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**Affirming Diversity: Developing
Theological Collections from
the African-American
Perspective**

*Princes shall come out of Egypt;
Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

Psalm 68:31

I. Introduction

Developing theological collections from the African-American perspective requires a penetrating investigation of diverse issues that not only identifies the unique context for this study, but also lays the foundation upon which to build the discussion. This is a demanding task! Any attempt to undertake this formidable challenge immediately acknowledges that collecting and preserving "the documentary and cultural heritage of people of African descent" has been unrecognized and therefore unhonored.¹ ". . . [T]here is a kind of intellectual chauvinism that permeates the academic world [which] says that grassroots people are marginal. . . ."² Understanding this bias, a new frame of mental reference is required, and empowerment strategies which affirm the diversity of the Black Experience and ameliorate the consequences

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¹Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle, eds., *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), xiii, 196.

²*Ibid.*, 198.

of contemporary racism (racialism) can then be engaged. This approach demands that we look from the inside out, not from the outside in³—the African-centered perspective.⁴ The process employed develops action initiatives to identify lacuna in documenting Black history and also retrieves vital sources of history to generate African-American collections which preserve a common culture.

Naming is power!⁵ African Americans have "named" societal injustices (racialism, classism and sexism), opening up ideological consciousness to new ways of responding. Feminist Theologian Elizabeth Dodson Gray compares this change of consciousness to ice breaking up after a long winter.⁶ Old thought patterns are crumbling, and new perceptions are slowly forming. Understanding that reality is perceived through the eyeglasses of our social formulations,⁷ a "flowering of interest" in the Black Experience is being actu-

³Ibid., 197.

⁴This writer uses the words "African" and "African American" interchangeably. See Stacey Scales, "A History of the Interest in and Study of Ancient Egypt from an African-centered Perspective" (M.A. thesis, Clark Atlanta University, 1995), 1-12, especially 1-2, who says that "the designation African American refers to the American experience of a particular group of African people. In spite of their being geographically located in America at this time, they are still African. An African-centered perspective differs from a Western interpretation of history by honoring Africans within an interpretation of African history, both continentally and diasporically."

⁵For a discussion of this concept, see Elizabeth Dodson Gray, "Feminist Theological and Religious Education," in *Theologies of Education*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1995), 199-229.

⁶Elizabeth Dodson Gray, *Green Paradise Lost* (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, 1981), 143.

⁷Elizabeth Dodson Gray, *Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap* (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, 1982), 38.

alized into the general discourse of American and world history⁸—the spectrum of diversity.

This essay examines issues that affirm diversity in developing African-American theological collections: the African-centered perspective, mission driven culture (ethos) and curriculum, particularities of collection development and special resources.

II. The African-centered Perspective

The African-centered perspective, a paradigm that substantiates the centrality of African history and her people,⁹ is the context for this work and lays a firm foundation upon which to discuss issues affirming diversity in building African-American theological collections. This context interprets history with data provided by reference to the African-world experience, differing from the Western view of history which Molefi Kete Asante refers to as "European studies of Africa."¹⁰ "African-centeredness is maintained by expressing the study of the African phenomena and events in the cultural voice of African people."¹¹ An African-centered Egypt and the Africanity of the Black Church are discussed briefly as important expressions of the African-centered perspective, providing a cultural continuum within this unique context.

⁸Sinnette, Coates, and Battle, *Black Bibliophiles*, xiii.

⁹This writer is indebted to Stacey Scales' brilliant research on ancient Egypt and the African-centered perspective which provides much of the content for this section.

¹⁰Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 6.

¹¹Scales, "History of Ancient Egypt," 2.

A. An African-centered Egypt

James H. Costen, in *The Costen Legacy, 1983-1997*, says that Africa is not only the cradle of humankind but the source of civilization, and that this culture had its genesis in northern Africa, especially Kemet (ancient Egypt), Ethiopia and Nubia, now Sudan.¹² Efforts have been made to remove Egypt and Saharan Africa from the southern portions of the continent, giving the impression that "Africans had made no major contributions to world civilization."¹³ African world scholars have reclaimed ancient Egyptian achievement as part of the total African heritage.

Noted Egyptologist Cheikh Anta Diop has argued the Africanity of the ancient civilizations of the Nile Valley. His central thesis is that all Africans can claim ancient Egypt as

¹²[James H. Costen], "From Strength to Strength: A Brief History of the Black Church in America," in *The Costen Legacy, 1983-1997*, ed. John C. Diamond and Joseph E. Troutman (Atlanta: The ITC Press, 1997), 31.

¹³*Ibid.*, 31-32. For documentation supporting the contribution of Africa and especially Egypt, to ancient civilizations, see Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1974); Asa G. Hilliard, III, *The Maroon Within Us: Selected Essays on African American Community Socialization* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1995); Asa G. Hilliard, III, *Free Your Mind: Return to the Source: African Origins* (Atlanta: Wa'set Educational Publications, 1991); Charles S. Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science: Essays on African History, Science and Civilization* (London: Karnak House, 1990); Ivan Van Sertima, ed., *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern* (originally published in *Journal of African Civilizations*) 5 (April and November 1983); Charles B. Copher, "Three Thousand Years of Biblical Interpretation with Reference to Black People," *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* XIII (Spring 1986): 225-246; George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy in Stolen Egyptian Philosophy* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992).

the basis of their traditional cultures, just as Westerners claim Greece and Rome as the origin of their civilization and the genesis of European thought and practice.¹⁴ The work of Diop has proven so pivotal that his reclamation of ancient Egypt has shifted the arts and sciences from the Western world to Africa. Although deceased, his research "remains the foremost authoritative body of knowledge in the tradition of African-centered Egyptology."¹⁵

It appears that interest in Egyptology occurred when Africans were enslaved in America. During this time, colonialism had eradicated African culture, both ancient and contemporary. W. E. B. DuBois points out that "the science of Egyptology arose and flourished at the very time that the cotton kingdom reached its greatest power on the foundation of Negro slavery."¹⁶ This deculturalization process denied and debased African peoples' humanity.

