



Annual Edition 2009

THE LANTERN

The Magazine of Interdenominational Theological Center

THEOLOGY ON THE CUTTING EDGE

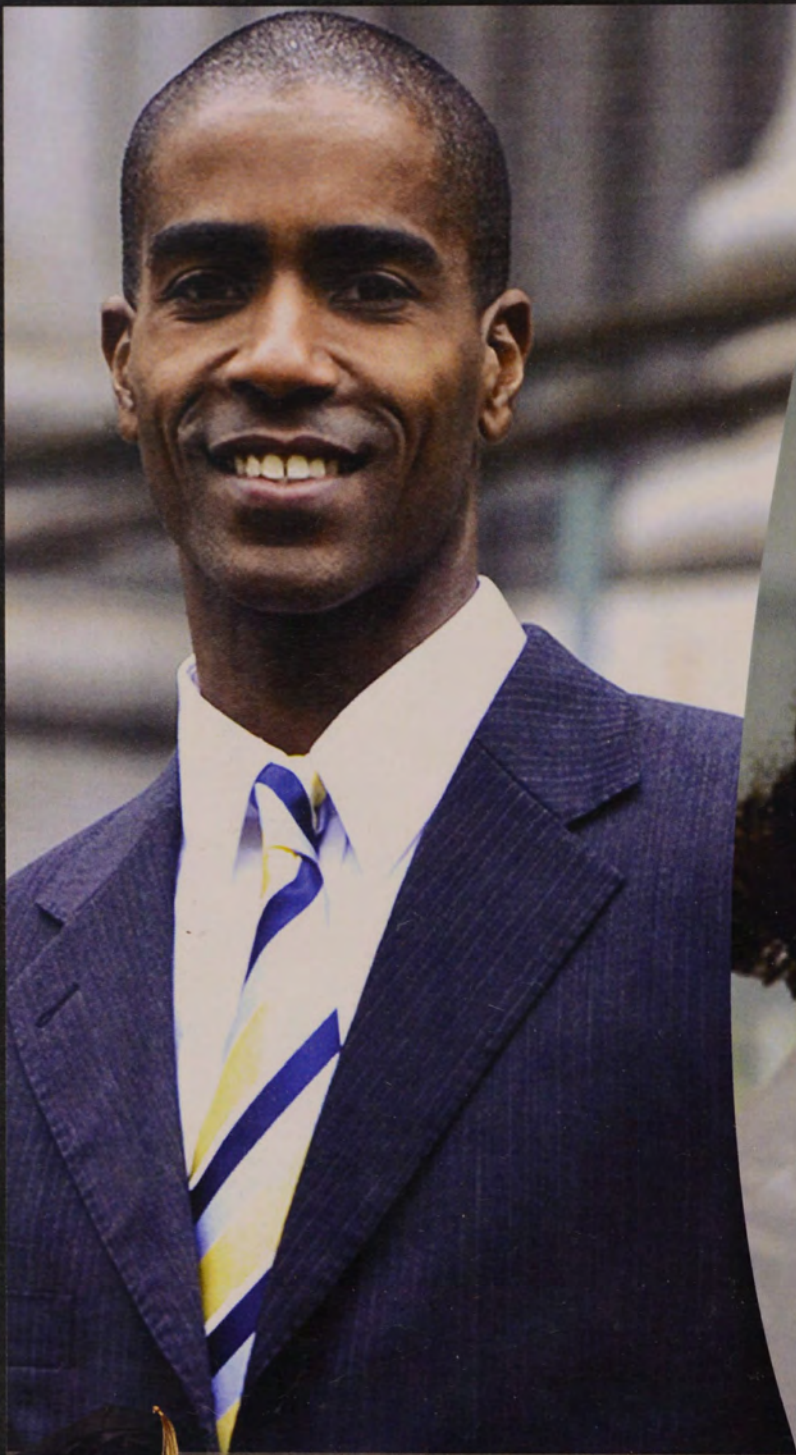
Is Our Preaching Christian? –
DR. GARDNER C. TAYLOR

Viable Religion: Modern Movements
Reflecting the Past –
DR. JAMAL-DOMINIQUE HOPKINS

Silver Reflections - DR. RIGGINS EARL JR.

Christian Mission in This Global Era -
MARSHA SNULLIGAN HANEY

The Church and Its Ministries -
DR. LISA ALLEN



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EDITOR'S NOTE



"There's no place else in the world quite like ITC." This phrase often sets the tone for opening conversation, building alliances and cultivating relationships with those unfamiliar with the ITC story. It is one approach to defining the specialty of the educational experience at ITC that is unique and extraordinary in comparison to other programs of theological education. Those words remain unrivaled in expressing an academic experience that must be lived to fully understand how truly profound it is. It contends that ITC is an institution on the cutting-edge even in its ecumenical conception.

Last year's commemorative edition of The Lantern celebrated a half-century of "preparing women and men for Christian leadership in the Church and the global community." ITC's survival as an academy requires that it not only rise to its initial calling to provide learned clergy for the pulpits of Black churches but that it continue to grow its vision of preparing church leaders to address the needs of the Church universal at every level – spiritually, academically and culturally.

Beyond the usual annual updates, our intent in this issue is to allow you to hear several perspectives on the "cutting-edge" theme from the voices of ITC faculty, Drs. Jamal-Dominique Hopkins, Lisa Allen, Marsha Snulligan Haney, Riggins Earl Jr., Provost Edward Wimberly, and from seminarian, Mr. Harry Gatewood III, in our special features section "Theology on the Cutting-Edge."

As always, we appreciate your comments via email to jjones@itc.edu or call me at 404-527-7718.

Grace to you,

Jane Jelks Jones

Jane Jelks Jones

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Friends,

The ITC community has welcomed me to the Office of the President for this academic year and I am grateful for the cooperative relationship I am experiencing throughout the campus constituency.

In my first chapel service I said to the community that my duty is not to be a caretaker of the seminary, but to follow the plan that has been set by the administration with vigor and determination. We will continue the work of garnering friends and potential benefactors to support the institution's academic program and preserve its legacy of preparing leaders for the local Church and communities across the globe.

Recently, the Center's 10-year Strategic Plan was updated to list the most recent accomplishments of 2008-2009. You are invited to read the document as it is posted on the ITC website at www.itc.edu and take note of our progress. Copies are also available by mail on request.

I commend the members of the faculty on the articles that appear in the special features section, "Theology on the Cutting-Edge." They are examples of the scholarly work for which ITC is known throughout academia.

Again, it is with gratitude, joy, and a level of intensity that I approach this year at ITC. I invite your continued support as we remain committed to the delivery of an excellent academic program that provides an exceptional model of ecumenism.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Cole Jr.
President

THEOLOGY ON THE CUTTING EDGE

EDITOR'S NOTE

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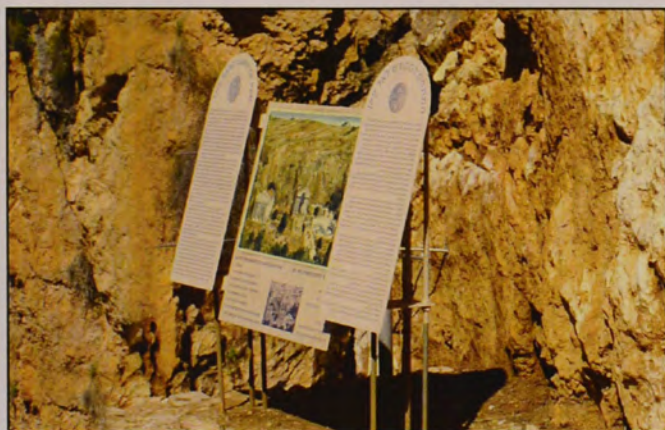
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JESUS MATTERS MOST

— Dr. Michael A. Battle

In Paul's letter to the church in Philippi recorded in Philippians 12:9-11 these words are found: **"God has highly exalted Jesus and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father"**. Using this scripture as a starting reference I want to speak on the subject; **Jesus Matters Most**.

Much has been said about what matters in life in terms of importance. Questions are often raised about what makes a difference, what issues affect and have an effect on the outcome of life, what things, what opinions, what conditions and what circumstances have a determining influence on shaping the development of our lives.

We are told that Race Matters, that Politics Matter, that Money Matters, that Education Matters and that **being in the right place at the right time** matters. Indeed, it is the case that all of these things matter in the context of this life.

Without attempting to review or even discuss the aforementioned areas that matter, I affirm that they do matter and that they are each very significant alone with a great host of other things that matter. My intent in this brief sermon is to declare that above all things and above all persons, for those who profess the Christian faith, Jesus Matters most.

In the Christian Faith as a matter of faith and as a matter of fact, Jesus matters most. Jesus matters in the context of this life and in the context of the life to come. In fact, Jesus matters transcendentally, because he is to only one who preexisted with God prior his earthly birth, existed as the Son of God during his earthly life, died a human death, was resurrected by the power of God, is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, and who will return to demonstrate final victory not just for himself but for all who believe in him that they, with Jesus, might have everlasting life.

If you want to anchor your hope in what matters most, I encourage you to anchor your hope in Jesus. It is easy to understand why the hymnist Edward Mote, declares in his hymn titled **"The Immutable Basis of a Sinners Hope,"** which was later re-named by William Bradbury **"The Solid Rock"** that, **"my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; in every high and stormy gale my anchor holds within the veil. His oath, His covenant, His blood support me in overwhelming floods; When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found, Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand"**.

Clearly it is the case that Jesus matters; yet, it is sad to say that in too many instances even in the Church, Jesus is marginalized as if his name is not to be mentioned in so-called enlightened circles. Far too often, even in the Christian Church, there is a minimizing of the significance and power of Jesus and a minimizing of the power of Jesus' name.

Gardner C. Taylor, in a brief article titled, **Is our Preaching Christian**, states that *entire so-called Christian sermons are palmed-off on congregations with little or no mention of our Lord Jesus*. Taylor goes on to state that *our preaching is spurious and spiritually criminal when it does not exalt Jesus*. The truth of our faith is that Jesus is the core and foundation, through whom and by whom and from whom and with whom we come to know and to be in relationship with God the Father, in Trinitarian terms, and from whom we receive the promise of God the Holy Spirit.





The seventh station at the cross, artist Arhelo Beck- from the Beck Collection in the ITC Chapel.

There is no Christian Faith without Jesus. There is no fulfillment of redemptive biblical prophecy without Jesus. There is no hope of salvation nor is there redemption from sin without Jesus. The first prophetic promise of redemption from the fall voiced in Genesis 3:15 anticipated Jesus. God said to the human family that even though Satan may bruise your heel and constantly annoy you, in the final analysis, through Jesus the human family shall be victorious because Jesus shall ultimately defeat Satan. No wonder Paul writes in Philippians 2:9-11 that God has highly exalted Jesus and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. Jesus matters.

In theological studies the area of Christology refers to the study of and the exploration of Christ with a clear understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. Thus, Christology is the study of Jesus. According to the narrative in the Gospel of John, Jesus is the eternal Christ existing with God and existing as God. In Jesus, God became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld, we were able to see, His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (St. John 1:14)

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke that clearly declare Jesus as the Son of God; the Gospel of John presents Jesus as God. According to John's telling of the good news, Jesus does not become the Son of God at the point of the manifestation of the incarnation of God in flesh. Jesus, according to St. John eternally existed with God and as God. Even the activity of the creation was done by Jesus. All things, declares John, were made by Him and to emphasize this point with greater clarity John states that without Jesus was not anything made that was made. Jesus did not impersonate God in the incarnation. Jesus is God self-disclosed to us in flesh so that in Him and through Him we might see God dwelling among us. God robed Himself in flesh so that we might see Him.

Colossians chapter 2 and verse 9 declares that, in Jesus dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Jesus matters. Jesus is essential. Without Jesus there would be no Church. Without Jesus there would be no creation and there would be no life for in Him was life and the



life in Him was the light of humankind that shineth in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The Christian Church preaches Jesus. Jesus is its foundation. The truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the rock upon which the Church is built and it is this truth that empowers the Church in such a way that the very gates of hell shall not and can not prevail against it. Jesus is not only the source of the strength of the Church; Jesus is the strength of the Church. He is the head of the Church and the Church is His bride. The Church is the body of believers baptized in His name and commissioned by Him to go into all the world teaching all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus. Jesus matters so much that there would be no Church without Him. He is a necessary condition for the Church to exist.

I do not understand Christians who try and minimize the importance of Jesus to the faith and to the theology of the Church. As Christians we should unashamedly and unapologetically proclaim our belief in Jesus. We may not be able to explain how Jesus was born of a virgin, how His death on the cross is our redemption, how God resurrected Him from the dead, how He ascended to the right hand of God, how He dwells now one with the Father and the Holy Spirit and how He shall come back to rapture His church. The details of the intricate nature of how these things were done may never be fully explained; after all it is a great mystery of the faith that the same Jesus who was once dead is now alive and alive forever more.

Even though I do not know the intricacies of the nature of how these things happened, I do proclaim unashamedly and unapologetically that it is a fact of my faith and it is my faith in the fact that Jesus was indeed born of the Virgin Mary, that His death on the cross was for my redemption and the redemption of the world, that He was resurrected by the power of God, that he did ascend to the right hand of God and now dwells one with the Father and the Holy Spirit and that he shall come again to rapture His church built upon the foundation of the truth that He is indeed the Son of the living God.

The early church preached Jesus even when doing so caused controversy and when doing so did not bring about popular acclaim. Paul states in First Corinthians chapter one that we preach Christ crucified even though it is a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others. The centrality of the crucifixion of Jesus to the redemptive story proclaimed by the Christian faith is such that we must proclaim it even if its proclamation is deemed foolishness to some and even if its proclamation is such a difficult challenge to others that they reject the faith because of their inability or unwillingness to accept the redemptive story of the crucifixion.

I know well meaning and well educated persons who can not and will not accept either the necessity of or the reasoning in a faith that centers on the vicarious suffering of the very incarnation of God. If God were to disclose Himself in flesh, they say, He would not do so and die on a cross a victim of a miscarriage of human justice. The point missed by the critic but that is essential to the Christian faith is that it was for this exact cause that Jesus came to earth. He came to die for the sins of the world. The crucified Christ is, for those who believe, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

In Romans chapter one Paul states the clarion call of Christian preaching when he said, in verse sixteen, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." In proclaiming faith in Jesus, it is not our task to make the faith acceptable and agreeable to all. It is our task to proclaim the faith even when it is not acceptable and agreeable to all. This is why Paul, in his final charge to Timothy, advises Timothy to preach the Word, to do so in season and out of season. Timothy is admonished that he must be fully dedicated to preaching the message of Jesus even when the time comes when people will not want to hear sound doctrine and when they turn away to more simplistic fables. Timothy is encouraged to preach Jesus because Jesus matters to the faith.

IS OUR PREACHING CHRISTIAN?

-Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor



The New Testament carries in John 14:26 the word credited to Jesus in which he set forth the Christian doctrine of the "Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." There he said that "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The first of the seven ecumenical Christian Councils, out of which

we get the Nicene Creed and in which 220 Bishops came together at Nicea in 325 A.D., asserted belief in Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In the fourth century, following the New Testament and Nicea, there was begun the Trinitarian Benediction taken directly from the closing verse of Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen." From the fourth century forward, this has been the benediction most frequently used in Christendom.

Now there is an heretical preaching which falsely calls itself Christian and which practically ignores the Persons of Jesus in the Trinity. Entire so-called Christian sermons are palmed off on unsuspecting, unenlightened congregations with little or no mention of our Lord Jesus. This is "binitarianism", and may turn out to be Unitarianism; it is certainly not trinitarianism.

Any attempt, for whatever reason, to eliminate the "Jesus Presence" from the New Testament eviscerates the Faith and makes of Christianity a vague and pale vestige. Our Lord's life here among us is an enactment in time of what is forever true, and inevitably true to the Divine Nature. It was He who told us "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus is in time what God the Father is in eternity.

Our preaching is spurious and spiritually criminal when it does not exalt Jesus. There may be a solid reason why spurious contemporary preaching is afraid to speak of Jesus. This preaching make the Father all Glorious a "cash cow." You can have anything you want. The God of creation exists to cater to your whims. This is "slot machine religion," put in a "prayer," pull the lever and out pours the goodies. And poor gullible people will fall for this scam.

Such preaching dare not indicate that our Lord's life among us was rife with disappointment and rejection. He said "foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath no where to lay His head." To be sure, there is victory and reward, without number, but they follow "hard trials and great tribulation."

Jesus' experience established that true Christian preaching pictures him a "Heaven's Champion" in a life and death struggle with evil – no, a life and death and life struggle. In prelude to crucifixion, Jesus snatched the mask from false claims of religious purity and spurious political assertions of authority. There near the last, Jesus stood alone, but He forced, as Francis Buckler and James Stewart pointed out, the High Priest, successor to Aaron to repudiate his own claim to

spiritual authority by producing two lying witnesses in direct violation of a paramount edict of his faith "thou shalt not bear false witness." Jesus also unmasked the counterfeit claims of government to be just and above connivance and sleaziness. Pilate, representative of the supposed supreme power and justice of Rome, was reduced to a dastardly act of washing his hands and cravenly surrendering to the mob, though he found no fault in Jesus. At the end of Friday's crime against God and with a shout of victory, Jesus said he was in "safe hands." The tidings of Resurrection Sunday were announcement for all time that the victory lies in and beyond Calvary, not in the absence of it. Taking precedence over all of that is the salvific work of Calvary where Jesus returned our souls to God from the fiendish grip of sin. So much for a cheap caricature of the gospel called "name it and claim it."

There is another "Binitarianism" which makes the spurious claim to be Christian preaching. It is the exaltation of the Holy Spirit to the center of worship. Did not Jesus make it clear as to the work of the Third Persons of the Trinity?... "he shall glorify me...." (John 16:14). There it is! The Third Persons glorifies the Son! The Holy Spirit's work is to lift up Jesus Christ. There is no "free standing" Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is not self-honoring and is in service to the Father and to Jesus. True Christian preaching will test the authority of the claim about the work and gifts of the Spirit by the person and work and manner of Jesus.

No wonder that Paul under the direct influence of the Lord Jesus said, "he that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." Is this Christian? Besides, in the "glossolalia" of the Book of Acts, in the speaking in tongues there were multiple translations so that they were heard by every man "in our own tongue, wherein we were born." (Acts 2:7-8a) Anything else is not consistent with Pentecost in the New Testament.

Likewise, true Christian preaching in the New Testament and beyond was never acrobatics and gymnastics. That is pulpit vaudeville. Of course, such antics excite "silly people" (II Timothy 3:6), but do not edify the people of God. Preaching, which is not Biblical is not Christian, maybe motivational, popular perhaps, Christian, No!

He or she who would preach a true and faithful gospel must beware of garish costumes and gaudy jewelry designed to dazzle a gullible populace rather than to exalt Jesus and feed the people of Christ. Any preacher so tempted ought to read Acts 12:21-23. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying it is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Let those of us who preach remember what Paul Scherer said long ago, "Worship is the time when we bring the gods we have made before the God who has made us" – including the gods the preacher has made.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen". II Corinthians 13:14.



After seventy-one years as a Preacher, the above is sent forth as my final attempt to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (The Letter of Jude, 3).

— Gardner Calvin Taylor

Dr. Taylor is impressed on his visit to the Woodruff Library. ITC seminarians, Marcus Halley and William Spencer, are helping to process the Taylor Sermons for study by scholars and graduate students who come to the Woodruff Library.

NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL AIDS PRESIDENT'S PLAN FOR PROGRESS

The term "change agent for progress" has a striking correlation to the administration of ITC's President Michael A. Battle. With numerous programs and initiatives moving the institution forward and keeping it in sync with the growing demands of institutional advancement, Dr. Battle has developed a President's Advisory Council. Providing counsel and assisting the president in developing strategies throughout the year for a comprehensive outlook at fundraising opportunities for ITC will be a primary focus of the Council. In fact, the group comprised of corporate leaders, educators, and successful entrepreneurs have committed themselves to the specific goals of:

- Strategic direction
- Communications and image
- Fundraising, and
- Major event planning

The Council met in October 2008 and again in February 2009 to begin its work with the President and the Senior Director of External Affairs, Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones.

Members of the Council are:

- Mr. George Andrews, President and CEO of Capital City Bank and Trust
- Rev. Adrienne Johnson, National Brand Manager for Multi-cultural Marketing, The Coca-Cola Company
- Ms. Charmaine Ward, Community Relations Manager for Georgia Pacific Foundation
- Mr. Solomon Hicks, President and CEO of Sol Hicks Financial Services
- Mr. Michael Gist, President and CEO of CraftTech Builders, Inc.
- Dr. Melva Wilson Costen, ITC Helmar Emil Nielsen Professor of Music and Worship Emeritus
- Dr. Betty W. Clark, Retired Educator and ITC Benefactor
- Rev. Marvin Crawford, M.D., ITC alumnus and pastor of First St. Paul AME Church, Lithonia
- Mr. Charles Harrison Marketing Executive, East Lake Golf and County Club

Mr. Andrews and Rev. Johnson will serve as the Council's Chair and Secretary respectively.



CONVERSATIONS WITH ANDREW YOUNG: THE FUTURE OF AFRICA

-Monica Peterson



ITC seminarian, Monica Peterson interviews Ambassador Young.

One of the messages conferred by Ambassador Andrew Jackson Young Jr. was, "The future of Africa is and should be determined by Africans." The Ambassador returned to ITC for a second installment of his lecture series, "Conversations with Andrew Young: The Future of Africa," on March 26, 2009. Ambassador Young spoke to a crowded multicultural audience in the Franklin Auditorium where he gave a discerning perspective of the rapidly changing dynamics of politics, leadership and economics on the continent of Africa and their implications for leaders around the globe.

"As Africa rises, we all rise; as Africa goes down, we all go down," said Dr. N'dugu T'Ofori-Atta, who gave the occasion for the event. Affectionately known as "Dr. Tee" in the ITC community, he is also the Founder and Director of the Religious Heritage of the African World (RHAW) and Chief Secretariat for the World Afrikan Diaspora Union (WADU).

Dr. T'Ofori-Atta expressed the importance of building ties between Africa and America. He reminded the audience that remembering the past helps us put together the meaning of who we are and what we are, which is tied to the richness of our legacy to guarantee a FUTURE. "There needs to be development of new leadership to take the mantle of current leadership," said Dr. T'Ofori-Atta.

Another member of the ITC faculty recounted meeting Ambassador Young early in his career. "I met Andrew Young for the first time in Climax, North Carolina at a Youth Conference in 1957 or 1956, sponsored by the National Conference of Churches. That was the first time I had attended an interracial conference. Whites seemed to gravitate towards Andrew Young. He was a superstar in his early 20's and late teens," said the dynamic author and professor of Church

History at the ITC, Dr. Love Henry Whelchel.

Dr. Marsha Snulligan-Haney, Professor of Missiology and Religions of the World introduced the speaker of the hour mentioning ITC's mission statement that reiterates the goal to educate ministers for global communities. As she introduced Ambassador Young, she reminded the crowd that he has shared the blessings received from the Lord as a model pastor, Ambassador to the United Nations, and U.S. Congressman from Atlanta's Fifth District and Mayor of Atlanta. Stating that nothing has happened in his life that he was not called to be involved with, Mr. Young is still leading the way, having turned 77 years old just weeks prior to the lecture.

Mr. Young attributes some of his education and blessings to Sunday School and his grandmother whom he considered one of the wisest in the family. His grandmother knew Scripture and often reminded him that "to whom much is given much is required." Because of those lessons his grandmother taught him, "I knew everything was not just for me, but to be passed on," said Young.

In a interview prior to his talk, Young gave advice to today's youth. "Unless the Lord build a house, they that labor, labor in vain," quotes Young from Psalm 127:1. "It is very important that youth also learn to wait on the Lord and not to seek fortune and fame. Martin Luther King Jr. didn't want to be famous. In order for Ralph Bunch to get anything done he had to stay under the radar," said Young.

Young was born March 12, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana to his school teacher mother, Daisy Fuller Young and his dentist father, Andrew Jackson Young Sr. Young was educated at Dillard University and after one year transferred to Howard University in Washington,



D.C. where he graduated in 1951 with a Bachelor of Science degree in pre-dentistry. Originally, he planned to follow in his father's footsteps, but heard the call of God to ministry; which prompted him to further obtain his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut. His first church was Bethany Congregational Church in Thomasville, GA, in 1955. While there, he became a staunch supporter and advocate of the Civil Rights Movement and voter registration drives. In 1957, Rev. Young joined the staff of the National Council of Churches. In 1961, Rev. Young left his position as pastor to assist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Rev. Young inevitably became the trusted aide to Dr. King and Executive Director of SCLC. He was instrumental in organizing voter registration and desegregation campaigns. Reportedly, Rev. Young was with Dr. King when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968.

In 1972, Young was elected to the House of Representatives, the first Black representative from Georgia in 101 years and served three terms as a United States Congressman. In 1977, under President Jimmy Carter, Congressman Young was appointed to serve as Ambassador to the United Nations, the first African American to serve in this position. Ambassador Young helped President Carter transform the basis of American foreign policy, making human rights a central focus and arguing that economic development in the Third World, particularly in Africa, was in the best interest of the United States. Young was among one of the first to call for sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa, according to the Georgia Encyclopedia. In 1981, he was elected Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia

and he remained in office for two terms. He also served as co-chair of the Atlanta Committee for the 1996 Olympic Games and was integral in ensuring the Olympics were held in Atlanta. Young was also instrumental in persuading Delta Air Lines to fly direct to Africa from Atlanta. Reportedly, by June 2009 Delta Air Lines would operate from nine cities in seven African countries: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Lagos, Abuja, Nairobi, Dakar, Monrovia, Cairo and Accra.

Young continues his fight for freedom and justice through community development with the Andrew Young Foundation, established to support and promote education, health, leadership and human rights in the United States, Africa and the Caribbean.

