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# Alexander, Daniel William (A)

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## Alexander, Daniel William (A)

1883-1970

**African Orthodox Church**

**South Africa, Uganda, Kenya**

Daniel William Alexander was born on December 23, 1883 in Port Elizabeth. There are conflicting reports about his birth parentage. Johnson (1992:78) says he was born on December 25 and that his mother was of Cuban and Javanese extraction, but in his application for a French passport he said his father was a French subject from Martinique and his mother was an African.

He was brought up as a Roman Catholic but later joined the Anglican Church. He was commandeered to serve as a cook in the Anglo-Boer War when he was living in Johannesburg and went to Natal. He was arrested as a British spy and imprisoned in Pretoria, then released when the British took the city. His first wife, Maria Horsley, died about this time (Johnson 1992:79). He met an Anglican priest, Father Godfrey, who asked him to help with a funeral, and he became an Anglican, and began to study for ordination (Johnson 1992:80). He was a catechist at St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church in Pretoria when he married his wife Elizabeth on August 29, 1902. He later joined Brander's Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, where he was a Provincial Canon, Director of the Rand, and Prebendary of St. Augustine's Pro-Cathedral (Kampenhansen 1976:578).

According to Johnson (1992:81), Alexander left Pretoria and the Anglican Church in 1914. In about 1920 he joined the African Church of J. Khanyane Napo, who had also been a member of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion. He was stationed in Kimberley, and, tired of being summoned to Johannesburg for meetings about quarrels between the leaders, he left to form the African Orthodox Church in 1924. He sought to affiliate this entity with George McGuire's African Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. after reading a sermon by McGuire in *Negro World* of August 9, 1924 (Marks & Trapido 1987:221). He was consecrated a bishop by McGuire and others in America in 1927.

In about 1928, Reuben Spartas in Uganda made contact with Alexander. Alexander traveled to Uganda in October 1931 and, on Trinity Sunday 1932, he ordained Reuben Spartas and Obadiah Basajjikitale as priests (Welbourn 1961:81). When travelling back to South Africa, Alexander met a postal clerk, James Beuttah, in Mombasa. Beuttah suggested that he return to Kenya to visit the independent schools associations.

In May 1935 Alexander wrote to Archbishop Isidore of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Johannesburg, asking for letters of introduction to Fr.

Nikodemos Sarikas of Tanganyika and the Patriarch of Jerusalem (Githieya 1992:158). The archbishop replied, suggesting that he visit the Patriarch of Alexandria. Alexander arrived in Kenya on November 18, 1935, and founded a seminary with eight students at Gituamba. In June 1937 he ordained two of his students as priests and two as deacons and returned to South Africa (Githieya 1992:167-168).

The African Orthodox Church in South Africa received government recognition in 1941. In 1960, two bishops from the American branch of the AOC visited South Africa to consecrate two new bishops. Shortly after the consecration, they deposed Alexander and promulgated “emergency regulations” to govern the church. After that, mainly as a result of American interference, the AOC broke up into several factions, and Alexander changed the name of his branch to the African Independent Orthodox Church.

## **Stephen Hayes**

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