



Bishop C. David Willis

May 22, 1959 - November 10, 2025

HE CAME & He WENT

"I Shall Not Pass This Way But Once--- if there is any good, I can do, any song I can sing, or any message I can bring, let me do it now, as I shall never pass this way again."

On May 22, 1959, in Kansas City, Kansas, Emerson A., Sr. and Pearlle Loraine (Lorene) Morris Willis became parents of a new baby boy; they chose the name David. His paternal grandmother offered the name Caiaphas. Thus, the child was named Caiaphas David Willis. As a small child, he was badly burned. When he healed, his parents allowed his paternal great-grandparents to take him to Plain Dealing, Louisiana. Louisiana became his new home and "Dee" his nickname.

Like Moses, Dee was a goodly child. Like Samuel, he was dedicated to the Lord at an early age. Like Daniel, he possessed a more excellent spirit, and despite any mistakes, like David, he proved to be a man after God's own heart. Just as Nehemiah, he showed ability to withstand his worst critics. As Paul did, so did he in taking the time for a Timothy, and as Christ, he sought to please his heavenly Father more than himself.

Being a young lad, he would preach three times a day in the summer under a tarpaulin tent, just like he had heard a Radio Evangelist reference. He once

got angry with his paternal great-grandfather/Daddy for not giving in each of the offerings. His public or visible church work also began in childhood as a helper in weekly services. His job was to gather pillows used for kneeling during prayer service and to kill any wasp that came out in their country church building. As he grew, he was eventually appointed to Bible Band Secretary, Sunday School Teacher to his age group, Assistant Superintendent of Sunday School, and Sunday School Superintendent. Though not an adult, he had superb reading ability and even read aloud the scripture passages when the missionary and minister stood to preach. All of this was in addition to his helping with the music. While traveling on passenger trains, conductors and other passengers would give him money to play his acoustic guitar.

At age thirteen, Dee repented and accepted Christ. At age fourteen, after returning from a Christmas trip and speaking at his paternal grandmother's Kansas City, Kansas church, he accepted (publicly) his having a part in the Gospel Ministry. He was a faithful member of Bethel Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and was baptized both in the Holy Ghost and in water under the pastorate of the late Elder LeRoy Alexander.

He took seriously his admonition to remain consecrated before God and to live a life reflective of Holiness. At age sixteen, he received his ministry credentials from the late Bishop J. W. White, making him the youngest credentialed minister in the Jurisdiction. Many of the pastors said of him, "It's something about that young man. He preaches like he's been preaching thirty or forty years."

Willis graduated from Plain Dealing High School. While attending, he excelled in Newspaper Staff, Yearbook Staff, Class Officer, a state championship in Extemporaneous Speaking, and was a member of the Quill & Scroll National Honor Society. He also served as a student librarian, chairman of the school's Book Fair for two years, worked in the school office, and received the Patriotism Award at commencement.

After high school, Mr. Willis furthered his learning. He always described himself as a “lifetime student.” He attended LSU–Shreveport and Louisiana Tech University. Both his Associate’s (Psychology) and his Bachelor’s (Psychology) degrees were awarded by the latter. Later, he received his Master’s (Biblical Studies) and Doctorate (Ministry) degree from Friends International Christian University. Indeed, he gave himself to much training to be an exemplary counselor—prayer, fasting, and the study of God’s word. He also established the Evangelist Temple Diocese School of Ministry, subsequently served as its first Director, and eventually achieved status of Professor.

Elder Willis progressed in ministry. Our sovereign Lord connected him to the late Bishop M. H. Hendrix, and he came to the Bishopric via his commendation and the sovereign will of God. He had already founded God’s Way Out (Shreveport, Louisiana) as a result of his radio and television ministry. Being steadfast in ministry, he helped to establish or maintain several churches, served as Interim Minister at Emmanuel Church of God in Christ (COGIC) (Shreveport, Louisiana), and went to Glory after numerous years as Pastor for Hendrix Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC) (Atlanta, Texas) and a short term of service with Evangelist Temple Church of God in Christ Headquarters (HDQS) in Kansas City. He also succeeded the late Bishop Hendrix as Jurisdictional Bishop of the Arkansas–Louisiana–Texas Jurisdiction. He was duly consecrated to the sacred office of Jurisdictional Bishop in 1989, after having been consecrated an Assistant Bishop in 1984. In 1993, he was elevated to the esteemed office of Presiding Bishop/Chief Apostle/CEO of the Evangelist Temple Diocese, succeeding the late Bishop S. R. Chambers, who had consecrated him to the Bishopric years earlier. He repeatedly stood the test of fire and helped many to launch out in ministry work!

