

**BISHOP WALKER CELEBRATES 21 YEARS AT THE MOUNT**

# TRUMPET



# GET CONNECTED

**MINISTRY - COMMUNITY - SERVICE**



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# BISHOP WALKER CELEBRATES 21 YEARS AT THE MOUNT

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## TRUMPET MISSION

To provide and equip readers with vital, current and relevant information that is applicable to their daily lives as Christians in the Nashville community and the world



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# THE MISSION

## THE MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mt. Zion Baptist Church is a Word-centered ministry, designed to evangelize the lost at any cost, equip and empower the people of God and provide holistic ministry to our community as well as the world.*

*Seeking to minister to the total person, we are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural ministry impacting the world in which we live with the uncompromising message of Jesus Christ.*

*Committed to the spirit of excellence, we are striving to become an oasis of hope within the Nashville community by promoting and providing education, awareness as well as financial independence.*

*We believe that God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. We embrace freedom in worship because the Word says, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

*Our foundation is the Word of God, and we believe It in Its entirety. We believe we can do what It says we can do, be who It says we can be and have what It says we can have.*

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# DEAL OR NO DEAL?

by Dacari Middlebrooks

For months, the marketing efforts for the entitled *12/12/12 Service* had been in effect, but for the first time—actually the weekend before—the subtitle finally resonated within my spirit, “God is going to seal the deal.” This declaration had been applauded and loudly proclaimed at various intervals of the service. However, I must admit that I thought that this statement was merely another church cliché or some jargon to arouse people to flock to this worship service. I know that it’s hard to believe that anyone who serves alongside Bishop Joseph Walker, III, the visionary and pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, had reservations about “God sealing the deal,” but I did.

The sanctuary was packed, the parking lot was full and there was a traffic jam on the freeway miles away from the church. While the elbow-to-elbow sanctuary, the passenger-packed parking lot and those in close proximity to the church were in expectation, behind the scenes, we daily servants were tense. See, I received a phone call around 6:00 p.m. that Dr. Frederick Haynes was delayed because his plane wouldn’t arrive in Nashville until 7:00p.m. Thus, we would have to rush him to Old Hickory Boulevard for the service. In addition, around 6:45p.m., Bishop Rudolph McKissick, Jr. and Bishop Walker had yet to arrive—both because of evening freeway traffic. Inside the church, there was expectation, but on the outside of the church, there was tension. Isn’t this the beauty of our lives? Don’t we all wrestle between these two realities—tension and expectation?

Examining the sanctuary, I imagined seeing single mothers who probably worried about Christmas for their kids or seeing the recent widow who would spend the Christmas Holidays without her “significant other.” One could imagine a teenager in the sanctuary, struggling to find significance, or maybe there was a married couple about to say, “It is over!” Whatever the case, no one present could escape the two realities of tension and expectation.

Nevertheless, the brassy voice of Benita Washington electrified the stage, inviting heaven to orchestrate our praise of the living God. Praising was a sound of yearning, desperation and exuberant resilience that only believers could resound. Praising



was the voice of God speaking directly to His people who needed that moment. By the time Praise & Worship ended, we had already shattered the spine of the devil, and we were ready to hear the words of dual speakers who in no unprecedented way would move us to a place of empowerment in our lives to seal whatever that deal was.

Dr. Frederick Haynes took the stage first, and from the onset, he took us **OVER** the mountain. He spoke to that expectancy we believed could happen. He educated, empowered, entertained and implored us to take action over our lives. Dr. Haynes is what I would call the Jay-Z of preaching because he paints a canvas like Picasso. In all of its beauty and somewhat abstractness, the artist inspires us, and we walk away not just feeling great but feeling empowered to do something in our lives that also matters. Dr. Haynes commandeered Picasso's brush to paint what God had on His canvas for us to clearly see.

Finally, Bishop Rudolph McKissick, Jr. closed out the evening service in his own unique style. With his bold voice, he captivated worshippers with his hermeneutical lens on the text. He spoke directly to the present experiences and tensions that many believers face. When Bishop McKissick ended, we had no other choice but to "Look up and move on."

The calendar date 12/12/12— a pivotal date in history with significant spiritual implications—brought me to this question: "Deal or No Deal?" I can't answer this question for

you who may be reading this article, but I can say that God elevated my awareness about the next journey in my life. For those who attended the 12/12/12 Service, my question to you is "Did God seal it?" Whatever your answer, remember this:

*Simply trusting every day;  
Trusting through a stormy way;  
Even when [your] faith is small,  
Trusting Jesus, that is all.*

"The 12/12/12 worship experience was one of those precious moments when God's presence brings restoration, healing and deliverance to His people. He used divinely appointed vessels to present His oracles with warmth and great clarity."

- Elder Opal Scales

"Dr. Frederick Haynes put a spin on 'all things working together for your good.' If God closed a door on what you thought you wanted, it's only because what He has in store for you is far better!"

- Elder Linda Sykes

"I can summarize the 12/12/12 Service with a simple acronym, AAA: We were ASSURED that our pastor appointed great men of God to declare the Word; we were in AWE of the anointing as the Word came forth; We were AMAZED at the miracles, signs and wonders encountered following the 12/12/12 Service."

- Elder Gloria Burton

## NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE MOUNT

by Otis Robertson

**A comeback is a term given to someone or to something that appeared to be down, defeated and "out for the count," but by some miraculous happenstance, the victim becomes the victor. A comeback is a response to the determination that resides inside a person, allowing one to dig deeper and to fight harder for what one believes. Making a comeback is ultimately prevailing over what once had the upper hand.**

On New Year's Eve at The Mount, "The Year of Divine Favor" was proclaimed over the house of Mt. Zion for the year 2013. Over 7,000 believers stretched across two night services at both the Old Hickory Boulevard and Antioch

locations along with viewers both nationwide and worldwide through mtzionanywhere.

Each service began with a unique greeting from two of Mt. Zion's most entertaining members of the Welcome Ministry. Gospel Diva Connie Donnell from WQQK 92.1 welcomed our guests at Antioch, and actor Barry Scott welcomed our guests at the OHB location. After a video presentation of the vision for 2013, the Mt. Zion choir took us *higher* as they rendered a riveting medley of gospel favorites. The evening concluded with an anointed Word from our pastor, Bishop Walker, as he declared "The Rest of Me Will Be the Best of Me."

While 2012 had been deemed the "The

Year of Divine Order," Bishop spoke about a turnaround in 2013 when he stated, "It is now time to rebuild, restructure and recalibrate." The presence of God entered as he further ministered that we are the remnant, a people who survived the tumultuous events of life and a people who can declare and decree that nothing will prevent us from receiving what God has for us.

As the clock struck midnight, all gathered at the altar to consecrate another year. Sentiments of gratitude filled the atmosphere as 2012 concluded and as an expectation of divine favor, an anticipated "comeback" for even better days in the year 2013, rested upon each heart.





a  
four-fold  
blessing

by Ariel Evans



On Sunday, February 3, Monica and Frederick Reed prepared their children for their dedication service. That morning was filled with excitement and the expected chaos that comes along with trying to dress their babies at the same time. From diaper changes, keeping shoes on tiny feet and prompting a husband to move faster, Monica had her hands full. Mr. and Mrs. Reed were whizzing like the Road Runner.

The road to parenthood, however, was not an easy one traveled. For a period of time, the Reeds were unable to process the idea of having children. They tried for three years prior to giving birth, and two years before that, Monica suffered a miscarriage. Her doctors told her that she would never conceive because of uterine fibroids, but God had other plans.

