

Boyce, Vasco T.

(1917–2001)

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."

Vasco Timotheus Boyce was a Barbadian conference and union administrator. A third-generation Adventist, he served in many church positions across the Caribbean from Jamaica to Guyana for more than 30 thirty years. His extensive church work began in 1946 in British Guiana (Guyana) as he conducted church services among the Amerindian people in the colony's vast interior. Then he served

as manager at three book and Bible houses (in Guyana, Barbados, and Jamaica); mission education secretary; conference treasurer; union treasurer; auditor; and president of the Guyana Mission of Seventh-day Adventists between 1968 and 1970. Also he functioned on various advisory committees for the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists during his decades of leadership¹

Vasco Timotheus Boyce, the first of seven children, was born July 23, 1917, in Pie Corner, St. Lucy, Barbados. During his formative years, his parents moved to the British colony's capital, Bridgetown. He attended the Wesley Hall Elementary School and spent his secondary school years at Combermere Boys School. After completing his high school education, he began to study pharmacology with a leading Bridgetown pharmacologist and worked alongside him in his business. However, he had to discontinue his studies as a result of a conflict involving Sabbath observance. Young Vasco was baptized as a teenager, joining the King Street SDA Church in Bridgetown, where the rest of his family attended.² After he became an active youth leader in this congregation, he aspired to be of greater service for his church.



Vasco T. Boyce

Photo courtesy of Glenn Philipps.

Consequently, he matriculated during early April 1936 at Caribbean Training College located in the Maracas Valley of northern Trinidad³ to study business management. During those years he became deeply involved in the school's work-study horticultural program and participated in various campus activities, including one of the college's first male quartettes. After the college upgraded its academic offerings, he completed a double major in both theology and business administration, graduating June 30, 1946⁴

Boyce's first church assignment involved the British Guiana Mission in Georgetown, British Guiana, (Guyana), where he served in various positions, including as missionary to the Adventists' Amerindian population living in the country's vast interior. On March 15, 1948, he married Marjorie Van Lange of Georgetown and to that union came five children: Pamela, Verla, Angela, Trevor, and Karla. L. A. Kraner, president of the British Guiana Mission, and F. S. Thompson, president of the Caribbean Union Conference, ordained Boyce during January 1952 in Georgetown. By 1953 he had served as the education secretary and became the secretary-treasurer of the British Guiana Mission as well as the manager of its book and Bible house in Georgetown. Additionally, he was the rotating member for the Caribbean Union Mission for the planning committee of the Inter-American Division.

Returning to his native Barbados, Boyce served briefly as assistant treasurer of the Leeward Islands Mission and manager of its book and Bible house, before accepting a call to the West Indies Union in Jamaica, the first Barbadian church officer to serve in that union. Between 1955 and 1960 he worked as the treasurer of the East Jamaica Conference and manager of its book and Bible center. Next he joined the West Indies Union Mission as treasurer and auditor from 1960 to 1968. He strengthened the oversight policy regarding the finances of the various conferences and worked to increase the financial support given by the union to the Bahamas and Cayman Islands missions⁵

During the summer of 1969, he accepted a call to return to his home union as the president of the Guyana Mission,⁶ where he had begun his church work decades earlier. He dealt with a number of issues, including the new government's policy to nationalize all schools including the many Adventist ones in the newly independent nation, as well as a regulation barring non-citizens from holding administrative church positions⁷

In 1971 the Caribbean Union Conference in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, appointed him assistant treasurer and auditor, and he worked to bring the various entities of the union in compliance with the new policies of the Inter-American Division. Retiring in the mid 1970's, he moved to Barbados with his wife, and later resided with his daughter and son-in-law, Verla and Eric Greene, in Saskatchewan, Canada. Elder Boyce passed away on January 2, 2001, at the Regina General Hospital. His funeral took place January 6, 2001, in Regina, Canada, and he was later buried in the Westbury Cemetery in Bridgetown, Barbados.⁸

SOURCES

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"Celebrating the Life of Elder Vasco Timotheus Boyce." Obituary from his funeral held January 6, 2001, at the SDA Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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NOTES

1. "Celebrating the Life of Elder Vasco Timotheus Boyce," obituary from his funeral held January 6, 2001, at the SDA Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.
2. "Record of King Street SDA Church, Bridgetown, Barbados, 1891-1932," vol. 1, 7m in author's collection.
3. "The Student Record of Caribbean Training College, 1927-1947," Office of Registry, Royal Road, Maracas Valley, Trinidad, 1947, 12.
4. "Celebrating the Life of Elder Vasco Timotheus Boyce;" Glenn O. Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College, 1927-1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977).
5. "Rotating members of the Inter-American Division Committee," *Inter-American Division Messenger*, n. 1, January 1953, 12; C. Dirgoonanan, "Annual Colporteur Convention in British Guiana," *Inter-American Division Messenger*, no. 9, September 1953; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 136; "Notes," *Inter-American Division Messenger*, vol. 45, no. 11, November 1968, p.12; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 163.
6. Vasco T. Boyce, *Caribbean Union Gleaning*, Fourth Quarter, 2000, 15.

7. Glenn O. Phillips, *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados: Over a Century of Adventism* (Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics & Letchwork Ltd., 1991), 141.

8. "Celebrating the Life of Elder Vasco Timotheus Boyce."

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