Even though European scholarship subscribed to anti-African prejudice so embedded in discourse during the 1800s, it was unaware of the spoken language and written script of the ancient Egyptians called hieroglyphics. The French scholar, J. F. Champollion deciphered the Rosetta Stone, utilizing the bas-reliefs of the tombs of Sesostris I, and was able to determine the Africanity of the ancient Egyptians. "The next figure had a dark complexion which . . . needed no classification for he was an African."¹⁷ Champollion's dis-

¹⁴Scales, "History of Ancient Egypt," 93.

¹⁵St. Clair Drake, *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: University of California, 1991), 313.

¹⁶W. E. B. DuBois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 99.

¹⁷Scales, "History of Ancient Egypt," 24.

covery caused quite an outcry from Eurocentric Egyptologists who were unable to accept the notion of an African Egypt. Diop states that European scholars, in dealing with ancient writers about an African Egypt, "either give them the silent treatment or . . . reject them dogmatically and indignantly."¹⁸

B. The Africanity of the Black Church

The Black Church's history is traced to Africa—the origin of its people. The attempt to establish Christianity in Africa's remote regions resulted in economic rape and the beginning of slave traffic. Bringing the Bible and prayer to Africa, Christian missionaries, along with traders, took the land when Africans' eyes were closed.¹⁹ ". . . [T]he Africans were left with the Bible and prayer."²⁰ Thus, an unsuspecting continent was deprived of its stable family composition as its human chattel was transported across the Atlantic Ocean. The slave trade became an enormously profitable industry.

In America, greedy plantation owners, under the guise of Christianity, attempted to dehumanize the Africans, robbing them of self-respect. This ploy failed. Albert J. Raboteau, in his important work, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, speaks of the slaves' indomitability²¹ which enabled them to call upon their ancestors for consolation "while travelin' through this weary land." Similarly, Stacey Scales in his "History of Ancient Egypt," notes that "Africans maintained their Africanity and cloaked it

¹⁸Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization*, 45.

¹⁹[Costen], "From Strength to Strength," 34.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 92.

within Christianity out of survival necessity."²²

The Black Church was aborned, embracing the totality of life. African roots enabled slaves to identify with this worldview. Independent Black churches were organized: African Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and Church of God in Christ. These churches possessed a distinctiveness—the Black Religious Experience. Consistently "being all things to all persons" in the Black community, they fulfilled spiritual, social and educational needs.

The roots of the Black Church are in Africa. This lineage is embedded in the culture, education, art and religion of the African continent. The slave, although ripped out of a traditionally firm family structure by servitude, maintained a durable religion, thrift, ancestry, and worldview. "This strength contributed greatly to the founding, growth and current condition of the Black Church in America."²³

The African-centered perspective, the context for this article, is expressed in the analysis of the relationship between an organization's mission, library and curriculum—one of the issues affirming diversity in building African-American theological collections.

III. Mission Driven Culture (Ethos) and Curriculum

An institution's mission statement (purpose, nature, objectives), curriculum, librarians, faculty, religious traditions (if any) and budget generally determine the direction for developing a theological collection. This is particularly appar-

²²Scales, "History of Ancient Egypt," 149.

²³[Costen], "From Strength to Strength," 46.

ent if the school of theology is African American. Immediately, the school's unique mission is recognized: educating women and men who serve the African-American Church and the world community.

Although this section focuses on the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), an African-American theological seminary in Atlanta, Georgia, for primary emphasis, the writer identifies five additional theological schools with similar profiles: Howard Divinity School, Washington, DC; Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, OH; Shaw Divinity School, Raleigh, NC; Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, NC; and Virginia Union University School of Theology, Richmond, VA. The contribution of these schools is discussed in the collection development and special resource sections of this paper.

A. Mission of the Interdenominational Theological Center

ITC, one of the most significant ventures in theological education in America, is the nucleus for an ecumenical consortium of six historic African-American seminaries²⁴ which cooperate in providing a single faculty, administration and student body. The school has been accredited by the Association of Theological Schools since 1960²⁵ and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1984. It

²⁴Morehouse School of Religion (Baptist), Gammon Theological Seminary (United Methodist), Turner Theological Seminary (African Methodist Episcopal), Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (Presbyterian, USA), Phillips School of Theology (Christian Methodist Episcopal), and Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary (Church of God in Christ).

²⁵ITC was chartered in 1958.

is related locally to the larger academic community of theological education through its membership in the Atlanta Theological Association and the Georgia Association for Pastoral Care. ITC also participates in the Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education (ARCHE), a consortium of nineteen colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning in the Atlanta, Georgia region. During the 1997-98 academic year, 434 students were enrolled with twenty-two full-time and twenty-two part-time faculty.

Governed by a forty-one member Board of Trustees of which twenty-one persons come from the six participating denominations, fourteen at-large members selected without regard to denominational affiliation, two alumni, two faculty and two student representatives, ITC "is committed to standards of excellence that demand continuous intellectual and spiritual growth, responsible leadership development, personal and professional integrity, and respect for the dignity and worth of all persons."²⁶

A unique feature of administration and governance at ITC is the denominational trustee boards. These are separate from the ITC Board of Trustees, but do not infringe upon its authority. The denominational trustee boards are primarily responsible for overseeing the work of the several seminaries, including fund-raising for building maintenance and financial aid for students.

To ensure institutional effectiveness, the school has developed a Five-Year Strategic Plan as a means of assessing strengths and weaknesses. "This plan is designed to keep the ITC community focused on its mission of excellence in theological education, [requiring] a continuous . . . review of degree programs, curriculum, and public services."²⁷ ITC real-

²⁶Reta L. Bigham, comp., *The Fact Book, 1990-1994* (Atlanta: ITC, 1995), 9.

²⁷*Five-Year Strategic Plan, 1995-2000* (Atlanta: ITC, 1996), i.

izes the importance of strategic planning as related to its mission and the determination of the quality of effectiveness.

