

Image not found or type unknown



Jamaica

BERTRAM MELBOURNE

Bertram Melbourne, Ph.D., author, preacher, and scholar, is a professor at Howard University School of Divinity, pastor at Rockville SDA Church, and founder of "Collaborate to Educate Our Sons," an organization designed to facilitate caring relationships and education for boys and young men. He was chair of the religion departments of Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) and West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University). He is married and has three children.

Jamaica is an island in the Caribbean Sea about 146 miles long and 51 miles at its widest. It is 4,244 square miles (10,991 square kilometers).¹ This paradise isle renowned for exquisite white sand beaches, rich bauxite ore, luscious

tropical fruits, enchanting cuisine, world-beloved music, and a proud people has a lush topography marked by mountains, rainforests, and reef-lined beaches. There are an estimated 2.7-2.9 million people on the island and many others in the Jamaican diaspora. It has a rich tapestry of peoples: African, English, Spanish, Hispanic, German, East Indian, Chinese, Syrian, French, Jews, Lebanese, and Irish.

As of June 30, 2018, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in Jamaica had 703 churches and a membership of 310,762. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica is governed by the Jamaica Union Conference (organized in 1944 as British West Indies Union Mission) that is comprised of Central Jamaica Conference, East Jamaica Conference, North East Jamaica Conference, North Jamaica Conference, and West Jamaica Conference.² As of 2017, 160 ordained and four commissioned SDA pastors served in Jamaica.³

Historical Background

When Christopher Columbus reached Jamaica in 1494, he found Arawak Indians, who had arrived much earlier from South America. They called the island Xaymaca: “land of wood and water.” It was phonetically changed to Jamaica by the Spaniards during their occupation. Columbus claimed Jamaica for Spain in 1494. It stayed a Spanish colony until 1655, when England captured it.⁴ It remained British until it gained independence in 1962. The English harnessed it for its natural resources, especially sugar cane, bananas, tobacco, and coffee.

The first Africans arrived in Jamaica in 1513 as the Spanish slaves and were freed when England captured Jamaica. They became the Maroons. Later, English landowners took more Africans to work on sugar plantations, while East Indians – the largest Jamaican ethnic minority – arrived as indentured servants between 1845 and 1917, as did Chinese (1849), Germans (1834-1838), Irish (starting in 1665), and Scots (1865).⁵ Syrians and Lebanese went to Jamaica voluntarily in the late 19th century to avoid religious persecution at home.⁶

Today, 90% of Jamaicans are of African descent followed by Indians and Irish. Many Jamaicans, even those of African descent, are a medley of these races. Jamaica is a 57-year-old independent nation, gaining it in 1962. Its official language is English, though most of the people also speak Patois. It is a combination of English and West African languages, notably Akan, but with traces of other languages.

Political Structure

Jamaica is a member of the British Commonwealth. Patterning the British Parliamentary system, it is a parliamentary democratic constitutional monarchy. The Queen of England is head of state. A governor general appointed on the prime minister’s recommendation represents the Queen of England on Jamaican soil.⁷ Currently, the governor general is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister. The prime minister, who is speaker of the house and minister of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, professes Seventh-day Adventism. This is true of other members of Parliament, including the prime minister’s wife.⁸

Jamaica has a two-party system. The prime minister is the head of government. Usually, the head of the winning party in an election is officially appointed to that office by the governor general. Members of the losing party constitute the opposition. Its head is called the leader of the opposition and is appointed to office by the governor general. Both are nominated to office by virtue of being head of their respective parties. The main policy-making body is the cabinet. It is made up of the prime minister and ministers of government. Parliament is made up of the senate and the house of representatives. Members of the house are elected by the people in general elections that are constitutionally due every five years. Senators are appointed by the governor general upon recommendation of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.⁹

Religions of the People

Jamaica has been known as a religious nation. Religion has an important place in Jamaican society. Freedom of worship is enshrined in the constitution. The Church of England was the island’s only established church until 1870!¹⁰ Since then, other religions practice freely.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church entered Jamaica in 1890, and it constitutes 12 percent of the population. The second-largest denomination (11 percent) is the Pentecostals. Other Protestants in Jamaica include the Church of God, Baptists, Anglicans, United Church, Methodists, Moravians, Brethren, and Pocomania. Christian religions other than Seventh-day Adventists include the Roman Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Latter-day Saints, and Rastafarians, who see *Haile Selassie* as God incarnate or Jesus in Second Advent state. Other religions include the Ethiopian Orthodox, Hindu, Jews (one of the oldest in the Western Hemisphere), Muslims, Buddhists, and Bahia!¹¹

Affiliations

As a former British colony, Jamaica has had alliances with Britain and the commonwealth. Jamaica has entered wars with Britain but has not conducted any wars. It holds membership in the CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and the OAS (Organization of American States). Its proximity to America’s mainland and migration of Jamaicans to America speak for the close relationship between these neighboring nations. Education has been crucial to Jamaicans.

Successive governments and religious bodies have made it central to their work. So, nine-tenths of women and four-fifths of men are literate.¹² Primary education is obligatory and free.

