

# THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD & CHURCH ON THE MOUNT

Bishop Alonzo Austin Daughtry was born February 17, 1896, in Rockyford, Georgia. Alonzo was a tall, slender man, and after his military service, he was employed by the United States Postal Service. In 1919, Alonzo married Emmie Cheatham, and in 1921 the first of their children, Alonzo, Jr., was born.

Around 1924, Alonzo came under the influence of Bishop Marcelino Manoel da Graca, commonly called Bishop Grace, or "Sweet Daddy Grace," founder of The House of Prayer for All People, and he was saved and filled with The Holy Ghost in Savannah, Georgia. In the latter part of the same year, Bishop Daughtry felt the Call to the Ministry and immediately demonstrated unusual spiritual power. With his ordination to the Ministry, Alonzo became the third identifiable generation of African-American preachers in the Daughtry family. He had been preceded by Reverend Robert Daughtry, a slave preacher, and Robert's son, Dr. William Van Daughtry, who was a presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Alonzo's decision to join with Bishop Grace evoked tremendous resentment in the Daughtry and Cheatham families. The Daughtry family was highly regarded, prestigious, and moderately affluent. On the other hand, the Pentecostals were considered the lowest rung on the social ladder. Even their places of worship were tents with dirt or sawdust floors, or old, dilapidated buildings.

To go against the family's wishes and leave their tradition in Methodism took extraordinary courage and determination. These qualities were deeply rooted in Alonzo's character and were to surface again and again. Two of the factors that probably influenced Alonzo's decision was the racism and classism in the Methodist Church. Asbury Methodist

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Episcopal Church in Savannah, Georgia, pastored by Reverend William Van Daughtry, was considered the church of the well-to-do Negroes, as they were called at that time. Alonzo, Jr. recalls that the children of the church were separated and seated according to their social and financial status. He remembers one occasion when he was pulled from one group of children and directed to another, and was given the explanation that the children he had been seated with "were from poor families".

Nevertheless, it was obvious to all that The Lord's Hand was upon Alonzo and that he was destined to do exploits in The Name of The Lord. It was probably for this reason that Bishop Grace sent him to pastor in Augusta, Georgia.

Upon arriving in Augusta around 1927 with his wife and three young sons, Alonzo Jr., William Emmet, and Robert Nathaniel, Alonzo found an old wooden building, a very small congregation, and a city -- like most cities at that time -- not at all receptive to Pentecostal preachers. In fact, Bishop Grace had been shown such hostility that he was forced to leave, which opened the way for the appearance of Bishop Daughtry. It was not long thereafter that God began to show Himself mightily. Through the ministry of Bishop Daughtry, multitudes were saved and filled with The Holy Ghost. Captives were set free and the sick were healed.

But it came to pass that, with the growth of The House of Prayer in Augusta as well as in other cities, there began to emerge a tendency to exalt Bishop Grace above that which was normal. Whether this was done at the instigation of Bishop Grace or whether it was initiated by well-meaning, misguided souls, we do not know. But the fact that it did exist is beyond question. An article in the *New York Times* (December 17, 1995) quotes Bishop Grace referring to himself:

*"Salvation is by Grace only. Grace has given God a vacation, and since He is on vacation, don't worry about Him. If you sin against God, Grace can save you, but if you sin against Grace, God cannot save you."*

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At a service in the year 1929, Bishop Daughtry made an attempt to correct this tendency while it was still in its early stages. He read from the Scripture:

*I Corinthians 1:12-15: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith,  
I am of Paul; and I, of Apollos; or I, of Cephas; or I, of Christ.  
Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized  
in the name of Paul?  
I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;  
Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."*

When Bishop Daughtry finished reading, he began to teach. His lesson centered around the Lordship of Jesus Christ and not ascribing to any man divine prerogatives, positions, or glory. This lesson precipitated an Ephesian uproar. There were those who felt that he had committed the unpardonable sin by questioning the authority of Bishop Grace, but there were others who shared his concern. Among them were Sister Sadie Crawford, Sister Annie Dudley, Sister Mary Fuller, Mother Venus Hart, the Russell family, the Ware family, Deacon and Sister Wise, and many more. With this group, Bishop Daughtry left The House of Prayer and founded The House of the Lord and Church on the Mount, also known as The House of the Lord Pentecostal Church, or The House of the Lord Church.

After worshiping for a while in a store on Wrightsboro Road, the Founders succeeded in raising enough money to purchase their own land. In 1930, the year the church was incorporated, the first House of the Lord was built on the corner of Tenth Street and Perry Avenue, in Augusta, Georgia. Anyone who wanted to attend was careful to be early in order to get a seat. Brother Herman Grant, whose wife, Gainelle Ware Grant, had been a young girl at the time of the break with The House of Prayer, recalls that the church was an "extraordinary place. In those days, it was like the famous revival at Azusa Street must have been."

Not only did the crowd number Black worshipers, but whites began to attend as well. This brought Bishop Daughtry in direct conflict with the segregation laws of the South. Bishop Daughtry was warned that interracial worship had to cease or he would be jailed. But true to his character, he continued to welcome white worshipers, believing with

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Peter that *"it is better to obey God than man."* The authorities, seeing Bishop Daughtry's bold defiance, decided against arresting him.

God blessed the Church wonderfully so that it grew in Augusta and spread to neighboring cities. Churches were then established in Cameron, Miller, and Waynesboro, Georgia, and Aiken, South Carolina.

Alonzo, a thoughtful man who was noted as being unusual among those who felt drawn to the Pentecostal movement, was one who had an innate concern about the effects of society upon the people and made a determination to make this concern part of his ministry. This concern for the apparent exploitation of the people he was called to serve prompted him to start a burial society in the church. When the major insurance companies of the area heard about his efforts, they – along with the local morticians, many of whom were African-American – initiated a law suit against Daughtry. Though he eventually lost the case, when the news of this suit spread throughout the community, those who heard came to the church and the numbers increased.

However, as always, with growth and additional responsibilities, burdens are inevitable. During these years, the care of the churches took its toll on the Daughtry's domestic life and the marriage began to disintegrate. Bishop Daughtry, the once tall, slim preacher/teacher gained weight at an alarming rate, weight which would ultimately lead to his death. Despite the domestic troubles, all who knew of his ministry attested to the fact that he was a spiritual giant.

With the migration of people to the north, seeking better economic and social conditions and respite from the segregated south, Bishop Daughtry came north around the year 1942, and founded churches in Harlem and Brooklyn, New York. The pastorate of the church which he had started in Augusta, Georgia was turned over to a woman named Venus Hart, a post which she held for thirty years. Mother Hart retired from the pastorate of the Augusta church in 1976, but continued to serve the church faithfully until her death in 1991.

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Daughtry's concern for the economic life of the community was evidenced by his custom of opening businesses as an economic arm of his ministry. While in Georgia, his businesses included a barber shop, candy store, wood yard, lawn furniture sales, restaurant, and auto mechanic shop. In New York, he owned a

candy/grocery store on the corner of Saratoga and Dean Streets in Brooklyn, a precursor to the innumerable such ventures which permeate our communities today. His fourth son, Herbert Daniel, recalls that, throughout his life, "there was always some kind of business."

Bishop Daughtry, perhaps ahead of his time, was a pioneer in a number of areas, not the least of which was his willingness to chart an unchartered course and to break with tradition: his resistance to following the trend if it was going in what he believed was the wrong direction, his holistic approach to ministry, resistance to segregation laws, challenges to monopolistic systems, forward thinking on the question of women in the ministry, economic development initiatives, and the synthesis of the typical demonstrative Pentecostal style of worship with quiet, patient, methodic teaching, an approach which is prevalent today.

In 1952, Alonzo Daughtry, now remarried and overwhelmed with the burden of the churches he had founded, and carrying the burden of 200 additional pounds, became desperately ill. On his death bed, he called Elder Inez Conry, one of his faithful members to his bedside. Daughtry had ordained Elder Conry, a native of Detroit, to the ministry a few years earlier; she had been converted at one of the home Bible studies which Bishop Daughtry had conducted upon his arrival in New York. (Elder Conry's sister, Annie Irvin, is now Mother of the Augusta church.) He confided to her that he was going to leave the national responsibility of the Church in her hands.

When she resisted, feeling that she was not equipped to carry such an awesome responsibility, he reassured her of his confidence in her and reminded her of his vision. He told her that he was certain that one of his sons would come, in God's own time, to take over the work. Because she knew that he was a praying man and felt that his prophesy would materialize, she accepted the position and became the church's highest officer, a responsibility she carried for eight years.

In 1958, eight years after his conversion and Call to the Ministry, and in fulfillment of his father's prophesy, the fourth son of Bishop Alonzo A. Daughtry, Elder Herbert Daniel Daughtry, was ordained and installed as Pastor of the Brooklyn church. Approximately one year later, he became the Church's third National Presiding Minister, in which capacity he still serves. Mother Conry continued to serve the Church faithfully and consistently until her death in 1977.

