

TRIBUTES
REV. ASHLEY A. SMITH

LAY MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION OF JAMAICA - KINGSTON CHAPTER

We mourn the passing of a Friend, Colleague, Confidant, Counsellor, Chaplin and Justice of the Peace - Reverend Ashley Alexander Smith - Justice of the Peace for the Parish of Kingston, Jamaica. Reverend Smith was commissioned as a Justice of the Peace on November 20, 1969 and served actively until the time when he became ill in 2014, serving for forty-five years. His impressive service to the Chapter and wider parish of Kingston was not only in years, but in quality and quantity. The impact that he has made on Chapter will remain indelible in our minds. We salute him for the rich legacy that he has left us as Justices of the Peace.

During his years as a Justice of the Peace for Kingston, reverend Smith used his extensive academic, religious and social knowledge to advise and guide, not only Justices of the peace, but families, friends and members of the Church and School Communities that needed special guidance in varied aspects and situations of their lives. So many of us have benefitted from his wise counsel for which we remain eternally grateful!

Reverend Smith's care and compassion extended beyond national boundaries through past students and members of the church and wider communities who now live their lives overseas, using his tutelage and guidance as benchmarks for their own lives and that of the families.

Reverend Smith has left an indelible mark on the Lay Magistrates' Association of Jamaica – Kingston Chapter and we take pleasure in celebrating his life and praise him for his contribution. Our memories of him will never be diminished in any way! On behalf of the Custos Rotulorum for Kingston, the members of the Executive of the LMAJ- Kingston, and wider body of Justices of the Peace, we take this opportunity to convey condolences to his Widow - Winifred and son - Bertrand who are both Justices of the Peace for the Parish of Kingston.

May his Soul Rest in Eternal Peace and we pray that the comfort of God surrounds his family for peace, strength, grace, and healing.

Take your rest Reverend Smith and be welcomed into the arms of the Lord our Father who you served so well.

JAMAICA COUNCIL FOR INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

We are first human!

It is with sadness that I am not able to be present so as to publically speak of the magnificent man of Rev. Ashley Smith and his strong promotion of interfaith dialogue.

In 1982, I came to teach philosophy at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Seminary in Kingston, Jamaica, which is adjacent to the United Theological College of the West Indies. In 1990, I started teaching ethics at both institutions and came to know the Reverend Ashley Smith.

Our mutual collaboration was regular, but minimal, until 2000 when I became involved in the Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship (JCFIF) of which Rev. Ashley Smith was one of the co-founders and former President. A comment that Professor Mansingh (a Hindu) stated on several occasions was that Ashley Smith was the most Christian person he had ever met. In working with Ashley more frequently through JCFIF, over the years, I would also have to concur.

Regardless of his clear Christian demeanour, his overall interfaith theology was, and still is, 'We are first human and then a religion.'

The interfaith theology of Ashley Smith realizes that it is the human person who is the starting point of any further description of a religion. Why are humans so intent to separate ourselves by first recognizing others as a person of a religion? Ashley Smith reminds us to have 'eyes that can see' that we are first human and utilize this common oneness as each person then expresses their relationship with the divine in a particular religion. Religion by nature does divide for we frequently say 'we are this (as a religion) and you are that (as a religion)'. It is now time to see that religions do in fact unite. We are united in our humanness; we are united in our desired relationship with the divine. Let us come out of the cave of division and separation and be united in our one humanness found in the totality of reality graced by the one God of all.

Amen!

Rev. Dr. Martin J. Schade

General Secretary

JAMAICA COUNCIL FOR INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

The Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship (JCFIF) came into being as a result of a process of interfaith dialogue commenced by Rev. Ashley Smith, a Christian, Professor Ajai Mansingh, a Hindu and Mr Elias Zohoori, a Bahai. That dialogue widened to embrace adherents of the Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist and Rastafari traditions.

With the encouragement of the late Sir Howard Cooke, the then Governor General of Jamaica this group of fellow-learners moved from dialogue to structuring their relationship as the Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship. Rev. Ashley Smith was the first President of the Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship and served in this capacity for over 20 years, that is to say from 1990--2012. Rev. Ashley Smith's vision, and the vision animating the establishment of the JCFIF was to enhance harmony, love and understanding between all the religions in Jamaica and not just within the various denominations of Christianity. He had a deep awareness that there is but ONE GOD, and his life was a testimony to that reality.

He was a great advocate for peace within religions and for interfaith dialogue. He felt strongly -- as Hans Kung articulated --- that "[u]ntil there is peace between religions there will be no peace

in the world". He was driven by a strong conviction for not merely tolerance towards other religions but rather genuine respect for them. Rev. Ashley Smith's hope is that the different world religions in Jamaica can work together to bring about peace and harmony in Jamaica – land we love.

Under his leadership the JCFIF, by itself and in collaboration with other entities – most notably the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) --- hosted Annual Symposiums; aligned itself with Religions for Peace (an international coalition of representatives from the world's religions); engendered the University of Technology's annual Interfaith Awareness Day and through its member religious organizations participated in numerous Interfaith religious services.

A Gentle Giant in his Faith, a nation---builder, a mentor, a compassionate man, a man of intellectual curiosity --- Rev. Ashley Smith was all of these and more because he truly, sincerely believed that beyond religious belief, economic circumstances, educational level or any other factor we are all human first and accordingly deserving of respect and compassion. Our thoughts and prayers are for the progress of his soul and the comfort of his family.

GUYANA CONGREGATIONAL UNION

It is with much sadness that I am writing to express condolences to the UCJCI family, from the GCU family, on the passing of the 'Gentle Giant,' Rev. Ashley Smith.

The UCJCI has lost a wonderful soul, one who served faithfully in so many various capacities, wearing the numerous hats with grace and humility. I, personally, remember him as a friend, a mentor, a teacher, a father to many of us who had sojourned at the UTCWI. It was quite touching to learn that a mere two days prior to his transition he participated in his final meeting with the clergy for its entirety – not missing a beat. Indeed, Rev. Smith's memory will surely live on!

Please, also, convey to Mrs. Smith and family our hope that they will experience God's divine comfort and peace during this period of grief, knowing that he is resting safely in the Saviour's Arms, with perpetual heavenly light shining all around him.

Rev. Keith Haley
General Secretary

JAMAICA BAPTIST UNION

I write on behalf of the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU) to express heartfelt condolences to the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) at the passing of the Reverend Ashley Smith.

The Rev. Mr. Smith will long be remembered as one of the finest minds and staunchest allies and proponents of Caribbean theology and the emancipatory project ever to have graced our region. From his lectern at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), he sensitized and

empowered hundreds of church leaders from across the region and beyond, to read the bible through contextual and cultural lenses.

His teaching style, wit and knowledge combined to aid his communication of a vision of a region marked by justice and equity. Ashley was unique in many ways and a true blessing to the church and it is deeply regretted that plans for his farewell services may be negatively impacted due to Covid-19 regulations.

Please convey our sympathies to his family and be assured of our prayers as you adjust to life without our beloved brother.

Karl B. Johnson (Rev.)
General Secretary

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN GRENADA

It was it great sadness that we received the death of Rev. Ashley Smith. Rev. Smith came and ministered to the Presbyterian Church in Grenada as a CANACOM missionary for a year from 1998-1999. Our people were particularly pleased that although of the United church, his religious heritage was Presbyterian.

Rev Smith and his wife Winnie were well loved and are remembered with great fondness by our church. Please extend to his family and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, our deepest condolences at their loss of such an erudite and exemplary pastor and wonderful human being.

Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Osbert James, OBE
Moderator and Minister

THE HOPE AREA CHURCHES ORGANIZATION (HACO)

It is with deep regret that the Hope Area Churches Organization (HACO) has learned of the passing of Rev. Ashley Smith, one of its founding fathers. Rev. Smith, who was a pioneer in the ecumenical movement in Jamaica and the Caribbean, brought that to bear on his local context, when he became minister at the Hope United Church in the 1970s.

Though he was not there at the very beginning, Rev. Smith, along with others of the time, gave the fledgling organization some of its most distinctive- and enduring- features. These included its emphases on the inclusion and promotion of lay leadership, the need for visible signs of unity such as joint church services, and the imperative of practical missionary involvement in the life of the community, such as the establishment of a skills training centre.