Origins of Adventism in Jamaica

Adventists' arrival in Jamaica has been recorded to have been in 1889 or 1890. It is typically associated with colporteur William Arnold, who sold a book to Henry Palmer in Antigua, who sent it to his son, William Palmer, in Jamaica.¹³ While some see this as the beginning, Adventism's arrival actually predates this. Prior to receiving the book from his father, William had encountered Adventism. The International Tract Society commissioned by the General Conference to oversee worldwide book and tract distribution engaged ships to circulate literature worldwide. One such shipment made its way to Kingston's wharf, and one piece of literature got to William Palmer. Not fully understanding its contents, he laid it aside for a later day.¹⁴

While Palmer awaited a more opportune time, he received Edson White's "The Coming King" from his father!¹⁵ It intrigued and moved him to action. He became a Sabbath-keeper and produced the first documents about Adventism in Jamaica.¹⁶ He wrote to the International Tract Society, giving his decision and seeking more information. The society's secretary, Mrs. S. L. Strong, responded to his letter on January 12, 1890, offering resources from London and Battle Creek.¹⁷ There were several letters between them, indicating ongoing correspondence. When the resources arrived, he distributed them throughout Kingston.¹⁸

One recipient of Palmer's distribution was Dr. Ross. Not interested, he gave the packet of tracts to a social worker, Margaret Harrison, an upper-class Jamaican woman of British descent.¹⁹ One tract was called "Elihu on the Sabbath." Though convinced about Sabbath-keeping, she did not embrace it immediately. The packet of tracts contained a note inviting the recipient to correspond with Mrs. S. L. Strong of the International Tract Society. She took the offer and wrote to Mrs. Strong, who sent more literature. Ongoing correspondence developed between them.²⁰ Shortly after, three women from her St. George's Anglican Church approached Mrs. Harrison, questioning the legitimacy of Sunday worship. Expressing her own discomfort on the matter, she shared the tract she had just read. They also were convinced but hesitated to make the final move.²¹

One Sunday, as they recited the commandments and sang, "Lord have mercy on us and incline our hearts to keep Thy law," they became persuaded that the words also applied to the seventh-day Sabbath and decided to begin keeping the Sabbath. In September 1891, Mrs. Harrison wrote to Mrs. Strong, outlining her plan to begin keeping the Sabbath on September 12, 1891.²²

At the time, a Sabbath-keeping group met at Mr. Palmer's home on Prince Albert Street in Allman Town. Some say it was five or six people while others say four or five families.²³ The evidence supports six people. In 1892, L. C. Chadwick, president of the International Tract Society, visited Jamaica to evaluate its growth. His visit is attributable to the constant flow of correspondence between Palmer and the International Tract Society and to developing interests in the field. In at least two letters to Palmer, Strong mentioned the impending visit of Chadwick to Kingston. Following his visit, Chadwick reported a group of six people worshipping at Palmer's house.²⁴ After a 17-day tour in which he preached many sermons,²⁵ Chadwick returned and made recommendations to the Foreign Mission Board based on the potential he saw. He reasoned that Jamaica was a place "where certain ones of our laborers could doubtless do more effective work than in northern climates."²⁶ The board voted to immediately send J. A. Patterson to Jamaica to introduce the canvassing work and to allocate \$700.00 to send A. J. Haysmer and his wife to Jamaica.

Patterson, the first African-American to be sent as a missionary, arrived to Jamaica in July 1892.²⁷ It seems he soon got frustrated and advised that a white colporteur would be more effective. He went to Haiti, and B. B. Newman, a white man, replaced him. As the number of Sabbath-keepers grew, correspondence between the tract society and both Palmer and Harrison increased. In at least one piece of correspondence, Mrs. Strong referenced Palmer's request for help regarding the canvassing work and his desire for a minister, "which you so much desire, and which I believe you ought to have."²⁸

In January 1893, Margaret Harrison decided to visit Battle Creek, Michigan. Some say she was ill and needed treatment at Battle Creek Sanitarium. Woods wrote about her desire to attend that year's General Conference session and noted how God opened a path for her.²⁹ Haysmer confirms this notion, stating "myself and family, accompanied by sister Harrison of Kingston, who had been to America to attend the [General] Conference, left Battle Creek, May 19..."³⁰ Perhaps both accounts could be correct. She might have had medical consultations while in Battle Creek, but her presence before and after the session indicates an extended stay that could have been medically related. This conclusion is sustained by a letter to Brother Palmer dated December 16, 1892, in which Mrs. Strong references the illness of Sister Harrison and expresses hopes for her recovery.³¹ Nevertheless, Mrs. Harrison was baptized while visiting Battle Creek and, thus, became the first Jamaican Seventh-day Adventist.³²

While attending the General Conference (GC) session, reports indicate she made a passionate appeal on behalf of the work in Jamaica. She specifically requested that a missionary be sent there.³³ Her request did not go unheeded. The GC Daily Bulletin of March 6 reports that a March 5th session accepted the recommendation of the committee on distribution of labor that A. J. Haysmer and his wife, who had been assigned by the missions board to go to the West Indies, be sent to Jamaica to labor.³⁴ The Sabbath School offering for December 1892 had already been allocated to the West Indies. Now, a portion was assigned for their support.³⁵ Haysmer and his family went to Jamaica on May 19, 1893, arrived on May 26, and set to work the very next day. F. I. Richardson reported that Haysmer baptized eight people, including his son.³⁶ As the number of attendees grew, Palmer's home became too small. They moved worship to Mrs. Harrison's home at 1 Law Street until they outgrew it and rented premises at Higholbourn Street.³⁷

The next nine month's work "appears to have been particularly difficult and perhaps even frustrating."³⁸ Haysmer worked in Kingston but also traveled elsewhere, including Falmouth and Montego Bay, where he reported good interest.³⁹ In February 1894, Mrs. Haysmer described progress to "The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald." She told of work in Port Antonio, where a Baptist minister and his entire congregation were studying to become Seventh-day Adventists.⁴⁰ Yet, those nine months seemed to have produced only three more baptisms. A turn came in the tenth month, when Haysmer held meetings in Kingston, culminating on March 5, 1894. On March 2, he baptized 20 people, which brought the total membership to 37, including some transfers from the United States. That very day, they organized a church.⁴¹

