

JOURNEY OF FAITH -
THE HISTORY OF MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH OF
ONTARIO

BY PASTOR BRIAN E. KENNEDY, SR.

AUTHORED WITH – C OCTAVIA ROBINSON, CO-HISTORIAN

“TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. IN ALL YOUR WAYS
ACKNOWLEDGE HIM. AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.”

PROVERBS 3:5-6 NASU

The Purpose for Celebrating Church History

It is an honor to present the following historical summary of Mt. Zion's *ninety* year journey of faith that we may praise God and celebrate all that He has done, what He is doing, and what He is going to do.

History gives us an accounting of God's track record of faithfulness. Stopping to recognize, recount, and celebrate who God is, and what God has done is a biblical principle found throughout Scripture (See, Exodus 15:1-21; II Chronicles Chapters 5 through 7; Daniel 6:18-28; Matthew 9:1-8; Matthew 15:29-31; Luke 17:11-19; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 3:1-8; I Corinthians 11:23-26, et al.). These passages of Scripture clearly present the appropriate response of God's people when God does something on their behalf. For over six years we recited Psalms 100 each Sunday morning! Why? It is because ". . . the LORD is good, His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations." In the year 2006, we started reciting Psalms 46 each Sunday morning! Why? It is because "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear . . . The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." In the year 2009, we started reciting Psalm 23 each Sunday morning! Why? It is because the LORD is our Shepherd. . . Now we are reciting Psalm 103, to reinforce our commitment to worship and praise God, to review and reflect upon the blessings and benefits of God's salvation, and to join with all the saints and the heavenly host to bless the Lord with our total person.

We must always remember to stop in these hectic days and respond with great praise and celebration for who God is and what God has done. It is when we review God's perfect track record that we gain a deeper appreciation for the vision of the future. When we, worship and praise Him with our whole heart, then we are given the assurance that God can and will do the seemingly impossible! This is how we approach "God size" assignments - we approach these assignments with our hope in the miracle working and enabling power of God! (Ephesians 3:30)

God Bless You.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. E. Kennedy, Sr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pastor Brian E. Kennedy, Sr.
Senior Pastor

I.

The Historical Summary of Mt. Zion

Mt. Zion's summary is presented through a chronology of the various Pastors that served throughout the years – from, fact, it's very founding.

The compilation of information and data was gathered through the many interviews with senior members of our church including but not limited to: the late Sis. Willa Bratton, the late Sis. Sweet P. Nash, Sis. Rever Patterson, Sis. Inez Nash, Sis. Elvenia Bratton, Sis. Freddie Fort, Sis. Tijuana Bratton, Bro. Walter Bratton, and Sis. Rita Ford. Other vital resource documents that were reviewed were, but not limited to: various newspaper articles (some of which are dated as far back as 1925, 1935 and 1941), escrow documentation, a written summary by Sister Elvenia Bratton on behalf of the late Jane Hayes, a written summary by the late James B. Dunnigan, and a two page chronology compiled by Sis. Barbara Bratton and Sis. Brenda Orea.

II.

In The Beginning . . . A Chronological Timeline

Pastor Arthur F. Seaton (1922 – tenure unknown)

Pastor Seaton was the founder and first Pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. At that time, Mt. Zion was located in an old house on the corner of Sultana and Nevada Street; its official address was 501 East Nevada Street, Ontario, California. On April 25, 1925, Mt. Zion was incorporated within the State of California.

Mt. Zion was known as the first “colored church” in the City of Ontario and was used for various events outside of Sunday worship. The October 29, 1925 edition of the *Daily Report Newspaper*, reported, “It will be the only community center for Negroes in a radius of many miles west and the only one in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.” With the assistance of Sister Ida Dunnigan, Sister Lelia Parks, Sister Sweet P. Nash and Sister Lizzie Williams (the “building fund committee”), Pastor Seaton led the church in its very first building project after serving his first sixteen (16) months as Pastor. Sisters Dunnigan, Parks, Nash, and Williams were totally committed to the project and worked tirelessly to raise money for the new church – raising \$712.50!

The “building fund committee” collected money throughout the community by various means: Sister Ida Dunnigan collected money in a fruit jar and others took out loans on their homes’ equity. Several families were so committed to the work of the Lord and the building of His house that they went without so that the church could go forward. These families strove to follow the instruction Paul set forth in Romans 12:1 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” The “old house” was eventually demolished by the City of Ontario who in turn donated the land to Mt. Zion. The church then applied for a building permit, to construct a new facility. After issuance of the building permit, the church held a groundbreaking service on October 11, 1925! The cost for the new church was \$3,650.00 excluding furnishings. The amount of money raised up to the point of construction was \$712.50. The church celebrated the “laying of the cornerstone” on November 1925. All of these milestones were evidence of the great faith in God, which those early members possessed! There were no additional funds or bank loans available during that time just “faith” and FAITH in our Lord proved, as always, to be enough!

There were also several churches during this time that provided needed financial assistance. One of the churches, Ontario First Baptist Church on Euclid Avenue at “E” Street, hosted a benefit service in March 1925. Dr. William Carter, Field Secretary of the Southern California Baptist Colored Churches, was responsible for bringing these two churches together.

In addition to Ontario First Baptist Church, other so called "White churches"¹ also supported Mt. Zion in this building project.

Pastor Seaton stated in the October 25, 1925 edition of the *Daily Report Newspaper* that the relatively small group of approximately fifty (50) saints "exercised great faith"! Today, many years later, we too are very thankful for their faith as well!

Pastor E. P. Johnson (tenure unknown)

There is very little written history about Pastor Johnson's tenure. He is mentioned in the *Daily Report Newspaper* in March 1935. According to the *Daily Report*, he served when Ontario's First Baptist Church hosted one of the fund-raisers for Mt. Zion.

Pastor J. Johnson (tenure unknown)

The "mortgage burning" service for the first church was held under Pastor J. Johnson in October 1941. This event was recorded in the October 27, 1941 edition of the *Daily Report Newspaper*.

Pastor Morris (1942 – tenure unknown)

Very little is recorded during this time. It brings joy to know that during this time the Nash and Carter families came to the Inland Valley and joined Mt. Zion. It is even a greater joy to say that the Nash and Carter families are still part of our church today!

Sister Sweet Pecolia ("Sweet P") Nash and Brother James Dunnigan were members of Mt. Zion during these early times. Though both have gone on to heaven, their early contributions will be forever cherished.

Pastor Randolph (mid 1940s – tenure unknown)

As of this writing, little is known or confirmed of our Church history during this time.

Pastor Ellis (tenure unknown)

¹ The terms "Colored churches" and "White churches" were common in the early 1920s. Today many Christians see the church as "The Body of Christ" as described throughout the New Testament.

As of this writing, little is known or can be confirmed of our Church history during this time.

Pastor Randolph (served a second term – tenure unknown)

Little is known or can be confirmed of our Church history during this time.

Pastor Richard D. Bizzle (1956 through 1960)

Pastor Bizzle, from Georgia, was said to be, well educated and he was known as a great orator. Mt. Zion's first exposure to the Sunday School Convention was under Pastor Bizzle's leadership. Pastor Bizzle, also set into motion structured church decorum.

Several new families moved into the Ontario area during this time – the Bratton, Mann and Little families. At this time, there were only approximately ten (10) Black families in Ontario with a population of approximately 27,000! The Bratton and Mann families are still a part of Mt. Zion today! It was during Pastor Bizzle's tenure that the "Pastor's parsonage" was built.

Mother Willa Frances Bratton recalls Mt. Zion being then, as it is now, a "nice" church with a Sunday School for seniors, adults, and children. The "Baptist Women's Missionary Society" was also emphasized during this time.

Pastor Robert Young (1961 through 1963)

Under the leadership of Pastor Young, Mt. Zion purchased new pulpit furniture and a new Lord's Supper table.

Pastor Lofton Thomas (1964 through 1967)

Pastor Thomas had a great love for leading children to the Lord; a great part of his ministry concerned the Baptist Training Union ("BTU").

Pastor Oscar L. Harvey (1968 through 1970)

Pastor Harvey was a graduate of Biola University and was seen as a "great administrator," Bible teacher and writer. Under his leadership, the by-laws and church constitution were updated.

Pastor Harvey conducted studies in "God's Plan of the Ages (A Summary of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation) and "Christ in the Tabernacle." He placed emphasis on Vacation Bible School and started the Christian Girls and Boys Club.

It was during this time that the loan on the Pastor's Parsonage was paid off.

Pastor William Binford (1970 through 1972)

"Youth Fellowship" a program for the developmentally disabled was established during Pastor Binford's tenure. Sister Thelma Smith supervised all of the day-to-day responsibilities of this program.

Pastor Chester Carter (1972 through 1973)

The Young Matrons' Ministry - formed to help young adult women grow in their faith by assisting in the work of the ministry in such ways as visiting senior citizen homes and those in hospitals - was established under Pastor Carter's tenure.

Pastor Alvin J. Carter (1973 through 1986)

Pastor Carter has had the longest pastoral tenure in the life of Mt. Zion to date. Under his spiritual leadership and prayer, Mt. Zion grew in the areas of evangelism, basic youth training, witnessing and door-to-door ministries to name a few. His continued emphasis in these areas throughout the years was a major part of his spiritual focus and plan.

Pastor Carter received an educational scholarship from Central Baptist Church of Pomona to attend seminary in West Covina. He was known to "reach out" to other Baptist fellowships, crossing long-established color barriers, and made evangelism his first priority in the church. He instituted door-to-door evangelism and established classes to foster the growth of the members in this area. Programs such as the "Follow Through Evangelism Movement" and "Child Evangelism" were focal points in his ministry relating to community and global outreach. To further enhance the church's focus in regard to evangelism, Pastor Carter established a scholarship fund to sponsor foreign missionaries, to provide the opportunity for Fred Morgan and Samuel Dawkins to attend seminary to name a few.

Mt. Zion's membership, physical and spiritual growth was remarkable during this period. Pastor Carter established a building fund for the purchase of the church property located at 224 West California Street on July 10, 1978! During this time, members recall the "old" church being open for "round-the-clock" prayer in anticipation of the closing of escrow of the new church location - opening early in the morning and closing late in the evenings to accommodate the schedules of as many as possible. God heard and answered the prayers of the faithful! On March 30, 1980 approximately 50-60 members led by Pastor Carter, followed by the Deacons and Trustees, Ushers and the Choir, church members, children, family and

friends marched down Nevada Street to Fern Avenue then down to California Street (approximately four blocks) rejoicing and singing "We've Come This Far By Faith" (as well as other songs) in celebration of the close of escrow and the purchase of our new church home. During this time there were *less than* one hundred (100) tithing members on the "rolls" at Mt. Zion!

"Feeding the Whole Man" was Pastor Carter's motto. He exposed Mt. Zion's congregation to many growth and educational ministries during these years; ministries such as the Institute in Basic Life Principles, The National Evangelism Movement, The Biola Stewardship Workshop (with Dr. George Moore), as well as various Financial Seminars with Dr. Napoleon Rhodes.

Other significant areas of development and growth during this period were:

- The establishment of a full-time day care center and the Mt. Zion Christian School (for grades Kindergarten through the 12) opened on March 4, 2002.
- A church for the developmentally disabled was established under the prayerful direction of Sister Thelma Smith ("Big Momma") which was eventually moved to the Mt. Zion Annex. The Mt. Zion Annex, located across the street from our California location, was demolished in 1999.
- A community outreach program to assist with emergency shelter, delinquent mortgage payments, utility bills, food, and clothing.
- The church distributed Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for seniors, homeless individuals and those with low incomes.
- The first large scale evangelical play, "As It Is Appointed Unto Men Once to Die, and After This, The Judgment" was performed. Over one hundred (100) people gave their hearts to Christ during that performance!
- Seminars with Dr. Napoleon Rhodes were held.
- The yearly participation of the youth and others at the Long Beach Convention Center to attend the Bill Gothard Institute in Basic Youth Conflict Seminar.
- What a major historical and spiritual leap of faith, Mt. Zion! We remain forever grateful and thankful to God.

Interim Pastor Richard D. Bizzle (1986)

Pastor Bizzle returned to Mt. Zion during this time to assist in keeping the church together until a new pastor could be selected.

Pastor James Berry (1986 through 1988)

During Pastor Berry's two-year tenure, attention to emphasis on door-to-door evangelism was of great importance. Pastor Berry instituted Wednesday Family Night at Mt.

