

## **Bishop Charles E. Blake Biography**

Charles E. Blake was appointed the seventh in succession as Presiding Bishop by the General Assembly of the Church Of God In Christ on November 12, 2007. At the 101<sup>st</sup> Holy Convocation, during the quadrennial elections in 2008, Bishop Blake was re-elected as presiding bishop for another four-year term. As presiding bishop, Blake has become the new face of and an international spokesperson for Pentecostalism as it is known today.

Blake is a spiritual motivator who is astute in world business systems. He leads by example and has transformed church culture throughout the denomination. He is a consummate visionary and knows how to inspire others who share his vision.

He is the pastor of West Angeles Church Of God In Christ in Los Angeles, Calif. West Angeles has more than 24,000 members and offers more than 80 ministries for psychological, social and economic enhancement of the Los Angeles community.

Blake is a humble humanitarian and communitarian. He is the chief executive officer of Save Africa's Children, a program of the Pan African Children's Fund. The group has assisted over 300 grassroots and faith-based projects in sub-Saharan Africa, reaching over 90,000 AIDS-affected children. Save Africa's Children supports more than 100 thousand children in 340 orphan care programs throughout more than 23 nations on the continent of Africa.

Bishop Blake was the founding Chairman of the Board of Directors for the C.H. Mason Theological Seminary and has served as an Executive Committee member on the Board of Directors of the Interdenominational Theological Seminary. He also formerly served as an Advisory Committee Member of the Pentecostal World Conference.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> in Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama tapped Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake to serve on his 25-person White House Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. This one year appointment is a testament to his passion for the community and his desire to unite all people for the common good. He was also tapped as one of four to speak at the Democratic National Convention's first Ecumenical Service, where he pronounced his status as pro-life democrat and challenged both democrats and republicans to protect the rights of the unborn and born alike.

Bishop Blake has received numerous awards, commendations and accolades, including the Distinguished Leadership Award presented by the African Presidential Archives and Research Center at Boston University (2007), the Trumpet Award (2006), the Salvation Army's William Booth Award, the Greenlining Institute's Big Heart Award, and was the designated recipient of the L.A. Urban League's Whitney M. Young Award (2000). In 2003, Bishop Blake was awarded the Harvard Foundation Humanitarian Medal for his work with Save Africa's Children and its mission to support orphanages throughout that continent. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors designated February 5, 2004 as "Bishop Charles E. Blake Day."

Bishop Blake is married to Mae Lawrence Blake. They have three children and six grandchildren.



Media contacts: Deidre Malone and Latrivia Nelson, The Carter Malone Group, 901.278.0881 or 901.409.9899

Bishop Charles E. Blake Wins Full Term as Presiding Bishop

Church Of God In Christ - Quadrennial Election Results

**(November 11, 2008 - Memphis, TENN)** The 101<sup>st</sup> Holy Convocation of the Church Of God In Christ concludes today with the election of officers for the international denomination. Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake was elected to a full term as the leader of the Church. Blake was elected to serve the remainder of the late Bishop G.E. Patterson's term preceding his death. Blake has been elected to serve a full 4-year term as presiding bishop.

"This convocation has truly been blessed. We have had a wonderful turn out despite the many economic hardships that our members have encountered, and this time of planning and rejuvenation has yielded prosperous fruit in the form of very competent leadership ready to work for the denomination and glory of the Lord," said Bishop Blake of the newly elected and reelected officials.

Members of the general assembly have elected their new general board, general secretary, financial secretary, treasurer and trustee board. Over 3,800 delegates had an opportunity to vote in this election.

Two new members were elected to the general board today, and they are Bishop Frank O. White from New York and Bishop Sedgwick Daniels from Milwaukee, WI. Returning general board members include: Bishop Blake, Bishop Phillip A. Brooks, Bishop Jerry W. Macklin, Bishop George D. McKinney, Bishop Wilbur Hamilton, Bishop Roy Winbush, Bishop Chandler Owens, Bishop J. Neaul Haynes, Bishop Nathanial Wells, Jr., and Bishop Samuel Green.