Without fertility treatment, Monica became pregnant. For the first 3-4 months of her pregnancy, Monica's health was touch-and-go. Her team of doctors advised Monica to abort two of the babies, but her faith in God outweighed the doctors' advice. During her fifth month, she was admitted to Baptist Hospital and was on bed rest. Monica said that she was "about to go nuts." Her "saving grace" was that her hospital room was located at the end of the hallway. The room's window had a view of downtown Nashville.

After 30 weeks of a strenuous pregnancy, Monica gave birth to the couple's four babies: Malila; Frederick, Jr.; Joshua and Olivia. The Reeds saw their babies as a supernatural gift from God. However, shortly after their birth, Monica suffered from heart failure and was placed in the ICU. Her babies, still under doctor's care, were in another wing of the hospital in the NICU. Her husband,



*"Little ones to Him belong..."*

Frederick Sr., saw his whole family in the hospital and did not know who was going to survive. As Monica and the babies recovered in the hospital, many thoughts and fears ran through her mind. To ease her spirit, she quickly remembered prayers and scriptures of healing. She began to recite the quotes and scriptures daily, not only for herself, but for her precious newborns.

Six months later, Monica and Frederick stood on the pulpit at the Old Hickory Boulevard location with their four precious babies at the Baby Dedication Service. The Reeds exclaimed that they were giving back the *supernatural blessing* God had given them.

While witnessing the dedication, Elder Princess Cowan, Overseer of Mt. Zion's, Daughters of the Promise, said that God spoke to her saying, "Don't wait to be asked to serve." As the grandmother of twins, Elder Cowan quickly remembered the struggles she and her husband had while helping their daughter raise two children. Princess couldn't begin to fathom the idea of raising four. After the dedication, Elder Cowan and Monica talked about the babies and inquired about their needs. Quickly, Elder Cowan and the Daughters of the Promise (DOP) planned to assist the Reed Family with diapers, formula and

other baby needs. The DOP set a goal to serve this family throughout 2013 by being a blessing to these children during the first year of their lives. The result of this initiative has been an overwhelming outpour of support from Mt. Zion members and other ministries.

However, Monica isn't ready to be a stay-at-home mom just yet. Mrs. Reed is a physician ready to return to work. While pregnancy has humbled her even more, her walk with Christ has grown stronger each day since the birth of her four children. She says, "God's provision has always made a way for me, and He will continue to provide for the Reed Family."

***"They tried for three years prior to giving birth, and two years before that, Monica suffered a miscarriage. Her doctors told her that she would never conceive because of uterine fibroids, but God had other plans."***





*Jovanni's Birthday  
Celebration*

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Mt. Zion's Girl Scouts donated over 200 boxes of cookies to the families at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Vanderbilt's Children's Hospital.

### New Programs:

Designed to help children begin their spiritual journey, **Jump Start** is a pre-baptism class for children who have come forward during the invitation to Christian Discipleship or who have expressed a curiosity about accepting Christ as their Savior. The Jump Start Program includes presentations, parental involvement and the creation of a custom baptism video--all culminating to the actual baptism.

### Children's Ministry Accomplishments:

Mt. Zion's Girl Scouts exceeded \$26,000 in cookie sales!

**First Look**, a new curriculum for children ages 1-5, was introduced.

### Announcements:

Summer Camp is June 2 – July 26. Register now!

**The Perfect Family** video series is coming soon!

### Sunday Service Schedule:

Antioch Location - 9:30 a.m.

OHB Location - 11:15 a.m.

Additionally, we offer the Toddlers' Class at 7:00 a.m. at the Antioch location.

Sign-in begins 30 minutes prior to service.

Pre-K4 - 1st Graders - Classes fill quickly. Toddlers must be independent walkers, ages 1-3.

**For more information or to volunteer, email us at [kingdomkidscm@mtzionnashville.org](mailto:kingdomkidscm@mtzionnashville.org) or visit [www.mtzionnashville.org/cym](http://www.mtzionnashville.org/cym).**



# HBB O?

# HBB U?

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## HELPING A BROTHER OUT?

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## HOW 'BOUT YOU?

by Joyce Espy Searcy  
Director of Community Relations  
Belmont University

In Romans 16 (NLT), Paul sends greetings to those with whom he has been in a relationship. Take note of how these relationships were developed. In Verse 2, he wants the believer to “Welcome her (Phoebe) in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God’s people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.”

Paul calls the roll of service: Some risked their lives for him. Some worked hard for others’ benefit. Some were his co-workers in Christ. Someone was a mother to him. Connection through service is the common denominator. At the chapter’s end, Paul says that helping others earns a place of honor with God—quite a compelling reason to volunteer.

The Mount makes it easy for members from all age groups and with diverse interests to volunteer. The Pace Matrons visit the sick, prepare “Thinking of You” baskets for college students and provide Thanksgiving baskets for the needy. Many of us dread the annual April 15, but Mt. Zion volunteers relieve anxiety by preparing income tax returns for qualifying taxpayers.

Our Prison Ministry plays Santa, providing Christmas gifts to over 100 children whose parents are incarcerated.





Mt. Zion's The Xperience at Belmont University with Laureate Shirin Ebadi

If you like running, you can run in "Relay For Life." If you like cooking, you can be a chef for homebound seniors. Most women know that when they look good, they feel better. Consequently, why not host Room In The Inn for 12 females who have no permanent home? These guests are pampered when they get their hair styled and their nails and feet groomed.

Today, teens are leading the way in community service. *USA Weekend* reports that "a higher share of high school students are volunteers (over 65%), more than ever measured before, going back half a century. On January 26 - 27, Mt. Zion youth joined 200 other teens at a PeaceJam Teen Leadership Conference at Belmont University. While there, they discussed global action topics like poverty, disease, racism, violence, human rights, environmental degradation and changing the world through voice.

One Mt. Zion participant found his voice at PeaceJam:

*I am really proud of myself because I was able to stand up and confess one of the main reasons why I began to write poetry, my older brother. The teasing and bullying from him made me angry on the inside, and I would take it out on people around me, when all I wanted was for my older brother to hug me and say, 'I love you' .... While attending PeaceJam, I was able to share my spoken word with those around me... .They all told me my words were incredible and powerful.*

At PeaceJam, Mt. Zion youth committed to implementing their environmental project with Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi, who lives in exile because she is advocating for women, children and human rights.

## TOP 10 REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

10. Volunteering is work and builds your résumé for college and future employers.
9. Volunteering lets you share your skills and/or learn new skills.
8. You get to be a leader. You can choose the project and implement it.
7. You make your voice heard. You change the world.
6. Volunteering gives you a new perspective on life. You appreciate what you have when you help others.
5. It beats boredom. When people call you and ask what you are doing, you don't have to say, "Nuthin" because you'll actually be doing something.
4. You learn more about yourself and make new friends with others who are doing something positive, too.
3. Volunteering is fun.
2. Others see the Jesus in you.
1. You earn a place of honor with God.





# PROTECTING the Whole Child

by  
**Tony R. Majors**  
*Chief Support Services Officer  
 Metropolitan Nashville  
 Public Schools*

I would like to begin by thanking Bishop Walker and the *Trumpet* staff for inviting me to contribute to this edition of the magazine. Earlier this year, I truly enjoyed speaking to the Mt. Zion congregation during the community call to action held at Hadley Park. During that event, I shared my personal testimony from my time as the executive principal of Glenclyff High School. Each morning for four years, I would begin my day with the same private prayer “Oh Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus; bind Satan, sin and the effects of sin from the hearts, minds and spirits of all those who enter Glenclyff High School.” The Lord answered this prayer by

transforming a school known for gang violence into a school that won both local and national awards and is currently in good standing under the state’s accountability system. This was my way of acknowledging that the safety and security of our schools require more than just physical security measures. It was also my way of calling on my faith to enlist the power of the Lord to protect our school and students while improving the performance of everyone.