Ambassador Young is a founding principal and Chairman of GoodWorks International, dedicated to directly linking potential emerging markets of Africa and the Caribbean with U.S. companies. "We wanted to do good works," said Ambassador Young about himself and his partner Carlton Masters. GoodWorks has been actively engaged in efforts that foster improved standards of living, education, health and capacity building in Africa and the Caribbean.

Young travels extensively to meet with officials and other individuals interested in improving the economic situation in Africa and the Caribbean. He has headed numerous missions to the Continent of Africa and continues to use his extensive network to facilitate new business developments. He remains active in community matters and often sets time aside to speak at various schools and universities on a range of issues. He participates in events that foster sound public policy, economic development, human rights and education.

Young is also the author of *A Way Out of No Way* (1994) and *An Easy Burden: the Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (1996).



"MESSAGES FROM THE FIELD" A COMPELLING THEME FOR PRESIDENT'S CHAPEL

- Karla Simpson-Brown



President Michael A. Battle designated the theme "Messages from the Field" as the focus for the worship service hosted by the President's Office once each month during the past academic year. "Among those who will preach for this series are academicians, pastors, evangelists, and persons with unique ministries who will bring to ITC some exceptional examples of leadership in ministry. These are persons who provide models of excellence in ministry with academic acumen and spiritual power, from which comes an authentic call to ministry with preparation, the experience of walking with God, and serving God's people," said Dr. Battle. Many of the guest preachers are ITC alumni; others are former instructors or administrators, or are developing ministry partnerships with ITC.

While he is known as a key figure on ITC's executive leadership team, serving as Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, and is one of the nation's most widely published authors on pastoral care and counseling, Dr. Edward P. Wimberly is also a skilled and authentic preacher of the Gospel. His message, *A Safe Space: Formation in Theology Education* using Ephesians 4:17-37 as the supporting text, was the first in the series delivered on August 28.

The other messages in the series follow:

- **September 2, 2008** - Dr. Aaron L. Parker, Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA and Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA. Dr. Parker's sermon topic, *Ambassadors for the Lord*, used Isaiah 6: 1-8 as the supporting text;
- **October 14, 2008** - Rev. Gregory V. Eason, Senior Pastor of Big Bethel AME Church, Atlanta, GA, spoke about *God's Presence in the Midst of Adversity*, using texts from Exodus 17: 1-7 and Psalm 121: 1-8;

- **November 6, 2008** - Mr. John K. Coors, Former Coors Brewing Executive, Founder and CEO, Circle of Light/Community Uplift Ministries - Arvada, CO; spoke about the Circle of Light Outreach Project, under the guidance of Old Testament scripture: Isaiah 42: 6-7;
- **January 22, 2009** - Rev. Yvette Massey, Senior Pastor of Warren Memorial United Methodist Church, Atlanta, GA, delivered her sermon: *A Message from the Field*;
- **February 3, 2009** - The sermon titled: *The Power of the Holy Spirit* was delivered by Rev. Portia Wills Lee, Founder and Senior Pastor, Trinity Tabernacle Baptist Church, Marietta, GA;
- **March 17, 2009** - Rev. Connie Jackson, Executive Director, City of Hope Ministries, Inc., Decatur, GA, delivered *An Obstruction of Justice*, to a captive audience; and
- **April 2, 2009** - Bishop David Copeland, Founder and Pastor of New Creation Christian Fellowship, Windcrest, Texas, closed out the series with his Sermon on *Clay* using texts from Genesis 2 :4-7.

Each speaker in this exciting series delivered a sermon that spoke directly to what current seminarians go through, while warning them not to fall for what they think they know about being a minister.

Although Mr. John K. Coors is not a minister in the traditional sense, he does minister to the less fortunate in Sub-Saharan Africa by imploring groups across the country to invest in the Circle of Light ministry which strives to bring "energy to lift the world's poor out of darkness." Circle of Light was started in 2002 as a way to provide clean affordable energy to meet the needs for cooking and lighting of people living in the rural areas of Africa.

Chapel speakers: (top row l-r) Rev. Connie Jackson, Rev. Gregory Eason, Dr. John Coors, Rev. Yvette Massey, (bottom l-r) Rev. Portia Wills Lee, Bishop David Copeland, and Dr. Aaron L. Parker.



ITC PRESIDENT, DR. MICHAEL A. BATTLE, GETS GRAND SEND OFF TO THE AFRICAN UNION

-Michael Fletcher

The doors to the chapel opened to reveal the center pulpit chair, filled by the green and white ITC president's academic robe draped neatly with multi-colored Kente cloth from one of the countries that is a vital part of the African Union, Tanzania. These were poignant symbols of the transition of service that would be celebrated. The President would relinquish his robe of academic leadership to take on the ambassadorial mantle of oversight for 53 African nations. The site was made quite beautiful and all things were absolutely in order on August 18, 2009 at ITC.

Nearly 350 members of local civic, government, clergy as well as laity representing a broad range of Christian denominations, academia, seminary administration, faculty, and staff gathered with scholars, both past and present, as well as family and friends. All convened in unison as well-wishers in the Chapel of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in a grand "Sending Forth Celebration" to extend to Rev. Dr. Michael A. Battle, congratulations and God's speed as President Barack Obama's personal choice to fill the post as U. S. Ambassador to the African Union. The "esteemed" Rev. Dr. Battle has served six distinguished years as President of the historic ITC and the overwhelming consensus of all the evening's speakers was that he and his rare, dynamic leadership will be greatly missed.

Prior to the start of the program, a well-dressed senior lady whispered not so softly, "He is a righteous man, he does things decent and in order. We will really miss him." These words of the beautiful and gracious, Mrs. Lucy Edwards, seemed to sum up the heartfelt sentiments of the community of faith that was assembled.

After the processional of program participants, the Honorable Ambassador was seated on the front row of the Chapel with his wife (Linda Ann), facing the now empty robe on display for all to observe and perhaps privately wonder who would be the next man or woman to fill this robe? The decorated seat that symbolized the transition provided no answers.

Initially there was a feeling of great loss in the chapel, as is often felt when a loved-one passes on or leaves the family for some unknown and uncertain travel. Yet, there was a heightened sense of personal and corporate pride, expectation and honor as the unique celebration unfolded.

ITC's melodious choir, under the able direction of Dr. Lisa Allen, was an assembled quorum of recently graduated former choir members and other students on campus awaiting the start of the new academic year. All volunteered to come together to sing for this President who always loved and appreciated the choir and their music. The choir selections were intentional, appropriate and quite uplifting.

There was never a loss for words as speaker after speaker recounted



the incredible importance of the President of the United States reaching into this seminary community to select this president to serve 53 African nations with millions of people, tremendous natural resources, potential for growth, advancement and the audacity to hope.

Dr. Joseph L. Crawford, Chair of the ITC Board of Trustees presided at the celebration and in his opening remarks reminded all that, "God has blessed us," indicating that not only was Dr. Battle being elevated but we, too, the ITC community were being elevated along with him.

Rev. Charles Lomax, President of the Student Christian League at ITC spoke of the "auspicious occasion," saying, "We gather to celebrate one who has been selected to represent us!" In tones of a seasoned Baptist preacher he spoke of the seminary being in a special place, "imbedded and deliberative."

He was followed by Rev. Dr. Love Henry Whelchel, who set forth the occasion and spoke convincingly and eloquently, citing rich text and poetry with depth, clarity and stirring emotions. He stated that, "this is a proud moment in

the life of Dr. Michael A. Battle, his family, the Atlanta University Center and ITC." He ended by saying of Dr. Battle, "He has been elevated to the world stage and we are proud. This is a time to celebrate—Africa is not a dark continent, it is a place where the world first saw the light! It's time to celebrate." He continued, "Time to sing a new song and do a new dance. Let us go on and see what the end is going to be."

Dr. Marvin F. Thomas, Chair of the ITC Dean's Council, suggested a different perspective. He quoted the writer of *Ecclesiastes* reminding us that "there is a season for everything." He further stated, "We pause this day in the life of the ITC to acknowledge the 7th season of ITC. Dr. Battle's leadership these past six years brought us new ideas; reached to the highest place in the land. We count this as an honor and on behalf of all the president-deans, we bid you God speed. Go well, be well and do well."

Dr. Edward Wimberly, Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost spoke of the personal grief he was experiencing with the news of Dr. Battle leaving ITC and about the impact that Dr. Battle has had in his life. Then, this renowned pastoral care scholar and author, said, "I guess if I have to, I will let you go!"

Dr. Cameron M. Alexander, a distinguished Atlanta pastor, ITC alumnus and neighbor of ITC said he first walked on the ITC campus some 51 years ago. "I stand here today, a graduate of ITC, well-grounded and one of a kind. I heard that we had hired a president. You reached out to graduates who were pastors in the trenches. You compelled us to stretch. You have helped me and I appreciate you. I hope for your success—you have been training in this African American Union. We thank God for Obama making the appointment, but God made the call!"

In words that were precise and crisp, Rev. Dr. Robert Franklin, former ITC President and current Morehouse College President, and also a cousin to Dr. Battle, said, "Michael, we are godly proud for this appointment. Carry us with you. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

Ms. Lynette Young, Managing Principal of Damespointe/Atlanta Green Government, brought greetings from Mayor Shirley Franklin. She noted that Dr. Battle was the Mayor's only choice to serve as Chairman of Sustainable Atlanta. The audience laughed aloud when she spoke of having first met Dr. Battle in his office. "I don't go to church every Sunday and I don't go every year. But, when I first met him, I knew I was in the presence of someone very special."

Final comments came from Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones, Senior Director of External Affairs and Executive Assistant to the President, who spoke quite fondly of Dr. Battle and his work ethic, positive attitude and strength. She delivered her comments with great clarity and power while thanking Dr. Battle for his years of service to ITC.

The sound of African Drummers filled the chapel with the loud rapid beats and Dancers from the First Afrikan Church Tamba Issa Dance Ministry, dressed in their traditional multi-colored African apparel, danced in tribute as an expression of life itself. The celebration dance was filled with joyful shouting and seemingly, "a release," as the participants paid tribute to the outstanding work of ITC's Seventh President. A man known for his accessibility, administrative skills, intellectual capacity, humility, order, work ethic, customary broad smile, fiery articulate voice, military astuteness and correctness, his large physical frame, and also for his very tender heart, not so obvious at first glance. He never met strangers and had the gift of being able to humanize and affirm others from all walks of life.





After sitting through the well-choreographed program, Dr. Battle came forth to address the assembly of guests. He powerfully proclaimed that he looked at this opportunity as mission and ministry. Speaking directly to all present, with a particular message to the ITC students, he advised, "Don't ever let anybody cause you to despise your experience." Referencing his extensive military experience that some seemed to question when he began to serve at ITC, Dr. Battle went on to explain that this was his reality and he is not ashamed of it. He credited the experiences over the years for his selection to the new post. All were in keeping with prior years of experience on various committees and as an Election Observer in South Africa for their first free elections.

Throughout his academic career, Dr. Battle has been the recipient of many awards and citations and has received high accolades as a renowned theologian and progressive thinker. He urged again, "Don't ever let anybody despise your reality. The only power that opens doors in your life is God. Keep being who you are, nobody knows where God is going to take you." He cautioned against getting angry and feeling hurt, stating, "The battle is not yours it belongs to God! What God has in store... don't let nobody take away your joy." He further observed, "I leave ITC with a lot of sadness." However, reflecting upon the positive outcome of his leadership role in maintaining the accreditation of ITC on his arrival, he continued "God has ITC in God's hand. It's time for me to go. If I stay any longer I would probably mess it up." Concluding, Dr. Battle avowed, "I leave with no regrets."

What began with a stated intent of a special summer's early evening program soon became a spirited evening filled with rejoicing, jubilation and offerings of praise and thanksgiving to God for the numerous accomplishments and steadfastness of ITC's 7th President. The program concluded with the incredible feelings that one experiences at a joyous revival meeting.

A reception in honor of Dr. Michael A. Battle followed the celebration. In keeping with his humble and gracious demeanor, Dr. Battle took the time to greet all of the guests and well-wishers, pose for pictures; signing and personalizing the colorful program booklets as keepsakes for years to come.

Dr. Battle was sworn into office on August 21, 2009 and will report to his new post in Ethiopia following State Department training in mid-September 2009.



Photos of Swearing-in Ceremony, Washington, DC, August 21, 2009 courtesy of Mrs. Carol Battle Barnes.

THEOLOGY ON THE CUTTING-EDGE



VIALE RELIGION: MODERN MOVEMENTS REFLECTING THE PAST

Jamal-Dominique Hopkins, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor of New Testament

Introduction: A Viable Religion

A viable religion will be a functional expression of the culture of which it is a part; or at the very least it will be a religion in which the expectations of the faith are not grossly incompatible with the existing norms, values, and social experience by which that culture is defined.¹

At what expense is, in fact, viable religion viable, especially in light of the notion of unity espoused in the New Testament?

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (NRSV)²

So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. (NRSV)³

In raising issues concerned with viable religion, this essay will also challenge the notion that all modern religious sectarianism, especially those associated with modern Black Protestant religion, were not predominantly established due to sociological factors. Without ascribing to or assigning a particular historical normative pattern of investigation, and clearly noting the demarcations that inform the concept of religious schisms,⁴ this notion comparatively is juxtaposed to the sectarianism of ancient religious communities, most notably as that found described in the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵

Viable religion has functioned in the experience of religious communities since the beginning of the Common Era (C.E.). Throughout human history, the sociological factors that helped to form the relational dynamics between people groups have been peculiar and precarious. Groups have developed certain theological and sociological penchants that while espousing freedom and self-worth for some, the same inclinations have reservedly derided the basic civil liberties of others. And so it has been the case behind most religious schisms and splits. Black religious and cultural scholar, C. Eric Lincoln, has noted this reality with particular regard to Black folks in American society. He notes that "... the American commonwealth 'conceived in liberty' for some was born in slavery for others."⁶ Lincoln contends that sectarianism within the Black church mostly is devoid of theological promptings:

... The Puritans who settled New England, the Baptist who came to Rhode Island, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, the Methodist on

the frontier, the Anglicans along the South Atlantic sea board, the Catholics in Maryland were all responding to certain cultural factors considered critical to the distinctive religious predispositions by which they were characterized. None of the creedal, theological or ritual shibboleths which excited these communions were prominent among the reasons for sectarianism within the Black church. Why, then, did the Black Church permit itself to be divided at its inception rather than take advantage of its political and theological innocence to unite all Black Christians in a single communion?⁷

Lincoln probes the subject from a socio-cultural vantage point. Despite classifying Black Protestant religion into three distinct traditions (Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal), which somewhat conflicts with his claim that "None of the creedal, theological or ritual shibboleths which excited these communions were prominent among the reasons for sectarianism within the Black church,"⁸ Lincoln suggests that Blacks were more substantially influenced by the forces of human and psychological strictures (imposed by White sectarianism) which thus influenced religious preference. Failing to fully explore the theological sentiments behind the variant Black Protestant traditions, Lincoln goes on to list sociological reasons for Black religious sectarianism.⁹

While it is true that most Black sectarianism was socio-culturally initiated, Black sectarianism in some cases resulted, in fact, from a blend of both socio-cultural and theological factors. This is certainly the case regarding the establishment of the Black Holiness movement and Pentecostal sects, which broke with the Black Baptist, Methodist and Wesleyan movements. These former groups primarily formed over the theological issue regarding the Holy Spirit, total sanctification and holiness (glossalia or speaking in tongues in the case of the Pentecostals).

Probing the Evidence

Socio-cultural factors have worked in concert with particular theological penchants in the development of denominationalism, especially as seen from ancient communities to modern movements. In light of factors that led to the rise of ancient religious sectarianism, the suggestion that modern sectarianisms is chiefly devoid of theological oriented dynamics is colored. It is here in particular that ancient communities (specifically the Dead Sea sectarian

community) have something to say and perhaps teach modern movements (i.e. the Black Church).

Viable religion of particular religious groups is keenly evidence in the biblical sacred text. Expressions of viable religion are seen up close in the community of Israel, most notably during the rise of variant Jewish sectarianism during the late Second Temple Period. On the heels of the successive campaigns of the Jewish Maccabean revolts, wherein they uprooted the vile grip of the Seleucid empire's rule led by Antiochus the IV and procured for themselves a kind of socio-cultural, socio-political liberation, Jewish reaction to the quell was met with some contention. Liberated from foreign repression in some way meant a redistribution of power.

As champions of the revolts, the Maccabees secured for themselves priestly and monarchical status at the expense of variant Jewish religious ideologies and ancient cultural traditions. Priestly succession met with resistance not only from the Pharisees and Sadducees but the newly formed group, the Essenes (established circa 160 B.C.E.). Similar to other distinct Jewish groups of the time, the Essenes (likely akin to the community associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls),¹⁰ understood themselves as the 'Sons of Zadok,' the priestly order divinely charged with temple cultic responsibility during the time of Israel's most beloved Kings David and Solomon. As the scrolls, themselves, note:

And this is the rule of all the congregation of Israel in the final days, when they gather [in community to walk in accordance with the regulations of the sons of Zadok, the priest and the men of their covenant who have turned away from the] path of the nation. ...¹¹

... Of the Instructor. To bless the sons of Zadok, the priest whom God has chosen to strengthen his covenant, for [ever, to distribute all his judgments in the midst of his people, to teach them].¹²

Sociologically, the Maccabees elevated themselves over all other Jewish clans. Wielding religious and cultural dominance, privilege and status over their fellow Jews, this led to civil strife, thus, subsequently, resulting in the blood shed of more Jews than at any other time during Israel's history (a weakening of the faith community). In Israel, the priestly status was divinely ordered as a socio-cultural reality. The usurpation of this status (which lasted for nearly a century) was politically oriented.



The Essenes viewed themselves as theologically distinct from the Maccabees and the current religious establishment in Jerusalem on a number of points. The rise of the Essenes, perhaps initially being part of a larger Sadducean tradition, was due to a repressive socio-cultural and foreign theological reality imposed from Seleucid sectarianism first (i.e. the Jews were forcibly made to worship under a non-divinely and in some cases a non-Jewish ordered priesthood, and likely defiled temple), and secondly from a socio-cultural and theological rift with the Sadducean and Pharisaic movements. Contention regarding the Sadducean and Pharisaic movements appear to be noted in the Dead Sea sectarian text, 4QMMT (a work found from the fourth cave at Qumran which describes contention over certain halakhic regulations concerning purity and sacrificial worship). In this work, a 'we group,' the group associated with the scrolls, appears to be warning a 'you group' (possibly the Sadducees) against a 'they group' (likely the Pharisees):

[And you know that] we have segregated ourselves from the multitude of the people . . . [and] from mingling in these affairs, and from associating with them] in these things.¹³

With regard to the Qumranic Essenes, in light of the above, it is clear that schisms resulted over both socio-cultural and theologic-polity oriented concerns. Debate centered on issues regarding possible calendrical observances¹⁴ and priestly legitimacy (a socio-cultural rift) as well as purification rites, temple purity, and sacrificial regulation (theologic-polity oriented distinctions). Viable religion for the Essenic Qumran community was responsive. Due to both theological and socio-cultural factors this ancient community ideologically and geographical split from the religious temple establishment in Jerusalem as well as the larger Jewish society.

Similar to Jewish religion of the late Second Temple Period, viable religion in the African American tradition has had many variant expressions. Expressions have been reflected across the theological spectrum while yet consistently holding to similar sociological factors. The origin of most African American congregations resulted over socio-cultural humanistic concerns in the new world, where Blacks (as slaves) were forced to worship under the scrutiny of the slavemaster. Black folks were restricted from free expression and devalued as full worship participants. Despite such oppressive vices, Black's developed a certain theological predisposition distinct from the Christian religion of the slaveholder. Lincoln notes the socio-cultural and distinct theological sophistication of slaves during this time:

. . . Between the order and the threat [evoked from the theology of Christian slavemasters] was an elaborately conceived, universally promulgated theological doctrine which made the wisdom of God the agent and the reason for the black man's fall from grace into slavery. Black Christians were given to understand that slavery was God's will and his enactment. . . The black slave came early to the conclusion that religion as taught by the slavemaster or their representatives was not concerned with his salvation. The fact was that the religion he

was offered was designed primarily to reduce the inherent hazards of slave keeping to manageable proportions. So blatant a strategy, even when attributed to the politics of God, was seen by the black slave for what was from the beginning. And it was rejected even then.¹⁵

Thabiti Anyabwile similarly highlights this theological sophistication while also classifying the African Christian view of a distinct doctrine of revelation.¹⁶

Similar to the Jewish factions reflected in the scrolls, factions within Black Protestantism are clear. But what exactly can this particular period, the Qumran community and the Dead Sea Scrolls teach us? That despite demonstrating a cadre of evidence concerning sociological and theological penchants of an ancient community informing Black Protestant sectarianism, perhaps there also should be a better way of unifying and rectifying the divisive issues among us, especially in the spirit of unity as described in Galatians 3:28 and Romans 12:5 (viable religion). This unifying spirit lies behind the founding, and sustaining development of the ITC. In consideration of what can be learned from the demise of several Jewish splinter groups, including the Qumran community, it is possible that many Black religious sects could be reduced to similar footnotes in history. This trajectory seems frightening.

End Notes

¹C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma* (Rev. ed., New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), 62.

²Galatians 3:28. Here, Paul stresses the notion of unity in response to the ideology behind the Jewish baptismal confession.

³Romans 12:5.

⁴J. Milton Yinger, in referring to S. L. Greenslade, notes five causes of schisms that mutually work together. See J. Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1970), 230-31.

⁵The Dead Sea Scrolls are Jewish writings that were found beginning in 1947 and up to 1956. They were found in eleven caves in the hills of the Judean desert overlooking Khirbet Qumran. These literary finds attest to variant ideologies of several 1st century Jewish groups.

⁶Lincoln, *Race*, xxi.

⁷Lincoln, *Race*, 79.

⁸See above citation in note 7.

⁹See Lincoln, *Race*, 81.

¹⁰The link between the Essenes and the Qumran site was first put forth by Eleazar Sukenik. He based his claim on Pliny's description in *Natural History* 5.15.73; see Sukenik's *Megillot Genuzot* (Jerusalem: Magness, 1948), 16. This link was further asserted by Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran: And Modern Biblical Studies* (The Haskell Lectures 1956-1957; London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 1958), 52. The ideological correlation between the Essenes, as described by classical sources (Pliny, Philo and Josephus), and the Dead Sea Scrolls both agree with the Sadducean view as well as outlines significantly variant regulations which starkly contrast with the Sadducean view. Hence, Vanderkam notes that the Sadducean hypothesis (chiefly as purported by Schiffman) yet ignores (1) the testimony of Pliny and (2) the numerous and fundamental agreements between Josephus' description of Essene thought and practices and the contents of the sectarian documents from

Qumran.

¹¹1QS a I 1-3a. All Dead Sea Scrolls passages are taken from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (2 vol.; Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998), unless otherwise noted.

¹²1QS b III 22-23.

¹³4QMMT C 7b-8a.

¹⁴This likely was behind the polemic behind the numerous calendrical texts found at Qumran: see 4Q317; 4Q319; 4QOtot; 4Q320-4Q330; a sections of 4Q259 (calendrical material only appears in this one work of the *Rule of the Community*) and others.

¹⁵Lincoln, *Race*, 56.

¹⁶See Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 36-7.

Black Ecumenism

THE HISTORY OF
THE INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER
AS A PARADIGM FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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SILVER REFLECTIONS ON ITC'S GOLDEN MOMENT

-Riggins Earl Jr., Ph.D.,

Professor of Theology and Ethics

My reflections here are based on better than a quarter of a century of working at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). I have served the Center over half of its fifty years of operational existence. For this reason, I have characterized what I am doing here as silver reflections as opposed to golden ones. Working with students, faculty and former graduates at ITC has profoundly shaped my theological and ethical views of the Black Church and its seminary connections. This experience has impacted my researching, teaching, writing and publishing career. It has brought me face-to-face with at least two major uncritical assumptions about the Black Church and the Black preacher in America: a) "That the Black Church is the only and greatest institution owned by Black Americans." b) "That the Black preacher is the most powerful leader in Black America." These assumptions were affirmed both during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the Black Liberation Theology Movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Both as a participant in and an observer of these movements, I embraced fully these uncritical assumptions about the value of the Black Church and its preachers to the community. Only with the rise of the Gospel of Prosperity churches among Blacks in the 1980s did I start to waver in my convictions about the truth of these assertions. In the initial phase of this movement I saw the great disconnect between the leaders of these growing churches and Black institutions of higher education. These leaders often boast of being possessors of real faith, evidenced by their economic prosperity, which is superior to the faith claims of traditional Black preachers. Consequently, this has produced a relationship tension between those who claim that they model genuine faith as opposed to virtual faith.

Leaders of the Gospel of Prosperity Black church movement veered from the rich racial heritage and mission of traditional Black Churches. Calling themselves non-denominational, these young Black leaders divorced themselves from the civil rights struggle which was unique to the Black Church's *raison d'être*. This new church movement among Blacks focuses for me, with great clarity, the lingering problem between the economically thriving Black Church and the barely surviving Black seminary. It provokes several sobering questions: Why is there such glaring distance between the economic success of most Black churches and the economic struggle of the historical Black seminary for survival? Did Black leadership lose sight of the collective need to reform or reinvent the Black theological seminary for the liberation of the Black Church and vice versa? What has been the unique contribution of the Black Church experience to the academic conversations of Black liberation theology and ethics within the Black community? I am more interested for the moment in raising the questions than trying to answer them. Raising such questions will hopefully help us guard against our becoming inebriated with a one-dimensional idea of success.

Scholars and stakeholders of the Black seminary are in a unique position to reform or reinvent the Black Church's academy into a positive liberating force for the Black community. Both the leaders of the Black Church and its seminaries have failed at this point. Much of this failure has had to do with leaders of these institutions having ignored the intellectual capital that lies dormant in the rich ethnic heritage of their denominations. The intellectual capital of the ethnic religious heritage of Black Churches can be parlayed into economic wealth. Economic wealth that is needed for leveraging the institution's future in the post modern world. This can happen only if Black Church leadership, lay and clergy, work together to overcome the faith and reason problem that haunts its existence.

