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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### BAPTIST CONVENTION LEADERS TOUR ITC'S GARDNER TAYLOR ARCHIVES



(l-r) Dr. Tyrone Pitts, William T. Perkins, T. DeWitt Smith Jr., Stephen Thurston, Samuel Tolbert, A. Wayne Johnson, and Michael A. Battle in the Taylor Archives

(Atlanta, GA - March 12, 2008) The Gardner C. Taylor Archives and Preaching Laboratory has drawn many visitors to the campus of The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) since its opening in October 2007. The intrigue of seeing just how the lab operates, its features and benefits to theological education, recently brought to the campus the leaders of all four Baptist Conventions.

Dr. T. DeWitt Smith Jr., president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, returned for a second tour, having witnessed an earlier private demonstration of the facility and sufficiently impressed to return with clergy colleagues. ITC President Michael A. Battle, joined by Dr. William T. Perkins, the president-dean of ITC's Baptist seminary affiliate, Morehouse School of Religion, explained that the Archives has a three-pronged function: to serve as a classroom for teaching advanced Homiletics courses; as an extension of the institution's Distance Learning smart classroom, and as a forum for sermonic critiques of specially invited clergy to provide additional instructional tools for ITC students and others in pursuit of theological education.

ITC is also in the process of establishing a Gardner Taylor Endowed Chair in Homiletics and Church Administration. In fact, Dr. Smith was among several persons in attendance at the Archive's grand opening who pledged to support the fundraising campaign for the



project. During a roundtable discussion and obvious approval of the facility, the leaders pledged their financial support of ITC's efforts to preserve the preaching legacy of one revered throughout the Church as the "Dean of Preachers," Dr. Gardner C. Taylor.

More than 160 of Taylor's audio and video sermons are currently available for listening and viewing in the archives. Over 40 volumes of his sermons are already being cataloged at the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center, with the expectation of receiving more as they are being transferred from Dr. Taylor's personal library to the ITC.

The leaders present representing the Baptist Conventions were: Dr. Stephen J. Thurston, President, National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. and his General Secretary, Dr. Samuel Tolbert; Dr. T. DeWitt Smith Jr., President, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (PNBC) and Dr. Tyrone Pitts, PNBC's General Secretary; and, Dr. A Wayne Johnson, General Secretary for the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, representing his president Dr. C.C. Robertson. Dr. William J. Shaw, President of the National Baptist Convention, USA was unable to attend.

The Taylor Archives is open to the public during special hours each week. For additional information, call 404-527-6394 or visit the ITC website at [www.itc.edu](http://www.itc.edu).

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