Since the tragedy in Connecticut, a great deal of attention has been placed on school security. The debate has included arming teachers, adding



armed security and upgrading school security measures. Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools are fortunate that a tragedy of this magnitude has not impacted any of our schools. However, we are not going to make the mistake of believing that we cannot improve. Since Sandy Hook,

Our police department maintains their commitment to provide more than 70 school resource officers...

Mayor Dean's office and Director of Schools Jesse Register have allocated more than \$5 million to expedite upgrading the security measures in all our schools. These upgrades will include installing intruder locks on all classroom doors, installing a standardized visitor buzz-

in system and installing digital security cameras in all schools. Our police department maintains their commitment to provide more than 70 school resource officers, and we have trained administrators on Federal Emergency Management Agency Procedures. The point that I am making is that our schools are safe, but the question remains, "What else needs to be or can be done?"

In this day and age, our children are exposed to stress and circumstances that have the potential to inflict psychological and emotional harm equivalent to any act of violence. If we are going to truly protect our children, we have to enlist the support of everyone. Without question, this generation is the most technology proficient and globally exposed group of young people in history. However, all the exposure in the world does not change the fact that they are

still children and that they need our help and guidance.

As adults, we must be vigilant in our efforts to meet their needs and to develop their character. Every day, we must talk with, not *at* our children. Pay attention to the signs of stress or emotional hardship. Ask the questions and pay attention to both the verbal and non-verbal responses. When our children hurt, they will find any way possible, such as becoming withdrawn or defiant, to get our attention. We must then find out what has so negatively impacted them that they lash out against friends and family whom they love. When we suspect that our children are in distress, tell them how much we love them and that we are there for them. Afterwards, immediately seek whatever assistance deemed necessary. The *Holy Bible* tells us in Proverbs 29:17 (ESV) to "Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart." Therefore, having a disciplinary consequence for misbehavior is an essential parental responsibility. Likewise, for every act of punishment, children should expect five acts of love, compassion and kindness. Contact your school, your pastor or a trained professional to help you and your children through the hardship, for you are not alone.

In closing, according to Bill Modzeleski of the US Department of Education, national statistics tell us that 98% of deaths of children under the age of eighteen are not related to school. We have to give our young people some degree of freedom if they are to grow into responsible Christian adults; however, when intuition signals us adults that something is wrong, we are probably right. We should get to the root of the problem and protect our children from the negative factors that may affect *or* influence them. We have lost far too many of our youth to senseless violence, and only through the collective efforts of our communities will we break the cycle.

#### Reference:

Modzeleski, Bill (former Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary)  
US Department of Education; Obtained January 29, 2013 - Tennessee  
Department of Education School Safety Summit presentation.



# I AM CHANGE

CHURCHES HELPING A NEXT GENERATION EVOLVE

## THE EMERGENCE OF A MOVEMENT



BY ALEXANDER RASPBERRY  
OVERSEER OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

*“combating against violence and spreading the gospel to teens”*



**As I sat on the wooden pew at our Jefferson Street location,** I intentionally shuffled through my pockets for gum or chapstick as I tried not to focus on what was right before my eyes. The organ played softly while I looked up to face the finality before me. The teenage body in the casket became blurred by the tears that flooded my eyes as I could no longer fully hold back my emotions. Here I sat at the second funeral of one of our teenagers who was brutally gunned down. As I glanced at the pulpit, I noticed that Bishop seemed visibly disturbed, yet at the same time, I knew his wheels were turning, for he was contemplating what would be our response as a church. With the surmounting rise of teen violence in our city, those called to be the church could no longer turn a blind eye to such senseless violence. Hearing the heart of Bishop on a weekly basis, I knew it was just a matter of time before he addressed the problem and released vision about how Mt. Zion would respond to violence among our local youth. However, no one—including myself—could have imagined the scope and the magnitude of the project God had laid on Bishop's heart.

It was a Thursday evening on November 29, 2012, at 4:30 p.m. I was finishing last minute preparations for our youth workers' meeting, which was about to commence at 6:30 p.m. Bishop was invited to our meeting to give us a glimpse of what to expect for 2013. Earlier that week, I informed his First Assistant, Dacari Middlebrooks, that Bishop only had to speak for 10-15 minutes. While at my desk, I received a call from Bishop, who said that he had been thinking about Mt. Zion's response to teen

violence and that he wanted my help in applying an acronym to the project. Pausing briefly in conversation to shuffle through his bag for what seemed to be a blueprint to the vision God gave him, Bishop resumed our conversation with the outburst, "Ah, here it is...I AM CHANGE!"

When 35 minutes passed and Bishop was still speaking, it became apparent that Mt. Zion's youth ministry would have to shift gears, rethink priorities and prepare ourselves to pull up a seat at the table of Nashville and beyond.

As Bishop told our youth workers' team exactly what was needed for the kickoff, we scheduled the first **I AM CHANGE** meeting for January 14, 2013. The vision called for ensuring principals, counselors, teachers and all involved in education and in the juvenile court system to join us in the planning process. At our first meeting, there was representation from several of the schools in Davidson and surrounding counties. Throughout the evening, several questions were posed, fresh resources came to surface, concerns were acknowledged and extreme viewpoints of optimism and reality were discussed. As they so often do, many hearts not only aligned with the vision before them but also set ablaze hope for flourishing youth in the future. We had not prepared a standard for how the success of this initial meeting should be measured, but judging by the emails that flooded my inbox and by the voicemails ensuing the days after, I knew that **I AM CHANGE** had the "beyond potential" to be the change our city and nation needed.

As the Overseer of Youth Ministries, I know first hand about the horrific trials our young people are facing, and I see the potential impact that this movement will have on many of them as well as on their families.

During our last meeting on February, 4, 2013, the attendance more than doubled that of our initial meeting. We clarified the tentacles of this movement that would serve as its foundation:

