



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR THE UCJCI
August 12, 2016

REV EARL THAMES REVERED UCJCI MINISTER PASSES

Beloved and revered, straight-talking Minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, (UCJCI) the Rev. Henry Earl Thames passed yesterday.

Rev Thames, described by the UCJCI as “a rare, gifted and self-effacing individual”, and a special and celebrated treasure of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, made his transition while doing one of the acts of Ministry he loved best— serving and interacting at Youth Camp, an activity he engaged in for 52 consecutive years. He was equally instrumental in the formation of the UCJCI Young Adults Action Movement of which, at the time of his passing, he was an advisor.

A devoted and committed servant of Christ, Rev. Thames described his decades of Ministry as “a celebration of marriage” - a vocational union which began with his ordination in 1964.

Rev. Thames served the United Church as pastor, Moderator (twice), theologian, Chairman of Synodical Committees (Mission Witness & Service, Constitution and Doctrine); as member of Christian Education, Finance and Property Committees, Chairman of School Boards and Institutions (Knox Community College - 29 years!), Regional Director and lecturer in the International University of the Caribbean (IUC) and most recently, **Co-ordinator of the Preliminary Year for United Church theological students.**

He was pivotal in the union of the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches in 1965 to form the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman (UCJGC); and later in 1992 that of the UCJGC with the Disciples of Christ to form what is now the UCJCI. Much of the Church's polity and practices have been shaped and refined by his gifted intellect and practical orientation.

UCJCI Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Mason, commenting on the great loss to the Church occasioned by the passing of Rev. Thames, said; *“Indeed, it is true to say that Rev. Thames is an institution within this United Church, and the UCJCI throughout his years as Minister, experienced added value through his leadership, commitment and contributions.”*

He was an ecumenist serving with purpose institutions like the Jamaica Council of Churches, Keswick Convention and Youth for Christ. Internationally, he provided leadership to the Council for World Mission (CWM), as Executive Member, (1997-1981), and was partially responsible for its current manifestation. The Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM) and the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (1972-2005) have benefitted from his wisdom and vision for ecumenical engagement.

Rev Norbert Stephens, UCJCI General Secretary describing the life of this former 1959, Jamaican Rhodes Scholar states that, *“What has been clear throughout Rev. Thames’ long and outstanding career has been his passion **for children and young people, his advocacy for justice for the marginalized, his pursuit of high morals for the society and his push for evangelism for all**”*. In fact, Rev. Thames passed while carrying out his Ministry to the youth of the Church who had gathered at the Madge Saunders Conference Centre in St. Mary, for their Youth Camp with its theme: **“Discipleship: Action- not a bag a mout’**. ”

Rev. Thames has several publications to his credit, the latest being *“The Book of Revelation: A commentary for Lay Persons”*, published in 2015.

He leaves behind his sisters, Maxine Parchment, Hilma Bramwell and other relatives.

END.

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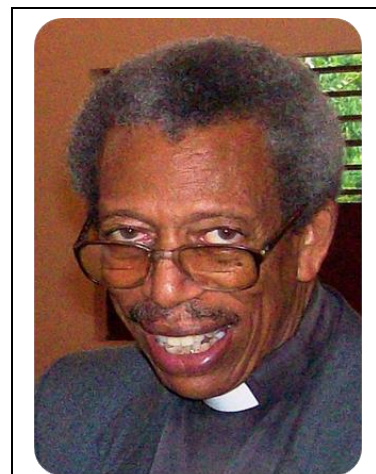
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Rev. Earl Thames