

Sounds of Encouragement

Website Twenty-fifth Anniversary

2000 to 2025

*A story of creativity and courage that began in 1984.
Radio, online, and print outreach.*



The website, Sounds of Encouragement (www.soencouragement.org), started in April 2000 as a tool to publish articles online written by Barrington H. Brennen. In July 1996, he began writing articles to publish in the Nassau Guardian, a local Bahamian newspaper. The opportunity to have a website was a dream come through after TAGnet (Three Angels Global Networking) was founded in 1995 in Silicon Valley (California) as a primary volunteer organization for hosting Adventist websites. Pastors and churches were given the opportunity to publish websites for free or at a low cost. TAGnet, now called netAserve, hosts thousands of Adventist churches and other institutions' websites from around the world.

How did Sounds of Encouragement get started in the first place? What is it all about? Between 1980 and 1983, when Barrington Brennen and his family were serving the Islands of Exuma and Long Island as the district pastor, his hobby was listening to shortwave radio every day. In those days, there were no digital television channels online, smart phones or laptops. Hence, Barrington became an avid listener to many religious and new programs from around the world with the use of a shortwave radio. This included The Voice of America, National Public Radio, Transworld Radio, Bonaire near South America; Radio 4EVH Haiti (Evangelist Voice of Haiti), Radio Germany, Radio Vatican Italy, Moody Radio, Family Radio, and much more. Quickly he became someone who practiced DXing, the practice of listening to many stations from as many countries as possible and receiving verification cards from them. He accumulated about 100 of those cards.

One outstanding program he enjoyed and that touched his life was "Night Sound" by Bill Pearce, that came on every night on most of the shortwave religious stations. Night Sound was a 30-minute program with inspirational music and intriguing spiritual and encouraging thoughts designed to motivate each listener. Bill Pearce's voice was warm, inviting, and special. His rich bass tone was

sufficient to lure Barrington each night to his shortwave radio. Little did Barrington know that he was being set up to have his own radio program. His creative juices began to flow from his mind. Thus, before he left Exuma, he was determined in his heart that he would start his own radio program. This was when the name “Sounds of Encouragement” was born in his heart to be a radio program on ZNS Radio Station. What a dream!

In 1983 he was moved to Crooked Island as the district pastor. In those days there were no public electricity, running water, nor personal telephones on the island. Homes got their lights from generators people only used a few hours each day or windmills that charged a cluster of batteries to produce lights. The only phones available were at the Phone Depot eleven miles away in Colonel Hill. Using the phone felt like a picnic day. The family would pack lunch and travel the lonely road to the town hoping that the lightning did not strike out the transmission tower the night before. If that was the case, Morse Code was used to send messages to friends and family. Barrington and his wife, Annick, had to use this method twice while living on Crooked Island.

The Brennen’s home was the only one on the island to have a twenty-four-hour generator. But one thing everyone had was CB Radios (Citizens Band Radio). A church member, hearing about his interest in radio, loaned Barrington a CB Radio. This was exciting. After erecting the antenna and setting up the radio, he began organizing in his mind, and then on paper, how he would use the CB Radio to start a CB Radio program. Bingo! It happened.

First, he started composing program scripts and then selecting music from his wide collection of music cassette tapes. Thus in early 1984, (41 years ago) Sounds of Encouragement had its first radio broadcast using CB Radio on Landrail Point, Crooked Island, Bahamas. It was at 6 a.m. for about 15 minutes, two days a week. Not being an actual radio studio, it required skillful manipulation each time the program was on air. Before the program started, he had to line up on the little desk the three or four cassettes from which he had selected songs to use, have a script neatly written in front of him on the desk, and then with the right hand, hold the CB Radio microphone button that one cannot let go for the length of the program. When the music was playing, he had to place the microphone closer to the speaker of the cassette player, and when coming to the end of the song, skillfully reduce the volume like in a real studio, to begin talking.

“Good morning! I am Barrington Brennen, your early morning motivational speaker. You are listening to Sounds of Encouragement.” There were a few listeners on Crooked Island and Acklins, even a few on their boats out at sea. Sometimes, when the weather produced a high-pressure system across The Bahamas and North America, skips – truck drivers on the highway in Canada--would tune in on their CB Radios. “In CB radio terminology, “skip” refers to a phenomenon where radio signals travel long distances due to the reflection or refraction of radio waves from the ionosphere, a



layer in the Earth's upper atmosphere. This allows CB radio operators to communicate with stations hundreds or even thousands of miles away.”

It was the beginning of something special. The program was not broadcast on the regular CB radio channel not to interfere with regular radio traffic. Users were invited to turn to another channel to listen. Barrington really enjoyed doing this program. It ignited a spark that would never fade away.

The first installment of Sounds of Encouragement continued for about two years and in 1986, Barrington and his family moved to Nassau to serve as the pastor of Berea Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was during that year that ZNS Radio Bahamas began offering pastors the opportunity to have a radio program at a very discounted rate of \$20 for thirty minutes. With the official blessing of the Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Barrington jumped on the opportunity and began soliciting financial donations from individuals. The response was magnificent. He then contacted the late Edgar Williams, a leading Bahamian sound engineer at the time with one of the first audio production studios, and an alumnus of Bahamas Academy, to produce the programs.