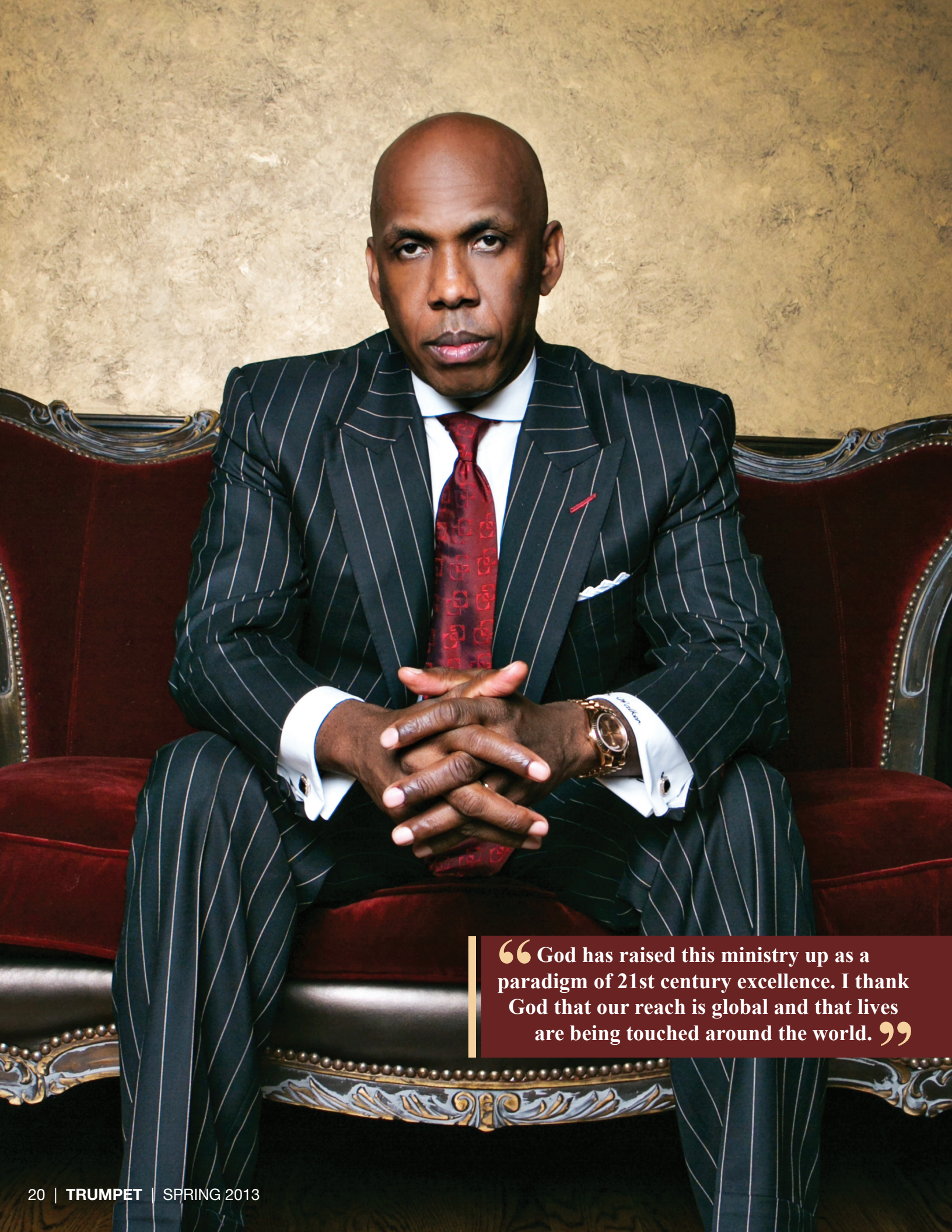
- 1) **Leadership for all schools**
- 2) **Mentorship**
- 3) **Exposure and**
- 4) **Spiritual/Inspirational Insight.**

We also assigned task force groups to serve as "engines" or as the core teams of **I AM CHANGE**. The core teams are responsible for pushing the **I AM CHANGE** agenda forward and for bringing the various plans to pass. As I said often at our meetings, this is an "organic" project, meaning that this is a living project with many moving parts in which many people will have to be called upon to play vital roles so that the project will continue to thrive.

Fruition is not an overnight achievement, but it is an on-going ministry pursuit that will result in success stories for our young people. I ask that you pray that our motives, intentions, direction and hearts concerning **I AM CHANGE** be soaked in the heart and mind of the living God. I ask that you also pray that Mt. Zion commits to HIm our plans so that He establishes them to uplift our youth (**Proverbs 16:3**).

**To get involved, email [araspberry@mtzionnashville.org](mailto:araspberry@mtzionnashville.org).**





“ God has raised this ministry up as a paradigm of 21st century excellence. I thank God that our reach is global and that lives are being touched around the world. ”



# *From the* **Desk** *of the* **Bishop**

I greet you in divine love. Once again I am pleased to report that God is doing great things in our midst. After 21 years as pastor of this great ministry, I continue to stand amazed at God's favor upon us. God has been so good to us. As we began this year with high expectations, we have been challenged to fulfill the vision God gave to us. This is the year of Divine Favor. In order for favor to come to fruition, we must be committed more than ever to the *spirit* of the vision. I am confident that we are on the right track.

Mt. Zion, we have witnessed supernatural growth within this ministry. God is adding to the church as He did in the Book of Acts. There is a hunger for God's Word, and it is apparent that God is continuing to raise us up to be a beacon of light within this community. We must continue to foster an environment of integrity and progressiveness that propels us forward. I am especially thankful for the gifts that God is sending to this ministry. Mt. Zion members are resourceful people, and it is my desire to see you guys getting involved. There are so many opportunities to serve within and beyond the walls of the church. To this end, I'm very pleased to name Elder Dacari Middlebrooks as Overseer of In-Reach. He is our point person for ministry development and involvement. I am confident in his exceptional ability to facilitate ministry involvement within the church.

As we continue to aggressively eliminate the debt over the house, I am pleased to share the next phase of the Mt. Zion Master Plan. We need your prayers and support in order for this ambitious plan to come to pass. It is a vision that will enhance our community. I truly believe that our ancestors envisioned this phase of the ministry, and to know that it is a reality motivates me

to continue striving forward. I am more than convinced that we can succeed. God's favor is upon us, and we will not allow debt to hinder us.

God has raised this ministry up as a paradigm of 21st century excellence. I thank God that our reach is global and that lives are being touched around the world. As we navigate through the rest of this year, let us continue to maintain our resolve to stand tall. We cannot grow weary in well doing. Although our assignment is weighty, God would never have given it to us if He didn't believe we could be victorious. We can do it together. We *will* do it together.

I continue to encourage you to stay on the prayer call. We have seen God grow our call to over 14,000. This is by far the largest prayer call in the nation. The prayer movement has been the sustaining force behind Mt. Zion. We are a praying church and shall continue to pray unceasingly. I thank each of you for your support. Ministering eight times a week at Mt. Zion is a daunting task, but knowing I'm covered by the support and prayers of each of you makes serving much easier. Dr. Stephaine, Giovanni and I appreciate you guys so much. We love you and want you to know that we are excited about your future. Let's continue to rise as we always have. Let's continue to love one another as we have always. We are family and shall forever be *The Mt. Zion Church Family*.

Thank you for 21 years, and I look forward to many more years to come.

In His Service,  
**Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, III**



# *Congratulations, Bishop Walker!*

## 21 YEARS OF FAITHFULNESS

*“and the sheep recognize his voice and come to Him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” - John 10:3 (NLT)*



“Thank you, Bishop Walker, for your 21 Years of Leadership as a Shepherd over the Flock of Mt. Zion. The anointed word you speak unto the entire church is named individually for each of our lives. We are humbled to serve as "Flock Leaders." Because of your obedient leadership and vision, we as a global congregation are able to focus on the mark of a higher calling.”

*Bobby Straughter, Deacons Ministry / Mt. Zion Baptist Church Family / Nashville, TN*

“Bishop Walker, Thank you for a heart that wants to see children grow in the Word of God and for making that a priority. Regardless of age, all members at Mt. Zion are blessed to have you as our pastor.” *Mt. Zion Children's Ministry*

“Dear Bishop Walker, Congratulations on your 21st Anniversary. We are praying that you have another 21 as your ministry continues to shift in order to make new disciples of Jesus Christ across our world. May God bless you and your family.” *Kathy Armistead, Ph.D. of Abingdon Press*

“Bishop Walker, You are a man who can be counted on, trusted and revered. Your mere presence activates a man's desire to succeed. Thank you, Pops.” *Bishop Johnny Withers, Unity Christian Fellowship / Compton, CA*

“I'm so honored to know such a distinguished man of God. Having you as both a mentor and an elder brother is transforming my life and ministry. This is your 21st year. That means that you are legally able to drive Mt. Zion to the next level!” *Dr. Anthony M. Chandler, Sr., Pastor / Cedar Street Baptist Church of God / Richmond, VA*

“Congratulations, Bishop Walker! I thank God for you and the impact you have on my life and ministry as my spiritual father and mentor.” *Pastor John W. Jude / Pleasant Grove Church / Athens, AL*

“Bishop Walker, Your natural gifts will always serve as a blueprint of a cutting-edge ministry. Blessings and Favor to you and your family and to the entire MZBC.” *Pastor Brian Hogg / Alpha Baptist Church / Franklin, KY*



