

Election as General Bishop of Pentecostal Church of God Catches New Leader Off Guard

Lloyd Naten says he was surprised when he was suddenly elected General Bishop of the Pentecostal Church of God at its annual general convention in Arlington, Texas, last Friday.

Naten has served as General Secretary for the last four years and had served in a series of denominational, district and pastoral positions for the last couple of decades, having joined the Pentecostal Church of God in 1961.

The move came the same day that the denomination was to have voted on a visionary organizational transformation called Resolution 7 and 8, which would have amended the bylaws and centralized more power in the office of the General Bishop, sources told *Charisma News*.

Naten said he has not yet articulated the vision for his next two-year term. "I wasn't anticipating this. I am giving it thought. We need to reconnect with the ministers and especially reach out to younger ministers," he told *Charisma News*.

Charles Scott served as General Bishop for eight years. He had planned to present the transformational plan and this was discussed on the denomination's website. The plan was the work of a number of people in the denomination including pastors and denominational officials. The transformation proposal was withdrawn after Scott withdrew when he was not re-elected in the first four ballots.

Denominational rules required two-thirds vote to elect any official. If that does not happen in the first three votes only the top two vote-getters—Scott and Naten—were voted on.

Scott had fallen behind Naten in votes on the fourth ballot, which prompted Scott to pull his name. Naten then received the two-thirds required on the fifth ballot.

When Naten was asked about this, he declined to answer.

However, Naten did say that there was a good spirit and atmosphere at the convention even though the "changes were unexpected.

"We'll move forward from here," he added.

Denomination rules make a new General Bishop in office for two years the first time followed by four-year terms.

Scott declined to give a statement about not being re-elected, indicating that he wanted to put this behind him and move on to the next phase of his ministry.

In addition to his time as General Bishop, Scott served as evangelist and pastor for 11 years; as sectional presbyter in the Arkansas District for five years, Arkansas District youth director for five years, administrative assistant to the General Secretary and Stewardship Ministries Director at the International Headquarters for five years and General Secretary for two years.