

Bishop Roger L. Jones, Sr. - Prelate
Letter of Support for Bishop Charles E. Blake
Sr.

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, Luke 4:18 (KJV)

As a father in the Gospel and a Bishop in this grand Church Of God In Christ, I am compelled by God to speak peace and truth. I have sat quietly by and observed all of this rhetoric and I find that my Spirit will not allow me to continue to be quiet. Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. and I have been friends for more than fifty-fifty-five (50-55) years. Why is that important? Because only a friend can talk about what they know as fact, only a person who has been there can speak what they know to be true, only one who knows his friend's character can speak about his character, anything else is just hearsay!

There was a time when Bishop Blake, Bishop Gilbert Patterson and I were all brothers. Young men in our early twenties traveling to Memphis, the various conventions across the country, preaching and running revivals many times in the same cities or we would meet up as one was coming and the other was going. Whoever, had the car would drive and the others would pay for the gas. We developed a true friendship which has lasted these many years. Today, there are few of us who grew up together still living, who can attest to actually knowing Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. personally; many have gone on to be with the Lord. During our many years in this church as young ministers, I cannot say that I have observed any inappropriate behavior and the three of us were close. At all times I have found Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. to be above reproach; any suggestions, allegations or accusations otherwise, are despicable and ungodly!

In my heart I believe that Bishop Blake is an anointed and devoted leader. One who has compassion for the people; his dedication to God is unparalleled. You could always count on a Word from the Lord through our leader. He dedicates many hours studying, praying and fasting because it is important to him that his messages are able to speak spiritual growth, development and increase to God's people. Bishop Blake understands that it is our souls which are in question.

The General Assembly of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. elected Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. as its Presiding Bishop, the **Leader** of the Church. When the **LEADER** whom God has elevated, is under attack, then the Church Of God In Christ and the entire **BODY is under attacked! All of us are a part of this BODY, the CHURCH!** I ask this question: Why would you allow anyone to try and destroy that which you are a part of? Therefore, I submit to you that it is my belief that it's time for the Church to stand-up and defend the very principles of which we stand for. ***The Church is more important than all of us.*** God is going to hold us accountable for souls which may be lost due to gossip, hate, selfishness, envy, strife and innuendoes.

Bishop Blake has proven time and time again his love for the Church and the people of the Church. I remember him standing up in General Assembly coming to the platform to the mike fighting for the betterment of the Church and its people; even then he was fighting for transparency! He had no thought for himself, what people said about him, how they perceived him or even said about this young pastor from California of what was thought to be a very liberal state. He withstood the harsh words and comments because he had a greater goal and that was the Church. None of that mattered to Charles Blake, he just wanted the people of God to be treated fairly and honestly. He wanted better education, accountability, to establish church growth programs and to preserve our history. Yes, he was intense but he believed that this was the Church Of God In Christ and that no good thing should be withheld from the Church or its people. He believed in the principles of this Church and what it stood for. That was evident in his writings as Editor of the YPWW, as the Founding Chairman of the C.H. Mason Seminary, as President of the Student Body while a student at the ITC and even as Vice President of the Publishing Board. He not only talked about it he believed it.

In 1985 in Memphis, Tennessee in the Holy Convocation, there were twelve men consecrated as Jurisdictional Bishops that year; at that time that was the largest number of Bishops to have been consecrated at one time. ***Today only four of those men are still living and they are Bishop Charles E. Blake, (Presiding Bishop) Sr., Bishop George McKinney, Bishop Nathaniel Wells (General Board Members) and Bishop Roger L. Jones, Sr. (Former Chairman of the National Board of Trustees for twenty-six (26) years).***

I know this man! His father and I were great friends and we worked together at the National level. I knew his mother and his entire family. There were several of us who attended his wedding such as Harry Anderson, Charlie Brewer, Johnathan Greer and I. At that time we were all young men in the ministry, not any of us had titles. We fellowshiped together as brothers and as friends; if one had and the other one didn't, we all picked up the slack. I had just been appointed as Pastor to my church in Flint,