It was this last feature of Christian community involvement that was to be the lasting legacy of Rev. Smith's tenure with HACO. For he was known, even beyond church circles, as a man of and for the people. So whether as the pastor of Hope United who did the weddings, funerals or christenings of people, or as the Chair of HACO who spoke out on some public issue, or as the President of the United Theological College of the West Indies, or as just the neighbor in Hope Pastures, persons in the Hope, Mona, Papine and Liguanea areas of Kingston and St. Andrew, experienced the presence and the ministry of an authentic man of God. You could never not feel the impact of his ministry if you went to Mona Preparatory or Mona Primary Schools, for he would be present in devotions, or would meet you on the street and ask you in his usual candid style what you wanted to do with your life, which he would then remind you was God's life which he lent to you.

We therefore will miss Rev. Ashley, as we often called him. We will miss his kindness, his genuine interest in people, his story-telling and his humour. His was a pastor's heart, one who sought to mentor others to their full potential in God. His commitment to live out the prayer of Christ, that we all be one just as Christ and the Father are one, will always be appreciated- and hopefully emulated- by us and by generations of HACO members to come. We express our sincerest condolences to his immediate family, and to members of the Hope United Church family, where the Smith family worshipped even after Rev. Smith's retirement. We pray that that the God of Jesus Christ will comfort them through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Servant of Christ, well done. Your soul is resting in peace.

Rev. Canon Michael Allen - Chair

CARIBBEAN AND NORTH AMERICA COUNCIL FOR MISSION (CANACOM)

Debonair, tall, dark, handsome and possessing an engaging, all-embracing smile, Rev. Ashley Smith was comfortable in his skin, literally and figuratively. A multi-talented giant of a man he was not encumbered and constrained by his undeniable gifts. He was therefore neither conceited nor excessively humble. He felt at liberty to use these gifts at large. His modus operandi declared his gratitude to God for all that he was and all that he possessed. Even more visible was his commitment, for as long as he was able, to give and give to the world, for the glory of God.

We at the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) warmly remember Rev. Ashley Smith who has gone on to higher service after a long and illustrious life. We tenderly recollect him in many phases of his splendid vocation. He exuded a palpable joy, for indeed the joy of the Lord was his strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

The Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) had been independent for some decades. The tenure of the serving missionaries was about to come to an end. There would therefore be need for a

new missionary to be appointed to support the work in the context. The Administrative Committee of CANACOM resolved to identify such a person. An agreement was arrived at among CANACOM, the Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI). So it was that an invitation was proposed.

With a nimble, imaginative mind and a body always ready for the work, he gladly accepted the challenge to serve in Grenada. We thank God that his wife Mrs Winne Smith was enthusiastic about partnering with him in this assignment. CANACOM with its eight (8) Member Churches at the time was very happy at their willingness to move to an area of the mission field in which assistance was required.

Rev. Ashley was blessed with the quality of pure joy and added zest to whatever his hand found to do. He had a peaceful spirit and was totally committed to serving his Lord. He was curious and obedient to the Lord and the mischievous twinkle in his eye seemed to symbolize the spirit of adventure which characterized his light sojourn here on earth.

His life was full. His service in God's kingdom was light hearted and was defined only by the divine instructions which he received and accepted. His long strides and light footfall helped him to gain invitations and entry into many fora. He was a United Church Minister with a Presbyterian Background. This put him in an excellent position to serve the people with a deeper understanding.

We celebrate his ecumenical service as a CANACOM missionary to the PCG. We hold on to his memory with great affection. He was the epitome of the "re-tyred" servant of God. He was particularly blessed to have had his wife and life partner Mrs Winnie Smith serving with him in the mission field.

Although Rev. Smith had had previous association with CANACOM it was during the period 1998 to 1999 that he became deeply involved in our work of CANACOM. His period of intensive involvement was fairly brief when compared with his career of 65 years, yet it left an indelible mark on the church in Grenada.

The roles played by the Smiths in Grenada required diplomacy and tact at a time when the different ethnic groups were becoming more accustomed to working together. He was the first Afro-Caribbean person to be inducted in to the Ministry of the Church in Grenada. The Smiths were blessed with a serene and calm manner of working across different cultures and nations. Rev. Smith was very open to working in whatever capacity was required. He therefore served as the Moderator and Minister to the three congregations – St. Andrew's Kirk, Belair and Samaritan and Chairman of the McDonald's College. This energetic and sterling intervention paved the path for the new directions upon which the church was set to embark.

Rev. Smith and the Grenada church remained in contact for many years. It was therefore no surprise that after Grenada was damaged by hurricane Ivan in 2004 that he paid a pastoral/fact finding visit to Grenada on behalf of CANACOM. Among his recommendations were that:

- Pastoral help be provided to the Presbytery and that

- Seeds of all kinds be sought for distribution to farmers and members of the church since much of the vegetation on the island has been destroyed by hurricane.

The Moderator of the UCJCI Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans would be pleased to hear this. Rev. Ashley Smith possessed a keen compassion which drew his eye to all persons and led him to make recommendations and to effect change where he could.

In paying tribute to Rev. Smith, Rev. Dr. Osbert James, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada who holds him in very high esteem said “Rev. Smith and his wife Winnie were well loved and are remembered with great fondness by our church. Please extend to his family and the UCJCI, our deepest condolences at their loss of such an erudite and exemplary pastor and wonderful human being.” On behalf of Rev. Carlington Keen, Chair of CANACOM and the entire CANACOM family, may his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him.

Jennifer P. Martin (Mrs.)
Education in Mission Secretary

GIRLS' BRIGADE JAMAICA

The Girls' Brigade Jamaica's association with, and the contribution of, the Rev. Ashley Alexander Smith's work in Jamaica has been as distinguished as it has been long. Whether it was as Chaplain of the Company affiliated with the congregations where he served as minister, or at the level of National Chaplain, to the point of Honorary Chaplain, competence and commitment were the HALMARK of his service.

WE are indeed saddened at Rev Smith's passing, but the Girls' Brigade in Jamaica CELEBRATES:

- His fun-loving and humorous disposition
- His demonstration of fatherly love toward members of the Girls' Brigade, as well as the Boys' Brigade
- His persistent INSISTENCE on each member, whether girl or officer DEVELOPING and DISPLAYING aHEALTHY SELF-LOVE AND A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE!!!
- HIS DEDICATION TO SERVICE. During his active years he faithfully attended Executive Meetings, Launch of Girls' Brigade Month in March usually held at kings House since that is the residence of the GBJa patrons and SERVICES OF THANKSGIVING. And only missed these events if he could not help it – and that was very rare. As Mrs. Jaunita Bernard would say, HE WAS THE GIRLS' BRIGADE MAN! Well that's understanding after all he came from that parish where Girls' Guildry was born as the first overseas Guildry company at Brownsville Presbyterian, in Cascade Hanover 1923. Later named Girls Brigade! Started by Mrs. Brooks whose husband Rev Brooks was the then minister.
- Rev Smith loved both old and young alike!

So as we remember him we acclaim....

- The enlightened and progressive nature of the ideas he shared coupled with his openness to the views shared by others
- The vastness of his capacity for patience, caring and understanding
- His abiding commitment to be a friend and confidante.

For all the foregoing, generously lavished upon the Girls' Brigade in Jamaica, we will always hold a deep sense of indebtedness.

So to his widow, our beloved Aunt Winnie, herself a former President of the "Friends of Girls' Brigade in Jamaica", his children Faith, Grace Bert, his daughter-in-law Sharon and grandchildren Hannah & Jonathon of whom he always spoke of so lovingly & other members of the extended family, The GB Ja offer our appreciation, & love as we pledge our prayerful support for you all at this time.

May the soul of our dearly beloved Ashley Alexander Smith rest in peace. And all of us who come behind him 'find him faithful'.