Zion. Through prayer and outreach, Mt. Zion grew to over three hundred fifty (350) members strong!

Interim Pastor Edgar Murrell (1988 through 1989)

Interim Pastor Murrell's emphasis at Mt. Zion was placed in the area of Sunday School and systematic Bible study. He conducted the young men and boys' discipleship program at his home during this time.

Through his discipleship ministry, Brother Murrell raised up several deacons, ministers, and community leaders. Pastor Murrell also started the Murrell Fellowship Luncheon with Brother David Tait. Today, men at Mt. Zion still fellowship in this luncheon, which is held at different locations every other Friday at 11:30 a.m.

Pastor George Moore (1989 through 1998)

Pastor George Moore, a retired Systematic Theology Professor at Biola University and founder of "Fisherman's Gospel Ministry" (a foreign and domestic missions ministry) became Mt. Zion's Senior Pastor in 1989. Dr. Moore was a strong Bible teaching pastor. Under his leadership, the Wednesday night Bible study grew to a point that it became one of the main highlights of our church. He also led Mt. Zion in street witnessing and overseas missions. Dr. Moore, as well, started in-home "cell groups" and re-established the Women's Ministry and Nursing Home Ministry.

It was during Dr. Moore's tenure that funds were awarded to Mt. Zion by Ontario Airport from noise abatement funding. Funds from this award were used (i) for a new roof on the sanctuary and education buildings, (ii) to replace doors and install double-paned windows in the sanctuary, (iii) to purchase carpet for the education building and (iv) to purchase and install new air conditioners for both buildings.

Under Dr. Moore's leadership, God allowed a major controversy to occur with the church and resulted in an unfortunate litigation in court. This was an extremely difficult time

in Mt. Zion's history. Satan saw an opportunity to get Christians to attack one another in the areas of authority in the local church and finances. Satan thought that he could destroy God's church but God **proved** beyond a shadow of a doubt His love for Mt. Zion, blessed our church, and brought us through with His grace and divine favor. God gave Dr. Moore strength as he lead Mt. Zion through a painful "cleansing process" that would not be forgotten. We truly serve a mighty God!

Dr. Moore made many contributions to Mt. Zion during his time as Pastor, but his most significant contribution was His commitment to helping Mt. Zion develop an unwavering biblical orientation. It was not long discovered by Dr. Moore's successor how the members of Mt. Zion learned an invaluable lesson during his leadership – that the Bible must be recognized and followed as the final authority for the Christian's faith and practice. Notwithstanding the

strong feelings on both sides of the subject of concern, Mt. Zion members learned to yield to what God says in His Word.

Dr. Moore retired in 1998 to serve as a full-time missionary for Fisherman's Gospel Ministry.

Interim Church Leaders Richard Young and Joseph McDowell (1998)

Interim Pastor Richard Young and Brother Joseph McDowell helped lead Mt. Zion during a critical time after Dr. Moore's tenure. They needed God to empower them to provide both administrative and spiritual services to the church as well as to lead the pastoral search team while they both worked full-time jobs.

During this time, Mt. Zion (i) continued the sound proofing project (which began under Dr. Moore's tenure); (ii) purchased a piano, and (iii) selected a new pastor to serve.

Pastor Brian E. Kennedy (1998 - Present)

Pastor Kennedy - a graduate of Talbot School of Theology, a former Los Angeles Area Director for Prison Fellowship, USA, and Youth Pastor at Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church, in Los Angeles – was selected to serve as Senior Pastor in November 1998.

Pastor Kennedy came at a time when Mt. Zion wanted to move forward with a sense of clear biblical direction. The church was determined to avoid the same mistakes from the past. The congregation, totaling approximately forty (40) members agreed to restructure the ministry through a time of "vision development" with Pastor Kennedy. In 1999 during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, those members of Mt. Zion who still had ill feelings and who had not reconciled came forward during altar prayer and peace was made between one another.

In the same year, former pastor, Dr. George Moore, was invited to return to Mt. Zion to preach. After delivering his sermon, Dr. Moore apologized to those members who were hurt by any of his actions during his tenure; members who attended that needed to apologize for hurting Dr. Moore came forward during altar prayer. There was biblical reconciliation between all parties. There was not a dry eye in the church! On that Sunday, God removed the dark cloud from over Mt. Zion and freed her to serve Him with a pure heart.

THE YEARS 1999 AND 2000

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 239:11 (NIV)

Beginning in January of 1999, the soundproofing project continued and soon expanded into a full renovation project of both the exterior and interior areas of the sanctuary and education buildings.

During 1999, an audit was conducted by Pastor Kennedy. The audit report was distributed to and discussed with the congregation to provide full disclosure and accounting of the proper disbursement of all noise abatement funds awarded. This accounting reflected funds were wisely invested and earned interest making it possible for Mt. Zion to have financial resources for things needed for the church that fell outside of the soundproofing restraints.

In years, 1999 and 2000, two new properties located directly across the street from the church were purchased for the expansion of the Helping Hands and the boxing program. The corner lot (located at California and Palm) was also purchased for future ministry and parking needs.

A three-year strategic planning process was implemented during this time, which tied ministry events and programs to the church budget. Mt. Zion made a commitment that ministry would drive the church budget. Annual and semi-annual Holy Spirit Guidance Meetings with ministry reports and financial statements were also instituted during this time. These meetings were designed to demonstrate financial, programmatic, and administrative accountability before the church congregation. Praise and worship are also incorporated in these meetings to recognize the power of God.

THE YEARS 2001 and 2002

*"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord."
Jeremiah 17:7*

The year 2001 was one of stabilization for Mt. Zion. With the rapid growth of the church and limited space, serious thought was given to future expansion. With ten (10) staff members and a little over 780 members, God was leading Mt. Zion to seek out land to build for the future. In June of 2001, the stewardship campaign was initiated and a feasibility study was conducted to assess the proper direction for future expansion of our church.

The first phase was to continue purchasing property around the church to build a three-story multi-purpose building, senior housing, a 500 car parking structure, and eventually a

larger sanctuary. A planning committee, which consisted of Pastor Kennedy, the church Trustees and other church leaders, was established to consider, research and analyze numerous factors relative to the initial planning phase which considered and included, but not limited to, property acquisitions, street closures, displacing residents, relocation of residents, owners that would hold out and refuse to sell, demolition, hazardous material removal, property set-backs and the relocation of existing infrastructure.

The preliminary reporting to the church of the committee's findings and analysis was conducted in an official church meeting held on November 25, 2001. It was noted that two primary factors made the above option unsuitable:

(1) The \$19.00 to \$21.00 per square foot cost to acquire the land around the existing church and prepare the land for building by reducing it to raw dirt status. Research revealed at that time that there were a few land parcels, which were selling for \$15.00 per square foot. However, the norm reflected that property in Ontario – specifically around the Ontario Mills area - was selling from \$8.00 to \$10.00 per square foot; and

(2) Ontario City Officials felt that our proposed plan was too intensive for the existing neighborhood around the church.

After hearing the results of the feasibility study, Mt. Zion's congregation overwhelmingly voted for the Pastor and Trustees to seek out raw land for the future expansion of the church if the property was located in the City of Ontario. Several properties were considered (i) 9.5 acres located on Campus and Cedar, (ii) 40 acres on Vineyard and Riverside,² and (iii) 40 acres located on Vineyard and Chino Avenue. God in His providential sovereignty saw fit to close the door on the three aforementioned properties.

During the years 2001 and 2002 several programs were either reactivated or initiated to fulfill Mt. Zion's mission statement – "to evangelize and disciple the nations". Two of the most exciting programs started were the (i) F.A.I.T.H. Sunday School based evangelism strategy and in March of 2002 the (ii) Mt. Zion Christian School (for pre-school and kindergarten).

In October of 2002, the Trustees opened escrow for a feasibility study on eighteen (18) acres of land located on the southeast corner of Chino and Grove Avenues.

During 2002, the Helping Hands ministry served **24,402 individuals** representing all ethnic groups and walks of life. This was a substantial increase in service – serving 20,535 in the year 2001!

² Forty (40) acre lots were considered in that the church could sell portions of the lots to raise capital for expansion.

THE YEAR 2003

*Our foundation as believers is rooted in Scripture which was "God-breathed" and then dutifully recorded by inspired writers of the Word. Its message is unmistakable – that in **all** circumstances we should prayerfully seek a Word from the Lord. (Psalms 119:105)*

On January 19, 2003 during an official church meeting, the congregation of Mt. Zion overwhelmingly voted to purchase the eighteen (18) acres located on Chino and Grove Avenues!

On January 23, 2003, Mt. Zion closed escrow on the Grove and Chino Avenue property purchasing the land for \$2,400,000.00! This was a decisive commitment by the church to pursue the vision to reach more people for Christ.

On February 16, 2003, Mt. Zion's congregation traveled to the property site and held a "property blessing service" – praying over and committing the land to the Lord's use. While the Male Chorus led the congregation, the cows responded by gathering together getting as close as they could to the "human" congregation and joined us in praising God for providing the church with a strategic piece of property for future kingdom building.

On February 23, 2003 Mt. Zion burned the mortgage on several 224 West California Street properties which included (1) the sanctuary, (2) education building, (3) the youth building and the land directly behind the youth building, (4) the Helping Hands building, and the (5) boxing gym across the street. Mayor Gary Ovitt, Rever Butts-Patterson, Mother Willa Bratton, and Mt. Zion's Senior Pastor participated in the actual burning of the mortgages. Several long-term members of the church and representatives of deceased members came to the stage to participate in this ceremony. Pastor Alvin J. Carter was also recognized for his vision in leading Mt. Zion to the California Street location. (" . . . Eyes have not seen and ears have not heard, neither has entered into the heart of man all that is prepared for those who love the Lord."
I Corinthians 2:9)

The summer of 2003 left an indelible spiritual imprint on our children and youth. It began on June 23 with the annual Summer Children and Youth Academy – a four (4) week program for children between the ages of 6 and 18 that was open between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. daily. The Children and Teen Summit in Sacramento, California for three days followed soon thereafter. There was Vacation Bible School which was held for one week; the Summer Youth Camp which was also held for one week; ending with a "Back to School Explosion Concert on the 31st of August! "Totally Awesome!"

The Wednesday night Children and Youth programs, The Children's Church, The Children's Choir, The Youth and Young Adult Choir, The Youth Usher Board and our Sunday School continue to provide a strong foundation for our children and youth.

On July 20, 2003, the Health and Fitness Awareness Program ("HFAP") had their official "kick-off." Funded by the California Endowment Foundation and administered by the Los

Angeles Metropolitan Churches ("LAM) and Churches Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E.), Mt. Zion took its' existing family fitness ministry to a new and exciting level for all age groups. Room 7 was renovated and equipped with several exercise machines and weights while Rooms 5 and 6 were used for open floor exercise classes. Fitness advocates also lead members of the congregation in scheduled walks in the community. The Senior (citizen) members of our church are benefiting from healthy cooking and shopping training while our children and youth are learning healthy eating principles.

Mt. Zion's Music Department grew to six choirs (Children's, Youth and Young Adult, Voices of Zion, Male Chorus, Sanctuary, and the Mass Choir); they faithfully lead the church in worship Sunday after Sunday throughout the years.

The Senior Usher Board grew to seventeen (17) members strong and the Junior Usher Board grew to eight (8) members strong by the middle of 2003 providing critical services to the growing congregation during worship services and special events.

Two active missionaries in our church served in Ghana, West Africa, Southern Sudan, and Kenya. Our short-term missionary leader took eleven (11) Mt. Zion members to Mexico to build shelters for needy families.

In an effort to be better stewards over the new members that God brought to Mt. Zion, the Nurturing Ministry was reactivated. By mid-year there were 40 "nurturers" ministering to new members.

The unity and hard work of our Deacons, Deaconess, Trustees, Men and Women's ministry along with other leaders in the church and individuals wanting to make a difference proved to be invaluable in helping Mt. Zion stabilize during its rapid growth and other challenges that accompany such growth.

With twelve (12) staff members and a little over 1,000 members, God's faithfulness in pastoring Mt. Zion brought our church to 81 years of service in 2003!

The end of 2003 was celebrated with a concert hosted by our Music Department during a Spirit-filled New Years Eve service.

