

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH

"HISTORY"



513 M STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

The following information is a concise history of the Apostolic Faith Mission located at 513 M Street, NE Washington, DC. The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. later became its Headquarters.

The Founder of the church in Washington, DC was the late Reverend Mary Gertrude (Mother) Kelley. She was born in North Carolina on January 22, 1901. Her life was filled with activities of spiritual meanings. She later in life relocated to the District of Columbia and, there the Lord manifested his will for such a beautiful woman of God.

Reported by Rev. Mary G. Kelley:

In the year 1953, June 3rd, the first Sunday of the month, the Apostolic Faith Mission was born as a house Mission. Thirty three (33) days prior to June 1st, I (Mother Kelly) was taken off my feet by God. I had been a very busy woman working my job, keeping my home, and caring an uncertain burden. Shortly afterward I lost part of the use of my left leg and left foot. As long as I was still in the bed they were painless. A few days later it was clear that God wanted my attention. I was working a job. Yet, I was continuously asking the Lord what will you have me to do? My desire was to work for the Lord. I had no known sin in my life. My testimonies were always about the goodness of God. Freely I preached all the truth that I knew wherever I was permitted. Yet, God wanted my attention. Thanks be to Him for that thirty three days of solitude that we (God and me) had together. The first thing he brought to me was the church. I was visiting here and there (different churches). Pastoring an unbelieving group that skowed me much respect. The Lord led me to look in the bible to Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 1-6 and many more encouraging scriptures. My understanding of God's words increased as I read it. I said, "Lord I have nothing to use"; the Spirit within me said use what you have, I will be the church builder. I then began reading St. Matthew 16:18. I said, "Lord I don't even have a house to shelter a church." The Spirit of the Lord led me to Romans 16:1-5; and I Corinthians 16:19. I continued praying. I said Lord will the church be willing to come to my house. The Holy Spirit said yes. The church is subject to Christ (Ephesians 5:24). Then I resorted to my husband to get his consent. He said, "yes sweetheart the house is yours." I was still confined to my home and the bed. Later I went into a deep consecration to say yes to every command of the Lord. I was led to write to Reverend Raymond (Brother) Crawford, General Overseer in Portland. He was the successor to the late Reverend Florence Crawford, his mother, the Founder of the Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon. I wrote telling him of my testimony and vision of what the Spirit has said to me.

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I had never attended any of the Apostolic Faith Mission meetings. In the testimony I told of how I was wonderfully healed instantly of a broken back about 40 years ago (1981). The healing was a result of prayers by Holy people of whom I will never forget. I wrote to Brother Crawford asking advice about the church and its laws (By-Laws or Doctrines). In a short time I received a letter from him stating that the Bible, the word of God was the guide. I had already started the church in my house. My dining room was cleared of all the furniture; the chairs were replaced; I used my food server as the rostrum. I was already saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost and power with the evidence of speaking in another tongue according to the utterance of the Holy Spirit. Also, I was already an ordained minister and later in 1956 I was ordained as an Elder of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

On June 3, 1953, God allowed me to open the Mission with about twenty-three (23) people. A friend of mine who pastored a church known as the Glorious Church of God had died and some of her members came that Sunday to the house. About 1 1/2 years later I received another letter from Brother Raymond Crawford stating that Reverend Cato (Brother) Bush had been warned of the Lord to go East and, that the letter would be followed by him. About another 1 1/2 year later at a meeting in Kingstree, South Carolina, a testimony from our Sister Pauleen White aroused his memories of that letter. She had not heard anything of there being a church or mission in Washington, DC. By this time the Lord had given us a rented place (building). After about three year, upon receiving a letter from Rev. Bush, I invited him to visit us and hold a two weeks revival meeting. He came in May for which June would have made it three (3) years since we had been in the building. Reverend Boyd, pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Kingstree, South Carolina learned about the DC Church through Sister White. He visited us just before Brother Bush.

We moved again to another Mission building. Shortly, after that move, we obtained our third Mission. The area was very noisy due to the heavy traffic. We then began praying asking God for a permanent church home. Souls were being added to the church; we dedicated Monday night from 6 to 7 pm as prayer and, we received great blessings. Gladys Reed helped in a great way in the music for God. Many came and took root in the gospel while others said the way was too straight. Nevertheless, God blessed the faithful ones who remained.

