

Pentecostal Group Consecrates New Leader

✖ Bishop Alfred A. Owens Jr. will be installed leader of Mount Calvary Holy Churches of America during the denomination's 80th convocation being held this week in the nation's capital.

Owens, who with his wife, Susie, pastor 8,000-member Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church in Washington, D.C., was appointed presiding prelate of the denomination last year and will be consecrated to his new post on Thursday.

He succeeds Bishop Harold I. Williams, who stepped down last year after leading the organization since 1972. Williams, who selected Owens to succeed him, now serves as presiding prelate emeritus.

"My vision for the future of Mount Calvary is to see it grow and develop into a unified body that continues to reach the lost, that continues to be on the cutting edge of social issues, that continues to feed the hungry," Owens told *Charisma*. "Not just a Pentecostal church that reaches the four walls of the church but... that reaches into the community as well."

Owens' congregation is one of the largest in the denomination, which includes 80 churches in the U.S. and 15 abroad. Gospel artist Shirley Caesar, who is married to Williams, is also a pastor within the church.

During the denomination's 2008 convocation, Owens said returning to the foundation of Pentecostalism—including an

emphasis on evangelism, holiness and the baptism in the Holy Spirit—are the keys to church growth.

“The Lord added to the church just by the preaching of the Word,” he said. “Preachers, get back to preaching. And we’ve got to preach the message [that] it’s holiness or hell. That’s how I got saved. I didn’t get saved under no prosperity and name-it-and-claim-it [preaching]. I got saved under the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.”

(See clip of Owens’ sermon below.)

Mount Calvary was incorporated as a denomination in 1929 by Bishop Brumfield Johnson, who left the United Holy Church of America because of its acceptance of female bishops. Mount Calvary permitted women to serve as pastors from its inception and began ordaining women as bishops in 1991.

Before being named presiding bishop, Owens had served as vice bishop of the church since 2001. He is also dean of the Joint College of African-American Pentecostal Bishops, an organization unaffiliated with the denomination that offers training to newly appointed Pentecostal bishops in both ministry and healthy family development.

Bishop J. Delano Ellis, president of the Joint College, will oversee the consecration service Thursday with Williams. Bishop T.D. Jakes of The Potter’s House in Dallas and Bishop Kenneth Ulmer of Faithful Central Bible Church in Los Angeles also will participate in the convocation, which begins Tuesday.

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