



# City of Chicago



R2013-885

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 10/16/2013  
**Sponsor(s):** Fioretti (2)  
**Type:** Resolution  
**Title:** Tribute to late Bishop D. Rayford Bell  
**Committee(s) Assignment:**

## TRIBUTE TO BISHOP D. RAYFORD BELL

WHEREAS, In His Infinite Wisdom, Almighty God has granted Apostolic Bishop D. Rayford Bell eternal life after a devoted earthly life of four score and ten years; and

WHEREAS, On July 9, 1923, Bishop Bell started his temporal life as Dennis Raphael Bell, the son of sharecropper parents in Leflore County, Mississippi. Raised by his grandparents and convinced that a ray of heavenly light was guiding him, he was elevated from a Mississippi plowboy to a Prince of the Apostolic Church of God; and

WHEREAS, In 1938, after a brief stint in Missouri, he returned to Mississippi where, at the age of 15, he met Darlene Griffin. On July 20, 1942, they were united in Holy Matrimony and to this union were born two sons, Harvey and Curtis, as well as nine grandchildren. Their 48 years of marriage ended only with her passing after a lengthy illness. However, in April of 1991, the Lord blessed Bishop Bell with a new mate and life partner, Jacqueline Collins; and

WHEREAS, Soon after Harvey was born, Bishop Bell was drafted into the United States Army and was sent to the European Theatre where he saw action in campaigns of Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe. He was honorably discharged December 9, 1945. Four years later, Bishop Bell received the Holy Ghost; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Bell constantly sought to improve himself through education. He finished high school at LaSalle University in Chicago, matriculated to Southwestern College in Oklahoma City where he was awarded a Bachelors degree with honors, earned a Masters of Theology at American Bible College and a double Doctorate in Theology and Philosophy from Toledo Bible College and Seminary; and

WHEREAS, As an Apostolic preacher for more than 55 years, Bishop Bell spent the majority of his life serving the people of God in many ways. He was a chaplain for the Chicago Police Department and came up through the ranks of Christ Temple Church, serving as Sunday School teacher as well as Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent, Vice-Chair and Chairman of the Youth Department, Trustee, Assistant Pastor and ultimately Pastor. He held the title of Senior Pastor until his passing; and

WHEREAS, Bishop D. Rayford Bell was the founder of the Christ Temple Apostolic Church in Joliet as well as the founder and President of Midwest Apostolic Bible College in Chicago. He also founded Samuel Barnes Christian Academy and created the Mother Darlene Bell Scholarship Fund in honor of his first wife to assist deserving students with the cost of their education; and

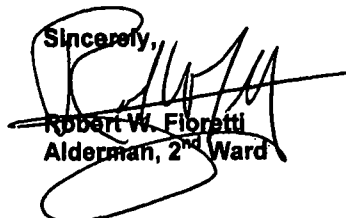
WHEREAS, Bishop Bell served as the Assistant Presiding Bishop of the Pentecostal Churches of the Apostolic Faith for 19 years along side his best friend, the late Bishop Elzie W. Young. Thereafter, he was the Presiding Prelate from January 1990 to July 2000 and held the title of Senior Bishop until his passing; and

WHEREAS, Having preached the Gospel from the street corners of Chicago, in 49 states throughout this nation, in more than 50 countries, on all five inhabited continents and many islands, Bishop D. Rayford Bell transitioned from this life to the next doing what he loved best. On September 29, 2013, he passed away while in the middle of preaching his Sunday sermon at his beloved Christ Temple Church where he had been its spiritual shepherd since 1958; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Robert W. Fioretti, Alderman of the 2nd Ward has informed this august body of the passing of this icon and pillar of this city's spiritual leadership, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 16th Day of October, 2013, do hereby express our collective sorrow at the passing of Bishop D. Rayford Bell and extend our deepest sympathy to his family, his congregation and all those many people whose lives this remarkable preacher touched.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Bishop D. Rayford Bell.

Sincerely,  
  
Robert W. Fioretti  
Alderman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward