

IDENTIFYING EARLY ANGLO-CARIBBEAN SDA HISTORICAL SOURCES AND DEVELOPING NEW INTERPRETATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Early Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders placed a high priority on keeping careful records of the circumstances and events that led to the creation and development of the activities and beliefs that shaped their mission and movement. Mrs. Ellen G. White's statement in Life Sketches, p.196, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history," appears to be among the compelling thoughts that encouraged this endeavor among the church's pioneering leaders. Their history gave them hope as well as direction for the future.

One hundred and fifty years after the founding of the SDA Church, we are gathered here to again look back on what has been written, by whom and to more definitively interpret the Church's past and more importantly to search for new ways and strategies to make the Seventh-day Adventist experience more relevant to today's young generation of Seventh day Adventists and others who wish to understand what has transpired over the decades.

I believe that it is the responsibility of historians to constantly reinterpret history based on the new questions that each generation asks about the past. It is increasingly important that young and recent Adventists are presented with a far more balanced narrative of what happened in North America as well as what transpired around the world in what was called the "Mission Field" that has led to the very successful spread of Adventism globally.

This paper deals specifically with the arrival and early establishment of Seventh-day Adventism in a relatively small land area of the world, the Anglophone Caribbean. However the emergence of Seventh-day Adventism in this region can be viewed as significant for many reasons and should be studied to better understand the many challenges that both the Adventist missionaries as well as the "Caribbean natives" encountered during these very critical years and seek to analyze what transpired over decades that eventually led to the outstanding success of the Church in this region of the world.

In order to achieve the most accurate and balanced historical perspective it is necessary to pay very close attention to the primary and secondary sources that are available to researchers who desire to develop this narrative.

In some respects, this paper is the logical next step from an earlier paper presented by this author at the Seventh Conference of the Association of Adventist Historians held during March 2013 at Union College, in Lincoln, Nebraska entitled "The Shaping of Early Eastern Caribbean Adventist Leaders, Charles J. B. Cave and George E. Peters." That paper argued that the Dominant Narrative of Caribbean SDA history was essential incomplete and was primarily written from an American missionary perspective.

This paper seeks to examine that the available primary and secondary sources and to explore ways to identify and preserve numerous non traditional sources that can be vital in an attempt to re-constructing what some might regard as a lost narrative.

Consequently this paper focuses on (1) The Significance of early Adventism in the English speaking Caribbean; (2) Review of the Earliest writings and authors on Early British Caribbean Adventism; (3) The Archival Sources of the Early English Caribbean Adventism; (4) The More Recent writings about Adventists in the Commonwealth Caribbean; (5) The Challenges Facing the Researching of early Adventist Caribbean history and (6) Some Strategies for Re-examining the Early Anglo-Caribbean Adventist Experience.

I. The Significance of Early Adventism in The English speaking Caribbean

There are a number of important reasons for seeking to more clearly examine the existing official record of what transpired during those very early years based on what has been written and by whom. First, this region of the Caribbean is among the first places that Seventh-day Adventism was embraced outside of the United States. This early embrace of Caribbean residents to Adventism has been acknowledged in what can be called the official SDA record and is identified as occurring as early as during 1883. This has been cited over and over by many Adventist historians, from the writings of John Loughborough to many others for decades, including those by Richard Schwartz and Floyd Greenleaf.

Secondly, relatively recent preliminary research seeks to suggest that there were even earlier contacts and acceptance of Seventh-day Adventism in this region of the Caribbean prior to this official time. There is evidence to show that the initial contacts and concentrated attempts at evangelizing this area was not by American Adventist colporteurs and missionaries but by West Indian immigrants to the U.S. who were converted here and returned with a small amounts of Adventist literature...but who were treated poorly by the British colonial authorities. Among these persons were possibly James Brathwaite of probably Barbados, James Paterson of St. Vincent and David Blake of Jamaica.

