

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

- Jan. 29th
Homeless Outreach
- Feb. 14th
Love Night Banquet
- Feb. 25-26
Children's Choir Weekend Celebration
- March 9-11
Revival
- March 16-18
Single's Conference

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HAPPY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!!!!

On February 4th, Bishop & First Lady Dennison will celebrate 34 wonderful years of holy matrimony. We are grateful for the living example of godly marriage that our leaders provide and we pray God's richest blessings upon them.

Our Marriage Getaway

By Dr. Karen Woods

Red, red everywhere; red, red showing that we care. We were the Compassionate Convoy! From the initial point of discussion to the moment of departure there was rampant anticipation, looking for any clue to determine where we could possibly be going. This secret remained very much a mystery even as the couples departed promptly at 7:00am and shared two large motor coaches. The journey took us first to South Jacksonville for breakfast and then



North to the romantic city of Savannah. Couples snuggled together to enjoy the ride, unhurried conversation, and moments without the tug of little ones at their feet. Many of us found ourselves thinking, "When was the last time we had time alone together, when we were not too tired to talk to each other?"

Around midday, we pulled into the Savannah Visitors Bureau parking lot. It was a moment to stretch our legs and interact with our brothers and sisters from the other bus. This tour of Savannah was very different from all the others I have been on. This was special because the tone of the trip was set to encourage an atmosphere of loving companionship, so Savannah was viewed through a filter of spiritual romanticism. Then, with a trail of red shirts stopping traffic and causing many quizzical stares, the group made its way to Paula Deen's well-known restaurant "The Lady and Sons" for lunch. Imagine almost 100 people in red walking down the streets and crossing the road! That's how Compassionate rolls!

The entire trip exuded an atmosphere of holy, humble, and positive connection with one's spouse. Then to top it off, a short time later, the convoy pulled into the Ritz Carlton Amelia Island! How

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A Compassionate Date Night

By Dr. Karen Woods

On Friday, January 13th, Bishop and First Lady Dennison sponsored a date night – Dinner and a Movie, Compassionate Style, of course, for all the married couples in the ministry. The venue was the newly constructed Senior Center on 34th Street. And when the couples made their way to the dining area, they were greeted by Black and White splendor. By contrast, we were all dressed casually. The message in the contrast is that a casual or laid back attitude towards your marriage only promotes a casual relationship. However, with care and attention, our marriages can grow from casual to careful. Members of the young adult and singles ministry served the couples a buffet meal prepared and coordinated by Bishop and First Lady themselves. The movie "Marriage Retreat" echoed the same message as the décor and showed that working on our marriages (serious dedicated, focused attention, not a casual, laid back, whatever-happens approach), reaps the kind of results that God desires for us to have in our marriages.

Healthy Hearts: Bullying

Sister Vondalyn White & The C.O.M. Health Team

In recent years, there has been a growing number of bully-related suicides. Though many adults still see bullying as "just part of being a kid," it is a very serious problem. Indeed, cyber bullying, which uses instant messaging, cell phone, text messages and online social networks like Facebook and MySpace to humiliate and embarrass others, can be especially devastating to bully victims since they cannot find a safe place in even the virtual world.

The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people. For every suicide among young people, there are at least 100 suicide attempts.



Even more disturbing is that over 14 percent of high school students have considered suicide, while almost 7 percent have attempted it. Unfortunately, bully victims are significantly more likely to consider suicide than non-

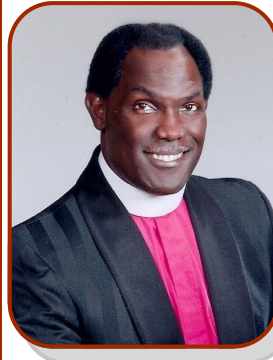
victims.

Because of the prevalence of bullying and because many students are afraid to tell an adult that they are being bullied, parents and teachers need to be aware of the signs of bullying. Look for signs of depression such as sadness, negative feelings about oneself and the future, loss of interest in life, mental confusion, indecision, loss of appetite, weight loss, insomnia, and fatigue. Moreover, parents must talk to their children about their day and get involved. It is equally important that parents avoid overlooking any potential bullying situations. Children should be encouraged to talk about all of their interactions with other children.

Another important aspect of dealing with bullying is to watch your own child for signs that he or she might be a bully. If your child is a bully, take the time to find out why he or she may be acting this way. In some cases, a child psychologist or developmental expert can help you figure out the reasons behind the behavior and work to change these them.

In the book of Hosea it is written "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6) It is imperative that we lean on the scriptures and the power of the Holy Ghost so that we may "know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor 2:12). God cares about our innermost feelings, and He wants to give us peace where there is anxiety, joy where there is depression, and hope where there is despair. We must pray that our children understand these truths and that they are the solid ground upon which love and acceptance are established in their character. Along with prayer, children need to see love manifested toward them with eye contact, physical touch, loving acts, kind deeds, and edifying words. I have learned that being a perfect parent doesn't matter but being a praying parent does.