The Faith and Reason Problem

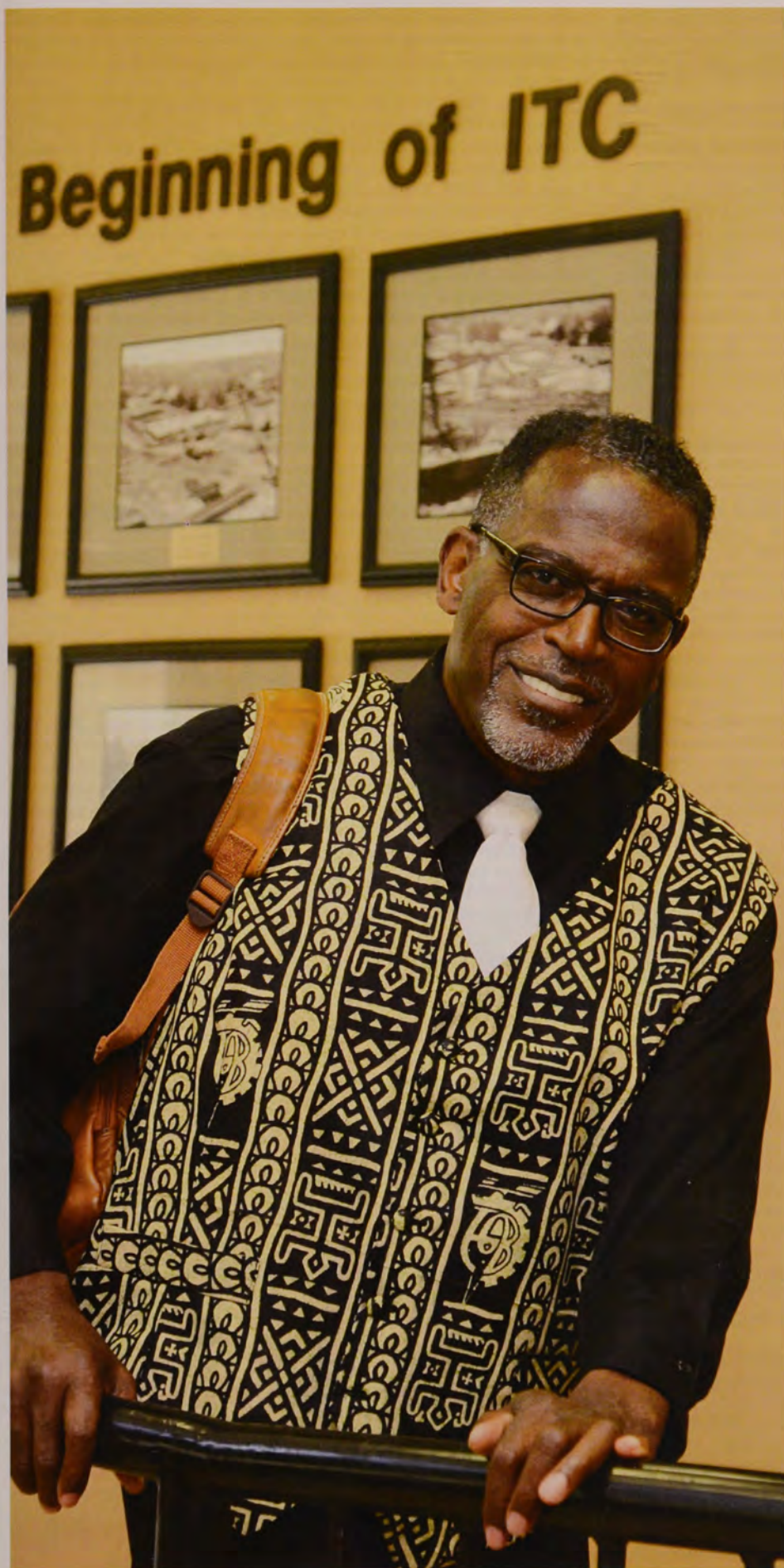
Black Church leadership, since slavery, has been unable to hold reason and faith in critical tension with each other for holistic institutional development and progress. This failure to connect

faith and reason constructively has caused many Black Church leaders to view seminary professors as hostile interrogators of their faith. In short, as enemies of the Church. On the contrary, Black seminary professors often see these church leaders as hostile to rational evaluations of the beliefs and practices of the faith community. These different perceptions of each other often produce subtle resentment on both sides of the leadership divide between the church and seminary. This resentment manifests itself constantly between seminary trained church leaders with mainline accredited seminary educations and those lacking it. The national reality is that Black pastors lacking accredited seminary educations generally lead the largest and more affluent churches in the Black community. These Black pastors are more likely to use the literary resources of White evangelical leaders, often reflecting the racial self-hatred of the former. Progressive Black seminary trained church pastors, I suggest, ought to call for a national forum on this issue. Such proposed national conversation is necessary for transforming traditional Black seminaries into models of educational success for the empowerment of the Black Church and community. A new Black leadership must emerge that is desirous of making the Black seminary a place of thriving success; a place for reproducing educational resources for empowering its people. This calls for a reassessment of the Black theology and ethics of surviving versus the theology and ethics of thriving or progressing. These two types must be viewed in the Black experience as prerequisites for the theology and ethics liberation. The need here is to identify the distinction between Black survivalist theology and ethics and Black progressive theology and ethics.

Survivalist and Progressive Theology and Ethics

Black Americans' notions of both survivalist ethical responses and progressive ethical responses have their genesis in the slave experience. That experience constitutes the genesis of the shaping of the theological and moral tradition of Black Americans. During slavery Blacks crafted for themselves, using scriptural scrapes from their enslavers' devotional tables, their own different ways of ethically responding to their masters' oppressive behavior. I prefer to call them: a) the survivalist ethical response; and b) the progressive ethical response for the purpose of analysis. Blacks of the survivalist ethical response tradition rightly made a virtue out of having survived slavery. Many White abolitionists contributed to that effort by assisting escaped slaves in writing their autobiographies of having survived and escaped slavery. On the contrary, some Southern white segregationists, following the Civil War, published under former slaves' names romantic stories of the idyllic character of slavery. Blacks of this type, at the hands of white writers, portrayed the land of slavery as the place of the happy darkies. Southern white crafters of these stories sought to refute the white abolitionists' sponsored writings of escaped slaves' memories of the oppressive character of slavery. Survivors of slavery, such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, were careful not to equate the survival of slavery with their insatiable desire for racial progress before and after the Civil War. Generations removed from institutional slavery, contemporary Black leaders always run the danger of romanticizing the notion of Blacks having survived slavery. Such leaders are subject to make survival, when seen as the end itself, synonymous with racial progress. Traditional Black Church leadership has made the idea of Blacks having been survivors in a weary land their sermonic mantra. It has been promoted as the bright side of blacks' survivalist ethical response.

The darkside of the survivalist ethical response tradition runs the danger of promoting the individual's interest over that of the group. Advocates of this response type are subject to favor narcissism over altruism. Individual survivalists in an oppressive society always stand to benefit at the expense of the group. The individual as survivalist uses the argument of self-preservation to justify his/her narcissistic



actions. In the tradition of the Black folk experience, Brer Rabbit, who is deemed the consummate trickster, personifies the master of survivalist ethics. Brer Rabbit is a survivalist par excellence, an iconic hero of the individualist survivor tradition. This is the case despite the fact that Brer Rabbit is too often a victim of his own narcissism. The slave community vicariously identified with and celebrated the survival antics as virtuous of this complex fragile creature. Despite his fragility, Brer Rabbit symbolized for the individuals of the community the embodiment of the creative moral genius of improvisation and humanistic hope.. He represented for Blacks an ingenious ethical respondent who could skillfully negotiate the dangerous immoral terrain of the oppressor's the making.

In the best sense of the idea, Booker T. Washington was celebrated by many Blacks as a sophisticated leader who had mastered the art of trickery when dealing with the white powerbrokers of America. Washington was perceived as knowing how to hold in creative tension the survivalist ethical response, symbolized by Brer Rabbit, and the progressive ethical response advocated by white racial moderates. Employing this skill, Washington sought institutional progress for Blacks through their educational development. Within the constraints of a racist Jim Crow society, Washington's leadership forged out a notion of educational progress, providing Blacks with an option for hope. Mr. Washington's ethical genius manifested itself in his ability to challenge Blacks, who were recently out of it, to live creatively between the differential of having survived slavery and conservatively progressing within the oppressive constraints of Jim Crow America. This meant that Blacks had to become ethically savvy, ambidextrously holding their desires to both survive and progress in healthy tension with each other within the constraints of Jim Crowism. Knowing how to manage this balancing act has been the greatest ethical challenge that Blacks have had to face in America following slavery. Only in managing it were Blacks able to overcome the temptation of making the survival of slavery the end in itself. A healthy perspective of surviving slavery enabled blacks to transition from survivalist to progressive ethics.

Advocates of progressive ethics refuse to allow the truth of Blacks having survived slavery to become the end in itself. They demanded and fought for, in the name of racial uplift, institutional progress even during the most repressive era of segregation. Christian representatives of progressive ethics strongly identified with Jesus as its exemplary model. For Black progressives Jesus' absolute obedience to God becomes the norm for radically redefining progress. All notions of progress must be measured in relation to the signal events of Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection. Leaders such as Martin L. King, Jr., Benjamin E. Mays, Johnetta Cole, Coretta Scott King all modeled for the Black

community the progressive ethic, which is driven by self-sacrifice. In their lives, these leaders raised self-sacrifice for the good of their people to a noble level. They lived in tension between the is/ought struggle. These leaders' sacrifices have much to teach those of the Gospel of Prosperity church movement and vice versa. Ecumenical conversations between leaders of the Gospel of Prosperity movement, traditional Black pastors and the Black seminary community are badly needed. Birthed out of the Black Church tradition of the spirit of ecumenism, ITC ought to be the place for starting dialogue between both those of the survivalist and progressive traditions of the Black Christian experience. This must happen despite the fact that materially the Black seminary looks like an abandoned orphan besides the Black prosperous mega churches and many of the traditional Black Churches. Black mega-churches have literally left the Black seminary in the wilderness of survival theology and ethics. Most of their leaders believe that an accredited seminary education has nothing to do with professional ministerial success. What is the ecumenical link between ITC and these churches?

The Black Seminary: Ecumenism Surviving or Thriving?

Over the years I have spent several summers in the Spingarn Archival Collection of Howard University. During those visits, I have read thousands of the unpublished papers of Benjamin Mays and Mordecai Johnson. Both men were premier Black scholars of religion and philosophy. They individually and collectively gave Black America an institutional vision of theological education for racial uplift. These leaders exhorted the belief in the pursuit of excellence. Prior to Mays and Johnson's leadership, whites were the primary theological educators to the Black community. Taking up the mantle, educated clergy such as Mays and Johnson led the Black community in wedding faith and reason in their pursuit of the common good for America. Studies of these leaders' ideas enabled me to make the connection between Howard Divinity School students of that period and their pioneering work for social justice. Although it graduated only a handful of students yearly in the decades of the thirties and forties, the Howard University Divinity School graduates provided transformational leadership before and during the Civil Rights Movement. Many of my generation studied under these leaders. Preachers and teachers such as Kelley Miller Smith Sr. of Nashville, TN, brought to their respective communities the challenge of holding faith and reason in creative tension. They caught the spirit of ecumenism from their teachers. Howard University Divinity School gave its students an ecumenical perspective of the Christian faith and practice. Benjamin E. Mays and Harry V. Richardson had the same idea in mind in the organizing of the ITC. They placed on the same ground Blacks whose different denominational genesis went back as early as the Reconstruction era. The African Methodist Church's existence preceded the Civil War.

Unfortunately, Black Liberation Theology has not leveraged the rich ethnic heritage of these divinity schools as intellectual capital for future transformation. Black Liberation Theology, which emerged at the beginning of 1970 under James Cone, focused its attention on the racist nature of theology in white seminaries. Almost no attempt has been made on the part of Black theologians to broach a public conversation about Black seminaries and why they need to survive or succeed. Why has there been so much silence on this subject? Are Black theologians who teach at these schools fearful of facing this question? Are Black theologians of Black seminaries waiting on their ethnic brothers and sisters at white schools to raise the issue?

Last academic year, ITC observed fifty years of service. ITC's survival represents several denominational seminary constituencies that were started before, during, and after the Reconstruction era. Gammon, Morehouse, Turner and Philip Schools of Theology are all rich in ethnic heritage. Leadership from these institutions helped shape the Black Church heritage of America. ITC represents the organizational attempt of Benjamin Mays and Harry Richardson, etcetera in collaboration with white theologians and philanthropists, to reinvent a successful model for doing accredited theological education in the Black community. Survival questions of adequate

student enrollment and finances threatened the schools abilities to survive as stand-alone institutions. Gammon Theological Seminary was the exception to the rule. Ironically, questions of financial survival still haunt the Center. I am constantly asked, during my travels, by ITC graduates: "Is ITC surviving?" Ironically, these same students do not use the word surviving when speaking of the churches that they lead. Instead, they speak proudly of their successes. If the Black Church is the greatest institution that we have in the Black community, what happened that its leaders have failed to empower its seminaries for economic success? Are Black seminaries training their students to use survival language when speaking of their seminaries and success language when referencing their churches? The use of survival language when speaking about the progress of the theological school might say something about the schizophrenic relationship that we have between education and the practice of faith. When we dispose of the survival philosophy for the school it will become a success icon in the mind of its stakeholders. What do we need to do at ITC to help our students see the institution as an empower of the Black community in particular? During my tenure at the school, I have never seen any historical publication done on the history of any one of the denominations, a collective history of the denomination's educational efforts from an ecumenical perspective. If ITC is a great ecumenical center for the Black Church, why have we not produced a publication that addresses this heritage for the new age? If ITC represents historical Black denominations that are being challenged by non-denominational movements, why are we not becoming a resource center for gathering and interpreting data on this new era of Black Church growth in the sun belt?

The Age of Black Post-Denominationalism

In an era of post-denominationalism, ITC still has no problem with attracting large numbers of students of all Protestant groups. This is the case despite the fact that many seminaries of mainline white Protestant Churches are dying for the lack of enough students. Located in the thriving city of Atlanta, ITC's student enrollment has grown despite its survival challenges. As non-denominational mega Black Churches have grown in the area and the nation so have the school's enrollment of at-large-students. Students who do not come from traditional Black groups often come with a different theological and ethical perspective of success. They spout the sermonic rhetoric of the contemporary preachers who model material success from being preachers of the Gospel of Prosperity. This is quite a different attitude from students who come from those traditional Black Church traditions that teach the virtue of surviving in Jesus' name. Students of the Black post-denominationalism age bring their own theological and ethical challenges to the seminary context. This must be viewed as ITC's new frontier for doing theological education.



Construction begins on the ITC classroom building in 1958.

This must be seen as ITC morphing into a different kind of ecumenism center than its founders probably had in mind at its genesis. Richardson and Mays thought of ecumenism in the context of bringing together traditional Black denominations for the common goal of collectively providing an accredited seminary education for their students. Since their era, radical change has taken place in the growing religious diversity of the Black demographics in a large metropolis like Atlanta as well as America. In the last fifty years, Black America has gone through an incredible social and cultural revolution that impacted its church culture in profound ways. Employment and economic wealth gained from the fruits of the civil rights struggle, produced a growing Black middle-class unlike America has previously known. The growing Black churches are reaping the harvests of these new economic resources with which they are building huge edifices of worship etc. Starting with a handful of students, ITC has grown to over four hundred enrolled students on campus. Organizers of the Center probably could not envision such a large population of Black college graduates from which to receive applicants. The leaders, fifty years ago, certainly did not build the present facility to accommodate such numerical growth.

How does the governing board of ITC reinvent itself so as to benefit from the revenue stream of a class of Blacks who are willing to express their love for God tangibly with their gifts? Many of these people are members of nobodies' church. At the golden moment in its life, ITC must revisit the uncritical assumptions about the place and power of the Black Church and the Black preacher in the mind of its people. How is it that the Black Church and preacher could have been held in such high esteem by the Black masses and classes and its seminaries be in the shape that they are? How is it that in Atlanta that Black Churches of the different denominations put the hundreds of millions in the banks each Monday morning and their seminary has nothing in exchange for it? Where did the breakdown take place, if there was one, between the Black Church and those Blacks who are caught in the mega-material success of the Black Church? Such questions must drive the institution's work as it embarks on the next fifty years.

Endnotes

¹ The Interdenominational Theological Center, located in the Atlanta University Center of Atlanta, Georgia, has operated as an accredited institution since 1958. Several published studies of the Center have taken place during its fifty years of operation. The first study was done by Harry Richardson, ITC's first president. Richardson published his reflective thoughts on the genesis of ITC in his book *Walk Together Children: The Story of the Birth and Growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1981). President Richardson might have done better to call this his memoirs of the story of the birth and growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center. In this account, Richardson does not give the reader a critical perspective of his friends, foes or himself in the accomplishment of this feat. Perhaps, this would have been too much to ask of the first president of the Center. Richardson's story celebrates the birth and growth of ITC as an ecumenical miracle, as the accrediting Savior of six major Black denominations' floundering theological schools during the era of Jim Crow. In the beginning, ITC was lauded as a federated ecumenical structure, providing accrediting status for the six denominations' seminaries. In an era of rigid denominationalism among many Blacks, ITC was viewed in its genesis, at best, as an institutional maverick and pioneer on the frontier of theological education for Black Americans. Denominational purists (e.g., fundamental Baptists and Methodists), undoubtedly, saw ITC as an aberration from the literal interpretation of the Bible and Jesus tradition. In short, students of fundamentalist backgrounds saw ITC professors as potential stealers of their Jesus. Denominational fundamentalists wanted a theological education that filtered Jesus through the biases of their particular denominations. ITC's founders attempted to move these often financially troubled schools from a trajectory of surviving, without mainline accreditation status, to one of progressing in the emerging world of modernity.

Also, see Oswald Bronson "The Origin and Significance of the Interdenominational Theological Center." (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Evanston, IL, Northwestern University, 1965). Later Bronson sought to serve ITC unsuccessfully, because of an inability to successfully fund the operation, as president. The more recent publication on ITC's story was written by Kenneth Henry and Mark Ellingsen, both ITC professors of Church History at ITC, wrote *Making Black Ecumenism Happen: The History of the Interdenominational Theological Center As A Paradigm For Christian Unity* (Atlanta: ITC Press 2008). These two historians, flirting with the temptation to romanticize, posit the thesis

that ITC is an ecumenical model for the Black Church and the church globally. Henry and Ellingsen draw their conclusion from numerous interviews that they conducted with some students and faculty of the different eras during its fifty years of operation.

The authors do not give enough of an in-depth analysis, from the institution's formal records of ITC's economic failures. They fail to show why there has been a failure over the years of successful financial cooperation between Black denominations in order to make the operation an economic success ecumenically. Very few references are made to the correspondences between the school during the fifty years of operation and what have been some of the pivotal decisions of the governing board. ITC's economic nightmare, and its leaders' political wrangling over governance, suggests that serious thought and energy must go into reforming its structure for operational success. Second, Henry and Ellingsen give too little attention to how ITC's programs and curriculum are ecumenically supported financially by these predominant Black denominations. What about an ecumenical foundation? For instance, there has been no ecumenical attempt on the part of these denominations to provide ecumenical scholarships to students from Africa and the Caribbean. No attempt has been made to provide ecumenical scholarships for youngster who come from here in America with no formal church background.

Authors Henry and Ellingsen would have made the study more intruding had they been careful to compare the ITC ecumenical experiment in theological education with the federation of schools experiment at Chicago Divinity School in the 1950s. For instance, there was no serious effort on the part of the writers to show what the core survival elements of ecumenism are at ITC. Where are those elements manifested in the ITC curriculum? Has there ever been an attempt at ITC to teach an ecumenical history of Black Church denominations? Where is a publication by any ITC professor, during the fifty years, that addresses this issue of Black ecumenism? Would it be possible for denominations to work collaboratively to build ecumenical programs of research on such issues as Black women, men, and youth in the Church?

ITC's economically unsuccessful governance structure, in the name of Black ecumenism, continues to haunt its yearly operations. Each generation of the institution lives with the false premise that the appointment of the right president can save ITC. This, perhaps, explains why ITC has had eight presidents in fifty years.

² See Victor Anderson's recent publication *Creative Exchange: A Constructive Theology of African American Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2008). Although suspicious of the Black experience, Anderson constructively appropriates the African American religious experience as the constructive construct. Stating his rational justification for preferring the linguistic use of the African American religious experience over Black theologians commonly used phrase Black experience, Anderson notes with suspicion:

Yet I am still suspicious of their persistent defining of Black experience as the experience of suffering, humiliation, struggle, survival, and resistance. I argue in this book that the manner in which we take up the concept of experience itself will determine what gets emphasized as defining aspects of African American religious experience, and that experience itself has all too often been the unexamined language controlling African American theology, the exception being perhaps African American process theologians (8, 9).

³ Decades ago James Cone struggled with this issue, pointedly asking: "What does it mean to be Black and Christian?" Often in white theological seminary settings, Cone struggled with such questions about the Black Church and its leadership as:

Why do we still have statements of faith of slave masters? . . . Why did it take nearly 200 years for the Black Church to develop a self-identified Black Theology? How do Black Churches explain that they still have not devoted themselves to an understanding of the faith that they preach every Sunday? See James H. Cone, "Black Theology and the Black Church," in *What Does it Mean to Be Black and Christian: Pulpit, and Pew, and Academy in Dialogue*, ed. Forrest H. Harris, et al. (Nashville: Townsend, 1995), 57; the conference was funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and Pew Charitable Trust.

Cone's questions must be asked by Black seminaries if they would take seriously the alienation between the Black pulpit, pew, and academy. Leaders of the Interdenominational Theological Center will hopefully take this challenge seriously as they begin the next phase of the journey.

⁴ For a needed treatment of the tension between the traditional leadership of traditional Black denominations and leaders of Black mega-churches see Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

⁵ Most uneducated Black church leaders' inability to embrace the needed

creative exchange between faith and reason, following the rise of historically Black colleges and universities, often alienated them from the Black leadership class. Highly educated Black leaders often were guilty of being unable, following having been formally educated, to appreciate the authenticity of Black folk religious ritual. For a historical perspective of this problem see the following Black leaders' view of the Black preacher: Booker T. Washington, *Speeches*; Mordecai Johnson *Speeches* and Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921); E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York, Schocken Books, 1963).

⁶ The survivalist notion of ethics is a continuation of the argument that I attempted to set forth in *Dark Symbols, Obscure Signs. God, Self, and Community in the Slave Mind*. (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee 2003). I sought to make the case in my read of the Brer Rabbit, an icon of survival ethics, trickster stories that the slave community created and celebrated. See particularly chapter five.

PRAYING FOR THE ROLE OF SEMINARIES IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

-Edward P. Wimberly, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost



In his new book entitled *Doctrine in Experience: A Methodist Theology of Church and Ministry* Russell E. Richey comments on the eclipse of seminaries' influence in United Methodism.

Seminaries increasingly lost sight of their prior audience; they lost sight of the fact that their teaching office was for the church. So though the faculties continued to write and the church read, authorship and readership diverged. Faculty increasingly wrote for one another and with such specialization and technology that laity and even ministers had difficulty in following. Theology differentiated itself into technical academic disciplines and professional societies. The seminary turned away from the church; the church turned a deaf ear to the seminary. So Bishop Paul N. Garber could denounce the school of which he had been dean as "un-Methodist."¹

Russ has put into words what many have felt for a long time. Even the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has raised some serious concerns about the state of theological education and its relationship to the church. The Committee on Faith and Order has provided the seminary a real opportunity to become co-partners again with the Council of Bishops and the general boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church in providing theological leadership for the church.

In Romans 3:27 the writer of Romans asked the question: "Then what becomes of our boasting. It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No on the principle of faith" (RSV). The critical question this text raises for theological seminaries today is the following: Is the effort of seminaries to establish intellectual superiority in theological conversation with the church through developing highly technological academic disciplines and professional societies misguided and useless? Is it useless because such an effort loses sight of the purpose of theological education, which is to educate leaders for the church and for the world in response to God's grace?

Weekly Prayer

Achieving academic superiority is works righteousness; whereas, the ministry of theological education is the work of our response to God's grace. Both the seminary and the church are responsible to make the mission of the church intelligible for the church and the world in the twenty-first century. Boasting about who can do it best is useless and meaningless, and the educational mission of the church and seminary suffer as a result. The mission is to be co-partners with each other and God in speaking theologically to the church and the world.

Our prayer today is that we as members of the Committee on Faith and Order of the United Methodist Church take seriously our theological leadership role for the church by demonstrating how the church, the theological academy, and the board and agencies work together in carrying out our theological mandate.

May grace, mercy, and peace through Jesus Christ continue to sustain our work as we respond to God's grace.

¹ Russell E. Richey, *Doctrine in Experience: A Methodist Theology of Church History* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2009)

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THIS GLOBAL ERA

-Marsha Snulligan-Haney, Ph.D.,
Professor of Missiology and World Religions

In a recent issue of Faith and International Affairs, which focused on Black Clergy and U.S. Policy in the Middle East and North Africa, in response to the question "Why should the church become involved?" community activist Mildred Bell Johnson responded by saying:

This question is a summation of perhaps the whole sad state into which the Church has allowed itself to wander. It highlights our reluctance to see the Church as a community of believers who are charged not to come into the Church but to go out of the Church into the world.

This statement is a clarion call that while the Church must remain committed to responding to the multiplicity of social issues that confront our local communities in what we term local (or home) missions, our vision must also include a concern for issues impacting global (or foreign) missions. From the perspective of mission history, there have been seven basic convictions that have guided the churches mission involvement: conversion/evangelism; the Gospel applicable to all realms of life; the Church and its unity in God's mission; good news to the poor; mission in Christ's way; mission "in" and "to" six continents, and the witness among peoples of living faiths. This suggests that the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, is broader than the mission of the Church and embodies the total impact of the Church on the world: its influences, its involvement with the spiritual, social, political and moral life of the community and nation where it is placed; and its call to address every aspect of human life. Given the rich history of the Black denominations and congregations in mission, and lessons learned through the pursuit of prophetic justice and pastoral care, who else is better equipped to respond to the current challenges facing the global community and Church worldwide?

