

# Cayman Islands Conference

---

## SHIRLINE S. HENRIQUES

Shirline S. Henriques, B.S.N. (West Indies College), M.A. (Central Michigan University), has served the Adventist Church in numerous capacities in the past, including ADRA director for the Cayman Islands Conference (CIC) and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission director of Women's Ministries for CIC, grief counselor, and member of the North Caribbean University (NCU) Board of Governors. Henriques was also CEO of Cayman Islands Health Services Authority, and the registrar of Health Practice Commission and 5 Councils. Some of the awards that she has received are Certificate and Badge of Honor – Work in AIDS in Cayman Islands, Presidents Medallion from NCU, and Nursing Pioneer Award from the Cayman Islands government.

---

Cayman Islands Conference is one of four territories of the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission. The conference spans 100 square miles across three islands: Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. Grand Cayman is the largest and most developed of the three. The conference currently has 16 churches, two companies, and a pre-K to grade-12 school with an enrollment of 312. The conference membership stands at 6,414.<sup>1</sup>

## Origin of Adventist Work in Territory

The Adventist message was introduced to Grand Cayman in 1894 by Captain Gilbert McLaughlin of East End and again by Torebo Lazzari (“Uncle Teebe”) to Cayman Brac. To establish structure in order to best direct and manage the efforts in the territory, West Indies Union Mission organized the Cayman Islands Mission in 1929. Pastor I. G. Knight became the mission's first president, and its secretary-treasurer was Mrs. Knight. The mission started with 33 members.

For good governance, the mission was first placed under the supervision of West Jamaica Conference in 1952. In 1954, that responsibility was assumed by the British West Indies Union Mission. At the time, there were five churches and 210 members. Its president was Pastor Walter Comm with Pastor R. S. Blackburn as secretary-treasurer, Pastor L. D. Mahabee as a licensed pastor, and Dorothy Comm, George Merren, and Raymond Wood as licensed missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Pathfinders was begun with George Ebanks, his wife, and Ms. Dorothy Comm in West Bay. Ms. Maxine Goulbourne maintained this on the island for many years. In 1964, Ms. Goulbourne became the first local secretary-treasurer of Cayman Islands Mission.<sup>3</sup> As the number of believers increased, small groups grew throughout the districts. With the leadership of George Ebanks in West Bay, Captain Thomas Diaz in Savannah, George Merren in George Town, Raymond Wood in Bodden Town, Theophilus Bodden in East End, and Torebo Lazzari in Cayman Brac, the message thrived. In 2004, the mission was granted conference status under Doctor Jeffery K. Thompson's leadership.

## Formative Events Leading to Organization

The Savannah Seventh-day Adventist Church was rebuilt on the property given to the church by Ms. Erna Hislop and was dedicated on May 31, 1992, under Pastor W. G. McDonald's leadership. Evangelistic work in the North Side district took many years and had been hard, but Pastor Ted Hunter planted a church, which was dedicated on November 6, 1994, under Pastor Wesley Nyack's leadership.

With a strong interest in making Christian television available to the population, and with hard work on the part of a selected committee, a contract was signed with the Cayman Islands government in 1996 for an initial 10-year license for Cayman Adventist Television. In 2020, this was upgraded to CATV International.

The mission was not insular in its approach to serving the islands; from a humanitarian perspective, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was formed in 1998 under Shirline Henriques's leadership. ADRA played a pivotal role in response to Hurricane Mitch's devastation of the Bay Islands in October 1998, to Hurricane Ivan in Grand Cayman in 2004, and to Paloma in Cayman Brac and the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2005. ADRA also played a role in undertaking overseas mission trips to Francia Sirpi, Nicaragua, Ahuas, and Honduras while still under Shirline Henriques's leadership.

In 2001, the Inter-American Division gave preliminary approval of conference status to Cayman Islands Mission. The mission's membership grew steadily as a result of multiple church crusades, including those done by international speakers. In addressing the needs of the population, a Filipino church was organized with Filipino Pastor Cipriano Collado on September 9, 2006.<sup>4</sup>

Newlands Company was formed in 2003 and was upgraded to and dedicated as a church in 2004. The Maranatha, Bethel, and Berea churches were organized in 2005, and the Spanish-language Ephesus and Filadelfia churches were organized in 2006 under the watchful eyes of Doctor Jeffery K. Thompson.

Thompson worked hard to upgrade the educational standard of the only conference-operated school. Cayman Academy was physically expanded with new lower school classrooms, a sick bay, and a cafeteria. Grades 8-12 were added one grade per year until a fully functioning high school was established. The school is fully accredited by the Cayman Islands government's Ministry of Education and by the Adventist Accrediting Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 2004, at Cayman Island Conference's first session as a conference, Thompson was elected president with Pastor W. G. McDonald as executive secretary and Sheila Woods as treasurer. On June 25, 2005, Cayman Islands Conference witnessed the first ordination of a local pastor, Al Powell.

## List of Presidents

### Mission Presidents

I. G. Knight (1929-1933); George Smith (1941); Kenneth Crowfoot (1947-1948); Orville Schneider (1948-1951); Balfour Hurst (1951-1953); Walter Comm (1954-1957); Garfield Newman (1957-1959); Levi Connolly (1960);

George Gantz (1962-1963); Gordon Weidemann (1964-1967); Albert Lyle (1967-1971); Leslie McMillan (1971-1974); Seymour Cole (1974-1976); Trevor Thompson (1977-1983); Neville Scavella (1984-1990); Jeffery K. Thompson (1990-2004).

Conference Presidents

Jeffery Thompson (2004-2007); W. G. McDonald (2007-2008); Eric Danny Clarke (2008-2012); Shion O'Connor (2012-2018); Renaldo Drocket (2018- ).

---

## SOURCES

"Cayman Islands Conference." *astr: Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research: Yearbook Homepage* Accessed 2020. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=14151>.

"Cayman Islands." *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia: First Revised Edition*. Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976.

"Filipino Church Planted." *Echo Magazine*. 2006.

---

## NOTES

1. "Cayman Islands Conference," *astr: Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research: Yearbook Homepage*, accessed 2020, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=14151>.
2. "Cayman Islands," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia: First Revised Edition* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976).
3. Ibid.
4. "Filipino Church Planted," *Echo Magazine*, Third and Fourth Quarter 2006, 16.

---

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