Florida's New Jurisdictional Bishop



Promotion comes from the Lord! On December 23, 2011, Bishop Dennison was elevated to the position of Jurisdictional Bishop for the State of Florida by C.L.U.R.T International and the College of Bishops, with the Chief Prelate, Bishop George G. Bloomer, serving as the consecrator. In this new role, Bishop Dennison is responsible

for overseeing ministries throughout the entire sunshine state. The consecration service in which Bishop Dennison was commissioned took place in Quincy, Florida. Congratulations on your new position Bishop Dennison!

First Sunday Explosion!

On February 5th, Compassionate Outreach Ministries will host a First Sunday Explosion during our morning Worship Service. The featured guest will be Recording Artist Zacardi Cortez of James Fortune & FIYA. Mr. Cortez is a charismatic gospel singer who has a reputation for ultra-spirited worship. He is best known for songs like, "I Believe," "Breakthrough" and "Mighty God We Serve. Please join us for an Explosive Worship Experience on Sunday, 2/5/12 at 10:00 am.



Homeless Outreach



On Christmas Eve, The Homeless Ministry of Compassionate Outreach Ministries set up a serving station at the Bo Diddley Community Plaza

in Downtown Gainesville and served about 250 meals to the less fortunate. The C.O.M. Children's Choir sang praises to and Elder Lee Ray Harden offered prayer. Please contact Sis. Bonnie Means if you are interested in serving in this arm of ministry.

Princess Brunch: From A Struggle To A Princess



Prophetess Rawls, First Lady Dennison, Dr. Herring, & Elder Coon after the Tiara Adorning Ceremony

First Lady Dennison & The Women’s Fellowship Committee hosted a unique Princess Brunch for the ladies of Compassionate Outreach Ministries on Saturday, January 21st. The theme of the event, which was held in the ballroom at the Best Western Grand was “From A Struggle To A Princess.” During the brunch, Sis. Shawndria Dennison spoke about what it means to be a princess in the kingdom of God and each attendee received a handbook which covered the call of God in the princess’ life, the princess’ relationship with God, and the rights and duties that a princess has. There was also a very special tiara adorning ceremony, during which each attendee received a pretty tiara that had been prayed over by Bishop Larry J. Dennison and anointed by God. During her remarks, First Lady Dennison stated that the idea for the Princess Brunch came from God and that there would be a special healing through the tiaras. The guest speaker was Dr. Marie Herring of Dayspring Missionary Baptist Church in Gainesville, Fl. Dr. Herring shared a message on “What Is Truly Important As A Princess” and informed the body that a princess must be faithful, fruitful, giving, and a source of revival. All of the attendees were absolutely wowed by the Princess Brunch. Sister Marquita Houston beamed, “I really feel like a princess!” Indeed, many women wore their tiaras to church on the following day, acknowledging that they had received the message that they are princesses. In a special tribute, the Women’s Fellowship Committee presented First Lady Dennison with a queen’s tiara during the Sunday Morning Worship Service to show that she is loved, adored, appreciated, and highly esteemed by the ladies of C.O.M.

Special Recognition

Bishop Larry J. & Sis. Margaret Dennison	2/4	34 years
Mr. Harold & Mrs. Gwendolyn Jenkins	1/8	30 years
Mr. Keith & Mrs. Patricia Jeter	2/9	22 years
Mr. Patric & Mrs. Kathy Kimbrough	2/18	9 years
Mr. Bruce & Mrs. Kathy Robinson	1/5	22 years
Mr. John & Mrs. Donna Smith	2/12	12 years

CONGRATULATIONS!

To Sister Addie Davis, who at the age of 61 became an Adjunct Professor of Mathematics at Valencia College. Let this be a reminder to everyone that it is never to late. We are so proud of you Sister Davis!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To everyone born in the months of Jan. & Feb.
We Love You, We Do!

Journey To Africa

By Bro. Xavier Monroe

During the Christmas break, I had the opportunity to conduct academic research in Kano, Nigeria. The research, conducted for my honors thesis, focuses on Chinese influence in Nigerian industrial markets and examines the role of Chinese investments in the developing economy of Nigeria. Kano, a city of over five million Nigerians and once textile hub, has experienced a dramatic transformation in industrialism and manufacturing, which has resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs.

Although the primary purpose of traveling to Nigeria was to conduct research, I was also able to tour meet and make friends with individuals from all walks, and experience a different way of life. Although Kano is predominately Muslim, I was always treated with the upmost respect, kindness, genuine hospitality and most certainly welcomed. During my stay, I was able to visit the Emir’s Palace and interact and see various levels of Nigerian royalty, explore Bayero University, shop in historic markets, interact with film and music stars as well as attend the Hausa Music Awards.

