

eREACH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD – JAMAICA

VOL 3 NO 3 | SEPT 2022

CONVENTION 2022

TELLING
IT AS IT IS

SUMMER
HARVEST

MOVING
ON UP

AN INSTANT
MIRACLE



EQUIPPED FOR YEAR AHEAD | YOU ARE A THEOLOGIAN | LET US EMBRACE LIFT | CALENDAR

CONTENTS



EDITOR'S NOTE

EDITORIAL TEAM 3

**MINISTERS
MOVING ON UP** 4

SUMMER HARVEST 7

LET US EMBRACE LIFT 9

**YOU ARE A
THEOLOGIAN** 10

**CONVENTION 2022:
TELLING IT AS IT IS** 12

AN INSTANT MIRACLE 15

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 16

**COVER IMAGE AND BACKGROUND IMAGE
ON THIS PAGE:** Worshippers taking part in
services at Convention 2022.

EQUIPPED AND READY FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

From all reports, the new church year has got off to a resounding start. Many pastors who have assumed duties at new churches are settling in well, newly-elected members of the Church and Pastors' Councils have been installed, while other workers appointed for the 2022-2023 church year have been commissioned and have assumed their responsibilities.

It has also come to our attention that many churches, in an effort to ensure that members of auxiliaries and committees are clear on their Terms of Reference, have held training sessions during the month of September, and workers have reported that they feel much more equipped to embrace the tasks ahead.

We believe, therefore, that the period 2022-2023 will be another year of rapid expansion and many blessings for our denomination as we move 'Forward Together with Justice and Loving Care' – the theme for this church year.

We commend those pastors and members who have been promoted to leadership positions within the region and the island. We will not cease to pray for them as they continue to use their talents to serve the Kingdom.

For this quarter, we will be focusing on Stewardship during the month of October, Community Connections in November, and Fellowship during the month of December. There are some recommended events in the Calendar of Activities during those months, and we encourage pastors and leaders to engage in as many of those activities as possible.

We look forward to receiving the reports of success for the new quarter. You may reach us at communications.ntcogja@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy the information provided in this edition.

Corinne Barnes

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Corinne Barnes

WRITERS

Sandrina Davis

Renee DeLeon

Carla Thomas Hewitt

Mario Romans

Sherine Williams

DESIGNER

Andewale McLaughlin

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please email articles, photos, letters, suggestions and feedback to
communications.ntcogja@gmail.com

ABOUT US

eREACH is a quarterly newsletter published by the New Testament Church of God i– Jamaica. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher, editor or partners.

CONTACT US

**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
OF GOD – JAMAICA ISLAND OFFICE**

Rodon's Pen

Old Harbour

St Catherine

Tel: (876) 876-927-3712,

876-978-4193, 876-978-8341

www.ntcogjamaica.org

MINISTERS MOVING ON UP

Several of our pastors have been elected or appointed to different positions and have commenced their tenure since the start of the new Church Year on September 1. We use this medium to commend them and to wish them success as they continue to serve with distinction.

REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS



BISHOP DR. ROY NOTICE

Bishop Notice has been appointed a member of the Caribbean Council for the period 2022-2024. In that capacity, he also has responsibility for coordinating activities of the Northern Caribbean Region.



REVEREND NIGEL MARTIN

Reverend Martin has served as the National LifeBuilders Men’s Ministry Director for the past year. In addition to that role, he has now been called on to assume responsibilities as the Caribbean’s LifeBuilders Men’s Ministry Director.



Seated (from left): Bishop Ishmael Charles, Caribbean Field Director; Dr. John Childers, Deputy Director of World Mission; and Bishop Moses Johnson, Admin Bishop – The Bahamas.

Standing (from left): Bishop Joseph Persaud, Admin Bishop – Guyana; Bishop Wendel Davis, Admin Bishop – St. Lucia and St. Vincent & Grenadines; Bishop Juan Tiburcio Perez, Admin Bishop – Dominican Republic; Bishop Alonzo Jones, Admin Bishop – Trinidad and Tobago; Bishop Kenroy Burke, Admin Bishop – Barbados; Bishop Ricardo Lopez-Ortiz, Admin Bishop – Puerto Rico; and Bishop Roy Notice, Admin Bishop – Jamaica.

