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**LEADERS OF DIFFERENT FAITHS ANNOUNCE
PLANS TO COMBAT A COMMON ENEMY**

**A Christian-Muslim Alliance Announced at ITC's
ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY FORUM**



(l-r) Bishop Earl McCloud, AME Ecumenical Affairs Officer; Dr. Michael A. Battle, ITC President; Rev. Jasper Williams, Pastor, Salem Bible Church; Minister Abdul Sharrief Muhammad, Nation of Islam Mosque #15, and Rev. Gerald Durley, Pastor of Providence Baptist Church at ITC Ecumenical Leadership and Public Policy Forum.

October 1, 2006, Atlanta, GA - While Dr. Michael A. Battle and Bishop Earl McCloud were planning an historic meeting of clergy representing the eight mainline African American Christian denominations in an Ecumenical Leadership and Public Policy Forum on the campus of The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC); not far away, Rev. Jasper

Williams, pastor of Salem Bible Church, was also making plans to fight crime in the southwest corridor of the city with an unlikely ally, Minister Abdul Sharrief Muhammad of The Nation of Islam Mosque #15 in Atlanta. The opportunity to enlarge that collaboration surfaced while Rev. Williams and Brother Muhammad were being interviewed during an evening broadcast on WAOK News and Talk Radio. They were talking about *Black on Black crime*, the havoc it has wreaked in Atlanta and their plans to join forces to fight the common enemy despite their different approaches to religion. ITC President, Michael A. Battle, was listening and called in to invite the two ministers to join him and other faith leaders at ITC's Ecumenical Leadership and Public Policy Forum the following day. The timing and the audience would be ripe for hearing about their new friendship and crime combat strategy.

As president of the ITC, Dr. Battle understands different denominations coming together, working cooperatively toward achieving a common goal. That has been the hallmark of the ITC for 49 years -- providing theological education in an academic environment that is intentionally diverse through six affiliate seminaries and attracting all races, creeds, and colors with a desire to explore theology from an afro-centric perspective.

Reaching across lines of denominational division has been a uniquely rewarding experience for all who attend the institution. "We have a strategic plan by which we are operating that has been dubbed "Ecumenism in Action. While listening to Rev. Williams and Minister Muhammad speak with passion about their concerns for the welfare of those in our communities who are experiencing needless and random violence; it was clear that they are laying aside the differences that would divide them and coming together to work toward correcting circumstances they both recognize run counter to faith and humanity. This, too, is ecumenism in action. So I extended an invitation for these men to join us at the forum," says Battle.

Bishop Earl McCloud, Ecumenical Affairs Officer for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, facilitated the forum on September 28th, bringing together representatives from the Historic Black Churches in the U.S. that are members of the National Council of Churches U.S.A. It was a major gathering, drawing over 300 clergy and community

leaders from across the region to listen and dialogue. The panelists comprised leaders with the authority to influence Church governance, representing thousands of congregations across the nation. In the wake of denominational leaders of the Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostal denominations including Bishop Samuel Norris, Drs. Tyrone Pitts, Staccato Powell, and Leonard Lovett, addressing critical issues facing American society and how the Church can wield its powerful constituency to make a difference, Rev. Williams and Minister Muhammad made brief statements about their alliance to fight crime in the Bowen Homes and Hollywood Road areas of Atlanta. “We have decided to work together to seek out and work with the perpetrators of crime and to help those who are being victimized by crime,” said Williams.

Dr. Battle further commented, “What these men are attempting to do is exemplary and indicative of the direction we should take throughout our communities across this nation – working together across the lines of division, be they race, ethnicity, and religion.”

an hour long special presentation of the Ecumenical Leadership and Public Policy Forum will be shown on Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters, AIB Comcast Channel 5. Call 404-527-7718 for a schedule of air times or you may log on to AIBNET.TV.

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