Christian mission in this global era cannot be effectively understood or comprehended within the traditional paradigm. Instead, we are challenged to ... Missiologists have labeled the first century of Christianity as the "first Church", the century that laid the foundation for the primitive [early] Church. This Church was marked by the earliest councils and theological debates, and gave us the early North African theologians such as St. Augustine. During the second millennium, the Church was marked by its encounters with Europe and the Europeans worldview, its scholars, theologians, and theologies, and the North Atlantic slave trade emerged, and as a result Christianity is no longer viewed as the product of Europe and North America, but the epicenter of the Christian faith is now sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia. There simply is no way that the rapidly emerging African, Asian and Latin American ways of being Christian, and their own understandings of the Christian faith and mission can continue to be ignored by churches in the West.

What a phenomenon!

Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West (Lamin Sanneh), *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History* (editor Wilbert R. Shenk), and an article by Dale T. Irvin entitled "Not Made in the USA: Global Faith" (Christian Century, July 27, 2004) are but some of the resources used to challenge and engage students enrolled in missiology courses at the ITC. What is apparent is that modern Christianity has been a global phenomenon. Although Western forms of thinking and knowing have been dominant, they have not been the only way Christians have



expressed their faith, and this is becoming more apparent. When considered in light of the history of religions Christianity is fairly new and even more recently has it become a dominant religion. Throughout the efforts of early missions and missionary journeys of the first disciples of Christ, the results led to the expansion of the faith, and Christianity grew rapidly in terms of religious propagation and promulgation. Recently there has been a marked decline and this is in part due to changes of western philosophy and thought, as well as to external challenges posed to it.

Another point made is that "now, at the end of the modern age, the success of that missionary project (and especially of the apprehension of the Gospel along the indigenous side of the line between missionary and convert) emerges as perhaps the most important factor in world Christian life today. Coupled with the staggering "de-Christianization" of the traditional European "homeland" of Christendom, the shift is enormous. Christianity, long identified as primarily a Western, European religion, is so no longer. It is now predominantly a religion of Africans, Asians and Latin Americans, and of the descendants of these regions who now live in the North Atlantic world. According to recent estimates, as many as 60 percent of the world's Christians now live in the Southern Hemisphere, (south of the equator) often referred to as the "Southern Church." Most Christians in North America are unaware of these changing dynamics.

What this means according to Lamin Sanneh is that although "the West may still have material and intellectual advantages, there is a vitality in Christianity outside the West that is generating its own sense of purpose and meaning", and it is to this world that Black denominations and Black congregations (located in predominantly White denominations) are called to engage. What are the implications for theological education today?

As ITC prepares women and men to participate in a liberating praxis of Christian mission, there are three geographical areas of concern.

First, an incarnation perspective is needed in regards to local ("home") missions. The Department of Missiology and Religions of the World, ITC teaches that the local congregation and congregational leaders must be willing to follow Jesus in order to help a world in trouble. What is it that God is calling the Church to "be" and "do" within the particular context it is called to live out its faith in? The ITC Mission Society, under the auspices of its president, third year student Mr. William Spencer, has identified addressing issues of sexual violence against youth as a priority during the 2009-2010 academic year. If the lives of sexually abused youth are to be transformed, the power and presence of God must be demonstrated in real and concrete ways. The churches' Christian influence must be made evident in the local

communities where they are located. By the words, deeds, service and lifestyle of the congregation as it related to the larger community where God has placed it, the church becomes a truly creative and authentic presence of the living Christ.

Second, transforming and empowering ministry leaders are those who are willing and able to engage not only in local missions, but also national missions by emphasizing the role of theology and ministry that speak to the national agenda. Through activities such as participation in the Annual Samuel Procter Conference, national internships, and through US short-term travel seminars, seminarians are able to obtain a different perspective on mission engagement. "Feed a person a fish and she/he will eat for a day; teach a person to fish and he/she will eat for a lifetime" is true; however, as urban missiologist Bob Lupton has observed, when the fish disappear from the lake then what? Then community development, not human services, becomes the strategy. The photos below were taken in New Orleans, LA during ITC's spring recess when students volunteered to help in the ongoing process of community redevelopment. Denominational and ecumenical models of community development offer students firsthand experience and opportunities for reflection, with the hopes that when they return to their local church communities, they can then offer and share their best insights.

The third concern is relegated to the call of the local congregation and its leadership to respond to global (or 'foreign') mission concerns. In January 2010, ITC students plan to travel to East Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. They do not go as experts to 'save' Africans, but rather as persons responding to a call to 'accompany' another, as a stance of solidarity on common concerns, and as a short-term way of learning with one another. The study travel seminar to East Africa is designed to enhance and enrich a relevant understanding of Christian mission as it relates to the contemporary challenges facing Church and society. Insight into the churches response to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and other challenges will be gained through active ministry engagement. Through this short-term but intensive study seminar in Kenya and Tanzania, participants will be exposed to life, culture, ministry and community leaders in several contexts. Students enrolled in this course are expected to be participant-observers in the contexts and to be prepared upon return to interpret their experience for a variety of church and community related audiences. In terms of learning outcomes, through this study travel course, participants will be able to:

- learn about the work and witness of local faith communities in Kenya and Tanzania,
- serve with members of the local community to meet local needs, -experience and reflect on life in light of the gospel within community
- build partnerships and relationships with others responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic,

--worship with local congregations, and utilize personal gifts and talents in teaching, ministry, and preaching.

However, traveling abroad is not the only way to respond to pressing global realities facing the world. Another example is offered in the opportunity that ITC professors (Drs. Randall C. Bailey and Marsha Snulligan Haney) had recently to join with President Jimmy Carter and other concerned religious leaders to address a concern for peace with justice. Leading ecumenical advocacy organizations, Palestinian Christians and Israeli human rights leaders, and political analysts gathered May 14-15, 2009 at the Carter Center to engage real-time developments in Palestine and Israel and to discuss issues critical to peace. Church leaders were made aware of tools for action that they can use and can promote among their congregants, connecting them to leading ecumenical and interfaith advocacy organizations with a view to significantly increase participation in such efforts.

What Do Students Learn?

From an academic perspective, missiology is defined as the academic discipline which researches, records and applies data relating the biblical origin, the history, the anthropological principals and techniques, and the theological base of the Christian mission. From the Black Church tradition, it is church historian emeritus Gayraud Wilmore who speaks of mission studies as being that discipline which serves as an integration of all the other theological disciplines. From the perspective of our students, what do they learn about Christian mission? This article concludes with a reflection written by a third year ITC student who accompanied the group to New Orleans. Although a pastor of a dynamic congregation in Alabama, this was Rev. Bobby Goliday's first experience of mission involvement.

MISSION JOURNAL:

WHAT I SAW, EXPERIENCED AND MY INTERPRETATION OF THE JOURNEY

During the mission journey there were numerous experiences that were to be expected and the following is how I interpret my experience. As we departed the area of New Orleans, I shared a song with the group about the journey through the life and ministry of Jesus the Christ. The Song was "Amen".

Amen,

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

We began our journey in eager anticipation of sharing a missionary journey and yet there were feelings of anxiety because we (most of us) had never done anything of this sort. Yet still there was a sort of jubilation. The "Amen" factor of finally getting on the way!

See the little baby, Wrapped in a manger,
On Christmas morning

To finally arrive in the Big Easy, this was our "baby" for the next couple of days. Wrapped in a manger, the throws of the aftermath of Katrina, a city being born "again".

See him in a temple, talking with the elders;
tomorrow there's wisdom

On this day we were able to meet with the Pastor (Elders) of the church (temple) a few officers, as well as many who worked for other volunteer organizations. Also, we were eagerly awaiting for instruction of the work on the following day (tomorrow there's wisdom).

Down at the Jordan, John was baptizing, And saving all sinners.

The following day, Monday, we met at a church in anticipation of working our agenda. Many were disappointed because God's agenda was for us to focus on preparing for a health epidemic/pandemic. As a result, only a few hours were used to actually do work. We were ready to work—to help redevelop the community! I guess we were being baptized into the realization that everyone will not share our agenda and that things don't always go as we plan.

See him at the seaside, talking with the fishermen, and made them disciples
The Tuesday began by talking with others who were working (fishermen/fisherwomen). Many of them were or had been on site and we were becoming disciples. That is— we were devotees and partisans of the cause of their cause. A few of them had been there a couple of years while others were there for a term, others were like the job corps, called AmeriCorps. Others were students from other colleges on hiatus from studies as far away as Colorado and Washington State.

Riding through Jerusalem, Waving palm branches, In pomp and splendor
Finally, we got the opportunity to go to work. We started painting a house for the elderly. Others went to work at a soup kitchen. Jamari Butler shared with the group his opportunity to pray as he served food with the homeless and less fortunate—to pray with and for people.. He shared that one touching moment occurred when the owner/director came and requested prayer. This was somewhat sobering because it made us realize that while we are so busy looking at others who we consider to be in need, often we overlook those providing the help. Missiology is a draining, demanding job and we need to care for each other as well.

See Him in the garden, praying to His Father,
In deepest sorrow, sorrow

In the garden is where we found ourselves when we set forth working on painting a local church. I think there was a true devoted compassionate spirit displayed when everyone began painting and determined among ourselves that we would not leave on the following day until we reached a point of completion. I must admit when I heard this, it brought me to tears. To feel and share in that group compassion was unspeakable in words—it was an experience. In the garden, there is where much of our compassion is shown.

Led before Pilate, then they crucified Him,
But He rose that third day

So many people thanked us for coming, but not all. I cannot say we were led before Pilot but I do realize that many felt unappreciative and wonder why these out-of-towners come in and try to fix things up for them. As I spoke with people on the street and some of the others workers, they spoke of the occasional encounter they had that was somewhat negative. My question was why the attitude? After pondering, I suppose in helping we may have prevented them from receiving assistance they may have been waiting on or perhaps they felt we were snoots coming to rescue poor "old" New Orleans. On the other hand, I did feel that there was a sense of complacency where people simply waited for someone to come and do for them what they could do for themselves and were too lazy.

In the course of pursuing our Missiological goals are we enabling people to become dependent on handout rather than teaching them the greater goal of providing for self and independence?? Is there a better way? It reminds me of an old Chinese proverb that states, "If you give a person a fish you feed them for day, but if you teach a person to fish you feed them for life!" Too often we depart from our missionary journey after having handed out fish but we have enabled the people to become dependent on handouts. . . The bottom line of the Hippocratic Oath is "Above all, do no harm" makes me wonder whether in our missionary efforts are we not teaching people to fish and doing more harm by just giving them fish? The urban contexts and its realities are so complex.

Glory hallelujah! He died to save us, And He lives forever, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

The experience of being present in New Orleans to help meet basic needs inspires us to examine the consequences of our actions rather than be focused only on our personal/spiritual motives.

Conclusion

One thing is for sure, in the 21st century: mission and evangelism for the current and future generations cannot be pursued according to old paradigms. Although we may be disillusioned, and often mistrustful with the traditional missional outcomes, that does not excuse us from fulfilling God's calling "to go out of the Church into the world". Because place (context) matters and too often congregations do not understand themselves within their social context, it is up to theological education to provide opportunities to engage in creative and fresh ways for current and future church leaders to be renewed through a new paradigm of Christian mission based on the need to demonstrate in local communities, in response to crisis such as that caused by Katrina, and in the global sphere that the Gospel message/theory and gospel praxis are linked inseparably. In the 21st century, when world Christianity is no longer dominated by Western models of evangelism, mission and theology, US congregations, especially those of the Black denominations, are encouraged to engage in new and fresh understandings of God's mission and our response.

End notes

The Review of Faith and International Affairs, Council on Faith and International Affairs, Volume 6, Number 1, Spring 2008.

Mildred Bell Johnson, "Deep are the Roots", in *Rhetoric, Religion and the Civil Rights Movement: 1954-1965*, eds. Davis W. Houck and David E. Dixon, (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006), 727.

See "Controlling the Lake" in the February 2008 issue of *Urban Perspectives*...Reflections on Faith, Grace and the City, Atlanta, GA.

Rev. Bobby Goliday (13 May 2009), Atlanta, GA.



Drs. Marsha Snulligan Haney and Randall Bailey (top row-center) were among these national Christian leaders at the Carter Center in Atlanta, GA. The meeting was titled, "Towards a New Christian Consensus: Peace with Justice in the Holy Land", May, 2009. In addition to building constituencies to advocate for a just political settlement to the Israeli-Palestine conflict, a letter was written to President Barack Obama after two days of discussion on the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

A BLACK THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

-Lisa M. Allen, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor of Music and Worship

What makes worship, "Black"? What gives it its uniqueness, its identity, its "flava," (if I may appropriate a more modern term)? Moreover, what is unique, theologically, about Black worship? Are we not worshipping the same Creator, Liberator, and Sustainer, as other cultures? How do Black folk think about God and how does that express itself in worship? My assertion, and the impetus and focus for this article, is that each of us who participates in worship is actively engaged in "doing" theology, and if it is in the Black Church, may be engaged in a theology of Black worship!

The Black Church grew out the invisible institution, which came about because of the necessity for enslaved persons to experience authentic worship of God. Contrary to prevailing (and incorrect) ideas about Africans who were imported, immorally, to the Americas and elsewhere, Africans worshipped God. It was not the God to whom they were introduced by their Anglo oppressors, but, rather a concept of God as One Who had made them as part of divine creation and to Whom they were linked as creations of the Most High and part of the divine cosmological order. As part of this understanding of God, enslaved Africans understood that they were linked to everything in creation, whether human, animal, or plant, and were responsible (as much as humanly possible) for the well-being of that creation.

Our understanding of being linked to each other evinced itself in a system of kinship. We believed that we were divinely related to each other through God and through our history as Africans, particularly on these shores where we were no longer identified through tribal association, but by color, linked by the fact that we, literally, were in the same boat, and bound together by the same horrors, injustices, and acts of systemic oppression. Thus, our understanding of life was communal. What happened to one, good or bad, happened to all. When decisions were made, they were made to benefit the community and if the proposed action did not benefit the community, it did not occur.

Another prevailing cosmological view was the understanding that all of life was sacred. There was no separation of sacred and secular because there was no secular; all of life was lived as an offering to the divine. What one did in private, one still did in the presence of God, and therefore, one was called to live ethically at all times. This contributed directly to the continuation of authentic worship on these shores, which led to the development of the invisible institution and its evolution into the Black Church.

What religious heritage(s) do we bring from the invisible institution? E. Franklin Frazier coined the term invisible institution, which portrays the earliest enslaved person's initiation into Christianity. Enslaved African/Americans held their own secret gatherings, where they did not have to ascribe to the white man's god nor his beliefs of inferiority. They could incorporate aspects of their African heritage and belief systems into the Christian worship they had witnessed in the white man's churches. Thus, an Africanized Christianity was born, "a unique interaction between the white Baptist world view and the black African/American world view, resulting in a new black or Afro-Baptist Sacred Cosmos." This led to a worship experience that transcended the horrific consequences of their lives and subsequently, gave many a will to live, to "run on and see what the end's gon' be."



What acts of worship did we engage in that, in turn, became part of our liturgies as Africans in America and what were the theologies undergirding those acts? There was the call to worship, which literally called us to worship. We could not worship in the open, but had to steal away to the woods, the (br) hush arbors, the forests, where we could pray, moan, shout and dance, though we had to hang up wet quilts or turn over iron pots to subdue the sounds. When we got to the (br)hush arbor, we invoked the presence of God, through prayers full of yearning and wonder, requesting God's Spirit to come and descend and fill the space with God's glory. Other prayers surely thanked God for one more day's survival, asked for deliverance, and healing, not just for one, but for the community.

The music of the invisible institution also rang communal. I got a robe, you got a robe, all of God's chillun got a robe. Even 16th century psalm-lining that developed into hymn-lining in the Black Church

was communal – the leader called out the first line—Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee”—and it was understood when we responded—that we were all singing and we were all stretching, for there was no other help we knew. We even took Protestant hymns and made them into confessions of faith – O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home. Whatever we sang, it was the community that sang, that affirmed, that lent our voices to become part of the communal choir of praise, lament, confession, and joy.

The preached word was communal. We asked, “Is there a word from the Lord?” not merely to hear an expository lecture on the biblical text. More often than not, it would be a word that sought to undo the damage from the White preacher’s message that sought to uphold slavery’s demonic existence and to encourage enslaved persons to accept, nay, embrace their lot in life. The Black preacher’s task, then, was to remind us that God did not make us for this; that we were called to be free and we had to fight to survive so that we, or the next generation, might be free, and not just free in heaven, but on earth, as well.

Shouting was communal. Being descended upon by the divinity was a goal of worship; being in the Spirit was taken literally. We had an understanding that as part of the divine creation, we flowed directly from the Creator, and thus, were in communion with God and each other. This was evinced, perhaps most clearly, in the event of shouting. As worship went along, it became more and more climactic, until it erupted into ecstatic shouting and dancing, as persons experienced soul-shaking encounters with the Holy.

These worship practices continued as the invisible institution grew into the Black Church and were codified into liturgies as we began to build our own visible churches. Many continued to worship in ways that were authentically representative of our African heritage. However, as we became part of mainline Protestant denominations, which often had established liturgies, something happened. We began to allow our worship traditions and heritage(s) to be maligned, negated, and, in many contexts, disallowed. It has been well-documented that in many worship settings in mainline Protestantism, Whites were against the expression of any aspect of what might be considered African retentions in worship. The communal nature of call and response was deemed “disorderly” and the ecstatic nature of music, shouting, and dancing was considered “heathenish.”

What is more surprising is that as Blacks began to establish our own denominations, many of us echoed these sentiments, denying our African worship heritage, adopting the same liturgies used in Anglo churches, and removing any vestiges of African-ness, including color as we ourselves began to use this physical characteristic to draw class distinctions. As we made strides in American society, we began to abandon our own ways of being in worship, not merely on the surface, but entire theological paradigms of what worship was. Prior to our inclusion into other churches, the primary focus of worship was liberation – being free to worship the God who would deliver us, and working for that liberation through acts of justice in our communities. But, as James Cone tells us, “The Post-Civil War Black Church fell into the white trick of interpreting salvation in terms similar to those of the white oppressor. Salvation became white: an objective act of Christ in which God “washes” away our sins in order to prepare us for a new life in heaven.” This new evangelical paradigm, coupled with the desire to assimilate into American mainstream society, served to render our African-ness a liability, rather than an asset. The focus became individual conversion to the detriment of a communal understanding of salvation. And though the advent of Jim Crow and the subsequent Civil Rights Movement saw the reemergence of liberation themes in some contexts, there persists to this day a repudiation of African-ness in our churches.

What is going on, theologically, in Black worship today? Though we may, in some respects and contexts, embrace ecstatic worship, the focus is still on individual conversion and a very personal view of salvation. We have embraced a very Western, capitalist, individualistic paradigm of worship that knows very little of African concepts of

community, kinship, and sacred cosmos. Those of us who are still part of mainline Protestant denominations, whether historically Anglo or historically Black are fighting for our lives. Our churches are dying and in many respects, worship styles are blamed for this problem. “The liturgies are boring, worship is dry, dead, and static,” is what is said. So, we copy worship styles by adding what we believe to be elements that make wor-

ship “successful”. And it doesn’t change anything in our communities. We still have hunger and homelessness and poverty and AIDS. What does it mean that we are sitting inside a 10,000 or 20,000-member church with “slamming” worship?

What theology undergirds much of this worship? From whence did it come? Is it an African construct? No, it grows out of an evangelical model that focuses on individual conversion and salvation. There is very little, if anything, communal about it, and nothing political or revolutionary, so the community benefits very little, if at all, from it. And, in the last 30-40 years, it has become enmeshed with a prosperity gospel that contends that wealth is good all the time, and all the time, wealth is good. What is being offered in many of our churches now is simply a watered-down Gospel that offers cheap grace; a crown without a cross, Easter without Good Friday. People are able to attend a 5,000, 10,000, or 20,000 member church, cross that off their weekly compartmentalized to-do list, and never worry about anyone holding them accountable.

This type of worship has made its way into our denominational churches, as well. Interestingly, it doesn’t fit the liturgies of piety and evangelicalism most often found in denominational churches, much less African liturgies based on understandings of sacred cosmos and kinship. That is why our mainline churches in Black America are dying, because every Sunday we engage in schizophrenia. We engage in “praise and worship” spiritual calisthenics (which is not our heritage), on top of denominational liturgies (also based on other cultural and ethnic heritages), on top of prosperity preaching, which is not only not part of our heritage, but is generally exegetically incorrect, and basically proof-texting in overdrive. It’s no wonder people have no idea what went on when they walk out the door and therefore, don’t come back!

Black people must cease our engagement in schizophrenic worship during which we sound, act, and worship like anyone except authentically who we are. Embracing Black theology in worship means recovering African and Black historical liturgical practices: authentic calls to worship, communal prayers, readings, music, and preaching, acts undergirded by a Black theology of liberation for women and men. A Black theology of worship holds all of life as sacred, exalts God as a God of justice and liberation, recalls what God has done for us through 400 years of oppression and also through last week, and has as its foundation hope. Such is a theology around which we can build worship services which facilitate communal transformation. Ashe.



A THEOLOGY ON THE CUTTING-EDGE

-Harry D. Gatewood, III



Theology on the cutting-edge is an understatement for the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) and implores people of faith to an introspective examination of personal theology and its ultimate influence on a universal theological praxis.

I would submit that the Church is labored by Embedded Theology, a silent epidemic that has harried the unsuspecting faith community across America.

Dr. Edward L. Smith, ITC Professor of Philosophy and Theology notes embedded theology as, "Countless daily encounters with Christianity - formal and informal - planned and unplanned. It is the understanding of faith disseminated by the Church and assimilated by its members in their daily lives."

Personally, I believe ITC has evoked in me and many other ITC seminarians a requisite to come face-to-face with our own personal embedded theologies. Through many hours of theological discourse, we have reasoned with these matters, chiseling and shaping a more deliberative theology that embraces and surpasses the cutting-edge. ITC is a laboratory to dissect every element of theology that pervades both personal and ecumenical settings. After a year of study at ITC, I continue to wrestle with some parts of my

embedded theology. While others parts of my theology have been successfully checked and balanced. I have found that churches are corrals of embedded theology and preachers are plagued by embedded theology. In some ways this is good and is other ways it is bad. This awe-inspiring construct of embedded theology engages one to move into deliberative theology and look circumspectly at the world to find some anchor of hermeneutic.

Apostle Paul said, "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." I agree with Paul in this reference but there are still some things that Paul has said that to me are mind boggling. "Slaves obey your masters," says Paul, but what happens when the master is abusing you, or even worse, your son or daughter? Paul said, "Wives submit to your husbands," but how does one submit to a husband when he has gone on a path seemingly more absurd than Noah's building the ark in drought?

I would submit that we cannot use First Century behavior as a literal guide for our present-day actions and beliefs. To do so is to fall in the same trap of fundamentalists.

Further, we must consider that through culture, experience, rev-

elation, scripture and tradition, we find the functional sources of cutting-edge theology. Culture encompasses the qualities in a people or society that arises from a concern about what is regarded as protocol or acceptable comportment, scholarly pursuits, or arts. Experience is the atmosphere in which we live our daily encounters, the totality of our existence in today's world. Revelation is what we are doing about our liberation. Revelation is what God is saying to us now.

Scripture is indeed the biblical witness that says that God is a God of liberation who speaks to the oppressed and abused, and assures divine righteousness. It is the Bible that tells us that God became human in Jesus Christ so that the Kingdom of God would make freedom a reality for all human beings. The Bible is a living document that speaks to people and changes lives. However, I submit that The Bible changes as the world changes and God and God's word is powerful enough to withstand any test of time.

Lastly, tradition plays a big part in embedded theology. Tradition is a long-established or inherited way of thinking or acting. It refers to the theological reflection of the Church upon the nature of Christianity from the early Church to earlier today. Tradition may control both our negative and positive thinking about the Christian gospel and is essential for any theological reflection.

These five elements - culture, experience, revelation, scripture and tradition, are what I believe to be the pillars of successful theological reasoning, leading to a breaking-away from embedded theology to deliberative theology and the cutting-edge. Theology should always be on the cutting-edge. I believe that in the vista of life there comes a time to accept critical consciousness.

All authorities are being questioned, especially those with dominant Western cultural-religious tradition. Many respected authorities of the Church and some theologians have been found to be patriarchal, racist, sexist, and indifferent to the

realities of oppression and class orientation to the point of being obsolete. To me, theology on the cutting-edge is a never ending challenge of faith-seeking understanding.

Dr. James Cone, said, "That true religion is loving God with your mind." Loving God with your mind should always take you to the cutting-edge of theology. And this praxis should lead one to find God not just personally but universally.

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PHILLIPS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY HOSTS 2009 DISTINGUISHED PREACHER BISHOP OTHAL LAKEY



Annually the seminaries of the ITC consortium rotate the honor of selecting and hosting the visit of the Distinguished Preacher to the ITC campus. Phillips School of Theology, the Christian Methodist Episcopal affiliate seminary, presented Bishop Othal Hawthorne Lakey as the 2009 honored guest orator.

The title distinguished suggests – to be made conspicuous by excellence, which so aptly describes Bishop Lakey. He is no stranger to telling a story, to laying out the plot, drawing in his audience, and then delivering a theologically relevant message. Such was the case during the February chapel hour on his visit to ITC. Lakey's sermon, "Can I Get a Witness" was based on the Gospel scripture of Mark, verses 16 through 21. It was noted that this was a text out of context – a passion narrative – which Bishop Lakey considers "the most sacred of sacred verses." Bishop Lakey, a wordsmith and natural narrator, makes this particular text relatable and understandable – specifically to African Americans.