NATIONAL APPOINTMENTS



**REVEREND DR
EARLMONT WILLIAMS**

Reverend Williams is the new President of Bethel Bible College of the Caribbean. He previously served as Academic Dean for that institution and Pastor of the George's Valley Church in Manchester.



REVEREND CAVON CAMPBELL

Reverend Campbell has assumed duties as the Director for Ministerial Care and Development, succeeding Reverend Alexander Simms, who recently retired. Reverend Campbell has been in ministry for 37 years, and previously served as a member of the National Executive Council as well as Pastor of several churches, the most recent being the Spanish Town Church in St. Catherine.



**REVEREND DR.
DONALD ROBERTS**



**REVEREND DR.
AJILON FERNDINAND**

Reverend Dr. Donald Roberts and **Reverend Dr. Ajilon Ferndinand** have been elected to serve as members of the National Executive Council. Dr. Roberts recently demitted office as President of Bethel Bible College of the Caribbean, and in addition to his seat on the Council, will also serve as Pastor of the Mandeville Church in Manchester. Dr. Ferdinand will also be serving as Dean of Bethel Bible College as well as pastor of the Papine Church in St. Andrew.

DISTRICT OVERSEERS



REVEREND COLERIDGE MINTO

Reverend Minto now assumes responsibility for the Rocky Settlement District of Churches in Clarendon. That District comprises six churches – Rocky Settlement, Portland Cottage, Mitchell Town, Waterlane, Springfield and Alley.



REVEREND ALTON THELWELL

Reverend Thelwell is the Overseer of the newly created Riverside District of Churches in Hanover. In his new role, he has oversight of four churches – Riverside, Richmond, Friendship and Cocoon.



REVEREND DENNIS BANNER

Reverend Banner is now in charge of the Siloah District in St. Elizabeth, with four churches – Siloah, Balaclava, Aberdeen and Benlomond – under his supervision.



REVEREND KERRITT HINES

Reverend Hines assumes responsibility for the Brandon Hill District in Clarendon, with six churches – Brandon Hill, Prospect, Johnnies Hill, Colouden, Crooked River and Top Hill.



REVEREND MARTIN MURPHY

Reverend Murphy now leads the Salem District in St Ann, with four churches – Salem, Discovery Bay, Thicketts and Runaway Bay.

Summer HARVEST



The months of July and August this year were abuzz with activities, as, for the first time in more than two years, young people from all over the island gathered at the newly refurbished campsite in St. Ann for Teens and Young People's camps.

Only Children's Camp was held virtually, with an attendance of 520. At the end of that five-day activity, 12 children indicated that they had surrendered their hearts to the Lord.

National Teens Camp followed closely and had an attendance of 350 at the campsite. At the end of

those week-long activities, 39 people were saved and 29 baptised in water.

When August rolled around, the National Young Adults Ministry retreat was ready to take off. When the numbers were counted and after sessions, such as Friday in Berea, Battle of the Sexes, Prayer Room and Tarrying, 285 people were in attendance and 11 were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

COMING SOON

The National Youth and Discipleship Department has organised a series of training sessions during the months of October and November. Those located in the Central Region are invited to the Mandeville Church on October 8; Western Region, October 15 at the Montego Bay Church; Eastern Region on November 5 at the Waltham Park Road Church; and the North Eastern Region on November 5 at the Oracabessa Church.

Those sessions are intended for district and local directors, leaders in the Children's, Teens,



Young Adults, Young Men's and Sports ministries, as well as talent showcase coaches, Christian Education/Sunday School superintendents and

teachers, youth presidents, secretaries, and all other leaders and workers of the Youth and Discipleship Department.



LIFT

LET US EMBRACE

Forward Together with Justice and Loving Service' is the theme that will direct the operations of the New Testament Church of God – Jamaica for the church year 2022-2023.