Michigan. Isn't it refreshing to know that we can care about each other without hidden agendas and to care about each other because "you're my brother, or you're my sister in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Many of you know me and you know that I am not quick to speak and I am slow to anger. However, you also know that when I do, it is because I do it from my heart. I love this Church and my heart is hurting to see the turbulence and the discontent going on in the Church. The Church was built out of *prayer and fasting*. Bishop Mason was a man of prayer and fasting, reconciliation and peace. Each year that Bishop Blake has been our Presiding Bishop, he has called the entire Church to prayer and fasting. Every year we have had all night prayer and our leader has always been a part of that prayer.

Bishop S. M. Crouch appointed the then, Elder Charles E. Blake to pastor Elder C. E. Church's Church after his death in 1969; this was a small congregation of about 50 members. Elder Blake accepted this appointment knowing that there was a lot of confusion going on at that time. However, today that same church's pastor is Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. and has moved three times and the current building holds 5,000 people, with three services every Sunday and a current membership of 25,000. They have more than eighty (80) full-time ministries and property worth more than \$65 million. I can remember the sacrifices he and his family have made over the years. A wife who never asked for anything more than what was needed because she understood her husband's vision and that was to build a cathedral for the Lord. Bishop Blake drove the same car for so many years that one of his members said to me personally that they had prayed for someone to steal it! They lived in the same house for approximately forty years. Only friends can tell the real story. Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. has brought that same level of commitment and transparency to the National Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Please allow me to list a few of the many accomplishments which have taken place during his tenure as Presiding Bishop. *Please note that I can only list a few because it would almost be impossible for me to actually list eight years of a man's work in a few pages.*

- Moved the Holy Convocation to St. Louis, Missouri to accommodate more than 50,000 – 60,000 plus members. This was done so that everyone could worship together under **One Roof!**
- Sold the Chisca Hotel in Downtown Memphis, establishing a fund so that COGIC would never be in the RED.
- The first complete Internal Audit for the entire National Church-thorough background research on all departments, auxiliaries, entities, bank accounts, etc.

- Mandatory Background Screening for all National Church employees and he strongly recommended it for local churches.
- Education and Training at every National Meeting.
- Online Training Modules to allow those hired when there is no immediate meeting to obtain training online.
- Developed a Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth.
- Special Training for Youth in Crime Prevention.
- Other Proactive Measures to Minimize the Risk of Sexual Misconduct.
- Remolded the Lee Ann Building/oversight-Bishop Sedgwick Daniels and Committees. Headquarters, Mason Campus.
- Remolded and updated, Mason Temple/oversight Bishop Blake, Dr. Joe Chase, General Board and NBOT, Headquarters, Mason Campus.
- Remolded the old Publishing House, now known as the L.H. Ford Bldg./oversight Bishop Blake, Dr. Joe Chase, General Board and NBOT, Headquarters, Mason Campus.
- Remolded the Publishing House at 2500 Lamar/ Chairman John Daniels Esq. & the National Publishing Board.
- Developed a joint venture with United Ministries Inc. a.k.a UMI and the Publishing Board.
- Approved the development of the "Archives Project" with the Publishing Board. *The first time in the history of the Church Of God In Christ preservation of historical artifacts.*
- Currently, the renovations of the *Leila Mason Building as the Landmark for Preservations of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Museum of Historical Culture*/oversight Bishop P. A. Brooks, Bishop Roger L. Jones, Sr., Dr. Lytia Howard, Project Coordinator, Darin Burns and Committee Members.

Bishop Charles Blake is a man who offers sincere encouragement to others. He understands that Friendship is good and that we (people) actually need one another just as we need the Lord.

Yours for service,

Bishop Roger L. Jones, Sr.

Michigan Southeast Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, Prelate
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.