



## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

To The House of Assembly

By

The Hon. David Burt, JP, MP  
Premier of Bermuda

JUSTICE

12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

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**Mr. Speaker**, just over a year ago I advised this Honourable House that I had invited the Governor, pursuant to section 22(1) of the Bermuda Constitution, to consult the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of mercy with a view to granting a full and free posthumous pardon to Rev. Charles Vinton Monk.

**Mr. Speaker**, since that time I have regularly raised this matter with the Governor and he has indicated that the case has been the subject of extensive research and review. **Mr. Speaker**, the Governor confirmed that he had delved into as many aspects of the case as records from 1903 would allow.

**Mr. Speaker**, Honourable Members will recall that it was the late Ira Philip whose definitive work on Rev. Monk provided the best account of the circumstances of the events that led to his trial and conviction. Monk's story was renewed in earnest by the clarion call of the pastor of St. Paul AME Church, the Rev. Nicholas Tweed. With the support of the AME Churches of Bermuda this Government determined to seek the redress a pardon could bring.

**Mr. Speaker**, it is important to note that there is an inextricable link between the AME Church and the pursuit of social justice. In this year when we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Theatre Boycott, it must be remembered that the movement that led to the desegregation of public places in Bermuda came out of the AME Church.

**Mr. Speaker**, under Papers and Communications to the House I have tabled for the records of this Legislature, the Writ by which the Governor has granted the posthumous pardon to Rev. Monk.

**Mr. Speaker**, I wish to thank the Governor for his thoughtful and thoroughly researched consideration of this Government's request. I saw the working file on this case and it was considerable. This is no flight of fancy, but a decision made on the strength of the facts presented and one that finally does justice after 116 years.

I must also recognize the leadership of Rev. Nicholas Tweed on this issue. Sunday after Sunday he challenges a congregation, swelled by radio and internet listeners, to look beyond the walls of the church; to see what is possible through commitment to a common purpose and an honest discourse around who we are and what we can become.

**Mr. Speaker**, it was Dr. Martin Luther King who said: "*Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.*"

**Mr. Speaker**, it is through that lens that I view this historic event. The pursuit of justice demonstrates who we are as this island's government, and we will continue to seek to redress injustice wherever or whenever it occurs.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.

