

# George Augustus Stallings, Jr.

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**George Augustus Stallings, Jr.** (born March 17, 1948) is the founder of the Imani Temple African-American Catholic Congregation, an African-American-led form of Catholicism. He served as a Roman Catholic priest from 1974 to 1989. In 1990, he made a public break with the Roman Catholic Church on *The Phil Donahue Show*, and was excommunicated that year.

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## Early life and priestly ministry

Stallings was born in 1948 in New Bern, North Carolina to George Augustus Stallings, Sr., and Dorothy Smith. His grandmother, Bessie Taylor, introduced him as a boy to worship in a black Baptist church. He enjoyed the service so much that he said he desired to be a minister. During his high school years he began expressing "Afrocentric" sentiments, insisting on his right to wear a mustache, despite school rules, as a reflection of black identity.<sup>[1]</sup>

Wishing to serve as a Catholic priest, he attended St. Pius X Seminary in Kentucky and received a B.A. degree in philosophy in 1970. Sent by his bishop to the Pontifical North American College in Rome, he earned three degrees from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas between 1970 and 1975: the Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T.B.), a master's degree in pastoral theology and a Licentiate of Sacred Theology (S.T.L.).

Stallings was ordained a priest in 1974. His first assignment was as an associate pastor at Our Lady of Peace Church, Washington, D.C. In 1976, at the age of 28 years and just two years after ordination as a priest, he was named a pastor of St. Teresa of Avila parish in Washington. He was the pastor of this church for 14 years. During Stallings' pastorate, the parish become known for its integration of African-American culture and gospel music in the Mass. In 1988, he was named to a new position as a diocesan evangelist.

## Departure and excommunication from the Catholic Church

In 1989, one year after having received this new appointment, Stallings announced he was leaving it to found a new ministry, the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation. He stated that he left because the Catholic Church did not serve the African American community or recognize talent.

In January 1990, Stallings announced on *The Phil Donahue Show* that he was breaking with papal authority and giving up Catholic teaching on abortion, contraception, homosexuality, and divorce. James Cardinal

Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, excommunicated him and any Catholics remaining in the Imani Temple. Critics claimed that Stallings had lived extravagantly and that Hickey had ordered him to seek psychiatric treatment.<sup>[2]</sup>

Stallings was ordained a bishop in May 1990 by Richard Bridges, a bishop of the Independent Old Catholic Church, a denomination not in communion with Rome, and was given the title of archbishop in 1991 by the same group.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Accusations of sexual misconduct

In 1989 a former altar boy at St. Teresa of Avila Church accused Stallings of sexual misconduct over a period of several months in 1977.<sup>[3]</sup> *The Washington Post* reported in 1990 that concerns about Stallings' association with teenage boys had helped lead to his split with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>[4]</sup>

In 2009 the archdiocese reached a \$125,000 settlement with Gamal Awad, who said he was sexually abused at 14 by Stallings and a seminarian.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Relationship with Emmanuel Milingo and Sun Myung Moon

In the year 2001, Stallings married Sayomi Kamimoto, a native of Okinawa, Japan, in a ceremony presided over by Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church. They now have two sons. In 2004 he was a key organizer for an event in which Moon was crowned with a "crown of peace". The event was attended by a number of members of the U.S. Congress.<sup>[6]</sup>

Stallings regained attention in 2006 due to his association with excommunicated Roman Catholic archbishop Emmanuel Milingo and his group Married Priests Now!. Milingo consecrated Stallings and three other independent Catholic bishops conditionally in a ceremony in September of that year.<sup>[7]</sup> Stallings is also active in the Middle East Peace Initiative, which promotes conflict resolution between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

## Media appearances

In the late 1980s, George Stallings made numerous appearances in the news media. He was interviewed on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Larry King Live*, *The Phil Donahue Show* and *The Diane Rehm Show*.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Published works

- *I am ... Living in the Rhythm of the god within the key of g minor* (2003, SKS Press).

## See also

- Imani Temple African-American Catholic Congregation

## References

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  - Bowie resident pushes for peace ([http://www.gazette.net/stories/01082009/bowinew114509\\_32470.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/01082009/bowinew114509_32470.shtml))
  - Muslim cleric from Edison works for peace in Middle East (<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/article/20090108/NEWS/901080327/-1/newsfront>)

## External links

- Imani Temple's bio of Stallings (<http://imanitempledc.com/ArchB.htm>)

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