I am appreciative for my professor, Dr. Susan O’Brien for her encouragement and for making this trip possible. I am also tremendously blessed to be a part of a supportive family and church whose prayers made my trip a success. This trip was offered a welcome end to 2011 and broadened my perspective on my life and the way others live. I was humbly reminded to be thankful for the life I have been blessed with as well as to help improve the lives of others. The trip was a great transition into a new year, a year in which I believe will usher in a greater sense of accomplishment and destiny.



Compassionate Outreach Ministries



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First Lady: Sister Margaret Dennison

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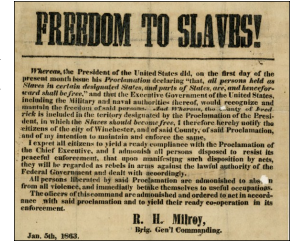
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**We Are Reaching Out,
Not Out Of Reach**

A Black History Lesson: Watch Night Service

By Sister Vivian Alexander

Like many other African-American churches, Compassionate Outreach Ministries hosts an annual “Out With The Old, In With The New” Watch Night Service on New Year's Eve. Members and visitors gather together to bring in the new year in the spirit of praise and to receive an encouraging word from the Lord. As we have just begun a new year and are approaching Black History Month, let us reflect on the history behind this tradition.



The Watch Night Services in Black communities can be traced back to gatherings across the South on December 31, 1862, known at that time as, Freedom's Eve. On that night, Blacks came together in churches and private homes, anxiously awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had actually become law. Then, at the stroke of midnight, it became January 1, 1863, and all slaves in the Confederate States were declared legally free. When the news was received, there were prayers, shouts and songs of joy throughout the South as people fell to their knees and thanked God. Since then, Blacks have gathered in churches annually on New Year's Eve, praising God for bringing us safely through another year.

Marriage Getaway

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do you explain or begin to describe the feeling of each person on the buses. Cheers, whistles, and shouts of joy were heard and the excitement only increased. THIS was our destination!?! Wow! For the couples on board, the excitement was raised to another notch. We could not have asked for a more romantic destination.

After a short break, dinner was served! The menu offered a feast fit for royalty. We gathered to listen to a powerful testimony from Evangelist Clovia Lewis of love, abandonment, long suffering, forgiveness, reunification, and salvation. This story made us think about our own circumstances and even our past lives, and wonder IF we would have (or even could have) handled ourselves with as much fortitude, dignity, and deep faith as our guest speaker. Her husband, Deacon Lucious Lewis spoke about his longstanding battle with substance abuse and infidelity, which caused some of us to realize the true value of our relationship with our spouse. We realized that whatever we may have been through, it could have been worse, but for the loving hand of God in our circumstances. This couple's testimony caused us to listen to Dr. Geraldine Eady with a keener desire to learn what we can all do to enhance our relationship and friendship with our spouse. She gave us several tips, suggestions, starting points, and must dos. She opened her heart and shared a very personal story of friendship and love, highlighting the difference between the two, and the symbiotic relationship they have. Bishop and First Lady prepared a handbook to commemorate the event and a basket with goodies for a midnight snack. We were grateful, equipped with the right tools, and given an opportunity for romance! The beaches on Amelia Island are effortlessly romantic and provided yet another opportunity to walk, talk, commune, strengthen our friendship, and build another layer for a stronger marital foundation. We pray that everyone enjoyed themselves and did not miss any of the messages, the opportunities, nor the tools.

Departure the next morning was bittersweet. We knew we needed to return home, but we were enjoying ourselves, in a romantic, picturesque setting. Some couples discussed a longer getaway for the next marriage retreat, and after many pictures were taken, we boarded the buses. This time, the tone was more subdued and quiet. Perhaps it was one of thankful reflection, or thoughts of how to create future opportunities for a more loving and romantic atmosphere in our homes. Perhaps it was an opportunity to plan the next date night. During the ride south, we viewed two videos. One was a comedian who reminded us that laughter is still a pretty good therapy for a marriage. He focused on the humor in the differences between men and women – a recommended viewing for singles contemplating marriage. Arriving at a shopping center, we soon realized that this was a church owned center with a restaurant, gym, mini-mart, and retail store space. The food at the Soul Food Bistro was almost as good as my mother-in-law's Sunday dinner (almost). A few us kept saying, “We need one of these in Gainesville.” The couples enjoyed lunch and strolled through the shopping center together before taking a group picture.

Bishop and First Lady: From all the marriage getaway participants, you have given us a glimpse of your romantic side and we sincerely appreciate the example. We love you for your willingness to share aspects of your life with us to teach us the unique path of spiritual romance and oneness in a marriage. Thank you for emphasizing the three threads of love – Man, Woman, and GOD! Many Christian couples struggle with issues of intimacy and romance. We all learned something new on this trip, thanks to you! And we would be remiss, if we didn't say that we can hardly wait until Marriage Retreat 2012 is here!