

Against All Odds

This year the Daughter of Zion Church, Delray Beach, Fla., not only had one, two, or three college graduates, it had a total of eight, with four of them receiving degrees from Oakwood University, Huntsville, Ala.

Many times in the African-American community, it becomes a rarity to have young black men graduate from college.

The odds of becoming a high school or even a college graduate are slim. Only 43 percent of African-Americans who enter college graduate.

For black men that number is 36 percent. The eight graduates beat the odds.

One of the graduates, Denzel M. Gent, almost didn't beat the odds. After he lost his mother to breast cancer during his junior year at Miami Union Academy (MUA), North Miami Beach, Fla., he wanted to give up on his education.

"When I thought back on the many sacrifices that my mother made, and of God's grace and mercy my mother so often spoke of, I



Denzel M. Gent graduated Oakwood University on May 7, with a bachelor's degree in computer information systems. He will pursue a graduate degree from Carnegie Mellon University this fall.

decided to persevere," Gent said.

Four years ago Gent graduated from MUA as the valedictorian, and received a full scholarship to Oakwood University.

While preparing to gradu-

ate from Oakwood this year, Gent was awarded a full scholarship to the prestigious Carnegie Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh, Pa.

God has truly blessed Denzel and the young men

and women of Daughter of Zion who graduated this year.

Ja'Neil Carrington, Terry Caesar, Marlon Boucard, and Denzel Gent all received their bachelor's during the commencement ceremonies held at Oakwood University on May 7, 2010.

Theodore Ceaser, Jean Alexandre, Esther Noel, and Oriana Riley graduated and received their degrees from other institutions this year as well.

Daughter of Zion Church has a group of remarkable young men and women, who against all odds have achieved great academic accomplishments.

—BY EDNA FRANCOIS

Mt. Zion Ordains 13 for Ministry

The Mt. Zion Church, Kissimmee, Fla., held the largest ordination service in its history on March 20, 2010.

A total of 13 individuals were dedicated to God's service — four elders and six deacons.

The elders ordained were Edna Francois, Brenda Hunt, Wayne Morgan, and Pierre Hunt.

Among the deacons ordained, two of whom were 18-year-old young men, were Ean Watson, Carol

Walter Bryan, Larry Louis, Hicksford Francis, Clinton Henry, Adrien Francois, and Deland James.

Emil Peeler, D.Min., director of church growth and discipleship for Southeastern California Conference, delivered the ordina-

tion message.

Peeler admonished the ordainees to use their gifts in ways that would please God, and would be of help to humanity. He shared with them the experience of Uzziah, king of Judah. Uzziah, at the age of 16,

did that which "was right" in the sight of the Lord.

Assisting Maxwell Berkel, Mt. Zion pastor, to officiate the ordination service, were Ron Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., Southern Union Conference executive secretary;

Kevin Bryant, pastor of the Bethel Church, Gainesville, Fla.; and associate pastors Harold Cameron, George Greaves, and Mahatahis Patrick.

—BY EDNA FRANCOIS



The Mt. Zion Church ordained 13 individuals on March 20, 2010. They are pictured above with their families: Edna Francois (seated, left), Brenda Hunt, Wayne Morgan, Pierre Hunt, Ean Watson, Larry Lois, Carol Walter Bryan, Clinton Henry, Japheth Mokuia, Asplid Percinthe, Hicksford Francis, Deland James; Maxwell Berkel (standing, left), Mt. Zion pastor; Adrien Francois; Emil Peeler, D.Min., Southeastern California Conference church growth director (second from right); Ron Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., Southern Union Conference executive secretary.