

*“I am not sure that my parents had any idea as to the meaning of the name Gilbert when they named me, and it was more than 40 years later when preaching a series of sermons on names and their meaning, that I looked up my name and discovered that Gilbert means “light of many.” I had been proclaiming Jesus to be the Light of the world for almost 3 decades before discovering that my parents had prophetically given me a name describing my lifetime calling.”*

**-Gilbert E. Patterson**

## **GILBERT EARL PATTERSON**

Gilbert E. Patterson was born to Bishop William Archie Patterson, Sr. and Mary Louise Patterson on September 22, 1939. Gilbert’s beginnings started in the parsonage next door to the Church of God in Christ church in Humboldt, Tennessee. It was an act of divine providence that he was born in a Godly environment to devout Christian parents, forecasting of his called-out life and dedication in the gospel ministry. In November of 1939, Gilbert’s father, mother, his siblings - William Archie Patterson, Jr., Mary Alice Patterson, Lee Ella Patterson, and Barbara Patterson - moved from Humboldt to Memphis, Tennessee. Although he was too young to remember the move, it was in Memphis that Gilbert first showed his love for preaching the gospel. When speaking about her baby brother, Evangelist Supervisor Lee Ella Patterson Smith would talk about his early preaching. Fondly, she would remember the time when, at age four, he would “stand upon orange crates and soap boxes and just preach the gospel” to his first congregation of neighborhood children.

As a preacher’s kid, his formative years in Memphis from 1939 through 1952 were influenced by his father and by Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, founder of the Church of God in Christ. From 1945-1952 Gilbert received his primary education at Lincoln Elementary School, directly across from their house at 1567 South Orleans Street.

In May 1951, at the age of 11, Gilbert Patterson accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior during a revival at Holy Temple C.O.G.I.C, 1254 Wilson St. under the leadership of his father and pastor, Bishop W.A. Patterson, Sr. One year later, May 1952, the Patterson family moved to Detroit, Michigan where they resided at 1695 Chicago Street. While living in Detroit, Gilbert attended Hutchins Intermediate School during his 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. During his high school years, he attended Central High School.

In Detroit, his father Bishop W.A. Patterson, Sr. pastored New Jerusalem C.O.G.I.C., 7361 Lindwood Ave. During his teen years, Gilbert served God and his church in the music ministry. It was on a Sunday night, September 16, 1956, that Gilbert received the baptism of the Holy Ghost at the age of 16. Approximately 30 days later the Lord came to Him in a Sunday night worship service, giving him to know that he had been chosen from birth to do a special work in the gospel ministry.

Gilbert Patterson officially preached his first sermon on Tuesday, January 22, 1957. The text was Isaiah 59:9 and the sermon was entitled “We Wait for Light, But We Walk in Darkness.” He was licensed to preach in March 1957 and ordained as Elder on August 28, 1958. Gilbert Patterson many times recalled, “I am not sure when I truly came into complete realization as to God’s plan for my life, but I do know that I never saw myself in any other capacity. Preaching the gospel was my destiny and I knew it all my life.”

After graduating from Central High School in 1958, he briefly attended the Detroit Bible Institute. Elder G.E. Patterson returned to Memphis in December 1961, attended LeMoyne-Owen College, and started serving as Co-Pastor of Holy Temple C.O.G.I.C. in 1962.

The Lord called him to the office of Apostle in 1965 while conducting a tent revival on the corner of McLemore and Wilson St. He was called and started using the title “God’s Young Apostle,” which was unheard of in those days. Many felt that all apostles were in the past; but later scriptural revelations convinced him that the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were continuing ministries. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

From time to time during the G.E. Patterson Evangelistic Crusades, this God’s Young Apostle saw great miracles take place through his prayers, and recorded hundreds of testimonies on tape from persons who were blessed, healed, delivered, or received miracles of one sort of another through his prayers, broadcasts, letters, or in some connection with his ministry.

In a June edition of Ebony Magazine, Apostle Patterson was selected as one of the Most Eligible Bachelors of 1965. His words were that he was seeking a wife who would be “devoted to God and me.” He expressed to his Godmother that he wanted his wife to be saved, baptized, and filled with the Holy Ghost under his gospel ministry. In early 1966, Ms. Louise Dowdy visited the Holy Temple C.O.G.I.C. with her sister Evangelist Frances Kelley. Enjoying that service prompted many return visits to the church. Apostle Patterson’s message on Sunday, May 22, 1966, was very enlightening, and on that day, Louise Dowdy received salvation through Jesus Christ. A few months later she was baptized. On the final night of the New Years’ Revival, January 24, 1967, she received the gift of the Holy Ghost. G.E. Patterson affectionally called her his “number one student.” What he was seeking in a wife was complete, and on March 9, 1967, he asked Louise Dowdy to be his wife. After a brief courtship they were united in Holy Matrimony on May 27, 1967. He lovingly proclaimed her to be “his number one student” of the gospel.

In March 1975, Gilbert E. Patterson organized the Temple of Deliverance, the Cathedral of Bountiful Blessings, and in so doing established the first major church in 50 years organized in Memphis Tennessee free from any connection or control of any established denomination. It was one of the fastest growing congregations in the country.

Gilbert E. Patterson was a learned minister and held an honorary Doctorate from Oral Roberts University. He was the publisher of *Bountiful Blessings Magazine*; author of a book title, *Here Comes the Judge* released by Whitaker House Publishers; and was a contributing writer in the Spirit-Filled Life Bible (King James Version) published by Thomas Nelson Publishers and edited by Dr. Jack Hayford.

Gilbert E. Patterson was a visionary and was truly a 20<sup>th</sup> century Apostle of Jesus Christ. He was a renowned national speaker, known for his simplistic messages that transcend all barriers of race, gender, age, and walks of life for people around the globe.

His Bountiful Blessings Ministry was viewed internationally on *BET* and *TBN* networks as well as various local TV stations throughout the nation. One of his themes, “Be healed, be delivered, and be set free” has become a popular expression. The demand for his sermons is still being felt now. He was the president and general manager of the Memphis based full time gospel radio station WBBP (1480 AM).

Gilbert E. Patterson was a two-time Grammy Award nominee, for a 1999 project titled Bishop G.E. Patterson Presents Rance Allen and the Soul Winners' Conference Choir "*Just Right for a Miracle,*" and the 2006 project titled Bishop G. E. Patterson and Congregation "*Singing the Old Time Way Volume 1.*" Also, in 2006 he received the Stellar Award for "Best Traditional Male Vocalist".

Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson was considered a leader among church leaders. He helped finance many local churches and supported other pastors across the nation. On November 14, 2000, he was elected as Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Incorporated, the church of his nativity.

On March 20, 2007, Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson entered into the presence of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and left a great legacy of Salvation, Healing, and Deliverance for us to continue to share with all who would look this way.