



# Brooksville Bishop elected to Top International Leadership Post in his Church

By Gail Hollenbeck, Times Correspondent  
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BROOKSVILLE — Bishop Theodore N. Brown says he had a "drug" problem as a child.

"I was reared in the church. It gave me a drug problem, because my parents drug me to church," Brown, 72, said jokingly in a recent interview.

Brown's love for church is apparent these days. In October, he was elected and installed as president general of his international denomination, the Church of the Living God, during its 81st general assembly.

That's the top leadership position in the denomination, which is based in Orlando and has churches throughout the United States as well as in Africa and the Caribbean. According to a news release announcing Brown's election, there are 175 churches and 26 dioceses in the Pentecostal denomination, which was established in 1903.

There are more than 10,000 members across the United States, with missions in Jamaica, Trinidad, Haiti, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria.

The church's full name is the House of God Which is the Church of the Living God the Pillar and Ground of the Truth Inc.

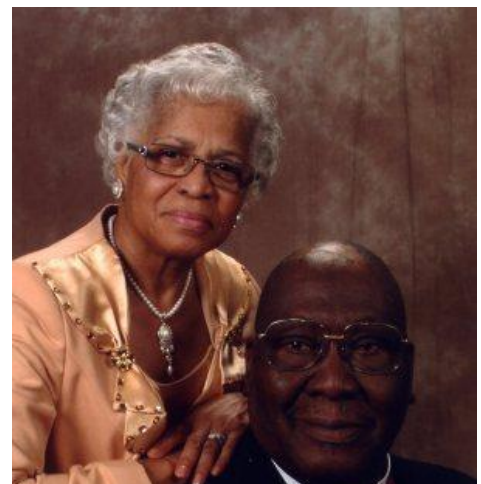
After starting out as a Baptist, Brown attended an Episcopal church. He attended a Christian college, St. Augustine's, in Raleigh, N.C.

But it wasn't until Dec. 19, 1972, he says, that he visited the Church of the Living God in Brooksville and had a conversion experience.

"I wasn't in any church at that time," said Brown, a Florida native who was a math teacher at Hernando High School at that time. "One of my nieces invited me to attend during a week of prayer. I complied, and, boom, it happened. I received the Lord into my life as my personal savior and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. From that point, I've been living for him."

Two years later, Brown was ordained as a minister and was given the pastorate of a church in the town of Hernando in Citrus County.

"I served there for 10 years and then was transferred to



During his pastorate, Brown was consecrated as a bishop over the Florida Gulf Diocese, with churches in Bradenton, Brooksville, Hernando, Lakeland, Orlando, Plant City, Plymouth and Wildwood, and the Georgia Diocese, with churches in Metter, Stillmore, Swainsboro and Wrightsville.

Before being elected to his new position, he served as general treasurer of the international body.

"Our president general became incapacitated and was unable to carry on the work," Brown said, "so we had the Board of Bishops come together to fast and pray for the Lord to give us some direction. It was on Oct. 23 that the mantle fell to me."

George W. Ward, national director of Christian education for the denomination, said Brown's election is a sign that the church, domestically and internationally, is moving forward.

"Bishop Brown has served the local, diocese, national and international church in many progressive capacities where he functions in a spirit of excellence," Ward said. "I would describe his leadership style as multifaceted. (It is) transformational, charismatic, cross-cultural, contingency and catalytic leadership."

Ward also noted that Brown is "bold, daring and decisive, with solid financial experience in forecasting, budgeting and systemic team building."

Brown's duties take him all over the globe, meeting with bishops in the various dioceses and still preaching on occasion. He and his wife of 44 years, Elder Gladys Brown, 67, also take time to visit their four children and six grandchildren, who live in other states.

Mrs. Brown, who began attending the Josephine Street church about six months after her husband's conversion, is the current pastor of the Hernando church, where Brown began his ministry.

"We are trying to reach the mass of people — no race, color or creed — but all people," Brown said about his denomination's goals. "We've got to reach humanity as a mission given to us by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

### **Church of the Living God services**

The Church of the Living God at 918 Josephine St. in Brooksville has services at 11:15 a.m. Sundays. Call (352) 799-8509. The church at 3441 E Oleander Lane in Hernando, in Citrus County, has services at 11:30 a.m. Sundays. Call (352) 726-3103. Bishop Theodore N. Brown's vision for his denomination can be seen on video, along with other information about the church, at [houseofgodclg.org/TempPage.html](http://houseofgodclg.org/TempPage.html).