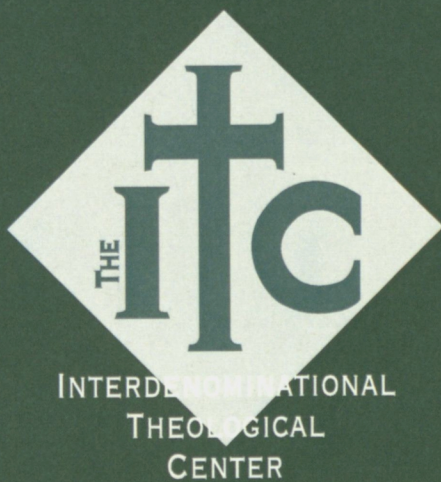


THE JOURNAL OF  
INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
THEOLOGICAL CENTER



*Seminary Education  
and Spiritual Formation*

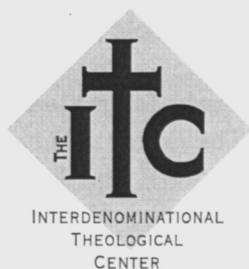
*Volume 39 Issue 1, 2014*

The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center (JITC) is published semiannually by the faculty of the Interdenominational Theological Center, 700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30314-4143. Subscriptions and requests for back issues should be directed to the Journal Office.

Copyright 2014 by the Interdenominational Theological Center. All rights reserved. JITC, indexed in the ATLA Religion Database.

Subscription rates per year are: Individuals, \$24.00; institutions, \$28.00. Make checks payable to: The ITC Press. JITC is a member of the American Theological Library Association.

**JOURNAL OF THE**  
**INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER**  
*Volume 39 Issues 1 2014*



Temba L.J. Mafico  
*Editor*  
Lynne St. Claire Darden  
*Associate Editor*

Editorial Board  
Richard Nysse, Luther Seminary, MN  
Hugh Page, Univeristy of Notre Dame  
Vivian Johnson, United Theological Seminary

Editorial Consultants  
Lisa Allen McLaurin, M.Div Degree Coordinator  
Reginaldo Braga, MA Degree Coordinator  
Carolyn McCrary, Th.D Degree Coordinator  
Marsha Snulligan Haney, DMin Degree Coordinator

Tessa Thompson  
*Journal Research Assistant*

Angel Parks  
*Journal Layout*

A Publication of  
The ITC Press  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center  
(ISSN 50092-6558) is published half yearly

*JITC* is a journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center. It publishes peer reviewed research articles written primarily, but not exclusively, from an Afro-centric perspective of the Bible and related disciplines. All contributions are referred to recognized scholars who are specialized in the particular discipline in which the article is written.

**Contributions and books for review should be sent to:**

The Editor *JITC*  
Interdenominational Theological Center  
700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive  
Atlanta, GA 30314  
United States of America  
(404) 527-7727  
Email: [journaleditor@itc.edu](mailto:journaleditor@itc.edu)

**Subscription should be sent to the same address but must be marked as**  
Subscriptions: *JITC*.

**Copyright**

*JITC* 2014

**House Rules**

Articles submitted for publication must conform to the house rules found  
on the home page:

***JITC* homepage (house rules, contents, subscription)**

<http://www.itc.edu/pages/jitc.asp>

***JITC* Order Form:**

**Institutional and individual subscribers are charged for international shipping.**

Individual Subscriptions: \_\_\_ 1 yr. (\$24.00) \_\_\_ 2 yrs. (\$45.00) \_\_\_ 3 yrs. (\$65.00)

Institutional Subscriptions: \_\_\_ 1 yr. (\$28.00) \_\_\_ 2 yrs. (\$56.00) \_\_\_ 3 yrs. (\$70.00)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail subscription to: The *JITC* Office, 700 Martin Luther King Jr., Drive, SW,  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314-4143, or call 404-527-7727.

## *Table of Content*

Editorial	
Temba L. J. Mafico.....	i
Black Theological Education: Its Context, Content And Conduct	
James H. Costen.....	9
Exploring Spiritual Formation In The Classroom	
Michael Dash.....	21
The Social Cosmos Of Black Ecumenism	
C. Eric Lincoln.....	37
The Bible and the African Experience: The Biblical Period	
Charles B. Copher.....	57
Bonhoeffer's Communicative Engagement With The Other: A Rhetoric Of Reconciliation	
Charles E. Thomas Jr.....	81

## EDITORIAL

### *In This Issue*

Several transitions taking place at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) have regretfully caused the delay for publishing this issue of the ITC Journal. This is an important journal issue that focuses on what four scholars said about seminary education more than twenty years ago, and is coming true today. It is a fact that theological education has lost its appeal to many people. A record number of seminaries have reported a sharp decline in student enrollment. This has led church leaders to ask the questions: Is seminary education still relevant for doing church ministry today? Why are pastors without seminary education leading some of the most vibrant churches in the United States? Religious institutions have been accused of always reacting to change very slowly.

James Costen, addressing Spellman College in 1984, argued that theology should not be performed in a vacuum isolated from prevailing circumstances affecting its people. The church must be relevant to the community by taking serious consideration of its historical experience of oppression and marginalization. He goes further to say that the content of the Black church must be seen as the content of black theological schools. What Costen implies is that for the church to be relevant, seminaries must teach theology that is relevant to the church.

Dr. Michael Dash's article argues that seminary must help students to feel the need for a person to have a sense of commitment in some form of spirituality in order to be of service to God's people. Dash believes that spiritual formation can and should take place in the classroom, particularly one that is established to lay a spiritual foundation in students. But he also makes this important point: spiritual growth is not a one-time affair. A person should continue to seek spiritual formation by being nourished by the Holy Spirit in order to be empowered for ministry.

Dr. Eric Lincoln's thesis is basically this: whereas religion should have kept blacks in solidarity, denominationalism has, however, negatively fractured the black community. He goes on to say that if black ecumenism must succeed, it must draw upon the black experience as interpreted by black ethnicity. "The concept of Black ethnicity "presupposes the primacy of spiritual values from the outset, and sees

## EDITORIAL

every black Christian as potentially and properly a member of a single confraternity defined by faith, and shaped by experience.”

Dr. Charles B. Copher, a pioneer on tracing the black experience in the Bible, made an exhaustive analysis of the Bible to demonstrate that there are numerous references to Africa and Africans that are located in several parts of the biblical literature from the Pentateuch to the Book of Revelation. This study led Copher to conclude his article by saying that, “... in numerous instances, the biblical experience is an African experience.”

The final article is by Dr. Charles Thomas who has reviewed Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s writing on theological and philosophical work. His goal in doing so is to provide a lens to view one’s fellow human in a world of division and to arrive at a framework for a rhetoric of reconciliation. Thomas’ article continues the theme of how to make theological education relevant to the condition of humanity. Thus he emphasizes how Bonhoeffer directed attention to the transcendent reality of a creator God from whom humans derive a starting point of how they are to understand the human condition; a God who interacts with humanity to develop a sense of how humans are supposed to live with one another in community.

The next issue that will be published in Fall 2014 will deal with the cutting edge methods that ITC faculty use to teach the Bible. In Spring 2015, an issue on the essence of Christian Education will be published. It is our hope that these issues will help the church and the academy to appreciate the liberating power of the Bible, and how approaching it with good methods may foster spiritual renewal.

Temba L.J. Mafico  
*Editor*

*Seminary Education  
and Spiritual Formation*