

eREACH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD IN JAMAICA

FIRST-TIME
BRIDE AT

93

RAISING
UP A NEW
GENERATION OF
LEADERS

**NIGEL MARTIN
STEPS INTO THE
DIRECTORSHIP**

*New
year, new
office
space!*

YOUR VIEWS: WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH ANYWAY?

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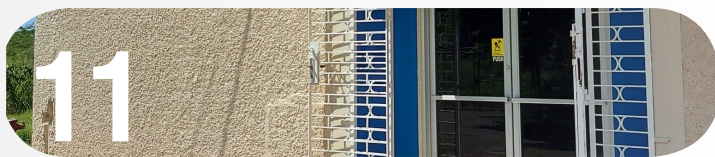
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ON THE COVER: The National Youth Department Praise Team leading in worship at the recent service held in honour of former Youth and Discipleship Director Reverend Leslie Pinnock and his family.

Cheers to a year of **DISCIPLINE, COURAGE, HOPE**

The summer is behind us, and we have embarked on a new church year. We hope that, like us, you are excited to see what the Lord has in store for the next months. The theme for this church year is 'Forward Together with Discipline, Courage and Hope'. Those are three words that hold a lot of depth in this call to action.

The word courage is defined as mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty (Merriam-Webster). It also means the ability to control your fear in a dangerous or difficult situation; to be brave and confident enough to do what you believe in (Cambridge).

Discipline, as a noun, and as used in the context of the theme, simply means self-control.

Hope is defined as the feeling that what is wanted can be had, or that events will turn out for the best (Dictionary.com).

Given those definitions, we may conclude that the theme is indicating that as a denomination, during the course of this year and beyond, we are going to be operating at a level that will be defined by perseverance, fearlessness and confidence and in obedience with our guidebook, the Bible, and with all hands on deck. It is indicating that we are going to approach our activities and our service to God and His people with boldness, while at all times looking forward with great anticipation to better days.

So, as you step into the unknown of a new church year, be assured that God is on your side, and with that assurance, you will be able to withstand any storm that comes your way. Call to mind Esther, who in the midst of uncertainty dared to believe that God would see her through, and He did. Reflect on Abraham, Joshua, Moses and many of the other prophets who showed courage, practised self-control and believed that brighter days were ahead. Call to mind the Shunamite woman whose only child lay dead, but in the midst of such great adversity had the courage to utter the words, "It is well."

We look forward to using this medium to bring you all the exciting happenings from around the island as we move forward together with discipline, courage and hope. Please continue to send your reports, photos and information on activities in your area to communications.ntcogja@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

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NIGEL MARTIN

STEPS INTO THE DIRECTORSHIP

“**T**hey [former directors] all added value to this ministry and all I’m doing is standing on their shoulders, looking over the horizon and saying, ‘Now that they have taken us here, what can I add that will prepare the ministry for the next generation?’” says Reverend Nigel Anthony Isaac Martin, the new National Director of the Men’s Ministry.

To those who know him, his whole life has been preparation for this moment of national leadership. His grandparents were lay preachers in the Baptist Church; his mother, pastor of the Bannister New Testament Church; and two of his brothers are also pastors in the denomination.

“My eldest brother is at Sandy Park New Testament Church and Jason [Martin, his brother] is overseas in Canada,” he says.

Despite that preparation, Reverend Martin says he did not want to enter the ministry when he heard older pastors sharing the hardships they experienced on the journey.

“When I listened to the testimony of Reverend Ronald Blair, I said that I didn’t want to be a pastor because it seemed like a very rough life,” he says.



From left: Bishop Dr. Roy Notice, Reverend Nigel Martin, Reverend Paul Morris and Reverend Kevin Page.

But his posture changed, when as a student in high school, he was ridiculed for his faith and he turned to former Administrative Bishop and pastor of many decades, Reverend Ronald Blair, for consolation.

