

SHIELD OF FAITH FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

Merry Christmas

*FROM Apostle Henry B. Alexander PRESIDING PRELATE &
Dr. Marty Alexander*



**Mid-Winter 2024
CONVENTION**
January 11th -12th

Bishop Ron Thomas
Reconciliation
Apostolic Ministries

Apostle Henry B. & Bishop
Marty Alexander
Fellowship Presider

Bishop Stephen Brunson
The City of Praise
Church

Bishop Lawrence Pate
Lighthouse Christian
Church

Bishop Arling Alexander
Shield of Faith Christian
Center, Long Beach

Bishop Tommy Green
Sunrise Mountain
Ministries

Bishop Charles & Pastor
Lisa Dorsey
Lifeline Fellowship
Christian Center

"Moving Forward In Faith"
Exodus 14:15,16

Pastor Shannon Flakes
Guest Speaker

Bishop Hershel & Dr. BJ Strothers

Thursday Morning Seminars:
9:30am - 10:30am
Using Your Spiritual Gifts

Afternoon Seminars:
1:30pm - 3:00pm

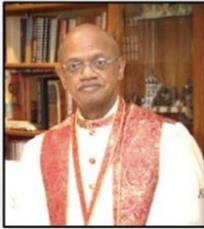
Evening Worship Service:
Worship and The Word
7:00pm

Friday Morning Seminars:
9:30am - 10:30am
"I Am A Church Member"

Afternoon Seminars:
1:30pm - 3:00pm

Evening Worship Service:
Worship and The Word
7:00pm

Bishop Charles Dorsey & Bishop Arling Alexander Pastor Ruben Matuk & Apostle Henry Alexander
Location: Immanuel Praise Fellowship 9592 7th Street Rancho Cucamonga, Ca 91730
Streaming On YouTube: Shield of Faith Media (909) 629-6294 | shieldfellowship.org



“The Presider’s Perspective”

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: (Exodus 14:15)

Welcome to our First Mid-Winter Convention!
We have Gathered for Purpose!

Moving Forward in Faith!

Holy Greetings to those gathered at this convention and to all the Saints of God in the Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches. Despite chaotic times in the world today, God continues to lead His people from one victory to another! We are living proof that *no weapon formed against us shall prosper*. By the limitless power of the Holy Ghost, God’s people continue to move forward, just as Israel did in the Book of Exodus, chapter fourteen.

As Spirit-filled followers of Jesus Christ, we will continue to triumph despite Israel and Hamas, despite Russia and the Ukraine, despite resurgent health issues across America. Every challenge is for us an opportunity to see the glory of God manifested in our lives, in our homes and in our ministries. Accordingly, the theme for our Fellowship in 2024 is “**Moving Forward in Faith!**”

There is no retreat in the work of the Lord. Complex circumstances and difficult seasons are always followed by the manifested Glory of God in the lives of His people. Those who of us are in challenging moments are simply called to hold on, to keep trusting God and to continue declaring victory. As He did at the Red Sea, God will show Himself mighty on behalf of those who trust in Him. Israel had no victory behind them in Egypt! God instructed them to *move forward*, to walk into the Red Sea and cross on dry ground to victory!

Brethren, keep moving forward. Your victory is in your future, not in the past. God promises, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:9). There is victory ahead. Move forward!

Apostle Henry B. Alexander

Shield of Faith Executive Board of Bishops

Bishop Rick Johnson

Bishop Stacy Edmond

Bishop Alan Young

Bishop Deborah Prophet

Bishop Victor Nolen

Bishop Robert Walker

Bishop Ronald Thomas

Bishop Robert Angel

Apostle Joseph Aigbe

Bishop William Hudson

Bishop Bruce Riley

Bishop John W. Thomas

Bishop Howard Colbert

Bishop Marty Alexander

Bishop Hershel Strother

Bishop David Burr

Bishop William Hudson

Bishop Troy Hughes

Apostle Harrison Nichols

Dr. BJ Strother

Bishop Robert Durgan

Bishop Arling Alexander

Bishop Steven Brunson

Bishop Michael Eanes

Bishop Charles Dorsey

Bishop Tommie Green

Bishop Phyrromn Gilmer

Bishop Anthony Hall

Bishop Lawrence Pate

Bishop James Reid



Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches Mid-Winter Convention 2024



“About the Mid-Winter Convention”

*Shield of Faith First
Lady, Bishop Marty
Alexander, D. Min.*



Welcome to an historic moment, the inaugural meeting of the Shield of Faith Mid-Winter Convention! For years we have convened each Spring at a date associated with Resurrection Sunday, but in 2023 God has allowed us to initiate two annual meetings, a Mid-Winter convention in January and our traditional Shield of Faith Annual Convention, now moved to June 5,6,7 &8 2024.