“Bishop Joseph Walker is my friend. Not just any friend, but someone I respect, honor, admire and trust. He is a gift from the Lord in my life, and I cherish our relationship—not as simply ministry colleagues but as brothers. Therefore, it is my honor to say "Stay Strong & Keep Leading" on his 21st Anniversary. Congratulations!” *Dr. Samuel R. Chand, author of Cracking Your Church's Culture Code*

“The Spirit of God resonates so heavily upon the life of Bishop Joseph Walker, III that it's unexplainable. As a pastor, I'm inspired by Bishop Walker's intimate relationship with God and his persistent faith that has released God's choice blessings upon his life. I celebrate you, “Man of God” for 21 years of innovative leadership. I'm glad we are connected.” *Pastor T. Ray Greer, Jr. of Salem Church, US*

“Bishop Walker, it is an honor to salute you for 21 years of service. We thank God for you and First Lady Walker as you share the message of Jesus Christ and minister the message of hope across the globe. You are in our prayers as you stretch even the more. In your Kingdom assignment—the best is yet to come.” *Elder Derrick Noble & Sherelle Noble / Mt. Zion Baptist Church / Nashville, TN*

“Congratulations to my Big Brother for another well deserved celebration as the Shepherd of the Mt. Zion Church.”

*Pastor Dennis C. Jones / Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church / Houston, TX*

“Bishop Joseph Walker, The Elizabeth Baptist Church Family celebrates and salutes your 21 years of leadership. Your worship unto Him, faithfulness, commitment, and steadfastness to the ministry serves as a testament of God's grace. May HE continue to richly bless you, your family and Mt. Zion Baptist Church.” *Pastor Craig L. Oliver, Sr. / Atlanta, GA*

“The Word of God in 2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV) tells us, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” On your 21st Pastoral Anniversary, I congratulate you for being a man whose life is a direct reflection of the God you so diligently serve. God Bless!”

*Pastor Venable H. Moody, III / Worship Center Christian Church / Birmingham, AL*

“To Bishop & Lady Walker, we honor you for the eternal impact in our lives. We are BETTER because of you!”

*Pastor Michael & Lady Ashley Miles / Canton, OH*

“Bishop Walker, thank you for your investment of wisdom since our arrival in Nashville. May God bless you and Dr. Stephanie as you continue to serve Mt. Zion, Nashville, & the world.”

*Pastor John & Lady Alethia Faison / Watson Grove Baptist Church / Nashville, TN*







*Congratulations on 21 Years  
of Faithful Service!*

Love,  
Stephaine & Jovanni



# The RELATIONSHIP TOUR 2013



**HAVE YOU HEARD?**

- FEB 11** The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square • 7:00 PM  
Pastor Anthony G. Maclin/Host  
9033 Central Avenue  
Capitol Heights, MD 20743  
(301) 333-9033 • [www.atthesanctuary.org](http://www.atthesanctuary.org)
- 12** The Triumph Church, North Campus • 6:30 PM  
Pastor Solomon W. Kinloch, Jr./Host  
15600 J. L. Hudson Dr. • Southfield, MI 48075  
(734)895-1170 • [www.triumphch.org](http://www.triumphch.org)
- 20** Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Bishop Alexis A. Thomas/Host  
1401 E. Jefferson Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034  
(602) 257-5060 • [www.pilgrimrestphx.org](http://www.pilgrimrestphx.org)
- The Experience Christian Center • 7:00 PM  
Pastor Derrick L. McRae/Host  
1224 26 Street, Orlando, FL 32805  
407.601.6444 • [www.theexperienceccc.org](http://www.theexperienceccc.org)

**MAR 06** Friendship-West Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III Senior Pastor/Host  
2020 West Wheatland Road • Dallas, TX 75232  
(972) 228-5200 • [www.friendshipwest.org](http://www.friendshipwest.org)

**08** Changing A Generation  
Full Gospel Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr.  
Co-Pastor Debra B. Morton/Hosts  
3350 Greenbriar Parkway, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30331  
(404) 284-8865 • [www.cagmin.org](http://www.cagmin.org)

**APR 04** Central Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Rev. Dr. Robert C. Scott, Pastor/Host  
2842 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
(314) 533-0747 • [www.cbstl.org](http://www.cbstl.org)

**MAY 13** The Mount Pisgah Church • 7:00 PM  
Pastor K. Edwin Bryant/Host  
1 Diamond Avenue, Dayton, OH 45403  
(937) 252-7188 • [www.tmpcdayton.org](http://www.tmpcdayton.org)

**14** Inspirational Baptist Church  
City of Destiny • 7:00 PM  
Bishop Victor S. Couzens, D.Min.,  
Senior Pastor/Host  
11450 Sebring Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45240  
(513) 961-3060 • [www.inspirationalbc.org](http://www.inspirationalbc.org)

**JUNE 04** Mount Grove Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Pastor Kenneth Reid, Senior Pastor/Host  
2801 Arkansas Boulevard,  
Texarkana, AR 71854  
(870) 772-9883

**11** Empowerment Temple AME Church • 7:00 PM  
Dr. Jamal H. Bryant, Pastor and Founder  
1505 Eutaw Place, Baltimore, MD 21217  
(443) 799-2000 • [www.empowermenttemple.org](http://www.empowermenttemple.org)

**26** Greater St Stephen Ministries • 7:00 PM  
Pastor Debra B. Morton  
5600 Read Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70127  
(504) 244-6800  
[www.greaterststephenministries.org](http://www.greaterststephenministries.org)

**SEPT 12** Tabernacle Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
Pastor Charles E. Goodman, Jr./Host  
1223 Laney Walker Boulevard  
Augusta, GA 30901  
(706) 724-1230 • [www.tbcaugusta.org](http://www.tbcaugusta.org)

**19** Northside New Era Baptist Church • 7:00 PM  
**20** Pastor Clarence C. Moore, Senior Pastor/Host  
517 West 30th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 923-5644 • [www.nne.org](http://www.nne.org)

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# #JOIN US ON THE ROAD TO 20

July 3<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> • Louisville, KY



**Paul S. Morton, Sr.**  
International Presiding Bishop



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[fullgospelconference.org](http://fullgospelconference.org)



# Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth

from the Office of Special Projects - MZBC

Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, International (FGBCF) is one of the fastest growing multi-cultural and multi-denominational reformations. It represents more than 10,000 leaders of faith and over 2,000 churches with millions of constituents, partners and associates in the U.S. and around the world. Along with its founder and International Presiding Bishop Paul S. Morton, the Fellowship is lead by its Executive Council in which Bishop Joseph W. Walker, III, serves.

The Fellowship, as it's fondly called, held its first convention in 1994 at the New Orleans' Superdome. More than 30,000 Baptists attended. At the time of its formation, there was concern among the leadership of the largest denomination of African-American Baptists—the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBCUSA)—about the Fellowship's purpose. As a former member of the NBCUSA, the Rev. Paul S. Morton, Sr., who is pastor of the Greater St. Stephens Full Gospel Baptist Church, started the Fellowship in 1993. Bishop Morton calls his reformation, "The movement that gives Baptists the right to choose." The right to choose what, you might ask? The right to choose is the freedom to express the gifts of the Spirit as a viable part of the Body of Christ. The Fellowship is convinced that the choice to exercise these spiritual gifts is imperative for today's New Testament Church to fully function as the dynamic organism God intends.

At that time, Bishop Morton was experiencing the liberating power of the Holy Spirit at work; the Lord intended to use him to bridge the gap

between Baptist and Pentecostal traditions, not simply on a local level but also on an international scale.

The Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship initiated a structural hierarchy that many Baptists do not support: Bishops, elders and other denominational titles were introduced into the African-American Baptist Church. The Fellowship allows African-American Baptists to express themselves without feeling constrained by tradition. This Fellowship is not designed to threaten or to replace mainline denominations but to provide an opportunity for those who want to remain Baptist and also exercise all of the gifts of the Spirit. Mt. Zion holds to the abiding Biblical principles of this Fellowship.

Bishop Joseph W. Walker, III, our pastor, currently serves as Bishop of Senior Pastors. The Senior Pastors of Full Gospel are the Fellowship's most valuable asset and are referred to as the "heartbeat" of the Fellowship. With his position, Bishop Walker serves as co-host of the Pastors and Ministry Workers Conference and is charged with developing, imparting and exposing Full Gospel pastors to innovative and cutting-edge ministry. Bishop Walker is truly a "pastor's pastor." He understands how critical his positioning is in the life of the Fellowship and is charged with training the next generation of leadership for this international organization.

Our pastor also insists that we, as members, must obtain a broader understanding of Christianity beyond the walls of Mt. Zion. The Fellowship

offers such an opportunity. It unites churches worldwide each year for three days of impartation designed to stir up spiritual gifts and to ignite a fire for outreach to serve our communities and to touch lives for the cause of Christ.

“

**Our pastor also insists that we, as members, must obtain a broader understanding of Christianity beyond the walls of Mt. Zion.**

”

This year, Mt. Zion members and *Trumpet* readers are cordially invited to join us at Full Gospel's 20<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Louisville, Kentucky on July 3-5, 2013, where Bishop Morton plans to announce his successor. Mt. Zion expects to "pack the house" to partake of the Full Gospel flavor on a worldwide platform. Events at this "Six Conferences in One" will include daily classes, training sessions, evening worship services and much more. Invest in your growth as a believer and experience Full Gospel on a broader level. We hope to see you at this more than average conference!

**To embark on this road, please log on to [www.fullgospelconference.org](http://www.fullgospelconference.org).**





# NEW LEVEL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
An Outreach of Mt. Zion Baptist Church

## 2012 Continuing the Work to Be “God’s Hands in Our Community”

by Kay Bowers  
Executive Director

*New Level Community Development Corporation works to empower people and to strengthen communities through housing, education and access to resources. Through our programs and community partnerships, New Level CDC connects people to the knowledge and the resources that lead to better futures. Enjoy our 2012 Highlights.*

### **Homeownership Education**

- Provided upwards of 300 hours of homebuyer education and counseling to 101 prospective homebuyers
- Used THDA loan products for 26 families to obtain homeownership

### **Housing Counseling and Financial Education**

- Acquired over 1,000 hours of housing counseling, financial counseling and financial education for 202 individuals

### **Affordable Housing and Community Development**

- Gained over \$750,000 in improved and now re-occupied properties, thus restoring homes and stabilizing North Nashville neighborhoods
- Provided 11 safe, fit and affordable homes owned by New Level CDC for qualifying families

### **Assets for Independence**

*(Financial Education combined with matched dollars for client savings provided opportunities to purchase a home, to pursue education or to start a small business.)*

- Delivered 15 Financial Education classes totaling 35 hours to 40 clients
- Opened 12 new bank accounts
- Paid off \$9,800 by using New Level CDC’s debt pay down match program
- Totaled client savings accounts to \$8,800
- Increased credit scores an average of 30 points

### **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance**

- Served 50 households earning under \$50,000/year
- Saved clients over \$7,000 in tax preparation fees
- Saved clients over \$5,000 in rapid refund fees

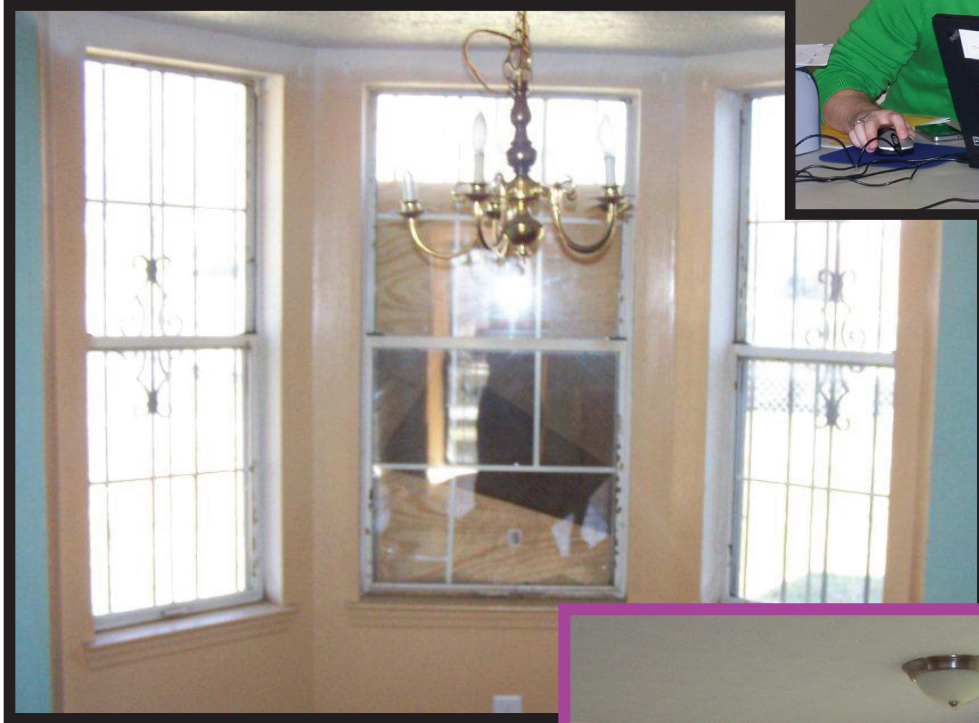
### **Community Partnerships**

- Leveraged resources for maximum impact with our partners: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Fifth Third Bank, Pinnacle Bank, SunTrust Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, North Nashville Coalition, Tennessee Housing Development Agency, Metropolitan Development Housing Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health and Human Services, Metro Social Services, United Way, Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity, Safe Haven Family Shelter and Magdalene House





**ABOVE:** IRS volunteer tax preparer Jeff Rupright helping Ms. Crawford file her tax return **LEFT:** Before picture---Foreclosed home purchased by New Level CDC



**ABOVE:** After picture---Foreclosed home purchased by New Level CDC  
**LEFT:** Bank award to New Level CDC and members of North Nashville Coalition



***We express our gratitude to partners like Mt. Zion Baptist Church, who continue to support the vision of being God's hands in our community. For more information, visit [www.newlevelcdc.com](http://www.newlevelcdc.com).***





But I was innocent...  
But for grace...

**BUT GOD!**

*by Keeda Haynes, Esq.*

A  
**DREAM DEFERRED**

*But*  
**NOT DENIED**

“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. . . .” -Joel 2:25 (NKJV)



In 2001, my world came to a screeching halt. Among other things, I had been indicted for conspiracy to distribute marijuana. I was 21 years old, had never sold or abused drugs, was raised by both parents and was a junior at Tennessee State University (TSU). Upon graduating, I planned to attend law school to become a lawyer.

In 1999, my boyfriend at the time asked me to accept packages containing cell phones and pagers for his business. Since we had been dating for a while, I trusted him and agreed. I did not realize that the packages never contained cell phones but marijuana instead. While I had had not lived a perfect life, I believed that God would never permit me to be convicted and imprisoned for a crime that I did not commit. In May 2002, however, the jury found me guilty of aiding and abetting a conspiracy to distribute marijuana. The court assumed that I had full knowledge of the contents of the packages.

