

## **BISHOP PHILLIP O. THOMAS BIO**



Bishop Thomas grew up in inner city Baltimore where his grandmother was the dominate influence in his life. “My mother was a devoted woman of God who suffered terribly from her illness--first, losing her sight, then use of her legs. Nevertheless, she and my grandmother insisted I spend practically every waking moment in church. My Grandmother would pull me off the basketball court, so that I could attend church service. She strongly believed that my being nurtured in a disciplined church environment was the only way to keep me focused on God.”

However, it was not until tenth grade that Bishop Thomas seriously put God first, after a fellow student challenged him in certain areas of his life that did not appear to line up with the relationship he confessed to have with Christ. “He challenged me to use my talent in communications solely for Christ. I accepted the challenge and made a vow to live my life as a committed follower of Jesus Christ.”

In the early years of ministry, while Bishop Thomas was gradually building a successful secular career as a Telecommunications Account Executive, he was also touring the mid-Atlantic Region preaching and singing with a male gospel group comprised of his childhood friends. It was during one of those tours when he performed at Highview Park Christian Assembly in Arlington, Virginia, where he met his future wife.

Bishop Thomas joined the ministry at the age of 19. After joining, the former pastor, Elder James A. Reid (1957-1996) appointed him to serve as Minister of Music and Choir Director. He served in the role for several years. After accepting the call to preach the Gospel, he was later elevated to the position of Assistant to the Pastor.

On October 17, 1997, Bishop Phillip O. Thomas was elected as the next Under Shepherd of Highview Park Christian Assembly. After two years of pastoring part-time, he walked away from his secular position with Bell Atlantic to devote himself to full-time ministry, the first pastor in the church’s 100 year old history to do so.

Bishop Thomas pursued higher education at the following institutions of learning: an Undergraduate Degree from Washington Bible College in Lanham, Maryland with an emphasis in Biblical Studies and Biblical Counseling, a Masters of Divinity Degree from The Christian College and Seminary in Independence, Missouri, and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Florida’s Jacksonville Theological Seminary.

In 2004, under Bishop Thomas’ watchful leadership, the ministry purchased a new multi-million dollar facility in Fairfax, Virginia. The new facility doubled the seating capacity, and included an adjacent transformational home for women, the Mark of Excellence preschool, and ample

administrative space for part-time staff. The name of the church was changed to Highview Christian Fellowship to accommodate the church's new vision and direction.

Under the ministry's vision, "***Providing World-class Ministry Deserving of an Awesome God***", a "total man" ministry was created to impact the body, soul, and spirit of every man and women. "When someone comes to Highview Christian Fellowship, my desire is to help them focus on developing their spiritual walk, so that they will not only become a stronger Christian, but a better mother or father, husband or wife, and a better contributor to society. I can't wait until our new facility is a 24/7 operation...a place where people from every race or socio-economic background will feel loved and encouraged to pursue a personal relationship with God." His former Executive Assistant and a long-time member, Carolyn June-Jackson expressed that "Bishop Thomas is not only a gifted psalmist, but also preaches the word of God with absolute and unshakable certainty that whoever hears his unapologetic, eloquent and logic-driven message would surely be motivated to follow the God of this humble servant."

Bishop Thomas launched thirty-five ministries, including, but not limited to: Ministers Training Institute, the Mark of Excellence Community Outreach Center, a church website and brand, new member orientation classes, mandatory leadership training, "Hightimes," bi-monthly newsletter, annual conferences and retreats for men, women, youth, children's church, and a fully-staffed nursery.

Bishop Thomas is a past President of the Northern Virginia Black Pastors Council. He is the Founder and President of PTM Resources, Inc., a consulting service created to helping build strong congregations and communities.

On April 10, 2005, Pastor Thomas was consecrated as Bishop of the State of Virginia in the Praise Covenant Interdenominational Fellowship (PCIF) of churches with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. In this capacity, Bishop Thomas is responsible for building a support network of Christian congregations throughout the state of Virginia, and mentors pastors within the jurisdiction and as far away as Nakuru, Kenya, Hyderabad, India, and Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic.

Bishop Thomas is married to Lady Cindy and they are the proud parents of three adult children: son Phillip and twin daughters, Brittany (Deon) and Brooke (Lawrence). They are also the doting grandparents of seven: twin grandsons Jaylen and Jarrell, Lawrence, Jr., and granddaughters Nyla, Chelsea, Bethany and Lacey.