KEY VERSES THAT WILL GUIDE THE THEME:

“Learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow’s cause.” (Isaiah 1:17)

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

SPECIAL FOCUS:

Loving Interventions ForTransformation (LIFT)

WHAT IS LIFT?

LIFT is a ministry framework that sets out to give renewed focus and fresh energy to the

incarnational calling of the church. It is an acronym that stands for ‘Loving Interventions For Transformation’.

LIFT churches, by definition, are “churches that believe that the gospel is, and has always been, a message that is best expressed in both words of love and works of love. Good deeds verify the good news and good news clarifies the good deeds.”

OBJECTIVES

- To remind believers that we are called to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God and to do good works
- To highlight the importance of service as a means of uplifting the lives of others
- To encourage every local church to engage in meaningful, sustainable acts of service through its different ministries
- To inspire members and congregations to identify and respond to individuals, groups and or institutions in their communities with the Gospel and good deeds
- Loving service is the mandate of the church. The community is depending on the church to continue to make an

impact. Without the voice of the church to speak to injustice and the loving hands of the church to intervene in the life of the hurting community, then there can be no resolution to the ills of the nation.

EXAMPLES OF LIFT ACTIVITIES/ INITIATIVES

- Bible study or sermon series on the power of serving others
- Special programme to reach teenage parents
- Implementation of prison ministry
- Training people to become community chaplains
- Devotions in schools
- Scholarships and other educational support programmes
- Witnessing campaigns
- LIFT memorabilia
- Mentoring programmes
- LIFT camps for special groups
- Equipping and empowerment sessions for unattached youth
- LIFT counselling centres
- LIFT-a-family initiative
- LIFT programmes to reach backsliders
- Sports programmes



PHOTO BY AARON BURDEN ON UNSPLASH

YOU ARE A THEOLOGIAN

By Dr. Ajilon Ferdinand

All Christians are theologians. Theology is not an obscure indulgence reserved for special people. This field of study is a skill that all believers need to hone to address issues of practical Christian living. While some believers are eager to accept their ministry gifts, many are confused when they hear the word 'theologian' and tend to believe that only pastors belong to that select group.

Deuteronomy 14:2

YOU HAVE BEEN

set apart
& chosen

FOR HIS PURPOSE.

This article is intended to inspire Christians to become more deliberate about matters of theological reflections and to embrace the fact that once they are followers of Christ, they are theologians.

Theology is a way of thinking about life from a Christian perspective. It is important to realise that theological reflection involves a measure of “*embedded understanding*”.

That expression points to all we understand about God and His purposes through the message of the church. One’s embedded understanding improves when he or she assimilates the message of the faith through sermons, study of the Word, worship, personal devotions, and in conversations with other believers.

Our embedded understanding, comprising our insights and beliefs about the Christian faith, shapes our *embedded theology*. All Christians have – and use – embedded theology. According to authors Howard Stone and James Duke, embedded theology “*is deeply in place and at work, as we live our lives in our homes, churches, and the world,*” (*How To Think Theologically*, 2013, 15).

Our embedded theology informs the decisions we make about work, family and career.

Embedded theology is what we have in mind when we say things like, “the Word of God is my guide”. It is our secure and passionately held convictions of the Christian faith.

We seldom question embedded theology. However, there are times when we may experience a real-life crisis that may force us to ask questions such as “Why did this happen to me?” or “Why didn’t God stop COVID-19 from spreading around the world?”

When we begin to question and reflect on our cherished convictions, we are engaging in what is called *deliberative theology*, which occurs when we reflect on our deepest convictions. Deliberative theology may help to inspire our faith in God and enable the formation of new convictions.

‘FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING’

Saint Anselm of Canterbury is best known for his motto: “Faith seeking understanding”. By that statement, Anselm did not mean he intends to replace faith with understanding.

Stone and Duke spell out the idea of faith seeking understanding: “*As Christians, we are called to pursue growth in faith – by relearning and reinforcing what we already understand faith to be and by expanding, deepening, and even correcting our initial understanding of the faith.*” (2013, 26).