Thirdly, Adventist historians including Richard W. Schwarz in Light Bearers to The Remnant (1979) and George Knight in A Brief History of Seventh Day Adventists, (1999) acknowledge that the early 1880's was time when the leaders of the Church were targeting specific areas of the world for mission work but clearly the Caribbean was not on the list of places. It was mostly European countries, or places with large British populations like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand as the exotic Pacific region.

Fourth was the Anglophone Caribbean would be among the earliest places that Adventist American missionaries would be faced with having to deal with the full acceptance and baptism of persons of African descent. In fact research has shown that the initial contacts between persons from this Caribbean region and the folk at Battle Creek, Michigan who began writing for SDA literature were primarily members of the Upper and middle classes who were of European descent. There is evidence to show that on the arrival of the first Adventist missionaries years later to baptize the initial converts and organize the first churches in this area of the Caribbean, the majority of those interested were the elite and well educated who desired to learn about the

Sabbath and the health message. The early missionaries wrote back to Battle Creek about them in great detail. However when it came to baptism into Adventism a significant percentage did not because of the challenges of Sabbath observance with their business practices and the requirements of abstinence from their use of alcohol and tobacco. However the early Seventh day Adventists population in the English speaking Caribbean was a racially mixed congregation made up of a wide cross section of the region's socio-economic groups. There were among the wealthy and more educated classes.

The fifth reason of examining early Adventism in this region is to observe more closely the dynamics between the early Adventist missionaries and the English colonial administrators and officials who granted permission for the Adventists from North America to evangelize this region. They seemed to have used a very different attitude and approach to these individuals than they had to local residents who emigrated and returned to the region share this new Adventist faith. The sources indicate that in some cases, former and returning residents who practiced and or evangelized in these colonies were placed in prison and lunatic asylums for sharing their faith. There is evidence that also during this time families placed relatives in asylums for practicing the keeping of the Sabbath while resident Jews were allowed to openly practice their faith. Consequently, this study is important for it is the logical next step in seeking to help develop and map the methods that produce the Caribbean perspective narrative on the coming of Seventh Day Adventism to the English speaking Caribbean.

Preliminary research has shown that a significant number of the American missionaries faced serious health challenges dealing with a variety of tropical diseases that in some cases took the lives of some of these Adventist pioneers.

The missionaries met with very strong opposition for decades from the clergy of the established Churches in British West Indian colonies including the Church of England (the Anglicans), the Roman Catholics, Methodists and Moravians.

This research also suggests that the earliest contacts by mail for literature and invitations for the Adventists to visit the region was made by members for the regions upper and middle classes, most of whom were of European descent and directly connected to the region's planter and mercantile classes rather than the larger lower classes of African descent. It appears event that after the initial direct contacts and the call for them to become baptized member, that a large percentage refused to take that step. However, the early SDA congregations in the Caribbean were racially mixed ones including many wealthy and highly professional individuals including medical doctors, teachers and leading merchants.

II. The Review of the Early British Caribbean Adventist Sketches about the Arrival of Adventism

The official narrative of the coming of Seventh-day Adventism to the Eastern Caribbean tells of the arrival of Adventist literature, itinerant colporteurs and then missionaries, in that chronological order. This narrative is based on both oral and written reports of those who visited and then those who lived and worked in the area for extended periods. These experiences were written to inspire the church leaders at headquarters as well as the church members in North

America to continue to support these efforts in the Mission field. The composited narrative was extracted from various missionary oral reports, personal correspondence from workers in that region and published reports that appeared in the local Adventist news letters and shorten versions that appeared the Church's official paper, the Review and Herald.

Additionally, some of the pioneering missionaries were skilled in the printing of their own local church newsletters, or had it done at local printing establishments for local and wider circulation of their activities. These Caribbean based publications included from the southern region, The South Caribbean Gleaner, Volume I-Xi, 1888-1899; The Home Missionary, Volumes I and II in 1890-1891; The Caribbean Watchman, Volume I-VI, 1903-1908, and The Field Gleanings, Volume I-VII, 1923-1928. In Jamaica, covering that colony as well as the surrounding areas including the Bahamas was the West Indian Messenger beginning in 1910 and continuing unbroken into the mid-twentieth century.