“He [Reverend Blair] said, ‘There are billions of people in the world and a mighty God looked on the earth and among billions of people, He put His finger on Jamaica and He said, ‘I want Nigel’. [After that] I developed an unquenching passion

“ We want to connect men to a brotherhood.
We want them to feel like they belong.
We want them to feel accepted.”



Reverend Nigel Martin with his wife Kadian Roberts Martin and children Nigel Anthony and Hope.

to be a pastor,” he says.

Prior to his appointment as Director of the Men’s Ministry, he spent seven and a half years at the Waltham Park Church in St Andrew; three years and eight months at the Eleven Miles Church in St Thomas; and five years at his most recent pastorate, the Trench Town Church in Kingston.

Reverend Martin says he was at first apprehensive about his appointment to the Trench Town Church, but those feelings were short-lived.

“I don’t think I have loved a space like I have loved the Trench Town people and community. They have helped to shape my thinking and how I engage ministry in a community context,” he says.

As the Men’s Ministry’s Director, he will be looking to engage men at all levels. His chief concerns are with the absence of men from the church and from their children’s lives as well as the abuse of women and children by some men.

“We want to connect men to a brotherhood. We want them to feel like they belong. We want them to feel accepted,” says Reverend Martin.

He will also be encouraging pastoral support for the ministry.

“The pastor must remember he is the chief discipler, and as the chief discipler, he has to lead by example. And as the discipler, he has to demonstrate to the men in church what it means to be a discipler and a disciple.”

Reverend Martin also notes that crucial to the brotherhood is the need for continuous training and development.

“We want to be deliberate that we are training and preparing men for leadership within our church and even outside the context of the church,” he says.



One of the objectives of the New Testament Church of God, Jamaica is to grow healthy churches. For this edition of eREACH, we canvassed a number of members at the Portmore Church in St Catherine to ascertain their understanding of this term. Below, we bring you their responses.

Question: The New Testament Church of God has been talking a lot about the healthy church in recent years. What is your understanding of the concept?

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH ANYWAY?



Renee Barrows

“My understanding of the healthy church is the overall collaboration between the organisation, that is the building and its leadership, and the organism, that is us and how effective we are in carrying out the mandate as is stipulated by the Word of God, as well as how much we are reaching the lost, how much we are open to those who are outside of the organisation, so that they, too, can be incorporated within the organisation.”



Delano Witter

“A healthy church is one that’s harvesting souls for the Father’s Kingdom, growing in spite of adversity and persecution (or lockdowns), and serving the communities in which it has been planted through robust programmes such as those that feed the hungry and care for the less fortunate and shut-ins. The work of the Lord never stops in a healthy church.”



Diedre-Ann Witter

“A healthy church is one in which those who name the name of Christ are NOT just hearers, but making every effort to do what the Word says in ALL areas of their lives. A healthy church pursues unity so that Kingdom goals can be fulfilled, despite personal differences of opinions, and is given to the work of evangelising those with whom they come into contact both verbally and by their way of life.”



Robin Williams

“The healthy church is one that pays keen attention to the strategic focus of the church and also to discipleship, the word of God, worship and fellowship.”



Vanessa Gayle

“A healthy church can be defined as a body of believers in Jesus Christ, who are fulfilling the mandate of the church given by Jesus to His disciples in St. Matthew 28:19. It is therefore evangelistically and missions oriented. A healthy church must also be discipling its members, that is, nurturing and training them up in the Truth of God’s Word and assisting them in living out that Truth in their daily lives, by providing spiritual coaches (such as prayer mother/fathers; teens/children’s mentors; big brother/ sister accountability network).”



Janielle Todd

“A church that caters to the spiritual, physical and emotional growth of the persons and allows the people to discover their purpose and talents through the initiatives in place.”