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Under the leadership of Reverend Herbert Daughtry, The House of the Lord has become a "beacon on the hill," a sterling example of faith in action, living the Scripture: *"be ye not hearers of the word only, but doers also. . ."* We have sought to bring our concretize our spiritual mission while, at the same time, strengthening and solidifying our infrastructure.

In the early days of Reverend Daughtry's tenure as Presiding Minister, our focus was on building and designing many of the internal structures and systems which are still in use today, such as the writing of the Official Orientation Material, and the Big Brother/Big Sister and Tribal systems. We also developed The Articles of Faith, our Church's doctrinal statement, as well as our Constitution and By-Laws, which is based on the model originally used by the Founders.

Meanwhile, our church's membership grew slowly but steadily. This was due in great part to the fulfillment of our Presider's desire to broadcast local church services across the radio airwaves; we began broadcasting on W.W.R.L. Radio Station in 1971. With the Unveiling of the Black Messiah mural in 1975, our church became a national beacon for those persons who believed in or were intrigued by the bold new concept of Liberation and Black Theology.

In addition, we concretized our belief in institution-building and our commitment to fulfilling the needs of the community by founding the Alonzo Austin Daughtry Memorial Day Care Center in July 1970. Though community activism and civil disobedience, we obtained our licence to operate in the City of New York in November 1971 - another example of our willingness to transform words into action. Our day care center, under the very capable direction of Senior Minister Karen Daughtry, still operates today and is one of the most acclaimed and recommended centers in the City. The center remains an integral part of our Church's ministry, as affirmed by the many families who have become members of our church as a result of their experience with our day care center. Witness Sister Inez Barron, Sister Rashida Johnson, and Sister Deborah Trent.

Our mission began to take shape even more fully as we sought to concretely live out our strong belief in the important and critical role of The Church in the community. During the early Sixties, our Church was involved in many anti-poverty programs, particularly Youth-in-Action, where our Presider served as Vice President of the Board of Directors. In the late Sixties, our Church was active in Operation Breadbasket, the

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economic arm of Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.), with our Presider serving as Executive Vice Chairman for Metropolitan New York.

We took an even more activist and leadership role as the 1970's progressed and issues of justice, equality, and human rights moved to the fore. Most pivotal to our Church's growth was the 1978 formation of the Coalition of Concerned Leaders and Citizens to Save Our Youth. This Coalition was founded as a response to a series of police brutality cases where the victims were young people. Most notable among these was Randolph Evans, a 15 year old youngster who was killed outside his home on Thanksgiving Day by Police Officer Robert Torsney, who was eventually acquitted of any wrong-doing.

The Coalition became a focal point for community activism as it focused the community's and the City's attention on the issue of police brutality, and the larger issue of justice for all people. On the wave of community sentiment and activism, the Coalition became a driving force behind the formation of the Black United Front (BUF), founded in July 1978 (and whose founding conference was held in at the Brooklyn Armory in 1979), and the National Black United Front (NBUF), whose founding conference was also held at the Armory in 1980.

Our Presider, as Chair of the Coalition of Concerned Leaders and Citizens, Chair of BUF, and subsequently Chair of NBUF, became a popular and familiar champion of causes of concern to people of African ancestry. Our church, as well, became a gathering place for "strugglers" before rallies and after demonstrations; it was not long before we became "home base" for so many of our brothers and sisters across the City, who began to refer to the church simply as "The House," and Pastor Daughtry as the "People's Pastor."

Through all of this the Hand of God was at work. Our church became known across the country, and, indeed, around the world, as a place where one could combine community activism and social consciousness with the praise and worship of God. There were many nights when, after several hours of marching on the boycott line, brothers and sisters would come back to the church for a good, old-fashioned testimony, tarry, and praise services. The Church grew by leaps and bounds as multitudes heard the call, joined our ministry, were saved, and filled with the Holy Ghost. Some of those who joined our

ministry during this time of great growth constitute the leadership of Church today. Witness Senior Minister Alice Edwards, Minister Ernest Louis, and Pastor Elaine Solomon.

Our rather unique ministry continued into the new decade of the 1980's. We felt the call to develop a forum where Christian people could struggle together in an atmosphere of brotherly love and affection, with Christianity as a base and the love of Jesus as a uniting umbrella; this forum became the African Peoples' Christian Organization (APCO), which was founded in October 1980. APCO and its subsidiary, the Timbuktu Learning Center, have since become the foremost center for lectures, talks, and rallies featuring the most renown and prominent historians, lecturers, and leaders in the African and African-American community, a model for the many similar programs which have sprung up around New York City.