A few skilled missionaries began to write and publish narratives about the success of their and other workers activities in the region. George F. Enoch who was responsible for the publication of some of the early newsletter coming out of this region, published the first known book about the progress on Adventism in this region. Published in 1907 and entitled, The Advent Message in The Sunny Caribbean. From his office in Port-of Spain in Trinidad, this modest volume contained a very positive narrative of the church's growth along with many photos and drawing of the people and places that were involved in church work and its expansion in this region. However the narrative is silent about the activities and struggles of the Caribbean Adventist experience.

After the creation of the Inter-American Division in 1922 that office began in 1924 to publish the Inter-American Division Messenger beginning with Volume I in 1924 and continuing unbroken into the mid-twentieth century. Although this paper covered a wider area, it frequently carried information on activities that transpired in the Anglophone Caribbean.

During the first half of the twentieth century, two authors with strong missionary ties and experiences in the Caribbean also published volumes about the origins of Adventism in the eastern and English Caribbean tracing its earliest activities to events beginning around 1883. The first was authored by Matilda E. Andross and was published in 1926 entitled, The Story of the Advent Message in the Inter-America Division by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Mrs. Andross and her family had a long tenure of missionary service in the English speaking Caribbean and her husband had been appointed the first Division president of that division.

The second publication was the 1947 volume entitled, The Advent Message in Inter-America and authored by Wesley Amundsen and published also by the Review and Herald Publishing Association and covered the same bases. The author wrote, "This book is dedicated to that corps of pioneer missionary men and women who, braving the perils of the tropics and strange lands, counted not their lives dear to themselves, but went forth in His name, to carry the Advent message into new fields."

Both of these early works appear to lay the foundation for other subsequent publications that appeared during the rest of the twentieth century that included the story of Seventh –day Adventism in this region and many simply used and reused the information included in these works without closely researching and studying the SDA archival sources that pertained to activities from this region.

III. The SDA Archival Holdings on the Early Presence of Adventism in The Anglo-Caribbean

The SDA Archives contains the most extensive collection of manuscripts and other documents on the early Adventist experiences in the Eastern Caribbean. A preliminary review of these primary sources indicate that they are quite extensive and reveals far more detail about the various tensions that existed in the formation and growth of SDA congregations in this region. These primary sources include correspondence between those working in this region from the early 1880's and forwards. Shorten versions of these letters found their way into the pages of the Church's official news carrier, the Review and Herald. There are also copies of the Caribbean based news bulletins that were already mentioned from the South Caribbean Field Gleaner to the Inter-American Messenger.

Additionally, there are other archival sources on which researchers can reconstruct the narrative about Adventism in the Anglo-Caribbean. These include the administrative personnel files on each Church employee that contains a detailed record of employment history of those who serve the Church in the Caribbean. There is also an extensive collection of biographical information and copies of these workers obituaries. There is also valuable archival information that can be examined in various Record Groups; from the expensive minutes of the Mission Board to the very early annual SDA Year books beginning with the publications from the mid 1880's and forward.

Within the Anglo-Caribbean region that presently includes over a dozen mini nations and British colonies there is an appreciable amount of archival sources that are available but have not been utilized by researchers. However, most of these historical materials are not stored in any one location as in the U.S. and there is not an Adventist archives in the Caribbean. While the Anglo-Caribbean SDA area is the home of two Adventist universities, North Caribbean University in Jamaica and the University of the Southern Caribbean in Trinidad, neither have archival holding that contain original documents or artifacts that directly deal with early Adventism.

