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ADVENT CONCERT – A CELEBRATIVE MUSICAL OFFERING OF HOPE AT THE ITC

Atlanta, GA (November 16, 2008) “The Advent Concert is the choir’s offering to the community in hope that it will inspire and create an abiding sense of peace throughout the holiday season,” says Dr. Lisa M. Allen, professor of music and worship at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). Dr. Allen is also the exacting director of the ITC Choir and draws from the enormous well of vocal and musical talent of the women and men who, in addition to excelling in rigorous theological study, also get high marks for their powerful and well-executed singing. The choir sings for most of the chapel services at the academy each Tuesday and Thursday and to other audiences across the nation by invitation. The Annual ITC Advent Concert ushers in the joy and hope of the Christmas season each year, often the first of the holiday concerts performed by colleges and universities in the Atlanta area. The musical has a unique appeal for those who relish a mid-morning opportunity to enjoy powerful soul stirring songs of the season, held at 11 a.m. in the ITC Chapel, 700 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW., Atlanta, GA, on Thursday, December 3, 2009. The event is FREE and open to the public.

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“This year, the choir will perform the Cantata “*Emmanuel God with Us*,” which speaks to the incarnation of God in Jesus, who is God’s love offering to the world,” continued Dr. Allen. The songs of joy are good news to those who get a daily dousing of negative news through electronic media – stories of death, devastation and destruction. But despite the economy, no matter what the headlines read, or what the forecasters say, the season of advent brings this hope, the hope of Christ. The ITC Chorus welcomes the season of Christmas with hope and anticipation of the good news, the birth of a Savior, Messiah, and King through gospels, spiritual and traditional songs, modern songs and anthems that will help prepare hearts for the celebration of the coming of the Christ child.

The ITC is a cross section of all students, reaching across ethnic, denominational and cultural lines and the choir is a great example of this ecumenism with its broad sampling of students. Among the many stellar voices in the choir are Reiko Yuge and Erick Thomas; two soloists to be featured in the holiday performance. Ms. Yuge, a lyric soprano from Japan, is a 2010 graduating senior. She has skillfully embraced the gospel music genre and will soon release a gospel CD she has recorded with a choir in Japan. A new face, Erick Thomas, is a first year student at ITC and brings a tremendous tenor voice to the aggregation and a wealth of musical knowledge, skills and gifts. Both Yuge and Thomas are part of ITC’s Masters of Church Music Program.

For many Christian churches Advent represents the beginning of the church year in Western culture. Advent begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. This year advent lasts from November 29, 2009 – December 24, 2009. The word **Advent** means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God, according to the CRI/Voice Institute.

For more information about the Advent Concert on December 3, 2009 or the Interdenominational Theological Center call 404-527-7718 or visit our website at www.itc.edu.

About the ITC

For more than 50 years the Interdenominational Theological Center has been training men and women from all walks of life and all faiths for the work of ministry and service to the Church and global community.

The ITC is one of the most unique training grounds in graduate theological education in America and is a consortium of six different denominational seminaries. Nowhere in the world is there found a consortium of this magnitude housing: Morehouse School of Religion (Baptist Affiliate), Gammon Theological Seminary (United Methodist Affiliate), Turner Theological Seminary (African Methodist Episcopal Affiliate), Phillips School of Theology (Christian Methodist Episcopal Affiliate), Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (Presbyterian Affiliate), C. H. Mason Theological Seminary (Church of God in Christ Affiliate) and all other affiliate denominations are part of the Richardson Ecumenical Fellowship.