THE YEAR 2004

*Everything in Scripture seems to reverberate to that vital little word – FAITH.
(II Corinthians 5:7)*

It is with that unwavering faith in God that Mt. Zion at 12:00 a.m. on January 1, 2004 welcomed in the New Year in prayer. The following are just a "few" of the many blessings from the Lord bestowed upon Mt. Zion during that year:

The New Year of 2004 began with two outstanding conferences – The Women’s Conference, which was held in January 2004 and the Men’s Conference, which was held in March 2004.

On March 31, 2004, Mt. Zion hosted the Caesar Chavez Day! Pastor Alphonso Montiel, Senior Pastor of Templo Bautista (Mt. Zion sponsored this church which was located across the street) was the lead Pastor for the event.

In May of 2004, Mt. Zion hosted the Annual Area-Wide Revival sponsored through the Pomona Valley Ministers Alliance.

The relationship between Mt. Zion and the Ontario Police Department was strengthened as Pastor Kennedy was invited to participate in “racial profiling training.”

The Health and Fitness Ministry assumed the supervision of the boxing program after the Police Athletic League’s contract was not renewed by the State of California, and developed an outstanding team of boxing coaches to continue our outreach into our community. In addition, Mt. Zion’s congregation developed an increased health and fitness mindset due to the tireless efforts of this ministry.

Mt. Zion was blessed with a twenty-four (24) seat shuttle bus to enhance outreach and discipleship efforts. So what was the inaugural launch of the shuttle bus? A trip to “The Price Is Right” game show for the Senior Citizen Ministry! When Brother Odom won, Mt. Zion’s Seniors Ministry was shown on national television **wearing their “Mt. Zion t-shirts”** and displaying the love of Jesus Christ!

An upgraded security system was installed in the Education Building for increased efficiency of staff and for the increased safety of the children in the Mt. Zion Christian School.

Mt. Zion Sunday School staff attended the annual Equipped for Excellence Conference and subsequently started a major reorganization. One major change was the implementation of the thirty-eight week discipleship training class during the Sunday School hour.

A team consisting of men and “one woman” launched a beautification effort by painting the properties on the south side of California Avenue and upgrading the landscaping around the church.

Our Church marquee was upgraded to reflect the God we serve, and to provide basic information regarding the church clearly during the day and brightly during the night.

A commercial exhaust fan and energy efficient air conditioner was installed in Mt. Zion’s downstairs kitchen. The response of the Hospitality Committee was loud and clear and continues to be lifted up during the warm summer days - **“Praise the Lord!”**

The end of the 2004 school year was a highlight for Mt. Zion with the annual graduation ceremony. One hundred percent of our high school graduates were college bound that year!

Praise the Lord! Our children and youth then quickly immersed themselves into four weeks of action-packed summer activities beginning with the Summer Youth Academy followed by Summer Camp, Vacation Bible School and the culinary delight of the summer – the Annual church picnic! The summer programs concluded with the Back to School Explosion Concert.

Two additional staff positions were funded by Mt. Zion – A Director of the Children’s Ministry and a Director of Evangelism.

Mt. Zion’s administrative staff began attending quarterly off-site training trips in 2004. The three “training trips” taken through September were: (1) “Customer Service” training at Crenshaw Christian Center; (2) “Innovative Thinking” training at Saddleback Church; and (3) “How to Reach Your Potential” at First Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena.

Mt. Zion’s church-wide leadership training program was upgraded to conducting three quarterly mini-retreats hosted by various members. In September 2004, a “first class” all day leadership retreat was conducted at Mt. Zion.

The “Land Payoff Project” was implemented in the year of 2004. This project consists of 550 members paying at least \$10.00 per week over and above tithes and offering to pay the balance of \$2,000,000.00 owed on the eighteen (18) acres on Chino Avenue and Grove in a five and one-half year period. By paying the balance off within this period, we would (i) save of \$570,000.00 in interest and (ii) provide \$130,000.00 in savings. As of September 2004, our members were half-way to our goal of obtaining the 550 committed participants.

At the end of August 2004, Mt. Zion was blessed to present Rene Farquharson, our missionary in Sudan, Africa with \$5,000.00 for the ministry. This blessing was in addition to the monthly church support. Several churches in Sudan and Kenya came under the Mt. Zion Missions Ministry. The church missions giving for the first eight months in 2004 totaled \$35,060.00 – a 38% increase over the first eight months in 2003. This figure represents 6.4% of the tithes and offerings in the first eight months as well.

The 82nd Church Anniversary was celebrated in what was called a “Power Packed Weekend!” The weekend featured an all church skate night on Friday, a spirit-filled musical concert on Saturday evening, concluding on that celebration-filled Sunday with a Word from the Lord presented by Pastor Fred Campbell (of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Redwood City and President of the California State Baptist Convention). Hallelujah! Glory to God!

THE YEAR 2005

The scripture characterizes God as infinitely loving and kind, gently watching over His earthly children and guiding the steps of the faithful. (Psalms 23)

We started the year 2005 on our knees at the Mt. Zion's Annual New Year's Eve Service. God used the ministers of Mt. Zion to challenge and encourage us as we entered into the New Year. The following are a "few" of the events, upgrades, and milestones that occurred during that year:

Mt. Zion's second annual Easter Sunrise Service was held on March 27, 2005 with the Pomona Valley Ministers Alliance on Euclid Avenue, at the Jack Mercer Band Stand. On that early Sunday morning, one man gave his heart to Jesus.

Our Missions Department stepped out on faith and started a monthly feeding ministry in Tijuana, Mexico. In July of 2005 over 600 people were fed.

In August of 2005, our Missionary in Africa presented the missions annual report; Mt. Zion was able to give \$10,000.00 to support several special projects in addition to our regular monthly contribution as she went back to the field.

Infused with God's love and our commitment to serving, existing ministries continued to grow and several new ministries were started in 2005. Three examples of the new ministries that started are the two major productions by our Children's Department (held at Easter and Christmas), The Young Adult Bridge Ministry; and The Widows Network and Encourage Widows Ministry.

In our Deacons ministry, five new Deacons were ordained and one Deacon transferred from another church. There were a total of twenty-six (26) ordained Deacons and eight (8) Deacons in training at Mt. Zion during this time.

In our Deaconess ministry, three (3) Deaconesses were ordained and three (3) Deaconesses transferred to Mt. Zion from other churches. There were thirty-one (31) Deaconesses in service at Mt. Zion during this time.

Also in 2005, the loan on the eighteen (18) acres on Grove and Chino Avenue was refinanced with One United Bank in Los Angeles. The primary benefit of this transaction was to position the church to start collecting rent from the dairy farming operation on the property – this could only be done by paying off the owners that carried the original note. In addition, a development company was secured to begin the process for master planning the eighteen acres according to the written descriptions provided by Mt. Zion Church leadership.

The last piece of property (the Young Adult Building) located on California Street was paid off in 2005. As of October 2005, all property on California Street owned by Mt. Zion was paid-in-full and unencumbered.

Several key upgrades that were scheduled were completed on a timely basis. These improvements were: upgrading the wiring in the sanctuary and Mt. Zion Café; the rewiring of the Young Adult building; the installation of an air and heating system in the Helping Hands building; the acquisition of equipment for the Audio-Visual Department to eliminate feedback and to upgrade the quality of public sound and recordings. The upgrade in the Education Building featured beautiful textured walls in the Pre-School classrooms, an upgrade in Room 2 of the Education Building that included four (4) independent partitioned workstations and one (1) office manager workstation, and the upgrade of the storage rooms with shelving to maximize space. The Mt. Zion Café also benefited from the additional 2005 upgrades to promote a "warmer, friendlier" feel. Lastly, one handball court and two-tether ball courts were installed on the parking lot.

In May of 2005, Mt. Zion hosted California Edison and the community for an energy conservation-training workshop.

The summer of 2005 was a blast for our youth and children's ministries! A carnival on the church parking lot kicked-off and introduced the Summer Day Camp, the Summer Away Camp, and the Higher Challenge Program for teenagers, Vacation Bible School, Church picnic, the Teen and Family Super Forum, the Teen Summit in Sacramento and the Back to School Concert programs to all! All of the events held during that summer were packed with lots of fun and provided unlimited opportunities for all to grow in the Lord!

The 2005 Vacation Bible School broke all attendance records on the first day – totaling 183 in attendance). The annual church picnic in the park was attended by over 400 people with plenty of fun and food for all!

In October of 2005, Mt. Zion held its second Town Hall Meeting. By doing so, a continued and stronger relationship was built with the Ontario Police Department.

Administratively Mt. Zion continued to grow in the year 2005. Three new staff positions were added – a Director of Couples Ministry (this staff member also helped to establish the Singles Ministry), an Office Manager for Ministry Services, and a full-time Maintenance Manager. In addition, a retirement, pension, and disability plan was provided for all Mt. Zion Church and School qualified W-2 employees.

The Mt. Zion Christian School experienced student enrollment growth as well hiring a full-time Director and adding a "toddler class" in the Fall of 2005. Our School began the fall semester with an all time high enrollment of seventeen (17) students!

As the year 2005 turned towards its last quarter the sweet smell of "celebration" filled the air – it was time to celebrate our 83rd church anniversary! The Annual Church Anniversary Concert was held on Saturday, September 17 and proved to be a clear demonstration of what happens when God's people allow the Holy Spirit to take control in the worship experience.

The 83rd church anniversary celebration on Sunday, September 18, 2005 was just what Mt. Zion needed! The anniversary theme focused on the need for the people of God to be faithful and finish well at the end of their journey here on earth and the message was delivered by Pastor Terrance Phillips of Prosperity Baptist Church of Los Angeles. Memories of the 83rd anniversary of Mt. Zion will be cherished in the hearts of all those who attended for a very long time.

Mt. Zion approached the end of 2005 spiritually healthy and postured to reach out, build-up and strengthen herself through the following – the Men’s Basketball League (a partnership with several Inland Empire local churches; the Women’s Retreat Rally; a three day retreat in Palm Springs; the Men’s Retreat; the Parent/Teen forum with Dr. Herb Fischer (superintendent of the San Bernardino County Schools); the All Saints Day Eve Celebration; the Ushers Annual Day (we now have grown to 31 ushers); the Thanksgiving Service; the Angel Tree Party; the Annual Christmas Program by the Children’s Department; and the Annual New Year’s Eve Celebration!

THE YEAR 2006

"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You . . ." (Psalms 63:1)

We began 2006 once again on our knees in our annual New Year’s Eve Service. Our desire for that year was to move forward on our knees until our Lord returns. (Note to all future generations of Mt. Zion: "Please ensure that Mt. Zion moves forward on her knees!")

Mt. Zion continued to build upon the "outreach" ministry goals set at the end of the year 2005. The All Saints Eve Parking Lot outreach attracted over 500 people with a deliberate strategy to do one-on-one evangelism and ensuring that every participant received the gospel message in a track.

In 2006, the Mt. Zion Christian School started out with a record high enrollment of 32 students! God continued to bless the school with staff members committed to recruiting students, obtaining equipment and other resources to make Mt. Zion Christian School a Five Star School. God provided a nurse to provide hearing and eye examinations for those children attending our school.

The Women’s Retreat was a life-changing experience as Sister Colette Graves challenged the women to work through the various seasons in their lives. The Men’s Retreat likewise was life changing as Pastor Kidd and Pastor Hargrove challenged Christian men to give hope to the world.

The 2006 Thanksgiving service included a "Sharing and Caring" Thanksgiving Day Luncheon. The homeless community was served a mouth watering sit-down turkey dinner

with all of the trimmings! We even had a delivery team take dinners to the homeless in the parks and other locations in our community. Over 200 dinners were served!

The Angel Tree Party included twenty (20) children that survived Katrina. All of the children, including the 126 children of prisoners, and their families received the gospel, great food, toys, and the love of Jesus Christ.

The Easter Pageant and Children's Christmas Pageant were, once again, second to none as our children vividly dramatized the message of God's love in sending Jesus to die for the sins of the world and rising again on the third day! God used our children to reach hundreds of people including a mother who led her son to the Lord.

The Third Annual Sunrise Service was held on Euclid Avenue at the Jack Mercer Bandstand. Pastor Dwight Peace, from South Hills Presbyterian Church brought the message.

Mt. Zion, as of September 16, 2006, baptized twenty-one (21) saints and witnessed to over 2,000 people one-on-one through the Evangelism ministry programs. Forty (40) decisions were made for Christ!