GIRLS' BRIGADE JAMAICA

- Rev. Smith was loving, caring and dedicated in his service / ministry to the inner-city community. He had a fantastic memory. A fine example of a servant of God.
Olga McDonald
- Condolences to the Family and loved ones of the Honourable Rev'd Ashley Smith. RIP
Kay-Ann Russell-Temple
- He will always have a special place in my heart.
So glad I had the opportunity to exchange a few words with him about 2 weeks before his passing to congratulate him on his 65th anniversary in ministry and to thank him for his continued support of the Girls' Brigade. RIP Rev.
Verna Wright
- A man who was ahead of his time. He served GB well. RIP
Blossom Hoad
- Thanking God for his unwavering support given to GB over the years even in his time of illness he maintained an interest. May his soul rest in peace.
Valrie Cyrus
- Rev Ashley Smith was the one who told me about the rebel slaves who escaped bondage from the plantation on the coast and went to the hills in Hanover. I suppose he was affirming the rebel in me.

He was a statesman of statesmen, a chaplain of chaplains and as Mrs. Juanita Bernard said, 'The Girls' Brigade Man! No wonder Mrs. Winnie Smith his life partner was the quintessential President of the' Friends of Girls' Brigade.

Rev. Verna Cassells

Immediate Past President

JAMAICA ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Rev. Ashley Smith was a member of the Jamaica Association for Mental Health for some fifty years. The Association was founded at a time when persons were afraid and/or ashamed to indicate that they may have had a family member or friend who suffered from any form of mental ill health. At that time persons working in the field of mental health would be shunned and stigmatized because of fear of the unknown. Volunteers also would be looked at with disdain so, one had to be comfortable to stand up to be an advocate to offer support to persons diagnosed with a mental illness.

Rev Smith was not only a member of the Jamaica Association for Mental Health, he extended himself to be a member of the Caribbean Federation for Mental Health and by extension the World Federation. He served as President to both the Jamaican Association and the Caribbean Federation. He was extremely sensitive to the needs of others and in 1979 in a message as president he wrote "At this time more than ever before, effective means must be found to get people to be aware of the need to promote good mental health for themselves and their fellowmen. The Mental health Association, in keeping with this need would like to get the message across that what is needed now is not so much to be able to provide better facilities and more skilled practitioners at our mental institutions, as to get parents, teachers, religious leaders, politicians and whoever else has influence over people to understand the implications of their approach for the mental health of those over whom they have power. This statement is still relevant today. He presented many papers at local and regional Conferences. Rev. Smith Dared to Care.

On a lighter note Rev. Smith often shared with the members of the executive committee the adjustments he had to make in the earlier years as young minister. As one tall in stature he showed that he had the ability and stability to stand tall.

At one Caribbean Conference, we became aware of his prowess as a dancer and he said he would like to continue this on his return to Jamaica as part of his exercise routine towards total well-being.

Rev. Smith remained jovial throughout his illness. His hearty laugh will not be forgotten. It was always a pleasure to visit with him. We would all leave encouraged and spiritually uplifted. He was truly a Man of God.

The members of the Jamaica Association are saddened by the passing of this kind and caring person whose love for all people, privileged and unprivileged alike of the country he loved and beyond. We offer condolences to his dear widow, children, wider family and the religious fraternity.

May his soul rest in peace.

~Sonia Watson Brown

On behalf of the J. A. M. H

HOPE UNITED CHURCH

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF REV. ASHLEY ALEXANDER SMITH, OJ, CD, JP

We thank God for Rev. Ashley Smith who ministered to our congregation from 1974 – 1981. We thank him for his stewardship and dedicated service.

Rev. Ashley Alexander Smith is a household name: he was humble, dedicated and a true stalwart of the church of God – he was no ordinary man. He answered God’s call to proclaim His Word and he did so passionately serving his country with distinction. His devotion to duty, his integrity, his insight and wisdom, and his faith in accepting God’s will for his life, clearly indicated the path which he should follow. His personal vision and mission statements must have been guided by biblical passages but Proverbs 16:3 (The Message) “Put GOD in charge of your work, then what you’ve planned will take place”. Must have been foremost in his mind.

Rev. Smith was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in 1955 in the former Presbyterian Church and served at other churches before he was invited to lead the fellowship at Hope United. He fearlessly preached the Word of God, and his was the voice, strong and courageous as he commented with vigor on socio-economic issues which affected the people.

Rev. Ashley did not confine his pastoral teaching to Hope, but strategically carried the gospel to the surrounding communities including the tertiary educational institutions – CAST/UTech, UWI, UHWI, and UTCWI.

Mona Preparatory School founded by Hope United Church along with nearby Shady Grove Basic Schools became the responsibility of our Church. Rev Smith recounted in later years that as Chaplain he relished the informal post-assembly discussions with the students, and as a member of the Board of Governors he promoted the welfare of staff and students, and always reminded the Board members that, they should always be guided by God’s will as they laboured in His vineyard.

History will recall his inspiring teachings of inclusivity and growth, and he knew that the ‘reach’ of any church could only be strengthened by the congregation’s impact on the wider community. As a result of Rev. Smith’s nurturing, our Church grew numerically and spiritually ably supported

by all the Ministry Groups and Sub committees - the Choir, the Men's Fellowship, the Women's Guild, now Women's Fellowship, the Youth Ministry, Church School, the Boys' and Girls' Brigades. Rev. Smith possessed exceptional gifts as evidenced by his thinking, preaching, and leadership skills. He saw a void, and knew that nature will not allow the vacuum to remain. He visualized an association of Churches in the Hope area – and so the Hope Area Churches Organisation (HACO) was established.

He was a major public figure in the 1970's and served as Religious Advisor to the late former Prime Minister Michael Manley during the heightened era of East/West tensions over Cuba.

An advocate for Caribbean Theology and a prolific writer on theological thoughts, and he authored a number of books including - Pentecostalism in Jamaica – A Challenge to the Established Churches and Society (1975);

Real Roots and Potted Plants – Reflection on the Caribbean (1984); Emerging from Innocence – Religion, Theology and Development (1991), and was relentless in the fight for the recognition of black people's dignity, worth and rights.

He was elected to serve as President of UTCWI – a position he held from 1985 – 1990 and contributed selflessly to the Youth Ministry of Synod, where at the Annual Youth Camp he presented at many sessions, and he and his beloved wife Winifred served for many years as Camp 'Parents'.

In the words of William Wordsworth "The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love".

Members of our congregation will recall his numerous acts of love and wise counsel on moral and spiritual matters. They will remember his words of comfort and assurance during difficult times and the many acts thoughtful and unsolicited, from which they benefited.

One couple recalled receiving pre and post-marital counselling sessions from Rev. Smith who later presented them with gifts of books which inspired them to live Godly lives.

A first-time liturgist was at a loss for words when Rev. Smith calmly whispered – 'let us pray'. He saved the day!

This gentle giant known for his enjoyment of a good joke, followed by his infectious laughter will be remembered for his humility, and his devotion to service.

This stalwart has given his life and talents to the Church and society. It is our prayer that Rev. Smith is now resting in the arms of our heavenly Father.

To his family who he loved so dearly we are sharing your sorrow, thinking of you, and sending you our love at this time.

REV. DR. GARNETT ROPER

Ashley Smith represented for people like me, the high water mark in theology to which you aspire and the shore to which you swim. I had heard of him and read his works and then later come to be treated by him as a colleague. In 2010, when the Jamaica Theological Seminary celebrated 50 years of theological education, I had been its president for one year. I regarded Ashley Smith as the famed black theologian and thought of the time as a Kairos Moment in Caribbean Theology. We had no hesitation in dedicating that work by that name to Ashley Smith, edited by myself and professor Richard Middleton, a JTS graduate and a son of the late former police commissioner, Jack Middleton.

It has been my honor and privilege to be spoken of in the same sentence as Ashley Smith who came to speak of me as a friend. I interviewed in 2019 when I was writing an essay for a yet unpublished festschrift in his honor. What stood out for me was Ashley's pastoral heart. We were speaking about his time as Michael Manely's spiritual advisor. He spoke about being already paid by his church and therefore regarded it as unthinkable that he should accept any money from Government to perform his duties and he spoke about the needs of political leaders for pastoral care as his motivation. He also spoke feelingly about the struggles he overcame as a black man in his church and how even colleague ministers mistreated him. He was forward thinking a pioneer and a pastor extraordinaire. His work and example shall inspire generations to come as it has already guided and inspired many.

REV. DR. COLLIN I. COWAN

I pause to remember Rev Ashley Smith as one who impacted my life for good and whose contribution steered my ministry on a path where conviction, courage and commitment became part and parcel of one journey of faith and prophetic witness.

As we stood in the quadrangle at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), where the students gathered frequently during our free time, Rev. Ashley Smith, the new President, came and joined us. He bowed. We found it awkward and questioned him about it. He smiled, and then he said: "I share the philosophy and always live with the consciousness that one day my students will become my professors". In all my journey with Rev. Smith, I have never had reason to doubt the sincerity of those words. With great humility and profound wisdom, he helped to shape my life and my ministry. On one of the occasions when he visited me at New Broughton, where I served my internship and he as my Internship Supervisor, he listened in as I taught the adult Sunday School class. At that time, I was young and insecure. I felt that the bigger the words, the better the show of brilliance, the brighter seen in the eyes of the congregation. His response to me later in the debriefing was: "Sometimes you have to use words that your members do not understand and then help them to understand, so they know you that you know but also that you are in touch with them". He could easily have said, next time try to use simpler words so that your members understand, but he didn't. He could have said you lost your class,

with those words, but he didn't. And yet in what he said, the message was clear. I got it. Once, on a visit from Singapore, I went to see him, and I brought him a book. He took the book, looked at it, then asked, "What is it about?" I tried to summarise as best I could and to my amazement, he initiated a whole lesson around the book. He acknowledged that he had not read it, but just from the title he led Rev. Norbert Stephens and me into a very insightful and meaningful conversation. Such is the teacher he was.

There was a time when my ministry with the United Church was on the line. While still a student, I was charged with "communicating primary allegiance" to the student body of UTCWI rather than to the United Church and to the college. The contradiction between what was taught me by Rev. Smith, in Church and Development class, and what was being played out in the decision-making courts of the church, was most confusing to me. Rev. Smith was present in these meetings, and I did not feel he defended what he taught. When it was all over, I went to him to articulate my struggle. I wanted to assure him that I was not disrespectful to him in the way I addressed the matter and to ensure that he did not think otherwise. I also wanted to clarify my confusion with what was a major contradiction in the discourse. Thankfully, he saw no disrespect and took no offence. But on the matter of my confusion, we had a lengthy conversation. The conclusion was that it was in my right to challenge the leaders of the church if I felt that convinced about my position. However, he said this: "Always remember that there is a consequence for every conviction expressed and you must be prepared for the consequence". That was sobering. Throughout my ministry, I have had to face many consequences, but I never kept quiet on the things about which I feel passion and conviction. I owe this to that conversation with Ashley Smith.

Under his distinguished guidance, as my Internship Supervisor, I was helped to understand early in the day that "half your problem is already solved by simply acknowledging the problem". That, of course, was not the answer I was looking for when I posed the question concerning some potent challenge I was experiencing at the start of my ministry. I wanted him to offer me a quick fix solution; but his answer had to suffice because he said nothing more. Over the years, these words kept coming back to me, and I have come to appreciate how profound they were and how instructive to this very day. In my ministry, I encounter people every day, seeking answers that are already embedded within their own realm of capacity. They do not need answers; they simply need help to unlock the potential and possibility inherent in their own consciousness. That is the nature of my ministerial formation, and such formation informs my contribution. So, to this day, I am quick to acknowledge that I do not have the answer but that I am willing and ready to walk with anyone in her/his quest to explore the options and possibilities.

On the passing of this great teacher, leader, mentor and colleague, I pay tribute to his life and legacy, and I thank God for sending him into my life. The Council for World Mission, where I serve as General Secretary, has named him a Prophet from the South. "Prophets from the South" is a series of publications through which CWM attempts to honour the prophetic witness of some of the sons and daughters from the Global South by highlighting the theology that informs their ministry and the courage and tenacity of spirit with which they have positively impacted and affected the world around them. We believe that Ashley Smith was one such prophet, who

disturbed the status quo and demanded justice and peace for all. Whilst we regret that this publication was not possible during his lifetime, we are pleased to say that this book, in his memory, will be published in early 2021; and more importantly, that he was aware that he was so named by CWM and that the publication was in trail.

On behalf of my family - Michele, Christopher, Mona-Christabel and me - I pay tribute to a dear companion on the journey, whose life was characterised by the power of example. We pray for the comfort and peace of Aunt Winnie, Faith, Grace, Bert and those near and dear to them. We offer our sympathies to his entire family and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. We celebrate the sure knowledge that Rev. Smith is at peace and that the God he served and the life he led are the source of his peace and joy, even in death.

Sleep on beloved, sleep and take your rest;
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast.
We love thee well but Jesus loves thee best
Goodnight.

V. REV. JOHN DUNLOP, CBE., DD., LL.D. AND MRS. ROSEMARY DUNLOP

Minister: Mount Hermon Charge in Westmoreland and St. James 1968-71; Webster Memorial United Church 1971-78; Moderator, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1992-93.

Dear Grace, (and through you to your mother)

Rosemary and I were watching the service from Webster Memorial United Church today when we heard of the death of your father. We want to send our condolences to you and the family and especially to your mother Winnie.

Ashley provided outstanding leadership to the Church and to the country at an important transitional phase in the life of both; recognised by his terms of service as Moderator by the Church and by the State in the award of Order of Jamaica. Those of us from Ireland who had the privilege of working with you all in Jamaica held him in the highest regard and learned much from his encouragement, his writings, his sermons and our frequent conversations.

We were honoured when he came to Lamb's River in 1971 to open the renovated Mount Hermon church and later that year he spoke at my Installation in Webster Memorial United Church. Seven years later he had prepared a thoughtful address for my valedictory service, prior to our return to Ireland. He was delayed by heavy rain at Frankfield but later gave me a copy of what he had carefully prepared. I read that document recently and value it greatly.

We were pleased that we were able to call and see him and Winnie on our last visit to Jamaica.

We send you our love and assure you of our prayers as God enfolds you all with his love and compassion. We rejoice with you in your memories of a loving husband and father; of a

remarkable servant of God and in our faith, that since Christ has risen from the dead, when we die, life is changed but is not ended.

Here is a copy of a newspaper photograph from 1971.

With warmest regards

John and Rosemary.

REV. MICHAEL MILLER

Remembering Ashley Smith:

I received news yesterday of the death of Reverend Ashley Smith and have thought a lot about it but have not had time to respond in writing until now. The dominant emotional reaction has been gratitude, for having become very well acquainted with him and benefited from his general influence and personal expressions of care.

Rev. Smith was impressive in his pursuit of a multi-pronged ministry as pastor-denominational and ecumenical leader-scholar-public theologian-activist. The immense blessing that those of us in this group share is that he was a noble member of a network of religious giants that was very active in the local and regional landscape as we grew up and were nurtured for service in and through our churches and related organizations.

As I continue to ponder how Rev. Ashley's death has reminded me of work yet to be pursued and visions that remain unfulfilled, I'll mention a few ways I've been marked by his gentle but powerful "touch."

While I was a student at UTC he would visit our denominational classes. It was striking that whatever else he talked about, the importance of reading and writing would always be mentioned. I've never forgotten his advice to always have a book with us: while standing in lines, traveling in public transportation, waiting on an appointment etc. I recall someone mentioning how awed they were by Rev. Ashley's extensive library. In sage-like manner he used the opportunity to inform us that what would enhance our resourcefulness for those we operated among was not having every bit of information in our heads but knowing where to locate what was needed and identifying appropriate ways to convey this to our audiences.

I also recall that even within the ethos of measured sermon delivery that was normative for his generation of United Church preachers, he stood out in the expression of that disposition. What would keep me traveling with him as he methodically engaged a text or topic was the obvious evidence of multifaceted preparation and the compassion that oozed from him as he made his delivery.