Tamara Corke-Watson

“I believe a healthy church is an obedient one. It displays faith that would uplift any onlooker. A church where Agape and Phileo love are evident and contagious; where unity is formidable; where spiritual gifts are nurtured and honoured but not placed above obedience. That’s what I think a healthy church looks like.”



Allison Bennett

“A healthy church is one that is devoted to biblical doctrines and the discipleship of others so they can become replicas of Christ. A healthy church should teach the Word of God in such a way that each believer can apply the Word, thus growing and manifesting the Fruit of the Spirit. Although not perfect, the healthy church caters to the whole man, hence it strives to address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of the individual.”





*First-time
bride at*

93

SEALING IT WITH
A KISS: Mary and
Alphonso Reynolds
celebrate after tying
the knot at home on
August 17, 2021
after more than 60
years together.

*A*ge is just a number. That may be a cliché, but for Alphonso and Mary Elaine Reynolds, it is also a reality. Based in St Elizabeth, Jamaica, the couple tied the knot recently, and their union has been met with a wealth of celebration and an equal amount of astonishment.

“Why astonishment?” some may ask. That’s because Mary, at 93 years old, was walking up the aisle to meet her 84-year-old groom, Alphanso, as a first-time bride.

The two are members of the Black River New Testament Church, with a love story that dates all the way back to 1965.

“I was doing some road work for the government. She (Mary) came to me and asked me if she could get some work to pour water for the workmen,” says Alphanso.

He did not hesitate to talk to his supervisor in his effort to assist Mary.

“The foreman agreed, and I went back and told her that he said she could come and do some work.”

Mary got the job, and Alphanso, a new heartthrob.

Weeks passed and Alphanso would watch Mary as she worked. His admiration for her grew stronger each day.

“I used to like the way she operates. She would come to the site with her clean bucket of water, her clean towel and glasses and she dressed up nice and clean. I would always look on her and say to myself, ‘I really like how that lady carries herself,’” he says.

Alphanso had no qualms expressing his feelings to Mary. He says he went on a relentless pursuit, but she initially ignored him. However, he never gave up and Mary eventually gave in.

“One day, after all my arguments, she said, ‘You know, I love you’, and we kicked it off from there,” he recalls.

Alphanso says after the project ended, he would leave his Great Bay home to go to see her in Brompton, St Elizabeth. He would purchase goods from the market to give to her each time he visited.

“She had three kids before she knew me, and then she got pregnant for me. After the pregnancy, she told me she was going to come and live with me. We have been living together since that time,” says Alphanso.



Soon after, the couple had another baby. Things were going well and Alphanso and Mary were living their dreams, but in a sad twist of fate, the unthinkable happened. The two lost their

daughter, who was 16 years old at the time.

“That was such a hard time for us. We took it really hard because our daughter was so sweet. She was such a beautiful daughter and people called her ‘Queen,’” he says.

Their daughter died shortly after she was diagnosed with cancer. It was a rocky time for the couple, but they were determined to weather every storm together.

When Mary decided that she wanted to commit her life to the Lord, Alphanso, who attended church regularly, did not discourage her. But the two were unmarried.

“When I decided to give my life to the Lord, I stopped sleeping with him,” says Mary.

“We were living together in the same house just the same, for many years, but we did not sleep together at all,” she adds.

The two wanted to be married after Mary’s conversion, but there was a major problem.

“Alphanso had issues with the registration of his birth and this made it difficult for them to get married,” their pastor, Reverend Dwight Whitley, says.

Reverend Whitley further explained that despite this problem, Alphanso had come to realise the honour in marrying the love of his life and the mother of his son, and with the help of the church’s outreach ministry, they were able to secure his birth registration details.

It was a beautiful day on August 17, 2021, when the elderly couple tied the knot at home after over 60 years together.

“I just put on a nice pants and a nice shirt and my wife put on something nice and we just do a little thing. It was nothing big. It was only pastor, Sister Thaxter and our son,” says Alphanso.

He and his wife are elated to finally be married.

