



Ocho Rios Church of Christ is 30 years old

By: Jovel Johnson

The recent robberies could not stop the Ocho Rios Church of Christ's elaborate official celebration of its 30th Anniversary, which started on Ocean Village Shopping Centre in Ocho Rios with much excitement. With the Prospect College Marching Band leading the procession with pulsating sounds of trumpets, brass and drums, followed by church members and sister churches, the journey started from the shopping centre, through the town of Ocho Rios. The march took place on Sunday, February 20.

The journey took them through Main Street passing Burger King, National Commercial Bank (NCB), Soni's Plaza and the clock, onto Evelyn Street, and straight to the church. There, the marching band continued in their spectacular display of showmanship.

Chairman of the celebration service and pastor of the Constant Spring Church of Christ, Albert Thompson, said that the church and its members should be grateful for being around for 30 years. "We should be grateful that the church has been around for so long, especially those who were here from the start," he said.

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Steadman Whyte, Chairman of the Churches of Christ Jamaica Incorporated, said he felt proud and extended his sincere congratulations to the church for going on for so long. "The church should hold on to its principles, especially in spreading the word of God," he said.

Custos of St. Ann, R.O. Walters, said, "As our challenges continue, and as people become more callous, the role of the church becomes more important." He said that the church is being hailed by on-lookers as not doing anything. "No one can say that the Church has not impacted the society, especially in education," he said.

Carol Jackson, Councillor for the Ocho Rios area, lauded the church in its many efforts in the community. "When I heard about the break-ins, I was troubled by them, but the church should hold strong," she said. She continued, "I know that you have done a lot in 30 years, but we need to do more for the glory of God. The church is the vehicle in which we can make change."

Pastor Gloria Gayle of the Ocho Rios Methodist Church and Secretary of the Ocho Rios Ministers Fraternal, also lauded the church for its efforts. "The anniversary of any church is a great thing. Thirty years may seem like yesterday, but it is a generation. It is a time to take stock, reminisce and make plans for future goals. With so much going on, we need to thank the Lord for helping the church for pushing it through for 30 years," she said.

A Call to Praise and Thank Almighty God

Pastor Donald Morris, under the theme "A Call to Praise and Thank Almighty God", spoke of how far the church has come. "Thirty years - that's a long time. Thirty years to still be standing, to still be encouraged and to spread the word of God is a good thing. This is a day to praise and thank God," he said. How should we answer to the call to praise and thank God? "We ought to be thankful unto God and bless his name, banishing bad things out of our hearts. The over \$1 million dollar damage to the church in robberies and Hurricane Ivan did not discourage the church. I think Pastor [N. Carlton] Mullings and the members of the church should give thanks for moving from a house to His house, and from a few to the many [members] it has now. The ones who stole just don't understand that the joy of the Lord is our strength," he said.

Why should we answer the call? "Because the Lord is God. Man is not God. He may have God-like qualities, but he is not God. If we were God, some of us wouldn't see the sunlight. Not only is the Lord, God, but he is also our creator. We are God's children,



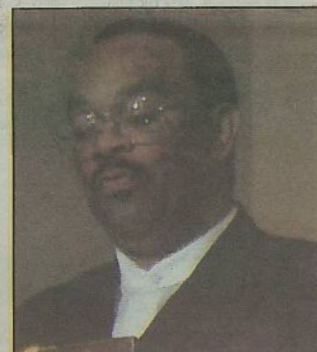
Members of the Ocho Rios Church of Christ enjoying themselves as they marched through the town of Ocho Rios.

made in his image. This God is able to sustain us. I wish we would sometimes believe that," Pastor Morris said.

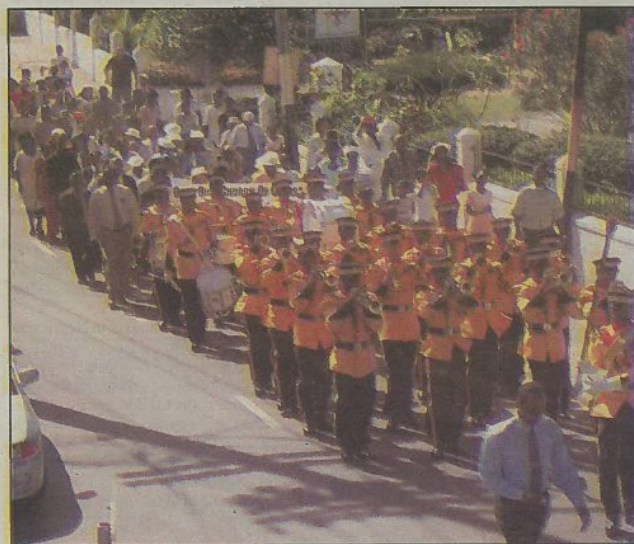
He said that some people get visions bigger than themselves, therefore, they fail to embrace them, but "thank God the vision they had by carrying the church from its infancy was made a reality. Let us just praise and thank the Almighty God," he said.

After the sermon, members of the congregation were invited to light candles around the anniversary cake.

Other churches that were in attendance were Churches of Christ from Beecher Town, Grierfield from Moneague, Northview from St. Ann's Bay, Free Hill, Guy's Hill, Albion Mountain, Claremont, Ewarton, Town Head from Westmoreland, Meadow Brook, Pedro River, and August Town. Other churches that were represented were the New Testament Church of God from England, Ocho Rios Methodist Church, Ocho Rios Gospel Chapel and the Ocho Rios Baptist Church.



Rev. Donald Morris



The Prospect College Marching band leading the procession on Main Street, Ocho Rios.



Young men of the Ocho Rios Church of Christ, Oral Higgings (far left) and Chad Johnson proudly carry the banner of the church during the march.