FOULKES, Sr., John Richard  John Foulkes is a native of Chicago, Illinois. His academic achievement includes a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary, Bachelor of Science in Education and Master of Science in Education degrees from Chicago State University, a Bachelor of Theology from Clarksville School of Theology, an Associate of Arts degree from Chicago City College, and a diploma from Moody Bible Institute. Rev. Foulkes was ordained into the ministry at the Berean Baptist Church in 1963, and served that church as Associate Pastor. He also served LaClair Bible Fellowship as Assistant Pastor. In 1972, Rev. Foulkes was given Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). For the Chicago Board of Education, Rev. Foulkes worked at Hinton School, and for the Chicago Public Schools in the DropOut Prevention Programs. John then served as Senior Minister of Parkway Garden Christian Church. John’s volunteer activities in the Chicago area included the Sunshine Gospel Mission board, the Juvenile Justice Project Committee of the Chicago Disciples Union, the Douglass Tubman Christian Center board, a Boy Scouts of America Scout Master, and as a Gang Detach volunteer for the Chicago Young Men’s Christian Association. John has served on the Higher Education Commission of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin and as a member of the College of Professional Ministers of the region. Beginning in 1980, Rev. Foulkes worked for the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Evangelism and Membership as the Director of Special Congregational Services and New Congregation Establishment (CAN). In 1986 John was called to the position of Associate General Minister and President of the Christian Church [Disciples of Christ] and Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation. He has done extensive Research/Publications. John and his wife Marilyn of 21 years have one son and two daughters.

PICKETT-PARKER, Ann  Ann Pickett-Parker is a native of Mississippi, where she was born, attended college and graduate school and taught mathematics in the public school system for 34 years. Ann married Rev. Dr. Lanston B. Pickett who pastored First Christian Church – Moss Point for 24 years. Ann recognized her call to ministry while preaching the eulogy at Lanston’s 2002 funeral. Ann continued her education and received a Master of Christian Counseling and Master of Divinity from Lift Bible College and Gulf Coast Theological Seminary. During this time she served as Interim Pastor for First Christian Church – Moss Point for two and a half years. She was ordained during the 2009 Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention. Ann has served as President of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCDC) for three different terms, President of the National Convocation Disciples Women and the MCMC Disciples Women. She has served in several capacities of the Great River Region, the Great River Region Disciples Women Cabinet, and the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention. Rev. Pickett-Parker has also been active in her local community. She is the chairperson of the Religious Committee of the Moss Point/Jackson County branch of the NAACP and a member of the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Rev. Pickett has served as a Chaplain for the Mid Delta Hospice. Ann is currently serving as co-pastor of New Generation Christian Fellowship (DOC) in Moss Point. She is the Vice President of International Disciples Women’s Ministries. She has participated in Women’s Action Web and Woman to Woman trips. She is a gifted writer, anointed musician, retreat leader and a very active Christian servant. Her passion is for women’s ministry, Christian education and leadership development. In 2007, Ann married Rev. James R. Parker. They are the parents of seven children, twenty grandchildren and one great grandchild.

We are grateful to the many Disciples who contributed to this monograph. In addition to our subjects, Tom Garrott Benjamin, Jr., Eliza Husser Cave, Delores Carpenter, John Richard Foulkes, Sr., Cynthia L. Hale, Alvin O’Neal Jackson, Ann Pickett-Parker, and Frank Anthony Thomas, grateful thanks are given to Vera Banks, Alice Hard, Teresa Manley, May Reed, Toni Ross, Doris Speaks and Barbara Williams. We are also indebted to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The publication is the third in a series about Black Disciples who have or continue to make a difference in the life of our church.

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BENJAMIN, Jr., Tom Garrott  Bishop Benjamin will celebrate 40 years as Senior Pastor of Light of the World Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis and 43 years of ordained ministry in October, 2009. Bishop Benjamin’s ministry has produced 45 seminary graduates with Master of Divinity degrees, six (6) of them have earned doctorates and three (3) are on the doctoral track. He was consecrated to the Bishopric by an ecumenical group of national bishops in 1996 at the Indianapolis Convention Center and his seminary degree is from St. Louis University. He holds two (2) earned cum laude graduate degrees (M.Div. and D.Min.) from Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana. Additionally, he holds six (6) honorary doctorate degrees and a host of other awards. Benjamin is recognized for his bridge building in races and cultures in the Diocese of Indiana. Bishop Benjamin is a lifetime member of the NAACP. He has also raised awareness and resources in the Indianapolis community dedicated to saving children and families through Project Impact-Indianapolis. Pastor Benjamin was selected as one of the recipients of the Morehouse College Distinguished Professor Award as well as being a past National President of the Black Disciples Ministers’ Fellowship. Dr. Benjamin has received the Sagamore of the Wabash from two different Governors of Indiana. This designation is the highest honor that Indiana bestows for distinguished service. In May, 2008, Martin Benjamin was selected as one of the recipients of the Morehouse University, Indiana, Indianapolis, Indiana, bestowed an Honorary Doctorate degree on Bishop Benjamin. Dr. Benjamin’s passion is children, and he has authored four books: Boys To Men, The Home Alone Syndrome, Mama’s Boy, and his most recent book, It’s All In Your Mind. His pride is his family, consisting of his beautiful and creative life partner, Lady Beverly, three awesome adult sons, one darling daughter-in-law, and one “grand” grandson, Channing Carlyle, Jr.

CAVE, Eliza Husser  Eliza Cave was born in the Husser Town Community in Cross, South Carolina. As a third generation disciple, she led church leadership experiences begin as Director, of the Camp and Conference Program for the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, S.C. She then moved to become Secretary of the S.C. Convention (predecessor to the regional assembly) and Chairperson of the S.C. Convention. She progressed to become President of the State Convention and then moved to become Secretary of the National Convocation (African-American Disciples) CWF, member of the National Convocation Board of Directors, two-time CWF Caribbean Representative, member of the denomination’s General Board and Administrative Committee, Christmount Assembly Board, two-term member of the church’s boards for Disciples General Minister and President, C. William Nichols and Richard L Hamm. Additionally, Mrs. Cave served as a Regional Assembly Secretary, and Vice-Moderator for S.C., Director for Stewards for a Women’sQuadrennial Assembly, member of the General Church Finance Council, and a Solicitor for S.C. In 2002 Mrs. Cave was recognized as South Carolina Regional Woman of the Year. Mrs. Cave is an Elder, sings in the choir and teaches Sunday school at the First Christian Church of Aiken, South Carolina (Disciples of Christ) and continues to be a contributing member to her home church, Poplar Hill Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), S.C., founded by her grandfather, Hiram Husser. Over the years Mrs. Cave has been a member of numerous organizations, volunteered numerous hours, and facilitated many retreats and workshops. Mrs. Cave has one daughter and a granddaughter. Currently, she resides in Bath, South Carolina and is a retired educator for the Aiken County School District.

THOMAS, Frank Anthony  Frank is the Senior Servant of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tenn. who speaks nationally and internationally, including engagements at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin Theological Seminary; Baylor University; Boston University; and the Morehouse School of Medicine. He is a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers. He has also served as a visiting lecturer at the University of South Africa and is known and respected for his preaching and teaching ministry at the “Under African Skies Conference” in Johannesburg, South Africa. Sermons by Dr. Thomas have been featured in The African American Pulpit, Patterns of Preaching, ed. Ronald Allen (Chalice Press 1999), and Pilgrim Press released Atonement: The Million Man March in South Africa. Dr. Thomas has been featured in the African American Heritage Hymnal, published by GIA in March 2003. She founded the African Heritage Hymnal and Project Promise International which gives scholarships to aspiring African American church musicians and grants to ministries in Africa with a special emphasis upon economic development. Her vision of a “living bridge to Africa” is birthing a major initiative to train African Americans in shoe repair, while training Africans in shoe production and distributing free shoes to schools in Africa. In 1994, she was among the first women listed in Ebony’s honor roll of the greatest black preachers in America. Dr. Carpenter served as the President of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 2004-2006. She has two daughters and three grandchildren.

CARMENTER, Delores  Carpenter has been Professor of Religious Education at Howard University School of Divinity for 27 years. She has served as the first woman and first African American Senior Pastor of Michigan Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Washington, D.C. for 4 years. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Bates College in 1970. She earned a Master of Divinity Degree from Howard University School of Divinity, a Masters of Arts Degree from Washington University, and a Doctor of Education degree from Rutgers University. She was the first recipient of the Samuel Proctor Award from Rutgers University and was awarded a Doctor of Education degree; the first woman ordained by the Progressive Freewill Baptist Conference of Baltimore, Maryland (1992); the first woman Dean at Essex County College in Newark, New Jersey. Her publications include “The Professionalization of the Black Woman,” “A History of Black Women in Religious Institutions,” “Cultural Regeneration and Discipline,” and a Time for Honor: A Portrait of African American Clergy women. She is the General Editor of the African American Heritage Hymnal, published by GIA in March 2003. She founded the African Heritage Hymnal and Project Promise International which gives scholarships to aspiring African American church musicians and grants to ministries in Africa with a special emphasis upon economic development. Her vision of a “living bridge to Africa” is birthing a major initiative to train African Americans in shoe repair, while training Africans in shoe production and distributing free shoes to schools in Africa. In 1994, she was among the first women listed in Ebony’s honor roll of the greatest black preachers in America. Dr. Carpenter served as the President of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 2004-2006.

HALE, Cynthia L.  Cynthia L. Hale is the founding and Senior Pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia. Dr. Hale is a native of Roanoke, Virginia. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Hollins College in Virginia, a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University and a Doctorate of Ministry from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Hale holds five Honorary Doctorates of Divinity. In 2004, Dr. Hale established a mentorship program known as Elah Pastoral Ministries, Inc. to assist in the spiritual as well as practical development of pastors and para-church leaders. In September 2005, she convened her first Women In Ministry Conference that has now become the Elah Conference. She received the Church’s Spirit Awards for the 2008 Democratic National Convention. In 2009, she was privileged to participate at the National Prayer Service for the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Honors and recognitions Hale has received in her thirty year ministry include Sisters in the Spirit in 2003, the Spirit of Hope Award from the National Convocation of Christian Churches of America, 2005, the LeadShip Award from Sisters of African Descent in 2006, the 2007 Pinnacle Leader Award presented for the Fortitude Educational and Cultural Development Foundation, Inc., the East Point College Foundation, the Rev. Dr. Paul Howard Sorority Inc., and the Ambassador of Christian Excellence Award. In 2008, her sermon entitled “It’s Time for the Silent Giant to Speak Up” was published in The African American Pulpit Journal. She is a contributor to the book, “Power in the Pulpit II: How America’s Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons.” Dr. Hale received the Bronze Award presented by the Rainbow Pulse Coalition and the Religious Excellence Award presented by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

JACKSON, Alvin O’Neal  Alvin O’Neal Jackson, born in Laurel, Miss. and raised in Indiana, Miss., is the first born of the late Mr. Clyde Cullen Jackson and Mrs. Queen Esther Jackson. He attended Chapman College in Orange, Calif. and graduated with honors from Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind. with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. He received his Masters of Divinity degree, also with honors, from the Duke University, School of Divinity, Durham, N.C. in 1973. In 1991 he completed the course work and was awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Jackson has also received honorary degrees from Rhodes College, Memphis, Tenn.; Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Va.; Bethany College, Bethany, W.V.; Jarvis Christian College, Hawkins, Texas; and the Southern California School of Religion, Los Angeles, Calif. He has served as pastor of Loudon Avenue Christian Church, Roanoke, Va., associate pastor, Second Christian Church, Indianapolis, Ind. For almost 20 years, Dr. Jackson was Senior Pastor of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church of Memphis, a congregation that experienced phenomenal growth under his leadership. For seven years, he served as Senior Pastor of Nazareth Christian Church and President of Christian Church of Indianapolis. In September 2006, he became Senior Pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church of New York City. Dr. Jackson is married to the former Tina Brown of Roanoke, Va., and they have one son.

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