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*(l-r) Dr. Leonard Lovett, Bishop Franklin Norris, Dr. Tyrone Pitts)*



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## **EIGHT BLACK MAINLINE DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS CONVERGE AT ITC FOR “ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY”**

**Atlanta, August 10, 2006** - The second in a series of public policy forums at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), “*Ecumenical Leadership and Public Policy*,” will take place Thursday, September 28, 2006 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the ITC Chapel at 700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Atlanta, GA. Key leaders of the eight predominantly Black Church denominations will serve as panelists, who include: Dr. Tyrone Pitts, Progressive National Baptist Convention; Bishop Marshall Gilmore, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Bishop Samuel Tolbert, National Baptist Convention of America; Bishop Richard Franklin Norris, African Methodist Episcopal Church; Rev. Charles Mock, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; Rev. Bernard Black, National Missionary Convention; Dr. Staccato Powell, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; and Dr. Leonard Lovett, representing the Church of God in Christ, Inc.

ITC has partnered in a second dialogue with the Historic Black Church Denominations in the U.S. that are members of the National Council of Churches USA under the guidance of Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Ecumenical Affairs Officer for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop McCloud says, “We

anticipate this being one of the more significant gatherings of clergy and community, particularly as the world is closely watching and listening to the Church for responses to some very pointed questions to identify where we stand on matters that affect us as a community of faith. We agree that some demonstration of our thoughtful reflection as leaders of Church denominations, representing millions of people who are also looking to us for substantive answers to oftentimes perplexing circumstances, is needed and these leaders are those who are eminently qualified to offer them.” Dr. Michael A. Battle, president of ITC sees the ecumenical environment of the seminary as the optimum place to bring together in one setting leaders of these eight mainline Christian denominations. “This is only the second time in over 30 years that such collaboration has taken place, the first being June 2005 during the Hampton Ministers Conference in Hampton, VA. We hope that this meeting will not only continue the collective dialogue among these denominations, but will foster a vision for even broader discussions among the faith community,” said Battle.

Topics to be addressed by the leadership panel in the context of public policy are:

Church Leadership and International Public Policy, Housing, Children’s Advocacy; Poverty; Health Insurance: The Uninsured and the Under-insured, Leadership and Social Action; Leadership and Public Policy in War and Peace; and the Preaching Dynamics of Leadership.

Between the morning and afternoon forums, the president-elect of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Rev. Dr. T. DeWitt Smith, Jr. will preach during the President’s Chapel Hour following a Leadership Luncheon, sponsored by “*Bread for the World.*”

The program is made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation and is free to the first 150 registrants. To attend, contact Yolanda Dowery at 404-527-7702 or register via email @ydoweryitic.edu.

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*The Interdenominational Theological Center, a cooperative theological academy of six different denominations, a Lutheran Center and an at large denominational fellowship, is in its fourth decade of providing service to the world as the leading academy for African American graduate theological education and training. ITC is the only UNCF institution that offers graduate theological education. The institution touts a world-class faculty, a vibrant and challenging afro-centered curriculum, and national and international outreach programs initiatives that include: Faith and the City, the Health and Faith Leadership Initiative, Black Women in Church and Society, The Continuing Education and Distance Learning Program, The Institute for Black Religious Life, The Youth Hope Builders Academy, Faith Journey, Religious Heritage of the African World, and the Urban Theological Institute.*