Most significant is that as I got to know Rev. Smith better, I concluded that he was not a natural at public performance (this may not have been correct, but ...). That, except for an overpowering sense of "call," the demands of justice, and his love for humanity (especially Black people), an important part of him would have been very fulfilled as a bookish teacher-scholar in one of a

number of academic institutions. Yet even when he was located at UTC he still lived a very public life and was involved in a variety of challenging social spheres.

Those who know that I'm not a natural at public performance, will appreciate why Ashley Smith modeled for me the character of "call" that has helped to keep me going when I'm intimidated by the demands of public life.

As the first full time pastor at Hope United Church after Rev. Smith had moved on (I think Rev. Sam Smellie served as interim before I got there), I recall the broad and long shadow of his distinguished personality that persisted as I pursued my responsibilities. Yet, his careful and supportive manner ensured that I would not be undermined by his continued influence and his direct encouragement was most invigorating.

As I close my reflections. I can see his mischievous looking face, which accommodated a wry smile, an almost boyish chuckle, sometimes a broad grin that displayed his great teeth ... and I think I hear a raucous laugh.

ELS BROUWER, FORMER PARTICIPANT IN THE TRAINING IN MISSION PROGRAMME

Dear Mrs. Smith, Faith, Grace and Bert,

My sincere condolences with the passing of Rev. Ashely Smith, your husband and father.

How many memories, love and gratitude go around now for this man and leader and inspirer.

I never forget the first time I met Rev. Smith, the morning after I arrived in Jamaica, as part of the TIM- group in august 1984. He came to our cottage and invited us for breakfast at your home and introduced us to you, Grace, Faith and Bert. (Mrs. Smith was at work that morning) He made us feel welcomed and at home, always interested in our being. He has encouraged and inspired me and so many persons.

I also remember very deeply part of his sermon at St. Johns one Sunday.

He preached about how we are precious to God. "And if you think you are not good enough because you are black, then that is blasphemy. God has made you, and you deny that? Blasphemy." And now you might think I did not feel spoken to because my skin colour is pink? No, no!! I, who had struggled for years with an inferiority-complex because of my shyness, was deeply moved as his message spoke also to me! I am precious too, no matter how shy! And I realised that his message was not just his message, but that he was preaching the Gospel! It also applied to me! Gospel, good news!

I could mention more moments through which he inspired, personally and church-wide, but I just wanted to let you know that you are in my thoughts and prayers as you prepare for the funeral and as you continue your path in live without his physical presence.

I give God thanks for this man, Ashley Smith. May his soul rest in peace. And may you be comforted and strengthen by good memories and by the Lord which he preached.

Peace and Love,
Els Brouwer
Ermelo
The Netherlands

PETER THOMAS

Rev. Ashley Smith and my father, Rev. Clement Thomas, shared so much - love of the Presbyterian/United Church, its mission and purpose in Jamaica, and a total commitment to its success. Rev. Ashley told me he would never forget the first time, as a 10 year old boy in short pants, he heard my father preach at the church he was raised in. Neither of them knew that would be the start of a lifelong fellowship.

Growing up, my brother and I frequently saw Rev. Ashley and my father having long sessions together. Now I know they found support and strength from each other as they worked steadfastly on how to make the Church contribute to creating a better Jamaica and Cayman Islands. My mother very much approved of Rev. Ashley as she never complained when she knew my father had gone to see Rev. Ashley knowing he would, for sure, be gone a long time. She did not always have that same reaction to the many people my father visited with. Rev. Ashley took an interest in my brother and I from when we were very young. His brief and encouraging conversations with us were a blessing in our lives.

May we all be inspired by his life of commitment and courage.

LESLEY ANDERSON

I offer my condolences to his family and church, and pray that they may find comfort in Christ, the Conqueror of death and Giver of everlasting life. May Ashley Smith rest in peace in the arms of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and may light perpetual shine upon him.

REV. ROHAN KONG

May God's grace and comfort attend to his family in this time and may he find eternal rest in the arms of his Saviour.

REV. LENNOX SCARLETT

Words are inadequate. Rev. Ashley was a true giant of the faith and a mentor to many. I owe much of who I am to his wisdom and insight. It was an absolute joy to have sat at his feet and learn much about Caribbean Theology and regionalism. His pastoral details were exceptional and his care for people unquestionable. Though well decorated with accolades, Rev. Ashley was the epitome of humility.

I continue to lift up Mrs. Smith, Faith, Grace and Bertrand in prayer and ask God's strength and enabling at this time of grief.

REV. MARGARET DOWNER MESSIAS

Rev. Smith is irreplaceable as he left an indelible mark on this world. A giant of a man who invested in so many lives. May he rest in the Lord.

PASTOR ONEIL GAYLE

My sincere condolences to the family may his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him. Sleep on, brother.

DELTORIA CURRIE-HUNT

Condolences to the family of Rev. Smith. He's resting in the arms of Jesus.

REV. GODFREY MEGHOO

So sorry passing of Rev Ashley Smith. I read several books written by Ashley including one on PENTECOSTALISM. He was a model moderator of Synod and astute at reaching out to children and youth. God bless his soul.

REV. DR. DAVE HAZLE

I give God thanks for the life and ministry of Rev. Ashley Smith. I feel privileged to have known him in various capacities. He was my pastor who received me into membership at Hope United Church. He was my lecturer at UTCWI and his course in Church and Development was one of the highlights of my seminary training. He was my supervisor as I served as his student minister at St. Paul's Lockett Ave. He was my mentor one who I looked to for example and advice. He helped me and others feel proud to be a black Jamaica and confident of our ability to write our own stories. His wealth of knowledge inspired in us a hunger to learn more about current affairs, world politics, contemporary trends in theology, and the place of the church in community development. He was a friend and I will miss the occasional chats I would have with him. To say he has had an influence on my life would be an understatement and I am grateful for all he taught me. I pray for his family as they mourn his passing but it's not a sad farewell but a celebration of a life well lived. What an innings. Rest well Gentle giant.

SEAN MAJOR-CAMPBELL, BANMATTIE JEAN RAM AND OTHERS

It is with regret that we announce the passing of Rev. Ashley Smith, who served as a Minister of Hope United, one of the earliest local Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica to be of black skin, a leader within the Church, and a distinguished and prolific author and lecturer. His work and influence has supported the growth and development of many local theologians and he was praised for deep analytical insight and focus on equality of persons.

We thank God for his servant Ashley, and pray that his family will be comforted during their time of mourning.

REV. DR. MARJORIE LEWIS

Today, I thank God for having allowed me to cross paths with the Reverend Ashley Smith. In both the public occasion and the private conversation Ashley was consistent in his love for God, his passion for ecumenism, and his drive for the development of the people of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. His legacy of fostering understanding, respect and collaboration among people of different faiths and ideologies still continues. Evidence of this legacy has been demonstrated through his participation in advocacy for the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to include among its offerings, a Religious Education programme; and his work as one of the pioneers in establishing the Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship (JCIF).

Many have benefitted from his leadership at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) as he articulated a postcolonial Caribbean theology in lectures and publications and served as the College's President. On a personal note, I am grateful for the encouragement, support and advice that he and his wife Winnie provided, when I became President of UTCWI. I am grateful for his graciousness in illness and the confidence he expressed in me as he and others prevailed on me to succeed him as President of the JCIF.

Ashley Smith, we say your name. We will remember you. May you be welcomed home hearing the words, "Well done good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23 NRSV). To his wife Winnie and children, Faith, Grace, Bert, as well as the other family members, I extend my condolences and pray that God's mercy and consolation will attend you in the months ahead.

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis
Chaplain and Dean of the Manning Memorial Chapel
Acadia University

DR. HILARY WESTMEIER, NORMAN DAVIS, ROBERT DAVIS

Dear Faith, Grace and Bert,

My brothers Norman and Robert join me in extending our condolences on the passing of your father. Rev. Smith provided spiritual guidance to our family for many, many years. We always trusted him to give inspiring leadership and thoughtful whole-hearted support to our family. When I visited Rev. Smith two years ago, he reminded me that he knew my mother even before she married my father. That was from the time they both lived in St. James over sixty-five years ago. Throughout all these many years, he has been a loyal and good friend to my parents who admired him greatly. I am so sorry that my father is no longer able to express himself as eloquently as he did in the good old days. He would surely have said much more than I am able to. Let me just simply say that a great light has gone from our country, our church, and our

families. My brothers and I will always remember Reverend Smith with the deepest respect for his dignity, his wisdom and his compassion.