Bishop Joel Harley Lyles was re-elected as General Secretary, Bishop Samuel Lowe was reelected Treasurer and Pastor Frank A. White was elected to be the new Financial Secretary for the Church Of God In Christ.

There were 15 people elected to the Trustee Board. They include: Sylvia Law, Charles Ford, Brandon Porter, Charles Patterson, Sr, Dickerson Wells, Mildred Linzy, Josephus Shepherd, Amos Smith, Dwight Green, Cari Barnes, William Caboon, Dwight Walls, Georgia Lowe, Joseph Chase and David A. Hall, Jr.

The Church Of God In Christ is the fourth-largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States with an estimated membership above 6.5 million members. COGIC headquarters are located at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee.



Media contacts: Deidre Malone/Latrivia Nelson The Carter Malone Group 901.278.0881 <u>dmalone@CMGpr.com</u> <u>Inelson@CMGpr.com</u>

## INAUGURATION, WHITE HOUSE APPOINTMENT & HISTORIC MOVE IN ONLY 9 DAYS COGIC Presiding Bishop at forefront of momentous events for denomination

(April 22, 2009 – Memphis, TENN) The Church Of God In Christ (COGIC) has experienced significant changes that will affect the entire denomination and its leadership in the last nine days: an announcement from the White House, the official installation of its 7<sup>th</sup> Chief Apostle and the vote by the General Assembly to move the Holy Convocation from Memphis after nearly 102 years.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> in Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama tapped Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake to serve on his 25-person White House Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. On Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> in Memphis, TN, the denomination officially installed Blake at Temple of Deliverance during a sacred traditional ceremony with thousands of fellow COGIC denomination leaders, members and supporters present. One day later on April 14<sup>th</sup>, the General Assembly of the Church voted to move the Holy Convocation in 2010 to an undisclosed location due to cost issues and proximity challenges for its members. And on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, the Church concluded April Call Meeting with an Inaugural Banquet in honor of Blake that included star-studded sponsors and guests like Denzel Washington and Angela Bassett, who are both members of West Angeles, where Bishop Blake is senior pastor in Los Angles, California.

"We have to be ready to meet the demands of this changing world," said Blake of the recent events. "It is imperative for us to advocate for the saints of the denomination during these tough economic times. We must also have an opportunity to voice our concerns about important social issues that test our faith, and we must hold true to traditions that remind us of our sacred covenant with God."

Blake will serve for one year on the White House Advisory Council and will serve for four years as Presiding Bishop of COGIC before the next quadrennial election.

## About Bishop Charles E. Blake

Bishop Charles E. Blake serves as the Seventh Presiding Bishop of the 6.5 million -member Church Of God In Christ. He is the pastor of West Angeles Church of God in Christ with a membership of over 24,000. West Angles has been recognized as one of the fastest growing churches in the nation, with extensive ministry and outreach services including television and radio broadcasts. West Angeles is deeply involved in providing not only for the spiritual life of its people, but also it provides more than 80 programs for the psychological, social, and economic enhancement of the community. As founder and CEO of Save Africa's Children, Bishop Blake oversees the support of more than 200,000 children, in 400 orphan care programs, throughout more than 23 nations on the continent of Africa. Blake was a speaker at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado during the first ever Inter-Faith Gathering, where he endorsed President Obama and confirmed his status as a pro-life democrat.

## About the Church Of God In Christ

The Church Of God In Christ is the fourth-largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States with an estimated membership of more than 6.5 million members. COGIC headquarters are located at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee.



Media contacts: Deidre Malone and Latrivia Nelson, The Carter Malone Group, 901.278.0881 or <u>dmalone@cmgpr.com</u>

## Bishop Blake Meets with Memphis Media To Discuss Church Of God In Christ Initiatives and the Move to St. Louis

(November 5, 2009 – Memphis, TENN) The presiding bishop and chief apostle of the Church Of God In Christ, Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. held a news conference Thursday morning to update the local media on his national urban initiatives, the recent decision to move the 103<sup>rd</sup> Holy Convocation to St. Louis, and to state the Church's continued stand against sexual misconduct. All local news affiliates and the daily newspaper attended the news conference.