Over fifty (50) members were served and/or visited in hospitals or sick rooms by our Deacon and Deaconess ministries. Those who were a part of these ministries represented Christ with great honor as they diligently assisted in carrying out the work of the ministry alongside the Pastor and Elder's of our church.

God continued to honor the prayers of our Prayer Ministry as He protected the unity and love among the Mt. Zion Leadership Team. Moreover, God empowered the Leadership Team to help lovingly care for the congregation entrusted to our care. The installation of officer's ceremony in March of 2006 was a tribute to the faithfulness of God. The Leadership Team of Mt. Zion consists of the Elders, Senior Pastor, Ministers, Deacons and Deaconess, Trustees, Department heads and Ministry Leaders.

In 2006 the Holy Spirit led Leadership Team championed the task of updating the Mt. Zion's Church Constitution and By-Laws. This had not been done for thirty (30) years and the purpose for the update was to ensure that the By-Laws and the Constitution properly reflected the current operations of the church. As of September, 2006, the Leadership Team had only one more meeting to conduct before beginning the "all church" information meetings to explain the updates.

Praise God for raising up two (2) additional ministers – Thomas Kemp and Michael Calloway - they accepted their calling and were presented a minister's license in 2006. Several other men and one teenager started and/or continue in the ministers' training class.

Also during the year 2006, the Mt. Zion Economic Development Corporation began to take greater shape with an infusion of new board members and advisory team members under the leadership of Deacon James Young and continued leadership of Sister Toni Johns.

The Christian Education Department led Mt. Zion in the critical area of spiritual stability in 2006. The Sunday School grew to 699 members! Mt. Zion's Sunday School also received the High Attendance Award at the Equipped for Excellence Sunday School Worker's Training workshop held that year.

Members that attended the Discipleship Training through the Sunday School were taken to the eighteen (18) acres owned by the church during this year. Marriages were strengthened through the Couples' Class and members of all ages were and continue to experience the excitement and effectiveness of small group ministry through the Sunday School as well as through the Small Group Ministry that meet weekly.

Many, many other milestones were reached during the year of 2006; a few of them are as follows:

A Director of Counseling joined the staff to help counter the attacks of the enemy against marriages and to help members that need counseling to get the help they need as well as to move forward in Christ.

Wednesday Night Bible Study expanded to offer a variety of classes to the congregation through four sessions each year! In the fall session of 2006 four (4) classes were offered – "Getting Close to God through Prayer", "Getting a More Practical Handle on Witnessing", "Reasoning Through Romans" (young adults 18-25), and "Properly Handling God's Money". In addition, the Los Angeles Bible Training School started classes during the week at Mt. Zion in order to reach more students in the Inland Empire area.

The Young Adult Ministry stepped up and led the church in an exciting and fun-filled Church picnic (evangelism and discipleship was intentionally built-in to the event).

The Parking Lot Ministry continued to greet the congregation outside while members of Mt. Zion's Greeters Ministry met us at the door as the Ushers' Ministry graciously served us inside the sanctuary. We are placed in the capable hands of those in the Nurses Ministry and the Security Ministry. The Nurturing Ministry, the Deacons and Deaconess and the Evangelism Ministry continued to worked diligently to help encourage the congregation (of over 1,200 at that time) to stay together so that we might continue to faithfully grow and serve the Lord together. We are truly one loved and well cared for congregation!

Mt. Zion Church Staff who faithfully serve the congregation each and every week during the year continued to grow and learn better ways to help be of service to all who worship at our church by attending two (2) staff training and development seminars at the Crystal Cathedral and Harvest Church in Riverside.

Thirty-four (34) youth and children graduates were honored during our 2006 graduation program. Mt. Zion's first student to finish medical school – Dr. Mandesha Matthews – was our

guest speaker. It was an exciting year for Mt. Zion as we had the privilege to pray for youth transitioning to young adult life in college and in the work force.

Through the Children's Day Camp – which was filled with Bible training, field trips, food and fun – ten (10) children gave their hearts to Jesus; one child gave their heart to Christ while attending the "away camp." Both teens and children went to Guasti Park, Scandia, Castle Park, and Knott's Berry Farm for a fun filled summer! It was, to say the very least, an extremely productive summer for our children and youth.

God used the Youth and Children's section of our 2006 Vacation Bible to draw one (1) child and two (2) youth to Christ; nine (9) youth rededicated their lives to Christ!

Our children and youth ended their summer during 2006 with the Back to School Explosion Concert (a spirit-filled concert sponsored by the Young Adult Ministry to encourage our children and youth to press forward academically). Over forty (40) backpacks, several gift certificates were given away in addition to cash! What a way to start the new school year!

The Summer Youth Extreme program gave our teenagers an opportunity to experience Quest Software, L.A. Police Headquarters, Ontario Fire Department, Ontario City Hall, Kaiser Permanente Hospital, L.A. Metropolitan Courthouse, One United Bank, the U.S. Postal Service, Fat Burgers (hmmm), Southern California Edison Company, the Los Angeles Mission and the Ann Douglas Center, as well as a trip to Mexico to help feed hungry! What a summer!

The Campus Ministry headed up by our Youth Director is still strong and continued to visit De Anza Middle School, Oaks Middle School, and Ontario High School. A new student-led ministry was established at Diamond Bar High School and three student-led ministries were being developed at Chaffey High School, Upland High School, and Montclair High School.

In addition, in 2006, Mt. Zion entered into a partnership with the San Bernardino County Schools, under the direction of Dr. Herb Fisher, to operate an after-school literacy program. This program includes the AVID program curriculum and other supports to assist students maximize their educational experience.

The Evangelism Team, the Nursing Home Ministry, Angel Tree Ministry, and the Helping Hands Ministry continued in 2006 to lead the church in going beyond the walls internationally. Africa, St. Vincent, West Indies, and Mexico were the three main international outreach efforts during this year.

God blessed our Transportation Ministry with a long awaiting mini-van to fill the gap in "moving people for Christ." Thank you, Lord.

Mt. Zion developed another strategic partnership with law enforcement and the community in 2006. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department conducted an all-county job fair at Mt. Zion with an emphasis on jobs within the Sheriff's Department. We continued to

maintain and foster existing law enforcement relations with the Ontario Police Department by hosting the annual Town Hall meeting (with the Chief of Police and key specialists from the Ontario Police Department serving on the panel).

Once again, Mt. Zion was honored to host for the second time the annual Pomona Valley Ministers Alliance Revival. Dr. Howard John Wesley was the speaker at this 2006 event.

In an effort to improve our service, Mt. Zion underwent an internal reorganization; dividing the church into three major divisions – Ministry Services, Stewardship, and Church Administration. We hired our first Church Administrator, James Young, to oversee the stewardship and administrative divisions. To better utilize our technology and thereby reaching more people, the church hired Rev. Brian Wallace as Director of Marketing. Mt. Zion's website was upgraded (www.MtZionOntario.com), and our Sunday morning projection ministry was started as well. Last, but not least, to enhance administrative efficiencies our Director of Information Technology expanded our existing computer network, increased church data security, and established a proper network maintenance program.

The Trustees and the Maintenance Department continued to exercise good stewardship over the God given resources of our church. A new air conditioning unit was installed for the education building; Room Two in the education building was converted to a five work station office for Ministry Services, the young adult building was given a new roof and plans were moving forward for a complete renovation; the parking lots on the south-side of California Street were paved (Hallelujah!); a fourth classroom was renovated for the pre-school to raise capacity from 36 to 48 students; the pre-school office was renovated and the old library room was renovated to house both the Trustees and the Accounting Departments.

During the year of 2006, God through His sovereign providence moved and took two of His loyal servants from our Deacons' ministry to rest with Him in Heaven. We will deeply miss Deacon Charles Haynes and Deacon Willie Hughes (Texas).

Mt. Zion never ceased to pray for God to protect and preserve the love and unity in His church. With now over 1,200 members and twenty (20) church staff plus five (5) school staff Mt. Zion continued to experience God and we are *convinced* that the story of Mt. Zion's history will consist of the great and mighty things that we never even thought about!

We thank God for the numerous Mt. Zion members and friends who contributed to the development of our 84th year history! Thank you, Lord!

THE YEAR 2007

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

The year 2007 was ushered in following a beautiful evening church concert and good fellowship at our Annual New Year's Eve Celebration. Twelve o'clock a.m. found all in attendance – from the sleepy-eyed children being held in the arms of their parents or other loved-ones to the most seasoned senior citizens – on their knees, prayerful and thankful for the blessings and events that God had brought them through and for all that, He had yet to do in this new year. The delicious fellowship early morning breakfast was welcomed by all.

During 2007, Mt. Zion members continued to grow strong in their worship of the Lord.

Some of the significant milestones were:

James Young began to serve as the full-time Church Administrator.

Our church Constitution and Bylaws were reviewed and updated to reflect necessary changes by a unanimous vote of the congregation.

A full-time staff member was assigned to assist in the Marketing, Singles, and Young Adult Ministries.

The Young Adult Ministry refurbished and dedicated the Young Adult Building!

The Men's Ministry had scheduled and came together for a "general church clean-up day"! Thank you so very much, Men's Ministry!

God provided the Mt. Zion Economic Development Corporation ("MZEDC") with its first Executive Director, Robert Fletcher. Under the new Executive Director, the Board was able to refocus by establishing teams to carry out three key directives in the areas of education, health, and economic improvement.

Seven hundred and fifty (750) visitations were made to convalescent homes during 2007 through the continued and committed efforts of our various outreach ministries.

Other highlights include our Youth Director ministering in Uganda with Missionary Rene to disciple twenty-five (25) young adult musicians as well as to spread the gospel through relevant drama. One hundred and eighteen (118) people gave their hearts to Jesus! Travelling to St. Vincent, West Indies, another ministry team from Mt. Zion taught leadership development and dedicated a theological library with the blessing of the necessary donated items. Our Mexico ministry, interrupted temporarily at mid-year, is expected to resume in 2008. Please keep all who work in this ministry in your continued prayers.

We experienced a record high of seven (7) classes being made available for our Fall Session of Wednesday Night Bible Study! What a blessing and learning experience for all!

THE YEAR 2008

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (Galatians 5:22).

Our 2008 New Year's Eve Celebration began with scriptures, singing and testimonies. As the clock struck 12:00 midnight, we were all on our knees encouraging one another in the scriptures and the promises of God. We thank you, Lord, for yet another year full of your hope, blessings, and love.

Mt. Zion started the year with a \$200,000.00 reduction in the church budget from the previous year of 2007. Six months into the new year of 2008, we reduced our spending an additional \$100,000.00. These reductions reflected the economic recession in America. Despite the need for the reductions, we confirmed that our God ***IS*** "**recession-proof**" and **that He is NOT headed for a depression!** God is still the rich Creator of the heavens and the earth and is still able to do "exceedingly and abundantly" above all that we could ever ask or think (Eph. 3:20)!

God blessed Mt. Zion with two (2) newly appointed Elders – Lionel Newman and Floyd Johnson. God also blessed us with two (2) newly ordained Deacons – John Alfred and Robert Harris and one (1) newly ordained Deaconess – Sandra Alfred.

The various ministries of our church continued to be strong despite the economic downturn of that time. The following is a brief review of the activities and updates of some of our many church ministries:

The Children's Ministry had a vibrant Summer Day Camp with emphasis on spiritual development and lots of fun! During this year, an intensive academic component was added with great success. Both students and parents were extremely pleased with the teachers that helped our children grow academically.

The Children's Church team recruited more male speakers to give Sunday morning messages. In addition, new security measures were implemented to assure the protection and safety of our children.

The Children's Ministry experienced significant growth in the Nursery reflecting an average of ten (10) to eighteen (18) children. The Nursery Sunday School class also grew averaging twenty (20) children each Sunday.

During this period, the members of our Youth Department expanded their career options by visiting such entities as (i) the Marty Group whose emphasis is in manufacturing, (ii) Verizon as to telecommunications, (iii) LAX in regard to transportation, (iv) Los Angeles Mission providing an insight into the homeless missions ministry, (v) the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station which provided a deeper level of understanding of how committed men and women defend our Nation, (vi) NBC Studios in the field of entertainment, (vii) Coldwell Bankers in

regard to the finance world, (viii) the California Highway Patrol showing the inner workings of law enforcement from the "road", (ix) Christian Heritage Care Center which reflected the importance and need for the compassionate care of the elderly, and last but not least, (x) the African American Museum which provided an insight into the culture and history of African Americans.

Mt. Zion's high school students received a "perfect score" - twelve out of twelve! **All** twelve of our high school graduates entered college in the fall of that year! Hallelujah!

Committed to excellence in educating our children in spite of difficult family budget cutbacks caused by a fragile economy, Mt. Zion's Christian School graduated another six (6) kindergartners.

Forty-three (43) youth pledged to abstain from sexual relationships until marriage through our annual True Love Waits Ministry.

In 2008, Mt. Zion's Learning Center staff teamed up with our Children and Youth Department leaders to host our first Parent/Student Readiness Workshop at the beginning of the school year. Parents were introduced to student advocacy by staff of the San Bernardino County Schools. The Middle and High School students were given "AVID" training while elementary school students received "survival training." Preschool parents were given a virtual Pre-Kindergarten training session and the pre-school students received socialization training!

Our Young Adult Ministry also continued to make strides in the areas of discipleship and evangelism. Members of this ministry helped organize an event entitled, "Worship on the Beach," along with ten other churches. Members of this ministry also witnessed outside of our Mt. Zion immediate community - reaching out to those at Ontario Mills, Victoria Gardens and an area on Central Avenue in the City of Montclair. Through outreach efforts such as these, our young adults are experiencing the power of God and the joy of witnessing.

The Wednesday night "Hub" continues to provide a wholesome place where our Mt. Zion young adults can meet and fellowship with their peers as well as to equipping themselves for service through various studies. Although our young adults have several meetings together weekly, they are also intricately connected to the life of the church and participate at all levels. Our Young Adult Ministry is a Holy Spirit directed community of believers that refuse to buy into and thereby be a part of the doctrine of separatism and individualism.

The Adult Ministries at Mt. Zion also focused on the Great Commission during this year. Several new discipleship classes were taught during Sunday School, Wednesday Night Bible Study, "Thursday at Noon" Bible Study and through our Small Accountability Groups. Several of the classes that were offered were Spiritual Disciplines, Parenting, the Book of Romans, Stewardship, Marriage, Exploring the Bible, Fatherhood, Secret Sex Wars, and others.

Both small group and general church fellowships at Mt. Zion have deepened their love for God and for each other through various activities. A few of the activities held in 2008 were:

1. The Annual Church Picnic – which features as its grand finale the long-awaited, highly anticipated softball game – continues to take Christian fellowship to one of its highest level of excitement here on planet Earth!
2. The Couple's Ministry during 2008 focused on marriages by hosting the annual Valentines Dinner, holding classes on Sundays during the Sunday School hour. Counseling is also offered.

The Los Angeles Bible Training School Extension Class held at Mt. Zion started with a record high attendance of nineteen (19) students!

Our Mt. Zion Praise Dancers were highlighted in Sacramento this year and were invited to teach a praise dance workshop locally.

Our Men and Women's Ministries, the Nurturing Ministry, as well as the Deacons' and Deaconess Ministries have played a critical role in helping to meet the unique needs in our Mt. Zion family.

Mt. Zion's Ushers – lovingly and reverently known as our "silent servants" – presented a program on their Annual Usher's Day that filled all who attended with joy, hope, and renewal.

The Lord once again demonstrated His faithfulness toward our mission's team in Africa in 2008. Our Missionary, Sis. Rene Farquharson used her spiritual ears to listen for God's direction and led us into Uganda, Rwanda, and the Congo! Brother Johnnell Williams – our Mt. Zion Youth Director – joined Sister Rene for the second year in a row. Over 3,000 people were lead to Christ using drama, the "Jesus" film, conferences, and revivals!

God also raised up our largest team ever to travel to St. Vincent, West Indies, for the third straight year! Our team of six (including one of our college football players) conducted three concurrent leadership development workshops (Spiritual Disciplines, Deacons training, and Deaconess training). The evening revival focused on relationships. Mt. Zion once again generously donated Dove soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, Tylenol, and reading glasses. We continue to learn that what we take for granted here in America can drastically change the lives for "good" in other parts of the world.

The Helping Hands Ministry, Convalescent Ministry, Singles Ministry, Audio Visual Team along with our Street Evangelism Team ministered to thousands of residents in 2008 with the gospel, food, and singing.

Our Harvest Festival on October 31, 2008 was the best yet with over 700 people from our church and community in attendance for an evening full of games, fun, and the message of the gospel!

During 2008, over twenty-five (25) people were baptized and over one hundred eighty (180) people received the Lord's Supper during home and hospital visits made by the Deacons and Deaconess Ministries.

In 2008, it was very exciting to see the resurgence of Mt. Zion's Transportation Ministry, which remains to be a vital enhancement to our outreach efforts!

A prayer team was also established during this year to intercede before and during the 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. worship services. God continued to bless Mt. Zion with an increase in prayer warriors who continue to hold us up in prayer through all night prayer and Monday night prayer meetings. Each one of us must continue to hold these prayer warriors up in our prayers as well.

Our Church Administration Division played a critical role in improving our financial tracking system for weekly briefings.

God has blessed our Building Campaign to reach the milestone of paying over \$1,000,000.00 on the principle of the land loan! Moreover, the Lord led us to a new architect who had significantly more experience in building churches.

Our 86th Church Anniversary was kicked-off a week earlier in 2008 with a Sunday evening concert wherein we all were lifted to higher heights and deeper depths in Christ through song, worship and fellowship! The following Sunday the entire anniversary program (which included food, bouncers, face painting, singing and preaching) was held outdoors. A good time was had by all in attendance!

With the Lord leading us to build an army of prayer warriors and being more intentional in discipleship, our eyes have not seen, nor has it entered into our hearts all that God has in store for us as we love the Lord our God. (I Corinthians 2:9)

THE YEAR 2009

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

The month of September 2009 is upon us as of this writing. Summer is almost officially over with our children returning to school and just a hint of Fall briefly touches our shoulders in the still of the evening air. The year 2009 is quickly coming to its close as we stop to wonder, "where did the time go." This year has been full of blessings and events. Please read on and see how our Lord and Savior blessed us and "keeps on blessing" us.

We began 2009 once again on our knees in our annual New Year's Eve Service, which this year featured the play, ***The Prodigal Son***, written by Dean Myles, and directed by Johnnell Williams. This service is much more than a tradition at Mt. Zion. The New Year's Service is a show of our commitment and thankfulness to God for remaining steadfast in His promises to us, and our love ones throughout the previous year. It is a time of prayer where we ask God for continued faith and strength to face the "tomorrows" before us. It is a time to say, "thank you Lord." It is through our prayers and commitment to serve the Lord that Mt. Zion continues to move forward. We remain on our knees and in prayer until our Lord returns (Note to all future generations of Mt. Zion: "Please ensure that Mt. Zion moves forward on her knees!").

Our Black History Program this year celebrated African heritage with a view to include the heritage and advancements of other ethnic groups as well. We went beyond "the color of one's skin" and recognized:

Retired Fire Chief Fred Nelson for his courage to promote people of color in the Ontario Fire Department

Police Chief Doyle for courage to promote people of color in the Ontario Police Department;

Retired County School Superintendent Dr. Herb Fisher for his courage to put resources in underprivileged and low performing school districts to address the achievement gap;

Senator Neil Soto for marching with Dr. King and her continued fight for justice amongst all races; and

Pomona School Superintendent Dr. Thelma Melendez for inviting African American Pastors into the schools to help with African American students who are performing below the state standards.

This year, Mt. Zion was selected by the Inland Empire Association, along with twenty-one other churches in Southern California, to pilot the "God's Plan for Sharing" ("GPS"). Four hundred volunteers reached approximately 88,000 homes in a joint effort to fine-tune a strategy to reach every home in America with the gospel by the year 2020. The Mt. Zion Cycling Ministry is featured in the GPS promotional!

Speaking of our Cycling Ministry, this ministry received cycling shirts in May of this year. Members of our Cycling Ministry not only enjoy great fellowship while they exercise but they also enjoy praying and witnessing for Christ in the different communities along the way. The Mt. Zion Cycling Ministry has participated in the following charity rides thus far in 2009 – the Tour de Foothills, Tour de Palm Springs, and the Los Angeles River Bike Run as well as the Cancer Walk in Pomona. Our Cycling Ministry has grown to over thirty (30) riders this year!

This year, Mt. Zion sent three church leaders to Africa to serve with our full-time missionary, Sis. Rene Farquharson. Jeffrey Freeman, Johnnell Williams (this is his third trip) and Pastor Richard Young met Sister Rene in Africa, for three (3) weeks of ministry. Jeffrey taught the musicians and choirs, while Johnnell taught young adults how to spread the gospel through the art of drama. Pastor Young taught the various Pastors key principles regarding the purpose of the church. Sister Rene developed Mt. Zion's Africa Missions Ministry in August of 2002. God has used her in leading Mt. Zion to send necessary funds to purchase the land, build the necessary school buildings, and install a water tank system at the Nakaseeta Primary School in Nakaseeta, Uganda. **Over 200 children were enrolled in the school as of July, 2009!**

Here at home, Mt. Zion's Deacons Ministry held their first annual Deacon's Wives Appreciation Dinner. In an effort to build an army of prayer warriors, Mt. Zion's Deacons and Deaconess restructured our all night prayer service to a "night of prayer" – now starting at 6:00 p.m. through 12:00 midnight. Several "nights of prayer" will be held each year.

This year, Mt. Zion held a "parking lot give-away" – to share our God given blessings with the community around us. God used our Young Adult Director, Brian Wallace, to share the gospel that morning. Throughout the day, the Word of God was shared with our various guests (writing materials were given out throughout the day).

"Hold On, You Can Make It!" a play written and directed by our very own Johnnell Williams, and performed by our Ministry of Arts Department was presented to a full house! This dramatic play was both a church and community ministry endeavor! The standing ovations at the end were proof positive of the successful spiritual impact the play had upon all in attendance!

God has given our "silent servants" – the Usher's Ministry and the Audio Visual Ministry – the gifts of help, administration, and service to faithfully serve Mt. Zion throughout the year. We cannot thank you enough for all that you have done and continue to do for all of us who enter the house of the Lord.

The four-week Summer Children's Day Camp and Youth Xtreme was a huge hit and our God moved on and in the hearts of our children. This year twenty children prayed the prayer of salvation and several were encouraged to read their Bibles more, to pray daily and to be of service for the Lord. The academic emphasis this year was on math, writing, and reading comprehension. The climax trip this year was to Magic Mountain! We thank God for raising up exceptional teachers and support staff for our summer youth ministries.

Vacation Bible School was also another exciting time for Mt. Zion this summer during which nine gave their hearts to the Lord!

During 2009, the fifth Sundays were designated as Mt. Zion's Children and Youth Explosion Sunday's. The Children and youth were designated to lead the worship services and

they are recognized for their accomplishments. The Children and Youth Choirs were re-established and "Glorious" (the Next Generation praise dancers) will serve to praise the Lord on this designated Sunday as well.

Sunday August 30, was one of the great highlights in the 87-year history of Mt. Zion. Twenty saints were baptized at the 11:00 am service. Baptism represents new life in the church. Many of the candidates gave their hearts to Jesus in the children's church. Praise the Lord!

During the period **January 1, 2009 through September 6, 2009, thirty-two (32) new members joined Mt. Zion!** During this same period, Mt. Zion **baptized thirty-one (31) new members!**

Mt. Zion's Boxing Ministry expanded in 2009 to include a girls boxing team. Two of Mt. Zion's boxers won during their participation in the 2009 Golden Glove competition! We had one boxer fight in the State competition in Ventura and won second place.

Our Fitness Program has been growing with more participants signing up every week. The importance of physical exercise and activities, as well as eating healthy, should be a part of our daily routine

Mt. Zion's Wellness Ministry continues to thrive and bring forth their mission statement in educating not only Mt. Zion but also the surrounding community regarding heart health. For the past eight months, the Wellness Ministry has made a special effort to reach beyond the church walls out into the community to bring awareness of the health care disparity that exists within the African American and Latino communities. The year was kicked-off by presenting the first Heart Health Conference at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The conference featured breakout groups focusing specifically on cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, nutrition and physical exercise. Over seventy-five (75) people participated! The conference was presented (i) to encourage heart health screening, (ii) to answer questions and (iii) to hand out pamphlets and brochures on "heart disease" – the number one killer for all Americans!