While this is unquestionably the first organized church in Jamaica, it appears the Palmer group was not the first group on the island to practice Sabbath-keeping. There is oral evidence of Sabbath-keeping some 13 years prior to Palmer's receipt of the tract on Kingston's wharf. Nola McIntosh of the Sheffield SDA Church in Westmoreland reported that her great-great-grandfather, Daniel Barnes, knew a gentleman in Sheffield who kept the Sabbath in 1876. McIntosh's grandmother told her about her great-great-grandfather, who gave Mr. Grayson five acres of land as payment for caregiving in his old age. One Friday, when Mr. Grayson brought Mr. Barnes's rations, there was twice as much. When Barnes inquired why, Grayson said he was now keeping the Sabbath and would not be cooking on Saturdays, so he brought enough for two days. Oral tradition links the Sheffield church to this, beginning with Mr. Grayson.⁴² It is unknown whether Barnes accepted Adventism, but his great-great-granddaughter did.

Reports indicate that, in the 1880s, a citizen from Southfield took a tract he picked up in Kingston to his district, which influenced the start of a church there.⁴³ There was a wharf in Lucea, Hanover, the Parish adjoining Westmoreland, and, since tracts were shipped to Jamaica, some may have been left at that wharf and were received by Mr. Grayson. Further, given the population of Jamaica was 631,000 in 1890⁴⁴ and given that vehicular transportation, telegrams, telephones, and radio communication were nonexistent, it is not surprising that what was occurring across the entire island went unknown.

Mrs. Strong in Battle Creek informed a young believer, C. R. O. Rowland, who had moved from St. Kitts to Kingston, that there were believers in Kingston worshipping on the Sabbath. She got him in touch with Brother Palmer.⁴⁵ Matthew Robertson, who returned to Kingston after conversion in Sierra Leone, took some time to learn of the church in Kingston. Initially, to keep the Sabbath, he attended the Jewish synagogue.⁴⁶ So, it is conceivable that Haysmer was unaware of these activities. What we can definitively say is that the International Tract Society's effort to share the gospel was having positive results in varied areas.⁴⁷

Pioneers

Among the earliest SDA pioneers in Jamaica are William Palmer and Margaret Harrison. Their avid correspondence and earnest pleas to the International Tract Society laid the foundation and opened the door. Moreover, Mrs. Harrison's sharing of her faith, opening of her home for worship, visiting Battle Creek, and appealing to the GC session were pioneering.

The first missionary pioneer in Jamaica was A. J. Haysmer. He worked tirelessly across Jamaica and laid a foundation for growth and development. As Jamaica's potential became evident, the Foreign Mission Board decided to invest there. As early as April 1894, it considered purchasing property.⁴⁸ In response to "earnest pleas," it voted on May 25, 1894, to recommend a medical missionary be sent to Jamaica. On March 7, 1895, it voted to recommend that F. I. Richardson be sent to Jamaica in response to Haysmer's pleas for help. The GC Bulletin of April 1, 1895, states the acceptance of this recommendation.⁴⁹

Richardson left for Jamaica on March 23, 1895, and arrived on March 29. He reported attendance at a meeting in progress to be between 35 and 40. Soon after, they had quarterly meetings and a baptism of seven believers. He reported a total membership of 81 on the island with 30 more keeping the Sabbath.⁵⁰ Prior to this baptism, Loughborough reported a membership of 75. He attributes the success and growth of the work to the canvassing ministry, noting sales of \$8,200 USD of health-related material and a total of \$15,854 USD of books. He saw this as opening avenues for ministerial labor in all parts of the island.⁵¹

As the church in Jamaica grew and expanded, on July 16, 1895, the Foreign Mission Board recommended that W. W. Eastman join the workforce. He arrived in early 1896 and, by then, the number of Sabbath-keepers had grown to 110.⁵² The records of the Foreign Mission Board on September 30, 1895, indicate that the committee on plans and appointments recommended three individuals to serve on the Jamaica Committee – A. J. Haysmer, chairman; F. I. Richardson, treasurer; and W. W. Eastman. They all gave dedicated service, and the work continued to grow. By March 16, 1896, the board voted what must have brought disappointment to A. J. Haysmer as it recommended that

Richardson be relocated to South Africa. On May 7, 1896, it recommended that C. A. Hall replace Richardson in Jamaica.⁵³

Other foreigners who did pioneering work include J. B. Beckner, George Enoch, J. A. Strickland, W. J. Tanner, and D. E. Wellman and colporteurs like J. A. Patterson, B. B. Newman, William Arnold, G. Perrin, and J. Gordon⁵⁴ It was their pioneering work with bags and books that broke the ice and laid the foundation for preachers to follow. Young Jamaican believers also played a pivotal role; after embracing the truth, they responded to the call and devoted the rest of their lives to spreading it. These included H. F. Humphrey, Frank Hall, Hubert Fletcher, W. H. Rhandle, A. N. Durrant, and Linton Rashford, among others. Some of these men were the first to be ordained under the Jamaica Union Conference and West Indies Union Conference structure.⁵⁵

Spread and Development

In those early years, some who accepted Adventism were pastors from other denominations. H. F. Humphrey, who joined with some of his 300 members, opposition notwithstanding, was one such pastor. His outstanding work influenced the General Council held in Kingston in November 1897 to recommend him for ordination. The mission board approved the recommendation and authorized the British West Indies Union Mission to ordain him. He became the first Jamaican pastor to be employed and ordained.⁵⁶ Other locals, including Methuselah Jones, who worked in western Jamaica, soon gained employment with the church.