ITC's identifiable mission-driven culture is exemplified in its broadly pluralistic and ecumenical environment. Maintaining its international, inter-ethnic and interracial board, faculty, staff and student body, the school serves as the "repository for the study of Christian theology, both in Africa and the diaspora."²⁸ Three of the school's twelve objectives are identified as being especially relevant to its mission and uniqueness:

- > To establish in its curriculum the contributions of women to Christian ministry and to document women's experiences through special programs such as Black Women in Church and Society;
- > To provide a critique of Euro-American theological education which is informed by the perspectives and contributions of African American and other "Two-Thirds World" interpretations; and
- > To stimulate among faculty and students such scholarly studies and publications that will promote personal and professional development and contribute to a body of knowledge related to the diasporal African religious experience and the mission for the African-American Church and the church universal.²⁹

Barbara G. Wheeler, Director of the Auburn Center

²⁸*Interdenominational Theological Center 1996-99 Catalog* (Atlanta: ITC, 1996), 12.

²⁹*Five-Year Strategic Plan*, 10.

for the Study of Theological Education, indicates that faculty are committed to the needs of both church and academy as a central aspect of their school's mission.³⁰ ITC's faculty personifies "a common identity based upon a shared mission commitment . . ."³¹ This ethos promotes bonding. In addition to the competency required by their specific academic disciplines, this faculty provides the educational context for the critical voice raised by the African-American Experience.

B. Mission of Atlanta University Center (AUC) Robert W. Woodruff Library

A relationship exists between an institution's mission, curriculum and library in collection development and consequently, the delivery of library services. At ITC, as noted, the focus is a discussion of issues affirming diversity as an asset in developing African-American theological collections.

One easily identifiable asset in affirming diversity in collection development is the ITC/AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library. This centralized library serves the instructional, informational and research needs of the participating Black institutions of the AUC.³² The library's mission and that of ITC, although stated differently, have a common goal—the delivery of library services.

The library's mission, on the one hand, is to provide

³⁰Barbara G. Wheeler and Mark N. Wilhelm, *Tending Talents: The Cultivation of Effective and Productive Theological School Faculties*, Auburn Studies, no. 5 (New York: Auburn Theological Seminary, 1997), 27.

³¹Ibid.

³²Clark Atlanta University, ITC, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Morris Brown College, and Spelman College comprise the "parent" consortium.

bibliographical, physical, and intellectual access to recorded knowledge and information (including print, audio-visual and electronically stored data) in support of learning, teaching, cultural and research needs of students, faculties, staffs and administrators of the AUC institutions, as well as their alumni/ae and the outside scholarly community.³³

ITC's mission to deliver library services, on the other hand, endeavors to promote the advancement of theological education among the leaders who will serve predominately African-American churches primarily through three goals:

- > To undergird the theological curriculum of ITC and the research of its faculty;
- > To support the special emphasis of ITC in service to the Black Church; and
- > To house the archival records of the constituent denominational seminaries comprising ITC.³⁴

Thus, ITC and the library, in partnership, extend the centrality of the library to the academic community. The combined mission of ITC and the library results in the pursuit of library policies and procedures designed:

- > To increase knowledge and use of library resources by ITC students and faculty in classroom teaching, seminars, independent

³³Interdenominational Theological Center, *Report of Institutional Self-Study* (Atlanta: ITC, 1990), 42.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 43.

study and research;

- > To ensure the proper development and management of the collection in support of the master's and doctoral programs of ITC; and
- > To assist in the preservation and utilization of archival materials and special collections relating to the Black Church and its African and African-Caribbean heritage.³⁵

C. Curriculum

In keeping with ITC's mission to educate women and men who serve the African-American Church, the curriculum is conceived as a plan to provide graduate and professional learning opportunities for students. These learnings exemplify the close relationship between the school's mission and curriculum development, formulating the theoretical basis for building library collections (acquiring, preparing and preserving) to meet the needs of the academic community.

The philosophy of a holistic theological education undergirding the curriculum is grounded in an understanding of the Christian faith which affirms liberation (church as God's agent for salvation and freedom from oppression of all humankind), wholeness, justice, righteousness, reconciliation, and love.³⁶ There is a basic concern at the center of the cur-

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Interdenominational Theological Center, *Report of the Curriculum Revision Task Force, 1990-1993* (Atlanta: ITC, 1993), 1. There is a formal process in place for revising the curriculum every six years.

riculum which emphasizes the spiritual and academic development of persons in a global context. The school "holds a deep conviction as to the worth and value of each person and the belief that persons will make informed decisions for themselves when provided with a nurturing environment and the necessary learning opportunities."³⁷

Faculty expect students to "drink deeply" at this "well of knowledge." In so doing, a living environment is created which fosters critical and analytical thinking (investigation, reflection, evaluation, communication, decision-making, and responsible action).³⁸ Learners are challenged to identify concerns which affect the human spirit, resulting in their becoming agents of change locally, nationally and internationally. The curriculum invites a communal response, which, in turn, creates a shared commitment to learning. Courses of study open "windows of awareness," sometimes surprising in depth and intensity, of personal and intellectual growth and liberation.³⁹

To express the mission of the institution there is a rationale for organization which perceives each theological discipline within the curriculum as essential to the functioning of the whole. No discipline, however, is more important than another. Attempting to facilitate this process, the designation of "Area" places teacher and student in a position not only to be actualizers of Christian faith, but also to be actualized by it.⁴⁰ This interaction is intended to stimulate the critical and analytical thinking referenced earlier as well as to encourage research and writing by both teachers and students. "All persons involved in the curriculum should view themselves as

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 3.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰*Interdenominational Theological Center 1996-99 Catalog*, 68.

persons 'in process,' under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."⁴¹

Four Areas have been designated, providing an opportunity for group-related concerns, as a forum for faculty with similar disciplines and initial interdisciplinary teaching:

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|
| Area I: | Biblical Studies and Languages |
| Area II: | Philosophy, Theology, Ethics and History |
| Area III: | Persons, Society and Culture |
| Area IV: | The Church and Its Mission ⁴² |

This structure provides unity within the framework of theological education and transcends the unhealthy tension that has existed between theory and practice, theoreticism and practitioners;⁴³ and closes the gap between fragmentation of subject matter.

