

REMARKS BY FRED MITCHELL MP
ON THE LAUNCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR RE-
ELECTION IN FOX HILL

Faith Mission Church of God

Davis Street and the Fox Hill Road

23RD May 2011

Mr. Party Leader, Mr. Deputy Leader, colleagues and friends, Reverend gentlemen and ladies, Stalwart Councilors, my constituents.

May I ask my campaign manager Philip Mortimer, Branch Chair Charlene Marshal and all branch officers to stand and be recognized with my thanks.

Tonight as we begin this journey for the fourth time, we invoke the blessings of Almighty God.

In doing so, we renew what has become a tradition. This is the fourth time that we have had the honour and privilege to begin with prayers to the Almighty right here at the Faith Mission Church of God, now known as the Mega Worship centre, led by Rev. Sherelle Saunders J.P. I want to thank her for allow us to continue this tradition.

Rev. Saunders is the daughter of the late Bishop Austin Saunders who founded this church. He was a strong supporter of the Progressive Liberal Party. I shall never forget his preaching in army fatigues on the day we launched the campaign in 2002.

Tonight is really about getting a proper start, to give thanks to God for all that he has done, for all that he will do and to say well done to those stalwart councilors who were recently appointed to that lofty office.

Tonight then, as we begin this campaign I remember Bishop Austen Saunders. I remember and recall my friend Kermit Rolle of Exuma to whom I dedicated the night of my acceptance of the PLP's nomination.

Tonight I wish also to pay special tribute to my late friend and Brother Charles Johnson who was a leader in last time's campaign. This one must do without you Charles, but I have faith and confidence that we will remember how you did it and repeat the victory. So let us all remember Charles Johnson in that other place this evening.

But tonight cannot just be about the past, it must more importantly be about the future. It must be how we are going to engage the young Bahamian in the future of this nation and this constituency.

I have dedicated this general election campaign to fighting for the young people of our country. When I meet them, as I go from house to house the single most depressing thought is the fact that there are far too many men and women under 25 who are sitting at home with nothing to do.

I have given some ideas to the leader of the party about a jobs programme which we must adopt when we come to government which will solve this problem of youth unemployment.

It is in my view the single biggest factor that will lead to social disorder in this country if it is not resolved and solved.

I can tell you that as a representative that is more often than not the only level at which young people especially young men engage with representatives. They want a job and they believe that the role of an MP is to find a job.

The role of the PLP is to solve the economic crisis in which we find ourselves today and provide the jobs. I pledge to work to do so.

There is a line in the Anglican service which implores and exhorts the congregation: "let us do the things that make for peace and build up the common life." That bit of poetry is an exhortation to build community. That has been the singular focus of my time here in Fox Hill. I pledge to continue to support the integrity of this community.

I will tell you how we are different in this than our opponents. We made sure that the Fox Hill Festival was supported fully by the coffers of the state because we believed that it was the primary vehicle for the national celebration of African culture in the country. We believed that it was central to the cultural integrity of the Fox Hill Community and The Bahamas. The people of Fox Hill can be assured that when we return to office Fox Hill and its cultural integrity will once again be in safe hands.

There will be a revitalized Fox Hill Urban Renewal Programme the refurbishing of homes and feeding of the hungry. All of that is central to building community. My belief is that by building community, people will support their own and not destroy their own communities.

I have engaged in this community building in Eastwood and Hill Side Park, Monastery Park and Heights, Grays Terrace, Freddie Munnings Manor, Smithsville, Canon Pugh, Canterbury, College Gardens, Gleniston North.

But you know I don't fool myself. Good representation alone does not get you re-elected. People make decisions for all kinds of reasons. We therefore have to simply pound the

pavements and find out where we are. In a resource starved organization that is our only defence: people to people, one vote at a time.

Tomorrow, we begin with a concerted campaign to get everyone registered to vote.

So I ask all to join me as we do the things that make for peace and build up the common life.

What we can say is this: "Say all they want; talk all they want, leadership is not the issue in this campaign. The issue is jobs and crime."

When we left office there were no problems paying mortgages, school fees, and car payments, no problems with jobs, that is what Mr. Christie's leadership left The Bahamas. Today, decisive leadership has given us mass unemployment, no scholarships for the children, school fees can't be paid and homes being repossessed.

I am therefore asking tonight for another chance to represent this constituency; a chance for a return to the glory days.

I pledge to continue good representation and to continue to be in touch with the people.

I must tell you that I expect the most difficult battle of my political career. That is why I am trying to start right and start early.

I am proud to be the standard bearer of the Progressive Liberal Party. With God's help, I shall prevail.

Thank you all for coming and bless you.

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