

JOURNAL OF THE INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER



DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
ITC

*Rebooting
Doctor of Ministry Education
for Transformative Leadership*

Volume 41, Fall Issue 2015

JOURNAL OF INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER Volume 41, Fall Issue 2015

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

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Subscription rates per year are: Individuals, \$24.00; Institutions, \$28.00. Make checks payable to: The ITC Press. The Journal of the ITC is a member of the ATLA.

Cover Designed by Angel Parks

**JOURNAL OF THE
INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER**
Volume 41 Fall Issue 2015



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A Publication of
The ITC Press
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center
(ISSN 50092-6558) is published semiannually.

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:

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The articles in this issue relate to the restructured Doctor of Ministry (DMin) offered by the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). Dr. Edward L. Wheeler's article, "Rebooted: A Fresh Start for a Seasoned Degree," begins with a general overview of the DMin program. Wheeler points out that the initial enthusiasm that greeted the degree when it was first introduced fifty years ago has since declined, along with the decline in student enrollment in seminaries and theological schools. His article lists some of the benefits and pitfalls of the DMin degree as it has been administered at ITC. Among the benefits of the DMin program is the resulting cohort group, "peer relationships that have the potential to create ministerial support systems that last long after the degree has been obtained." (p. 1) The limitations of the DMin program include that DMin students may be too involved in their professions to expend the necessary time on the program, and that trying to accommodate DMin students with courses that are relevant to their research projects is challenging faculty in various ways. Recognizing the benefits and challenges, Wheeler suggests rebooting the DMin program in order to give it a fresh start.

Dr. Marsha Snulligan Haney, Director of the DMin program, in her first essay, "The Leadership Practicum Reformed as Intercultural Formation and Dialogue," reports that the ITC DMin Program has responded to Wheeler's concerns by broadening the goals of the leadership practicum so that students may gain intercultural (formerly called missiological) competencies. The restructured two-year DMin program is graduating students with a degree that equips them to lead churches and other organizations that are diverse in their population and experiences. In her second essay, "The Leadership Practicum: The Space Where DMin Education, Action Based Research and Interfaith Dialogue Converge," Haney argues that pastors cannot be effective in ministry in the twenty-first century unless they are equipped with skills to engage in interfaith conversations, now more than ever an invaluable form of Christian mission particularly in urban US communities. Being competent in interfaith dialogue "offers current and future Christian leaders opportunities to engage three groups of religions: African, Jewish, and Islamic, and their faith systems, based on a more relational model of interfaith engagement." (p. 1)

Drs. James T. Roberson, Jr. and Constance L. Chamblee in their essay, "The Doctor of Ministry Cohort as a Transformative Dialogue Group," focus on the transformative dialogue that they regard as an essential component of the DMin learning experience. Their article

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emphasizes the importance of the cohorts as safe learning spaces. They offer students “transformative learning dialogue moments during which a student’s identity and professional ministry are reshaped by mutual conversation with other members of the cohorts on ministerial issues.”

Dr. Edward Wimberly’s article, “Prophetic-Pastoral Imagination in an Age of Sankofa and Post-racialism: The Concerned Black Clergy of Atlanta,” attributes the continuing existence of the Concerned Black Clergy of Atlanta (CBC) to its application of the Sankofa principle. Based on the mystical bird, the Sankofa principle suggests that one should constantly look or go back to retrieve past experiences that can inform the future. Both Drs. Wimberly and Haney agree that religious practitioners must be capable of dialoguing with those of other faiths. This implies that the DMin degree must be based on a clearly understood concept of prophetic-pastoral imagination.

The final two articles are written by Drs. Greg Nash and Cassandra Hill, graduates of the ITC’s three-year DMin program. Nash’s article conveys the gist of his DMin project’s heuristic research as well as his evolving heuristic investigation. Hill is reporting on her research on the unequal treatment of women clergy by African American denominational episcopal leadership. Both attribute their sharpened critical thinking to ITC’s instructors, ecumenical environment, and available resources.

I hope that subscribers will find this JITC issue valuable, and that it will serve as a resource for schools likewise contemplating the revision of their DMin programs.

Temba Mafico
Editor