However, both have extensive library holdings on their campuses in Mandeville, Jamaica and at Maracas Valley in Trinidad. In the North Caribbean Library system is the Hiram S. Walters Research Centre as well as the Ellen G. White SDA Research Centre. At the University of The Southern University is the K. E. Forde Library that includes the usual library holdings as well as specific Library Collections including one for a former student-professor and administrator, Dr. George Carlington Simmons Collection and on that campus there is also the Eric S. Greaves Museum that houses artifacts from the early years of that institution in the late 1920's. While both institutions have copies of publications about early Adventism in the region, there has been to date no administrative attempts to have an archive that includes materials about

early Adventism. Nevertheless, there are in their general collections copies of some early conference newsletters, magazines, conference reports, union newsletters, magazines, quarterly papers and Union sessions reports, as well as some random materials in both the library systems.

There are other archival sources in the Anglo-Caribbean that include materials that can help to re construct the early Adventist experience in the region from the various government archives of each of these countries. There are also the library systems of the University of the West Indies, at three locations, in Jamaica at Mona, in Barbados at Cave Hill and St. Augustine in Trinidad. There are also the respective governments Archives from those in Nassau, The Bahamas to Georgetown, Guyana. Many of the various countries also have Public Library systems. In these locations some libraries have archival facilities that include newspapers and their country Year Books that mention and include information about the early activities of Adventists and other religious groups.

IV. The More Recent Writings and Focus on Adventism in the Eastern Caribbean

Beginning in the late 1950's the tradition role of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries serving and leading the Church's work in this part of the Caribbean began to dramatically decline. Positions of church leadership began to be assumed by individuals who originated from this region at both the Conference and Union levels. This trend was similar to the changes that were also unfolding in secular political sectors across the Caribbean where former British colonies, from Jamaica to Guyana, were becoming politically independent. During this period Adventist church growth in this region began to accelerate and the church received a wider acceptance from the wider Caribbean community. One of the leading Caribbean evangelists, Kimbleton S. Wiggins who won hundreds of converts each year published an instructional volume on his methods of public evangelism. Many church papers as well as secular newspapers carried these stories about the changes of leadership and perception of the SDA church unfolding within this region of the Caribbean. On the other hand the publications that contained the history of Adventism in this region did not carry these changes within SDA Church leadership and administration. At the same time SDA works that carried the historical narrative of Adventism in the Caribbean did not include these changes. The widely acclaimed SDA history by Richard Schwarz in 1979 entitled, Light Bearers to The Remnant, includes small glimpses of early Adventism in the Anglo-Caribbean but he never deals with this later changes, but focuses the earliest periods taken from the books that repeat the official narrative.

However, during this period the first narratives prepared by Caribbean Adventist authors begin to appear and focus on the experience of the converts to Adventism in this region. The first narrative completed during this time was prepared as a thesis at a secular institution in the Caribbean at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill in Barbados. Wismar Greaves' "The Rise and Growth of The S.D.A. Church in Barbados" was prepared as a thesis for part of the fulfillment a Bachelor's degree. And other Caribbean authors would write about the progress of Adventism mostly in the eastern Anglo-Caribbean. Ian Greene of Trinidad would author in 1979, "A Study on the Emergence and Socio-Religious Integration of the SDA Church in Trinidad and Tobago," that carefully tracks the struggle of Adventist to expand their membership in a Caribbean society that was predominantly Catholic and significant percentages

of the population were Moslem and Hindu. In 1977 Glenn O. Phillips authored, The Making of a Christian College, Caribbean Union College, 1927-1977 published by the College's Press and the following year authored "Barbados' Battle Creek Doctor: Dr. Charles Cave, 1879-1939" in The Adventist Heritage Magazine, Volume V, No.2. Both essays focused on the activities of Caribbean Adventists in seeking to promote the work of Adventists in this region through Christian education and the health message.

Another Anglo-Caribbean Adventist author, writing about the early experience of Caribbean Adventists was Eric John Murray of Trinidad and Tobago. An experienced Church leader and now Union president, he authored A History of the SDA Church in Trinidad and Tobago 1891-1981, was published in 1982 by the College Press in Trinidad.