Because the Lord deserves our absolute best, as we enter this meeting, we are thinking of the Mid-Winter Convention as a time of *sharpening our swords*, a sort of *Workers-Conference* in which we come together for the purpose of training ourselves and worshipping the Lord in warm fellowship. In the Mid-Winter meeting we will challenge ourselves to rise to the level of “Best Practices” in every aspect of our ministries. It is our goal to serve the Lord with a quality of ministerial excellence that is second to none.

We have gathered to share ideas and to discuss “what works” in Christian ministry at this challenging hour. We gather to acquire a greater corporate anointing, praying for one another and challenging each other to rise to new levels of ministerial excellence. Where even *two or three* are gathered, there Jesus comes with His healing and reassuring presence. We will leave this meeting edified, strengthened, affirmed and connected to one another as never before. We aspire to live out our motto, **“More than a Fellowship – It’s a Relationship”** in Christ Jesus!

Bishop Dr. Marty Alexander
Diocesan, State of Oregon

Our mission is best described in the prophetic text of Isaiah 58:12 which says, “And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called. The repairer of the breach, the restorer of places to dwell in.”

Our Convention Schedule

Thursday – January 11th

Worship & General Session One (9:30–10:30)
“Using Spiritual Gifts, Accessing the Supernatural” Bishop L. Pate, Facilitator
General Session Two (10:30 – 12:30)
“Developing a Great Church for God” Bishop Rick Johnson, Facilitator

Morning Seminars (10:30–12:30)

- Altar and Power Room Workers Training Min. Mary Madkin and Team
- Evangelism and Soul Winning Pastor Shannon Flakes and Team
- Excellence in Worship Arts Minister Mila Knox and Team
- Issues of Church Administration Bishop M Alexander/Dr. L Dorsey

Lunch Break | 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Afternoon Seminars (1:30 – 3:00) Completion of Morning Material

- Altar and Power Room Workers Pt. II
- Evangelism and Soul-Wining Pt. II
- Excellence in Worship Arts Pt. II
- Church Administration Pt. II

Thursday Evening Worship and the Word - 7PM
Bishop Charles Dorsey and Bishop Arling Alexander

Friday – January 12th

Worship & General Session One (9:30–10:30)
“I Am a Church Member”/ “Follower-ship” Bishop Steven Brunson, Facilitator
General Session Two (10:30 – 12:30)
“Getting Ready For The Rapture” Dr. BJ Strother,

Morning Seminars (10:30–12:30)

- Attracting/Discipling Youth & Young Adults Bishop Ron Thomas and Team
- The Heart of a Spiritual Leader Bishop Tommie Green and Team
- Life-Changing Children’s Ministry Minister DL Ballard and Team
- Pastoral Excellence Apostle Henry Alexander

Lunch Break | 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Afternoon Seminars (1:30 – 3:00) Completion of Morning Material

- Attracting/Discipling Youth & Young Adults Pt. II **Friday Evening Worship**
- The Heart of a Spiritual Leader Pt. II **and the Word—7PM**
- Life-Changing Children’s Ministry Pt. II **Pastor Ruben Matuk and**
- Pastoral Excellence Pt. II **Apostle Henry B. Alexander**

Our Fellowship Mission Statement

“The Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches, International, Incorporated is a reformation/restoration movement raised up by God to assist God’s Church in returning to its biblical foundations.”

Meet Our Presenters



Bishop Stephen Brunson, D. D. Bishop Stephen M. Brunson is Senior Pastor of the City of Praise church located in San Diego County a ministry which he founded and has pastored for twenty-seven years. Bishop Brunson was first filled with the Holy Ghost then baptized in Jesus' Name in 1980. While on deployment in the United States Navy Bishop Brunson was responsible for many coming to Christ and baptized numerous souls in almost every port he visited. Bishop Brunson has been married to his amazing wife and soul-mate Pastor Angela M. Brunson for 40 years. They are parents to four brilliant adult children (one of whom deceased in recent times) and an amazing granddaughter. Bishop Brunson is an alumnus of Southern Illinois University and Point Loma Nazarene University and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree (D.D.) from the Elbon School of Ministry, Apple Valley, California. Ving served as Vic-President of Youth in his former organization, Bishop Brunson has served our Fellowship as Diocesan of the South Pacific Diocese and currently serves as Diocesan for the San Diego Region and member of the Executive Board of Bishops.



