

Patrick Allen gets second term as Adventist head

PASTOR PATRICK Allen was, last Thursday, re-elected to serve for a second consecutive five-year term as president of the over 230,000-strong West Indies Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, at its Quinquennial Session in Mandeville, Manchester.

The Union 13th Session, or Fifth Quinquennial, which commenced last Wednesday and culminated on Saturday, November 12, brought hundreds of Adventists from The Bahamas, Turk and Caicos Islands, the Cayman Islands and Jamaica to the gymnasium of the Northern Caribbean University. The session was held under the theme 'United in Jesus Christ'.

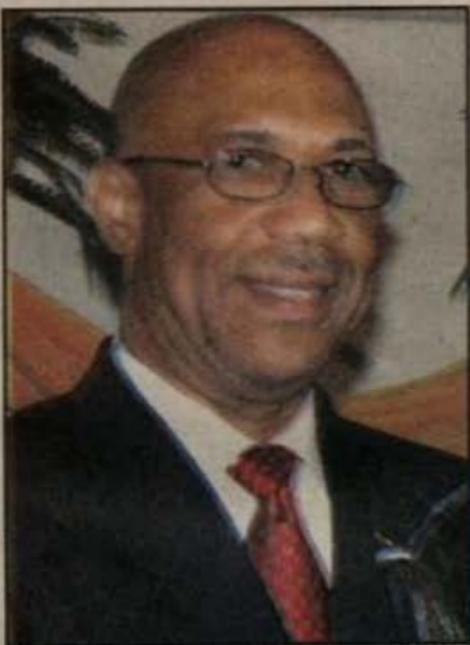
NOMINATED BY 41 DELEGATES

Pastor Allen, the 54-year-old leader who was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fruitful Vale, Portland, at age 11, was nominated by a committee comprising 41 delegates. The general body of 285 delegates then ratified the nomination, by raising voting cards signalling their approval.

Separate from the call for a life of spiritual renewal or formation by church members, he made reference to the Adventist Church and its social role in Jamaica.

"We have tools to offer to the needy; we have tools to offer for the healing of the sick; and we have tools in offering hope to the dying," he said. "The Church must go out in the communities. Not only must our doctrines and beliefs be appropriate for the time, but our outreach and intervention must also be shaped to fix the

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specific need of our contemporary society and the communities in which we live."

He said there was a need for the Church to address issues such as HIV/AIDS, child and spousal abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime and violence, and unemployment.

Pastor Allen, a former school principal, was trained for pastoral ministry at the Adventist-run Andrews University Seminary in Michigan, United States of America. He returned to Jamaica and pastored several churches in St. Catherine and Clarendon, including May Pen and Spanish Town branches. He rose through the ranks to become president of the Central Jamaica Conference and also the West Indies Union Conference in 1998 and 2000, respectively.

He has now been installed as head of one of the largest and fastest-growing denominations in Jamaica. He presides over 233,264 members and 632 churches and companies spread across five conferences, three missions and four institutions, in four countries.