There were other narratives authored during this period that touched on the rise of Adventism in the region but many of them were not published. Some authors began to prepare narratives on the beginnings and growth of SDA Church in Jamaica but most were never completed or published as a number of informants have indicated to the authors. There were a number of short essays written by Anglo-Caribbean Adventists that dealt with changing nature of Adventism in the region. Among them was Dion E. and Glenn O. Phillips' "Preacher-Politician in The Caribbean" that appeared in Spectrum; Journal of Adventist Forum, Vol. 16, No. 2, in June of 1985, pp. 14-17. The essay is about one of the early Barbadian Adventist politician, Victor Johnson who served in the ruling party's Cabinet as head of the Department of Labor while still serving his church and conducting evangelistic meetings and adding to the church's membership. At this time, there also a growing number of Jamaican Adventists who were intimately involved and served in the Jamaican government.

On the other hand, there were some non Caribbean authors who undertook to write about the growth of Adventism in a wider context who included the Anglo-Caribbean. Floyd Greenleaf's two volume, History of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin American and the Caribbean, published by Andrews University Press in 1992 was an overly ambitious effort undertaken by a trained Adventist scholar that was forced to cover lots of ground in his effort. He would later remark that this effort "... turned out to be a much longer and more penetrating story than I anticipated." Confronting the issues that faced a reinterpretation of the early history of Adventism in the Anglo-Caribbean was clearly on Greenleaf's agenda. Other Adventist scholars who wrote about early Adventism around the world ignored the region because of the concise nature of their publications. An excellent example of this was George Knight's 1999 narrative, A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists, in his remarkable series of publications about Adventists. Knight makes no reference to Adventism in the Caribbean.

A very interesting and related matter is the outstanding voluminous body of writings published by Anglo-Caribbean Adventist authors in a very wide variety of academic fields. While this is not a focus of this paper it would be an insightful theme for another paper. However in passing it is important to mention this development and highlight a few authors. Numerous of these authors were students and graduates of the two senior Adventist colleges in Jamaica and Trinidad who continued their education and wrote about their areas of expertise. The earliest Anglo-Caribbean author to have a manuscript published by an Adventist publishing house was Antiguan George E. Peters' 1947 "Thy Dead Shall Live" prepared by the Southern Publishing

Association. Peters was at the time the director of the church's Negro Department and one of the leading Adventist evangelists. This ten-chapter book was specifically designed to reach the African-American community having been accompanied by a number of photos with persons of color. The later authors include Roy Adams, George W. Brown, Walter B.T. Douglass, G. Ralph Thompson, Melvin K. Peters, Lyndrey A. Niles, Slimen Saliba, Esther Simmons, George Simmons, Earl Gooding, Talbert O. Shaw, Judith Nembhard, Clarence Barnes, Ouida Westney, Bertram Melbourne, Harold Bennett, W. U. Campbell, Pedrito Maynard-Reid, D. Robert Kennedy, Alvin Mclean, Alanzo Smith and many others. Not included in this list are thesis and doctoral dissertations by other authors at a wide variety of universities in the U.S. that focus on the Adventist experience. The graduate programs at Andrews University facilitated a number of studies regarding the Anglo-Caribbean experience. Probably beginning with Edwin English's study as he was among the first from this region to complete his doctoral degree in Theology at the SDA Theological Seminary in 1974 and to focus his dissertation writing on the Anglo-Caribbean experience. Others would research around this other area in various disciplines including Educational administration. Vernon E. Andrews completed his doctoral degree in 1978 at Andrews University writing about higher education in the Anglo-Caribbean.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century an increasing number of authors from this region have authored studies about various aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist Caribbean experience. The subjects range from social activism, public evangelism, Caribbean Adventist secondary and tertiary education, Church development to the impact of emigration and immigration within the Caribbean Adventist community.

One publication deals with an early twentieth century Adventist leader originally from Jamaica was R. Clifford Jones' James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists that the University Press of Mississippi released in 2006. Trinidadian SDA seminarian professor and former pastor- evangelist writes about Humphrey's Harlem, New York City congregation and their separation from the SDA world church. The following year, the University of The Southern Caribbean historian Loverne Jacobs-Browne presented a paper at the fifth Conference of the Association of Adventist Historians held in 2007 on the campus of Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama on "Adventism in Trinidad and Tobago 1889 to the Present." This presentation shows the willingness of Anglo-Caribbean scholars to develop an academic dialogue with their colleagues in the U.S.