Giving back to the community is another important focus for the Wellness Ministry. Over thirty-one (31) individuals participated in our bi-annual efforts to collaborate with the American Red Cross Blood Drives during the months of February and December. Mt. Zion and the community contributed enough blood to save **ninety-three (93) lives!**

Once again, Mt. Zion collaborated with the American Cancer Society and the County of San Bernardino Public Health to implement the "Body and Soul – A Celebration for Healthy Eating and Living" and "Champion for Change – A Healthy California." Bringing a nutrition program to Mt. Zion and the community was long overdue. This past July (2009) during Vacation Bible School, the Wellness Ministry kicked off the "Body and Soul" program which encourages everyone to eat at least 5-8 fruits and vegetables each day. **Seventy-three**

participants signed a contract to eat five (5) fruits and vegetables a day along with daily exercise and attending events on nutrition hosted by the Wellness Ministry! Our Wellness Ministry received community support from local businesses in the area, Mt. Zion Economic Development Corporation, Stater Brothers, Albertsons, and Vons!

During the month of October, 2009 Mt. Zion's Wellness Ministry will be handing out pamphlets and brochures on Breast Cancer and breast screening.

God used our very own Pastor Richard Young to install additional lighting in the sanctuary. We were all amazed to see the difference that a few extra lights enhanced our ability to see at night and during the day. On Monday, August 31, 2009, God woke up Milton Harris, owner of Color Floors in Rancho Cucamonga, and spoke to his heart about blessing the church. Once Bro. Harris clarified what God was saying, he loaded up his truck with beautiful Italian porcelain tile, and met his installation crew at the church that same morning and installed tile in all the hallways of the church education building. God also used brother "Jim" to provide two brand new freezers for Helping Hands so that we could triple our capacity to store frozen foods to distribute to community around us.

In August of 2009, the Annual Mt. Zion Church Picnic took place. The fellowship (good conversation, good Christian music and lots of laughter), food (hmm – barbeque chicken, ribs and baked beans, salads, cakes, pies, and Rev. Newman's homemade ice cream just to name a few of the best culinary delights), and fun (from the hula-hoop contest to the year-long awaited softball game) can only be described in two words – okay, maybe three – **ABSOLUTELY POSITVELY AWESOME!**

Two more words that describe our 2009 Church Picnic – THE BEST!

The Year – 2010

Our **Children's Ministry** grew by leaps and bounds during the year 2010! Areas of growth and the establishment of strong, resilient roots were established that showed and continues to show a fruitful lifetime harvest of committed souls. The many activities (such as the Children's Lock-in, Annual Resurrection Play, Summer Adventure Camp, Fall Harvest Festival, Christmas play) are but a few of the activities and highlights of the Children's Ministry in 2010. During the week of July 23, 2010 through July 30, 2010, members of the Children's Ministry joined in with our domestic mission and travelled with forty-three members of Mt. Zion to Tchula, Mississippi to provide multiple ministerial services to one of America's poorest communities!

During the time period beginning October, 2009 through September, 2010, nineteen children and five adults were baptized!

Highlights of **The Couples' Ministry** included, but were not limited to, were the annual Couple's (Valentine's Day) Dinner which provided an evening of fun, food, fellowship and renewal to over eighty (80) attendees! Over fifty (50) attendees participated in the Intergenerational Fellowship event as well. Thank you, Reverend and Mrs. Calloway and Mr. and Mrs. McBride, for your continued leadership, support and creativity in this ministry.

The Cycling Ministry, whose members numbered forty-seven during 2010, participated in various annual charity bike rides (the "Tour de Foothills", and the "Tour de Palm Springs" to name a few) during which they rode distances up to 100 miles while ministering and sharing the Word of God. The Cycling Ministry was one of the new ministries of 2010!

The Deacon's Ministry continued steadfastly in their mission goal to "assist and serve the Pastor, Elders, the entire congregation of Mt. Zion as well as the community at large.

A few of the highlights of 2010 for this ministry included the ordination of Roderick Arrant and the recognition of Osiris Bennett as the newest Junior Deacon to join the ministry. Deacons served the "Lord's Supper" approximately seventy-one times during the time period from October 2009 through September 2010 in addition to

assisting in the baptism of thirty-seven candidates. Also, the Deacon's Ministry extended a very special "thank you" to Deacon David Tait, a longtime servant of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, who was moving out of the country. The Deacon Ministry paid special homage to Deacon Theodore Sneed, a faithful and loving servant, who went home to be with the Lord.

The Helping Hands Ministry continued under the supervision of Ms. Bertha Henderson and her faithful assistants to provide an emergency source of services to the homeless and disadvantaged families of our church and community in the form of food, clothing and transitional housing. Helping Hands served approximately 920 individuals each month. During 2010 approximately twenty-four recipients who attended the bilingual Thursday worship service gave their hearts to Christ!

The Men's Ministry reflected a "doubling" in the attendance and participation in the men's breakfast from the previous year! Due to the successful efforts of the Men's Leadership team, the men of Mt. Zion increased their service levels in the Church. One of the themes for 2010 was to encourage the men of this ministry to increase the mentorship to young adults and boys at Mt. Zion.

During 2010 The Men's Ministry sponsored a successful men's retreat at no cost to the men of Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion was, once again, truly blessed by the members of the Men's Ministry.

The Music Ministry continued to spread the Word of God through "song and dance" during 2010. While constantly striving to grow closer to the Lord Jesus through using the gifts God has blessed them with during Sunday morning services. This ministry also blessed us with their gifts at the following services: Watch Night services on New Year's Eve, the Annual "Worship on the Beach Fellowship" in Manhattan Beach, the "Night of Praise", and our Annual Harvest Festival to name a few.

"Glorious" our Praise Dance Ministry ministered to Mt. Zion and the community through the art of dance and artistic drama during 2010. This ministry performed during 2010 at such events as "Christmas on Euclid", Sunday School plays,

Watch Night Services, Black History Celebrations, True Love Waits ceremonies and at the Annual Praise Dance Fest hosted by Loveland Church.

Our **Sunday School Ministry** averaged approximately 1,375 children in attendance during 2010; that's approximately 343 per week! Mt. Zion's Sunday School Ministry continues to stand upon the ten principles found in our Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and our Core Values.

This ministry participated in and/or held the following activities during 2010 – Discipleship Training, Equipped for Excellence, In-House Training, Sunday School Kick-Off, the sponsorship of youth during the Annual Youth Retreat, the Children's Bible Drill and the first ever Annual Teachers and Worker Appreciation Dinner!

The **Young Adult Ministry**, facilitated by Reverend Brian Wallace, moved ever forward and steadfast in fulfilling their mission statement – "To reach and disciple young adults in their pursuit of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." 2010 highlights include, but were not limited to, the Spring Wednesday evening HUB Fellowship (which drew the largest attendance to date), the formation of a young adult HUB Praise Team to lead worship on Wednesday evenings, the implementation of a young adult orientation and the hosting of the Inland Young Adult Conference! Reverend Wallace also began ministering at Chaffey College in connection with the on-campus College Christian Club.

Our **Youth-in-Action Ministry** continued in 2010 to be just that – YOUTH IN ACTION for Christ all day, every week, each month and throughout the year! Some of the highlights for 2010 were the 2010 Youth Explosion Sunday, participation in the "Growing for Christ Missionary Tour" to Tchula, Mississippi, the admission of "all" active graduating high school seniors to college, the "Youth Lock-In", a workshop entitled, "Youth Male Awareness", and 1 six-week study program promoting abstinence entitled, "True Love Waits".

Mt. Zion's **Wellness Ministry** continued to reach out not only to our church community but well into the community itself promoting awareness of health care

disparities that exist within the African-American and Latino cultures. During 2010, the Mt. Zion's Wellness Ministry partnered with the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, and the County of San Bernardino Public Health to implement the "Body and Soul" program entitled, "A Celebration for Healthy Eating and Living" and "Champion for Change – A Healthy California"!

Our **Missions Ministry** continued its outreach in 2010 to the far-reaching land of Southern Sudan, Western Upper Nile and was full of, as per Missionary Renee "God's amazing grace". Those in attendance at the various workshops earnestly requested to "Please come back and teach us again and schedule us often for training." Pastor Richard Young and Johnnell Williams ("Youth in Action") also travelled to Southern Sudan with Missionary Renee during 2010!

On March 5, 2010 **Mt. Zion Christian School** celebrated their 8th Year Anniversary! The school continues to offer quality Christian child care and pre-school programs for children two years of age through Kindergarten. There were six (6) students who graduated from the kindergarten class in June, 2010!

Mt. Zion's **Vacation Bible School 2010** saw an average daily attendance of 98 students! The total enrollment for the summer of 2010 was 150 students, 15 teachers and 12 Vacation Bible School workers! Participants of all ages demonstrated great enthusiasm during the daily Bible lessons taught, through song, arts and crafts and Bible Study, to name a few. Nine students accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and 4 were baptized!

During **Black History Month 2010** our theme was "Where Do We Go From Here" using Philippians 3:12-14 as our Scriptural reference. Highlights of the program also included the introduction of Mt. Zion's Children Bible Drill Team!

"Let the games begin!" The **2010 Mt. Zion Church Picnic** was yet again a huge success! Our top "chefs" were once again in true form and Sister Quan and her "popcorn stand" was, as always, the booth to visit! Picnic attendees also took the opportunity to celebrate Pastor Kennedy's 50th birthday surprising him by bringing (in

secret) his Mom, family and "special friends" to this event. As a tribute to Pastor Kennedy, the Picnic Committee inaugurated the "First Annual Brian E. Kennedy Relay Race"!

The Year – 2011

Mt. Zion Structural Upgrades - Mt. Zion began several physical improvements and upgrades during 2011 such as new landscaping improvements of our shrubs and flowers, eco-friendly plants, brick planters, new sprinkler systems, a new air condition unit for our Sanctuary, fresh painted textured walls and new carpet in classrooms in the Children Center. Other improvements throughout Mt. Zion were "tender loving care renovations" to repair the tile wall and painting of the walls in the restroom area of the Mt. Zion Café area.

Missions – Ontario and beyond - During 2011 Pastor Kennedy and Johnnell Williams joined Missionary Renee and other local team members **in Rwanda and Uganda!**

Pastor Kennedy's key role was to teach senior Pastors, associate ministers and other church leaders. Johnnell utilized his expertise by helping local youth and young adults increase their understanding of the death of Jesus through four dramatic productions.

In **Tchula, Mississippi Mt. Zion's Mission team** members received a warm welcome from the community members during their 2011 vision ministry. While in Jackson, Mississippi the Mission Team also visited several family members of Mt. Zion members who were ill or in the hospital. Missionary Renee had the opportunity to spend several afternoons teaching Vacation Bible School and other related activities with the children of that community as well.

Mt. Zion continues to grow in all areas! A couple of our **church growth highlights in the Discipleship ministry** for 2011 were:

(i) Our "Street Evangelism Ministry" has been given a new name and an expanded vision; it will now be called the **"I Care Ministry"**! This ministry will visit members who are ill or shut-in at home or in hospitals, follow-up on missing members, etc.

(ii) Mt. Zion formally launched the one-on-one six month discipleship-training ministry through Pastor Kennedy's Doctor of Ministry project. This ministry will address needs that our excellent small and large group discipleship ministries currently do not address.

Our **Small Group Bible Study** experienced their first Facilitator Training on March 19, 2011. This ministry's purpose is to help members become transformed believers by learning the Bible, to facilitate a Bible study, and to motivate others to do the same while building relationships as a means to sharing the gospel.

Update on Mt. Zion's "18 Acres of Land" - We continue to pay off the note on the 18 acres of land and deposit funds into the bank for Phase One of our building project. In addition, we entered into a five-year lease towards the latter part of 2010 with Beneficial Ag Services (a reputable green waste company that produces wood chips and other unique green waste products by grinding leaves and tree branches into mulch.) Beneficial Ag Services, during this time period blessed, Mt. Zion with mulch for the parkway on Laurel Avenue and a \$3,500.00 donation to repair the roofs on the Helping Hands and boxing gym buildings!

During 2011, members of Mt. Zion gave a substantial sum to support our efforts to pay off the mortgage on the 18 acres of land on Grove and Chino Avenues in the amount of \$997,875.51!