Haysmer organized the Spanish Town Church in June 1896, Font Hill Church in July 1896, Trinity Ville Church in April 1897, Green Island Church in August 1897, and Waterloo (Harry Watch) Church in October 1897. By 1896, membership rose to 300. After attending the General Council Meeting in Kingston from November 5-15, Allan Moon reported that Jamaica had 13 organized churches with a membership of 384, several “unorganized companies obeying the truth,” and another 46 people awaiting baptism. He told the Foreign Mission Board that “about 1,000 persons in and around the Caribbean Sea are keeping the Sabbath,” and, in his “judgment and in the judgment of those who attended the Jamaica meeting, it is desirable to unite the work in that field under one general management with headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica.”⁵⁷

Moon made two notable predictions, “Jamaica will hereafter be the centre of the island work” and “We shall soon have a strong conference in this island alone.”⁵⁸ These two predictions did not take long to materialize. The board endorsed the proposal and, on December 5, 1897, voted to recommend that the work in Central America, Bay Islands, the West Indies, northern South America, and Guiana fall under the West Indies mission field. A. J. Haysmer was named acting superintendent of the West Indies mission field with headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica. F. J. Hutchins was asked to head the canvassing work for the new field.⁵⁹

Growth in the Jamaica field and developments elsewhere initiated fulfillment of Moon’s second prediction. F. I. Richardson, who had been sent to South Africa, did much to develop the work there, but health challenges that were not problematic in Jamaica surfaced in South Africa. Thus, he requested to relocate to a warmer climate and particularly to return to Jamaica. The board voted on December 5, 1897, to grant his request.⁶⁰ “The Missionary Magazine” of August 1, 1898, reported that he and his wife left for Jamaica on July 14, 1898. Within months of his arrival, he was named superintendent of Jamaica Mission.⁶¹ This partially fulfilled Moon’s projection that Jamaica would become a conference.

Progress continued as the evangelistic and educational arms of the movement combined for evangelism. The mission board accredited several missionaries to serve as preachers and teachers. Schools were started in Southfield, Trinity Ville, and Waterloo. Moon’s prediction soon came to be fully realized. By January 1903, much growth became evident. J. A. Strickland noted that membership had grown to 1,182 with 37 churches and companies. In a report in “The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald” on the session he attended, W. A. Spicer said delegates from 17 organized churches and representatives from various unorganized companies attended. Spicer also noted over 1,200 Sabbath-keeping adults – the fruit of ten years of labor – were present in Jamaica.⁶² On January 26, 1903, with delegates from churches, companies, and the mission board, the Jamaica Conference was organized with F. I. Richardson as president.⁶³

Between January and June 1903, the new Jamaica Conference added 100 members through baptism, and membership grew to 1,300.⁶⁴ There was also an increase in young nationals hired for church work. In 1906, the British West Indies Union Mission with headquarters in Kingston became the West Indies Union Conference with George F. Enoch as president and D. Wellman as vice president. Also in 1906, the West Indian Training School was approved to begin training church workers. Its doors opened on January 1, 1907, on 100 acres of land near Bog Walk, St. Catherine, with the support of the East Caribbean Conference.⁶⁵

By March 1907, the membership grew to almost 2,000 in 20 churches and 28 companies.⁶⁶ Following the earthquake of 1907, the British West Indies Union Mission headquarters moved to Colon, Canal Zone, but returned to Jamaica in 1911. In March 1908, there were seven baptisms. The growth spurt and momentum seemed to have stopped since all the seasoned workers were transferred to other areas of labor, and their replacements were not as experienced.⁶⁷ There was a new British West Indies Union Mission president, Bender; a new Jamaica Conference president, W. G. Kneeland; and new pastors. Bender resigned in 1913. Later that year, D. E. Wellman, president of Jamaica Conference, reported at a GC session that there was little baptism growth to report especially compared to the last GC session, though the work was moving forward.⁶⁸

Haysmer later returned and was followed by G. A. Roberts, but to no avail; these were lean years. The training school

that was founded in 1906 with a promise to train local workers was closed.⁶⁹ In 1919, membership in Jamaica Conference was 2,200 in 50 churches. This means that, while the first 14 years yielded 2,000 members, the next 12 had yielded only 200. There was a growth of 30 in organized churches, perhaps attributable to companies upgrading into organized churches.

By 1923, the membership grew to 2,216 in 56 churches. This says only 16 were added in four years. These lean years saw positive contributions, as N. J. Aalborg and E. C. Boger placed Montego Bay Church on firm footing. Mandeville Church was established resulting from an evangelistic crusade in 1919 by Aalborg and C. H. Keslake, and West Indian Training School was reopened with a new mandate in a new location.⁷⁰

After 16 years of slowed growth, beginning in 1923 with C. E. Woods's leadership, growth began to be seen and sustained by H. J. Edmed, C. E. Andross, and W. E. Atkins.⁷¹ Under their leadership, membership grew from 2,216 in 56 churches in 1923 to 9,255 in 150 churches in 1943.⁷² Jamaica began growing, as the mission board had expected. Woods employed young Jamaican pastors like George Smith, Allan Stockhausen, H. P. Lawson, O. P. Reid, Frank Fletcher, and P. J. Bailey. Edmed introduced the pastoral district system and saw a growth of 2,000 in his five-year tenure. Andross and Atkins hired graduates of West Indian Training College who brought new insights, like W. S. Nation, E. E. Parchment, A. R. Haig, A. D. Laing, H. Nembhard, and H. S. Walters.⁷³

In 1943, the Inter-American Division (IAD) annual committee voted that Jamaica Conference would be divided in two missions, East Jamaica and West Jamaica, which both became conferences in 1944. It was also voted to organize British West Indies Union Mission, which would include Jamaica, the Bahama Islands, British Honduras, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. R. H. Pierson was appointed president of the new union.⁷⁴ R. H. Pierson served for four years. By May 1944, with these new institutions in place, the Jamaican membership grew to 10,000.⁷⁵

In June 1953, the first native Jamaican, A. C. Stockhausen, became president.⁷⁶ In 1959, the name changed to West Indies Union Conference. By 1962, Jamaica was divided into three conferences, East Jamaica, Central Jamaica, and West Jamaica. In 2001, a fourth one, North Jamaica Mission (now a conference), was added. In 2006, a fifth field, Northeast Jamaica Mission (now a conference), was added. From small beginnings in the 1890s, currently, Adventism in Jamaica progressed to 307,427 believers. It continues to positively impact the work in Inter-America and the world field with workers and missionaries everywhere.