The writer has demonstrated the relationship between ITC's mission, curriculum and library as this "translates" into building collections to support academic programs.⁴⁴

The African-centered perspective, the context for this endeavor, is also communicated in an examination of the particularities of collection development—one of the issues affirming diversity in developing African-American theological collections.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 68-69.

⁴³Ibid., 68.

⁴⁴Six degree programs are offered at ITC: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Education, Master of Arts in Church Music, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling, and double degrees comprise the sixth program.

IV. Collection Development

It is essential that an institution speaks with clarity in articulating its mission and the library's understanding of that mission as expressed in collection development policy statements. Context is the beginning point for building balanced collections, and this is apparent where the particularity is African American as in this commentary. The school and the library, in partnership, demonstrate how mission is conceptualized into collection building. This is usually a written document called the collection development policy which carefully defines the library's proposal to collect resources to meet the needs of its academic environment.

A. Purpose

We ask the question, "What are the purposes of a collection development policy?" At ITC/AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, they are:

To enable selectors to work with greater consistency toward defined goals, thus building and shaping stronger collections, and using limited funds more wisely;

To inform users, administrators, trustees and others of the scope and nature of existing collections and the plans for continuing development of resources;

To provide information that will assist in the budgetary allocation process; and

To support the instructional programs of the

participating schools in the AUC consortium.⁴⁵

B. Parameters

Moving to general priorities governing selection, collection parameters are important. For ITC, the most recent edition of materials that support its curriculum are purchased. These resources are placed in the general collection, as well as collected for and housed in Archives/Special Collections, Curriculum Materials Center, Serials Department, and Government Documents. Special formats include:

- > Microforms
- > Electronic Resources
- > Pamphlets
- > Dissertations
- > Maps⁴⁶

A well-developed collection development policy recognizes limitations and priorities. A statement must be made regarding gifts, duplicates, replacements, textbooks, binding and mending, weeding. Faculty, for example, need to understand the number of copies of a resource which the library purchases. It is essential that this is spelled out. For ITC, it is a maximum of three copies.

⁴⁵Robert W. Woodruff Library, *The Collection Development Policy of the Robert W. Woodruff Library* (Atlanta: The Library, 1997), 3-4.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 8-9.

Similarly, the question of textbooks needs to be addressed. If the purpose of the general collection is to augment course work, the library needs to determine if textbooks will be purchased except in classes where they are the only available source of information or when recognized by an expert as a classic in the discipline. The "thorny" question of weeding must be pursued. Too frequently, librarians are reluctant to discard materials. Does the collection development policy address this issue? Deselection must be done to maintain a collection that is vital, useful and supportive of curricular offerings. This process, although sometimes painful, receives the same integrity as the selection of materials. Contextual particularities (collecting specialities) are observed, however. This means, for ITC, that the library retains all resources that document the Black Experience.

C. Collecting Levels

The collection development policy must address collection levels to ensure a balanced collection with density where appropriate. The ITC/AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library identifies three levels: research, study and basic. ITC's focus is on the first level. This collection includes the major published source materials required for dissertations and independent research, research reporting, new findings, and scientific experimental results. All important reference works and a wide assortment of specialized monographs, as well as an extensive collection of journal and major indexing and abstracting services for the theological disciplines are selected.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Ibid., 12-13.

D. Languages

Regarding foreign languages, the policy identifies those that support course offerings and are expected by accrediting agencies. Consequently, ITC collects in Greek, Hebrew, German and Latin.⁴⁸ The other schools in the AUC collect in French, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili and Japanese. As expected, foreign language dictionaries and encyclopedias in the reference collection are purchased.

E. Various Countries of Origin

If the library intends to acquire resources from countries other than through regularly-used vendors who promote overseas exchanges, the policy needs to address this "specialized acquisition process." Attempting to collect from "Two-Thirds World" destinations can be daunting.

Libraries approaching this task with Western presuppositions, i.e., Western intellectual traditions of scholarship, discover that much of the primary documentation of "Two-Thirds World" countries remain uncollected. Although ITC and the Woodruff Library do not represent this bias, there is concern about the logistics of acquisitions, bibliographic command and preservation.⁴⁹ Also, since our focus is narrow—

⁴⁸Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics is presently taught at Clark Atlanta University (CAU). Conversation is underway between CAU and ITC for hieroglyphics to be offered as a biblical language for ITC students.

⁴⁹For a discussion of collecting from Latin America, see Curtis L. Bochanyin, Alan D. Krieger and Donald M. Vorp, respondents, "Latin American Collecting and Theological Libraries," in *Summary of Proceedings, Forty-fourth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, ed. Betty A. O'Brien (Evanston, IL: The Association, 1990), 191-200.

documentation of the Black Experience (Latin American, Africa and Asia)—we have been only moderately successful.

One of the most effective ways to collect from various countries of origin is direct, personal contact. This can be accomplished from exchange of faculty persons, travel seminars, personal correspondence, guest professors, all of which require great persistence. The ITC/AUC Woodruff Library has utilized personnel from the Mission Resource Center, the training program for missionaries from the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church which is located in Atlanta under the joint sponsorship of the Candler School of Theology/Emory University and ITC, to search for requested titles. Also, another viable resource for ITC is its own Religious Heritage of the African World, a project-program focusing on the Pan-African and "Two-Thirds World" religious heritages. Professors and students traveling abroad have been successful in selecting titles in their disciplines and mailing them to the library. Expense is incurred, but this rather unique feature of collection development has enabled ITC to acquire monographs not available in the United States.

F. Subject Disciplines

A well-worded policy delineates an analysis of collection coverage for each subject area. Although there are over ninety subject disciplines in the Atlanta University Center schools, the writer focuses on the one discipline about which ITC is most concerned—theology. That which follows analyzes this discipline as represented in ITC's degree programs and interpreted by the library in its written collection development policy, identifying areas directly related to the Black Experience with liberation motifs. (Space does not

permit even a cursory glance at the 200-plus courses in ITC's curriculum, all of which interweave the African-American perspective, including Liberation Theology—specifically Black Theology.)

