

Allen perfect man for the job - SDA leaders

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Dr Herbert Thompson (left), president of Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Manchester, makes a point to Pastor Adrian Cotterell (right), president of the East Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Pastor Glen Samuels, (centre) president of the West Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, before the start of a press conference yesterday at the Terra Nova Hotel, St Andrew. The conference was called by local Adventist leaders to affirm Dr Patrick Allen as a suitable person to become the country's next governor general. In the background (from left) are Pastor Everett Brown, president, Central Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Pastor Michael Harvey, president, North Jamaica Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. - Norman Grindley/Staff Photographer

Leaders of the West Indies Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists yesterday dismissed claims that the faith of Dr Patrick Allen, governor general designate, would conflict with duties of state.

Since Prime Minister Bruce Golding announced Tuesday that the next governor general of Jamaica would be Dr Patrick Allen, concerns have been raised in letters to newspapers and by various public commentators about Dr Allen's commitment and ability to execute the affairs of state on Friday evenings and Saturdays.

At a news conference held at the Terra Nova Hotel, St Andrew, leaders of the church community, including Dr Herbert Thompson, president of Northern Caribbean University (NCU), and Pastor Glen Samuels, president of the West Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said Allen was of unquestionable integrity and was capable of embracing all people.

Samuels said, "He is impartial and open-minded." Allen, he continued, would demonstrate love to all Jamaicans, regardless of their affiliation or creed.

Other state issues

Thompson lashed out, saying that there were other state issues to debate rather than whether Allen would attend events on a Saturday in his capacity as governor general.

"With certain respect, this country has bigger issues to discuss. Really, people, we need to major in some more major issues," he said.

The university president said that Adventists were peculiar, but not fanatics or sectarian.

"We go out to help people without asking what day or time, all the time," said Thompson.

On the matter of signing off on issues of current affairs, especially with regard to the retention of the death penalty, Thompson said Allen would affix his signature based on the decision of the people.

"The governor general designate is very aware of current affairs. He will be signing, not his conscience, but what the law of the land states," said Thompson.

Allen, 57, is also chairman of the board of governors of NCU.

Governor General Professor Sir Kenneth Hall, who has been serving in that capacity since February 2006, is retiring, citing ill health. Allen is scheduled to succeed Hall when he is sworn in on February 26.