May God give you strength and comfort in knowing that your father was indeed one in a million.

Blessings,
Hilary

LLOYD, ALVINA FORBES AND FAMILY

Rev. Ashley Smith was a very remarkable, intelligent, humble God fearing person. He became a very prominent person to our family over 40 years ago.

Rev. Smith was our matrimonial minister and family advisor. He was the minister who after marriage received us as members to the Hope United Church. We continued with his spiritual guidance and I became an Elder in the church. He was my advisor to help me perform my duties as an Elder and he didn't stop spiritually guiding us after he was no longer the minister of the Hope United Church. He was still accessible and ensured we were on the right path. Our girls were members of the Girls Brigade and Youth groups. My wife was instrumental and participated in support of the churches duties through the activities surrounding the hall for weddings and events. He told us often of how proud he was of us and we were truly grateful and honored to have received his review.

We and our children fondly remember having many discussions with him and we all looked forward to his calm, wise, honest advice and opinion. Many visits sitting with us in our family home as he checked in with us. He always had a joke to share or a similar scenario of life experiences that made you not only stop and think but also laugh. He was always approachable about different concerns. Rev. Ashley Smith embodied the true nature and personality to be called a great minister of religion, dedicated family man and great friend.

There was one incident that although embarrassing to us at the time, was not embarrassing to Rev. Smith at the time. Instead he was comforting and understanding. One of our curious daughters was confused as to why he wore a "frock" (pastoral robe) and if he had trousers on. She insisted on lifting the hem of his robe. She was 4 years old. My wife tried several times to stop this and she ran and did it anyways surprising Rev. Smith as he greeted members at the end of the service. As an adult she apologized and thanked him because she remembered the day and how he reacted. He gave her one of his usual chuckles, comforting reasoning response and said afterwards "luckily I did have trousers on." That young girl grew up loving God and as an adult worked with him at the office of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Our youngest daughter was the last to work with Rev. Ashley Smith along with her sister on the many writing projects he did for books or presentations.

I had the opportunity of accompanying him and sometimes Mrs. Smith to many meetings and events in Kingston and around the island. He always asked me to drive him because he loved how I always took caution with them and was always willing to help. He would always ask me to sit with them. On the many trips we had religious and other discussions from different walks of life. The nature of these discussions were fatherly, brotherly and as a minister whom I looked up to and respected. Often times he would send a word of advice home for my wife and children. We never had a dull moment when we met and he was always truly concerned about our family and the progress of our children. Never stopped giving advice to guide us in matrimonial life or life in general.

As he became more ill and not going out as much, we still kept in touch via telephone or visited whenever I was on the island. Our last conversation was on Father's Day 2020. Little did we know that would be our final telephone call with him. His physical being will be greatly missed by our family but he will not be forgotten in our hearts.

We thank God for sending him to our lives for as long as we had him and we are truly better because of his words of wisdom, genuine affection and sincerity. These moments we will not forget.

Condolences to the Smith family. God bless and guide you as you move on here on earth without him.

Lloyd, Alvina Forbes and family.

Tribute to Rev. the Hon Ashley Smith OJ, JP.,CD.
Parishioner, Pastor, Mentor & Friend of over 50 years.

WINSTON AND VERNA WRIGHT

I first met Rev. Ashley Smith when he was a young pastor at St. John's United Church in Hannah Town, Kingston, and when I was working with Miss Madge Saunders, Social Worker and Youth Organizer in the Presbyterian Church of Jamaica in the early 1960s. Being a recent graduate of the Mico, I was working with Miss Madge to set up the Presbyterian Young People's Youth Organization (PYPYO), which later became the United Church Young People's Organization, when the church was Jamaicanized.

The fact that we were "parishioners" led to our mutual admiration; he from Williamsfield on the plains of Westmoreland, and I from Lambs River in the hills of Eastern Westmoreland. He had a legendary affinity for genealogy so that every time we met, I would get a 'lesson' in family connections, in the church in education and in the nation. The friendship strengthened and the admiration grew when Rev Smith assumed duties as pastor of Hope United Church in 1974. I had joined the launching service for the new congregation on the 17th April 1960.

By the mi 1970s, I was not only appointed Warden of Chancellor Hall on the UWI Mona Campus, but by then I had a family with three boys under the full tutelage and Christian leadership of Rev

Smith. As Minister of the Hope United Church, and Chaplain of the Men's Fellowship, we also worked very closely together, when Mr Charlie Balfour as President, and myself as Secretary, formed the Hope United Men Fellowship in the early 1980s. His stature grew not only as a pastor but as a theologian and a national leader, concerned about the socio-political welfare of the Jamaican people when he was appointed as Advisor to Prime Minister Michael Manley.

I can remember being invited to a public symposium in his honour, based on the title of his book "Caribbean Theology and other Potted Plants" which I found very intriguing. I also remember calling him when he was President of the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), and telling him that I wanted to register to do my Masters Degree in "Contemporary religion", because in addition to the "Reformed Tradition", I wanted to broaden my knowledge of the Western religions. This never materialised of course.

My cousins, Dr. Ivor Nugent and Miss Genevieve Nugent who were then living on North Street and attended St. John's United Church in Hannah Town always spoke highly of Rev. Smith and his caring and nurturing approach to the young people in his charge.

My wife Verna (June), also worked with Rev. Smith & Mrs Winnie Smith for many years, and was no less in awe and veneration of their humility and leadership. In fact Rev Smith recruited her to serve as Captain of Hope United Girls' Brigade Company in 1976. Rev Smith served as Chaplain of the company for many years, and became National Chaplain, and later Honorary National Chaplain of the Girls' Brigade, a position which he held until his passing. Mrs. Smith served as President of Friends of the Girls' Brigade, and spearheaded many fundraising events in support of the organization.

The fact that Rev & Mrs. Smith were both Justices of the Peace made the business and family relations more intimate and impactful. At my 80th birthday party I can remember expressing gratitude to some of the persons who had contributed to my growth and development over the years. I told the story related to me by Rev. Smith, that not long ago, a bank official called him in relation to giving a character reference on me, and when she asked him how long he knew me, he told her "fifty years." She exclaimed "you know Mr Wright for fifty years sir!!", and when he replied "yes" she was amazed and said "done"

Rev Ashley Smith was a man of the soil, a man of God, a national leader of integrity, a mentor and friend to me for over fifty years.

May his soul rest in peace.

IRENE WALTER, SANDRA GLASGOW, PETER WALTER, CLAUDIA WALTER

The Honourable Rev. Ashley Smith has been a presence in the life of my family for such a long time that it is difficult to disaggregate the several roles he has played in the period of over 50 years. To my four children, he was Uncle Ashley long before he became their pastor at Hope

United Church. I am not sure whether they were ever aware in those early years that there were no family ties, but when they learned it, it did not matter. They knew him as counsellor, mentor, pastor and as they grew older, a trusted advisor and friend.

For me, he was the caring pastor, a trusted confidante and the model of a good husband and father. He later became a dependable colleague, one to whom I could turn to celebrate professional achievements of the family or to share the pain of personal heartbreak and failures. He was always available to listen, to comfort, and to advise on personal or professional matters. One more than one occasion, he has in my professional career, “pulled the chestnut out of the fire”. One such occasion when during my tenure initially as Pro Registrar of CXC I was faced with the difficulty of identifying a suitable person to lead the Religious Education syllabus panel, he undertook at short notice the arduous task serving both as Panel Convenor and Chief Examiner for several years.

He has left for my family a legacy which demonstrates that Christian principles and actions can coexist with extending love and care beyond familial or pastoral responsibilities. The friendship forged with his dear wife Winnie, which preceded their marriage, and with his children, will I am sure, sustain us in coming years as we remember the earthly treasure of his presence among us.

Irene Walter

Sandra Glasgow

Peter Walter

Claudia Walter

LEWIS SMITH (BROTHER)

TRIBUTE TO MY BROTHER, ASHLEY SMITH

Good morning everyone. Sorry I can't be here in person but I'm undergoing some medical difficulties.

