

Hands of the Cause of God:
Enoch Olinga:

My first encounter with Enoch Olinga was in Barbados in August 1970. He was visiting the island for the first time and had a heavy schedule of meetings with high officials, media and with the friends in the capital.

My family was then living in St Thomas but I was now here in Barbados on a teaching trip which included a youth from St Vincent - Don Providence, the USA - Michael Fanning and my two daughters, Lynn and Judy. I had picked a small village in the middle of the island called Newbury. Because of the youth presence and the time frame of the early days when TV, cable and other distractions were not available, we were able to have many people show up for our nightly meetings.

This time frame also coincided with a visit of my husband Frank and another pioneer from St Thomas, Ethel Harris, who were lucky enough to be able to take the same flight as Mr. Olinga did to Barbados.

After he arrived on the island, I went to see him at the house of Karen and Phil Wood where he was staying. Unfortunately, I arrived just after he had gone in to rest. Karen and I talked softly so as to not disturb him, but he did hear us and graciously got up to see who was there.

When he entered the room where I was I felt really bad disturbing him as he looked so tired. But we chatted a bit and then I thought, well, as I'm here, I might as well ask him if he will come to Newbury and speak at one of our meetings.

After I did, he sighed, was silent for a bit, and then said to me "What's it like in Newbury". Now I was silent for a bit, and then said "well, where you are now is like the city and Newbury is like the country". He broke into that big smile of his and said "lets go".

The day in Newbury was wonderful. Frank and Mr. Olinga took a long walk, he and I got to have another long talk, and best of all he was very happy there and noticeably relaxed.

Then came the night meeting, it was even more crowded than usual. The word had spread, a Black man is going to talk tonight! We never had enough chairs so those who came late had to stand. One of our regulars however, a small, elderly woman came as usual, carrying her chair on her head. He spoke and it was so well received that the crowd did not want to leave. But as West Indians tend to get up early, eventually they all left.

The rest of us, the team, and those who came from town, went inside and talked with lots of enthusiasm about the meeting. Mr. Olinga who had been quiet, then turned, pointed to me and said "I want you to come to Barbados". We all responded with a laugh, the Paccassi's were Americans living in St Thomas, and being able to move to

Barbados was fraught with complications, such as visas, residency, employment, schooling for the girls and etc. His expression changed and he said in one of the most forceful voices I have ever heard, "I have the power to make it happen". We all stopped laughing. One year later our family moved to Barbados where we able to stay 5 great years.

My second experience with Mr. Olinga's vision of things before they happened was in Dominica in 1977. We had moved there as we always did, after Frank had been replaced in his job to local person. It also always, strangely enough, coincided with an Island that the National Assembly had set as goal to be opened or supported.

For the past several years, living in both St Thomas and Barbados, Frank and I had served on the National Spiritual Assembly. The next year, 1978, was the year in which the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies around the world were eligible to travel to Haifa for the International Convention. We had gone there together for the International Convention in 1973 and had enjoyed our privilege enormously. While it was unspoken, the desire to go again together was present.

Mr. Olinga and his wife Elizabeth's visit to our house in Dominica was charming. We lived in a small house on a big estate and it was all country. While sitting in our screened porch, some chickens strolled by, and they both laughed, clapped their hands, saying, "it's just like home". Mr. Olinga made tea for us all, and as they were leaving, he again turned to me and said "I'll see you in Haifa next year". This sorta surprised Frank and I, as we had been the National Assembly together for many years, but we said nothing. Next year at our National Convention, I was elected to serve, but Frank was not, and I did see Mr. Olinga in Haifa, as we stayed at the same guest house!