Dr. Willis' secular career was marked by over 45 years of service as a Counselor. During this tenure, he held status as a Board-Certified Substance Abuse Counselor, Certified Compulsive Gambling Counselor, Critical Incident Counselor, National Certified Bereavement Facilitator, International Certified Co-occurring Disorders Professional, International Advanced Alcohol & Drug Counselor, and Licensed Addiction Counselor, as well as a Christian Counselor. He held membership in the American Association of Christian Counselors, American Academy of Bereavement, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals, National Funeral Directors Association, and held Diplomate status in the International Association of Christian Clinical Counselors. He obtained his Broadcaster's License from the Federal Communications Commission in 1978. He received the SPACE Award in 1982 and 1983 for excellence in cable programming for his telecast "The Victor." His community work involved serving on numerous Boards of Directors, Advisory Boards, and committees for several entities and caused him to travel throughout the United States, including to our nation's capital. He also served in several journalism capacities over his tenure. Perhaps the most notable was his time spent as the Editorial Writer for the Sunday edition of the newspaper. He received much training from nationally recognized presenters and was honored with invitations to speak in statewide conferences. Since 2005, he was also a Funeral Director licensed via the Texas Funeral Service Commission but had served the funeral service profession in Louisiana previously. To be often invited as a trainer or guest lecturer was his joy and esteem.

Bishop Willis was blessed and honored to receive the keys to the cities of Birmingham, Alabama (2004), and Bastrop, Louisiana (2005, 2008, 2009), thrice recipient of the distinguished Arkansas Traveler Award (2003, 2006, 2008) from Arkansas' Governor Mike Huckabee, as well as proclamations from several United States Governors, Senators, and cities. Prior to this, in

1987, he was highly honored via being invited back to Plain Dealing High School to be Commencement Speaker.

Brother Willis loved God; so therefore, he loved God's people. This was evident outside of the sanctuary walls as well as inside. When someone reached out to him in sincerity, he reached back. In so doing, he was blessed to love, adopt, and be adopted in the heart of many. He made certain that he treated people no less than he treated himself.

On November 10, 2025, Bishop Dr. Brother Mr. "Pops/ Dad" Willis closed his eyes, vacated his bodily premises, and obtained a better home in a better country. At his life's closure, he hoped that the following would maintain precious memories: his sons, Michael (Kim), Dr. James (Angel), Dee, and Anthony Sr. (Kayla); two daughters, Rev. Shaundala (Taurus) and Erin; one sister, Carol Willis Mabon; two sisters-in-law; one maternal uncle; one maternal aunt; six grandsons; one granddaughter; one great-grandson; five nephews; four nieces; a host of cousins; six godsons; three goddaughters; four brothers-of-the-heart; one sister-of-the-heart; one nephew-of-the-heart, Joel Ratliff; Evangelist Temple COGIC Diocese, and Hendrix Temple COGIC membership; as well as a host of rapture-awaiting Saints.

His parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, three sisters, and four brothers finished their journey prior to him. For all that he was, meant, and represented, he will indeed be MISSED, and his SEAT will be EMPTY.

Humanity is left with a lasting void.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday November 22, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at Evangelist Temple Church Of God In Christ 2315 Benton Blvd. KCMO 64127. Interment: Bradley, Arkansas. Visitation: 9 – 11:00 a.m. at the Church. Arrangements entrusted to Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapels.

Condolences may be shared on our website lawrenceajones.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **22**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Evangelist Temple Church Of God In Christ
2315 Benton Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64127

Funeral Service

NOV **22**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Evangelist Temple Church Of God
2315 Benton Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64127