Bishop Blake stressed that the religious denomination has an investment in Memphis. "The Church Of God In Christ international headquarters is here in Memphis. This will always be home to the Church Of God In Christ," said Blake. The Church has launched a capital campaign to expand the headquarter campus to include a high-tech center for online education, a training and retreat space and centralized location for administration of the global ministry.

The Urban Initiative is a comprehensive strategy created by Bishop Blake to strengthen communities through local church advocacy. "I asked Pastor Edwin Bass to lead this massive urban project and to share with our congregations the roadmap and model they should use to tackle the target areas of illiteracy, high unemployment, crime, the denigration of the family and lack of financial literacy," said Blake. "The goal is to have a substantial impact on the communities in which our members live here in Memphis and across this country," said Blake. "MORE-

There are more than 400 COGIC churches in the mid-south region and 12,000 in the United States and around the world.

During this Holy Convocation, Bishop Blake and the General Board are presenting a resolution to update the current Sexual Misconduct Policy to make some requirements for employment with the National church mandatory. "Since assuming the leadership of the Church in 2007, I have supported the Church Of God In Christ's zero tolerance position against sexual misconduct and have made sexual misconduct prevention a top priority for my administration," said Blake. "It is imperative that we continue to tackle this problem directly and have a level of transparency regarding acts of sexual misconduct within our Church that is uncompromised," said Blake.

It is important to note that the new recommendations build on the current policy. Some of the new additions include:

- Mandatory Background Screening for all National Church employees and are strongly recommended for local churches
- > Education and Training at every National Meeting
- Online Training Modules to allow those hired when there is no immediate meeting to obtain training online
- > Develop a Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth
- > Special Training for Youth in Crime Prevention
- > Other Proactive Measures to Minimize the Risk of Sexual Misconduct

The Presiding Bishop and the General Board will present the resolution to the General Assembly during this Convocation to ask all the entities within the Church to adopt this revised policy.

In the history of the Church, the Holy Convocation has only been held in Memphis. That has been for the last 102 years. Next year, the meeting will be in St. Louis. Bishop Blake shared with the media the rationale for the move. "I recommended, and the membership supported, moving the convocation to St. Louis," said Blake.

-MORE-

"St. Louis offered COGIC a better package for lodging for our membership and we had to accept it. Memphis will always be home. They have an opportunity in future years to make an effort to obtain our business again. We are open to the discussion," said Blake.

During the news conference Blake also mentioned earlier Convocations he attended when the meeting was small enough to be held in Mason Temple. Back then Mason Temple was the largest African-American owned auditorium in the nation.

The Church Of God In Christ is the fourth-largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States with an estimated membership above 6.5 million members. COGIC headquarters are located at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee.

###



Media contacts: Deidre Malone and Latrivia Nelson, The Carter Malone Group, (901)278-0881 or dmalone@cmgpr.com

## Bishop Blake Issues a Bipartisan Challenge Regarding the rights of the Unborn and Born at the Democratic National Convention

(August 26, 2008 – Denver, CO) Stating that he is a Pro-Life Democrat, the leader of the Church Of God In Christ, Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr., challenged democrats and republicans to speak-up and take a stand for the unborn child in this country. Bishop Blake had stern comments as well for republican leaders regarding their failure to support the rights of the born. Bishop Blake was one of four religious leaders tapped to participate in the Democratic National Convention Committee (DNCC) Ecumenical Service on Sunday. Bishop Blake leads the largest and oldest African-American Pentecostal denomination in the world and the fourth-largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States the Church Of God In Christ.

Bishop Blake spoke on "*Our Sacred Responsibility to Our Youth.*" He reinforced the commitment this country should have in not only our living children, but the unborn child as well. "Our children have sacred value and every child is equally valuable," said Bishop Blake. "Some of us have philosophic, humanitarian and theological differences with those who put forth abortion as an appropriate, routine and acceptable birth control procedure? There are millions of us who would hold that such a position conflicts with our conviction regarding our sacred responsibility to our youth and to human life itself," said Blake.