There have also been other of these Caribbean Adventists in non history disciplines who have begun to write biographies and auto biographies reflecting on the lives of Adventist from the region. Herbert J. Thompson's Rural Gumption: Autobiography, published by Dikah Publishers in 2001 traces the humble beginnings of one of the leading administrators in Adventist tertiary education and his decades long leadership as president of North Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica. Another auto-biography was written by Jamaican obstetrics and gynecologist Lennox S. Westney entitled, Just As I Am: Challenged, but Confident, released by Trafford Publishing in 2008, that shows the many hurdles the author encountered on his way to a life of service in the Washington metropolitan area and also serving as a chairperson of his specialty department at Howard University Medical College.

Other biographies have written include Phyllis Andrews' Held Captive: Memoirs of a Caribbean Woman, (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Calfigrafix Ltd., 2012) and Dorothy Minchin-Comm's Of Courage, Compassion and Endurance: the Story of Timothy Greaves, M.D., (Loma Linda, Calif., Loma Linda University, 2013). There are many other publications and projects not included in this list as well as incomplete projects begun by many with personal interests in more clearly understanding the impact of the SDA church on this community. Nevertheless one can only review what has been completed and to date these publications capture various images and perspectives of the Anglo-Caribbean Adventists over the various decades and is part of the growing literature about the diverse experiences of Adventist regarding how they viewed themselves and how they lived their lives and contributed to the church's overall mission. However, much more can be done to have the present and future generations more clearly understand and fully appreciate the challenges that earlier Seventh day Adventist encountered.

The most recent and promising indication of the growing interest in the early Adventist Caribbean experience is the short essay by Gosnell Yorke, "The Role of Mrs. White's writings in the start and spread of Seventh-day Adventism in the Anglo-Caribbean," in the NCU Spirit of Prophecy Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 1, December-January 2014, pp. 1-2. Yorke is the director of the E. G. White Research Center on that campus. The Jamaica Union Conference office has also started to collect printed information on the origins of Adventism in the country. Over the years individual church leaders the Caribbean Union Conference in Trinidad have expressed interest in the subject but mostly at a personal level and so far have not crafted a plan or policy to implement a method that will constructively lay the ground work for the preservation of this experience.

V. The Challenges Facing Researching and Writing about Early Anglo-Caribbean Adventist Experience

There are still a number of hurdles that need to be dealt with in order to be able to capture a carefully balanced narrative and gain insight into this experience this many years later when for decades the subject was ignored and essentially relegated to being the hobby of untrained chroniclers and the vague recollections of a few converts that were in their last years of life that have been written about for some older Churches anniversaries.

The existing challenges include the fragmentary state and multiple locations of the primary Anglo-Caribbean sources that still exist. There appears at present to be no existing letters, documents, artifacts or inventories of these located at the most logical sites in the Anglo-Caribbean except that which is kept at some individual churches in their record books of baptisms and important business meetings.

A second challenge is the general lack of genuine interest by most Anglo-Caribbean church administrators, leaders and even historians to having this period of Adventism carefully preserved, researched and carefully narrated. [This conclusion comes from numerous conversations and enquiries over many years with many from these groups. The church administrative and operational papers (correspondence and annual reports) of earlier administrations appear to be routinely dumped to make room for the new officers and their secretarial staff when there is a change of administration.]

Third on account of the increasing number of administrative organizations that manage the church's operations in this area, there is a real challenge of fragmentation in seeking to obtaining the necessary historical documents and data information regarding the areas church growth even over recent years. For example the Caribbean Union Conference presently serves nine conferences and/or missions with administrative offices that keep the collective church's information and records in Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Croix for USVI, Tobago, Trinidad, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent.

