

COGIC Moves Convention

✖ **April 17, 2009** – Church of God in Christ leaders voted Tuesday to move their annual convention to St. Louis after hosting it in Memphis, Tenn., for more than 100 years.

“Memphis is our home,” said Bishop Charles E. Blake, leader of the 6 million-member denomination. “We love this city, but we have been offered a better package that is more cost-effective for the membership of our church.”

People have speculated for years that COGIC would relocate. But church leaders said discounts on hotel rates, convention facilities located very close to the hotels and a convention space large enough to accommodate all the delegates in one location ultimately made St. Louis more attractive.

The change will come in 2010, when delegates from the nation’s largest Pentecostal denomination mark the 103 anniversary. COGIC’s international offices will remain in Memphis, where founder C.H. Mason held the first Holy Convocation in August 1907.

Today, some 50,000 churchgoers gather each November for the event, filling area hotels and patronizing local businesses. COGIC officials estimate the Holy Convocation contributes more than \$35 million to the Memphis economy.

The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* reported that St. Louis has 38,000 hotel rooms, compared 21,000 in Memphis’ Shelby County. And the St. Louis convention center has 502,000 square feet while Memphis’ Cook Convention Center has only 300,000-square-feet.