



Bishop U.T. Thomas
Thomas
& the Late Mother W. Thomas



Overseer Anthony
& Lady Sarah Thomas

Tribute to the Late, Great – Revd Carmel Jones, MBE

The flag of our West Indian community, Jamaica and the world is flying at half-mast in honour, celebration, and recognition of a national treasure – a genuinely great man in the person of Revd Carmel Jones. I would like to add my name on behalf of my father, Bishop U.T. Thomas, Emeritus to the numerous tributes being sent for this excellent and skilful leader, entrepreneur, philanthropist and churchman.

As one of my sisters wrote in her tribute, Revd Carmel Jones was one of the few church ministers outside of our family, who would reference our parents by their Christian names – Tivy and Poly; a relationship that went back to the 60's-70's with the late Revd Dr Vincent Fagan of Mallison Road, Battersea; The highly respected Bishop WA Shaw from JA – frequent visitors to our home; he was one of musicians – playing the guitar.

Revd Carmel Jones was an uncommon and effervescent personality, that has reflected so favourably upon the generosity of his character – he gave of himself for us to serve his generation and more. In the words of the late Presiding Bishop J.O. Patterson, COGIC 1968-1989 who said: *"I have attempted to pay a debt to the PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE: To the PAST, because of the sacrifices that the pioneers have made in order that we might now enjoy the beauty of a growing church, and reap the harvest of their labors; To the PRESENT, because the children of this generation deserve a better opportunity than the one we were afforded. They must be allowed to prepare themselves and make a contribution to our society; To the FUTURE because our unborn children must have a place to start. We must not squander the resources of the Church, and not leave some footprint on the sands of time for them to pattern."* I believe Revd Carmel Jones' life exemplifies and bears the hallmarks of this most profound statement.

What a unique and unforgettable SMILE he had – his trademark.

I was fortunate to get involved with PCU in the 90s; I attended a number of meetings as Revd Carmel Jones, was trying to share the PCU model of business to our wider church groups. He was a tenacious and militant visionary; one that didn't suffer fools easily, but also one that worked tirelessly on behalf of our churches and community. He was a stickler for order and process – the minutes were corrected and corrected until every dot and punctuation was in order! On the first few occasions I came away thinking: *"Oh my gosh"* but as time went on, your appreciation and admiration of him grew. I also attended prison ministry with him on a number of occasions.

Headquarters Address

47 Chalvey Road West, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2NJ | Tel: 01753 517755 | Email: admin@faithtempleuk.org | fb: FAITH TEMPLE UK
Officers: Overseer Anthony & Mrs Sarah Thomas, Deacon Rayhill Dirwayi, Missionary R. Young, Minister Valerie Castry, Minister Ruby Matthews
and Bishop U.T. Thomas, Emeritus

Trustee Members: Rt. Revd Overseer Anthony Thomas, Mr Rayhill Dirwayi, Mrs R. Young, Miss V. Bryan, Miss V. Castry
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Revd Carmel Jones was more than a dreamer, more than a pessimist - he was an optimist, trailblazer and Windrush pioneer; who could not be and would not be silenced or stopped: believing that with God "*no word shall be void of power*" Acts 1: 37 (ASV); a leader par excellence - a champion of the people. The Pentecostal Credit Union (PCU), whilst not ahead of its time, Revd Carmel Jones and his vision were ahead of his peers; our community lost out big time because it failed to catch up with him! PCU has facilitated the purchase of many of churches; at a time and crucial juncture when many of our commercial, and high street banks closed their chequebooks to our community. I can't help but think what might have been had we persevered more with him.

We esteem him highly in his earthly passing. To his wife and life partner, Mother Jones, we pray for you and applaud your strength. Thank you for doing a splendid job in looking after him and loaning him - to do his best for us.

Finally, to those on whose shoulders the mantle now rests - run your lane well; run with courage and faith; in the pioneering spirit inspire you to carry on.

May he rest in peace and be raised in glory at the resurrection.

Anthony

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