Our church's activism and leadership role within the community continued with an increased emphasis on political activism as a tool for liberation. With the redistricting brought about by the 1980 Census, the African-American community found itself on the brink of real political empowerment for the first time in many years. Through our efforts in concert with other community groups, we were instrumental in electing at least three African-Americans as new members of the United States Congress. With our Presider serving as Advisor and Confidant, we played a major part in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Campaigns of Reverend Jesse L. Jackson. Our crowning achievement, of course, was the election of David N. Dinkins as the Mayor of the City of New York, bringing about the end of the twelve year, repressive, racist, and reactionary regime of former mayor Edward I. Koch.

Whether Grenada, Ireland, Zimbabwe, or South Africa, our Church has been similarly involved internationally. As early as 1977, our Church formed the Commission on African Solidarity to focus public attention on the issue of Southern Africa in general, and apartheid in particular, long before it became a popular issue. At that time, we raised several thousand dollars to assist the anti-apartheid forces in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa. We have hosted numerous international dignitaries, including Palestinian West Bank mayor, Joshua Nkomo (Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union), The Honorable Omarou Youssoufou (Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity), Princess Zenani Mandela Dlamini (daughter of Nelson & Winnie Mandela), Madame Maria Eugenia Neto (First Lady of Angola), and exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti.



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In 1986, inspired by the courage of Winnie Mandela, our First Lady, Minister Karen Daughtry, convened a group of concerned women to form a coalition that would directly support the struggle of women and children in South Africa. This organization, SASAA, takes its name for a KiSwahili word meaning “Now/Present,” and is the acronym for Sisters Against South African Apartheid. Since its inception, SASAA has actively participated in the anti-apartheid struggle, through civil disobedience, moral, spiritual, and material support, including the shipment of clothing and educational materials to refugee camps in southern Africa. Following the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, SASAA and this church were honored to host Sis. Winnie Mandela during the Mandelas’ historic visit to the United States. In July 1995, a SASAA delegation journeyed to South Africa to witness a post-election South Africa, and rededicate themselves to their mission of providing assistance to South African women and children.

We have been likewise hosted abroad: witnessing the inauguration of Sam Njoma as President of Namibia, attending the conferences of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), dialoguing with President Maurice Bishop of Grenada, sharing an audience with Pope John Paul II, to cite just a few. Our Church has become known across the country and the world for its commitment to the liberation and self-determination of oppressed people everywhere.

As our church’s mission continues to expand, we dedicated the 1990s to institution building. To accomplish this, we have founded organizations dedicated to the building and promotion of positive institutions in our communities. One of these is Alonzo Daughtry Family Life Services, Inc., which serves as an umbrella organization for various church-sponsored, non-sectarian programs, all of which are united by a common goal of providing critical and needed services to the community in which it ministers. Examples of these programs are Project Enlightenment (an AIDS education and prevention program), and Alonzo Daughtry Day Care Center, to name just a couple.

As well, “MAN To man” and “Sister to Sister,” our mentoring programs, fall under the umbrellas of the Family Life Services Corporation. MAN To man seeks to provide young boys who live in a single parent, female-headed household, with a positive male role model. Likewise, “Sister to Sister” pairs African-American, adult, professional, women with African-America, inner-city, adolescent girls, in mentor relationship.

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The Church seeks to complement its work in its institution-building programs through the strengthening of its own internal systems and structures. Specific emphasis has been placed on leadership training and development as well as the creation, development, and implementation of successful programs.

Under the leadership of Reverend Daughtry, The House of the Lord Church has continued to experience the blessings of growth. We have maintained our congregations in Augusta, Georgia (1930), Brooklyn/ Atlantic Avenue (1942) and Brooklyn/ Pacific Street (1977) New York, while establishing churches in Beaver Falls (1978) and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1990), Oberlin, Ohio (2001), Washington, DC (2001), Bergen County, New Jersey (2002), and mission outreach efforts in many other cities along the eastern seaboard. Additionally, we instituted the “Members in Diaspora” which is designed to maintain contact, offer encouragement, and provide a network for our members who live in cities and states where a House of the Lord is not yet established.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH**

The House of the Lord Pentecostal Church is a national organization comprised of local churches located throughout United States. Our church here is but one of these congregations. In addition to these congregations, we also have clergy persons scattered across the country, who are engaged in Ministry through Bible Studies and other outreach programs.

The operation of our Church is governed by our Constitution and By-Laws, which outlines a church structure on the local, district, and national levels. The structure of our local church has already been discussed in the “Concept” lesson.