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He gave us a small six (6) room and one (1) bathroom house through our prayers. We had a nice size lot with a front and back yard. This was in 1962 and the property only costed \$11,500.00. God helped us to have the front remodeled; making it look more like a church. We also placed a sign reading The Apostolic Faith, Fundamental Trinitarian with Headquarters in Portlan, Oregon. Our work continued to grow and, the power of God was upon our services. our brethren came in and showed us so much kindness. Reverend (Brother) Bush stood by us; Reverend Leon C. (Brother) Dicks, pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church, in Brooklyn, New York, was with us in person and prayer inspite of his similiar struggles. Reverend William McClary and Reverend Issac Davis spent more than three years putting in their service. The late Reverend Willie Cureton served for a number of years until ill health claimed her. She was the Church Treasurer and Assistant Pastor. Sister Cureton was also our first Sunday School Leader and, Sister Mildred J. Smith, my daughter, was her assistant. Reverend Nathaniel White shared the responsibility of the ministry. Reverend William King and wife, Sister Stella, was part of the work. Brother King was a minister and Sister Stella served as our leading soloist until the Lord called her home. Reverend John McElveen and wife, Annie Ruth, and many others whose names I may not mention helped to shoulder the many responsibilities. Sister King and Sister Beatrice people were very helpful with the work. Elder Pearl Lockett, Sr, and wife, Sister Katie, came at every call. Reverend Eugene Segres, pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and wife, Sister Gertie, helped build the steps that we are able to ascend upon (?). Please allow me to say that many hours would not give space to all God's great blessings that the Eastern and Southern Coasts Churches have brought to us. Also, the many prayers and financial assistance from he Western Churches. Now last but not least, I wish to thank our many friends and customers of my Beauty Shop who have helped me to keep faith in God. Many of them never came into the services and left without leaving a donation for the new church. I apologize if you are hurt over perhaps not seeing your name printed stating your assistance but, I must say your faithfulness will surely be rewarded.

Mr. Walter Washington, Mayor of the District of Columbia, prayed with us on our ground breaking and, he delivered to us words of encouragement. Mrs. Little Brazed, retired school teacher, gave a response to a welcome. Sister Doris (Malone) Dicks brought words of encouragement to us in song. Rev. Leon C. Dicks preached the ground breaking service sermon.

The Apostolic Faith Mission, hosting church, choir presented musical selections. The Choir Director was my Junior Minister, Dennis W. Prothro. His wife name is Stephanie and, she is one of the church's soloists. The choir sung the Church's theme song, "We've Come This Far By Faith" as one of the special selections.

Jr. Minister Dennis W. Prothro was also ordained on the day of the ground breaking service for the new edifice. Hands were laid upon him by General Overseer Loyce C. Carver, Elder Pearl Lockett, Sr., and Pastor Mary G. Kelley. He had served as one of my ministers for almost five years (July 1981). At the time of his ordination, Brother Dennis was serving as my Assistant Pastor. He faithfully filled the office of many positions.

The different locations of the Apostolic Faith Mission during its establishment in Washington, DC are as follows.

1. 821 3rd Street, SE (Rev. Kelley's house)
 2. 202 2nd Street, NE
 3. 7th and L Street, NW (Approximately 7 months)
 4. 2nd and H Street, NE (Approximately 2 1/2 years)
 5. 513 M Street, NE
- * Temporary relocation during building of new edifice
507 Florida Avenue, NE

Rev. Kelley's desire was to move her parishioners out of a store front church into a nice edifice (church building).

RESTING FROM LABOR:

The REV. MARY GERTRUDE KELLEY, Founder and Pastor, of the Apostolic Faith Church in Washington, D.C. for over 29 years of service. Also, she served as Youth Leader of the Apostolic Faith Eastern and Southern Coasts Churches Youth Conference for 8 years before her death on December 18, 1982, at the age of 81 years. She was a pioneer of the gospel in Washington, DC. Her noteworthy dedication and contribution in the Lord's vineyard resulted in the building of churches and winning of souls in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC.

She testified of accepting Christ as her personal savior at an early age (9 1/2 years old) during a Monday afternoon prayer service at St. Peters Methodist Church in North Carolina.