Institutions

From its early days, the Jamaican laity has had a major role. The substantial growth in membership is attributable to members sharing their faith on a one-on-one basis and pastors following up with evangelistic campaigns. Members live out the notion that the best way to keep one's faith is to give it away. Thus, the local church has been the first and foremost institution.

The canvassing work was the second bedrock of Adventism in Jamaica. Even before pastoral help arrived on the island, literature evangelists influenced its early growth and development. Canvassing has continued to hold a vital place in evangelism. Among the most influential books have been children's, medical, and doctrinal books.

A married couple from a different faith came in contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church when their pastor refused to see them for business on a Saturday, saying it was the Sabbath, on which he did not do business. This caused confusion to the couple, especially when their pastor preached, "away with the law," the next day. Their confusion was cleared up by an Adventist colporteur and his sale of "The Drama of the Ages" by William Henry Branson. The wife became a colporteur who sold many books and led many to Christ. This has been the pattern of Jamaican colporteurs. Between 1960 and 1990, over 1,000 souls were baptized as a direct result of the influence of literature evangelists. During those same years, over \$20 million USD worth of books were sold by colporteurs and Adventist bookstores throughout Jamaica.⁷⁷

Establishing church schools was considered important in the early days of Adventism. The minutes of the Foreign Mission Board from the 1890s indicate there were at least four schools in Jamaica. They mention sending teachers to schools in Southfield, Waterloo, Font Hill, and Trinity Ville. Later, a day school was established in Kingston and was reportedly "a cheering success" with 130 pupils.⁷⁸ Today, there are 19 elementary schools, eight secondary schools, and a university operated by Seventh-day Adventists in Jamaica serving 15,496 students – 9,698 elementary, 1,798 secondary, and 4,000 college and university students.⁷⁹ Although student enrollment is reduced from former years, it still shows considerable interest in Adventist Christian education.

In 1905, William Daniel Peart, a newly-converted Adventist, had the idea to take his eldest daughter out of a government teachers' college because he wanted her to have a Christian education.⁸⁰ Thus, in 1906, the conference decided to establish West Indian Training School. After appeals to the General Conference, land was purchased for this purpose. G. F. Enoch, president of the West Indies Union Conference, spent time during the latter part of that year in the United States soliciting funds for the school. The new school opened as a twelfth-grade institution with eight students on a 100-acre farm in Riversdale, St. Catherine, on January 1, 1907.⁸¹ It was designed to serve the entire Caribbean.

Though opened with great enthusiasm and tremendous promise, its doors closed in 1913 due to financial constraints. When it reopened in 1919, it was relocated to a 200-acre farm near Mandeville, Manchester. It started with three students and soon grew to 20. It had its first graduation of three secondary-level students in 1923. Three years later, the school upgraded to junior college-14th grade status and offered courses in ministry, teaching, nursing, Bible work,

and secretarial sciences. It started to also offer theology, business, and natural sciences, thus, it was renamed West Indian Training College in 1936. It attained senior college status in 1959 when it introduced the bachelor's degree in theology and was renamed West Indies College. The bachelor's in education was added in 1963, and, since then, baccalaureate programs in 20 other disciplines have been added. The college gained university status from the Jamaican government in 1999 and was renamed Northern Caribbean University. Currently, it has three offsite campuses in Kingston, Montego Bay, and St. Ann's Bay with a staff of over 800 and student enrollment of about 4,000. It offers over 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the fields of humanities, sciences, business, and education.⁸² In 2019, the University Council of Jamaica granted accredited status to Northern Caribbean University.

Seventh-day Adventist medical work in Jamaica began in 1912. That August, "Massage and Hydropathic Treatment" rooms opened in Kingston with four nurses. This endeavor was highly supported and received recommendations from leading doctors in Jamaica. However, this medical facility discontinued operations in 1918 due to lack of funds⁸³ Yet, interest in the medical work persisted. Occasionally, classes in home care were taught at West Indian Training School. The leaders saw the potential benefits that the medical work could provide as the "right arm of the ministry." In the June 1, 1944, issue of "The West Indies Union Visitor," it was stated: "A splendid property has been purchased in Kingston, Jamaica, in which it is hoped that a modern Sanitarium and Hospital will begin its work before the close of the year."⁸⁴ The first phase of this project was completed in 1945.

The next phase involved building a modern 52-bed hospital, including auxiliary facilities for a nurses' training school, outpatient office, and maternity ward. The members of North Street Church firmly supported the project and, with their own funds, purchased the property on which the facilities would be built.⁸⁵ The new hospital, Andrews Memorial Hospital, was named after the church's first foreign missionary, John Nevins Andrews. "When the hospital's doors were first opened, it was then the most modern hospital on the island. Its impact on our health care environment was significant."⁸⁶ The hospital celebrated its 75th anniversary in March 2019. It collaborates with Northern Caribbean University to offer a baccalaureate nursing program.