In reference to the Republican Party, Bishop Blake continued, "Others loudly proclaim their advocacy for the unborn, but refuse to recognize their responsibility, and that of our nation, to the living. They are presently and historically silent, if not indifferent, to the suffering of our inner cities, the extreme levels of economic and social inequality that exist in this country and around the world, and to the ethnically indefensible restrictions blocking the access of some to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all."

## The full text of Bishop Blake's speech is in an attachment with this news release.

The event was held at 2:00 pm MT, Sunday, August 24 at the Wells Fargo Theater, inside the Colorado Convention Center in Denver.

## About Bishop Charles E. Blake

Bishop Charles E. Blake serves as the Seventh Presiding Bishop of the 6.5 million -member Church Of God In Christ. He is the senior pastor of West Angeles Church of God in Christ with a membership of over 24,000. West Angles has been recognized as one of the fastest growing churches in the nation, with extensive ministry and outreach services including television and radio broadcasts. West Angeles is deeply involved in providing not only for the spiritual life of its people, but also it provides more than 80 programs for the psychological, social, and economic enhancement of the community. As founder and CEO of Save Africa's Children, Bishop Blake oversees the support of more than 200,000 children, in 400 orphan care programs, throughout more than 23 nations on the continent of Africa.



**Media contacts:** Deidre Malone or Alandas Dobbins The Carter Malone Group, 901.278.0881 <u>DMalone@CMGpr.com</u> or <u>ADobbins@CMGpr.com</u>

## CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST MOVES 2010 CONVOCATION TO ST. LOUIS News Conference at City Hall makes the Move Official

(June 16, 2009 – St. Louis, MO) In a news conference Thursday morning in St. Louis, the Church Of God In Christ officially announced it will move its annual Holy Convocation from Memphis, Tennessee to St. Louis, Missouri in 2010. The Holy Convocation is a seven-day spiritual rejuvenation event for the denomination, where over 50,000 members converge on the city to pray, fellowship, minister and reflect on the previous year in order to prepare for the future.

For the entire 102 years of the Church Of God In Christ's existence, the convocation has been held in Memphis, TN, where it is also headquartered. However, after a General Assembly vote during the 2009 April Call Meeting, church leadership decided to relocate the convocation to St. Louis, Missouri in 2010.

"It is with the sincerest regret that we are forced to leave our founding city," said Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. "We care deeply for Memphis and our history there. However, this move is all about our members, whom we love and have to provide the best possible spiritual experience for even during very tough economic times. Hopefully this change will give them financial relief and a great new experience in the city of St. Louis," said Blake.

The move to St. Louis is designed to be more cost-efficient for the members by providing less expensive hotel prices, additional safety due to the close proximity of hotels to each other and the main convention area and flexibility for those who travel nationwide to the event each year. On average, the Church Of God In Christ's convocation generates over \$35 million during its seven-day event, which is a considerable boost to the local economy.

"St. Louis was a really good fit for the Church in terms of affordability and the close proximity of our hotels to the America's Center Convention complex," said St. Louis Convention and Visitors Bureau President Kitty Ratcliffe. "We offered the convention group convenience as well as the flexibility for their many members to travel nationwide to this event each year." Ratcliffe, Bishop Blake and St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay participated in the news conference. 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Presiding Bishop Jerry Macklin, Supt. Dickerson Wells and local St. Louis COGIC leaders attended the news conference at City Hall.

The 103<sup>rd</sup> Holy Convocation for the Church Of God In Christ is scheduled for November 8-16, 2010 at the America's Center convention complex located in the heart of downtown St. Louis.

## About the Church Of God In Christ

The Church Of God In Christ is the fourth-largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States with an estimated membership above 6.5 million members. COGIC headquarters are located at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee.



