fleming email to Glenn Phillips, July 12, 2020.
 6. "Dr. Kembleton Wiggins," obituary.
 7. Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventists in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891-1981* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1981), 193; "Pastor Wiggins with His Thousandth Convert For 1973," *Caribbean Union Gleanings*, Fourth Quarter 1973, 11.
 8. Floyd Greenleaf, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Volume II (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1992), 347, 8; "Pastor Wiggins with His Thousandth Convert for 1973," *Caribbean Union Gleanings*.
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