After moving to Washington, DC with her husband and young family, she continued her life as a born again christian. While fellowshipping with fellow saints (christians) she learned of the deeper works of grace. She sought the deeper experience of sanctification and fasted and prayed for the power of the Holy Ghost.

Rev. Kelley, known as "Mother Kelley" was loved by all whose life she touched. She often said, "I preach more in my Beauty shop than I do in the pulpit." She was a true Mother in Zion. The abiding memories of her as preacher, teacher, counselor, advisor, and friend will remain in her absence.

She often challenged her flock (parishioners) to "MEET ME THERE." We will see her again if we follow after Christ in her footprints.

A great soldier has been called off the battlefield, to receive her reward.

(December 1982)

The pasting of the late Reverend Mary Gertrude Kelley greatly affected the church both spiritually and emotionally. Yet, the pains and loss were not beyond repair. Mother Kelley taught the reality of physical death. She told me (Rev. Prothro) of a dream while lying on her death bed. In the dream she could see a light shining and, the closer she got to the light the smaller it became. Then, with an expression of total disappointment, she started crying and saying, "I woke up and was still here in this world, I thought for sure that I was gone to be with the Lord."

Rev. Kelley had told the (those present) congregatin to stay with Jesus and to follow Rev. Prothro as he follow the Lord. She made it known to the church officials that Rev. Dennis W. Prothro was to be her successor. On December 12, 1982 at about 11:28 am, the Lord called Rev. Kelley home to rest from her labor.

The church was faced with many struggles but, thank God, he had provided another strong and determined leader. Although I (Rev. Prothro) was only twenty six year old at the time my pastorate commenced, there was no doubt of doing God's will. The Lord had showed me that I would have to lead the church and, I took advantage of the prior notices to consecrate for the role. Mother Kelley and I used to often discuss my future leadership role as Pastor of the Church.

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On December 19, 1982 the late Mother Mildred Smith announced to the church members, who were present at Rev. Kelley's house, that I was recommended by Rev. Kelley to be her successor. She asked everyone to either agree or disagree. No one said they disagreed. The trustee board later sponsored a special service in the honor of Rev. Dennis W. Prothro. The service was to officially, on the local church level, turn the church over to Rev. Prothro as Pastor and presiding official. The late Mother Mildred J. Smith was the officiating officer of the service.

The church continued to progress spiritually, financially, and numerically. Due to the growing congregation, the sanctuary and other rooms in the edifice were rearranged. The church began to purchase its own van on October 31, 1982. It has been used for many evangelistical missions and recreational trips. We had our first church water (pool) baptismal on *March 26,* 1983. The church had a central air condition unit installed on June 18, 1983. Most of the work done to and around the church has been preformed by Rev. Prothro and the brethren (brother and sisters). I built the brick and chain link fence currently going across the front yard of the church. We later began to celebrate the church's anniversary in a more ceremonial manner which shows due recognition to the late Rev. Mary G. Kelley.

On September 6, 1983, Rev. Issac Davis, who was the District Overseer at the time, came to Washington, DC and rendered another special service, representing the organization executive staff, inaugurating me as the presiding Pastor of the church.

The Apostolic Faith Church of Washington, DC established its own charter on August 28, 1986. The charter indicates that it is an independent corporation. It is affiliated with The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland Oregon currently know as Headquarters.

The congregation is kept abreast of the business aspect of the church. Also, everyone is encouraged to understand the composition of the church. This will strengthen the fact that the church is not mine (Rev. Prothro) but, the entire bonafide congregation. I seek to educate my parishioners of the natural (materialistic) side of the church as well as the spiritual. I believe that factual and clear explanations will eliminate out of hand assumptions. My motto is: "THOUGH THY BEGINNING WAS SMALL, YET THY LATTER END SHOULD GREATLY INCREASE." Job 8:7

The church has grown commendably in organizational structure and balance. Harmony and unity is a priority. The congregation has increased and, the future looks promising. The church has spreaded its outreach to open air services and a thirty minutes radio broadcast. The broadcast is called "The Apostolic Faith Church Outreach Ministry". It is currently aired only on the third Sunday of each month on WUST - 1120 AM.