Firstly, there are the interdisciplinary courses of which two are identified: "Foundations for Ministry" and "Black Women in Ministry." "Foundations," a basic three-phase offering,⁵⁰ required of all beginning M.Div. students, has as its major goal the introduction to holistic Christian ministry. Focus is on the integration of the total curriculum and the awareness of lifelong learning as a prerequisite for complete, committed, compassionate religious leadership. Emphasis is placed on ministry within the Black witnessing community.

Secondly, "Black Women in Ministry" is designed to explore the significant issues related to Black Women and the Church. The scope is both historical and contemporary, exploring theological, socio-political, psychological and ecclesiological aspects of the subject. The course is open to women and men.

Area I (Biblical Studies and Languages):

- > "Black Peoples and Personalities in the Bible"
- > "Issues in the Interpretation of Paul" (hermeneutical issues of particular significance for African-American churches)

Area II (Philosophy, Theology, Ethics and History):

- > "History of Black Theological Thought in America"

⁵⁰The course (first year), Professional Assessment in Theological Education (second year), and the Senior Integrative Seminar (third year).

The Journal of I.T.C.

- > "Seminar in Black Theology"(examines Black theological thought while focusing primarily upon contemporary Black Theology)
- > "Philosophical and Theological Views of Humanity" (special attention given to emerging trends of humankind developed by Liberation Theologies)
- > "Seminar - Foundations for African-American Theology and Ethics"
- > "Moral Strategies and African-American Religious Leadership"
- > "Black Film as a Genre of Theological and Ethical Reform"
- > "Church History II - From Martin Luther to Martin Luther King, Jr." (emphasizes the Black Experience as a vital aspect of total history)
- > "African Church Mothers and Fathers"
- > "Black Ministry in Historical Perspective"
- > "History of the African-American Church"
- > "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Movement for Social Justice"

Area III (Persons, Society and Culture):

- > "Directed Research-Heritage and African-American Religious Concepts and Heritage and African-American Religious Movements"
- > "Pastoral Psychology and the African-American Experience"
- > "African Christianity as African Religion: A Spiritual Force and Pan-Africanism"

- > "The Bhakti Experience: Devotional Religions in Various Contexts" (examines this phenomenon in Black churches)
- > "African and Middle Eastern Religions"
- > "Philosophy and Practice of Traditional African Religions"

Area IV (The Church and Its Mission):

- > "Christian Education and the Black Church"
- > "Denominational Polity" (a study of structure and practices of the respective denominational constituents of ITC)
- > "The Pastor as Liberating Communicator"
- > "African-American Church Music"
- > "Seminar - Exegetical Approach to the Use of Hymns, Spirituals and Black Gospel Songs"
- > "History of Preaching" (examines preaching in the Black tradition)
- > "Liturgical Preaching and Worship" (examines consensus lectionaries to ascertain integrity in African-American worship)

These course offerings have research components requiring extensive use of the library's collections (print and non-print—emphasis on electronic formats). This thrust is enabled, in part, by the collection development policy which conceptualizes the mission of the school, and demonstrates this understanding by building collections undergirding the diverse needs of its academic community.

G. Role of Faculty

The collection development policies of ITC, Howard Divinity School, Payne Theological Seminary, Shaw Divinity School, Hood Theological Seminary and Virginia Union University School of Theology—the identified African-American seminaries—indicate that faculty have a role in the selection process. Determining what this role is and how it is achieved requires the "wisdom of Solomon" and the "patience of Job."

Librarians, waving an "imaginary wand," which will somehow magically transform the reversal of traditional roles to "discipline-oriented librarians and library-oriented professors"⁵¹ will find themselves in need of reality testing! It appears that the time-worn concept of subject selectors' continuing determination to meaningfully involve faculty in a collaborative effort to build collections will remain. Consequently, librarians will continue to spend energies justifying the library's contribution to the educational mission of their institutions.

Yet, who better than faculty can determine the resources needed to support and develop their subject specialties, and who better than librarians can facilitate this process? There may exist "a floating uneasiness"⁵² between the two entities; however, through committed and serious conversa-

⁵¹Betsy Baker and Marilee Birchfield, "Bibliographic Instruction: Bringing the Faculty on Board," in *Summary of Proceedings, Forty-fourth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, ed. Betty A. O'Brien (Evanston, IL: The Association, 1990), 227.

⁵²William E. Leshner, "Globalization and Its Significance for Theological Libraries," in *Summary of Proceedings, Forty-fourth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, ed. Betty A. O'Brien (Evanston, IL: The Association, 1990), 142.

tion—"sounds charged with intentionality"⁵³—this interaction can result in faculty's willingness to assist in this vital endeavor.

ITC's faculty may be an exception in the collection development process. Not only are they involved in selection, they come to the library to identify strengths and weaknesses of the theological collection as these concerns relate to their courses of study and to their research and publication. Frequently, librarians are beset with students who come to the library to do their "library assignments." These persons may be inadequately motivated and fail to understand why they are in "the library" for research purposes. This, fortunately, is not the case with ITC students. Syllabi have extensive research components, and the faculty expect learners to produce scholarly work. Faculty incorporate "critical thinking skills into their teaching, rather than relying solely on emphasizing information-finding techniques."⁵⁴ Students are equipped to "examine their assumptions and biases about a subject,"⁵⁵ contributing new syntheses and new conclusions.

A word of caution is needed. The attitude of faculty toward the library is the most notable factor influencing utilization of collections.⁵⁶ That which occurs in the classroom, e.g., the educational philosophy and teaching style of faculty, exerts more powerful influences on students' research behavior than librarians' efforts to motivate.⁵⁷ Students view fac-

⁵³Ibid., 143.

⁵⁴Evelyn B. Haynes, "Librarian-Faculty Partnerships in Instruction," in *Advances in Librarianship*, vol. 20, ed. Irene Godden (New York: Academic Press, 1996), 204.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 194. Here Haynes is referencing K. Allen, "Student and Faculty Attitudes," *Library College Journal* 3 (1970): 28-36.