Bishop Lakey was elected the 44th Bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church on May 9, 1982. He received the post after serving the denomination in various locales to include: Pasco, WA; Portland, OR; Shreveport, LA and Dallas, TX.

He has also served in the role of Editor of the Christian Index, the official publication of the CME Church, from 1974 to 1982. Beyond his stint as the editor of that publication, Bishop Lakey has published and co-authored several books to include: *The Rise of "Colored Methodism": A Study of the History and Background of the CME Church* (1972); *The History of the CME Church* (1985); *God in Mama's House: A Study of the Women's Movement in the CME Church* (1994); and *Mama Do I have to Shine Shoes for the Rest of My Life?: A Few Sermons out of the Black Experience*.

Bishop Lakey graciously supports the ITC as a member of the Board of Trustees, chairing the Committee on Buildings and Grounds and through his support of Phillips School of Theology. The institution attests to the worthiness of the honor of Distinguished Preacher bestowed upon Bishop Lakey and is grateful for the privilege it afforded the community to indulge in his biblical reflection for present-day application.

THE ITC CHORUS - TAKING PRAISE TO A NEW LEVEL

Every year, the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) community looks forward to hearing the Advent Concert and the Holy Week Gospel Mass. This year, the ITC Choir made several special appearances. The ITC Women's Choir wowed participants and onlookers during the dedication of the newly "green" renovated Music Room. Performing an original piece composed by ITC's own Assistant Professor of Worship and Music, Dr. Lisa Allen, the Women's Choir epitomized poise and confidence while the message of TheoEcology was clearly heard through the lyrics adapted from the biblical text of Psalm 8, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (Listen to a full rendition of the song when you go to the website, www.theoecology.us.)

In addition to the Music Room dedication, the entire ITC Choir made a joyful noise during the AIDS Alliance for Faith and Healing, World AIDS Day Interfaith Prayer breakfast on December 1, 2008, at St. Phillip AME Church in Decatur, GA. The even turned into a praise party – while reminding everyone in all seriousness that HIV/AIDS continues to be a worldwide epidemic.

The highlight of the Christmas season is always punctuated by the Advent Concert – or in this year's case – the Advent Cantata. The ITC Choir sang selections from the Winter Rose, composed by Joseph Martin. The program included the Gate City Choir, youth from the Gate City Elementary School, under the direction of ITC seminarian Mark Miles.

The academic year rounded out with a Holy Week Gospel Mass to celebrate the Easter season. Tremendous performances were given by ITC seminarians Reiko Yuge, Sheryl Jones Dillard and Anthony Clinkscales. Choir tenors, Barron Chisholm, Bernard Grace, Bertrand Griffin, Matthew Shannon, and Willie Nelson, also made an impression as they performed Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.

Dr. Lisa Allen is to be commended on the tremendous leadership she brings to the ITC choir as an arranger, director, and vocal coach. Their brand of praise and worship is unequivocally uplifting, always leaving the ITC community looking forward to hearing more in the years to come.



Seminarian, Reiko Yuge, is soloist with ITC Choir.

ITC CORNERSTONE WATCHES OVER PREACHING LAB



(l-r) Drs. Mark Lomax, John Green, Betty W. Clark, Michael A. Battle, and Edward P. Wimberly.

When Dr. Betty Clark speaks of her late husband – Dr. Isaac R. Clark – the love and adoration are apparent in her voice. Great strength is belied by her soft-spoken nature, especially when she speaks of feeling like ITC and the needs of its students took precedence over her position as spouse and supporter. “ITC was Camelot to my husband, he always talked about how ITC was a special place to be – he really loved ITC.” Nevertheless, Dr. Betty continued to strongly support her husband, and every thing he taught and believed.

The portrait hanging of Dr. Isaac Clark sparks a feeling of completion. After 28 years of dedicated service to ITC, and a preaching lab

named in his honor, it is a fitting tribute to hang his portrait in a position of prominence. From its lofty position, it appears he is watching over matriculating seminarians, silently guiding, just as he would have done when he was a physical presence more than 20 years ago.

Dr. Isaac Clark was a titan in homiletics and did not mind sharing his knowledge with future teachers and preachers. It was this dedication to his students that garnered the honor of lending his name to a preaching lab on the ITC campus.

As the portrait of Dr. Isaac Clark was unveiled, a sizeable group of former students and colleagues, and future recipients of his posthumous presence were in attendance. Dr. John F. Green, newly elected president-dean of Turner Theological Seminary, was on hand to offer kind words regarding his personal experience under Dr. Clark’s tutelage. Dr. Green recounted, “Dr. Clark was the sounding board when a question was raised about how to make the congregation understand without the entire presentation being so lofty that no one but the speaker and one or two seminary graduates would understand what is being said.” He went on to say, “He [Dr. Clark] would insist that you could teach it and preach it in a way where the word doesn’t lose its potency, but even a child could understand its importance.” During his first Turner Founders’ Week, Dean Green introduced the Inaugural Isaac R. Clark Pastors’ and Music Conference, which featured speakers and alumni influenced by Dr. Clark’s teaching acumen at ITC.

Dr. Clark’s influence and reach is renowned and earned him and his portrait unveiling acknowledgement in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) publication the Christian Recorder. Besides being a professor at the ITC for more than a quarter century, Dr. Clark was awarded the honor of being the first occupant of the prestigious Fuller E. Callaway professorship in Homiletics.

Dr. Betty Clark knew better than anyone, what ITC meant to her husband, she said, “This is a terrific honor bestowed upon my husband for his long years of service at ITC. Placing his portrait in the preaching lab that bears his name is a fitting conclusion to an enduring and resolute journey.” His 28 years of faithful service to the ITC has come full circle, with the hanging of his portrait, marking his posthumous return to ITC. Dr. Clark’s contributions to this institution remain as innumerable as they are timeless.

THE ELECTION OF THE NATION’S FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Millions of people across the nation and throughout the world watched and listened for news that would literally give way to the often narrated and now authentic birthing of the American dream – one can become President of the United States, irrespective of race, creed, or color. Likewise, on Tuesday, November 4, 2008, over 150 students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) gathered to watch the 2008 Presidential Election. It was a time of celebration, renewal, hope, fellowship, worship, change, grace and lasting memories. It was a night that the Spirit in the Costen Education Center will forever resonate. Where they were as they prayed, ate, hugged, cried, danced a holy dance, screamed, sung songs of praise, laid prostrate, when the announcement came that Barack Obama was indeed the US President-Elect, will forever be embedded in their memories.

In their own words, ITC students expressed the importance of the history-making event.

“Last night was phenomenal. To watch history unfold before my eyes in a room full of the future religious and social leaders in the Black community was priceless. God was present, and the right



teous wind Obama said he felt during the campaign was present with us as well.”

– Chris Jones, Richardson Fellowship, Senior Class of 2009.

“Being able to witness the victory of the first Black President-elect was such a historical moment, but to share this event with my colleagues at ITC has made this an especially memorable moment in my life. This event is something that I will cherish forever.”

- Andrea Richard, Church of God in Christ, Middler Class of 2010

"Last night was an epic moment in the history of America. It was historic to not only witness the first African American President of the United States of America being elected, but to witness the community of the most prestigious institution for theological studies, from

an African American context, come together and celebrate with the world. The liberating power of God was not only evident on the television, but also in the lives of those who God has called to be God's ambassadors on this earth."

- Kevin McKeithen, Turner Theological Seminary, Class of 2008

OAR BECOMING TECHNOLOGICALLY SAVVY!

-Harry D. Gatewood, III



ITC Recruitment Officer, Mr. Walter Cabassa

The Office of Admission and Recruitment (OAR) at The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) is making big strides in advancing recruitment connections.

The ITC/OAR has launched a Facebook page that has anchored an amazing 600 plus fans to ITC. For those who are new to the recent technology that is sweeping the nation with advanced opportunities for storytelling and marketing on an individual or corporate level, fans are Facebook users that have interest in ITC.

OAR Officer Walter Cabassa, MPA, says, "Facebook is a way for us to reach our target market and to reach others with the ITC story. Our goal is to use all available resources." Cabassa said, "E-mail marketing is good, direct mail marketing is good and so is telemarketing, but the Facebook page is a way to quickly and effectively communicate with prospective students, current students and alumni."

The recent creation of the ITC Facebook page is just one of the new innovative marketing strategies that Mr. Cabassa is incorporating in his admission and recruitment strategy for the coming year and guarantees that ITC stays current with local trends of social networking and technology.

Social Networking is a tool that uses a website to connect people who share personal or professional interests, places of origin or education at a particular school, etc. The ITC/OAR office erected the Facebook page in early March and is continuing to move toward other networking and marketing ventures. Facebook helps the department break down demographics such as age, sex, cities and countries.

Interestingly enough one of the largest changes in the Facebook demographics compared to ITC's current Class Profile is that the age of students interested in ITC is becoming younger! ITC's average student age was 39. The ITC Facebook page shows the average stu-

dent as age 30. Additionally, the Facebook page shows an increase in women interested in ITC. Compared to the current statistics which reflect 39 percent of the school's population as women, Facebook shows that 46.5 percent of women are fans of ITC's Facebook page.

Mrs. Bobbie Hall, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing, is also incorporating another type of networking system called Constant Contact. Constant Contact is an e-mail marketing program that creates professional e-mail campaigns and requires no technical skills. Mrs. Hall's e-mail campaign is geared toward incoming and prospective students of ITC. The e-mail campaign will be in newsletter form giving facts about ITC, in addition to biographies of current professors and students as well as giving information on current events at ITC with tour dates and deadlines for admission applications. The e-mail marketing campaign is called, The Compass, and will be mailed twice annually, during the fall and spring semester.

If you have more questions about the ITC/OAR, Facebook Page or Constant Contact (The Compass) or coming to ITC, please call 404-527-7792 or contact Walter Cabassa, at wcabassa@itc.edu.

Interdenominational Theological Center Distance Learning Program

www.itc.edu

Master of Divinity Degree (MDIV)

If you are interested in graduate theological education, have the academic qualifications of an undergraduate degree, and want the convenience of online study, the ITC Distance Learning Program is designed for you!


Quick Facts:

- ◆ The Total Online MDIV Program can be completed with only 90 credit hours
- ◆ There are 52 Online credit hours available toward the degree
- ◆ There are 30 credit hours of Residency Courses required
- ◆ You may transfer up to 30 credit hours from any accredited seminary toward the MDIV degree program
- ◆ There are 8-12 credit hours dedicated to Internships including CPE/Ministry and Context in Residency
- ◆ The courses are taught by a world renowned faculty in an ecumenical setting with emphasis on the African American Church

Enroll Today!

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Visit <http://www.itcdonline.net/about.htm>.
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Visit us on 

PASTORS RETURN FROM THE HOLY LAND WITH FRESH PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMITMENT TO MINISTRY

ABSOLUTELY, LIFE CHANGING! That's just one of the many awe-inspiring descriptions of the trip to the Holy Land as experienced by twenty pastors making the trip in June 2009 with Dr. Temba Mafico and Dr. Willie G-dman. In his third year of providing administrative oversight and serving as Spiritual Leader for the Holy Land Pilgrimage for Pastoral Renewal, Dr. Mafico always returns with a report of new perspectives, new blessings, and new commitments expressed by those who travel to the land that most have studied about, taught about, and preached about, but have never actually experienced.

What happens when these pastors, church leaders, and bible scholars actually set foot on the soil, walk along the roads, experience the culture; pray, meditate, worship, and take a dip in the cool waters of the Jordan, is that they are all moved to become one with that which they've heretofore only imagined.

"As one who has made this trip at least six times with six diverse groups of pilgrims, each time I am excited for them, knowing that each will experience something that is distinctively different and that has to be experienced to fully comprehend. And, I am always grateful to the CF Foundation for making it possible for the ITC alumni and other pastors not connected to the ITC to engage in this kind of spiritual and physical catharsis that changes the lives of everyone privileged to go," said Dr. Mafico.

With the awareness that pastors, shepherds of many persons with needs and concerns that must be attended on a daily basis, there is a growing acknowledgement that pastors, too, have needs and concerns that often go unattended – placing parish before person – until the pastor often becomes spiritually anemic and physically fatigued. Rest, relaxation, and restoration seem elusive to most and that is why the CF Foundation has provided the first step on the road to recovery – a trip to the Holy Land for more than an excursion, but for Spiritual Renewal. The pilgrims on this trek included:

Kenneth Board	Dennis Langdon	Karen Griffin
Angela Hardy-Cross	Alvin Harmon	Benjamin Hinton
Joseph Johnson	Terrence Lee	Lydia Lewis
Valerie Lomax-Jackson	Steve McKinney	Amos Oladipo
Darneather Murphy-Heath	Kenneth Ransfer	Lisa Robinson
Johnathan Ruben	June Shorter	Lisa Tait
Edwin Thomas	André Pierce	

From registration to orientation where Dr. Mafico and his colleague, Dr. Willie G-dman, ITC's Adjunct Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, set the tone with the travel expectation being a pilgrimage affording an intentional opportunity for "holy rest,"; the excitement grew among those who acknowledged feeling blessed to be among the chosen to travel. Travelers learned a bit about one another before leaving the home base, being admonished to lay aside titles and credentials and just become fellow travelers on a mutual mission. "Dr. Mafico kept reinforcing the need for us to separate ourselves from our ministry, our cell phones, computers, and family concerns so that we could clear our minds to prepare for the pilgrimage," said one traveler. And, having done so, a setting for pilgrims to get maximum benefit from the experience was provided.

The Pilgrims bonded and traveled well for 14 days to places that were former references in biblical exegesis which soon became integral to a new depth of scriptural comprehension. Daily activities included travel to special sites selected for the group and the evening debriefings of each excursion with shared impressions, individual and group worship provided the following shared by the pilgrims:

- The admonition to seek the LORD for the "one thing" I'm called to do and to revisit my call story in conjunction with the Pilgrimage. The discussion on one's call was extraordinary. I yearn for more of those kinds of theological conversations with colleagues.
- The daily devotionals which included worship, prayer, a message, and reflection were awesome. They made me become more introspective rather than environmentally external in my approach to spiritual renewal. The worship moments were very powerful which carried over to our worship times in the Holy Land.
- Although we all were strangers, when you put worship, prayer and reflection in the midst, you are no longer strangers but sisters and brothers. This made a huge difference.
- We developed covenant relationships with each other to pray for one another, respect and support one another while on the pilgrimage. By the time we arrived in the Holy Land, new friendships had been established that lasted throughout the journey. In fact, we were encouraged to continue to build covenant relationships beyond the pilgrimage.
- We engaged in group thinking and group sharing, which began, theoretically, the process of spiritual formation and interpersonal bonding. Such engagement proved invaluable, since we functioned as community and as a team negotiating the daily activities in the Holy Land.
- When we ate together we shared our perspective stories, expectations and excitement about the pilgrimage.
- It was an almost unbelievable bunch of personalities among my fellow pilgrims. I achieved strong, positive connection with each; a relationship that is now life-long. We did not see each other as belonging to different denominations, but one in Christ with one mission to the world.
- My whole approach to ministry and perspective on ministry has been enhanced. Walking where Jesus walked and receiving a new interpretation of things has deepened my faith in God.
- I will never view scripture the same. This pilgrimage has afforded me insight that I would not have gotten on any other trip/pilgrimage.
- The pilgrimage has radically changed my perspective of the Bible and biblical sites. It was so illuminating to actually see sites that I have been reading and preaching about for years.
- I have been changed! This trip has profoundly affected my ministry in many ways; some too early to even realize. I see the Bible differently and it has given me a sense of "authority" with the scriptures now that I have seen the Holy Land.
- I believe the Holy Land Pilgrimage had a life altering impact on my ministry. The pilgrimage itself; the rigors of the trip; the relationships formed; and the group dynamics catapulted me into a new realm of ministry.
- The journey illuminated my understanding of the biblical context, geographically and historically. I can't preach the Bible the same way.
- My known redactions from formal instruction are yet challenged more by the actual encounter of culture, customs, ethnicities, religions, terrain, ecology and economy of the Holy Land.
- Seeing the sites will transform my preaching. Amazing how much you can learn about a people, a culture, a region, and its geography by actually walking its streets. If a picture is worth a thousand words then being there was worth a million words.
- A newfound sense of community that I experienced on this pilgrimage was perhaps the most rewarding and beneficial aspect of this pilgrimage. I was able to make two new covenant friendships out of this experience and I felt extremely blessed because of that. I also made some very strong connections with others and I plan to foster those relationships as well.



- This was a life transforming journey. Thank you for the work of the CF Foundation and for selecting leaders who were knowledgeable and genuinely interested in my growth and development.

To find out more about the Holy Land Pilgrimage for Pastoral Renewal go to www.holyrest.org. Share in the exceptional work of the CF Foundation as an underwriter of this dynamic program that energizes pastoral alumni of ITC and those of other seminaries. Recruit others so that they may also have the same opportunity to reignite energies for ministry and service, and build meaningful relationships with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



HONORS, DEGREES, AND A MESSAGE OF WARNING

The 2009 Commencement Exercise



Dr. Claudette Copeland

A capacity audience at Morehouse College's King International Chapel shared the immense joy of the commencement moment with the Class of 2009. It is a privilege to attend – spouses, family, friends, colleagues – having watched the candidates during the years leading to the day that fulfills hopes and aspirations for a degree that purports authentic theological readiness to serve in ministry born of exacting and meticulous study and personal sacrifices and hardships often attending the journey of academic preparation. The anticipation of a waiting audience of loved-ones and well-wishers, a last official look at faculty and administrators before crossing over – the graduation, May 2, 2009, is a day that will jubilantly haunt the memory of the newly credentialed church leaders in the years to come.

Each year, the invitation to speak is extended by the president of the institution; however, the selection of the commencement speaker is actually that of the graduating class. But, a tribute to the ITC is that often, as in the last three consecutive years, the choice has been one of ITC's own – Bishop Eddie L. Long in 2007, Dr. William Watley in 2008, and this year, Dr. Claudette Copeland. Dr. Copeland is Co-pastor of New Creations Christian Fellowship in San Antonio, Texas along with her husband, Bishop David Copeland, also an ITC alumnus. The commonality of their matriculation at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), the uniqueness, diversity, and the profundity of their ministries, while a marvelous tribute to their ecumenical experience at ITC, are more impor-

tantly evidence of rightly used vessels in the clutches of an all powerful God.

Additionally, the line-up of special guests included persons recognized as Alumni Emeriti, members of ITC's first graduating class. While, Dr. Oswald P. Bronson, an alumnus and the second president of ITC sent warm regards as he was unable to attend due to illness, President Michael A. Battle welcomed and applauded those present from the 50th Year Class to include: Rev. James M. Bradley Jr., Rev. Paul H. Easley Jr., Rev. Seaborn B. Gay, Rev. Dr. John W. Heyward Jr., Rev. Dr. Lenton H. Powell, and Rev. Theodore A. Powell.

Four honorary degrees were conferred on persons from the ITC and three of its affiliate seminaries. These are persons that have made significant contributions to ministry. The Doctor of Divinity degree was conferred on the following: ITC honoree, Dr. Cynthia Hale, Founder and Senior Pastor of Ray of Hope Christian Church and its international ministries; Rev. Robert N. Burkins, Senior Pastor of Elmwood United Presbyterian Church, East Orange, New Jersey was honored by Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary; Dr. John F. Green made the presentation to Dr. George Moore, Pastor of St. Phillips African Methodist Episcopal Church, Decatur, GA from Turner Theological Seminary; and Dr. Harold V. Bennett, President-Dean of Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary made the presentation to – Judge Enoch Perry, III, General Counsel of The Church of God in Christ, Inc.

Dr. Copeland's message was entitled "The Perils of Our Profession." She began with a personal profile, "Thirty-two years ago, I too walked across this same bridge into an uncertain preaching

future with an unwavering zeal to change the world and its structures and strictures. Today, I return with a bit more humility and far less certitude but with convictions that are refined and reaffirmed and a course that has been worth keeping."

There were three very essential points made by Dr. Copeland in her message to the Class of 2009 as well as to others attuned to receive powerful truths. She stated clearly, "You have yielded to a glorious calling and entered a dangerous profession. This ministry should carry "warning labels" for it has perils. Warning-there will be a narcissism that is too seductive to be managed without the Holy Ghost. Secondly, yours will be a soul too often neglected and lost in the saving of other souls; and thirdly, you will deliver a gospel that will tend to shrink over the years, if you're not careful – a gospel too narrow to embrace the increasing demands of a widening and hungry world."

Copeland warned against ministers being seduced and succumbing to a love and pre-occupation with self, realizing that the very thing that makes great ministers is also the thing that can lead to their demise – ego! She explained, "Ministry attracts narcissism and provides a ready platform for us all....

those of us who secretly desire to be adored. So beware of the tendency toward preacher-worship, which is worshipping yourself. Warning! You got your M.Div. or your D. Min., but you're going to need the Holy Ghost! Loss of intimacy with God and a shrinking vision of the Gospel, can often lead church leaders to develop immunity to the very message they are preaching. Accept this degree only if you have a sure relationship with the Holy Spirit!"

ITC graduated 89 women and men on May 2, 2009, all having fulfilled the requisites of the curriculum and with the sanction of the administration of a seminary recognized as the world's premier academy for ecumenical theological study. The commencement narrative from one of God's faithful messengers hopefully is one that answers Dr. Copeland invocation and "will matter in eternity" as a source of enlightenment and encouragement for these future clergy, theologians, teachers, administrators, or whatever capacity and wherever God's assignments may lead. As Dr. Copeland's scripture is recounted, "And if your purpose and activity is of human origin, it will fail. But, if it is from God, they will not be able to stop you! They will only find themselves fighting against God!"



2008-2009 FACULTY BOOK REVIEWS

Randall C. Bailey, Ph.D.

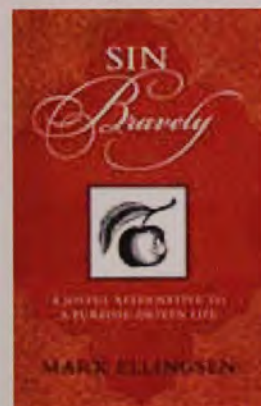


Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Hebrew Bible at Interdenominational Theological Center. He co-edited *They Were All Together in One Place? Toward Minority Biblical Criticism* with Tat-siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia. These three offer critiques from three major racial/ethnic minority communities in the United States—African American, Asian American, and Latino/a American—focus on the problematic of race and ethnicity in the Bible and in contemporary biblical interpretation.

With a view on both ancient text and contemporary context, the writers pay close attention to how racial/ethnic dynamics intersect with other differential relations of power such as gender, class, sexuality, and colonialism. They also consider their readings alongside those of other racial/ethnic minority communities.

Dr. Bailey has edited a number of volumes including *Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation* (Society of Biblical Literature), *The College Press NIV Commentary: Exodus* (College Press), and *The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Abingdon).

Mark Ellingsen, Ph.D.



Professor of Church History at Interdenominational Theological Center, has authored *Sin Bravely: A Joyful Alternative to a Purpose-Driven Life*. Dr. Ellingsen demonstrates that awareness of sin is shown to lead to freedom and joy, as the pressure is removed to do and be good all the time. It starts with a theological analysis of Rick Warren's brand of Christianity, and exposes the burdens and narcissism that duty-bound living encourages.

Dr. Mark Ellingsen dares you to go ahead and sin bravely! In this refreshing and unique book, he challenges the religious legalism pervasive throughout American evangelicalism today and encourages a new understanding of what it means to

be both a Christian and a human being. Equipped with the joyful, rebellious vision of Martin Luther, father of the Protestant reformation, and the latest in neuroscientific research, Ellingsen offers a new approach for healthy living – one opposed to the duty-oriented, selfish and stifling conception of faith that has gained such a strong foothold in contemporary American culture. It is an approach that fully embraces the active role that God's grace plays in each person's life and the fun and freedom one gains from it.

Beginning with the first theological analysis of Rick Warren's brand of Christianity, this book exposes the burdens and narcissism that purpose-driven and duty-bound living encourages, and includes the purveyors of the Prosperity Gospel, taught by such influential preachers like Joel Osteen, in his critique. Ellingsen writes that brave sinners, aware of God's grace in their lives, instead say "no" to narcissism and "yes" to healthy risk-taking that gets beyond selfish desires to the desire to help one another. When people sin bravely, acknowledging that everything done is done in sin with God's saving grace acting upon them, people can learn to recognize God. This awareness leads to freedom and joy, since the pressure is now removed to do and be good. In addition, total dependence on God entails a self-forgetfulness that leads to happiness. The more boldly someone acknowledges their sin, in failing to take credit for the good they

have done, the more focused on God the individual becomes. Correspondingly, this self-forgetful lifestyle is a promising counter-cultural alternative to the cultural narcissism, which so dominate in many segments of contemporary American society. This book demonstrates both how and why brave sinning leads to joy, and in so doing offers readers practical advice on living this way.

Ellingsen also cites recent neurobiological findings showing that when people forget themselves in order to focus on bigger projects, the pleasure centers of the brain are stimulated and people become happier and more content. It is this joyous risk-taking that he suggests brings people closer together, closer to God, and closer to a better understanding of themselves. *Sin Bravely* dares to be that joyful alternative to the purpose driven life.

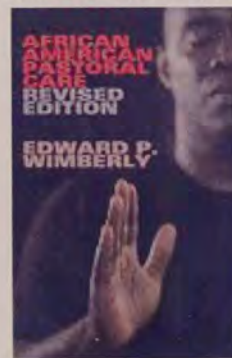
Temba Mafico, Ph.D.