In other words, deliberative theology brings our God-given gift of reason into the service of faith.

The theological task is an act of faith and a token of love for God. Our Lord Jesus, in what is called the Great Command, instructs us to “*love the Lord with all our mind*”. (Matt. 22:37).

That means we must take pleasure in theological reflection. Such deliberate and “full-breadth reasoning” is a way of loving God with our minds. However, loving God with our mind takes skill and robust reflection on biblical faith. How then does faith seek understanding? What is involved in the process of deliberative theology? We seek understanding and fashion theology through the activities of interpreting, correlating, and assessing the faith. We are all relentless interpreters. We are always seeking to know the meaning of things; that is what interpretation means.

As followers of Christ, we aim to interpret the meaning of things from the perspective of the Christian faith. That is how we should seek to live as believers. We also fashion theology through the activity of correlating. At its core, correlating means we seek compatibility or distinctiveness between ideas.

In this activity, we raise questions such as “How does the Christian faith overlap with other worldviews?” “Is there a relationship between Creationism and Evolutionary Darwinism?” The task of theology involves making a connection between the Christian faith and the world around us.

Further, theology is a way of assessing the rational

or trustworthiness of ‘truth claims’. The business of assessing helps us to decide what is valid, appropriate, intelligible, and grounded in the right ethical standards for Christian sensitivities. God calls us to formulate and express theology in a manner that serves the Christian faith.

For theological reflection to be of service to our faith, we need to harness the skills of interpretation, correlation, and assessment. Those skills should become habitual attitudes. The whole point of theology is to help us understand and apply the meaning of God’s message to the realities around us.

It is important that you seriously commit to the calling to practise deliberative theology, and make that activity your life’s mission. We need to listen and question, connect the dots, and carefully decide on what we will accept as faith convictions. This is a call to practise – not just to state – traditional beliefs, which need to be corrected.

Each generation has to make sense of biblical faith. It will take the efforts of scholars, pastors, and all believers to achieve that ideal, a call to all Christians to aim to become deliberative theologians.

■ *Dr. Ajilon Ferdinand is a member of the National Executive Council and is pastor of Papine New Testament Church of God in St. Andrew.*





CONVENTION 2022 TELLING IT AS IT IS



In an effort to obtain the views of delegates to Convention 2022, we conducted a survey among our pastors and members. The sample size was 389 and the number of respondents was 342 – a response rate of 87%. The overwhelming majority, 86%, had a positive view of Convention 2022, believing that the sessions were planned, organised and executed well.

Just over one-third – 38% – of the respondents worshipped with us online, while 33 per cent were in the physical space, and 29% indicated that they participated using both modalities.

Some 76% of the respondents were members and





CONVENTION 2022 TELLING IT AS IT IS

24% were pastors. Seventy-three per cent (73%) were female and 27% male. One per cent (1%) of the respondents fell in the under-18 age range, and 19% were in the 19-35 group. The largest percentage of respondents were between 36 and 55 – 49% – followed by the 56 and over age cohort, with 31%.

The participants in the survey gave the sessions an average rating of 84%, and 86% of the respondents said they believed that the sermons were well-received.

For those who were unable to attend in person, we bring you some images of what transpired.



CONVENTION 2022
**TELLING
IT AS IT IS**



AN • INSTANT *miracle*

By Renee DeLeon

A team member asked me recently if I had ever experienced a miracle and I told her yes. I asked her if she had ever experienced one, and she said, not really. So I proceeded to tell her that waking up every morning is a miracle and she said she understood that, but she meant an instant miracle where we pray about something and God answers immediately.

I shared with her one of the many "instant miracles" that I have experienced. I remember when I completed fifth form at Manning's School in Westmoreland and it was just about time for our valedictory dinner. I think it is called prom these days. I really wanted to attend, but did not have the means. As I was never one to pressure my parents, I never mentioned it, but in my heart, I knew I wanted to go.