Fourth, while there are some areas that have had some research and writing done especially Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, most of the other Anglo-Caribbean areas have a comprehensive narrative written and published to date. Very surprisingly, this includes the outstanding Adventist membership growth in both Jamaica and Guyana, both were very important and critical areas during the very early period of SDA church growth and remain very positive examples of the strong influence that Adventism has had for decades around the Caribbean.

VI. What are the Strategies that can be Utilized to Deal with Such Challenges?

Two years ago, the author prepared a paper to present at an annual conference held by the Association of Caribbean Historians in Puerto Rico on early Adventism in Barbados. It was undertaking in the research phase of this paper that he relied on the few strategies to complete the paper. First the author consciously made an effort to use primary sources and perspectives that reflected both the views of both the Adventist missionaries as well as their Caribbean converts.

Secondly, was the attempt to analyze what was written and stated by both groups and to be equally critical of their observations and statements regarding each other. Therefore it was necessary to re-examine all that was written for accuracy and balance in the telling of the story.

Thirdly, a conscious effort has to be made to search for and preserve earlier Adventist Anglo-Caribbean Adventist Church records and have them carefully housed in a suitable location where they can be carefully preserved and made available for those who wish to study them. Many of the older churches have over the years carefully kept the congregation's Record Book that contains dates of baptisms, marriages, deaths of members; some even has the records of some important board meetings.

A fourth strategy is examining the secular records of the society that can range from the annual Government records as they relate to and define the local SDA church organization in their publications. These include the annual Government Year books and other references in the colonies or countries' leading newspapers. The many Caribbean newspapers often include articles on various activities from new church openings to the arrival of new leaders, departures, deaths of members and special services. However, newspapers can at times carry inaccurate narratives and should be double-checked.

Fifth should be the attempt to obtain information prepared by other Anglo-Caribbean denominations about the SDA church and its work in the region. Many of the established churches viewed their role as opposing the formation of SDA congregations in areas where they had a strong following and often openly objected to their members and their families becoming Adventists. The information on Adventists from these “rival churches” can be very informative and useful for understanding the Adventist experience in the Caribbean. [Side note: Beware of some unwarranted bashing.]

The sixth approach/strategy is the use of conducting oral history projects, interviewing many of the senior Adventists in various congregations who were leaders and having them recount what it was like to be an Adventist decades earlier and to describe what they viewed as the Church’s leading achievements. Using the appropriate techniques for Oral history collection, very insightful recollections on early Adventism from the perspective of the Anglo-Caribbean Adventists can be obtained.

Finally, this paper urges that an outcome of this Adventist Historians Conference is that our SDA archivists encourage our church leaders, especially those working outside of the U.S., to develop and implement a plan to have the early historical experiences of Adventists in their area collected and preserved. Consequently, carefully researched narratives can be produced and in turn will inspire the younger generations of Adventists, many of whom are unaware of the outstanding work done by the Adventist pioneers from their countries.

This paper also wishes to convey that the History and Social Science departments in various areas be encouraged to collect existing primary and secondary sources on the beginnings and earlier times of Adventism in that area of any documents; including but not limited to: records, deeds, letters, papers, books, reports, newspaper articles, certificates, photographs, etc. Oral history projects should be encouraged to capture the recollections of what it was like on becoming an Adventist from the most senior Adventists in a given area.

Ultimately, if there are no local Adventist narratives, individuals are encouraged to carefully develop such a system with the assistance of an available social science professional. The appropriate persons are to be provided with instructions on how to establish a modest archive for the preservation of these records. Subsequently, specific steps should be taken to have these “indigenous collections” housed at an Adventist university/college/academic institution so that these materials are available to researchers and others interested to examine them. This should be in an effort to strengthen the narrative of early Adventism in that area, eventually becoming part of the greater Adventist historical database.

It would also be instructive to have the academic courses that are already taught in Adventist institutions on Adventist history to also include a specific section on local Adventist history. This will give students a more balanced perspective on the Adventist experience.