

People

News in the [May 15, 2007](#) issue

Joseph C. Hough Jr., who helped to rescue New York's Union Theological Seminary from financial jeopardy during his eight years as president, announced April 24 that he will retire from the post in June 2008. Hough, 73, was lured out of a planned retirement in 1999 to lead the ecumenical seminary founded in 1836. An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, Hough holds a Ph.D. from Yale and has written or edited several books. He was especially known for teaching and administrative skills. Hough served on the faculty of Claremont Graduate University and was dean of the School of Theology at Claremont (California) from 1974 to 1987. He then served as dean and professor of ethics at Vanderbilt University Divinity School for nine years prior to taking the Union post.

Charles E. Blake has been named presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ, the largest black Pentecostal denomination in the U.S. The 67-year-old Blake, who will remain the senior pastor of the 24,000-member West Angeles Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles, succeeds Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson, who died March 20 of heart failure. Actor Denzel Washington and former Laker basketball star Magic Johnson are among high-profile supporters of the politically influential congregation, the largest in the denomination. Blake will preside over COGIC's 100th annual Holy Convocation November 6-12 in Memphis, the denomination's birthplace city. Barring any move to hold a special election then, Blake said, he will stand for reelection at COGIC's quadrennial convention in November 2008.

Ann M. Svennungsen, a former pastor who is the Atlanta-based CEO for the Fund for Theological Education, has been named president of Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas. Svennungsen will be the first woman president in the 116-year history of the 1,400-student school, which is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Effective July 1, she will succeed Jon Moline, who is retiring after serving 13 years in the post. In her four years as FTE's top executive, she raised more than \$20 million in grants for the organization's financial assistance programs for seminary education. Prior to that, Svennungsen was senior pastor of the 3,700-member Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead, Minnesota—the largest ELCA congregation to be led by a woman.