Professor of Old Testament and Assistant Provost at the Interdenominational Theological Center presents *Yahweh's Emergence as "Judge" Among the Gods: A Study of the Hebrew Root Spt*. This book is touted as a "must read for every student of the Bible" by Dr. Robert Wafawanaka, of Virginia Union University. Mafico (Hebrew Bible, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia) presents a significant revision of his 1979 dissertation at Harvard University, attributing the delay to his eight years pastoring and teaching in Africa. After the century of study, he explains, scholars finally decided that the Semitic root *spt* has no basic meaning at all, and its meaning in the Hebrew Bible must be determined by a very careful analysis of the context in which it is used. He argues that

its use both within and outside the Bible suggests that Yahweh performed a function of judging that had previously been filled by kings.

Edward P. Wimberly, Ph.D.



Vice President Academic Service and Provost at the Interdenominational Theological Center, gives a fresh outlook in his re-offering of *African American Pastoral Care (Revised Edition)*. "Black pastors use many types of stories-long stories, anecdotes, short sayings, metaphors-to-respond to the needs of their parishioners," says Dr. Edward P. Wimberly. *African American Pastoral Care* is Edward Wimberly's 1991 "sequel" to his 1979 *Pastoral Care in the Black Church*. He continues his important focus on sustaining, healing reconciling, and guiding, while highlighting a new emphasis-pastoral care through narrative. He has revised this Wimberly classic

using his narrative methodology to take a closer look at current issues in African American pastoral care and counseling.

In his introduction and first chapter, Wimberly concisely explains the nature of narrative storytelling in African American pastoral care. In each subsequent chapter, he demonstrates how this model can be used in various counseling issues such as addition, bereavement, life stages, marriage, and family matters. Dr. Wimberly shows pastoral counselors how to care for African Americans through a narrative methodology. By linking personal stories and the pastor's stories to the heart language of the Bible stories, counselors can use God's unfolding drama to bring healing and reconciliation to human lives.

It because pastoral care and counseling facilitate personal agency and efficacy (personal, social, and political empowerment and transformation) that African American pastoral care and counsel-

ing are inherently political processes, contends Wimberly. In this new book, he outlines the theological anthropology that under girds the practices of care and the practices of self as holistic processes. He shows those who engage in pastoral counseling with African Americans how to navigate around the negative self-images, identities, and stories into which they have been recruited in order to liberate themselves to discern how to best make use of their personal and political agency and efficacy.



Drs. Edward Wimberly, Mark Ellingsen and Randall Bailey receive honoraria from Mrs. Adrienne Johnson, National Manager for Multi-Brand Marketing, The Coca-Cola Company

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Margaret Aymer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of New Testament, will deliver the keynote address opening the National Council of Churches (NCC) in Minneapolis, MN, November 10, 2009. Dr. Aymer will also deliver an address to the NCC Women's Luncheon on Nov. 11, 2009 from the theme of the 2011 Horizons Bible Study, tentatively titled *Confessing the Beatitudes*.



Randall C. Bailey, Ph.D., Andrew Mellow Professor of Hebrew Bible at ITC - The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. named Randall C. Bailey as Henry Luce III Fellow in Theology for 2009-2010 based upon the strength of his proposal to conduct creative and innovative theological research in a chosen area of theological inquiry. Dr. Bailey's

research is titled, *A Biblical Model for Promoting Dialogues in Churches among Diverse Theologies*.



Marsha Snulligan Haney, Ph.D. ITC Professor of Missiology and World Religions, was voted Alumna of the Year for 2009 by the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr. Haney is commended for her unique and fruitful work and ministry around the globe. The award will be presented during a two-day Missiology Lecture series, November 11-12, 2009.

Dr. Haney is also invited to the Auburn Faculty Seminar at Auburn Theological Seminary, which is underwritten by the Luce Foundation.

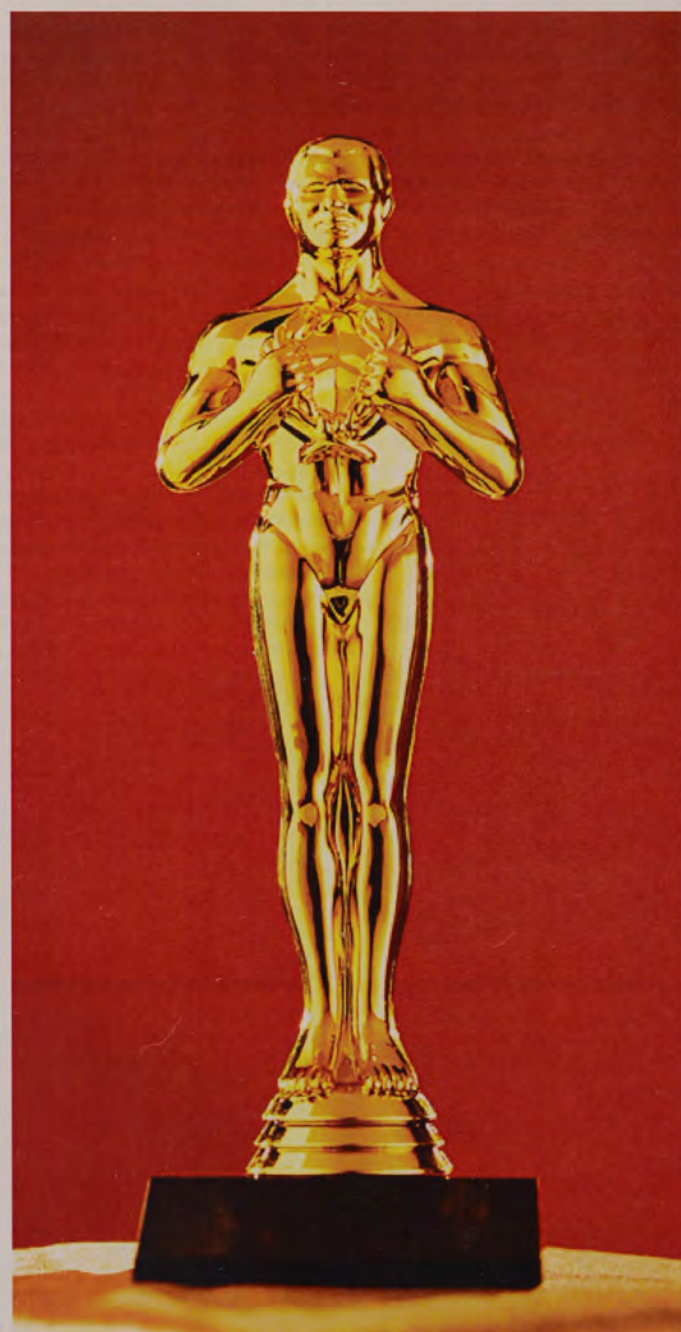
WALLACE S. HARTSFIELD II, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Hebrew Bible at ITC, Dr. Hartsfield will assume the Fred E. Young Chair of Hebrew Bible as Associate Professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary

in Shawnee, Kansas. The faculty chair is named for Central's honored former Academic Dean. Dr. Hartsfield has been an instructor in Hebrew Bible Central for the last two years in addition to his teaching at ITC. He also serves as the Senior Pastor of Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church of Kansas City, MO.

His spouse, Amy Harris Hartsfield, Ph.D., former Program Manager of the Black Women in Church and Society Black Women in Ministerial Leadership Program at ITC, is adjunct in the Urban Core Initiative Program and is the Counselor and Assessment Consultant at Central.



Anne Sreaty Wimberly, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Youth Hopebuilders Academy at ITC - Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has presented the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award to Dr. Anne E. Sreaty Wimberly, who graduated in 1993 with a Master of Theological Studies. The award was presented during the seminary's 152nd commencement service in May 2009.



JOE SAMUEL ANDREWS passed away on Monday, April 6, 2009 at St. Francis Hospital at the age of 65, in Upatoi, GA near Columbus. Funeral services were held on Friday, April 10, 2009 at Metropolitan Baptist Church. The Rev. Jimmy Copeland officiated. The burial with military honors followed at Ft. Benning Cemetery, Ft. Benning, GA.

Rev. Andrews was born February 27, 1944 in Clilo, SC, the son of the late Walter and Margaret McDonough Andrews. Rev. Andrews was a graduate of Troy State University and earned the Master of Divinity degree from Morehouse School of Religion at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Rev. Andrews was pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church for the past 18 years. Other affiliations include his service as president of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. He was retired from the U.S. Army having served 22 years with the rank of Sergeant Major.

WESLEY R. BUFORD – A member of the ITC Board of Trustees for the past five years, the California-based entrepreneur and financial services expert passed suddenly on May 8, 2009. A Celebration of Life for Wesley R. Buford was held on Friday, May 15, 2009 at First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, CA



Mr. Buford is remembered for his product development, management and marketing acumen for global markets. He developed numerous businesses and held partnerships in a variety of venture. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles, was a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, an advocate for Habitat for Humanity, Feed the children Worldwide Outreach, and created YET (Youth Education Town), a program for the National Football League to provide educational and youth training service for after school and summer programs for underprivileged youth in south Central Los Angeles.

CORNELIUS CURTIS CUMMINGS, an alumnus of Turner Theological Seminary at ITC, passed on June 2, 2009. He was eulogized by Bishop James L. Davis, Presiding Prelate of the 9th Episcopal District during a celebration of his life on June 9, 2009. Services were held at St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, Smithfield, Alabama where Rev. Cummings was the pastor for the past thirteen years.



Prior to his matriculation at Turner/ITC, Rev. Cummings was educated in the Everett City School system, then The University of Washington. He played football for the Washington Huskies during the 1978 Rose Bowl and 1979 Sun Bowl before entering seminary.

He answered the call to ministry at Payne Memorial A.M.E. Church in New Orleans, LA and later became pastor of Watergrove and Union Paradise A.M.E. Circuit in Yazoo, Mississippi. Following his transfer to the East Alabama Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District, Rev. Cummings was appointed pastor of St. James A.M.E. and St. John A.M.E. Church in Dothan, Alabama; after which he was appointed pastor of Bryant Chapel A.M.E. Church in Birmingham, and lastly assigned to St. Paul A.M.E. Church.

Pastor Cummings' community affiliations include the Smithfield Ecumenical Association, Greater Birmingham A.M.E. Ministers Alliance, Greater Birmingham Ministries and other faith based initiatives. He was known throughout the community for his exceptional leadership and contributions to the local and connectional A.M.E. Church. He was married to the love of his life, Mrs. Ira Brenda Grover Cummings, for over 25 years.

MARGARET BÉGUIN-NUVEEN – A resident of Geneva, Switzerland passed quietly on April 25, 2009 at the end of a glorious spring day

in Geneva ending a 20-year struggle with cancer, according to her daughter-in-law, Midge Béguin-Austin. A memorial service was held at Emmanuel Church in Geneva on May 27, 2009. Margie is known for having a deep love for education and for theological education in particular. She was a member of the ITC Board of Trustees during the Costen presidency and a generous donor to the institution.

Mr. and Mrs. John Nuveen of Chicago, Illinois, Margie's parents, were responsible for contributing two-thirds of the funding for the construction and furnishing of the dormitory space for the Baptist students at ITC known as Bennett Hall. It is stated on the plaque at the entrance to the building that it was erected in memory of Mr. and Mrs. William Stiles Bennett, by their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Nuveen. Mr. Bennett was a New York Judge, lawyer, assemblyman, and congressman, and a member of the organizing group for the NAACP. The Nuveens dedicated the building in the spring of 1965.

ELLA PEARSON MITCHELL was a renowned Baptist minister, author and expert in Christian education. On November 19, at the age of 91, she died at her home in Atlanta of complications from a stroke. Notable clergy from across the nation as well as members of the administration and staff of ITC participated in the celebration of her life, of love and achievement during the funeral held at Atlanta's historic Ebenezer Baptist Church on November 27, 2009.



Born in Charleston, South Carolina, Ella Pearson Mitchell was the third of four daughters of the late Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Pearson. She completed her secondary school education at Avery Institute and earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama. In addition to her M.A. in Religion from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, she held a Doctor of Ministry from Claremont School of Theology.

The second African-American woman to graduate from Union, Ella Pearson was licensed into the ministry in 1943 by the Church of the Master in New York City, where she served as Minister of Education for two years. She was an instructor in religious education at Berkeley Baptist Divinity School (now American Baptist Seminary of the West), then, taught early childhood education at Fresno State College, 1959 to 1973; in the late 1960s, she was instructor of early childhood education at Compton College and at Santa Monica City College.

In 1974, Dr. Mitchell received the Doctor of Ministry degree from the School of Theology in Claremont, and was ordained at Allen Temple Baptist Church, in Oakland, California and went on to serve as a minister of education at Second Baptist Church, Los Angeles; as associate professor of Christian education and director of continuing education at the Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University in Richmond, VA and as the first female dean of Sisters Chapel at Spelman College, from 1986 to 1988. Dr. Mitchell taught at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, The Claremont School of Theology, LaVerne University, Compton College and Santa Monica City Colleges, and the public schools of Fresno and Claremont, California. In 1983, she was the first woman to preach at the Hampton Ministers' Conference, and Ella and Henry Mitchell team-taught as visiting professors of homiletics at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta from 1988 to 2001. They also taught together as mentors in the Doctor of Ministry Program at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

In 1989, Talladega College conferred upon her the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. In 1994, Ella Mitchell was among the first ten graduates of Union Theological Seminary to receive the institution's Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Award, which honored her for inspiring generations of women, particularly African-American women, to exercise their gifts as preachers and ministers. She and her husband, Dr. Henry Mitchell were honored at the Claremont School of Theol-

ogy as distinguished alumni/ae in 2008. They were also honored at Union at Trailblazers 2008.

In addition to her work as an educator, Ella Mitchell edited *Women: to Preach or Not to Preach* (1991) and five volumes of *Those Preaching Women* (1985, 1988, 1996, 2004, 2008). In 1999, Ella and Henry released their autobiography of their then 55-year marriage, *Together for Good*. In June 2003, they released *Fire in the Well: sermons by Ella P. and Henry H. Mitchell* (Judson).

ALFRED SHACKLEFORD passed in May 2009. He was a 1978 graduate of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary at ITC. Prior to his death, he was an elder in the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church. Rev. Shackleford was ordained an elder in 1988 and served St. Luke's UMC; Goodsell and Sardis UMCs, and St. Thomas and Shady Grove UMCs as an Associate Director. He also served the Connectional Ministries Office, leading the conference in its ministries directed particularly to African American United Methodists.



ULYSSES SAMUEL GRAY passed on May 29, 2009 in Marshall, TX after failing health at the age of 96 years old. A Memorial Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for his life was held on Saturday, June 6, 2009, Ebenezer United Methodist Church in Marshall, TX. Rev. Maggie P. Young officiated and Bishop Bennie D. Warner was the eulogist. He is survived by his daughter and caregiver, Ms. Lady Gray Else and son, Duret C. Gray, many grandchildren, foster children and great grandchildren.



Rev. Gray accepted the call to ministry at the age of eleven and was licensed to preach at 13 years of age. He attended Wiley College, and after two years transferred to attend Clark College and Gammon Theological Seminary concurrently. He worked several jobs to pay his tuition, room and board. He graduated with the Bachelor of Arts degree on June 3, 1947 from Clark College and on May 18, 1948, graduated with the Bachelor of Divinity from Gammon Theological Seminary and was ordained a Deacon and Elder in the Methodist Church.

While in school, he met and married Vivienne Newton Gray in Atlanta, GA on Christmas Eve, 1945. Ulysses and Vivienne went to Liberia, West Africa as United Methodist Missionaries in 1948, one of the first Black couples in Foreign Mission. They were in Liberia at the time of Bishop Willis J. King, who was also a Gammonite, and Bishop Prince A. Taylor.

The couple developed a mission station in Gbarnga, Liberia, called "The Gbarnga Methodist Mission." They adopted two children and fostered over a dozen other Liberian children. Three of the children they fostered became Bishops of the Liberian Annual Conference and one became the Vice President of the country, while others went on to become educators, politicians and doctors.

The Grays stayed and worked in Liberia at the mission for 27 years, retiring only when doctors told Vivienne that she might not survive another bout of malaria. The people of Gbarnga ultimately named a school after the couple and the late president, W.V.S. Tubman, "The Tubman-Gray School." After retiring from the foreign mission field, the Grays moved back to Marshall, Texas and went to work at Wiley College.

Vivienne passed away on November 25, 1988, the day after Thanksgiving. He later married Jewel A. Young who was a retired principal of Carver Elementary School in Marshall. She preceded him in death on September 24, 2003 after 14 years together.

U.S., as Rev. Gray was fondly called, was 95 years old in 2008, at the time of his gifting to ITC's 500 Club, living at his home and as he said, "in his right mind". After seeing the movie, "The Great Debaters" from Wiley College, Lady Gray Else thought ITC might be interested in

hearing about two real-life Black pioneers sent from Gammon Theological Seminary to Africa and their success.

Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones, in the Office of External Affairs, reportedly had a delightful telephone conversation with Rev. Gray in December 2008, who said that he was blind, but had vivid memory and was still committed to education and the work of the Church. His commitment is evidenced by his eagerness to give to the 500 Club, which will be a blessing to other students to hopefully follow in his footsteps of faithfulness to God and Christian leadership.



AWARDS, ENTERTAINMENT AND PRAISE-HIGHLIGHT THE COSTEN AWARDS GALA

From the historical backdrop of first celebrations in the ITC Dining, to moving beyond the campus location to a downtown venue viable for attracting a broader audience with potential for fundraising as well as celebration during the James H. Costen Presidency, the celebration of the founding of Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) has made great progress. The sixth president, Robert Michael Franklin expanded the celebration to include the conferring of awards on persons who exuded the same excellence attributed to his predecessor as well as to the institution itself. Thus, the James H. Costen Tribute to Excellence Award was birthed in 1994 and has each year since found opportunity to rec-

Although the event always generates an atmosphere of excitement, it was never more pronounced, and surprisingly successful than this year. Given the recessed state of national economics and its tightening effects on the purse-strings of every budget from single families, to churches, businesses, non-profits, and corporations – from which hail the constituents, friends and faithful supporters of ITC – many of the same friends rallied to “the call” and made the 2009 gala one of the most successful in its history. “To realize a profit – a primary goal of the event is to raise funds for institutional operations – many thought far-fetched if not impossible in the current economy. However, concerted prayer and hard work are a great recipe for success in

A captive audience of 500 in attendance made the occasion an excellent venue for President Battle to give an annual mini-progress report on the state of the institution, however, the real focus for the evening is always the Costen honorees. Much credit for its success goes to the marvelous professional guidance through the program by the Mistress of Ceremonies and ITC alumna, Rev. Lorraine Jacques-White. It began with four members of the ITC Faculty being presented with an honorarium from Mrs. Adrienne Johnson, The Coca-Cola Company's National Manager for Multi-cultural Marketing, for their exceptional scholarship and publishing books in the current academic year (see page 39).



ognize those who excel and serve as models of achievement to the community while celebrating the progress of the ecumenism that is recognized as a model of faithful cooperation around the globe. The event continually finds itself expanding – adding to the celebration of the vision that created one of the most unique consortia in the world to paying special recognition to individuals selected who are of the same ilk as the fifth president of ITC, James H. Costen. Thus, the former Charter Day celebration evolved into the Charter Day and James H. Costen Awards Dinner, engendering the gathering of persons from all sectors of the local and national community.

any climate,” stated Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones, Senior Director for the Office of External Affairs (OEA). President Michael A. Battle said to the OEA staff, “I received calls and comments from many who said it was one of the best Costen Awards Dinners they had ever attended. Mrs. Jones, the entire External Affairs team, and Ms. Marianne Clarke are to be congratulated for a job well done.” For the past 12 years, Ms. Clarke has been a key participant in the planning of the event, first as a volunteer and then as a Project Consultant, garnering individual and corporate gifts for the Silent Auction and assisting with the promotion of the event through media partnerships.

There are some highpoints that are too priceless to omit. The presenters were eloquent in their pronouncements of the worthiness of each candidate but the responses were pearls of wisdom, humility, and praise and with each award the atmosphere soared into new dimensions of excitement – dare I say it – worship?

Community and Civic Awards honoree, Judge Glenda Hatchett gave the program a rousing kick-off akin to her hard-hitting declarations from the bench. ITC's first Theology (Green Award) recipient was Mrs. Laura Turner Seydel. Her gracefulness and transparency were endearing as she shared

snippets of personal gratitude to her family and friend, Dr. Gerald Durley. A night for a veiled political repartee, ITC's Government Award recipient, Senator Kasim Reed, garnered great applause. In addition to being the youngest senator in the Georgia Legislature and a successful attorney, he is also vying for the office of Mayor of Atlanta in the upcoming election. The introductory accolades for Judge Penny Brown Reynolds were given by Former Governor Roy Barnes, who among his reminiscences about childhood church-going, announced his intent for a repeat performance in the State Capitol, which was applauded as well. The elegantly attired Judge Penny's acceptance sermonette of praise and thanksgiving to God, ITC, her adoring husband, and Mr. Barnes, elevated the event to even higher heights.



whose voice readily exudes the familiar Baptist "tune", punctuated his comments with, "I'm not going to preach, I just wanted you to know that I could, if I wanted to." The evening ended replete with celebration and hallelujahs as Pastor McClurkin gave a well received mini concert.

Our final comment is one of gratitude for the support of ITC's growing constituency of friends and supporters. Your prayers, well-wishes and gifts are foundational to ITC's longevity and sustainability. And, the Charter Day and Costen Awards Dinner continues to build the body of evidence that people of faith can and do have great fun. Psalm 133 says it even better, "How good and pleasant it is for brethren (women and men) to dwell together in unity."



Having a noticeably wonderful time was Arts and Entertainment Awardee, Pastor Donnie McClurkin! An appreciable congeniality preceded McClurkin graciously accepting the award and noting a connection between the oneness of the seminars of the ITC consortia and his new music project "We Are One." He spoke as though taking a text and bringing it to full measure in his praise to God, which spread throughout the ballroom. Religion Award recipient, Dr. Aaron L. Parker, one of the most humble and most academically and spiritually astute theologians of this century, seized the teaching moment to accept the award and return the accolades to the true source of all excellence, The Almighty! The marvelous and appropriate finale was the President's Award, presented by Dr. Battle to Dr. A.C.D. Vaughn,



Save The Date

Charter Day/ Costen Awards
Dinner

Friday, April 30, 2010

ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

1985



Dan Stephenson, M.Div., D.Min. (TTS) is Presiding Elder of the Waycross District for the Georgia Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Savannah, Ga. The district comprises 32 churches in Waycross, Brunswick and Claxton areas of Coastal Georgia. His leadership in the district graduated five students from Georgia and South Carolina as the first graduating class of ITC's M.Div. Distance Learning Program.

1989



Frances Bryant-Lowery, D.Min. (MSR) was Chair of the 54th Annual Conference and Chaplain of the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals. The group awarded her the 2008 Benjamin I. Perry Leadership Award. Dr. Lowery also wrote the Foreword for the book *Check-Mating: Healthy Dating and Relationship Prosperity Series* by Brian K. Cunningham. Dr. Bryant Lowery was also the speaker for the ITC Annual Fall Convocation, September 11, 2008, which signals the beginning of the academic year.

1993



Harold D. Lewis, Sr. M.Div. (GTS) After serving 11 years as the Senior Pastor of Lincoln Park United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, the church that former president George W. Bush and his family attended, has been appointed Director of Black Congregational Development in the Florida Annual Conference. This new initiative implemented by the Annual Conference is designed to coach and consult with Black Congregations in the areas of church growth, church development, and revitalization of declining congregations.

1994



Paula L. McGee, M.Div. (MSR) currently a doctoral student at Claremont Graduate University, received the 2009 Prestigious Fund for Theological Education (FTE) National Fellowship Award that supports gifted African-American scholars preparing to teach. The FTE Dissertation Fellowship is a competitive national award. As an FTE Dissertation Fellow, McGee received a stipend of up to \$18,000 for expenses from The Fund for Theological Education. She also attended the 2009 FTE leadership event June 5-7 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Religion, Social Justice and the Post Civil Rights Era: The 21st Century Challenge.

1995



Bridgette D. Young, M. Div. (GTS) has been appointed Assistant General Secretary of Campus Ministry for The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church in Nashville, TN. Rev. Jones started her new position July 6, 2009. Her prior position was as Assistant Dean of Chapel at Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

1997



Tuere Bowles, Ph.D. has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Adult and Higher Education at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C. Dr. Bowles credentials include the Ph.D. in Adult Education, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; M.Div. in Christian Education, The ITC, and the B.A. in English, Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. She also holds Graduate Certificates in Women's Studies and Qualitative Research.



Candace Lewis, M.Div. (GTS) joins the nationwide effort of the United Methodist Planting Team in Nashville, TN to recruit and support 1,000 persons launching 650 new United Methodist congregations by the end of 2012. Path I is a response to the denomination's new church development goal "New Places for New People". Rev. Lewis is the founding pastor of New Life Community UMC in Jacksonville, FL.

2001



Pamela R. Lightsey, Ph.D., M.Div. (GTS) was promoted March 2009 to Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. In April she was selected by the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to attend the Prospective President's Workshop. Dr. Lightsey has also agreed to serve as an expert witness at what is being called A Truth Commission on Conscience in War being held in November 2009 at the historic Riverside Church in New York City.

2002



Marvin A. Moss, M.Div. (GTS) is pastor of Cascade United Methodist Church in Atlanta was guest on TBN's Praise The Lord program hosted by Dr. Zachery Tims on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. This program is taped at Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) studios in Decatur, Ga and airs internationally.



Lacey Alford, D.Min. (MSR) was elected the first female clergy in the South to serve as Moderator of the American Baptist Churches of the South (ABCOTS), Area III for 2007-2009. This covers the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. She was recently elected Secretary of ABCOTS for the term 2009-2011 with responsibilities covering 16 states and appointed Liaison to the Regional Ministers Council by the ABCOTS Executive Committee.



Vanable H. Moody II, M.Div. (JCS) is founder and Senior Pastor of the Worship Center Christian Church in Birmingham, Alabama and has grown the ministry from 20 members since its founding in 2006 to nearly 4000 members. Also, "Pastor Van" is heard weekdays on Birmingham radio during The Steve Harvey Morning show and the Donnie McClurkin Show on Sunday mornings.