In spite of my conviction, I continued to trust God to make a way. In September of 2002, I was sentenced to an 84-month federal prison sentence. I graduated from TSU in December of 2002 and reported to prison in January 2003 to begin serving my sentence. Before January 2003, I attended a worship service at Mt. Zion where the sermon was entitled “It’s Necessary.” At that moment, I knew that what God was allowing me to go through was necessary—not just for me but for others, too. I was reminded of the prayer where Jesus petitioned God on the Mount of Olives, for I also prayed, “Father, if it is Your will, take this

cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” Luke 22:42 (NKJV).

While incarcerated, I remained hopeful. Many people told me to give up on my dream of becoming an attorney. I refused to listen because I believed that God had a plan for me.

Two years after being incarcerated, the Supreme Court granted my appeal. I felt that God had finally opened the doors for me to be released. Instead, I was resentenced to 60 months, leaving me with another 18 months to serve. During these last months, I learned to trust God like never before because His thoughts are not our thoughts nor are His ways our ways. Isaiah 55:8 (NKJV).

On December 1, 2006, I was finally released from prison. Upon my release, God began opening doors for me. Two days after my release, my attorney offered me a job. I also enrolled in Indiana State University to pursue a Master of Criminology degree. In 2008, a year and a half after being released, I was accepted into law school at Nashville School of Law.

I worked full-time and went to law school at night. In May of 2012, I graduated, receiving my Doctorate of Jurisprudence. In November of 2012, I received a letter from the Tennessee Board of Law Examiners informing me that because of my criminal background, I would need a “Show Cause Hearing” to determine my character and fitness to be a licensed attorney in Tennessee.

Knowing that God had not brought me this far to leave me now, I continued to trust and believe that He would grant me favor with the Board members. At the hearing on December 6, 2012, I was granted my license to practice law in Tennessee IMMEDIATELY! God had shown me favor once again! On December 17, 2012, six years after being released from prison, I was sworn in as a licensed attorney in Tennessee.



Because I had gained a unique understanding and perception about the criminal justice system and obstacles faced by people formally incarcerated, I joined the Mt. Zion Prison Ministry in 2008 to help provide them support upon their release. Having been incarcerated with women separated from their children, I also proposed that the Prison Ministry partner with Angel Tree to support children with incarcerated parents.

Throughout my life, I have learned that if God is for you, He’s more than the whole world against you. No matter what a situation looks like and no matter what anyone says, we must keep trusting and believing in the plans that God has for us. I am a living witness that a dream deferred is not denied.



# COVENANT MATTERS

## COVENANT IN MOTION DANCE MINISTRY



by Mariam “Cookie” James

Ministry and dance are two topics that rarely come to mind in the same thought, but the merger of the two is exactly what Covenant in Motion’s (CIM) Dance Ministry strives to achieve.

God called us to put feet to our idea that the precious gift of marriage and dancing together can not only strengthen marriages but glorify God as well. Our daily routines of long work hours, children’s piano lessons, tee-ball games—to name a few—can cause marriages to become stale and no longer romantic. This lull gives the enemy a foothold. God did not design marriage to become a conflicting mismatch or a lack of interest in our spouses!

Dancing has become a time to accentuate the coveted, established relationship between the married couples and God. To tell the truth, married couples in the church are slowly growing apart, letting their busy lives replace the purpose of the marriage covenant. Through the art of dance, couples become more in tune with one another and find the freedom to release the highs and lows in their marriages and submit to the Father for better days ahead.

God gave the Covenant Matters Ministry the idea to bring another dimension to corporate worship that enables couples to appreciate the expressions of love, joy and gratitude for one another. CIM offers a fresh way to connect through the art of dance. The mission of CIM is for all married couples to know that through God all things are possible and that marriage works if “you work it!” Time spent practicing dance routines offers spouses a chance to steal away and to focus on one another. While choreographing the different routines, we’ve found dance rehearsals to be such a blessing.







**Here are few testimonies from our participants:**

“I thank Covenant in Motion for the love it brought and for bringing my husband and me together. We love one another and love to dance in the presence of God. It is a blessing!” **D. Vaughn**

“I just want to say that I enjoy learning and dancing with everyone. Most of all, I like the look on my wife’s face ... priceless.”  
**G. Gill**

“I just want to say what a blessing it is to be involved in a truly wonderful, loving ministry.” **S. Patterson**

CIM plans to continue bringing beautiful expressions of faith to the Mt. Zion congregation four times a year. Rehearsals, which usually take about two hours, are held at both the Antioch and Old Hickory locations. We invite all married couples to participate, regardless of the stage or state of your marriage.

If you are interested in ministering in honor of your marriage covenant as well as in worshipping through dance for personal growth, contact C.I.M. at [www.mtzionnashville.org](http://www.mtzionnashville.org) / [www.covenantinmotion.com](http://www.covenantinmotion.com).







## Staff Spotlight

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### Betsy Stubblefield

*Marketing & Media Department*

Betsy Stubblefield moved to Tennessee in 1994 looking for a career in music engineering, but God had other plans for her. While working in the custom picture framing industry, she met her soul mate, Michael. They have been happily married for 8 years.

After two devastating miscarriages and two years of being mad with God, Betsy was sponsored to go on a spiritual retreat. While there, she realized that she was spiritually and emotionally broken. She professes, “God really got a hold of my heart there and would not let me go! After I surrendered it all to Him, God healed my emotional and spiritual brokenness. Now, I experience ‘peace that passes all understanding.’ Truly amazing!”

In 2010, Betsy began as an intern in the Marketing & Media Department while she was a student at The Art-Institute. For the last two years, she has served on staff as a video editor. When she was asked how video editing impacts the Mt. Zion Ministry, she chimed, “Video is one of the leading ways to promote ministries, and it is especially appealing to teens and young adults alike. It is a great way to get information out about different ministries within the church.”

While here, she has not only strengthened her faith but also increased her desire to use her talents to glorify God. Sitting at her work station at M&M, Betsy lifts her beaming eyes when she reflects that time at Mt. Zion has been well spent!



### Duane Roberts

*When people ask me what it is that I do at the church, I joyfully reply, “Whatever they ask of me is what I do!”*

I was baptized at age 11 years old. Just two years later, I moved away from God. After a life of drugs, hustling, jails and prison—as well as my own self-imposed prisons, GOD saw fit to lift me out of a life of crime and dishevelment in 2001. That year, I started attending Mt. Zion at Tennessee State University’s Gentry Center, and I have been coming ever since.

My wife Marchelle (Shelley as she is affectionately called) and my then co-worker invited me to her church. Unbeknownst to me, it was Mt. Zion again! Meeting Shelley was refreshing because she already had her own personal relationship and experience with God. We pray for each other, and we pray “over” each other. GOD IS THE ONE!

Being on staff at Mt. Zion is a very

constant and humbling experience. It is a place where workmanship and character are on public display. It is also a place where GOD holds me accountable for the great opportunity to serve HIM.

Now that I look back, I have learned that I am a survivor—only because of God’s amazing grace. He protected me throughout my childhood from fatal calamities, allowing me to survive growing up in four housing projects in the city of Nashville—Settle Court, James Cayce, Cheatam Place and Andrew Jackson.

If I could give any advice to youth today, it would be to give God the chance to let your light shine in YOU rather than in this world’s dim light.

**Yes, GOD IS THE ONE!**



# what are YOU waiting for?

# WHO REALLY waits for SEX anymore?

by Erica Elizabeth

#### Supplementary References for Further Study:

McDowell, Josh. *Why True Love Waits*. Tundale House Publishers, Inc. (June 2002).

Scriptures: Acts 15:20, Galatians 5:19, Colossians 3:5, Jude 7, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Proverbs 5:15-19.

Walker III, Joseph W. *Love and Intimacy*. Abingdon Press (May 1, 2010).

