

What Caused Myles Munroe's Private Plane to Crash?

Severe weather likely was a factor in the crash Sunday of a private Learjet that killed prominent Christian pastor Dr. Myles Munroe, his wife and seven others while flying into the Bahamas for a conference, the Bahamian foreign minister said Monday.

Heavy rain was buffeting the region when the Lear 36 Executive Jet struck a shipping container crane in Freeport as it made its approach to the island of Grand Bahama, Foreign Minister Fred Mitchell said, according to an Associated Press report.

Mitchell said that a commercial Bahamasair flight making the same route, from Nassau to Freeport, had turned back because it was unable to land around the same time as the flight carrying Munroe and several members of his Bahamas Faith Ministries.

Civil aviation authorities launched a formal investigation on Monday.

The death of Munroe, one of the most prominent pastors in predominantly Christian Bahamas, stunned the country, and shockwaves reverberated across ministry circles in North America, where Munroe was known and respected.

"It is utterly impossible to measure the magnitude of Dr. Munroe's loss to the Bahamas and to the world," Prime Minister Perry Christie said. "He was indisputably one of the most globally recognizable religious figures our nation has ever produced."

The group was reportedly traveling to the Bahamas to attend a Global Leadership Forum arranged by Munroe. According to a statement posted to Munroe's Facebook page, that event will

continue, according to a report Monday on Caribbean Media Vision.

"This is what Dr. Munroe would have wanted," it said. "Please keep his family and the ministry in prayers."

Members of Munroe's organization sobbed and wailed when they learned of the crash, ABC News reported.

William M. Wilson, president of Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Munroe was a student and later adjunct professor, released a statement after Munroe's death: "His energy and enthusiasm for imparting Spirit Empowered Christianity to new generations was contagious."

Born in 1954 in the islands' capital of Nassau, Munroe founded Bahamas Faith Ministries International in the early 1980s after studying at ORU.

The charismatic pastor quickly became an influential religious leader among many evangelical Christians, giving sermons around the world and occasionally appearing on televangelist Benny Hinn's popular programs. He was also a motivational speaker and the author of numerous books, including the 2008 best-seller *God's Big Idea: Reclaiming God's Original Purpose for Your Life*.

As news of the plane crash spread, members of his church were shown weeping on a Bahamas TV station or raising their hands in prayer. Fellow Christian pastors expressed shock.

"At times like these, I don't try to figure things out, I just know that all things ultimately figure into a larger and higher purpose that we may never fully understand in this present limited reality," Bishop Carlton Pearson, a high-profile U.S. minister who was a friend of Munroe's for 40 years, wrote on his Facebook page.

Munroe, who grew up poor in the Bahamas, was considered an

inspiration for many people in the island chain and abroad, the foreign minister said. "He has really put his name on the world stage and helped the Bahamas achieve recognition for talent," the foreign minister said.