Winifred Monique Byrd, M.Div. (MSR) – The ordination service for Minister Byrd was held March 8, 2009 at the Greater Piney Grove Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA. Dr. William E. Flippen is the pastor and Rev. Dr. T. DeWitt Smith, President of the Progressive National Baptist Convention delivered the ordination sermon.



Ephious Davis, M. Div., (MSR) relocated to Accra, Ghana in October 2008 fulfilling a 10-year dream of moving to Africa to do ministry. Davis intends to create learning opportunities for youth and has launched a non-profit organization to teach students cultural awareness and spirituality. His goal is to bridge the gap and build relationships between Ghanaians and Africans in the Diaspora. Ephious is working on economic development projects including building a school, providing scholarship for students to complete secondary school as school beyond the middle grades requires funding. The scholarships he provides are for secondary and university students. More about his work on the continent go to www.e-3ministries.org.

Additionally, he is also Co-founder of Key Africa Tours and conducts workshops on African history in the Diaspora and cultural awareness help connect the world with Africa and its rich culture. Please feel free to contact Ephious at: ephious@keyafricatours.com.

B.C. Prince, M.Div. (CHM) is Pastor of Emmanuel Church of God in Christ in Plainview, TX. Prince came to the church immediately following graduation from ITC two years ago and has doubled the membership of the multi-racial congregation. Most recently he has created a Young Men of Valor Program, purchased an unused apartment complex in the area, and is renovating the facility to provide a 50-bed group home for displaced male youth ages 12-18 in Plainview and Hale County.



Vanessa Sharp, M.Div., JCSTS has birthed a non-profit organization, LINC Worldwide Outreach Love In the Name of Christ, LINC, Inc. (Love Integrates Nurtures and Cares). It is made possible with underwriting from Higher Hope Christian Ministries and Pastor Larry D. Taylor and a partnership with Shoot the Hoop, Inc., Rev. Jesse Hill. The LINC ministry is establishing a Widowed Women's Empowerment Initiative in Ndiwa, Kenya East Africa ministering to 40 women whose husbands died of AIDS. A second component of the program for 60 plus widowed women is being established in the Lwanda area near Victoria Lake.

Rev. Sharpe's Faith Journey and work in Kenya, are expanded as she received the Acceptance of Admission to attend Akrofi-Christaller Institute, beginning in September 2009 in Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana, West Africa. She will do post-graduate studies to earn the MA in Theology and Missions in preparation for the Dissertation Production 2009-2010, toward the Ph.D. program 2010-2014 with a concentration in African Christianity and Spiritual Commitment, a four-five years program.



Warren D. Wilcox Jr., M. Div., (CHM) was promoted to Central Office Chaplain Supervisor for the New Jersey Department of Corrections in June 2009. This new position requires that he provide oversight and support to all of the state correctional chaplains. Rev. Wilcox is also in the final phase of his candidacy for a Doctor of Ministry degree at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, N.J. His dissertation is focused on Correctional Chaplains' Pastoral Response to the Fatherhood Identity Crisis of Incarcerated Urban Fathers. Rev. Warren may be reached through his email at warren.wilcox@doc.state.nj.us.

CREATING SCHOLARSHIPS A PRIORITY AT ITC ALUMNI SUPPORTING THE 500 CLUB

The critical challenge, for The Interdenominational Theological Center in particular and Historically Black Theological Schools in general, is acquiring new funding resources to underwrite current student needs and costs for innovative academic programs to benefit its students. This also sustain the institution's image of providing a cutting-edge theological academic program that has been a proven ecumenical reality for over 50 years. In today's economic climate, ITC seeks to address the needs of current students while positioning the institution to compete for the best and brightest students seeking quality theological education.

The first consideration is need for scholarship support to defray student costs for the three-year program at ITC. The institution's tuition

is well below its peers while within the marketability of its first-class academic program to the target population that it serves. The total cost to earn the three-year Masters Degree is approximately \$70,000.00. However, far too many of ITC's students require financial aid to support their matriculation. Although ITC's tuition is lower than many of its competitors, its capacity to offer scholarship support is also lower.

Reportedly, among Master of Divinity students, African Americans borrow more than Whites. Specifically, an average theological debt for an ITC graduate can amount to as much as \$61,500 for those who borrow. In today's economy, these numbers are growing.

As an academy that touts being "student-

centered and faculty driven," a primary focus for the administration and its fundraising goals is scholarship support that will address the critical needs to attract bright, highly motivated new students; and, reduce average student debt by providing higher levels of scholarship support.

Along this line, Dr. Chestina Mitchell Archibald, a 1985 graduate of ITC, has been working with the Office of External Affairs in a campaign to establish a \$500,000.00 Endowed Perpetual Scholarship Fund. The strategy is to garner the support of ITC alumni – asking that 500 of the more than 5000 alumni give \$1,000.00 to the effort dubbed as *The 500 Club*. The fund will benefit students across denominational affiliation, holding true to ITC's ten-year Strategic Plan and

the goals that are exemplary of "Ecumenism in Action."

The 500 Club Brochure was mailed to alumni in June 2009 and sparked a new wave of support, while Dr. Archibald was hard at work, calling alumni, soliciting support, and passing on names for follow-through to External Affairs. Gold name plates from the first group of contributors were recently installed on The 500 Club Wall of Fame in the Atrium of the ITC Chapel as a lasting memorial to their support. The Wall of Fame display names like 96 year old Ulysses Gray, a Gammon graduate prior to the groundbreaking for ITC on its current campus, but one with a love and loyalty to Gammon that engenders his connection to the academic enterprise, ITC. The current list of contributors includes:

Rev. Chestina Archibald
Lt. Ammie Miller
Rev. Ulysses Gray
Bishop Martin Johnson
Rev. Dr. Lonnie Oliver
Rev. Taylor Johnson
Rt. Rev. Adam Richardson
Dr. Oswald P. Bronson
Rev. Russell McReynolds
Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Mitchum
Ambassador Charles Stith
Bishop Melvin Talbert
Dr. William Watley
Rev. Defarris Gooden
Chaplain Diana James
Ms. Elsie Cyrus
Rev. Charles Cottenmond
Rev. Olujimi Brown
Rev. Melvin Amerson
Elder Oliver Gordon
Rev. Julius Kidd
Rev. Gina Stewart
Rev. Jacqueline Wellington-Moore
Dr. Michael A. Battle, ITC President
Dr. Richmond Stoglin
Rev. Asha Bell, Class of 1998
Dr. Derrick Rhodes

Still shy of its 500 alumni goal, Dr. Archibald and the EOA staff have received requests from alumni for an extension from the originally slated end date of June 30, 2009 and continue to accept monthly installments to reach the \$1000 membership goal. Alumni and friends with interest in supporting the scholarship campaign are welcome to join The 500 Club!!

For more information about The 500 Club or other giving opportunities, please call the Office of External Affairs, 404-527-7718 or go to the ITC website and click the **Donate Now** button for a variety of ways that you may contribute to ITC.



Rev. Chestina Archibald



Add your name today!

"FRIEND RAISERS" HARVEST NEW DONORS

For the third consecutive year, the receptions hosted by ITC supporters in their homes are proving an excellent strategy for garnering new friends and additional dollars for the institution. Two recent events sponsored by members of the President's Advisory Council are great examples of the tremendous fellowship opportunities found in these activities while building networking potential and bringing in new monies.

April 28, 2009, Dr. Sol Hicks seized the opportunity to raise funds for the Sol Hicks Endowed Scholarship for Ministerial Excellence, inviting friends from across the nation to see his newly constructed home. Instead of gifts for the home, as would be expected for the Hick's Housewarming in Acworth, GA, Dr. Sol and Mrs. Carole Hicks requested a gift to the scholarship fund.

Rev. Adrienne Johnson and husband Mr. Joseph Johnson, Esq., also entertained guests in their home in Fayetteville, GA, July 16, 2009, soliciting financial support for ITC as an entrée to an informative talk by President Michael A. Battle. New friends and new gifts and pledges followed. In addition, there was expressed interest in the seminary's academic programs that led to the recruitment of three new students to the ITC Certificate of Theology Program.

Indeed, a member of the External Affairs team, was correct in coining the events as "Friend Raisers".



Above: Dr. Sol Hicks with daughter, Cynthia Dantzler, wife Carole and daughter Melissa.
Bottom Row: Dr. Michael Battle, wife Linda with hosts, Rev. Adrienne Johnson and husband, Attorney Joseph Johnson.
Mrs. Deloris Epps and husband Mr. Craig Epps making contribution to ITC.

A view of the Hicks Estate at night.

13TH ANNUAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM GRADUATION CELEBRATED MAY 1, 2009

-Susie Caswell



The "Light at the end of the tunnel" shined brightly for the graduates who converged upon the ITC campus to receive the Certificate in Theology at the Graduation Exercises on Friday, May 1, 2009. A host of family members, friends, pastors, and mentors filled the ITC Chapel and looked on with pride as the procession began.

From the moment that Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones stepped to the podium convoking this event and declaring – "Today is the day that the Lord has made;" the rejoicing and celebrating commenced. Dr. Battle set the tone of the program with an informatively delightful introduction of the guest speaker, Georgia Department of Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond. A prominent attorney, author, lecturer and public servant, Commissioner Thurmond holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy and religion from Paine College and a juris doctorate from the University of the South Carolina School of Law. The Commissioner delivered a rousing motivational speech with injections of humor and sincerity as he recounted small pieces of his life and Christian background. Praising each graduate for being the one in a million who demonstrated that "through faith and hard work, all things are possible," he offered reassurance that in spite of these depressed economic times; "God is still in the blessing business." Referencing Matthew 18:12, the graduates were urged to live the sermons they preach and hear, not only in the churches and com-

munities, but most importantly, in their homes where children need role models and uplifting words of encouragement. In an action that surprised and delighted the audience, Commissioner Thurmond announced his decision to enroll in the Certificate Program and brought closure to his message declaring, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found and I'll be coming to ITC!" Amen!

The popular gospel tune, "Victory is Mine," sung by the Choir of the Whosoever Will Community Christian Church and the J.A. Milner Ensemble of Atlanta, GA, appropriately expressed the sentiments of the 47 members of the Class of 2009 who juggled family commitments, cleric responsibilities and professional obligations to receive theological training at study sites that included the ITC campus in Atlanta, GA; Metrolina Extension Center in Charlotte, NC; Bethlehem Baptist Church in Columbia, SC; Solomon's Porch Cathedral of Christ in Crescent City, FL; Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia, PA, and Beulah Grove Baptist Church in Augusta, GA. Moving to the Costen Center Atrium, the celebration continued with dining, fellowship, testimonials and special greetings from renowned scholar, preacher and retired ITC Professor of Homiletics, Dr. Henry H. Mitchell and ITC Professor of Missiology and World Religions, Dr. Marsha Snuligan Haney. Both provide recorded lecture materials for the

program courses and the graduates were excited to be able to meet them for the first time.

The Office of Continuing Education and Certificate Programs is managed by Ms. Susie Caswell who attributes much of the growth and success of the program to the dynamic leadership of the president, Dr. Michael Battle; the copious support and guidance of Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones, Senior Director of External Affairs; and the innovative marketing and promotional strategies that Ms. Caswell has successfully implemented to increase awareness about one of ITC's well kept secrets. Boasting nearly 2,000 graduates, the program continues to thrive; drawing students from diverse ecumenical, educational and professional backgrounds, and is offered in 14 cities in the United States and Japan. The latest initiative - the "Awakened in the Night" Series – allows interested persons to get a glimpse of the program by attending a FREE Class Session in areas of homiletics, biblical studies, and pastoral care and counseling.

For details about the free study sessions, a complete listing of current study sites, to find out how you may host a certificate program study site or to enroll in an existing program, log on to the website at www.itc.edu or call Ms. Caswell at (404) 527-7766 or email scaswell@itc.edu.

GRANTS AND GIFTS

The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta Grants to Green Initiative - Through Grants to Green funding, non-profits are eligible to receive grant awards to make changes in the environment that make them become more sustainable. The foundation awarded \$50,000 to ITC to assist the Center in its TheoEcology efforts, specifically to improve environmental efficiencies by replacing the cooling tower and placing a water meter on the cooling system for more efficient energy consumption.

Estate of Dr. Mance C. Jackson Jr. - Former professor of Church Administration at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), Rev. Dr. Mance Jackson bequeathed \$38,105.05 to ITC. The gift represented a portion of Dr. Jackson's estate dispersed through the Christian Methodist Church (CME) Retirement Trust.

Estate of William T. Osborne - The Center is the beneficiary of \$139,453.27 to create the Esther Osborne African American Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded in increments of \$1,000 annually to deserving ITC students meeting the established criteria.

Turner Foundation, Inc. - The foundation is a supporter of the institution's TheoEcology initiative and awarded \$10,000 for "green renovation" of the ITC Chapel Atrium and Music Room in the classroom building.

ITC Receives \$1,000.00 Gift from Peach State Commanders - During a special presentation ceremony at the 56th Reunion of the Georgia Council of Deliberation and 46th Annual Georgia State Grand Assembly Order of the Golden Circle Banquet, S.G.I.G. Primis T. James and the Honorable James W. Johnson presented a check of \$1,000.00 to Mrs. Jane Jelks Jones, ITC's Senior Director of External Affairs, to support student scholarship funding at ITC. The Center was selected from names of several organizations submitted for consideration to receive the annual gift from the Peach State Commanders of the Rite 33rd degree, a Georgia affiliate of the organization that boasts numerous division memberships throughout the southeast.

THE WOMANIST SCHOLARS PROGRAM BEGINS ITS ELEVENTH YEAR OF SCHOLARS-IN-RESIDENCE ON THE ITC CAMPUS

The Womanist Scholars Program (WSP) is an integral component of the Office of Black Women in Church and Society (BWCS) at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). It is a national/international program to assist Womanist scholars in researching and publishing in the area of Black women, religion, and spirituality. Rev. Jacquelyn Grant, Ph.D., founder of both BWCS and WSP says, "The Womanist Scholars Program provides affirming, creative, intellectual opportunity for Womanist scholars to engage in scholarship that will impact the academy, the church, and the global community."

The Womanist Scholars Program brings two Black female scholars (annually), as Scholars-in-residence to the ITC. Each scholar teaches a course and delivers a public lecture in her area of research, and is awarded a stipend of \$37,500. The program has attracted and is still attracting noted scholars from various disciplines and from across the United States and the world.

Our most recent scholars were both products of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Womanist scholars for 2008-2009 were Dr. Sharon J. Willis, composer, musician, teacher, and Music Department Chair at Clark Atlanta University, and Dr. Melanie Harris, Ethicist and Ecologist from Texas Christian University. These scholars addressed areas of concern and discussion that were on the minds of many.

Dr. Willis is Founder and Director of Americolor Opera Alliance, and has composed and premiered ten operas to date: The Opera Singer, The Herndons, LaRoche, The Candles of Callan, The Great Divide, Pink Lady, Madam C. J., The Seduction of King Solomon, 3kings and a PRINCE, and Carmen J. Her organ suite, We Shall Overcome, published by Vivace Press, has been performed by concert organists throughout the United States. Dr. Willis has committed herself to the presentation of African American history through her one-woman shows that tell our history through countless stories. One of the end products of her time at the ITC is a Hymnal featuring Hymns, Prayers, and Litanies by African American women. Look for it in the very near future. Dr. Willis is included in the exhibit of Georgia Classical Composers at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon Georgia.

Dr. Willis' class and her lecture explored African American Women

and Music over the last 100 years. Both the class and her public lecture opened the eyes and minds of many to the ways we can be stigmatized by the stereotypical images presented of people, and particularly of women. Dr. Willis premiered a play, Rev Sistuh, to packed audiences which included ITC students and professors as well as local church congregations, and pastors/ministers. This play dealt with the plight of "Women in Ministry" in particular, while treating women in other professions as well.

Dr. Melanie Harris is Assistant Professor of Religion and Ethics at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth Texas. She is a graduate of Spelman College with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Sacred Music. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Iliff School of Theology and her Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Union Theological Seminary in New York. She is a former journalist who has worked as a television news producer and news writer for such stations as WSB-TV, an ABC affiliate in Atlanta and KCNC-TV, an NBC and later CBS affiliate in Denver, Colorado. Dr Harris is the author of several articles including "Womanist Humanism: A Hermeneutic," in *Deeper Shades of Purple: Charting Twenty Years of Womanist Approaches in Religion and Society*, and "Saving the Womanist Self: Womanist Soteriology and the Gospel of Mary" in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*. She is also an ordained minister in the AME Church and combines her gifts of preaching, scholarship and music with her identity as a Womanist activist-scholar.

Dr. Harris' class as well as her lecture, ECOWOMANISM: Womanist Prospective, Earth Justice, evoked powerful responses and discussions on the ITC campus. Her work connected well with the continuing work of ITC's Theo-Ecology program. She, as other women theologians have done, examined links between oppressions suffered by women across the globe and oppressions suffered by the earth.

The scholars for 2009-2010 are: Dr. Marjorie Angela Lewis of the United Theological College of the West Indies. Her area of specialty is Pastoral care and Counseling; and Dr. Dorothy Smith-Ruiz of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her area of specialty is Sociology-The Black Family/Intergenerational Households.

Look for more about the 2009-2010 Scholars in the next *Lantern*.

FAITH JOURNEY: PARTNERSHIP IN PARISH MINISTRY FORMATION THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

On Sunday April 17, 2009 thirty young persons graduated from the Faith Journey program with hopes and dreams of beginning to fulfill their call to ministry. One month later, on Sunday, May 31, 2009 new mentees were inducted into the Faith Journey program and embarked upon a one year opportunity designed to produce excellence in parish ministry. The ultimate goal of the Faith Journey program is to produce excellence in parish ministry through the use of formation interventions to assist pastors to remain in parish ministry. This goal is actualized through two interventions called (1) nurturing/educational goals and (2) mentoring goals.

Faith Journey offers nurture/ education through four Modules;

1. Disciplines that contribute to theological and ethical thinking;
2. Problems and Issues that Impact the Human Spirit
3. Experiences that foster emotional, spiritual, and relational intelligences; and
4. Practical skills and gifts development for parish Ministry

These core modules are completed through four week-end Quarterly Cluster meetings while mentoring is an ongoing process through the course of the year and beyond.

The learner in the Faith Journey program is called the mentee and the experienced person is the mentor. The concept of mentoring is not new; the Bible is filled with examples of the mentoring process. Jesus Christ was the master mentor. He called twelve men as disciples and mentored them through demonstration when he said "follow me." At the point when both Jesus

and the disciples were prepared, Jesus said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Another great mentor-mentee relationship is that of Naomi and Ruth. Ruth left her people and her god and followed Naomi and said "Do not press me to leave you or turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). To be a mentor is to teach by example. To be mentored is to follow or imitate the mentor.

Mentoring has made a difference in the lives of many persons who have matriculated through this program. Mentoring-- from the Greek word means enduring and is defined as a sustained relationship between a less experienced and a more experienced person. The goal of mentoring is to establish one-on-one mentee-mentor close, caring and supportive relationships. Through continued involvement, the mentor offers support, guidance, and assistance as the less experienced faces new challenge or goes through a new or difficult period.

The mentee may select their own mentor with the approval of the program or the program may assign a mentor. The advantage for allowing mentees to choose their own mentor is that they are more willing to take their advice and guidance seriously. As an example, one of the mentees in the class of 2009 was assigned a cross racial appointment to a dying inner city (Caucasian) congregation in Montgomery, Alabama. He asked for a mentor with cross racial experience. Rev. Jonathan Holston agreed to mentor Paul. Paul has completed his first year at this downtown United Methodist Church with excellence.

He is embraced by his congregants and the governor is a participant in his Wednesday noon Bible Study. Our desire is for the mentor to remain with the mentee for a life-time. Rev. Holston has agreed to be available to Paul.

Faith Journey has a bank of mentors who are Bishops, Pastors and judicatory officers. Annually, these persons meet with the leadership team of Faith Journey for a mentor colloquy session. The advantage of having a bank of mentors is, if one mentor needs to resign another can be easily accessed. We are also developing a group of persons who are not assigned to mentors. These persons are called Companions on the Journey. They are/will be trained and can provide mentorship any place they desire.

Our mentors for the graduating class of 2009 were: Reverend Jonathan Holston, Dr. Willie Coleman, Dr. Willie Goodman, Rev. Kathi Chavous, Rev. Yvette Massey, Rev. C. Hall, Rev. Binita Miles, Dr. Percy Johnson, Dr. Marvin Thomas, Dr. Gwendolyn Mosley, Rev. Keith Wilks, Rev. Amanda Kelly, Dr. Quintin Robertson, Rev. Gregory Eason, Dr. Betty Jones, Elder John Watts, and Rev. Dr. Lugenia Johnson, Rev. Hulon Kemp, Minister Sarah Poole, Dr. Phillip Dunston, Minister Derrek Lee, Rev. Damian Rice, Minister Pamela Perkins, Rev. Lauren Ellis, Dr. Rosa Baxter, Dr. Lisa Rhodes, Rev. J. Nagbe, and Rev. Joel Sejour.

The overall intent is for the mentors to provide the kind of support and guidance that will result in the mentees' reflection on their vocational direction, considering and discerning ways of approaching life and ministry challenges, and developing knowledge, attitudes, and skills conducive to excellent parish ministry in the 21st century.



THE YOUTH HOPE-BUILDERS ACADEMY: FOCUS ON CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP



The spring and summer of 2009 blossomed with Youth Hope-Builders Academy (YHBA) activities highlighting Christian leadership development of youth. A spring event, the 16th Youth and Family Convocation, was held at Ben Hill United Methodist Church the evening of February 27 and at Friendship Community Church in College Park all-day February 28, 2009. Based on the theme, "Out of the Box: Seeing and Serving God's People," the event drew nearly a thousand people over the two days and highlighted commitment to community service as an essential way of exercising Christian leadership.

We were reminded by Dr. Edward Wimberly, ITC Provost and Academic Dean, in the event's opening invocation that we are called to Christian leadership that responds to the "light" that God plants in us and that must shine before others. Throughout the convocation, a unified message was conveyed by the presenters that Christian leadership is far more than directing something or someone or setting an agenda for action. At its core, Christian leadership is dedicated, passionate, humble service that follows the example of Jesus and inspires others to do the same. It is seeing beyond our own situations, background, community, race, and age to serve the needs of others. Presenters included Norvell C. Coots, M.D., Commander of the Walter Reed Health Care System in Washington, DC; Mrs. Elizabeth Omilami, Executive Director of Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless; Ms. Nikki Thornton, Program Manager of Big Brothers and Big Sisters; Mrs. Marcia Brown and Mr. Ian Houston of Hands On Atlanta, and a host of workshop leaders.

A two-week YHBA residential program in June 2009, based at The Lodge at Simpsonwood in Norcross, Georgia, continued the emphasis on developing and exercising Christian leadership. Twenty-eight high school youth in the 2009 class engaged in community service at the City of Refuge in Atlanta and with senior adults at the Asbury Harris Epworth Towers also in Atlanta. ITC hosted the academy's third week of special activities. The hope-builders, led by fourteen adult leaders/

chaperones, embarked upon a special mission intensive called TAPS (Teens and Pre-teens) mentoring initiative. The purpose was to continue the high school youths' development as hope-building leaders by their embracing responsibility for modeling Christian character for middle school youth and helping guide the pre-teens' Christian formation. The intensive was also to prepare the high school teens to be mentors who continue the mentoring process over their year in the academy. Each high school youth was paired with a specially selected middle school youth and began practicing the art of being mentor and mentee. Together, the YHBA leaders, teens and pre-teens formed clusters to carry out community service at the Imhotep Academy, Clark Atlanta University, the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church soup kitchen, and the Central United Methodist Church Sunday school rooms.

In addition to the service dimension, the 2009 summer program highlighted Christian leadership formation through worship experiences led by the youth; music and arts activities; youth issues, identity and vocation exploration classes, immersion in church and community issues and forms of leadership led by guest speakers; video-conferencing at Clark-Atlanta University with youth in South Africa and Ghana; small group mentoring experiences; "village" formation activities with parents and family members; and talent shows.

The YHBA is in its seventh year of promoting Black youths' formation of a valued ethnic-cultural and Christian identity, their theological understanding and practices of the Christian lifestyle, and movement toward hope-building Christian vocation according to their gifts and interests. The program is funded in part by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The YHBA executive staff include: Dr. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, Director; Minister Pamela Perkins, Executive Administrative Assistant and ITC student; Rev. Casina Washington, Program Associate and ITC graduate; and Minister Sarah Poole, Program Associate and Ph.D. student at Candler School of Theology.

SEMINARY UPDATES

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Dr. Walter McKelvey, President-Dean

126th Observance of Founding

Gammon Theological Seminary celebrated one hundred and twenty-six years of service to the church and community, October 6-8, 2009. This year's theme: "Embracing Change: Raising New Leaders," was promoted through the dynamic voices of Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr., of the Holston Annual Conference; Rev. Dr. Frederick Outlaw of Bay Minette, Alabama; Rev. Candace Lewis of Jacksonville, Florida; Ms. Garlinda Burton of Nashville, Tennessee, and Rev. James Anyike of Indianapolis, Indiana. Rev. Dr. Frederick Outlaw was the Speaker for the Founders' Day Worship Service on Tuesday, October 6, 2009 and Bishop Swanson was the featured speaker for our Founders' Day Banquet on Tuesday evening at the Marriott/Airport. We were graced with two powerful and challenging lecturers for the Thirkeld-Jones Lecture Series – Reverend Candace Lewis and Ms. Garlinda Burton; and Rev. James Anyike was the Preacher for our Closing Worship Service on Thursday, October 8, 2009.

This year, for the first time, dinner and discussion with the "Ebony Bishops" of The United Methodist church was held on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the ITC Dining Hall. "Ebony Night" was an opportune time for students, pastors, and alumni to interact through an open forum with our "Ebony Bishops" discussing the status of the Church in the context of the world community.

