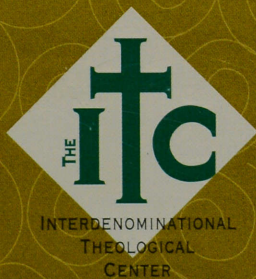


The Journal
of the
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Center



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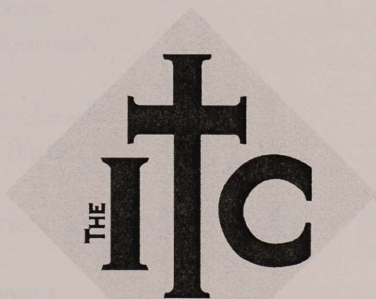
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Joseph E. Troutman
Editor

Reta L. Bigham
Associate Editor

Cecelia K. Dixon
Administrative Assistant
JITC Office

Madie J. Lock
Subscriber Database Management

Gerry R. Latson
Documentation Assistant

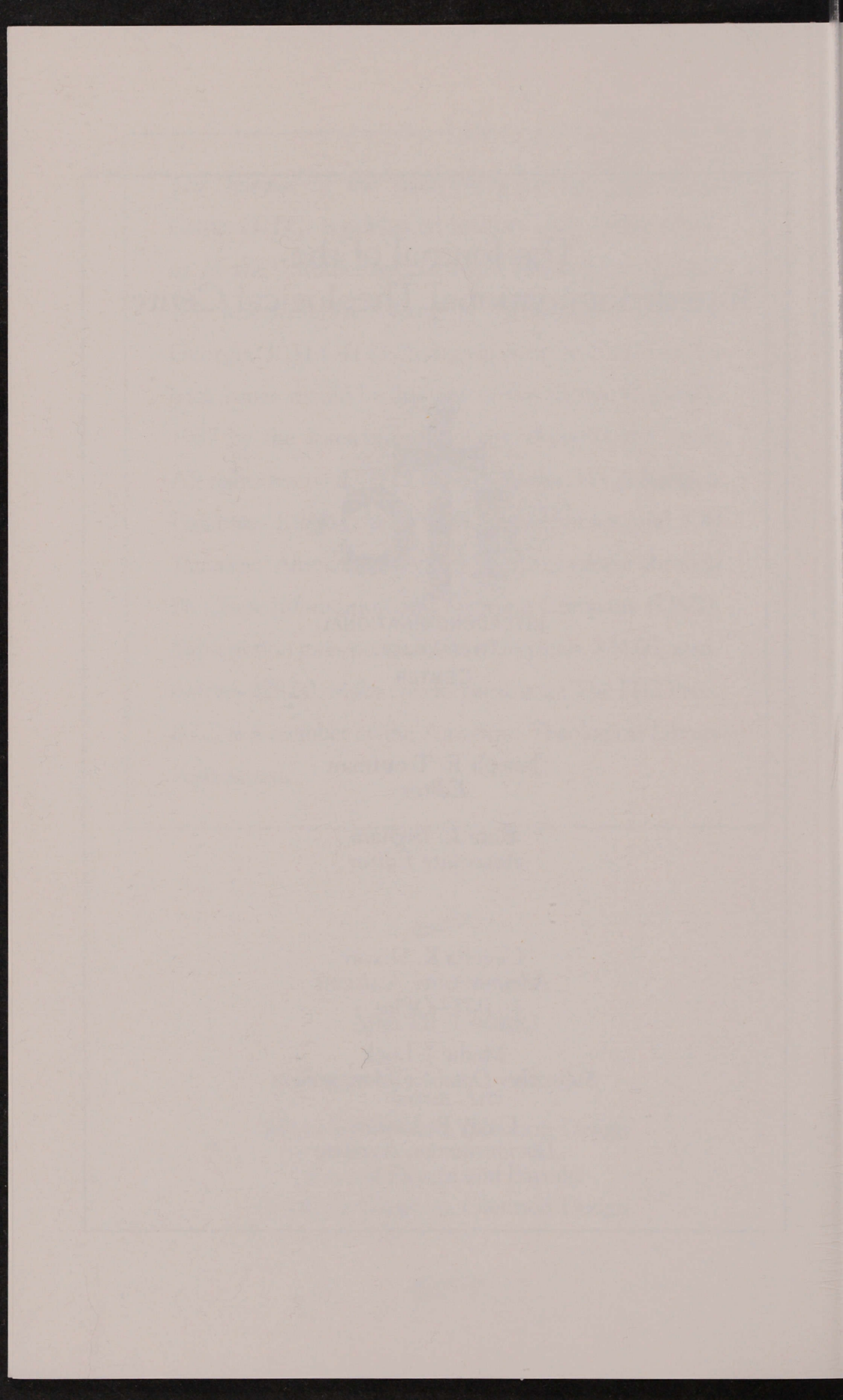


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PRESENTING THE ISSUE

This issue of *JITC* is our first non-theme focus since volume XXVIII, Fall 2000/Spring 2001 and includes a variety of articles—all from ITC's faculty, visiting scholars, staff, and students. Three of the essays represent the work of faculty persons who were the Charles B. Copher Annual Faculty lecturers in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Introducing the issue is President Michael A. Battle's inaugural address, "Visionary Servant Leader," delivered on October 15, 2004. This is followed by Margaret Aymer's "Teaching Christians to 'Read': Theological Education and the Church," presented in honor of the presidential inaugural colloquy.

Our lead article is Michael I. N. Dash's "Ministry, Spirituality, and Disciplines for Engagement," the Copher lecturer in 2005. The writer engages us in a provocative discussion centered on the formulation of a particular lifestyle and a search for direction to fulfill one's vocation. For persons preparing for full-time professional ministry, the importance of spirituality for the enrichment of the total church commands serious attention.

Maisha Handy's article, "Fighting the Matrix: Toward a Womanist Pedagogy for the Black Church," explores the "matrix of oppression" or the interlocking nature of race/gender/class and other forms of oppression that marginalize certain groups. Systemic, interdependent forms of domination create a hierarchical order of relations used to control subjugated persons.

Joan R. Harrell's essay, "A Womanist Perspective: Bridging the Black Church and the Academy Amid the Interlocking of Media, Patriarchy, and Televangelism," devel-

ops a “hermeneutic of suspicion” due to sexist, classist, racist, homophobic, ageist, and oppressive elements in the Black Church and the academy. Further insight is provided via Pat Robertson and televangelism—a phenomenological perspective.