Why are you waiting? When you think about relationships in today's society, it's the million-dollar question. As Christians, we have been taught that God wants us to wait until marriage. As good as waiting sounds, it is no easy task, especially when we are bombarded with sexual images, alluring song lyrics and even provocative television commercials. How can we practice abstinence in a sexually-charged world?

#### The better question is: Why should we?

God's plan for us includes one important fact: He tells us what He wants, but still gives us free will to choose. He knows the challenges we face and how difficult it is to control our flesh. After all, God created us, and He also created sex. It isn't a taboo subject but a beautiful experience created by God for man and woman to share. We know that when two are intimate, there is a physical union, and we also know that the more sexual partners you have...well you get the point. But, the conversation goes deeper. I'd like to add another topic to this discussion that we usually don't tackle—obedience. Intimacy and obedience bind covenant relationships with God as a holy unity of three—husband, wife and our heavenly Father.

The *Bible* never outright says, "Don't have sex before marriage." However, it talks about how sex is immoral on numerous occasions. In 1 Corinthians 6:18 (NKJV), the *Bible* says, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." Therefore, why did God create sex, on one hand, but then tell us that it is sinful? Well, the solution lies in 1 Corinthians 7:2 (NKJV), which says, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." This scriptural truth emphasizes that sex between a husband and his wife is the only sexual intimacy that God approves.

I don't think any of us oppose the idea that God wants us to wait until marriage, especially nowadays, knowing exactly how the Word breaks it down. However, knowing the Word and walking it out are two different vantage points. I'm not going to lie to you. Being a Christian is a difficult road to walk! Jesus suffered, and while we are here on earth, we must suffer too, knowing that one day, our suffering will pay off in heaven. I'd like to offer a few suggestions to help you walk in holiness:

1. **Keep your spirit fed.** When you are constantly feeding your spirit, you strengthen your spirit and are able to combat the flesh.
2. **Pray about denying the flesh.** Talk to God and confess your struggle. In my case, I made a promise to God that I would wait. Anytime I feel weak, I remember that promise. Breaking it is the last thing I want to do; one night just isn't worth it!
3. **Be open and honest with your partner.** Don't convey false hope. Tell your soul mate from day one about your standards regarding sex and stick to them. If your partner loves you, waiting becomes a valued, respected commodity.
4. **Shy away from situations where it would be easy to fall short.** Stay focused on your promise to God by walking circumspectly.
5. **Finally, know WHY you're waiting!** Remember that patience is a virtue. God will bless your obedience through the sanctity of your marriage. If He is blessing me, He can do the same for you.

Be blessed, Family.



# The LEAST Of THESE

by Barry Scott



At the center of my art has always been my pain, but there's more to my story. Throughout my professional career, I've enjoyed playing various heroic roles. However, I feel most blessed to have played the role of the underdog. I love playing the character that seemingly can be defeated, who looks to be experiencing the greatest hardship and who even appears to be the epitome of inferiority. I have played roles from Shakespeare to August Wilson, but playing a homeless character has been the most challenging and cathartic. Having a particularly enduring and deep affinity for the homeless, I cannot but think that Christ refers to the homeless in Matthew 25:40, 45 when he says "the least of these."

It occurs to me that one of the most prevalent, catastrophic conditions in all of human society is homelessness.

The fact that so many people are homeless in America should be controversial, but the sad truth is that according to a 2011 study by The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, between 2.3 and 3.5 million people experience homelessness in any given year. It is even more frightening and disturbing that the fastest growing segments among the ranks of the homeless are "families with children."

The theatrical production of *Stand* is the true story about the life and death of one of Nashville's homeless: Johnny Ellis and his relationship with Mark, a Good Samaritan. Working on this play for four months made me acutely aware of the homeless circumstance, and I am truly blessed because of it.

The real-life "Good Samaritan" in the play is also the playwright Jim Reyland, a Music Row commercial audio producer who was so powerfully compelled by his experience and friendship with Johnny that he wrote about it. For over 25 years, Jim has worked as a volunteer for Nashville's Room In The Inn and for the Campus for Human Development. Jim insisted that the play's intent be to create awareness and advocacy for the homeless and to generate funds for Nashville's Room In The Inn.

Longtime advocate for the homeless and founder of Nashville's Room In The Inn ministry is another Good Samaritan, Charlie Strobel. Charlie said simply, "The homeless need everything I need—everything you need."

As my relationship with God grows, my mindset continues to adapt to the realization that my career in the arts and entertainment industry must not define my life. I choose to compete for and participate in assignments that prove what God has placed in me. I pray in boldness, in work, in whatever we do and in whatever we profess that we be mindful to please God first. My prayer is that God helps us to help one another.

To find out more about Room In The Inn and how to get involved in "On site," "Off Site" and "Out Of The Box" opportunities, go to [volunteer@roomintheinn.org](mailto:volunteer@roomintheinn.org).

Mt. Zion Baptist Church is among many churches in Nashville that wholeheartedly support Room In The Inn's 22-week program. Mt. Zion offers hospitality and love to twelve or more women who call the streets of Nashville home.

**Volunteer at Mt. Zion today  
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## Dr. Mike Ivy

*Usher Ministry, Parking Etiquette Team and Deacons Ministry*

by Greg Lyles

Regardless of the length of time you have attended Mt. Zion, I would imagine you've heard the name, Mike Ivy. I've had the privilege of working with Dr. Mike Ivy on the Usher Ministry, on the Parking Etiquette Team, as well as on the Deacons Ministry. Mike and I first served together as monitors at the Mt. Zion Old Hickory Boulevard location. Before the official implementation of the Greeters Ministry, Mike filled that role on a weekly basis. With his congenial, welcoming voice, he greeted as many parishioners as he possibly could. When given the opportunity, Mike would quiz each person about whether or not that Sunday was their first visit. Before walking away, he would ask for their names and extend to them a warm welcome to Mt. Zion.

As a professor at Tennessee State University and as a well-regarded scholar in the field of research, Mike always makes a special effort to introduce himself to college students.

Once he learns their names, be assured that he will remember them the next time.

I would characterize Mike as a "people person." Sharing his time and talents, he can always be found at various church functions. Mike plays an active role in the annual Relay For Life and at the Mt. Zion Church Picnic. He also oversees the Old Hickory Boulevard Parking Etiquette Team. I am convinced that Mike gives 110% to any project or activity. Masterfully, he manages to juggle his time among several ministries.

Dr. Mike is always the same, regardless of what is happening in his life. I can truly call him an "Ambassador for Christ." He has the heart and the spirit of a servant. What a better place this world would be if more of us wore the spirit of servanthood like Mike Ivy.



## Joan Evans

*Ambassador of Hospitality*

by Wanda Sanders

Since uniting with Mt. Zion, Joan has served in the gospel chorus and has been a faithful usher for 51 years. She considers ushering to be her calling. Her membership in the Mt. Zion Pace Matrons, a church missionary ministry, has been for several years.

Raised in the loving Christian household of Noah and Olivia Evans, Joan and her two brothers enjoyed growing up in Nashville. Although she has no biological children, Joan is blessed to have a play-daughter, Verlina King, who resides in Louisville, Kentucky. Verlina is the joy and rock of Joan's life. Besides Verlina, there are numerous beloved individuals from all walks of life whom she has mothered.

In 2005, Joan retired from Tennessee State University (TSU) after being employed there for 36 years. While there, she was admired for her professionalism and her kindness to college students who came to TSU from across the country.

Through Joan's love for both her biological/extended families, Mt. Zion Church family and many friends, she exemplifies strength, pride and dignity. Her motto in life is, "If I can help somebody, then my living shall not be in vain."

Without a doubt, Sister Joan Evans wears the "hat of hospitality" as a Mt. Zion usher.



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