Our **Children's Ministry** continued to grow in all areas – especially in the area of "discipleship. A few of the highlights for this ministry include, (i) an average attendance of 50 children attending Sunday School, (ii) an average of 3 baptisms per month, (iii) 80 visitors to Children's Church between September 2010 and August 2011, (iv) 5 new families whose children enrolled in Children's Church, and (v) 2 new children are now "Jr. Deacons".

Other highlights include, but are not limited to, our (i) **2011 Summer Adventure Camp** which had an enrollment of 45 children, (ii) the participation of six children from the Children's Ministry in the **2011 California Statewide Bible Drill**

Competition and (iii) our **Children's Lock-in and Prayer Walk** with an attendance of 30 children!

The Couples Ministry conducted two events during 2011 to strengthen our couples at Mt. Zion. **The Couples Ministry** Valentine's Dinner was a huge success! The Art of Marriage conference was also held during 2011. The Art of Marriage Part 2 is planned for 2012.

The Cycling Ministry, founded by Deacon Harris Booker, Pastor Brian Kennedy, Sr. and Pastor Richard Young in 2007, continues to participate in numerous 25, 50 and 100 mile charity rides as well as their Monday morning rides.

Highlights of **The Deacon's Ministry** for 2011 include (i) serving approximately 50 members, (ii) assisting with the baptism of approximately 30 converts, (iii) the ordination of 3 new Deacons – Deacon David Barnett, Deacon Robin Coachman, and Deacon Charles Wade, (iv) visiting the sick and shut-in, and (v) conducting the Night of Prayer where there were 181 members in attendance! During 2011 **The Deacon's Ministry** included 25 Deacons and 3 Trainees, 2 Emirates and 4 Jr. Deacons!

The **Helping Hands Ministry** continues to serve and bless members of Mt. Zion and our community at large through providing food and assistance to those in need. In 2011 this ministry fed an average of 390 individuals per month as well as an additional 150 to 200 individuals during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays! The **Helping Hands Ministry** also provided Outreach Worship Services every Thursday.

The 2011 **Mission Ministry** set many milestones as they continue to spread God's Word through Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. Our beloved Pastor Kennedy brought forth the message of God in Rwanda during his very first visit to that country! Each year on a Sunday, Missionary Renee and others travel via motor bikes and visit six to eight churches. Pastor

Kennedy travelled and taught at each church during his 2011 mission trip! Johnnell Williams also accompanied Pastor Kennedy during this mission trip.

Our **Music Ministry** is forever faithful in providing us with the sheer joy of hearing songs of praise and worship. This ministry continued to grow throughout 2011 and maintained a steady membership of approximately 29 to 30 members. A few of the events which the **Music Ministry** performed during their busy calendar year were, but not limited to, songs and praise at the Annual Martin Luther King Breakfast, our Easter Sunrise Service on Euclid Boulevard and a concert series held at Christ Memorial Church in San Fernando, California.

In 1999 our **Nursing Home Ministry** only consisted of 2 workers and one facility. In 2011 this ministry continues to bless and be blessed with a team of over 12 workers and three facilities in which to comfort and bring forth the Word of God to the residents.

"Glorious" our **Praise Dance Ministry** was blessed with an additional 10 new members in 2011 whose ages range from 5 to 55! This ministry continues to minister at various other church services, retreats and conferences in addition to having the opportunity to be a model to others.

Mt. Zion's **Sunday School Department** continues to grow! This ministry of committed leaders and teachers continues to assist all in their teaching and outreach. We truly thank the Lord for our Sunday School growth knowing that He has more blessings for this department. This Ministry was honored to sponsor 6 children at the 2011 Second Annual Children's Bible Drill. Each of our children that participated came back as winners of the State Bible Drill Competition finals!

Our **"HUB" Ministry**, under the guidance of Pastor Brian Wallace, continues to help reach and disciple young adults (who are in their 20s and 30s) in their pursuit of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in and during the many phases and challenges of life. The **"HUB" Ministry's** first theme of the year 2011 was "Convicted Christian"; throughout that year many other outreach programs and projects were available such as (i) an outreach called "WOW Jam!" that reached communities within the City of Pomona, (ii) witnessing by Pastor Brian Wallace and HUB members at Chaffey College

during an "explosion outreach", (iii) "Project Exit" where bags of food and toiletries were handed out to the homeless, (iv) the 2011 Inland Youth Adult Conference, and (v) organizing the "5th Annual Worship on the Beach" in August of 2011 just to name a few!

Mt. Zion's **Usher Board**, which began as early as 1988 with Sis. Cathy Tait serving as Head Usher along with Bro. Bill Mann and Sis. Bertha Henderson, had grown to 36 members in 2011! Today, our ushers continue to serve us faithfully and efficiently whenever called upon. Mt. Zion's 6th Annual Usher Day Program (2011) was a huge success!

During the early evening hours of July 11 through July 15, 2011, Mt. Zion members and friends removed the constraints of their Stacy Adams and/or high heel shoes, slipped into their flip-flops, grabbed a pail and shovel and headed for oceans of fun at our **2011 Vacation Bible School ministry!** The theme, "Beach Blast - Dig into God's Faithfulness!" established the group activities and discussions for the week. Teaching and discussion topics were, "Dig into God's Promises", "Dig into God's Provision", "Dig into God's Power", "Dig into God's Plan" and "Dig into God's Presence"! Each night ended with a "worship rally" and all "beachcombers" were encouraged to be "fishers-of-men". An average of 120 "beachcombers" attended **Vacation Bible School** each night! We were also blessed by the eight visitors who also attended and participated in this event!

Mt. Zion's **Wellness Ministry** continued in 2011 to make great strides in reaching beyond our church to bring awareness of health care disparities that exist within the African-American and Latino communities. During 2011, the **Wellness Ministry** had six faithful screeners checking blood pressures on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. Mt. Zion once again partnered in 2011 with the American Red Cross in sponsoring another blood drive with 12 units being donated which would ultimately benefit thirty-six people! The Fitness Program also grew during 2011!

Our **Women's Ministry** reported in 2011 that, through working collectively together, they have successfully ministered to approximately 196 people! The various **Women's Ministry** teams (Hospitality Team, Greeting Team, Praise & Worship Team, Event Team, Mother's Day Luncheon Team, Prayer Team, Health and Fitness Team and

Calling Tree Team) continued to minister to the women of Mt. Zion and that the attendance at their monthly **Women's Ministry** meetings have noticeable increased!

Mt. Zion's **Youth-in Action Ministry**, which was established in 2003, has grown from the initial approximately 50 youths to 90 youths in 2011! A few of the activities in 2011 were evangelistic training, conducting Weekly On-Campus Bible Clubs, Youth Xtreme, Children/Youth Explosion Sunday and many more. Several conferences – "The Tsunami Student Conference" and "True Love Waits" were also held during 2011 with thousands attending "True Love Waits" from all over California!

The **Mt. Zion Christian School** year began September 7, 2010 with lots of excitement and enthusiasm! Field trips, Back-to-School Night, and other events were but a few of the events on the school's calendar for 2010-2011! On June 9, 2011 **Mt. Zion Christian School's** annual commencement was held – five (5) students walked down the aisle in cap and gown to receive their graduation diploma which would open the door to their future in First Grade and beyond!

Listen to the distant laughter, singing and conversations as you walk across the parking lot onto the grass. Can you smell the scents of barbequed chicken, ribs, and hot links? Can you almost taste the salads, fruits and desserts that you know have already arrived? The attendance was at near park capacity and all were enjoying the fellowship, friendship and fun of this annual event. From the baseball games to the hula hoop contest to the smell of popcorn to the taste of Reverend Newman's homemade ice cream to the sounds of gospel songs – it all bespeaks of nine words – "Welcome to the **2011 Annual Mt. Zion Church Picnic!** "

Mt. Zion's **Harvest Festival** is one of its main ministry outreach events! The **Harvest Festival**, which takes place each year on October 31st, experienced an attendance of over 800 attendees in 2011! This event provides an alternative for our children and youth to "trick or treat" by offering pony rides, a petting zoo, face painting, sumo wrestling and many other activities as well an opportunity to minister to the community. During the **2011 Harvest Festival** two people gave their lives to Christ as the message went forth. Word has it that the **2012 Harvest Festival** will be even larger! See you there!

The Year – 2012

Bricks, Mortar and Parking

Upon the dawn of a new year – 2012 – Mt. Zion's Trustees placed upon the table of discussion before Pastor Kennedy and other church leaders the subject of how Mt. Zion might maximize our existing church facilities by increasing the number of seats in the sanctuary and classrooms as well ways to increase our parking capacity. The state of the economy nationwide is a major factor to a viable plan and discussions on this subject are still ongoing.

Due to the current economic state of our country which has affected many, if not all households, the new church building project has been delayed for approximately five years. In the interim, Mt. Zion's church leadership members have been and continue to review and implement several projects where space and other areas of concern might be maximized until the move to our new church can be facilitated.

Despite the restriction on moving forward on certain plans to accommodate our growth, improvements to assist our members and visitors and to refresh our church have been made in the following areas:

(i) The purchase of two passenger vans to provide transportation to our members, who lack transportation or are unable to drive, so they might attend Sunday Service, Sunday School, Bible Study, and other church-related activities and/or functions. With the purchase of the passenger vans, **Mt. Zion's Transportation Ministry** has now been re-established!

(ii) Installment of a "lift chair" located in the west stairwell to assist our members and visitors with physical mobility challenges and to afford them the opportunity to be a part of those activities, luncheons, meetings, etc. that are held in the Mt. Zion Café

(iii) Painting of the Educational Building, Youth Building, lobby and the "side-rooms" in the Sanctuary;

(iv) Repair and painting of the restroom located downstairs in the Mt. Zion Café area;

- (v) Replacement of the floors located in the Baptism Rooms and Youth Building;
- (vi) Re-roofing of the Education Building and Gym;
- (vii) The completion of ironwork on the handrails leading into the Sanctuary, entrance to the Sanctuary on the east-side of the church, and entrance to the youth building.
- (viii) Mt. Zion has entered into a lease agreement to use land directly adjacent to our existing overflow parking lot (behind the Youth Department and Helping Hands buildings directly across the street from the Church Sanctuary) to ease existing parking challenges. This additional parking lot space will also help us to reach beyond the 800 plus people that Mt. Zion ministers to during our annual Harvest Festival held on October 31st.

Ministries

Mt. Zion has been truly blessed by the ministers that have always been, and continue to be, dedicated to the growth and service of our church! Due to this dedication and commitment of our ministers, Pastor Kennedy started an **Ordination Preparation Class** in 2012 with the intent of ordaining several ministers who have consistently demonstrated Christlikeness, commitment, and ministerial competencies that ordination demands.

(I Timothy 3:1-7)

On January 1, 2012, the Mt. Zion Sunday School launched our formalized **One-on-One Discipleship Training**. This discipleship training equips Christian disciples to make loyal followers of Christ by using the Mt. Zion Core Values as an integral part of their foundation. Mt. Zion's **One-on-One Discipleship Training** is the direct result of Pastor Kennedy's Doctor of Ministry Project at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. As a result of Pastor Kennedy's work, he has concluded that (i) one-on-one discipleships is the choice method for core values transference and (ii) that one-on-one discipleships aim to produce optimal long-term results by utilizing multiple intelligence, brain learning, and emotional intelligence theories.

Blessings come in so many unexpected ways. Mt. Zion's **Parking Lot Attendants** are just one of our abundant blessings. As we turn onto California Street and approach the various Mt. Zion church parking lots, all are greeted with a smile and assistance by Mt. Zion's **Parking Lot Attendants**, Our attendants, made up of

Deacons, teachers and members, faithfully greet our members, visitors and friends each and every Sunday – rain or shine! Our **Parking Lot Attendants** faithfully maximize our limited parking with a positive attitude and a desire to reduce any inconveniences as well as to expedite members and guests getting into Sunday School or the Worship Service in a timely manner. Once inside our Sanctuary, all are met by smiling greeters and our awesome ushers (known as the “silent servants”) who provide a program of the service and one of the best seats in our Sanctuary! It is well known that EVERY seat at Mt. Zion, is the “best seat” and there is plenty good room for all!

We, at Mt. Zion, are thankful and truly blessed for the exceptional service provided by our **Parking Lot Attendants, Greeters and Ushers** Sunday after Sunday, year after year!