I met my brother on the 26th of September 1935. I was hours old, he was 6 years old. The first time he looked at me, mom said that he said: I don't like him, he is too skinny, send him back. As time went on, we became buddies and he changed that feeling to, good, I don't have to play with those two girls anymore – meaning our sisters.

Growing up, Ashley always liked to read. He would take up a book, read a chapter, close the book, then recite what he just read. In early elementary days, he wanted to be a doctor but not just any doctor, he wanted to be a surgeon. He would cut oranges and grapefruit, scoop out the middle, stuff them with paper, stitch them back together, then give them to one of his friends as a joke.

We always did things together, which meant we got into trouble together. Here is one example. Mom always baked a cake every Saturday and that cake was for Sunday evening dessert. One Saturday night, Ashley said to me, I'm staying up late tonight and I would like you to say up with

me. I asked why. He said, I'm going to experiment on mom's cake. I asked him how. He said, I'm going to cut a piece out of the middle, put the two remaining pieces together, then put it on a smaller plate. She will never know the difference. I said mom is going to kill us. He said, remember I'm the surgeon. Guess what, the cake collapsed and we got into as much trouble with mom as I thought we would.

As time went on, he changed his mind about becoming a doctor. He said, I'm going to be a minister of religion. I will be able to help everyone spiritually and, indeed, he did.

He was my brother and my friend. He meant everything to me. One of his beloved verses was from A Psalm of Life by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time

Indeed, so true!

I would like to thank everyone here this morning for coming out and sharing your sympathy with us.

May his soul rest in peace.

Brother Lewis.

EVERTON HESSON (NEPHEW)

A life well lived is a precious gift of hope, strength and grace from someone who has made our world a brighter and better place; A life well lived is a legacy of joy, pride, pleasure and a lasting memory.

Uncle Ashley was a blessing to all of us family, friends and all those he came in contact with.

His life was exemplary and an excellent example of a man who was proud of his heritage.

He walked with kings but still had the common touch.

His footprints will be etched permanently in the sands of time.

Walk good uncle.

Yours truly

Everton Hesson

MARLENE AND LINTON HAMILTON, (NIECE AND NEPHEW IN LAW)

THE LORD GAVE

Uncle Ashley was not just a spiritual leader, but our uncle at heart and so this tribute is as a result of the impact and reach of this awesome man of God. There is a marvelous revelation in the book of Job that says "The Lord gave and the Lord takes away blessed be the Name of the Lord".

THE LORD GAVE!

And it came to pass that when God continued to favor this man of God we realize that he was not just someone who speaks about living an exemplary life for God, but he lives the life that he speaks about.

THE LORD GAVE!

As an adopted nephew he had prophesied on my life when I got married to his niece Marlene and became a wonderful spiritual coach. He gave us a book we cherished until today entitled: "Techniques in Counseling".

THE LORD GAVE!

He impacted our lives in more than one ways. He would encourage us especially when we pastored seven churches with two young children. He would tell us how he did it in his pastoral times and take us to places we have never been before with all the years and dates and the rich experiences he had traveling all over doing ministry.

THE LORD GAVE!

He was a marvelous historian who would talk about some amazing experiences that he had in his early days. ^[L]~~[SEP]~~ He was a historical paradigm. He could tell you about past and present leaders of this country and tell you who their mama and daddy were and when they died.

THE LORD GAVE!

When we went to visit him he would remind us that he had good days and bad days but never complaining. Nevertheless his good days outweigh his bad days. What a man!!!

THE LORD GAVE!

Our uncle has gone to rest Awaiting to be Awaken in the morning by Jesus the eternal Christ.

CROOKS FAMILY

Ashley: Brother in law

I can't quite remember exactly when this tall dark and handsome man started showing interest in my sister but I know it was when we lived at Jackson Road. She attended Galilee Gospel Hall and I think he was a friend of the McFarlanes – and after that friendly introduction.... He eventually became a part of our family and the rest is history.

Ashley was calm, bright, humourous in his own way and we welcomed him into our family with wide, open arms. He loved Winnie (my sister) and I had the pleasure of driving her to her wedding ceremony in the UWI chapel in 1963. They were a beautiful couple. Fast forward..... we became neighbours in 1965 when I moved to 15 Burbank Avenue, beside the church manse while Ashley pastored Hannah Town United Church, Kingston. We expanded our families at the same time and I had 4 children, Winnie and Ashley had 3 – Faith, Grace and Bert. The cousins lived close to each other and their house was home to my family and I... and the same in return.

We missed them greatly when they moved from Havendale and Ashley was transferred to Hope United Church.

We will surely miss you – your hearty laugh, your many prayers, your academic brilliance, your passion in championing the rights of the oppressed. You were a great brother in law, friend and advisor.

Walk good Ashley until then, our hearts will go on singing, until then we will carry on, until the day God calls me home and we shall meet again in the sweet by and by.

Melbourne Crooks

CROOKS FAMILY

We met Uncle Ashley at Burbank Avenue, Havendale over 55 years ago. We moved into the house that our Dad built and will always thank Aunt Winnie as she was instrumental in making sure that her brother lived right beside her. You see the church manse for Hannah Town United Church was on Burbank Avenue and there was a piece of land for sale right beside the house. Ingenious and filled with foresight, Aunt Winnie made sure that Daddy bought the land and he built his dream house We grew up together ... Faith, Grace, Bert, Ruth, Dougie, Joy and Ray. We met this tall, cheerful and pleasant gentleman.. affectionately called Uncle Ashley. We remember him always driving off in his silver grey Vauxhall to attend weddings, funerals, preaching engagements, counselling and so much more. He was the consummate pastor ... so devoted to his calling. Our mom – Aunt Joyce shared in the Mommy duties and many times when Uncle Ashley and Aunt Winnie had to attend functions or meetings at church, the children stayed at our home and my parents became the sitters. We played together, laughed together and grew up together.

Fast forward and we shared in many family events – dinners, birthdays, anniversaries, special functions..... there was a great family bond and Uncle Ashley always made sure that we were doing well in school, and just checking up on us to ensure all was well.... So caring, warm, loving, extremely respectful and witty.

We shared in the last family event – his 57th Wedding Anniversary in February 2020 and we toasted a lovely couple who faced highs and lows, good and bad times, but what a love. They were always together. A man of God who took his family commitment seriously. It was never easy to pastor a church, administer and manage a denomination and look after his family. He did well..... Uncle Ashley we remember you with fondness ---- how you assisted us with school issues, always checked up on us and shared your love, respect, warmth and jokes with us all the time. You were never too busy for us and we remember that study at number 11 – you spent so much time there.... Preparing, reading, and just keeping close to God.

We say goodbye now, but we know that we will see you again.....we will miss you... you left a huge mark on society, mankind, your family and friends.... Rest in peace and as the song states... Until then, our hearts will go on singing, until then with joy we will carry on, until the day my eyes behold that city, until the day God calls us home.....you have gone on before, you have gone home to rest from your labours and pains here on earth... it was a joy to have known you and as we bid you farewell..... we say .. Uncle Ashley.... See you in the sweet bye and bye.....UNTIL THEN.....

The Crooks Family
Joyce, Ruth, (Ronald), Dougie (Nesta), Joy, Ray
July 24, 2020

REV. HEWITT HOLMES AND MRS. EVELYN HEWITT-HYATT (MY MOTHER)

It is with deep sadness and yet a great sense of gratitude for the life and legacy of Rev. Ashley A. Smith, that I share this tribute as one of his little ones at St. Paul's United Church, Locket Avenue, Kingston Jamaica in the 1980s and 1990s.

The unforgettable experience of demonstrable humility was around 1987. Rev. Smith and I were having one of our usual chats after church service. I was around 9 years old, when I asked, "How do you minister to a congregation that has rich and poor people?" His dignified reaction began with a hearty laugh. He went on to say, "boy that is a big question for a small boy. I do this by loving everyone and working hard at making it better for those in need, people who are poor."

