

I stand before you today to share the tribute of the Constitutional Commission and the Commissions Secretariat.

Today we pause to remember Pastor Al Ebanks a prominent leader in our community who meant so much too so many. He was a friend, a spouse, a father, a grandfather, a brother, a colleague, a mentor, a counselor, a true Christian believer who put the needs of others before his own. He embodied unique qualities that enabled him to move effortlessly in the community touching our lives in different ways.

His contributions to the Cayman Islands are priceless. He gave fully of himself in true service, living a life of faith that was evidenced in his works – whether it was advising Government on good governance, comforting little children in distress or leading humanitarian missions to feed and clothe the poor or distressed. Everything that he did was to the glory of God.

You have heard and read today of his life with his family, his education, his career and his service to the community but I would like to take a moment to recognise how we knew him best. He served as an outspoken community leader on issues of national importance and as the first Chairman of the Cayman Islands Constitutional Commission created under section 118 of the new Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009. This Commission is a unique body and Pastor Al, being of a true pioneering spirit, welcomed this opportunity to make a difference in overseeing the application of the new Constitution in advising government, educating the people and promoting the advancement of constitutional matters.

Prior to his appointment in December 2009, Pastor Al dedicated his time and talent to researching and advocating the importance of educating the Caymanian people about self determination and constitutional development. He co-chaired the Non-Governmental Organisations Constitutional Working Group from 2004 until 2008. In this capacity, Pastor Al addressed the United Nations (UN) Special Committee on Decolonisation (C24) both at the UN Headquarters in New York City and also at a Regional Seminar St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In late 2002, he participated in Constitutional modernisation talks in London representing the Cayman Ministers Association. In 2008 and 2009, he served as a member of the delegation that successfully negotiated a new Constitution which was accepted by the people of the Cayman Islands through referendum vote in May 2009.

Pastor Al was instrumental in ensuring that the preamble of the Constitution reflected the essence and unique qualities of the Caymanian people. We can recall the vast amount of time and effort he dedicated to this mission working tirelessly to ensure that the wishes of the people were incorporated in the Preamble which read in part:

“The people of the Cayman Islands, recalling the events that have shaped their history and made them what they are, and acknowledging their distinct history, culture and Christian heritage and its enduring influence and contribution in shaping the spiritual, moral and social values that have guided their development and brought peace, prosperity and stability to those islands, through the vision, forbearance, and leadership of their people, who are loyal to Her Majesty the Queen;

Affirm their intention to be—

- A God-fearing country based on traditional Christian values, tolerant of other religions and beliefs.
- A country with open, responsible and accountable government, that includes a working partnership with the private sector and continuing beneficial ties with the United Kingdom.
- A country in which religion finds its expression in moral living and social justice.
- A caring community based on mutual respect for all individuals and their basic human rights.
- A country committed to the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

There are sixteen other points listed in the Preamble that represent the strong foundation upon which the Cayman Islands can grow from strength to strength. Pastor Al was committed to the empowerment of all of the people who reside in the Cayman Islands and worked steadfastly for unity and peaceful governance. Our first Chairman of this unique Constitutional Commission has left a shining light for others to follow.

Clergyman, activist and prominent leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., once said “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

By this definition Pastor Al was a man who was beyond measure. As 1 Corinthians, Chapter two, verse nine states:

“No eye has seen;  
no ear has heard;  
no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared  
for those who love Him”  
1 Corinthians 2:9

It truly was an honour and a privilege to work with such a dedicated and giving man.

We take comfort in knowing he is at home now and as a true Christian he looked forward to meeting his Saviour. We will forever be grateful for the time the Lord allowed us to be a part of his life.

Pastor Al – we know you are with us today and will be with us as we continue along our journey.

Thank you for every moment, every memory.

We pray that you will watch over your family and that God will help them to find comfort.

May your soul rest in peace.