Church Administrative Units

In 1898, Jamaica Mission was organized with headquarters in Kingston, and F. I. Richardson was superintendent. Sometime within that same year, Jamaica sent out its first missionary with Nathan Moulton to Puerto Rico. Soon after, others went to the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, and the United States of America⁸⁷

In 1903, the mission became a conference with J. B. Beckner as president. It was the first conference to be organized in the West Indies and had a membership of 1,200. In 1906, British West Indies Union Mission received conference status with headquarters in Kingston, George F. Enoch as president, and D. E. Wellman as vice president⁸⁸ 1908 saw the ordination of five Jamaican pastors, A. N. Durrant, Hubert Fletcher, Methuselah Jones, W. H. Randle, and Linton Rashford.

For almost 15 years, British West Indies Union Mission suffered stagnated growth. By 1923, British West Indies Union Mission was dissolved, and Jamaica Conference became part of the newly-organized Antillean Union Mission. In 1943, Jamaica Conference grew to almost 10,000 members, and Inter-American Division decided to divide it into two missions, East Jamaica and West Jamaica. Before the end of 1944, each had become a full-fledged conference. In 1943, Inter-American Division organized British West Indies Union Mission encompassing Jamaica, the Bahamas Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and British Honduras with headquarters in Jamaica⁸⁹ W. E. Atkin served as the first superintendent in an interim capacity. The first permanent superintendent was R. H. Pierson.⁹⁰ He served in that capacity until 1948.⁹¹ The first Jamaica Union president was A. C. Stockhausen, who was elected in June 1953.⁹² In 1959, British West Indies Union Mission was renamed West Indies Union Conference.

West Indies Union Conference was divided into two fields, Jamaica Union Conference (serving the island of Jamaica) and Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission (serving the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands). From the small beginnings of the 1890s, the church in Jamaica has progressed to a membership of 304,021 and 683 churches.⁹³

Effect of Political Development on the Seventh-day Adventist Mission

Over the years, Jamaica has had a stable government with no major political upheavals. The introduction of universal adult suffrage in 1944 and Jamaica's independence in 1962 represent periods of great growth for Adventism. In the 1970s, there was a communism scare when the prime minister held close ties with Cuba. During that period, growth leading to the first 100,000-membership goal was attained.

Adventism's Place in Jamaica

Adventism has had a huge impact on the nation. Several factors have contributed to this change: (a) the fact that one in nine Jamaicans is Adventist;⁹⁴ (b) the success of Northern Caribbean University and the positive contribution of its graduates to the nation; (c) the impact of Adventist Christian education through our educational institutions; (d) the impact and presence of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) during national disasters; (e) the involvement of the church in community services and development; (f) the positive influence of SDA employees in

government ministries; (g) the number of Adventist churches on the island and in local communities; (h) the contributions to developing the community and nation from church leaders serving on government boards, statutory bodies, and private sector organizations; (i) the positive impact of SDA pastors and leaders preaching on radio and TV stations; and (j) the Northern Caribbean University Radio Station's good national ranking. Furthermore, the ministry of education signed an agreement for the church's Pathfinder Club program/curriculum to be offered in the national school system to benefit all students.

Challenges

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica still faces challenges, such as gaining and retaining the interest, imagination, and commitment of members, particularly of the youth; making Adventist education accessible and affordable; and using its position as the largest religious denomination in Jamaica to contribute to the development of the nation.

SOURCES

2019 Annual Statistical Report: 155th Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for 2017. Silver Spring, Maryland: Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2019.

Archbold, B. L. *The Inter-American Messenger*. July 1, 1972.

Atlantic Union Gleaner. March 25, 1903.

Atlantic Union Gleaner. March 30, 1945.

British West Indies Union Visitor. May 1, 1953.

British West Indies Union Visitor. June 1, 1953.

"Dis 'N Dat: Did You Know?" *Jamaica National Heritage Trust: A Mission Begun in 1958*. Accessed February 4, 2019. http://www.jnht.com/disndat_people.php.

General Conference Bulletin. February 20, 1893.

General Conference Bulletin. March 6, 1893.

General Conference Bulletin. April 1, 1895.

General Conference Bulletin. June 8, 1913.

"Government And Society" in "Jamaica." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Accessed January 22, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica/Government-and-society>.

"Government of Jamaica." *Jamaica Information Service*. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://jis.gov.jm/media/GovernmentOfJamaica.pdf>.

Haysmer, A. J. "West Indies." *ARH*. December 5, 1893.

Haysmer, A. J. "Our Work in Jamaica: West Indies." *ARH*. April 10, 1894.

Haysmer, Mrs. A. J. "Jamaica." *ARH*. February 27, 1894.

"History of the Northern Caribbean University." *Northern Caribbean University: A Seventh-day Adventist Institution*. Accessed January 23, 2019. www.ncu.edu.jm/weare.

"History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica and the Development of Conferences." An unpublished report. Mandeville, Jamaica.

Inter-American Division Committee minutes, December 2, 1943. 1042, 1093. Puerto Padre, Cuba. General Conference archives.

"Jamaica." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Accessed January 22, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica>.

Loughborough, J. N. *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress*. Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 2015.

Mitchell, Linette. *Thy Light has Come: A Short History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica*. Kingston, Jamaica: West Indies College Press, 1990.

"New Prime Minister of Jamaica is an Adventist – Andrew Holness." *Adventist Today.org*. Accessed February 2, 2019. <https://atoday.org/new-prime-minister-of-jamaica-is-an-adventist-andrew-holness/>.

Present Truth. November 21, 1889.

Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 2 and 3.

"Religion" in "Jamaica." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Accessed January 22, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica/Religion>

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second revised edition. Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Jamaica."

Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook Accessed December 15, 2019.
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2018.pdf>.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019.

Stephenson, Lorna. Editor. "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: West Jamaica Conference," *Commemorative Magazine: 1962-2012*. Mandeville, Jamaica: North Caribbean University Press, 2012.

Stephenson, Lorna. Editor. *Seventh-day Adventist Church, West Jamaica Conference: Reflections on God's Leading... Advancing in Hope*. Mandeville, Jamaica: North Caribbean University Press, 2016.

ARH. March 29, 1892; May 26, 1896; March 17, 1903; July 21, 1903; April 1906; March 16, 1944.

The Caribbean Watchman. November 1, 1903; September 1, 1906; November 1, 1906; December 1, 1906; March 1, 1907.

The Inter-American Division Messenger, March 1, 1944; May 1, 1944.

"The First Scots in Jamaica." *Flag Up: Scotland Jamaica*. Accessed January 23, 2019.
<http://www.flagupscotjam.uk/connection/>.

"The History of Jamaica." *Jamaica Information Service*. Accessed February 4, 2019.
<https://jis.gov.jm/information/jamaican-history/>.

The Home Missionary Magazine. April 1, 1894; June 1, 1895; January 1, 1898.

The West Indies Union Visitor. June 1, 1944; Special Centennial Edition, 2006.

Spicer, W. A. "General Meeting in London." *Present Truth*. October 10, 1889.

Strong's letters. Mandeville, Jamaica. E. G. White Estate archives.

Wade, Herman. "A Brief History of Andrews Memorial Hospital." An unpublished report. Kingston, Jamaica, April 2019.

Weir, Garnett T. "125 years of Seventh-day Adventism in Jamaica: Highlights of its Organizational Development for the Whitehall SDA Church." Unpublished PowerPoint presentation. July 15, 2016.

"Welcome to Sligoville: The story of the Irish in Jamaica." *The Irish Times*. Accessed January 23, 2019.
<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/welcome-to-sligoville-the-story-of-the-irish-in-jamaica-1.3225038?mode=amp>.

Wellington Collection. E. G. White Research Center archives. Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica.

Wood, C. E. "How the Work Began in Jamaica." *The Church Officers' Gazette*. October 1, 1926.

NOTES

1. "Jamaica," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed January 22, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica>?
2. "Jamaica Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019), 122.?
3. "General Statistics by Division for 2017," *2019 Annual Statistical Report: 155th Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for 2017* (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2019), 36.?
4. "The History of Jamaica," *Jamaica Information Service*, accessed February 4, 2019, <https://jis.gov.jm/information/jamaican-history/>?
5. "Dis 'N Dat: Did You Know?," *Jamaica National Heritage Trust: A Mission Begun in 1958*, accessed February 4, 2019, http://www.jnht.com/disndat_people.php.; "Welcome to Sligoville: The story of the Irish in Jamaica," *The Irish Times*, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/welcome-to-sligoville-the-story-of-the-irish-in-jamaica-1.3225038?mode=amp>; and "The First Scots in Jamaica," *Flag Up: Scotland Jamaica*, accessed January 23, 2019, <http://www.flagupscotjam.uk/connection/>?
6. "Out of Many Cultures The People Who Came: The Arrival of the Lebanese," *Pieces of the Past*, accessed January 23, 2019, <http://old.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/history/story0056.htm>; and "Dis 'N Dat: Did You Know?" *Jamaica National Heritage Trust: A Mission Begun in 1958*, accessed February 4, 2019, http://www.jnht.com/disndat_people.php?
7. "Government of Jamaica," *Jamaica Information Service*, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://jis.gov.jm/media/GovernmentOfJamaica.pdf>?
- 8.

- "New Prime Minister of Jamaica is an Adventist – Andrew Holness." *Adventist Today.org*, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://atoday.org/new-prime-minister-of-jamaica-is-an-adventist-andrew-holness/>.?
9. "Government And Society" in "Jamaica," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed January 22, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica/Government-and-society>.?
 10. "Religion" in "Jamaica," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed February 4, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica/Religion>.?
 11. *Ibid.*?
 12. "Jamaica," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed February 4, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jamaica>.?
 13. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 14. W. A. Spicer, "General meeting in London," *Present Truth*, October 10, 1889, 332-333.; and "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica and the Development of Conferences," an unpublished report, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 15. *Ibid.*; Linette Mitchell, *Thy Light has Come: A Short History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: West Indies College Press, 1990), 19.; and Lorna Stephenson, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Church, West Jamaica Conference: Reflections on God's Leading... Advancing in Hope* (Mandeville, Jamaica: North Caribbean University Press, 2016), 14.?
 16. *Present Truth*, November 21, 1889, 381.?
 17. *Ibid.*; Garnett T. Weir, "125 years of Seventh-day Adventism in Jamaica: Highlights of its Organizational Development for the Whitehall SDA Church," unpublished PowerPoint presentation, July 15, 2016.; and Strong's letters, Mandeville, Jamaica, E. G. White Estate archives.?
 18. *Ibid.*; and "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica and the Development of Conferences," an unpublished report, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 19. *Ibid.*?
 20. C. E. Wood, "How the Work Began in Jamaica," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, October 1, 1926, 4; and Weir, PowerPoint.?
 21. Mitchell, 20.?
 22. *Ibid.*, 21; and Weir, PowerPoint.?
 23. *Ibid.*; and *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 24. Letter from Mrs. S. L. Strong to Mr. W. H. Palmer, November 1891, Wellington Collection, E. G. White Research Center archives, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 25. *General Conference Bulletin*, February 20, 1893.?
 26. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 29, 1892, 6.?
 27. Weir, PowerPoint.?
 28. Letter from Mrs. S. L. Strong to Mr. W. H. Palmer, December 16, 1892, Wellington Collection, E. G. White Research Center archives, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 29. B. L. Archbold, *The Inter-American Messenger*, July 1, 1972, 2; Mitchell, 22; and *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."; and Wood, "How the Work Began in Jamaica," 4.?
 30. A. J. Haysmer, "West Indies," *ARH*, December 5, 1893, 4.; and *ARH*, March 16, 1944.?
 31. Letter from Mrs. S. L. Strong to Mr. W. H. Palmer, December 16, 1892, Wellington Collection, E. G. White Research Center archives, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 32. Weir, PowerPoint.; and Mitchell, 23.?
 33. *General Conference Bulletin*, February 20, 1893; *The Inter-American Messenger*, 1972, 2; Wood, "How the Work Began in Jamaica," 4; Weir, PowerPoint; and *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 16, 1944.?
 34. Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 2, 29-30.; and *General Conference Bulletin*, March 6, 1893.?
 35. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 - 36.