Mt. Zion’s Audio Visual dedicated team is in a league by itself – they are second to none in every area of their expertise in providing quality sound and video clips, power-point presentations, CDs and DVDs, U-stream feed, to name just a few! This ministry has always and continues to provide first-class, cutting edge technology within their field so that the Word of God goes forth to Mt. Zion, our community and the world.

The year of our Lord 2012 has been an extremely blessed year for the deacons at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Several faithful men have committed to serve God as a Deacon through the **Deacon’s Ministry** this year! During the course of this year the **Deacon Ministry** facilitated two all Night Prayer services, ordained three new deacons and further developed

the Junior Deacon Ministry. These are just a few of the highlights so far this year. Each Deacon strives to maintain a heart of service. To facilitate this endeavor, the **Deacon Ministry** provides monthly meetings/trainings and encourages all deacons to attend and/or teach a weekly Sunday School class. God has truly blessed the **Deacon Ministry**. Through faithful service to God at Mt. Zion, the **Deacon Ministry** has been able to grow both spiritually and in membership.

The **Men’s Ministry** faithfully continues to prepare the remarkable breakfast for their ministry held on the fourth Saturday of each month. Mt. Zion has been blessed with Pastors and leadership team members who have encouraged full participation of all men of the church. Goals for the Men’s Ministry in 2012 include becoming a more dedicated Prayer Warrior and to develop an ability to assist our family members and others to become Prayer Warriors, to desire to evangelize and work consistently to create loyal followers of Jesus Christ and to better manage our health, both prevention

and sickness issues. "Serving others just makes a man feel good." (Anonymous Deacon).

The **Women's Ministry** focus for 2012 is based on Mt. Zion's seventh Core Value – Faithful Service. During 2012 we have and will continue to connect with the young girls (ages 12-17). Mt. Zion's **Women's Ministry** is committed to encourage all women to attend our monthly meetings where through fellowship we can strengthen our walk with Jesus and receive a sincere, loving welcome.

The **Children's Ministry** continues to have something for every child of every age! From the Summer Adventure Camp to the Children's Lock-in and Prayer Walk to the "Bible Drill (of which all six participants were winners and two of the six were "perfect" winners), to the Easter Play, Sunday School, Children's Church, Christmas Art Academy, "Stitched!" and the Harvest Festival! At our Children's Sunday School Department annual Christmas Program, 50 children participated in the program! The 2012 goal of our **Children's Ministry** is to grow in the area of discipleship and to develop a stronger relationship with the parents.

The **Cycling Ministry**, established in 2010, continues to meet every Monday morning in front of the church. Travelling at times up to 100 miles, each ride provides exercise for both the heart and the soul of each participant as they minister and share the Word of God along the way.

Helping Hands, established circa 1973, continues to assist both members and the community in providing transitional housing, food, clothing, community service credits for court referrals, etc. **Helping Hands** continues to feed an average of 490 people each month. Their Thursday morning bilingual worship services average approximately twenty people who have accepted the invitation to give their life to Christ. During the holiday seasons, **Helping Hands** feed 250-300 church members which also include local community residents. In addition, an average of 25 food bags are prepared each month and delivered to senior citizens that reside in the City of Ontario. Volunteer transportation to seniors who wish to attend Thursday Morning Bible Study and transportation to medical appointments is available upon request!

In July 2012, Mt. Zion changed our management over the boxing program and entered into a partnership with the **Ultimate Warriors Boxing Academy**. Under the new management, the gym was renovated and new procedures and systems were put into place to ensure the safety of all boxers and trainers as well as to better position all participants for a bright future in boxing.

Missions/Evangelism

Pastor Kennedy and Johnnell Williams joined Mt. Zion's **ministry team in Rwanda and Uganda** (Missionary Renee Farqueharson), in Africa in 2012. During the 2012 mission, Pastor Kennedy participated in four intensive "Pastors conferences" and plays entitled, "From the Murder of Jesus to the Mind of Christ".

The year of 2012 marked Mt. Zion's third year travelling to **Tchula, Mississippi**. This mission continues to be a source of encouragement to all involved. Thirty-two members which included the Youth of Mt. Zion travelled to Tchula, Mississippi (located in Holmes County – which is documented to be one of the poorest counties in America) to lead Vacation Bible School (held in a local park), teach parenting skills development (held in a local apartment complex) and to lead a Revival in a local church. During this mission trip, we also conducted our first community forum at a local high school "basketball tournament". To enhance the economy, we renovated the building in which housed a tire shop and poured concrete in front this building as well. Mt. Zion also purchased a new tire changer for the tire shop owner. During this mission we also visited with several residents who received the seeds Mt. Zion had donated to grow food in their backyards and on their farms. In the city of Yazoo, we preached the Word of God in the prison as well as in the city of Lexington at the request of members of the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church (which hosted the revival). It was truly an experience and thrill to see our young people learn how to operate a jack hammer, paint, cut lumber, plan and prepare meals for a large group of people, conduct Vacation Bible School and perform so many other tasks during this mission trip.

During the first eight months of 2012, there were several informative forums held at Mt. Zion; please continue to check your bulletin and our website to learn of other conferences and/or meetings scheduled in the future. A few of the forums held are as follows:

- Mt. Zion's strategic partnership with the community has once again proven invaluable with the Ontario Police Department in regard to addressing acquaintance rape, the laws regarding sexual relations among minors, and other crime prevention issues.
- The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department visited Mt. Zion to discuss human trafficking and designer drugs.
- Most recently, a physician from Kaiser Permanente discussed the importance of "advanced directives" and the concerns and challenges

surrounding "pulling the plug" (the decision of terminating life due to an irreversible vegetative state).

Mt. Zion's **2012 Summer Adventure Camp** was an awesome experience for all in attendance. This year, 50 children participated in our first ever "six week" camp! Our **Summer Adventure Camp** provided not only a great time to be with friends and to make new friends, it also provided an opportunity to learn or reinforce those areas of the school curriculum which a student will face in the Fall on an one-on-one basis if necessary. During our **2012 Summer Adventure Camp** days were full of swimming, skating, devotions, math, reading and reading comprehension, science and Spanish, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm to name just a few. Mr. Barnes' class (5th and 6th grade) and Miss O's class (3rd and 4th) ended their summer class with an Awards Ceremony attended by many of the parents and grandparents!

In June of 2012, Mt. Zion celebrated the graduation and advancement of 20 high school and college graduates, in addition to 22 pre-school through eighth grade graduates. 2012 produced the most graduates in the history of our church! Dr. Yolanda Morgan, Vice Chancellor of Admissions of UCLA (a member of Mt. Zion) and Dr. Gary Thomas, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools congratulated and encouraged our students and congregation to excel for the good of humankind during this **graduation ceremony**.

"Fishin' on a Mission" (Matthew 4:19) was the theme for Mt. Zion's **2012 Vacation Bible School** which was held July 23 through 27! Over 400 delectable dinners were served in the Mt. Zion Galley! The Bible Study held classes for an average of 150 individuals (ages 18 months through adult) each night. "Fishermen" laughed at Uncle Roscoe's silly skits, sang praises to God, created cool crafts, played great games, and most importantly, learned how to become a "great fisherman" for Jesus!

Mt. Zion's Nursing Home Ministry continues to provide visitation to two Nursing Facilities in Pomona, California on the second Sunday of each month as well as conducting a Church Service at a facility for moderate Alzheimer patients in Upland each fourth Sunday. **The Nursing Home Ministry** prays that the Lord will bless their ministry and enlarge its territory.

Our **Nurturing Ministry** continues to move toward and meet their goals during the year of 2012. New goals for the Nurturers are to enroll all new members in One-on-One Discipleship training. Since January, 2012 forty (40) new members have been nurtured into our church family!

Mt. Zion's Senior's Noon Bible Study was started years ago by the late Rev. Lionel Newman, Sr. Throughout recent years, the classes have been faithfully taught by Rev. Thomas Kemp, Rev. Floyd Johnson, David Barnett and the late Al Percy Bennett, Sr. Membership has grown to a total of over sixty members! Members of **The Senior's Noon Bible Study** are further encouraged by Marsha Hayes, Senior Coordinator, who lovingly reminds all that God still has a purpose for them and that "getting older doesn't mean that they cannot participate in activities but that they can enjoy life to the fullest"! Our Seniors have enjoyed many activities together such as trips to Santa Barbara, San Diego, the movies, lunch outings and to view the "Price Is Right!" to name a few!

In 2012, Mt. Zion's **Married Couples Ministry** sponsored two married couple conferences. The purpose of the conferences was to give couples hope during the many challenges that married couples face. Our "The Art of Marriage" conference event was presented as the first conference of the year and consisted of six video sessions featuring real-life testimonies, expert interviews, and humorous vignettes. The second conference was facilitated by Dr. Gloria Morrow.

Mt. Zion's Music Ministry continues each and every Sunday to bless us with songs of praise and worship by their exquisite voices of the Choir which are accompanied by world-class musicians, and holy Praise Dancers "Glorious". Our **Music Ministry** supports Pastor Kennedy both at Mt. Zion and at other churches when he is called upon to speak and provides musical support to other ministries at Mt. Zion as needed.

In 2004, "**Glorious**" became the official name for the praise dance ministry. "**Glorious**" ministers to our congregation every third and fifth Sunday for both the 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. "**Glorious**" continues to be faithful to glorify God in dance and to outreach to other churches, serving as mentors.

Mt. Zion's **Youth In Action Ministry** continues to reach out to those young people in Middle school through high school! This ministry consists of weekly Bible studies, abstinence programs such as "True Love Waits", summer projects, mission projects, college preparation, a weekly prayer team and youth conference, just to name a few! In 2012 once again **Youth In Action** served in their community and beyond from helping those who reside in Senior Assisted Living to the mission fields of Tchula, Mississippi. The youth ministry website, www.youthinaction.biz has become the main source of information for youth and parents using smart phones and computers. A newly formed partnership with parents of our teens this Fall is expected to grow the youth, their families and the ministry to an all new level in Christ.

In temperatures that reached 105 degrees in the Inland Valley, **Mt. Zion's Annual Church Picnic** was in full swing! For the first time in our 90 year history, our congregation and the surrounding community experienced "up close and personal" Mutual of Omaha's Wild Animal Kingdom at the picnic! Wow! During the picnic animal handlers of the exhibit

explained the contribution of each animal to our world and encouraged us to appreciate the animals and their habitat as we share Earth with them. Great food, organized games, blood pressure checks, fitness tips, and just plain "fun" filled this special event and day. If you have not attended **Mt. Zion's Annual Church Picnic** then you've never really attended a "real" old fashion "in-the-day" picnic!

Honorable Mention

Our own member at Mt. Zion, Floyd Clark, was promoted to Ontario Fire Chief! Chief Clark is the first African-American to be promoted to this position in the history of the City of Ontario!

Remembering . . .

Mt. Zion hearts were moved beyond expression at the home-going of four of our elderly members, three of whom were in their nineties, during the first half of 2012 – Mother Willa Francis Bratton (99), Mother Ellen Hatter (97), Mother Birdie Lee Moore (90), and Rev. Lionel Newman (86). While each one will be missed beyond words, we yet rejoice knowing that they are now with the Lord.

The future of Mt. Zion is bright. The aerial renderings of the eighteen (18) acre development on Chino Avenue and Grove have brought renewed excitement and a deeper determination to submit to the perfect plan of our Lord.

We have celebrated the lives of many members and loved ones that went to heaven since our 2009 church anniversary. Our hearts are heavy each time we think about them, yet God brings us comfort in knowing that we will see them again. We thank God for the faithfulness of the Mt. Zion Ushers, Choir, Deacons, Deaconess, Ministers, and the Hospitality ministries for faithfully serving families in their time of bereavement.

Mt. Zion is a blessed church and God's hand is upon us. We are all traveling together on this journey called "life." Together we share its joys and we bear each

other's burdens and heartaches. If someone stumbles, we help him or her get to his or her feet; if someone veers off course, we urge him or her back. On this journey, Christians are ***all*** brothers and sisters in the same family – God's family (I Corinthians 12). Hence, despite the "Great Recession" in America this year, we are determined to survive and thrive on the promises of God (Psalm 23:6).

As Mt. Zion's history continues to unfold, the Key Leadership team is committed to pursuing our strategic direction which is (1) building an army of prayer warriors and (2) intentionally making loyal followers of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).