⁵⁷Ibid., 193-194.

ulty as the authority, not librarians. And, on occasion, this scenario is enacted: ". . . even misinformation from faculty members is more authoritative than knowledgeable and accurate information from a librarian."⁵⁸ As faculty work with selectors in building collection density in their respective disciplines and assist students in usage, an awesome responsibility emerges: Students' perception of the library and how the library meets their needs is almost always filtered through faculty eyes and can be a "stronger motivator than reality."⁵⁹

One final word regarding faculty and their role in collection building and maintenance is in order. Faculty may not be aware of their responsibility to help build a collection utilizing electronic texts. However, with the proliferation of information systems, faculty, in order to be on the cutting edge of their disciplines, will need to recommend resources in electronic formats. Librarians must play a vital role "as facilitators providing scholars with the resources necessary to develop and test new theoretical models."⁶⁰ Both faculty and librarians can support each other through understanding copyright and licensing agreements, mainstreaming, costs, availability of products, software compatibility, hardware maintenance and staffing.⁶¹ Interestingly enough, collection development policy statements may need to be formulated for specific formats and genres of electronic publication.⁶²

⁵⁸Ibid., 198.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Marianne I. Grant, "Literary Text in an Electronic Age," in *Advances in Librarianship*, vol. 19, ed. Irene Godden (New York: Academic Press, 1995), 200.

⁶¹Ibid., 201.

⁶²Ibid.

H. Role of Library Committee

In order for the library to achieve that which has been discussed in this section, there needs to be a strong advocate to promote faculty involvement in building collections. The Library Committee cannot only accomplish this task but can also promote the centrality of the library to the academic community in the development and implementation of relevant programs.

ITC's Library Committee is composed of a faculty representative from each of the four curricular Areas, the Theological Librarian, two students and one denominational dean. The Academic Dean is the ex-officio member.

The Committee serves as the conduit for concerns from faculty and students to the library and also as the conduit for concerns from the library to ITC. In addition, the Committee relates directly to the Director of the Woodruff Library through the Office of the Academic Dean via the Woodruff Library's Advisory Council. The Committee, consequently, facilitates the flow of information about educational resources and policies pertaining to the ITC/AUC cooperative library venture, and, in turn, affects the decision-making process through appropriate channels.

In assuming a vigorous advocacy role, the Committee attempts:

To monitor the acquisition of resources to develop the collection in religion, theology and philosophy. This process includes purchasing in and utilization of practically all subject areas represented within the Library of Congress classification system;

To stress the role of the faculty in the acquisition process, especially in faculty's respective disciplines;

To address concerns from faculty and students regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the collection as these concerns relate to the courses of study (both master and doctoral levels) and to faculty research and publication; and

To support the special emphasis of ITC in service to the Black Church, e.g., preserving denominational archives and Special Collections.

The Library Committee assists in developing programs that encourage reading, writing and research; enhance teaching, learning, and the critical assimilation of information; and stimulate the intentional use of the Library by its users. Thus, the Library Committee in its advocacy role (partnership with ITC and the Library) seeks new opportunities and challenges in serving and furthering the aims of its constituency.

V. Special Resources

The African-centered perspective, the context for this critique, is also referenced in a review of special resources—one of the issues affirming diversity in developing African-American theological collections. Special sources in libraries and research centers in the United States and abroad are extremely important for identifying, collecting, preserving and disseminating information documenting the Black Experience.

A. Collections at Six African-American Seminaries

The ITC/AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, Department of Archives/Special Collections represents the library's "crown jewels" of special materials. Space permits only a list of the most important collections: the Carnegie Art Reference Set, the Henry P. Slaughter and Countee Cullen Memorial Collection of graphic and performing artists, the John Henrik Clarke Collection, the papers of Southern Regional Council Archival Collection of Race Relations . . . in the Southeast, the Hoyt W. Fuller Collection, the William Crogman Collection, the poetical musical works of the internationally acclaimed Dr. Eva Jessye, the complete set of Howard Thurman tapes, the John and Eugenia Burns Hope Papers, and the Vivian Henderson Collection.

Materials transferred from ITC to the centralized library include archival collections from the six constituent seminaries, documenting their founding. The most historical collection in the ITC repository is Gammon Theological Seminary, which documents the Black Experience of the United Methodist Church. ITC's holdings provide a collection for extensive research of the Black Church and Black Theology.⁶³

The African Heritage Collection at **Howard University School of Theology** documents the Civil Rights era and

⁶³For a detailed discussion of the special holdings in the ITC/AUC Woodruff Library, see Minnie Clayton, "Special Collections at the Atlanta University Center," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History*, ed. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), 81-102. Also see Dikran Y. Hadidian, "Seminary Libraries," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Studies*, vol. 27, ed. Allen Kent (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1979), 235-236, where reference is made that ITC "concentrates on acquiring material on the Black Church."

the life/history of African Americans and the African diaspora. This corpus now includes Black and "Two-Thirds World" theologies, indigenous religions of Africa, and Islam (especially in Africa) religious movements; the personal library of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays; and video and audio tapes of convocations, special speeches, lecture series and sermons.

Hood Theological Seminary's denominational relationship is African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and this emphasis is reflected in the collection on the AME Zion Church. Also, special resources on Black and Womanist Theology are represented. **Shaw Divinity School**, affiliated with the General Baptist State Convention, North Carolina, maintains special resources related to this denomination. **Virginia Union University School of Theology's** African-American collection consists of media resources, rare slave documents, pamphlets, children's books which reflect the Black Experience.

Payne Theological Seminary's collection emphasis are resources pertaining to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and to the history of the school. AME publications, the Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom Collection (papers and sermons), the George A. Singleton Collection (editor of the *Christian Recorder*, 1936-1944), and personal papers of C. S. Spivey, Jr., and W. R. Payne are representative.

B. Broadly Based African-American and African Collections

Collecting and preserving the cultural heritage of people of African descent is not limited to African-American institutions. The "flowering of interest" in the Black Experience referenced in the Introduction of this essay can be seen in a growing number of predominately white repositories that

document various aspects of Black history. Three of these endeavors are discussed briefly. They are, of course, only representative of efforts in this area.