Stephanie M. Crumpton identifies one of the ways in which the Black Church replicates the psychic and emotional violence of intimate violence in her “No Safe Place: The Impact of Sexist Hermeneutics on Black Women Victim Survivors of Intimate Abuse: A Womanist Pastoral Care Perspective.” The womanist approach to pastoral care is an effective intervention, providing alternative safe space for Black women survivors of intimate violence.

Troy Wheelhouse examines sex and sexuality in the Bible in his “What Is *Yādá* Doing Here? Another Text of Terror in the Creation Story.” The writer argues that we need to look more closely at the texts that conservative scholarship identifies as acceptable sexual behavior.

Frances Smith Foster in her “’Til Death or Distance Do Us Part? Marriage Ideals and Family in Antebellum African America” proposes that there is another method to explore different textures of understanding to document the histories, myths, and memories of African Americans. This alternative approach is the Afro-Protestant Press that offers unique understanding of ancestors’ ideals, dreams, and visions—inviting a reappraisal of our knowledge from other sources.

Miriam Burnett’s essay, “The Influence of Traditional African Health Beliefs and Practices on Present-Day African-American Health Beliefs and Practices,” investigates the impact of ancient African religions and the healthcare of present-day African Americans, the role of alternative medicine. The role of clergy in healthcare access, utilization, and compliance is contemplated.

Mark Ellingsen’s “Recovering the African Father: Towards

an Inclusive Reading of Augustine” confirms that the theological diversity of the Western Church is clearly Augustinian. The writer posits that virtually all of the Western interpreters are missing a full appreciation of the significance of Augustine’s African roots, the degree to which he truly was an African Father.

Kenneth Henry’s “Reconstruction for the Twenty-First Century: The Witness of the Church to African Americans in Higher Education” affirms that what the churches are doing in higher education on behalf of African Americans is a clear indication of the effectiveness of Christian witness. The church is entrusted with the mission to bring the world to awareness of the reality of our own human condition, with God’s power and love to sustain us.

Joseph E. Troutman

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