Minister Mila Knox was born into an Apostolic family in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is the fifth of ten children born to Pastor Wayne and Lady Virginia Harris. After Pastor Harris was called to the pastorate, Minister Mila served in her father's church from her youth and fell in love with music and worship. In later years, Mila served the Lord as minister of Music for a congregation in Tampa, Florida before relocating to Southern California and becoming choir director and worship leader at Shield of Faith of Pomona under the pastorate of our diocesan, Apostle Henry Alexander. When Apostle Alexander saw the anointing upon her life, Mila was called to serve as a worship leader and choir director at Shield of Faith Church and later appointed as the National Music Director for the Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches. Highly anointed and unconventional in her approach, Minister Mila is gifted in leading others into the presence of the Lord in genuine and passionate worship. She has sung and ministered not only in the US but also in the nations of Europe to the glory of God.



Bishop Arling M. Alexander is the namesake of his father, the late Elder Arling M. Alexander, Sr. Having first come to faith in St. Louis, Missouri in the 1950's Bishop Alexander has strong Apostolic roots which qualify him for foundational service in the Kingdom of God. Trained under the late Bishop James A-1 Johnson and the late Bishop Robert W. McMurray, Bishop Alexander first served as a singer and musician, then as a minister and deacon and finally as the Senior Pastor and Diocesan Bishop that he is today. Married to Pastor Bobbie Battle, he is the father of three daughters and a grandparent. Bishop Alexander now pastors Shield of Faith Christian Center of Long Beach and is the diocesan of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Diocese of Shield of Faith. Professionally, he served the city of Los Angeles as a firefighter for more than 30 years and retired with high honors.



Dr. Marty E. Alexander, B. S, B. A., D.D. is the First Lady of the Shield of Faith Fellowship and a spiritual mother to thousands. She is an ordained pastor and former Senior Pastor of Shield of Faith Christian Center of Pasadena. Married to Apostle Alexander for 51 years, she is the proud mother of Stephanie and Aaron Alexander, grandmother to Eric, Erin and Hannah. Bishop Marty was saved in 1971 in the church which is now Shield of Faith Pasadena. Pastoring with Apostle Alexander since 1981 she has become First Lady of a worldwide ministry. She is currently serving as Diocesan of the State of Oregon for Shield of Faith and has travelled the world preaching the Apostles' Doctrine to churches in Africa, Asia, Europe and Mexico with signs following. Dr. Marty is a graduate California State University at Los Angeles, having earned a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. She pursued graduate studies in Nursing at California State University at Los Angeles and seminary training at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from California State Christian University and a Doctorate Degree in Ministry from the Pentecostal Bible College of Tuskegee. Her service to God has made her a woman much loved by the people of God around the world.

Preparing for Shield of Faith's Annual Convention (June 5th—8th)

Our annual Convention has now been moved to the month of June. dates for this year will be June 5,6,7 & 8, Wednesday through Saturday. Please begin preparation for the Annual Convention by the following means:

1. **Intercession** – Most of all, please begin to pray for God's miraculous presence in the June Convention. Pray that God will speak, souls will be saved, ministry will be empowered and new ministries will join our fellowship.
2. **Make a Commitment to be a SPONSOR** – As a Convention Sponsor your \$100 gift paid *in advance* will make a powerful impact and undergird our Organization for the entire year. Sponsorships amounts vary, with most of the saints committing at the \$100 level. Greater amounts are encouraged. Please make commitments at once.
3. **Make travel and hotel arrangements.** Details can be worked out with the fellowship office at 909.629.6294. Feel free to call for assistance and to be referred to comfortable, affordable hotels in the area.
4. **Plan to Register, Renew Licenses, apply for new church admission and for ministerial licensure.** Much can be done at our website, www.shieldfellowship.org. Please schedule your vacation *now* so that nothing will hinder this wonderful time of fellowship and revival.



