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## Vaz, Kenneth Granville (1920–2013)

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### JUDITH NEMBHARD

Judith Nembhard, a lifelong educator with three degrees in English, including a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, has taught English at the high school, college, and university levels and has served in administration at all three levels. She has been published in professional journals, secular magazines, newspapers, and religious magazines such as the *Adventist Review*, *Signs of the Times*, and *Message*. She is the author of four books. She lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she is an involved member of the Chattanooga First Seventh-day Adventist Church. She has two adult sons.

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Kenneth Granville Vaz was a distinguished Jamaican church leader, pastor, evangelist, educator, and scholar.

## Early Life and Education

Kenneth G. Vaz was born in the village of Cave, Manchester, Jamaica, on January 18, 1920. In 1938 he enrolled in the ministerial course at West Indies Training College (now Northern Caribbean University), completing the junior college program in 1942. He later enrolled at Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) in 1956, graduating in 1958 with a B.A. in theology. In 1959 he received an M.A. in biblical languages from Potomac University (now Andrews University).<sup>1</sup>

## Pastoral and Evangelistic Work

Known affectionately as “KG” throughout the West Indies Union field, Elder Vaz first entered denominational work as a ministerial intern following his graduation from West Indies Training College. In addition to the island of Jamaica, he served in ministry, along with his wife, Agnes, in the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Cayman Islands.<sup>2</sup> After completing his master’s degree, he returned to Jamaica and served as a dynamic evangelist in the Central Jamaica Conference. Under his leadership in one evangelistic campaign, the Treasure Tent of Truth held in Montego Bay, 162 persons were won to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

## Accomplishments in the Field of Adventist Education

Elder Vaz’s outstanding record of contributions to Seventh-day Adventist education began in 1959 with his chairmanship of the department of theology at West Indies College. In 1964 he was appointed president of West Indies College and served until 1970. While president, he maintained his scholarly pursuits in such venues as the historic Inter-American Division Ministerial Council and Strategy Meeting, where he gave his dissertation on “The Nature of Christ.”<sup>4</sup> In his term as college president, he was known for building school spirit, for more than doubling the student population, for upgrading the business administration program, and for laying the groundwork for the establishment of a nursing program that later became the premier nursing education program in the region.<sup>5</sup>

In 1977 Elder Vaz became the ministerial secretary of the West Indies Union Conference and later served as the Union’s executive secretary from 1981 to 1985, when he again took over as chairman of the department of religion and theology at West Indies College. He remained in that position until his retirement in 1988, but continued to teach in the department until 1997. He also taught for the Andrews University Theological Seminary Extension School on the campus of West Indies College from 1986 to 1997.<sup>6</sup>

## Other Accomplishments and Awards

Elder Vaz was the author of numerous research papers and two books: *Christ, the Theanthropic Person* and *The Rest That Remains*, along with unpublished manuscripts on the development of the Adventist work in Jamaica.<sup>7</sup> In recognition of his stellar scholarly endeavors, Andrews University awarded him the Doctor of Philosophy degree (*honoris causa*) conferred on July 26, 1998, on the campus of Northern Caribbean University. For his contributions to religion, education, and nation building, the government of Jamaica awarded him the Order of Distinction (OD) in 1980. In 1981 he was appointed a justice of the peace for the parish of Manchester, becoming the first Seventh-day Adventist minister on the island to achieve that distinction. His community involvement included serving on the board of the Mandeville-based Hargreaves Hospital. The legacy of Elder Vaz is being kept alive by the world-class annual K. G. Vaz Lecture Series, established in 1998 by the school of religion and theology at Northern Caribbean University.<sup>8</sup>

Kenneth G. Vaz gave 45 years of service to God in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At his death on April 1, 2013, he was hailed as “a pulpiteer extraordinaire” and a “learned and humble servant of God.”<sup>9</sup>

### SOURCES

Coke, Nigel. “K.G. Vaz hailed as learned and humble servant of God.” *Jamaica Observer*, April 2, 2013.

“Former NCU (WIC) President Dies.” April 2, 2013, *Northern Caribbean University News*. <https://news.ncu.edu.jm/>.

*Inter-American News Flash*, n. 204, November 14, 1978.

*Inter-American News Flash*, n. 384, July 1988.

### NOTES

1.

"Former NCU (WIC) President Dies," April 2, 2013, *Northern Caribbean University News*, <https://news.ncu.edu.jm/>?

2. Nigel Coke, "K.G. Vaz hailed as learned and humble servant of God," *Jamaica Observer*, April 2, 2013, 2.?
3. *Inter-American News Flash*, n. 384, July 1988.?
4. *Inter-American News Flash*, n. 204, November 14, 1978.?
5. "Former NCU (WIC) President Dies."?
6. Coke, 2.?
7. "Former NCU (WIC) President Dies."?
8. *Ibid.*?
9. Coke, 2.?

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