“Married life feels very good. We’re alright,” says Mary.

Reverend Whitley says of all the weddings he has officiated in the past, the Reynoldses’ was perhaps the one that brought him the most joy.

“I have officiated numerous weddings, but none gave me the feeling of satisfaction that Alphanso and Mary’s wedding gave to me,” he says.

“Lay leaders can be a source of joy, gifts, and synergy in the life of a congregation. A well-prepared and organised laity can also act as a role model for aspiring leaders and offer advocacy for the needs of the community.”

Raising up a NEW GENERATION of leaders

What does a denomination do when it finds that there is a need to increase the number of leaders among its membership?

Organise several levels of training, is the response of Reverend Dr. Ajilon Ferdinand, who heads the National Discipleship Unit, and under whose auspices those training programmes will fall.

Faithful workers are tired and experiencing a leadership overload, and pastors are finding it harder to identify willing volunteers to fill ministry slots, is how Dr. Ferdinand rationalises the need for this programme that will equip believers with the tools to advance the Christ-centred and disciple-making mandates of the church.

Lay leaders are commonly described as the volunteer workforce of the local church. Their calling is to assist the pastor in accomplishing the mandate of Christ – that of soul-winning.

“Lay leaders can be a source of joy, gifts, and synergy in the life of a congregation. A well-prepared and organised laity can also act as a role model for aspiring leaders and offer advocacy for the needs of the community,” reads a statement from the Discipleship Unit..

But even as preparations are under way to raise up a new generation of lay leaders, many may wonder how such a dearth of leadership came about in the first place.

“There are a few practical reasons for this phenomenon in modern-day churches, among them is the practice of not proactively preparing to meet the future leadership needs, and instead waiting until the last moment to solicit new volunteers to serve churches,” says Dr. Ferdinand.

The hope is that this approach to training will provide a sustainable supply of members to serve as pastors’ council members, ministry leaders, praise leaders, finance committee workers, and Bible study and small group leaders.

There will be two sets of training sessions each year of six-month duration. Those desirous of participating should have been Christians for a minimum of two years and may contact their pastors for additional information on how to participate in these programmes.

NOTE: The first training session will begin on October 23, 2021 starting at 10:00 a.m.

Those desirous of participating may contact Reverend Dr. Ajilon Ferdinand at 876-434-6300 or Miss Gizel Townsend at 876-430-7667 or email mydiscipleshipunit@gmail.com.