One morning, while my mother was in the house cleaning and I was hanging out some clothes, I prayed quietly, but specifically to the Lord: "God, it's me, Your daughter. I really want to go to val dinner, but we have no money. However, You will do it. I want You to do it for me today because I would love to go to this dinner. I am Your child and I need You to do this for me."

That was the essence of my prayer. I still remember it quite vividly.

I shoved the line stick in the air and went to sit at my back door. It was less than five minutes later that my phone rang and when I picked it up, the person on the other end said, "Hi Renee. How are you? I'm in my office and you ran on my mind. Are you going to your val dinner?"

I was stunned.

I responded emphatically, "I would love to!"

The individual inquired about what I would need in order to be ready and I told him. He told me to stop by his office to pick up the money to get all I needed.

He did not just stop there. He asked about my mother and whether she was working and asked that she accompany me to his office as he would try to get employment for her. My mother and I sang and rejoiced loudly, giving God praise for the instant miracle.

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7)

2022 CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2022

STEWARDSHIP MONTH

KEY VERSE: MALACHI 3:10

Faithful stewardship is a response of gratitude to God for His goodness. It begins with an awareness that we are not owners, but only occupiers of God's space, using God's resources. During this month we are reminded to offer our time, talent and treasures to the Lord, willingly and wholeheartedly. Pastors should plan their preaching and teaching around the theme of stewardship; set a tithing goal for the month; encourage members to volunteer for ministries; organise loyalty campaigns for Sunday School and other ministries; and give attention to the management of time, money and the environment.

DATE	ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	LOCATION
1	Youth and Discipleship Eastern Regional Workers Training	Oracabessa
1	Youth and Discipleship North Eastern Regional Workers Training	Waltham Park
8	Youth and Discipleship Central Regional Workers Training	Mandeville
9	Retirement Service – Reverend Ralston Sinclair	Spalding Church
15	Youth and Discipleship Western Regional Workers Training	Montego Bay
16	Heritage Sunday	Local churches
17	National Heroes Day	
17	LifeBuilders Family Fun Day	Convention Centre
23-29	National Women's Week	Local churches
20	Hour of Power	Virtual
23	Retirement Service – Rev. Utel Robinson	Clark's Town Church
27	Ministers' Annual General Conference	Mandeville Church
29	NTSM Apologetic Session	TBD
30	Stewardship Sunday (Break the Record Sunday)	Local churches
31	Deadline for Submission of Credentialing Application	

NOVEMBER 2022

COMMUNITY IMPACT MONTH

KEY VERSE: JEREMIAH 29:7

During this month, churches are encouraged to make special efforts to connect with their communities. Take the opportunity to go beyond the church premises. Endeavour to reach the communities with preaching, witnessing and loving service. Examples of activities in which you may engage are school devotions, health fairs, sporting events, Community Sunday, street meetings, Friends and Co-Workers Sunday. Use this month to identify a LIFT initiative in which each ministry may engage.

DATE	ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	LOCATION
6	Bethel Bible College Graduation	TBD
12	LifeBuilders Central Region Gathering	TBD
15	Ministers Enrichment Seminar	TBD
18	Central Arts Celebration – Youth Dept.	Old Harbour Church
18	Western Arts Celebration – Youth Dept.	Falmouth Church
19	Diaspora Youth Forum	Online
20	Community Impact Sunday	Local churches
27	Retirement Service – Reverend Alexander Simms	Eastwood Park Road

DECEMBER 2022

FELLOWSHIP MONTH

KEY VERSE: 1 JOHN 1:7

Let us use the month of December to rebuild congregational fellowship. Be deliberate in reaching out to those who have not been active since the onset of COVID-19. Each ministry of the church is encouraged to conduct at least one fellowship activity during this month.

DATE	ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	LOCATION
2-4	Boys and Young Men's LifeBuilders Camp	National Campsite
15	Hour of Power	Virtual
21	National Office Closes (Re-Opens January 3)	
25	Christmas Sunday	Local churches
31	Watchnight and Thanksgiving Services	Local churches