Dr. Charles Dorsey, D.D. Born and raised in Pasadena, California, Bishop Charles Dorsey was a renowned athlete who ascended to the highest levels of achievement ultimately playing on the basketball team at Oral Roberts University on scholarship, the school at which he met his wife, Dr. Lisa Dorsey. Bishop Dorsey earned his Bachelor's Degree at ORU and his Master of Divinity and Doctoral Degree at Kings University. First ordained in ministry in 1994, Dr. Dorsey began Lifeline Fellowship Christian Center in 1994 and continues to pastor that church with great success.

In 2018, Dr. Dorsey was appointed as Bishop, charged to develop the work of God in New Mexico. He also serves as Senior Editor over the Fellowship's Newsletter and as Director of the Fellowship's Ministerial Alliance and the Ministerial Credentials Committee. God willing, Bishop Dorsey will plant new churches in New Mexico in 2024.



Dr. Lisa L. Dorsey, D. Public Administration, Ph. D., Theology, was born in New York City and saved at the tender age of thirteen in a Spanish Pentecostal church in Bronx, N.Y. While Attending Oral Roberts University she met her husband, Dr. Charles Dorsey. Lisa also holds a Ph.D. in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr. Lisa founded Unique Home Health Services, Inc., a home health care business providing skilled nursing care serving for over 28 years.

Gifted with a unique teaching ministry, she also helps women through the ministry of reconciliation. She helps woman find their identity, embrace their purpose, and find their God-given voice. She is currently working on two books due to release in 2024. Dr. Lisa & Dr. Charles have been married 37 years and have four children, Charles Jr., Daniel, Leah, and Chelsea and four grandchildren Isabella, Aria, Charles III, and Zina.



Dr. BJ Strother, B.A., M.Th. is the wife of **Bishop Hershel Strother** and a prophetic evangelistic teacher whose love is to empower God's people, so they can be used by God to help others according to Is. 61: 1-7. Dr BJ currently assists her husband, who has pastored since 1981. The Strothers oversee church in California and Missouri. Their ministry provides pastoral counseling, pre-marital and marital counseling, and leadership training, to help wounded warriors in the Body of Christ.

In 2014, Dr. BJ and Bishop Stother developed the Pakistan and India Diocese and led it to dynamic growth and profound Apostolic revival. Dr. BJ has been a Member of the Executive Board of our fellowship since its inception. She is the author of several powerful books and has worked professionally promoting social justice in the Labor Union Movement. She is also the author of [How God Empowers Low Self Esteem](#), [Bring Your Best to God](#), and many other self-help tools for the Body of Christ.



Pastor Ruben Matuk pastors the Lighthouse Apostolic Church, previously Apostolic Full Gospel Church of Christ. Pastor Ruben was baptized at the very church which he now pastors. He was saved in January 16, 1986 and has been a faithful servant of the Lord ever since. Pastor Matuk has served his local church in the capacity of youth pastor, teacher, minister, board member, co-pastor in 2003 and Senior Pastor since 2006. He has been ordained with Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches Int., since April 25, 2014.

Pastor Matuk and Lady Esther for 38 years and have four wonderful children and many loving grandchildren. One of Pastor's favorite scriptures is 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* Pastor Ruben is a faithful and loving Man of God with a passion, fire and vision to see souls saved, delivered and restored. His Vision for The Church is that God's people should go and win souls from all walks of life, teaching and training them to be faithful and productive disciples for the kingdom of God.



Dr. Ronald Thomas, Ph. D. is known as a dynamic preacher and teacher, a devout student of the Word, prolific orator, and visionary, and a leader among men. In his professional life, he has served in the U.S. Army and also as a Corrections Officer with the State of Nevada. After serving his country and community, God called and anointed Dr. Thomas and he served in ministry. Since his ministerial life began, Dr. Thomas has served multiple ministries across the U.S. and in India.

The Lord also used Dr. Thomas served as a Suffragan Bishop in another Apostolic organization before leading him to join the Shield of Faith Fellowship. Dr. Thomas has served in a number of ways, as the lead instruction for the REACH Program, a professional career development training program serving some of the most successful businesses in the State of Ne-

*God has blessed this Fellowship with a selection of the finest preachers and facilitators in Christendom. Our speakers are second to none. They are highly educated, widely experienced and greatly anointed assuring you of expertise in the areas to which they have been assigned. You will be blessed. Lives will be changed. Welcome to a life-changing experience at **SOF Mid-Winter 2024!***