Rev. Smith's response, forever etched in my memory, taught me one of the most important and cherished life lessons about serving people. That my living in community is to touch lives and to point others to the transformative love, which lights us up, to make a positive and powerful difference. His response confirmed from age 9, that the ministry was my calling and that I wanted to be just like Rev. Smith. A humble and caring servant of God, who loved and worked hard to make life better for family, friends, strangers, colleagues, and members, no matter the age and stage.

As many of us know, Rev. Smith was an avid cricket lover, therefore, I say, "well done, good and faithful servant," you have played an extraordinary innings.

Your knock has come to an end, but your legacy lives on. Your knock inspires liberation that affirms my "somebodiness," as a black human being. Your innings has passed unto this generation, the baton, to knock down the systems of oppression and exclusion that deny life in all its fullness to the marginalized and most vulnerable in our world. Liberating Church and Society from the Potted Plants mentality and syndrome, into Real Roots that spread in and through our worship and witness, building a more beautiful and better world of love, justice and peace.

My love and sympathy are with the family in this time of grief. Walk good, Rabbi!

Lovingly sent by Hewitt Holmes, Rev. and Evelyn Williams-Hyatt (My Mother).
July 2020

CHERYL NEUFVILLE

Rev. Ashley Smith was not just my pastor, he was my Uncle Ashley! His counselling and general discourse had a tremendous impact on me and my sisters Barbara and Dianne and much later my son Stuart. He was someone whose love and warmth were felt. His preparation classes for membership were legendary. He believed and indeed demonstrated the scriptural injunction “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”.

Uncle Ashley was a reservoir of knowledge and experience that he unhesitatingly shared with us. His historical data and storytelling technique were second to none. His accommodating demeanor and gentle spirit will be lovingly remembered and cherished.

Thank you Aunt Winnie, Faith, Grace and Bert for sharing him and allowing us to be a part of your family.

Walk good Uncle Ashley, May your beautiful soul rest in peace!

PATRICK ROBINSON

Rev. Ashley Smith was many things to me. He was my pastor, counsellor and friend.

Too young to be my father, we settled on a fraternal relationship and I valued every aspect of that relationship.

Our special bond commenced in the 1970s when I joined Hope United and came to live across the road in Hope Pastures from Ashley, Winnie, Faith, Grace and Bert. He informed me that he was from Blauwearie, Westmoreland, and was a young student at the elementary school when my father was its Headteacher in 1938. Although he was young at that time, he was able to tell me many stories about my father’s short tour of duty in Blauwearie, because his own father had passed them on to him.

Over the years, and in particular, the last twenty-one years, I visited him on many occasions. I looked forward to these visits because, quite simply, Ashley enjoyed a good conversation. I tried my best to gather as much as I could from his immense knowledge and insights. One was never bored in his company.

Ashley, who was only nine years old at the time of the 1938 Labour Revolt, and fifteen at the time of adult suffrage in 1944, was very much a product of the nationalistic fervour that created the movement for Jamaica’s independence.

Ashley Smith was a black nationalist, using the term “nationalist” to describe one who is committed to the political, social and economic advancement of his country through democratic means. The recurring theme of our many conversations was the status of black lives in colonial and post-colonial Jamaica. Ashley was sensitive to the historic and contemporary discrimination faced by black people. He told me more than once of the discriminatory practices in the local Presbyterian church, where for many years it was felt that only Scottish ministers were

acceptable as pastors of certain churches. That state of affairs did not embitter and paralyse him. Instead, it prodded him to work harder to bring about fundamental changes in the Church, including the recognition of the worth of native ministers.

He was a great advocate for the adoption of economic, social and political policies designed to rescue Jamaica's black masses from a life of persistent poverty. Ashley was saddened by the plight of the descendants of African slaves who have not benefitted significantly from independence and many of whom remain at the bottom of the economic ladder. However, his greatest concern was how our minds had been, and continue to be, warped by colonialism and enslavement, resulting in poor and negative self-esteem. He therefore supported policies and measures that promoted black pride and black empowerment. More than anything else what he wanted was recognition by all, in Jamaica and the world over, of the inherent dignity and worth of every black man and woman.

Ashley was a philosopher who reflected deeply on the problems affecting his people. He was a theologian for whom Christianity had no value if it did not seek to serve in a practical way the interests of the disadvantaged and the oppressed. Ashley saw the natural connectedness between Jamaica and the other Caribbean countries. He was committed to "a Caribbean theology that seeks to save that which is authentic in Christianity from the scandal of elitism and Eurocentrism", and the product of which would be "a new Caribbean person with a healthier self-concept". For him, Christianity and the Church should never be remote from, but involved in, the real lives of people and their struggles. Unsurprisingly, he was sympathetic to the positions advanced by developing countries in the 1970s to recalibrate their economic relationship with developed countries. He asserted that "the call by the oppressed for a New International Economic Order is neither unreasonable nor new". For him, "commitment to development is one aspect of the continuation of the redemptive ministry of Christ". I have referred to these three extracts from his book: *Emerging from Innocence: Religion, Theology and Development*, because they reflect the essence of Ashley Smith - the thinker, the pastor, the theologian and the Christian.

You only had to speak with Ashley for five minutes to be aware of his phenomenal intellect and his superior leadership skills. One can readily understand why he was elected four times as Moderator of the Church and served as President of the Jamaica Council of Churches and President of the United Theological College.

Who Ashley is and was is remains with us today, in Winnie, with whom he shared most of his nine decades of life; in the devoted care of Grace to her parents; in the service of Bert and

Grace in their churches and communities; and in Faith's excellent scholarship on the intellectual and nationalist histories of the Caribbean and African Diaspora.

Today we say goodbye to a man who served his God, his family and his country well.
Patrick Robinson

CAROLYN CLARKE COOPER

Rev. Ashley Smith has been a strong and steady source of support in my life for over 45 years. Imagine my surprise after all this time to find out that his first name is Alexander! You see, to me he has always been “Uncle Ashley” - a source of quiet authority in my childhood, a mentor and benefactor during my UWI years, marriage counsellor and parenting advisor during my adult years.

About 3 years ago while visiting him, to my surprise he asked what I would say when he died so today I’m keeping that promise. My first memories of you are in the baby blue gown when you got up to preach at Hope United. Whenever you got up to preach I knew it was nap time, my head went straight into my mother’s lap. Sunday school, Summer camp, Vacation Bible School, Valentine’s Brunch, Annual Church Barbeque, Youth services were activities You, Uncle Sam (Smellie) and a host of elders and Sunday school teachers at Hope United helped to provide me and firm religious foundation and for that I will forever be grateful. You also taught me the practical side of Christianity. And the politics involved in managing a church. The New York City MTA has a slogan – “If you see something, say something.” You taught me that as a child!

So Uncle Ashley the little bow legged girl from Hermitage wants to say “Thank You” for always making me feel that I matter. I will miss our Father’s Day conversations in the future but I will forever treasure all the ones we had in the past. I will also miss discussing your experiences while studying in the US and England and your take on all things political both in Jamaica and aboard. Thank you to Faith, Grace and Bert for sharing your Dad with me so graciously over the years.

DENISE SMITH

My memories of Rev Smith began from a child attending camp at Madge Saunders (Iona in those days) when he took his girls to camp, how he would interact with us campers.

After many years we met again this time he was my counsellor and marriage officer. I have a picture of him handing me the marriage certificate, I had a big smile on my face and I remember to this day what he had said to me then.

He was also a good story teller and whenever I needed to share a story with the children at church and ran out of ideas I could call on him for a story.

May his soul Rest in Peace and light perpetual shine on him.

TINA REID

Rev. Ashley Smith stood as an example to generations of Christians in general and to members of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands in particular. The debt owed by the universal church to him is immeasurable and deep. I am extremely grateful to God for the life and ministry of this wonderful servant of the gospel; the impact of his ministry on the lives of thousands of persons from all walks of life gave them hope for eternal life.

Rev. Ashley remained humble and tall throughout his life. He had this deep love for his fellow Jamaicans and the Jamaican culture; quite often using stories from his childhood to explain parts of his sermons.

Saddened by the passing of this wonderful servant of God; I am sure he will hear those words 'Well done good and faithful servant". Rest in Peace Ashley Smith.