

My Dear Friends,

Once again without shadow of turning, God has safely brought us through the ever-changing scenes of life, and through the changes of time, to the beginning of another year. What can we ask of him?

We can beseech him to pardon the sins we have committed in the past year – for all of us have sinned – and we can ask for grace that we may go through this new year a better person. We can thank him for all the loving kindness and tender mercies along the way. When the road has been dark, God has not failed us – though we often fail him – so we must ask for forgiveness and his help to do better.

Many of you have asked me to be more outspoken and critical of the governance we have, or the lack thereof, but there is time for everything and our country needs peace, not more trouble. I did promise that on taking up the mantle of opposition, I would not be – I could not be – to the government what they have been to me and thus to you the people. I keep that promise. For the government on its own, is self-destructing.

My concern though is for the suffering of all the people in these islands. It is true and I will as much say that the present government and their allies did everything possible to stop me from getting the projects completed that I had promised.

The problem today is that the dastardly deeds they did in assisting the then governor in stopping my work is not that it's backfiring on them, but that is hurting you the people. For what is their accomplishment but to brag of a surplus created by measures they railed against and cursed me for?

What is the use of a surplus when you are suffering in every way possible, and you could be assisted, but the government shows an indifference.

What is their accomplishment but to talk of increased visitors? A policy that I put in place – measures created by my staff in my administration – which they fought against! What is their accomplishment?

Our government's financial policy kept our Aa3 credit rating intact while others around the world floundered through a financial crisis, yet they cursed me!

Scholarships and assistance to our elderly, handicapped persons and seamen were not reduced, but remained intact with more people benefiting in the time of need. All of these areas have been impacted negatively by this government, with persons applying, but not receiving help, and definitely some children have lost their scholarship assistance. No!

Under my administration, if given support by the opposition rather than false accusations and disruption, by now our airport problems would have been solved, our cruise facility and Turtle Farm need for more visitors would have been settled as well.

Today there is more unemployment, more need, more people losing their businesses and their houses. My hurt is, that there are far too many people hurting and the government is indifferent to it. While all that is happening around us, people are not safe in their homes, on the street, at leisure, or at their businesses. The powers that be are again indifferent to it.

The immigration policy is a disaster causing more disaster in all shapes and forms. The government must embrace people who can help us. Poverty is growing. We must embrace wealth or reap poverty!

So, the government thus far is indifferent and ineffective. No doubt their answers to all of this chaos and trouble is to pull out statistics which they put together to say “our administration didn’t do it” as they did with the Mortgage Assistance Program. One quick example of that is: I found a problem and assisted the people. Many people who qualified for the assistance, between then and now, had no work or lost what work they did have. So naturally, no work and no mortgage will get paid. What is the government doing?

Every development plan, be it Shetty Hospital and its spin-off development, Enterprise City, Dart’s various developments, the hotel in Beach Bay, or the Ironwood Golf Community and its necessary road plan, all of these they berated!

Rather, these developments are not something bad, but are needed and will give the country revenue and our people work.

My friends, the government needs to stop dreaming, stop shouting, stop cursing, stop blaming, stop its nepotism, stop its cronyism and get to work using a common sense approach that will make a difference in the lives of the people. Difficult decisions need to be made, new industries started, be they in the technology area or other developmental sectors.

I really don’t believe that all the expensive consultants’ contracted from the outside or inside are going to solve any of the problems affecting us.

For now, I will pray for them and for us. I will not be a stumbling block. So I look forward knowing not what will befall us in the new year ahead. But I will trust God, as much in the shadow as in the sunshine and pray we find the way by the light of his will.

I will ask him that for all the possibilities ahead in the new year to make us thankful, to give us wisdom, courage and discernment in the face of so much chaos, despair and fear.

I will ask him to see how, in our circumstances, we can contribute to make our island nation a place of peace, faith and love, and also to give us the will to translate our desires into action.

I respect and care for each and every single soul living, working, moving and having their beings here.

May God be good to all of us and grant us good health in this new year.

Assistant labour boss retires from DLP

(CNS): The Assistant Director of the Department of Labour & Pensions (DLP) Robert Whittaker retired Wednesday after 24 years in public service. Whittaker was the longest serving employee at the DLP and officials said he has played a major role in significant change at the department over the years. This included the revamping of the Labour Tribunals in 2002, which divided the original body into six separate boards and saw the introduction of formal training for all new members. He also assisted in the establishment of the Conciliation and Mediation Unit in 2002, which separated the Complaints Section from the Enforcement Unit. Since 2000 Whittaker has served as Assistant Director and Senior Labour Officer.

From 1998-2000 he worked as Senior Labour Inspector, and prior to that was Labour Inspector from 1991 to 1998. In 1998 he also spent time seconded to the Turks and Caicos Labour Office. For much of his tenure at DLP he also served as an ex officio member of the Immigration Board.

“I can’t say enough about Mr. Whittaker’s work ethic and leadership,” said the director of labour and pensions, and acting superintendent of pensions, Mario Ebanks. “His commitment, dedication and sincere interest in helping people are commendable. He will be missed.”

Acting Chief Officer in the Ministry for Employment, Christen Suckoo thanked Whittaker for his “exceptional commitment” to the Department and his outstanding service. “I wish him the very best in his future endeavours and hope he enjoys his retirement which he rightly deserves,” he added.

Hospice doc gets royal gong

(CNS): Dr Virginia Hobday (Clough) has been given an MBE in the Queen’s 2015 New Year’s Honours List. Dr Hobday was recognized for her services to hospice care in the Cayman Islands in the annual list of royal gongs. She is presently the medical director for Cayman Hospice Care and has served on the organisation’s board of directors since 2001. She was the only Caymanian to receive a mention on the honours list this year. More than a thousand people were recognised by the Queen mostly from the UK including celebrities, politicians and other famous faces. See full list here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-years-honours-list-2015>