The **Library of Vanderbilt University**, Nashville, Tennessee houses the Kelly Miller Smith Research Collection. Rev. Smith played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. This collection reflects his skill in three areas: innovative leader in the Black Church, academician as professor and assistant dean of the Divinity School and community activist involved in negotiations after the 1960 sit-ins. The Kelly Miller Smith papers promote understanding of an appreciation for the Black Church in the Nashville area and in the South.⁶⁴

Emory University Candler School of Theology's Pitts Library, Atlanta, Georgia, realized the need to acquire "Two-Thirds World" publications written by non-Western and non-white Christians and initiated the African project. Working from a core list of 350 titles of church-related and mission periodicals published in Africa, the library moved to develop an African resource center.

The objective for this endeavor is to acquire primary church documents and periodical literature published in Africa and to disseminate this information to researchers. The process was one of improvisement: sending hundreds of letters in English and French to ecclesiastical organizations, requesting their publications for the library's African resource center. The Pitts Library now receives approximately 230 religious newsletters, newspapers and periodicals from thirty-

⁶⁴See Dorothy Ruth Parks, "A Brief Description of the Kelly Miller Smith Research Collection," in *Summary of Proceedings, Forty-ninth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, ed. Karen Lee Anderson and Melody S. Chartier (Evanston, IL: The Association, 1995), 119-120.

six African countries.

This corpus of literature constitutes the building blocks of the written histories of the church in Africa. It is imperative that new ways are devised so that faculty, students and church leaders can clearly hear the voices of the emerging majority of "Two-Thirds World" Christians. The African project of Pitts Library is one way in which the life, thinking and witness of sisters and brothers in African churches can be shared.⁶⁵

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, has established the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African-American Documentation of the University Library. This Center is intended to enlarge the University's collection of materials dealing with race relations, slavery, the abolition movement, and civil rights.⁶⁶ One of the exhibits, "Third Person, First Person: Slave Voices from the Special Collections Library," traces the life experiences of American slaves and examines the process for preserving African-American history of the period.

Duke University Divinity School's Office of Black Church Affairs provides services in four areas which help to document the Black Religious Experience: Academic Study, Preaching and Lecture Series, Continuing Education and Church Relationships.⁶⁷ Each of these efforts enables this

⁶⁵Channing R. Jeschke, "Acquisitions and the African Project at the Pitts Theology Library: A Reflection," in *Summary of Proceedings, Fortieth Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, ed. Betty A. O'Brien (St. Meinrad, IN: The Association, 1986), 75-87.

⁶⁶*The Chronicle* (Durham, NC), 30 June 1997.

⁶⁷The Divinity School, Duke University, "The Office of Black Church Affairs" [brochure online] (Durham, NC: Duke University Divinity School); accessed 28 September 1998; available from <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/black.html>; Internet.

Office to assist Black students in deriving the greatest possible value from theological education and to call the entire Divinity School to serious dialogue with the Black Church.⁶⁸

C. Research Centers for Black Studies

The **Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**, at 135th Street in Harlem, is one of the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library System. This famous collection began in 1925 with the establishment of the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints. In 1926 the private library of Arthur Alfonso Schomburg was acquired by the New York Public Library. Financial assistance was provided by the Carnegie Corporation and the National Urban League. Following Arthur Schomburg's death in 1938, the Negro Division became the Schomburg Collection, renamed in his honor.

Throughout the 1940s, this famous repository was more than a reference collection. Assuming an activist role, the Schomburg Collection and the facility that housed it became involved with the NAACP and the National Urban League. Its lecture series highlighted Black scholars who reviewed the issues of the day. During the 1950s and 1960s, concerns regarding funding, desegregation and students' strikes influenced the Schomburg's growth and development.

In 1972 the collection was renamed the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Legislature, and the National Cash Register Corporation gave a new lease on life for the Center. In the early eighties, after much effort, a new building was erected to supplement the

⁶⁸Ibid.

old 135th Street structure.

The Schomburg Collection is a monument to Arthur Schomburg's courage and expresses his life's work. His contribution to the history and culture to people of African descent is immeasurable.⁶⁹

The **Moorland-Spingarn Research Center**, Howard University, Washington, DC, was founded in 1914 and documents the worldwide history of people of African descent. The generosity of Jesse E. Moorland and Arthur B. Spingarn enabled this Center to be established.

With the acquisition of the Lewis Tappan Collection in 1873, the University Library became recognized for its antislavery holdings. Nurtured by Dr. Kelly Miller, professor and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Jesse E. Moorland contributed his private library in 1914. This collection consisted of over 6,000 books, manuscripts and artifacts documenting Black history in Africa and the United States. The University Library became the "first research library in an American university devoted exclusively to materials on the Negro."⁷⁰

Dorothy B. Porter, curator of the Moorland Founda-

⁶⁹See Elinor Sinnette, "Arthur Alfonso Schomburg (1874-1938): Black Bibliophile and Collector," and Jean Blackwell Hutson, "The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History*, ed. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), 35-45, 68-80. Both chapters provided this writer with much of the content for this section. Also see Jean Blackwell Hutson, "The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, vol. 26, ed. Allen Kent (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1979), 355-360.

⁷⁰Michael R. Winston, "Jesse Edward Moorland," in *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, ed. Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1982), 451.

tion for forty-three years, brought the collection to international prominence. Under her guidance, Howard University purchased the library of Arthur B. Spingarn in 1946. This collection of 5,000 books was strong in coverage of African-Cuban, African-Brazilian, African and Haitian writers. With the addition of the Spingarn Collection, the repository was named The Moorland-Spingarn Collection and became a valuable research library documenting the Black Experience.