Each local congregation in our national Church body belongs to a District, whose boundaries are drawn along geographical lines. Each District is headed by a District Minister, who is the chief officer of her/his District. The District Minister provides spiritual, moral, and administrative leadership and guidance in her/his District and is responsible to the National Board of Elders for monitoring and reporting the growth and development of each of the local congregations in her/his District.

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The National Board of Elders is our Church's highest governing and deliberative body. The Board is responsible for

Each District holds regular District meetings for all of the members of the churches in that District. The format of these meetings may vary, taking the form of conferences, meetings, revivals, or services.

On the National level, our Constitution calls for two annual, national meetings. The first of these is the Memorial Service, which is held in Augusta, Georgia, usually the fourth weekend in March. The Memorial Service is the time we have set aside to remember those persons who labored in our Church and have since gone on to get their reward. Part of the services at the Memorial Service is dedicated to Celebration of Baptism, for those persons who desire to be baptized.

Our second national meeting, the Annual General Holy Convocation -- which is our National Church's Anniversary, so to speak -- is held each October, at the church in Brooklyn, New York. The plenary of the Convocation is our Church's highest body, and is empowered to make decisions and pass resolutions regarding the welfare and direction of the Church.

There are two other national meetings which are held in alternating years: the National Women's Conference and the National Youth Convention. The National Women's Conference is sponsored by the National Department of Women's Work, and is held in even-numbered years (i.e.: 2000, 2002, etc.).

The National Youth Convention, is held in odd-numbered years (i.e. 2001, 2003, etc.) in either July or August. The site of the Convention rotates from year to year. While the Convention is planned and run by the National Youth Department of our Church, it is not just for the youth; any member of any age may attend. In the even-numbered years, each District hosts a District Youth Conference.

## STYLES OF WORSHIP

In our service, we urge everyone to participate and to express themselves freely. This freedom of expression may take many forms. It may take the form of hand clapping, shouting, dancing in the Spirit, singing, responding with "amen" or "praise the Lord" or "hallelujah" (which means "praise God"). During testimony service anyone can tell what God means to him and what God has done for him. We believe that all of this is good. We feel that it is healthy for people to express themselves and their feelings.

So much sickness -- mental, emotional and physical -- can be traced to buried feelings. Multitudes without number use all kinds of escape routes -- alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. -- rather than face their feelings. The society in which we live does not help, for it teaches us not to express our feelings, but to keep them in check at all costs. We are taught to emulate the people who are successful at maintaining a decorum of stoicism.

We are generally taught that feelings must be suppressed no matter what the price. One must never cry publicly, or give the slightest hint that one's feelings are aroused. We are instructed to equate stoicism with intelligence, and any display of emotion with ignorance. This is especially true when it comes to the church. One must sit or stand stone-like, otherwise God is not pleased. It is sacrilegious to verbalize in any way, or even to clap hands.

But again, we know that it is healthy for people to express their feelings. How often have we seen people come to church loaded down with worries, burdened with guilt, emotionally tense, mentally confused, having gone through a week of frustration, disappointment, and tension. We have seen them come and vent their hurt feelings in the services and receive the balm of God's Word -- then leave rejoicing. To those it would be cruel to say "sit still and be quiet". It would indeed be sacrilegious to say to these people, "do not praise God that way. Do it our way. Be still".

People also come to church filled with gratitude. Perhaps they've had a good week. They feel happy and want to tell it. Our services give them the opportunity to do so: to sing songs, to shout their joy, and to praise God with their hands and feet as well as with their mouths.

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We also believe that whatever a person feels deeply about, he will express with all that he has. A man who has been freed from prison or enslavement should not be expected to hold his joy. Nor should the people who join hands in marriage be required to show no emotion. Indeed, we would think it rather strange if they did not show emotion.

Where there is a great experience there is great feeling, and it is unwise not to allow a person to express it. This is not to say that we do not believe in the value of silence. We believe that there are times when we need to be still before God, and we believe that God also speaks in the "still small voice". But we hold that stillness, silence and quietness should not be used to fetter our feelings at all times. There are times when the child of God cannot be still and cannot be silent.

Finally, there is Scriptural basis for freedom of expression. Read the 100th Psalm. Also consider Psalms 150.

As a member of our church, feel free to clap your hands, dance in the Spirit, sing the songs that best fit your mood or express your feelings, testify or tell what's on your mind, give a verbal witness -- AMEN, PRAISE GOD, HALLELUJAH, etc. -- to what touches a responsive chord in your heart!

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