AAMHC

The African-American Methodist Heritage Center held its event, October 2-5, 2009, in collaboration with Gammon's 126th Founders' Day Celebration. AAMHC's theme was "Journey Forward: History As A Bridge," which focused on the importance of preserving our history, our story, our roots in methodism. Dr. J. Gordon Melton, author of "Will To Choose" was the keynote speaker addressing students and other participants in a special presentation on Monday, October 5, 2009 in the Gammon Chapel followed by a brief reception.

Youth Harambee 2009

"Harambee" is a Swahili word which means: "Let's pull together." Sponsored by the SEJ-BMCR of The United Methodist Church, this year Gammon (along with the ITC community – ITC, Turner Theological Seminary, Phillips School of Religion; Clark/Atlanta University and Central United Methodist Church) hosted about 400 youths between

the ages of 12-18, June 24-28, 2009. It was a week filled with speakers and workshop leaders exhorting students in spiritual expressions of praise, worship, and dance; workshops emphasizing Christian discipleship and commitment; religious growth and development; and great food, fun, and fellowship for all participants. An annual event, this youth conference helps to develop spiritual, leadership, and interpersonal skills as well as bridging generational gaps – and, pulling together in Christian-love.

Immediate and Long-Range Plans

The Gammon Board of Trustees chaired by Bishop Melvin A. Talbert (retired – Nashville) met in retreat for the Spring meeting at Simpsonwood Retreat Center, Norcross, Georgia, March 8-10, 2009. Mary R. Berlin of Berlin & Company was the enlisted strategist for the session. Thirty-one Board members and six staffers were in attendance.

The major work focused on three areas: 1) Rewriting mission statement and establishment of vision statement; 2) Development of new and innovative ways of increasing and sustaining enrollment; and 3) Designing, initiating and developing strategies for raising funds for current operational support and endowment.

The current stated mission statement: "The mission of Gammon Theological Seminary, a historically African American institution, in partnership with ITC is to recruit, support, and educate pastors and leaders for the United Methodist Church" was discussed and unchanged. The developed vision statement is: "To educate and equip persons called by God, to be prophetic leaders for the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The Board determined that there is need for an office for Institutional Development/Advancement. It was determined that by the end of Fiscal Year 2010 (June 30), there should be in place a staffed person. A committee is currently at work in an effort to make this goal a reality.

MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

CELEBRATING THE PAST AND THE BEST THAT IS YET TO COME!

Rev. Charles Lomax, President
MSR, Baptist Student Fellowship

In fanfare almost matching the prestige of the name it bears, the Morehouse School of Religion observed its 142nd Founders' Day Celebration and the 64th C.D. Hubert Lecture Series, February 10 - 12, 2009, at the historic Friendship Baptist Church located in downtown Atlanta. The recently elected Pastor of the iconic church, the Reverend Dr. Timothy T. Boddie, and the Friendship family spared no expense in rolling out the proverbial red carpet and ensuring that the delegation from ITC's Baptist Fellowship had all of its needs met. Embracing this year's theme, "The Lord is my Shepherd," participants flocked from far and near to share in the commemoration of this instrumental institution of instruction.



One of the four founding constituencies of the Interdenominational Theological Center and the oldest of the seminaries, the Morehouse School of Religion has a rich and prominent legacy. Originally known as the Augusta Institute, the Morehouse School of Religion was organized in the Springfield Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia, in the winter of 1867. Since that time, it has been dedicated to the theological instruction of men and women dedicated to preaching



and professing the goodness of God. One hundred forty-two years later, we paused on this platform of promise to honor our humble beginnings and celebrate where God is yet leading us.

This year's festivities incorporated the involvement of both alumni and current Morehouse students. Whether called upon to officiate, pray, read scripture or introduce the preacher, all were excited to contribute to the cause in the spirit of servant-hood. Even those who had no direct part to play on program made certain that the pews were filled each day. On account of this attitude of enthusiasm and involvement, this Founders' Celebration exceeded any within recent history.

One of the highlights of this year's Founders' Week was the preaching personalities selected to share and deliver a Word from the Lord. The first preacher out of the gate was the Reverend Dr. Marcus D. Cosby, Pastor of the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. Dr. Cosby elevated not only the consciousness of those who gathered in the crowded congregation, but he also raised the bar for those who would have to follow him. Later that afternoon, the Morehouse School of Religion Student Fellowship conducted their worship service where the then Student Fellowship President, Reverend Charles F. Lomax Jr., was the preacher of the hour. Culminating the day, the Reverend Dr. A. B. Sutton, Pastor of the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, sent everyone home full, having been spiritually fed.

The following day picked up where the previous left off. The morning began with a workshop entitled "Building and Growing a Ministry & Education Based Church". The Reverend Dr. Travis Harris, who Pastors the Zion Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia, was the presenter for that session. Immediately following the workshop was the morning worship service that afforded those in attendance to hear Reverend Dr. Joel Gregory, Founder and President of Joel Gregory Ministries of Ft. Worth, Texas, as he exegeted the text to perfection.

That evening led to an interesting turn of events. As people packed into the sanctuary to hear the Reverend Dr. Ralph Douglas West, they were disappointed to learn that his plane was unable to leave Texas due to bad weather, and as a result he would not be in attendance. As he approached the microphone in the place of Dr. West, Dr. A. B. Sutton, in an attempt to appease those who were expecting Dr. West, sang an amazing rendition of I Won't Complain. His attempt was successful. As he had done the previous night, Dr. Sutton wrecked the house yet again, sending everyone home full.

The final day of celebration began with another workshop. This session was entitled "A Stimulus Package for the Church" and it was facilitated by the Reverend Dr. Amanda Cunningham Ducksworth, a 2001 graduate

of the Morehouse School of Religion and Pastor of the Columbus Fellowship Church in Columbus, Mississippi. The celebration concluded with the final morning worship service where the guest lecturer, Dr. Gregory, preached with power and conviction.

In addition to the powerful preaching, there was excellent singing that took place during the week as well. The congregation joined in melodic harmony in singing some of the great hymns of the church. The Clark Atlanta University Philharmonic Society Choir under the direction of Mr. Glynn Halsey, the Morehouse School of Religion Praise Ensemble under the direction of Reverend Willie Nelson III., the Dixie Hills First Baptist Church Choir and Rev. Lonnie Weaver and Genesis also rendered selections during the Founders' Week Celebration.

As the Morehouse School of Religion continues to march on, we focus our attention not only on where we've been but where we are in the process of going. For 142 years, God has sustained and provided not only for the institution itself, but for the Baptist men and women who gladly bear the banner of the Morehouse School of Religion at The ITC. The Morehouse School of Religion has produced some of the greatest preachers, teachers, scholars and theologians to have ever matriculated through the Interdenominational Theological Center and the best is yet to come.

Turner Theological Seminary

Dr. John F. Green, President-Dean

Turner Introduces the Isaac Rufus Clark, Sr. Pastors and Music Conference

During the observance of the Turner Theological Seminary 115th Founders' Week at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), the inaugural Isaac Rufus Clark Sr. Pastors and Music Conference was introduced. The Isaac R. Clark Sr. Conference is an institute for pastors and church leaders that focuses on the methodology of preaching and the fundamentals of sermon preparation as a unique art of effectively communicating God's Word to God's people with relevant and practical meaning for daily living. Dr. Clark, who was a renowned scholar and professor of homiletics and preaching at the ITC for 27 years, taught this method.

In addition to lectures on preaching by Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, a professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia, and Dr. Wallace Hartsfield, a professor in Hebrew Bible and Preaching at ITC; workshops on Worship and Music in the Black Church Tradition were given by Dr. James

Abington, a professor in Music Theory at Emory University and Dr. Rosalie Hill, retired administrator at Florida A&M University and an accomplished church musician in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Dr. Abington's workshop on Hymnology affirmed the importance of singing hymns in the Black Church tradition, as well as invoked a greater appreciation for hymn singing in worship.

The conference featured outstanding preaching by Bishop John Richard Bryant, Presiding Prelate of the 4th Episcopal District and Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson Jr., Presiding Prelate of the 2nd Episcopal District of the AME Church, Dr. William Watley, Pastor of St. James AME Church in Newark, New Jersey; Dr. Wallace Hartsfield and Rev. Reginald Jackson, Pastor of St. Matthew AME Church in Orange, New Jersey.

As plans are underway for the second Isaac Rufus Clark Sr. Pastors and Music Conference, which is scheduled for February 1-4, 2010, President-Dean Dr. John F. Green anticipates a greater experience of enlightenment through preaching and teaching.

For those who were privileged to be taught by Dr. Clark while students at ITC, the conference is a serious reminder of the genius of Dr. Clark in developing the art of "black preaching."

In honor of his legacy and the impact Dr. Isaac Rufus Clark Sr. has had upon the voices of the Black Church, all "Clarkites" are invited to join the Turner family in remembering the man who said, "If you ain't got no proposition, you ain't got no sermon neither."

ITC/Turner Theological Seminary Participates in the Continuing Education Ministry of the Eleventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

ITC/Turner and the Eleventh Episcopal District form Continuing Education Partnership

During the months of June and July, 2009, the ITC and Turner Theological Seminary, in a joint venture with the Eleventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop McKinley Young, Presiding Prelate and ITC/Turner Theological Seminary trustee board member, participated in a series of continuing education workshops across the state of Florida.

Two of the renowned scholars and lecturers of ITC, Dr. Lisa Allen and Dr. Riggins Earl, presented these workshops. Presentations on Worship in the Black Church Tradition were given by Dr. Lisa Allen across the state of Florida. Comments from participants indicated, "Dr. Allen's presentations were filled with intellectual knowledge, personal



experience, spiritual fervor and a fresh anointing."

In addition to Dr. Allen's presentations, Dr. Riggins Earl provided a workshop on Ethics at the 2009 Christian Education Congress for the Eleventh Episcopal District in Orlando, Florida. Those in attendance were in awe of "Dr. Earl's extraordinary knowledge, relevant and practical teaching, as well as his dynamic personal style of delivery."

As a result of the Continuing Education Program in the Eleventh Episcopal District of the AME Church, approximately 600 participants will receive Continuing Education Certificates in ministry from the ITC/Turner Theological Seminary.

Phillips School of Theology at ITC

Dr. Marvin Frank Thomas, Sr., President-Dean

"The Seminary of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church"



chapel on three different occasions, Phillips' Communion Chapel, The Annual Founders' Day, and the Distinguished Preachers Series. The preachers for these services were members of the College of Bishops of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Paul A. G. Stewart, Sr., the Presiding Prelate of the Third Episcopal District and

The 2008-2009 Academic year was an exciting one for the Phillips School of Theology family. A great deal of this excitement stems from the fact that during the year, Phillips had the opportunity to provide leadership in

the Chair of Phillips' Board of Trustees was the preacher for the Communion Chapel service. Bishop Thomas L. Brown, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Fourth Episcopal District and the immediate past President-Dean of Phillips School of Theology, served as the preacher for the Sixty-Fifth Founders' Day Observance. The person serving as the 2009 Distinguished Preacher for Phillips School of Theology and the Interdenominational Theological Center was Bishop Othal H. Lakey. Bishop Lakey serves as the Presiding Prelate of the Sixth Episcopal District and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of Phillips School of Theology. In addition, it was exciting for Phillips students to participate in chapel, hear these distinguished leaders of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and to fellowship with them after the chapel experience in the Phillips-Hollowell Building.

The 2009 Seniors' Seminar, Senior Banquet, and the Dean's Retreat were experiences and events that also contributed to the excitement for the Phillips' family. The members of the 2009 graduating class presented the Second Annual Seniors' Seminar in April of this year. The theme for the seminar was "Theology in Focus." The following seniors presented reflections papers on selected topics: Jamie Capers(God); Doris Hicks(Christology); Willie Bell(Pneumatology); Cornelius Neal(Grace);

and Irvin Wright (Eschatology). The Annual Senior Banquet was held on Friday evening, May 2, 2009 at the West Mitchell Street Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Among the highlights of the banquet were the challenging message preached by Bishop Stewart and the recognition of the ITC faculty member, Dr. Lisa Allen as the 2009 Dean Thomas L. Brown, Sr. Leadership Award recipient. The Dean's Retreat was led by the Reverend Warren Lesane, Jr., Associate Presbyter for Church Development, Presbytery of Charlotte. Reverend Lesane presented a workshop centered on the theme; "Developing Visionary Leaders and Building Healthy Churches/Congregations: A Governing Body Perspective."

The Annual Pastors' Conference was again a huge success. More than 800 pastors, ministers, and laypersons from primarily the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church registered for the conference, which was held this past January at the Sheraton Gateway Atlanta Airport Hotel. In addition to the feature presenters in the persons of Bishop Ronald M. Cunningham, Dr. Charles Booth, and Dr. Love Henry Whelchel, several preachers from across the CME Connection presented spirit-filled sermons. The conference was a spiritual and financial blessing for the seminary and to all who attended.

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary

PRESBYTERY OFFICIAL DELIVERS FOUNDERS' DAY MESSAGE



Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (JCSTS) welcomed The Rev. Dr. Danny C. Murphy back to the campus as the convocation speaker for the 112th Founders' Day Observance, April 15, 2009. Rev. Murphy is the Associate General Presbyterian for Mission, Congregational Development and Evangelism for Trinity Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rev. Murphy earned a Bachelors Degree from Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin and holds the Master of Divinity

Degree from JCSTS at the Interdenominational Theological Center. He also earned the Doctor of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA.

He is married to the former Judith A. Conner of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He and his wife have two adult children. In addition, they are the proud grandparents of a five year old grandson and a 2 month old granddaughter.

Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary

Dr. Harold V. Bennett, President-Dean

Founders' Week 2009 Focused on Missions

The Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary continued demonstrating its commitment to theological education in the Church and in the academy. In February 2009, the Seminary celebrated its thirty-ninth anniversary and explored how a solid theological education, against the backdrop of ecumenicity, positions the Church in general and the Church of God in Christ in particular to speak and carry-out its Missions initiatives and address those socioeconomic and political problems that are detrimental to the marginalized in some of the world's most distressed communities. Seminars and discussions during Founders' Week 2009 explored COGIC's witness in Malaysia, the Middle East, West Africa, and the Caribbean. Some of the Seminar topics were:

COGIC Missions and Ministry

A Theological Perspective featured Dr. Gloria Rodgers, Supervisor of Women in Nigeria who delivered a lecture on "The COGIC Missions and Ministry in West Africa" during Founder's Week 2009.



Dr. Rozario Slack, CHM/ITC Class of 2003, co-author with Nisa Muhammad of *Basic Training for Couples*, spoke during the official Founders' Week. The book has received critical acclaim and was a topic of discussion in the recent CNN documentary *Black in America Two*.

Bishop Samuel F. Morgan visits C.H. Mason Theological Seminary



Students at the C.H. Mason Theological Seminary explored additional options for ministry in the Church of God in Christ, devoting a Friday afternoon to looking closely at the Military Chaplaincy. Bishop Samuel F. Morgan, Commissioner of Chaplains for the Church of God in Christ, shared with students post-seminary opportunities in ministry as COGIC Chaplains in the United States Armed Forces. Bishop Morgan discussed the advantages and disadvantages of performing ministry as a Chaplain in the

United States Army, United States Marine Corps, The United States Air Force, The United States Navy, and The Coast Guard.

Commencement 2009



The seminary graduated three persons during the May 2, 2009 commencement exercise. Rashaan Nowell (Durham, North Carolina), Tammy White (Atlanta, Georgia), and Jessica Wiley (Chicago, Illinois) received the Master of Divinity degree. Also, during the program, C.H. Mason Seminary/ITC conferred the Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree upon Judge Enoch Perry, Chief Legal Counsel for the Church of God in Christ



Scholarship in Rome, Italy

The Society of Biblical Literature held its International Meeting in Rome, Italy, June 30, 2009 to July 4, 2009. This meeting made it possible for scholars in Bible from all over the world to share in the exchange of ideas and to appreciate the hospitality of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (PBI) and the Pontifical Gregorian University. Dr. Harold V. Bennett, Dean of Mason Theological Seminary and Adjunct Faculty in Area I at the ITC, is the Program Unit Chair for the section on

Biblical Theology and presided over the section on Biblical Theology. He also presented a paper in the Methods in Hebrew Bible Studies section on Afrocentric Pentecostal Biblical Criticism and the Hebrew Bible: Its Prospects for Elucidating the Interplay between Religion, Marginalization, and Oppression in Ancient Israel.



Harry V. & Selma T. Richardson Ecumenical Fellowship

Dr. Frances Bryant Lowery, Advisor, Richardson Fellowship



The Richardson Ecumenical Fellowship, formerly known as the At-Large group here at the ITC is very much alive and well. Our students, consistently the second largest number of enrollees at our beloved institution, continue to excel on and off campus. Again this year we have graduated bishops, pastors, lay ministers, chaplains and entrepreneurs. Some will continue their academic pursuits, and/or pastor while others will honor God with their gifts and graces in various other ways.

Officers have been elected and plans are in the incubation stage for an impactful, successful and fun – filled year. Those elected to positions of leadership include: Marcus Halley, President, Marcus Fairley, Vice President, Shunnea Turner, Secretary and Earnest Salsberry, Chaplain. They have offered themselves as servants to the Fellowship.

The students of Richardson Fellowship not only serve but they also honor our founding President, Dr. Harry V. Richardson, and his wife Selma by striving for excellence in their academic preparations for ministry. This year we recognized and honored 38 students (with five being honored in multiple categories) with certificates and monetary awards. Of those honored, grade point averages ranged from 3.0 to 4.0 with Bridgette Hector, Erica Hendrix and Veronica Wright having the highest G.P.A.s. The Richardson Perseverance Award (a \$500 gift per student, funded annually by Faith Walk Ministries where Bishop Dianne Collins is the Founding Pastor) recipients were Roseanna Brannon, Kobbie Fitzgerald, Carmen Stephens and Stephanie Wanza.

We are very proud of all of our students and undoubtedly so are their pastors. Please be encouraged to support not only the Richardson Fellowship students who represent you and your church here, but also the Fellowship itself with words of encouragement, your gifts and donations so that the Fellowship can be even more of a blessing to those men and women of excellence who make the personal sacrifices required to answer the call of God on their lives.

Lutheran Theological Center

A PARTING MESSAGE FROM REV. CLARK



It has been my privilege and honor to serve as the Executive Director of the Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta, housed on the historical campus of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), for the past almost three years. Dr. Max Dupree a writer of a number of leadership books says, "The first responsibility of the leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the leader must be a servant and debtor." I am truly indebted to the faculty, staff, administration and students of the ITC. Over the past three years you

have made me feel right at home. There is much work to be done, and I solicit your prayers, as this is an exciting time in the life of the Center, as well as a time filled with many challenges.

The current mission of the Center is:

...to be a primary and unique resource of the ELCA in the preparation of leadership within the African Descent community and for those interested in urban ministry networked with the eight (8) ELCA Seminaries, the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), and other educational resources of the greater Atlanta area to equip all the baptized for ministry.

This mission along with the vision, purpose, governance and funding continue to be in evaluation mode at the time of this writing, but in 2009/2010, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its partners hope to clarify all matters.

2008/2009 will go down in the annals of time as a historic time in the life of the LTCA, as we celebrated 21 years of ministry. The Center has touched the lives of more than 300 plus theological students, rostered and lay leaders. Here are just a few of the highlights from the 2008/2009 Year:

- * Worship services including: Ash Wednesday, Reformation Day and Lutheran Days (Founders' Day)
- * J-Term Urban Cross-Cultural Plunge
- * Gospel Music Workshops & Revival services
- * Advanced Mission Developer and Re-Developer Training,
- * Lazarus at the Gate Conference – which focused on Poverty and Wealth
- * Core courses for seminary students.

In January, LTCA hosted 13 students from the eight ELCA seminaries, in the annual J-Term Urban Plunge (Cross Cultural Experience). This experience exposed students to Urban and African American contexts in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. We hosted a joint Atlanta University Center (AUC) campus-wide Ash Wednesday Service at ITC on February 25, 2009.

Plans are well underway to continue the many great programs, and at the same time explore new opportunities and possibilities. LTCA looks forward to all that the future has in store and the continued partnership with ITC and the Atlanta Lutheran community. Lutherans are excited about the future!

I conclude with a personal thank you to the ITC community. The Center solicits your continued prayers and support. To God be the Glory!

Your Brother in Christ,
Rev. Lawrence J. Clark

2008-2009 CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all of our supporters, for investing in TJC's mission and ministry - producing leaders of Christian ministry.



\$100,000 - \$500,000 Richardson Circle

Estate of William T. Osborne
United Negro College Fund

\$20,000 - \$99,999 Mays Circle

Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
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Estate of Dr. Mance Jackson
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\$10,000 - \$19,999 Costen Circle

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Center for a Higher Calling

Atlanta area is a national leader in preparing tomorrow's theologians

Region ranks 4th for graduate degrees awarded

The study of God is alive and well on Atlanta campuses.

While scientists in local university labs examine the material world, some of the country's top theologians are exploring spiritual matters. At the same time, they're training students for the Christian ministry.

Each year hundreds of future theologians and clergy receive advanced degrees from metro Atlanta institutions. The region ranks fourth among the 50 largest U.S. metropolitan areas in graduate degrees awarded in theology and religious vocations, topped only by Chicago, Los Angeles and New York, according to the ARCHE study "Higher Education in America's Metropolitan Areas."

Overall, bachelor's and higher, the metro Atlanta area ranks sixth in theology degrees awarded. From 1989 to 2005, the number of those degrees in the Atlanta area increased by 67 percent—the second largest numeric increase among the top 50 metropolitan statistical areas.

Cooperating Campuses

Atlanta "is one of the major centers for theological education in the United States," said Alan Culpepper, dean of Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology and chairman of the Atlanta Theological Association. ATA includes metro Atlanta's four major theology schools (plus two in South Carolina): Mercer's McAfee, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Columbia Theological Seminary and the Interdenominational Theological Center.

Each school has its strengths, Culpepper said. By collaborating and sharing resources, they can provide their students a deeper, more diverse experience. Through ARCHE and ATA, students can cross-register at other schools, use their libraries and archives, and attend many of their special events.

Citing the institutions' collegiality, Jan Love, dean of the Emory's theology school, said "It's just a joy to be in a city where there's a critical mass of professionals who do theological education."

Community as Classroom

The Candler school's setting in Atlanta is crucial, as Atlanta itself offers great opportunities for learning, Love said. Students in Candler's master of divinity program—the basic degree for ordination to the ministry—are required to spend time in "contextual education," she said. That means they must get out into the community to learn how to minister in different settings.

In Atlanta, she said, students can work in homeless shelters, food banks, hospitals, "big-steeple" churches, inner city and suburban congregations and, just a few miles away, in rural parishes.

Those students contribute both insight and elbow grease to those ministries. And the theology programs often lead the way in tackling tough political and social issues—from AIDS to immigration—from a Christian perspective.

"Having seminaries and institutions of higher learning that are willing to deal with these issues, not just in the context of the classroom but in the community, it certainly brings a richer environment for anyone living in this area," said Jane Jelks Jones, senior director of external affairs at ITC, which comprises six predominantly African-American seminaries in different denominations.

Only a city with such rich theological resources could support yet another collaboration, Faith and the City, organized in 1999 by former ambassadors James T. Laney and Andrew Young. Through it, leaders of the theology schools work with other civic leaders to promote the idea of bringing a moral dimension to civic concerns, across religious lines.

"It invites seminaries to remember, and helps students realize, that pastors are not only congregational leaders but also community leaders," said Columbia's dean of faculty, Cam Murchison.

Such programs help Columbia attract students who'll be the religious leaders of the future, he said.

A look at ARCHE-member theology schools:

Candler School of Theology, Emory University (founded 1914)
Candler is known for its affiliation with the United Methodist Church, but its students come from and practice in many denominations. As part of Emory, Candler students have had access to world-known religious figures such as the Dalai Lama and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as well as former President Jimmy Carter. Its Pitts library has one of the country's largest and best theological collections.

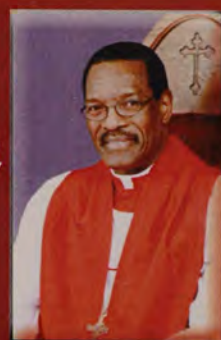
Columbia Theological Seminary (founded 1828)
As an institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Columbia's primary mission is to train leaders for the ministry—but that doesn't always mean the pulpit. The seminary's Center for Lifelong Learning gives practicing clergy and lay leaders a chance to learn from Columbia professors both on campus and in other settings.

Interdenominational Theological Center (founded 1958)
ITC is a consortium of six seminaries, each part of a distinct Christian tradition: Gammon Theological Center, United Methodist; Morehouse School of Religion, Baptist; Turner Theological Seminary, African Methodist Episcopal; Phillips School of Theology, Christian Methodist Episcopal; Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Presbyterian Church (USA); and Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary, Church of God in Christ. Together they make up perhaps the country's top institution for African-American church studies.

McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University (founded 1994)
Theological education has been central to the mission of Mercer since the university was founded by Georgia Baptists in 1833. More than 160 years later, Mercer's separate school for theology was founded on the university's Atlanta campus. McAfee is a partner institution of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderate Baptists formed in 1990.

By Gayle White

ITC Commencement 2010



Saturday, May 8th

Speakers:
Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake,
Church of God in Christ

M. L. King International Chapel at Morehouse College

Atlanta: Higher education destination.

When it comes to higher education, the Atlanta region rivals any in the nation.

With more than 220,000 students enrolled each year, the Atlanta region ranks 7th in student enrollment among America's largest metro areas and 6th in annual college graduates. And the region ranks 4th nationwide in graduate theology education – only Chicago, Los Angeles and New York educate more theologians.

The 20 members of the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education offer one of the widest arrays of higher learning found anywhere in the nation. World-class research institutions, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities and specialized schools of art, medicine, technology and theology help make Atlanta a premier place to live, learn, work and play.

The Interdenominational Theological Center is a big part of that remarkably collaborative mix, and ARCHE is proud to call ITC one of its 20 members.

Learn more about the Atlanta region as a powerhouse of thought and innovation at www.atlantahighered.org.

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