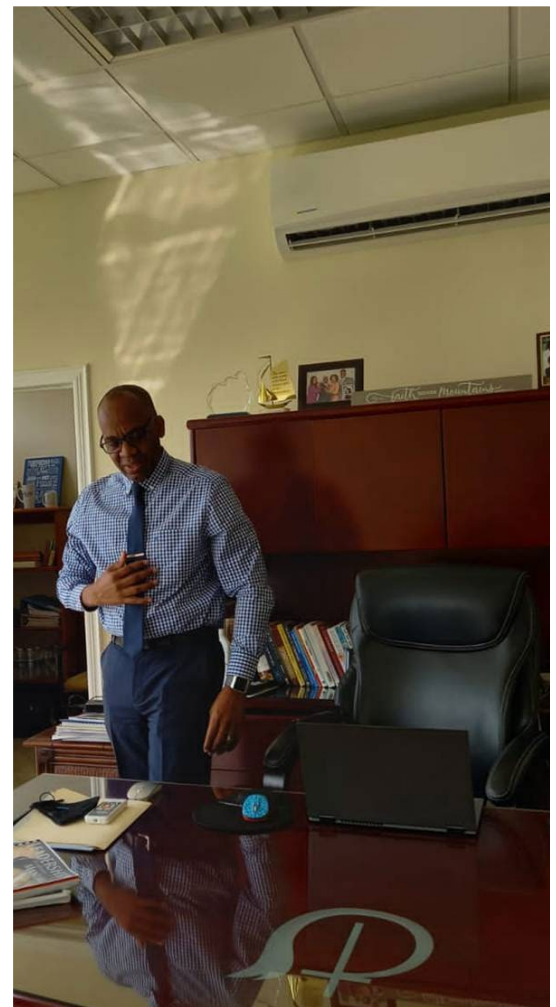
Reverend Dr. Ajilon Ferdinand



**FORMER
LOCATION**



**CURRENT
LOCATION**



*New
year, new
office
space!*

The administrative office of the denomination was recently relocated to Roden's Pen, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. In this edition of eREACH, we give you a peek into the new space with members of staff in the various spaces and the staff meeting in the boardroom.



*New
year, new
office
space!*





From left: Reverend Orville Plummer, National Secretary/Treasurer; Bishop Dr. Roy Notice, Administrative Bishop; Mr. Bruce Fletcher, Chairman, Operation Save Jamaica (OSJ); and Mr. Broderick Bowes, Board Member, OSJ.

Collaborating for **CHANGE**

Recently, one of the main strategic objectives of the New Testament Church of God in Jamaica, that of Community Outreach, became a little closer to realisation with the help of a charity organisation.

In September, Operation Save Jamaica (OSJ), a registered charity and para-church entity, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the denomination that will see the establishment of training programmes and community development initiatives.

“[The purpose of the MOU] is to form a strategic alliance between the New Testament Church of God and Operation Save Jamaica to promote and facilitate community transformation in keeping with the respective vision, mission and mandate of both parties,” reads a statement from OSJ.

The programme of training will include ministers and members and will see the Men’s Ministry taking the leadership on behalf of the denomination. As the plans are concretised, more detailed information will be sent to the churches.





NAOMI'S MINISTRY:

MOVING WOMEN TO A BETTER PLACE



Being the widow of a Minister of the Gospel or the wife of a retired Minister can, at times, be a lonely place.

But not anymore for many women in the New Testament Church of God who fall into those categories.

Naomi's Ministry, which began operations in 2017, was established to fill that need. It is an arm of the Ministerial Care and Development Department and the Women's Ministries.

"Life is unpredictable and can lead us down unexpected and undesirable paths. Naomi's Ministry reaches out to those who need a word of encouragement, those who are hurting and need a shoulder to lean on.

"Some of our members are well situated and are leading productive

lives, while some are struggling to make it. We try to provide a nucleus where there is love, compassion and solace, as also to empower those who are still able to contribute to ministry," says Pearl Taylor.

While the head of this ministry acknowledges that the need is great and resources are limited, she is confident that God will always provide.

"God is faithful and never rescinded on His promises. He will not suffer our foot to be moved, He keeps us, and will preserve our souls. Our help comes from the Lord," she says.

"With that in mind, we continue to be thoughtful of each other, especially those who are more vulnerable among us. If we can help someone as we pass along, then our living shall not be in vain."

STRATEGIC UPDATES

– QUARTER ENDING AUGUST 2021 –

TOP 10 CHURCHES IN TITHES

	CHURCH	PASTOR
1.	PORTMORE	Cornell Shaw
2.	WALTHAM PARK	Stevenson Samuels
3.	MANDEVILLE	Osbourne Fisher
4.	MONTEGO BAY	Ruel Robinson
5.	ESCARPMENT ROAD	Leslie Pinnock
6.	EASTWOOD PARK	Clement Clarke
7.	PORT ANTONIO	Desmond Green
8.	LINSTEAD	Jephitha Reid
9.	SPANISH TOWN	Cavon Campbell
10.	COBBLA	Errol Gooden

Congrats to all our top churches!