**Fact Sheet** 

- The Church Of God In Christ, Inc. was founded in 1897, incorporated in 1907, and is now the fourth largest denomination in the United States of America.
- The Presiding Bishop of the Church Of God In Christ is Charles E. Blake.
- Elder Charles Harrison Mason is the founder and chief apostle of the Church Of God In Christ.
- The first year of the Holy Convocation was 1907. It was held in Memphis, TN.
- Bishop C. H. Mason is entombed in a marble crypt inside Mason Temple, which was the largest church building owned by a predominantly black religious denomination in the United States at the time of its completion in 1940. It seats 3,732 people.
- COGIC believes that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance, faith in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ and being baptized in water. Members also believe that the Bible is the inspired and perfect written Word of God. There is only one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Members also believe that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for personal salvation.
- The Church Of God In Christ ministers to an estimated 6.5 million members around the world.
- To learn more about COGIC, visit our website: <u>www.cogic.org</u> or the Centennial Web site at <u>www.cogiccentennial.org</u>



## West Angeles Church Of God In Christ Historical Fact Sheet

- West Angeles Church Of God In Christ was founded in 1943 by C.E. Church, Sr. It was located inside a small store front on Vermont Avenue in the heart of Los Angeles.
- C.E. Church built a permanent church home for the congregation in 1955 at 3501 West Adams Boulevard.
- After C.E. Church's passing, Charles E. Blake was appointed pastor of West Angeles in 1969 to head the 50-member congregation.
- Due to its expansive growth in the 1970s, West Angeles moved to its 3045 Crenshaw Boulevard location in Los Angeles in 1981. A few years later construction began on the Education Building, Crystal Room and administrative offices which were completed in 1987.
- Also in 1987, West Angeles Bible College started its first classes and a full-time counseling department was established. The West Angeles Christian Academy also experienced unprecedented growth during this year.
- Throughout the 1990s West Angeles experienced a surge in growth and in ministry.
- On April 28, 2001 West Angeles moved to yet another location in Los Angeles. The church built a 5,000-seat cathedral just two blocks from the original Crenshaw Boulevard location.
- The COGIC Presiding Bishop at the time, Bishop G.E. Patterson, preached the first service at the new cathedral.
- Today Bishop Blake is still pastor of West Angeles Church Of God In Christ as well as the current presiding bishop of the denomination.
- West Angeles has more than 25,000 members and over 80 ministries in the church.
- Bishop Blake is known as the bishop to the stars. He has a diverse congregation from Hollywood celebrities to individuals who live in the community.
- For more information about Bishop Charles Blake or West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, visit <u>www.westa.org</u>



## **Fact Sheet**

- Save Africa's Children (SAC) is a program of the Pan African Children's Fund that has assisted over 350 grassroots and faith-based projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Bishop Charles E. Blake, pastor of West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, founded Save Africa's Children in 2001.
- Save Africa's Children is among the first and largest African-American-founded organizations providing direct support to AIDS orphans.
- SAC has helped over 90,000 AIDS-affected children in the seven years since its founding.
- One of the program's main goals is to create awareness of the fact that ninety percent of children orphaned by AIDS globally live in Sub-Saharan Africa; this includes more than 17 million children under the age of 15.
- Save Africa's Children seeks to expand the scope of care for AIDS orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa and strengthen the capacity of families and communities that provide care for AIDS-affected children.
- SAC is partnering with the existing efforts in Africa to provide safe, compassionate and productive alternatives through residential care and community-based programs.
- Grants from Save Africa's Children have supported education, health and training initiatives, African infrastructure and community-based and orphan care programs for those living in the Sub-Saharan region.
- SAC is working with a network of researchers and non-governmental organizations concerned with strengthening the response for HIV/AIDS affected children and has been represented at a number of international forums about the topic.
- Over 61,000 church groups and faith-based organizations support Save Africa's Children. Individuals and corporate organizations also sponsor the charity.
- For more information about Save Africa's Children and the programs it supports, visit <u>www.saveafricaschildren.com</u>