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, May 26, 1896, 12.?

37. Weir, PowerPoint.?
38. Ibid.?
39. A. J. Haysmer, "West Indies," 4.?
40. Mrs. A. J. Haysmer, "Jamaica," *ARH*, February 27, 1894, 10.?
41. A. J. Haysmer, "Our Work in Jamaica: West Indies," *ARH*, April 10, 1894, 11; and *The Home Missionary Magazine*, April 1, 1894.?
42. Dr. Astor Bowers, interview by author, January 2019; and Lorna Stephenson, ed., "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: West Jamaica Conference," *Commemorative Magazine: 1962-2012* (Mandeville, Jamaica: North Caribbean University Press, 2012), 4.?
43. Ibid.?
44. "Jamaica: historical demographical data of the whole country," *populstat.info*, accessed March 25, 2019, <http://www.populstat.info/Americas/jamaicac.htm>.?
45. Letter from Mrs. S. L. Strong to Mr. W. H. Palmer, December 16, 1892, Wellington Collection, E. G. White Research Center archives, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
46. Mitchell, 25.?
47. Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 2, 104, 106.?
48. Ibid., 147.?
49. *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1895.?
50. *The Home Missionary Magazine*, June 1, 1895.?
51. J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 2015), 433.?
52. Ibid.?
53. Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 2, 219, 228, 238.?
54. *The Caribbean Watchman*, March 1, 1907.?
55. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
56. Ibid.?
57. Weir, PowerPoint.; Mitchell, 24.; Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 3, 123.; and *The Missionary Magazine*, January 1, 1898.?
58. Ibid.?
59. Records of Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church, vol. 3, 123-124.?
60. Ibid., 125.?
61. Ibid., 216.?
62. *ARH*, March 17, 1903.?
63. *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, March 25, 1903, 3.?
64. *The Caribbean Watchman*, November 1, 1903.; and *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 21, 1903.?
65. *The Caribbean Watchman*, November 1, 1906.; and *The Caribbean Watchman*, September 1, 1906.?
66. *The Caribbean Watchman*, March 1, 1907.?
- 67.

- Weir, PowerPoint.?
68. *General Conference Bulletin*, June 8, 1913.?
 69. Weir, PowerPoint.?
 70. Weir, PowerPoint.?
 71. Ibid.?
 72. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 73. Weir, PowerPoint.?
 74. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."; Inter-American Division Committee, December 2, 1943, 1042, 1093, Puerto Padre, Cuba. General Conference archives; and *The Inter-American Division Messenger*, March 1, 1944, 8, 12.?
 75. *The Inter-American Division Messenger*, May 1, 1944, 2.?
 76. *British West Indies Union Visitor*, May 1, 1953, 8; and *British West Indies Union Visitor*, June 1, 1953, 1.?
 77. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 78. *The Caribbean Watchman*, December 1, 1906, 16.?
 79. Michael Henry and Bylton Clarke, interview by author, Northern Caribbean University, April 15, 2019.?
 80. "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica and the Development of Conferences," an unpublished report, Mandeville, Jamaica.?
 81. "History of the Northern Caribbean University," *Northern Caribbean University: A Seventh-day Adventist Institution*, accessed January 23, 2019, www.ncu.edu.jm/weare.?
 82. Ibid.; *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."; and "Northern Caribbean University," *The West Indies Union Visitor*, Special Centennial Edition (2006), 14.?
 83. *General Conference Bulletin*, June 8, 1913; and *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 84. *The West Indies Union Visitor*, June 1, 1944, 1.?
 85. *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, March 30, 1945, 1, 7.?
 86. Herman Wade, "A Brief History of Andrews Memorial Hospital," an unpublished report, Kingston, Jamaica, April 2019.; and "Northern Caribbean University," *The West Indies Union Visitor*, Special Centennial Edition (2006), 14.?
 87. Mitchell, 27; *ARH*, April 1906; and *The Caribbean Watchman*, December 1, 1906, 16.?
 88. Ibid.?
 89. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Jamaica."?
 90. Inter-American Division Committee, December 2, 1943, 999, 1042, Puerto Padre, Cuba. General Conference archives.?
 91. "Presidents Who Served," *The West Indies Union Visitor*, Special Centennial Edition (2006), 21.?
 92. *British West Indies Union Visitor*, May 1, 1953, 8; and *British West Indies Union Visitor*, June 1, 1953, 1.?
 93. *Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook*, "Jamaica Union Conference," accessed December 15, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2018.pdf.>?
 94. "General Statistics for 2017: Global Mission (GM) Table 2," *2019 Annual Statistical Report: 155th Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for 2017* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2019), 69.?