TOP 10 CHURCHES IN OFFERING

	CHURCH	PASTOR
1.	WALTHAM PARK	Stevenson Samuels
2.	MANDEVILLE	Osbourne Fisher
3.	MONTEGO BAY	Ruel Robinson
4.	PORTMORE	Cornell Shaw
5.	ESCARPMENT ROAD	Leslie Pinnock
6.	PAPINE	Ajilon Ferdinand
7.	CLIFTON	Monroe Wisdom
8.	RUNAWAY BAY	Deloris Trowers-Huntley
9.	LINSTEAD	Jephitha Reid
10.	EASTWOOD PARK	Clement Clarke

TOP 10 CHURCHES IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE BAPTISED IN WATER

	CHURCH	PASTOR	W/BAP
1.	FRANKFIELD	Hopeton Jarrett	22
2.	PORT ANTONIO	Desmond Green	10
3.	CALEDONIA	Eileen Bromfield	10
4.	FORT GEORGE	Oswald Leon	9
5.	AEOLUS VALLEY	Chez Cameron	8
6.	MOUNTAIN VIEW	Courtney Beason	6
7.	SPRINGFIELD	Glennese Dunkley-Baker	6
8.	BLACK RIVER	Dwight Whitely	5
9.	CHRISTIANA - Lower	David Wright	5
10.	LONG ROAD	Fitzroy Johnson	5

TOP 10 CHURCHES IN MEMBERS ADDED

	CHURCH	PASTOR	ADDED
1.	WALTHAM PARK	Stevenson Samuels	33
2.	MANDEVILLE	Osbourne Fisher	23
3.	HIGGINS LAND	Donald Dawson	17
4.	BEESTON STREET	Cleo Ellis	15
5.	BATTERSEA	Curtis Grindley	15
6.	ESCARPMENT ROAD	Leslie Pinnock	11
7.	DUTCH HILL	Nicola Walcott-Robinson	10
8.	ROSE HILL	Seth Romero	8
9.	MOUNT STEWART	McKenum Prendergast	8
10.	LOWER BUXTON	Paulette Whyte	8

TOP 10 CHURCHES IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE BAPTISED IN THE HOLY GHOST

	CHURCH	PASTOR	HOLY GHOST FILLED
1.	FRANKFIELD	Hopeton Jarrett	28
2.	MAY PEN	James Small	15
3.	MINERAL HEIGHTS	Stanley Ivey	8
4.	MITCHELL TOWN	Jeremiah Brown	5
5.	LUCEA	Robert Williams	4
6.	RAMBLE	Megan Calbert Crowl	3
7.	LILLIPUT	Howard Nelson	3
8.	PORT ANTONIO	Desmond Green	3
9.	CUMBERLAND	Richard Edwards	2
10.	GALLOWAY	Nakisha Herde-O'Brien	2

2021

Calendar

OCT

STEWARDSHIP MONTH

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
3	Launch of Stewardship Campaign	Local Church
9	District and Local Youth Directors Conference	Regional
10	Retirement Service – Reverend John Hardy	TBD
14	Ministers' Conference	Local
15	Deadline for Submission of Credentialing Application	
17	Heritage Sunday	Local Church
18	Men's Ministry Family Fun Day	TBD
21	Hour of Power	Online
25	Ministers Enrichment Seminar (Pre-Retirement)	Online
31	Stewardship Sunday (Break the Record Sunday)	Local Church

NOV

MISSIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MONTH

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
4	Fast and Feast (Prayer Network)	Online
7	Bethel Bible College Graduation	TBD
14	Missions and Community Sunday	Local Church
15	Ministers Enrichment Seminar-Evangelism	Regional (Online)
18	Diaspora Connect Conference (pm)	Online
23	Prayer Crusade (pm)	Online
28	Bethel Bible College Sunday	Local Church

DEC

FELLOWSHIP MONTH

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
16	Hour of Power	Online
17	Youth Christmas Cantata	Virtual/ Eastwood Park
22	National Office Closes (Reopens January 3)	
26	Christmas Sunday	
31	Watchnight and Thanksgiving Services	Local Church