COGIC Charities Fact Sheet

- The Church Of God In Christ (COGIC) Charities was founded in 2002 by former Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson.
- The charity has 19 board members who represent the leadership of the Church and its diverse membership.
- In 2008, COGIC Charities raised over \$110,000 for educational scholarships. The charity also sponsored *Christmas in November*, a clothing, food and toy drive for 1,000 of the Mid-South's poorest families.
- In 2006, the denomination raised over a million dollars to assist victims devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The charity distributed close to \$1 million and through in-kind donations, services and collaborative efforts, the denomination also facilitated up to \$16 million to benefit hurricane victims.
- In 2005, the Church Of God In Christ raised money to create an African Tsunami Relief Fund by which African countries could receive relief aid.
- In August 2005, COGIC Charities donated \$150,000 from the African Tsunami Relief Fund to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) and \$100,000 to the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Organization working in Somalia.
- In 2004, COGIC Charities partnered with the The Salvation Army and the Second Harvest Food Bank and delivered disaster relief to Florida after Hurricane Charley devastated the region.
- In July 2003, a straight-line wind storm hit the Mid-South. COGIC Charities helped in the clean-up effort and donated much-needed water to the citizens of Shelby County, Tennessee.
- On two separate occasions, COGIC Charities donated to the American Heart Association to help in the fight against heart disease.
- Visit the COGIC Charities website at <u>www.cogiccharities.org</u>.

Herenton wins again. WHAT NOW? ~ P. 112

Venonis

THE CITY MAGAZINE

WAYS TO

P. 25

USA \$3.50

COVER UP

NOVEMBER 2007 VOL XXXII NO 8

# BEST DRESSED FASHION AT ITS FINEST ~ P. 46

A MURDER IN CENTRAL GARDENS PART II HAS JUSTICE REALLY BEEN SERVED IN THE EMILY FISHER CASE? ~P. 58

PLUS

BUY LINES HAS THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL SOLD OUT? ~ P. 32

# <image>

# **Charles Blake**

Presiding Bishop, Church of God in Christ

by preston lauterbach

**MEMBERS OF THE** locally based Church of God in Christ (COGIC, Inc.) converge on Memphis November 5-12 for their annual holy convocation. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the gathering, and the first for Charles Blake as presiding bishop. Following the death of Memphian G.E. Patterson on March 20th, Blake was named spiritual leader and CEO of the world's largest African-American Pentecostal denomination. He pastors the largest African-American church west of the Mississippi River, West Angeles COGIC in Los Angeles, California, which he founded in 1969. Blake served as Patterson's right-hand man since 2000, and received the Harvard Foundation Humanitarian of the Year medal in 2003 for his Pan African Children's Fund and Save Africa's Children program.

## How is Memphis important to COGIC?

Memphis is our Jerusalem, our Mecca. It's the place around which we gather. Memphis is where our church was organized. It's where our founding bishop [Charles Mason] lived, and where our headquarters office and main temple are located.

## What distinguishes COGIC from other denominations?

We are, in many ways, the mother organization of Pentecostalism, which is the fastest growing religious movement in the world. Our churches are usually located in the heart of the city. When other churches have moved to the suburbs, we have remained in the heart of the city, administering to the needs of inner-city dwellers.

### Tell me about the job of presiding bishop.

I function much like the CEO of any major corporation. It's just a matter of overseeing the resources and officers of the church in such a way that our operation is orderly and effective. Spiritually, the presiding bishop focuses on the moral lives of the members of the church, and the moral lives we would seek for the world to follow. It's also a primary mission to win as many souls as we can.

## What did you learn from working with Bishop Patterson?

We have known one another since the 1950s. We conducted revivals together as young ministers. I was very impressed by his leadership. He contributed progressive organizational leadership, and at the same time he had great respect of the traditions and practices of the church. I would hope to walk in that same spirit of leadership.

## How do you think you'll leave your mark on COGIC?

Every leader does so. The church is always impacted by its leadership. At the same time, the church has a life and a culture all its own. Leaders must respect that culture, and understand that they might not have a transforming impact. I heard a president say that he was both the most powerful man on earth, and impressed with how powerless he actually was. I'm sure that I'll make some differences, but I'm not convinced that I'm so great that I'll make the church something that it's never been before. Digital ministry is a high priority. It's unthinkable that we wouldn't try to minister to the world and educate our constituents with digital technology.