Pastor Shannon L. Flakes, B.S., M.S., D. Th. is the pastor and founder of the True Zoe Fellowship Church. In April of 1992 the Lord saved him under the pastorate of his grandmother, Dr. Myrtle Coleman-Williams where he served in various capacities. He has prepared himself to be used by God by studying at Living Waters Bible College, Ministerial Training Institute of Inglewood and Living Waters Theological University, having earned degrees from each of those institutions. In February 2006, God led Pastor Flakes to begin a work in the city of Perris, which has now become True Zoe Fellowship in Moreno Valley, a place where real people, conquer real issues and worship a real savior. In addition to ministerial education, Pastor Flakes returned to school to earn a B.A. degree in Business Administration, Applied Management. In 2018 he earned his Masters Degree in Government and Policy from Grand Canyon University. Pastor Flakes currently works as a Correctional Captain with the Riverside Sheriff's Department and an adjunct instructor for Moreno Valley College. Pastor Flakes and his wife Alisa also founded a public non-profit organization called We Community Partnership, with the goal of empowering the underserved in communities within the areas of civics, government, economic growth, and family and personal development. Pastor Flakes has been married to First Lady Alisa for approximately 32 years. They have six children and thirteen grandchildren.



Minister DL Ballard - The name DL was given to me by my mother: The meaning was given to me by God. My name means *child of the only living God!* I am the youngest in my family of five. I am now a wife to my husband, Miles Ballard and God has blessed us with two beautiful daughters, Mary-Ann and Lily-Ann. My husband and I are entrepreneurs and business owners. I was born and raised in Altadena by my grandmother and grew up not knowing much about the Lord. The Lord Jesus brought me to Himself when I was sixteen years old and I was baptized and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I have worked in ministry on and off for fifteen years. During that time I have sung for multiple praise teams and served the Lord by working in various children's ministries. In 2017 God led me to the Shield of Faith Christian Center. I am now a licensed minister, a faithful member of the praise team, and I also teach in the Shield of Faith Children's Ministry. While serving at the Shield God has confirmed the anointing He has placed on my life for teaching! He has given me a heart to truly love children and I am definitely called to minister to the youngest generation. I aspire to become an even more powerful worship leader and, at God's appointed time I am prepared to become a pastor willing to preach the Gospel in all the world. Two favorite scriptures are Psalm 91 and Numbers 6:30, 24-26.



Minister Mary Madkin, B. A., M. A. Minister Madkin has been a member of the Shield of Faith since its inception in 1981. Professionally she has worked for many years as a licensed Speech Pathologist for a variety of school districts around Southern California. She has found many areas of the church exciting to work in during those years. Some of the duties involved serving as a choir member, teaching Sunday School, serving as a Pastoral Care Lay Worker and also as an Intercessor in the Power Room. The passion of the Power Room and Altar Work was passed down to her from her parents Pastor and Mother Arling Alexander Sr, who spent many long hours laboring with souls to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The gift of working in the body of Christ with new converts has been the most rewarding experience anyone could ask for. Salvation counseling, deliverance from demonic strongholds and facilitating the infilling of the Holy Ghost has been the passion of Minister Madkin's life.



Bishop Lawrence K. Pate. Bishop Pate and his wife Elder Patricia were married in December 1977. Bishop Pate was saved in 1981 at Greater Bethany Community Church in Los Angeles, under the pastorate of Bishop Robert W. McMurray then transferred their membership to Bethany Community Church of Pomona now known as Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches Intl. Bishop Pate served under the pastorate and leadership of Apostle Henry B. Alexander, Presiding Prelate as an altar and power room worker, and the Assistant Pastor. Elder Pate was ordained in 1996. In 1998, the Lord called Elder Pate to the pastorate. In 1999 after much prayer and fasting he and his family returned to California from Arizona and began Apostolic Lighthouse Christian Church in Rialto. Lighthouse Church is thriving and Bishop Pate has been appointed as Diocesan over the great State of Nebraska. God will do a great work there in days to come. To date Bishop Pate has one published work: [How to Find Your Ministry in the Body of Christ](#). Bishop Pate has now pastored for twenty-four years and miracles of salvation and discipleship have occurred. The Pates are blessed with three children, Elder Lawrence Pate III, Elder David Pate who serves as the Assistant Pastor, and Prophet Bridgette Fields who serves in the power room. They are grandparents to six wonderful grandchildren!