It was exciting for Barrington to move from CB Radio to actual radio broadcasting. The discipline and practice prepared him for the actual radio program. The programs production never interfered with the regular ministry time and family involvement. He would go to the studio 5 am in the morning, while his family slept, once or twice a week to produce four to six radio programs 29 minutes 30 seconds in length. They aired late at night twice a week ,at 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and 3:30 a.m. on Thursdays. The goal of the program was to reach the late-night workers, the sleepless and restless, by providing soothing music and inspirational thoughts. It was effective. Letters and phone calls started to come in. There were stories of encouragement and healing. The program was changing lives.

It was amazing how many people could not sleep or who were at work at night. One of the sweetest sounds to his ears was when someone told him that they fell asleep listening to the program. The person could not sleep for weeks and when they tuned in to Sounds of Encouragement, they said that they received encouragement, insight, and hope, enabling them to fall asleep. Also the music helped them relax and let go. That was exciting to hear.

Many taxi drivers told him that while they were waiting at a hotel or airport for a client, they would tune in to the program and were inspired. Truly it was a blessing helping those he could not see or hear otherwise.

Barrington Brennen spoke on interesting topics that would speak directly to the soul and pain of people. For example: Stress, Old Age, Extra Marital Affairs, Headship or Partnership, Choosing a life Partner, Loneliness, Pregnant But not for My Husband, Shaking Up, For the Sake of the Children, How Much Are You Worth? Kiss Me, Kiss Me! Suicide, Homosexuality, Ghost and Things, Laughter, Death, Peace, and much more. The script for these programs and hundreds more are still intact in his library.

Sounds of Encouragement continued on ZNS Radio for a total of fifteen years. Yes, it was interrupted when the family moved to Andrews University, Michigan, where he studied for the degree in

counseling and marriage and family therapy. Upon returning home in 1996, he was the first marriage and family therapist in The Bahamas. The program was started on air once more for about two years, but it was difficult to keep on air because the cost had increased considerably and the work ministry was greater.

However, as stated earlier, in 2000 the opportunity came to keep Sounds of Encouragement ministry alive by having a website. A few years earlier (1992 to 1996), while at Andrews University, studying for the degree in counseling and marriage and family therapy, Barrington began publishing articles in the Student Movement (The University student newspaper). He needed to find an avenue to share his creativity. The response was encouraging.

In 2000, the website became an avenue to keep the messages going and to help others, not only in The Bahamas, but around the world. To date on the Sounds of Encouragement website there are over one thousand articles dealing with a variety of topics for individuals, couples, families, and teens. Sounds of Encouragement would continue to remain alive in the heart and soul of Barrington Brennen and all those who read his articles around the world.

The opportunity to share again on the radio, but in a different way came in 2017 on Word SBC 88.3 FM, Nassau, The Bahamas. It was when “Your Daily Relationship Nugget” was born. A 10-minute radio program designed to teach, heal and inspire. It airs midday Monday to Friday each week. It was inspired by Sounds of Encouragement radio program. The topics are just as spicy and interesting. Although not being aired on ZNS Radio Bahamas, Your Daily Relationship Nugget is being aired, at no cost, on Cayman Adventist Radio, Cayman Public Radio, WGod US Virgin Island, Belize Adventist Radio, an Adventist radio in the United Kingdom, and around the world on Spotify Adventist World Radio.

Sounds of Encouragement website set the foundation for inspiration for Barrington Brennen to share around the world through Your Daily Relationship Nugget. People from every country around the world, except one, read the articles, with the aid of Google Translate, in the language they choose. The only country where the Google Analytic Statistics indicate no activity is the Central Republic of Africa, located in the center of Africa. Some of the countries where people are reading or listening are in The Bahamas, Nigeria, Ghana, India, Vietnam, China, Togo, South Korea, North Korea, Jamaica, Trinidad, Czech Republic, Ukraine, South Africa, Israel, Jordan, Brazil, Argentina, and the list goes on. The articles and the radio programs are reaching people around the world.

Barrington believes that for many more years, people will find insight, healing, peace, and strength from these outreach programs.

BEHIND THE SCENES: In 2000, Pastor Leonard Johnson, the then Executive Secretary and Communication Director of the Bahamas Conference, invited Barrington to be an associate director of communication responsible for the Conference's website which began in 1999 (26 years ago). He invited him because he observed that the first Adventist Church website, Johnson Park Church website where he was the pastor, had become the most outstanding and successful church website in the Inter-American Division. He wanted him to do the same for the new Bahamas Conference website. Sure enough, for the almost ten years he managed the conference's website, it became the most popular and

functional website in the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. As a result the site own two awards from a local organization. Visitors says that the website was user-friendly, easy to navigate, and provided all they were looking for on the web regarding the church.

Note that during the early days of Sounds of Encouragement the sophisticated software website development had not yet been introduced. Content management software, CIG and PHP tools were not available. Therefore, Barrington never learned how to use those tools. Today, Sounds of Encouragement website is still an old technology website without those modern tools. However, it still ranks high on search engine optimization.

Sounds of Encouragement is a website “Dedicated to the restoration of life” and “Helping people smile again.” Your Daily Relationship Nugget ends each program with the words “I am Barrington Brennen doing my best to keep a smile in your heart.”

Barrington Brennen is a retired Adventist pastor of almost 42 years (1978 to 2019, an active marriage and family therapist and counseling psychologist since 1995, writer, musician, husband, father, grandfather, armature graphic artist, and a lover of people.