## Why does the world need the Holiness-Pentecostal message?

All the problems in the country today — juvenile delinquency, children having children, divorce — these are all things that the church attempts to eradicate from society. Of course you might say it doesn't seem very successful, and in many ways that may seem to be true. On the other hand, we have to see how much worse things could be. The millions of people who are involved in the church may do what the church is advocating, and if so, some of these problems are less intense were it not for the church.

## What are your thoughts on charismatic television ministers?

It's impossible to give a generalization of my impression of them considering how many there are. Those who preach the Word and those who believe in the Bible, and who operate with integrity, I love them and praise God for them.

## Are there thoughts of moving the convocation from Memphis?

Not at this time.

## CENTER STAGE

# BISHOP CHARLES E, BLAKE Presiding Bishop, Church of God In Christ

The man stepping out of the shiny black Lincoln Navigator had just been told that there was a problem in the multimillion-dollar cathedral he had built to spread the Word to the 24,000 saints of West Angeles Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles.

Due to a power outage the house was dark. But anointed folks often have ways of turning darkness into light, and before Bishop Charles E. Blake could even get the 4-1-1 on what was happening, he was told that the issue had been resolved. There would be light. And that's a good thing because as the newly appointed International Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Inc. (COGIC)—succeeding the late Bishop Gilbert Earl Patterson—Blake's light is shining brighter than ever as the Church approaches its centennial celebration this year.

And it was already pretty bright. The Little Rock native pastors the largest COGIC congregation in the United States, has authored several books and is also CEO and founder of Save Africa's Children, an organization that has raised more than \$6 million to assist AIDS orphans in Africa. But Blake, who has been married to Mae L. Blake for 42 years and has three children and six grandchildren, doesn't think he'll be spreading himself too thinly because he's mastered the art of delegation. That doesn't mean, however, there won't be challenges in his new position.

"It represents both challenges and wonderful opportunities," says Blake, who served as COGIC's first vice president under Patterson for six years. "There are challenges globally that our world confronts that the church needs to speak to. There are challenges in terms of managing and overseeing an organization as complex as the Church of God in Christ. We're now in 58 nations. We are the Church of God, but we're made up of human beings, and all of the challenges that a human organization faces, we face... But our faith is in an infinite and omnipotent God who will enable us to confront those challenges as they occur."

Blake has the daunting task of succeeding one of the country's most dynamic, respected and beloved Christian leaders—who was also his friend for nearly 50 years. "To observe his example and model of leadership was a most educational dimension of our relationship," Blake says. "I can never duplicate or match the wonderful accomplishments that he made, but in the same spirit of leadership and excellence, I intend to walk." And shine.



# RELIGION

# Bishop Charles E. Blake Elected COGIC's Presiding Bishop



Shown here during a worship service at a ministers conference earlier this year, was elected prestiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Church of God in Christ, Church of Sadin Christ, Smillion members.

ership ready to work for the denomination and the glory of the Lord."

Bishop Joel Harley Lyles was re-elected as general secretary; Bishop Samuel Lowe was re-elected as

Beishop Charles E. Blake was recently Belected presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) for a full four-year term during the recent Holy Convocation in Memphis.

Blake had served the remaining term of the late Bishop G.E. Patterson, who died of heart failure last year (JEr, April 9).

More than 3,800 delegates voted in the recent election.

"This convocation has truly been blessed," said Blake. "We have had a wonderful turn out despite the many economic hardships that our members have encountered, and this time of planning and rejuvenation has yielded prosperous fruit in the form of very competent lead-

> was elected as the new financial secretary. Fifteen people were elected to the Trustee Board. Blake is the pastor of West Angeles

treasurer and Pastor Frank A. White

Durke is the pastor of West Angeles. Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles, with a membership of 24,000.

The Church of God in Christ, headquartered at the Mason Temple in Memphis, is the fourth largest Protestant religious denomination in the United States with an estimated membership of more than 6.5 million and is the largest African-American Pentecostal religious denomination in the world. □

-Clarence Waldron

24