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Reflections

"Writing a Careful Study of What Took Place": *A Reflection from the Transatlantic Writing Workshop in Jamaica*

Stephen USHER [1]

University of the West Indies and the United Theological College of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica; United Church in Jamaica and the Caymen Islands
usher.stephenj@gmail.com

Oral history will die with the one to whom it is known if it is not passed on to the next generation. Therefore, if we do not write about our experiences, our history will die with us, or it will be written on our behalf. If that happens, whoever tells your story will have the power to introduce you to the world in a way that can potentially misrepresent your life experiences and values. The Transatlantic Writing Project workshop, hosted in Jamaica by the United Theological College of the West Indies and St Michael's College and Seminary (August 2024), where I served as a student aide, was an eye-opening and inspirational experience for me. I learned that it is important for us as Caribbean people to record our life experiences and to add our voices to the growing body of theological literature being produced locally and globally.

To begin with, the session that resonated with me most was during a morning devotional exercise, in which Rev. Dr Daniel Eshun discussed the significance of adding our voices to the extensive body of literature that reflects lived transatlantic experiences. He employed the first four verses from the Gospel according to Luke as an illustration:

> Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done among us. They wrote what we had been told by the ones who were there in the beginning and saw what happened. So I made a careful study of everything and then decided to write and tell you exactly what took place. Honourable Theophilus, I have done this to let you know the truth about what you have heard. (Luke 1:1, CEV)

[1] Stephen Usher, a student aide for the Jamaica TWP workshop, is a third year theological student at the University of the West Indies with the United Theological College of the West Indies (both in Kingston, Jamaica) and third year student minister in the United Church in Jamaica and the Caymen Islands.

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With that, we were encouraged, and I was inspired as Luke was in his own era, to carefully record our stories and the stories of others in our communities, whom the world is yet to know, so that others may know the truth of our experiences. As Luke writes, "many have tried to tell these stories," but we need to write our own.

Furthermore, I felt strongly motivated to seize the opportunity to contribute to the rich tapestry of academic literature that I know can be produced in my region and by extension the Transatlantic community. At first when I listened to the presentations on academic research and writing, it all felt daunting and out of reach, but I promised myself that over my next few years of study, I will learn and harness the skills that will allow me to contribute to rigorous research and academic writing and that will educate and inspire others.

In conclusion, I have developed a profound understanding of and appreciation for the process of writing as an academic and spiritual discipline. Additionally, I recognize the importance of articulating the Caribbean lived experience, which serves as a historical record and witness to our tenacity and vitality as people, and a firsthand historical record that will inform and inspire future generations.