Bishop Rickey Johnson, M.A., D. M. is the First Assistant Presiding Bishop of our Shield of Faith Fellowship and the Senior Pastor of Shield of Faith Christian Center of Pasadena for some thirty years. Bishop is father to Minister Sharzae Johnson, Pastor Aaron Singleton and Sister Ila Singleton. As a well-known community leader and public speaker for over 25 years he skillfully represents the Kingdom of God in diverse settings in addition to building a great church which touches all the San Gabriel Valley. Bishop Johnson is a sought-after speaker with specialization in the areas of Finance and legacy-building. A self-published author of several books, Bishop Johnson is in demand on local TV and radio programs and has spoken on college campuses sharing the practical Wisdom which comes from God's Word. With the assistance of his late wife and the Shield of Faith Pasadena staff, Bishop Johnson has served the congregation and community, and the Shield of Faith Fellowship with five-star excellence.



“What SOF Fellowship Offers You”

(visit www.shieldfellowship.org)

We're together in ministry! Because pastoring God's people is a daunting responsibility, God has raised up the Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches to assist and support pastors in leading biblically-sound churches and propagating a truthful, doctrinally-sound Word in these last days. This organization offers many things to assist the local pastor and undergird the local church, including the following –

We offer *ministerial and pastoral licensing* through the authority of our credible, ecclesiastical, federally-recognized organization which reaches across the United States and provides ministerial services to pastors and churches worldwide. We are a doctrinally-sound covering which allows affiliate churches to expand ministry impact through collaboration with others of like precious faith. Shield of Faith offers biblical, spiritual and ministerial education through our *Shield of Faith Bible College*, an online, accredited institution offering degrees and certificates at all educational levels in a wide variety of degree programs at www.shieldbiblecollege.org. Because of our special concern for the challenges youth and young adults are now facing, Shield of Faith is in the process of fully-developing our *International Apostolic Youth Network*, having already established connection with our affiliated churches in sixteen nations of Africa, four nations of Europe and in various states across the United States of America. One of our most valued benefits is our periodic *Pastoral Training experiences* through our recurrent Pastors and Leaders Institute sessions and also through training at our conventions throughout the year.

We now offer four annual conventions, two for the main Body (in January and June), one for Youth and Young Adults (YAYA is the acronym) and one for the women of Shield of Faith typically in the fall. Beyond that, there are diocese meetings which are held throughout the year in various parts of the country. The Missions Department of Shield of Faith is very active travelling often for ministry in several European countries and various nations on the continent of Africa. Because of strong missions activity, we are now developing our *Shield of Faith School of Prayer*, an international prayer coalition which will unite Shield of Faith ministries for spiritual warfare worldwide. Please visit www.sofschoolofprayer.org for more information and to participate. More than anything, this great fellowship offers connection with other pastors and gifted men and women in the kingdom of God, assuring that you are never isolated as you do ministry for the hour of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

“Good News Travels Fast!”

The Hand of God is Upon the Fellowship! There are a number of wonderful things happening at this time, by God's Grace. **IN LAS VEGAS** - We are pleased to see the dynamic work in the State of Nevada as recently consecrated Bishop Tommie Green and Bishop Ronald Thomas are connecting in ministry with a number of pastors and powerful churches in the dioceses in the city of Las Vegas. We congratulate the men of God for their productive and encouraging ministry efforts and pray for even greater accomplishments ahead. **IN AFRICA** - From Africa, we are happy to report that many new churches, pastors and bishops recently affiliated themselves with us after our recent trip to Tanzania and Kenya. Apostle Joseph Aigbe is leading an anointed work across the entire continent: He is a man of action and faith!

IN PAKISTAN AND INDIA - In the India subcontinent Bishop Stacy Edmond has ceded leadership to a our new Bishop-elect Marvin Wiley who is moving powerfully in the work of the Lord among believers and pastors in India, and Pakistan. By God's grace, Bishop-elect Wiley will be consecrated fully to the office of Bishop in our June convention this year. In addition, Pastor Victor Bobo will be designated Bishop-elect in June over the Shield of Faith work in The Philippines. Thank God for these dedicated men of God and for their committed wives who support them in prayer and effort. **IN THE PRAYER AND YOUTH MINISTRIES** the Prayer and Youth Ministries are powerfully anointed at this hour. God has given a vision to Apostle Alexander for the creation of international, world-wide ministry in prayer and also among our Youth and Young Adults. Minister Jimmel Banks and Elder John Thomas, Jr. are both moving under God's direction to create a powerful international connection among intercessors and young people. Minister Banks will connect intercessors in Africa, Europe and America in a strong worldwide **prayer network**, sharing prayer requests and seasons of intercession, and also conducting **schools of prayer** which will teach God people to pray more effectively. Elder Thomas is working with a powerful team to assemble the **International Apostolic Youth Network** which will function as a strong Body of Holy Ghost filled young adults and teens in all nations of the world, God willing. Please stand by for specific steps you can take to promote and participate in these God-honoring efforts.

