

Cave Memorial Clinic and Nursing Home

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Cave Memorial Clinic and Nursing Home is located at Bryden's Avenue in Brittons Hill on St. Michael in Barbados—a few miles outside of Bridgetown, the country's capital. This facility is named after Dr. Charles Jerome Bright Cave (1879-1939), a pioneering Barbadian physician who was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1898. Cave left the British Caribbean colony in 1900 for the United States to study at the Battle Creek Sanitarium and its affiliated Medical School from which he graduated in 1907. He returned the following year, becoming the first Barbadian Seventh-day Adventist physician. Upon returning to Barbados, he made plans in 1908 to establish a local sanitarium that eventually operated for over 20 years. The Barbados government granted him a license to practice medicine and, due to his emphasis on preventive medicine and improved nutritional habits, he became well known to all classes of the population.¹

By the end of 1929, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Barbados had grown considerably, and Cave committed himself to the promotion of healthy lifestyles not only for Church membership, but for Barbadians on a whole. Dr. Cave's desire to begin a nursing program materialized, and for the next 10 years, he operated a sanitarium. During this decade, the sanitarium frequently changed locations as the number of trainees and patients steadily increased—the last of which was at Straiton, Dalkeith Road where Dr. Cave also lived until his passing in 1939. Aides, nurses, and most notably Nurse Mabel Cave (Dr. Cave's wife) ensured that the administration of the sanitarium ran smoothly and that the medical work progressed. Soon after Dr. Cave's passing, the sanitarium moved to a new location on Culloden Road, St. Michael. Nurse Cave was instrumental in developing this location into a retirement and nursing facility in the mid-1940's. In 1955, Nurse Cave agreed to turn the operations over to the Seventh-day Adventist Conference to continue the work her husband began. It was 20 years before the Church administration decided to purchase a new property at Brittons Hill, St. Michael, and effectively restart the program. Mabel Cave died in 1970.²

In 1977, the East Caribbean Conference officially reopened the facility under the new name-- Cave's Memorial Diagnostic Centre. At the opening ceremony, a government member of the Parliament, then the Minister of Health, officiated and declared the clinic opened for service. The focus for a functioning Diagnostic Clinic continued with the purpose of keeping the health message, the right arm of the Seventh-day Adventist message, alive.³

Over the years, well-qualified Seventh-day Adventist doctors and nurses comprised a dedicated workforce and team, and into the 1990's, the Rehabilitation Centre and Nursing Home was well known to the people of Barbados.⁴

Around 1997, the Institution began to experience fiscal challenges, and the Centre's astute management made it possible for the Centre to continue to fulfill its decades-long mission to the Barbadian community. The local Adventist Association for Independent Services (ASI) took over the operation of the Centre, and it continued to provide medical consultation, gynecological services, palliative care, nutrition, and dietary advice. The inauguration of the Dr. Charles J. B. Cave Memorial Lectures series was launched by the Adventist Health Professionals' Association in 2000, and presentations were and continue to be open to the Barbadian public.

The Cave Memorial Clinic and Nursing Home still offers medical and physiotherapy services that cater to the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of individuals. Qualified medical professionals trained in both natural and contemporary medical treatments offer holistic medical care from a Christian perspective, mostly on a volunteer basis.

The greatest challenges in recent times surfaced during 2016 when the location of the Nursing Home proved to be hazardous—the quaking and shifting of the land made it unsafe to house senior citizens, and this forced closure of the 20-bed facility in 2016. Nevertheless, Cave Memorial Clinic and Nursing Home continues to operate on a smaller scale at its location on Bryden's Avenue in Brittons Hill. Resident medical and paramedical practitioners provide dedicated services, continuing to assist with the short-term medical needs of the Barbadian community.

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Glenn O. Phillips, "Barbados' Battle Creek Doctor: Dr. Charles J. B. Cave," *Adventist Heritage: A Journal of Adventist History* 5, No. 2 (Winter 1978): 22-33.
2. Glenn O. Phillips, "Barbados' Early "Wellness Living" Physician: Dr. Charles J. B. Cave, 1908-1939," *The Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* Vol. LXIV (December 2019): 60; Glenn O. Phillips, *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados: Over a Century of Adventism, 1884-1991* (Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth Ltd., 1991), 142-143.
3. "East Caribbean Conference opens New Diagnostic Clinic," *Caribbean Union Gleanings* (Fourth Quarter 1977), 10.
4. Elliot Douglin, "Report of Cave Diagnostic Centre of SDA to the Fourth Triennial Session of the East Caribbean Conference," *The Fourth Triennial Session of The East Caribbean Conference of SDA* (Bridgetown, Barbados: East Caribbean Conference of SDA, 1982).

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