In 1973 the Moorland-Spingarn Collection became the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center with separate Manuscript and Library Divisions and Support Units. The Manuscript Division is comprised of four departments: Manuscript, Music, Oral History and Prints and Photographs. The Manuscript Department, for example, houses the papers of Alain Locke, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles C. Diggs, Paul Robeson, Vernon Jordan, Benjamin E. Mays, George B. Murphy, Jr., Charles H. Houston, the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.⁷¹ The Library Division consists of a closed-stack library of 150,000 volumes of books, newspapers, periodicals, serials, and microfilms.⁷²

Presently, this Research Center provides services for the Howard community and hosts thousands of scholars, both national and international. The legacy of Black culture is preserved with comprehensive book collections, periodicals, manuscripts, sheet music, oral history, sound recordings, photographs, artifacts and memorabilia by and about Black per-

⁷¹Betty M. Culpepper, "Moorland-Spingarn Research Center: A Legacy of Bibliophiles," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History*, ed. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), 109-110.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 111.

sons.⁷³

The **Special Collections at Fisk University**, Nashville, Tennessee, have a legacy from Arthur Schomburg, who served as the first curator of the Fisk Collections in the early 1930s. This repository's collections are identified by special headings.

- ◆ Fisk Archives - papers of the noted Fisk Jubilee Singers who brought much recognition to the University during their concert tours in the United States and abroad. Also, the papers of Charles S. Johnson, the first Black president of Fisk University.
- ◆ Art - papers of the Harlem Renaissance artist Aaron Douglas, the folk-type drawings of Winold Reiss and African drawings.
- ◆ Literature - the collections of Arna Bontemps, Charles Waddell Chesnutt, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes and Jean Toomer.
- ◆ Music - papers of composer John W. Work III, the George Gershwin Memorial Collection of Music and Musical Literature, W. C. Handy, Thomas Andrew Dorsey and Scott Joplin collections.
- ◆ Organizations - the papers of Sigma Phi Pi and

⁷³Ibid., 103. Betty Culpepper's chapter, 103-114, presents a full treatment of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center and provided this writer with much of the content for this section.

the Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives.

- ◆ Politics and Law - the papers of William Levi Dawson, John Mercer Langston and Nashville civil rights attorney Z. Alexander Looby.
- ◆ Race Relations - collections of Charles S. Johnson and Robert E. Park.
- ◆ Social Issues - papers of W. E. B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey.
- ◆ Women - papers of Eileen Southern and Naomi Long Madget.⁷⁴

In addition to the four repositories included in the discussion of Research Centers for Black Studies,⁷⁵ the writer identifies important geographical resources, expanding the arrangement of Jessie Carney Smith, University Librarian at Fisk University.

Northeast

District of Columbia: The repositories of the **Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History**

⁷⁴Jessie Carney Smith, ". . . The Special Collections at Fisk University," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History*, ed. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), 62-66.

⁷⁵Atlanta University Center, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Howard University and Fisk University.

New Haven, CT: **James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection** housed at Yale University

Philadelphia, PA: **Charles Blockson Collection** housed at Temple University

Lincoln University, PA: **Langston Hughes Collection** housed at Lincoln University

Midwest

Oberlin, OH: **The Antislavery Collection** housed at Oberlin College

Evanston, IL: **African Collection** housed at Northwestern University

Detroit, MI: **Burton Historical Collection and the E. Azalia Hackley Collection** housed at the Detroit Public Library

Chicago, IL: **Carter G. Woodson Library** housed at the Chicago Library System

West

Los Angeles, CA: **Black Collections** housed at University of California at Los Angeles

Stanford, CA: **Hoover Institution on War Revolution and Peace** (especially materials on Africa) housed at Stanford University

South

New Orleans, LA: **Amistad Research Center**
Chapel Hill, NC: **University of North Carolina's
Southern Historical Collection**

Charlottesville, VA: **University of Virginia's Manuscript Division** (material on plantation records, Underground Railroad, instruction of slaves)

Hampton, VA: **Hampton University's rich culture on Black Americans**

Tuskegee, AL: **Tuskegee University's collection on Booker T. Washington** (excluding papers located in Washington), **the papers of Monroe Nathan Work and George Washington Carver**

Atlanta, GA: **Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System's Auburn Avenue Research Library collections on African-American culture and history, the exhibits of APEX (African-American Panoramic Experience) Museum** depicting the cultural heritage of African Americans and their contributions and achievements in American history, and the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change** collects materials of organizations and individuals involved in the Civil Rights Movement (1954 -).⁷⁶

Before closing the discussion on regional reposito-

⁷⁶Jessie C. Smith, "... The Special Collections at Fisk University," 60-62. Also see Walter Schatz, *Directory of Afro-American Resources* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1970) for an older but useful description of regional repositories.

ries, the collections of historic Black colleges must be mentioned. Over one hundred in number, these institutions maintain the rich legacy of Black history.⁷⁷

VI. Conclusion

Developing theological collections from the African-American perspective examines diverse issues that identify the unique context for this study and determine the foundation upon which to build the discussion. The African-centered perspective is the issue that drives this context, and is expressed in the analysis of mission-driven culture (ethos) and curriculum, collection development, and special resources.

The African-centered perspective which interprets data with reference to the African world experience and differs from the Western view of history, hopefully has opened up ideological consciousness to new ways of responding. In order for this to occur, new frames of mental reference are required, both affirming the spectrum of diversity and naming racialism.

If old thought patterns are crumbling and new perceptions are slowly forming, resulting in a "flowering of interest" in the Black Experience, action initiatives are introduced to discover lacuna in documenting Black history and to retrieve sources of history to generate African-American

⁷⁷For a profile of Historic Black Colleges, see Charlene Hoffman, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, [1996]). Also see Levirn Hill, ed., *Black American Colleges and Universities: Profiles of Two-Year, Four-Year and Professional Schools* (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1994) for library holdings/special collections.

collections which preserve a common culture. All of this, however, is not yet a reality. Channing Jeschke, former director of the Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, names "cultural arrogance"⁷⁸ as limiting our capacities to engage the African-centered perspective. This is unfortunate.

ITC, along with the five other African-American theological schools identified in this paper, exemplify a unique mission: educating men and women who will serve the African-American Church. This is the context wherein the investigation of diverse issues which determine developing African-American theological collections is tested against the larger environment of "subtle limitations of cultural and racial boundaries of inherited patterns of thinking and behavior."⁷⁹

⁷⁸Jeschke, "Acquisitions and the African Project," 86.

⁷⁹Ibid.

