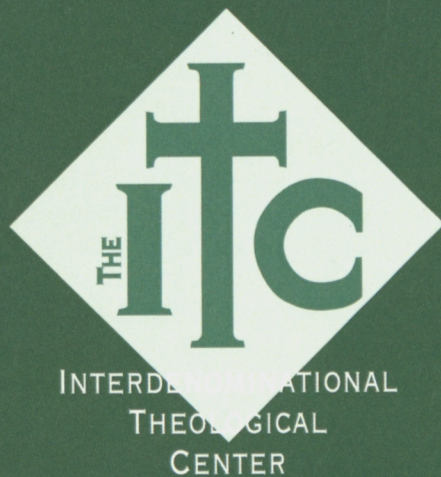


JOURNAL OF
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
THEOLOGICAL CENTER



*A Sample of ITC's Methods
for Interpreting the Bible*

Volume 41, Spring Issue 2015

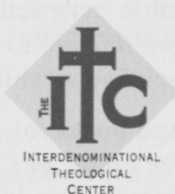
The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center (Journal of the ITC) is published semiannually by the faculty of the Interdenominational Theological Center. Subscriptions and requests for back issues should be directed to the Journal Office, 700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW, Atlanta, Georgia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

**JOURNAL OF THE
INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER**

Volume 41, Spring 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 of articles and books for review should be sent to:

The Editor *JITC*

Interdenominational Theological Center

700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

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A BRIEF WORD FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to thank the faculty of Area I: Biblical Studies and Languages together with two of their former students for contributing articles to this issue of the Journal. I particularly want to thank Dr. Lynne St. Clair Darden for serving as Guest Editor of this issue.

I also want to apologize to all our subscribers (libraries and individuals) for the delay in publishing this issue and for irregular publication in the recent past. Now that ITC has successfully defended its reaffirmation of accreditation with the SACS-COC, we expect to be on our regular schedule of publishing the Spring and Fall issues of the Journal of the ITC each year.

We appreciate your loyal support.

Temba Mafico
Editor

EDITORIAL

Beginning in the early 1980s, an influx of scholars of color and women besieged the well-fortified walls of the biblical guild. These scholars spearheaded an "other" way of reading the text by utilizing a variety of critical reading strategies that focused on contemporary cultural context and social location being influenced by the two reading approaches that had emerged in the discipline in the 1970s—literary criticism and sociocultural criticism. Both of these methods offered significant alternative approaches to historical biblical criticism, the traditional method of biblical scholarship. The cultural critical paradigm was established based on the interrelationship between the text and the reader. No longer is biblical interpretation focused on the ancient context only. The focus on the interrelationship between reader and text paved the way for the incorporation of interdisciplinary methods and models to the analysis of biblical texts allowing for the inclusion of critical theoretical inquiry which aids in producing innovative readings that are culturally relevant.

The five articles in this volume are examples of the innovative approach to reading texts that the culturally critical paradigm permits. Margaret Aymer's article "Sojourners Truths: The New Testament as Diaspora Space" examines the New Testament writings from the perspective of migrancy and displacement. She suggests that the majority of New Testament authors wrote as migrants (on the road, in exile, on the move) and that their writings constitute sojourners' truths, and thus diaspora space. Her approach to the New Testament reflects her own reality. She is an immigrant from Jamaica. In her thirty-three years in the U.S., she has come to realize that black theologians and biblical scholars have widely ignored immigrant realities; so she has attempted to fill the void in this article as she reads from her own place, "the diaspora space of migration, the ever liminal space of sojourners' truths."

The article by Karla Frye, "The Intersectional Significance of Voice and Testimony: Suggestions for a 21st Century Womanist Reclamation of Mary Magdalene" is focused on John 20:11-18. Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus from an expanded womanist perspective to offer a new look at the relevance of gender, class and community in the story. Frye claims that the writer of the Gospel of John "positions Mary Magdalene as the "voice" of the Johannine community, ordained by Jesus as the first to affirm and reflect his transformative power. She suggests that a reinterpretation of "Mary Magdalene's role in community

with others and her relationship with Jesus can help womanist scholars identify meaning, relevance and power in the most important story about the greatest news in Christianity.”

In his article: “Tales from the Crypt: A Same Gender Loving (SGL) Reading of Mark 5:1-20 Backwards” Eric Thomas reads Mark 5:1-20 via a narrative technique introduced by Randall C. Bailey; an alternative reading of the Legion narrative through an Africana queer contextual biblical hermeneutics on behalf of the Same Gender Loving (SGL) community. The suggestion is that the character of the man possessed by a legion of demons be read as a case study representing the experiences of many SGL people throughout the African Diasporas.

Vanessa Lovelace’s article, “This Woman’s Son Shall Not Inherit with my Son: Towards a Womanist Politics of Belonging in the Sarah-Hagar Narratives” introduces a new method of reading Genesis 16 and 20 framed by the politics of belonging and a womanist theoretical model to explore how gender, ethnicity, and class intersect with the politics of belonging. Her aim is to illustrate the key role women play in nationalist projects to determine who belongs and who gets excluded.

Temba Mafico’s article, “Ex-Jesus or Exegesis: How to Break the Students’ Resistance to Learn Biblical Exegesis” focuses on how to teach two types of students who matriculate at seminary. One is a student who has been in church for a long time and may even be a pastor of a church. He or she comes to seminary with some embedded beliefs about the Bible and does not want to lose them. The other is more open-minded and comes to seminary simply to learn as a goal in itself. How to combine these two types of students in one class so that they both appreciate biblical exegesis is what Mafico’s article is demonstrating based on his teaching experience and success stories. Additionally, Mafico’s article argues that the old critical approaches to studying the biblical text cannot be minimized or discarded because they are the foundation upon which the modern interpretive methods should be based.

These five essays represent the creative, groundbreaking and culturally significant work that is being done in the research of the ITC Bible professors and also illustrates the manner in which biblical studies is being approached in our classrooms. I hope you enjoy reading them.

Lynne St Clair Darden,
Assistant Professor of New Testament
Guest-Editor



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