

COGIC Elects New Bishop

G.E. Patterson ousted C.D. Owens in historic election

Never before in the 103-year history of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), headquartered in

Memphis, Tenn., has a presiding bishop been unseated. But in mid-November delegates to COGIC's general assembly opted for change and voted the incumbent, Bishop Chandler D. Owens, out of office.

Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson, 61, pastor of Temple of Deliverance COGIC in Memphis, defeated Owens 2,619 to 1,786. Owens, who is from Atlanta, was re-elected to the 12-member general board.

"The first thing I will do is bring the general [governing] board back into its rightful position," presiding bishop Patterson told Charisma, alluding to the diminished role the board played during Owens' tenure. He says he has plans to "expose the world to the great preachers, both male and female, in the Church of God in Christ" through an international TV and radio ministry that will serve as a vehicle to keep COGIC's 5.5 million-member constituency informed.

Five men have previously held the top spot in the Pentecostal denomination, including founder C.H. Mason, O.T. Jones, James O. Patterson, Louis Ford and Chandler Owens.