From the Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches International Executive Board, Administrator and entire staff, have a Blessed Christmas and we will see you January 11th & 12th.

Holiday Season Quiet Time

One of the most basic and natural methods for us to connect with God is through prayer. It is a powerful tool for quiet time. Jesus Himself made a daily ritual of seeking those kinds of private moments.

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35).

Other activities can make our quiet times special. Reading the Bible, singing or listening to worship hymns and songs, and journaling our thoughts, questions or insights will help us slow down and sense God's presence. Even walks in nature or creating art will remind us of His blessings.

Whatever we do, the main goal is to make God the focus of our thoughts, and to seek to grow in knowledge of Him. In turn, we will experience more of our Heavenly Father and His love.

"I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.' The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:24-26).

How Our Quiet Time Can Have a Positive Impact on Others

Though quiet time is a private thing for each of us, what we gain from it can end up blessing those around us, too. God wants us to both receive His touch and pass it on - and the holidays offer great opportunities to do that. We'll be filled up to overflowing so our every interaction this season can spread His love.

By keeping God's message of **salvation** in our hearts, we'll see the deeper meaning of such a busy season, and want to share it.

By celebrating God's **kindness** to us, we'll become more willing to handle stressful holiday moments or interactions better.

By reflecting on God's **love** for us, we'll feel a desire to reach out to family, friends, and neighbors during the season.

Things That Keep Us from Quiet Time (Especially during the Holidays)

As sweet as this season can be, it makes our world even more fast-paced. So if we're not careful, we can get caught up in the usual pre-holiday whirlwind and all that goes with it.

Conversely, some of us can feel especially alone during this time of year. If grief or depression has a hold, we can isolate ourselves and stop reaching out for the Lord.

But by seeking time with God, we're actually inviting Him to join us in those moments, whether they are happy, hectic or heartbreaking. Just being in His

presence aligns our perspective more with his and gives us the ability to face every challenge of the season with God's grace. Here are just a few examples of how we can bring faith into distracting situations:

Moments of Busyness

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

Moments of Stress

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Moments of Overwhelm

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Moments of Sadness

"...the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Moments of Fatigue or Sickness

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Moments with Difficult People

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

How to Guard Our Quiet Time

Be Intentional

Decide to protect your quiet time in some form, even when a busy schedule is calling for your attention. God is ready to respond to you.

"Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8).

Be Flexible

Have a willingness to shift your normal quiet time routine in terms of what part of the day or what activities you do. God is always near to you.

"Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always" (1 Chronicles 16:11).

Be Gentle on Yourself

Let go of any big expectations or judgment of yourself about how much quiet time you're able to have. God is delighted to be with you.

"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

Fit Quiet Time into Your Holiday Schedule

1. Wake up 15 minutes earlier in the morning to lift up a "good morning" prayer, asking God to walk with you, and even to help make your day's to-do list.

2. Use "waiting" time in the car or a line at the store to read one of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus, or to pray for family and friends.

Sample Scriptures:

Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9

3. Tune your car radio to a Christian station, or keep Christmas worship music in your car's CD player to remember the real reason for our enjoyment of the season.

Sample CDs:

Guest Sanctuary Choir - The Majesty and Glory of Christmas

Steven Curtis Chapman - The Music of Christmas

David Crowder Band - Oh For Joy

Third Day - Christmas Offerings

4. Utilize a Bible app on your phone to read or hear the Nativity story to renew your awe about the Good News.

How to pass it on: Think about or write out how Jesus' birth has impacted your life, and tell someone else.

5. Turn your quiet time into fellowship time by asking others to join you for a relaxed session of study or worship.

How to pass it on: Invite others to share how knowing Jesus has blessed them.

God so wants to be in relationship with us that He sent His Son Jesus to make it possible. So, while it's important all year, now is in many ways the perfect season for us to set aside quiet time to celebrate the greatness and goodness of our Heavenly Father.