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Immediate Release

ITC ALUMNUS, WILLIAM D. WATLEY, Ph.D. IS 2008 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

One-hundred ten seminarians to graduate on May 3, 2008



(Atlanta, April 15, 2008) Dr. Rev. William D. Watley, Ph.D., senior pastor of St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Newark, NJ and the visionary and founder of St. James Preparatory School was selected by the Class of 2008 to deliver the Commencement Address during the 2008 Graduation Exercise for Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). The exercise is scheduled for Saturday, May 3, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. on the campus of Morehouse College in the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, 830 Westview Drive SW, Atlanta, GA.

ITC will award 110 seminarians with degrees to include: the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), the Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE), dual degrees— Master of Divinity/Masters in Church Music, and 16 will receive the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.), the institution's largest class of doctoral graduates in its 50 year history.

Four honorary degrees will be confirmed on persons esteemed for their contributions to ministry excellence by ITC's constituent seminaries. They are: Bishop William Philip DeVeaux from Turner Theological Seminary, the African Methodist Episcopal affiliate; Bishop Thomas Brown from Phillips School of Theology, Christian Methodist Episcopal; Mr. James H. Salley from Gammon Theological Seminary, United Methodist Church; and Dr. John D. Fuller Sr., from Morehouse School of Religion, the Baptist seminary at ITC.

The commencement speaker, Dr. Watley is one of the institution's most distinguished alumni. Reverend Watley. earned the Bachelor of Arts in Theology from St. Louis University and a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center. He received a Master of Philosophy and the Doctor of Philosophy in Ethics from Columbia



University and has done post-doctoral work at the Ecumenical Institute in Celigny, Switzerland and at Harvard's Institute for Educational Management.

Dr. Watley's multifaceted approach to ministry aims to provide holistic care to those he serves. He established the St. James Social Service Corporation which oversees a daily feeding program and food pantry, a clothes closet, an intergenerational after school care program and Safe Haven Summer Peace Camp for children, as well as various emergency service mentoring, literacy and employment training programs for adults.

Dr. Watley's homiletical ability is both nationally and internationally recognized. He has had the distinction of having been the Conference Preacher for the Hampton University Ministers' Conference for two consecutive years, preached to over 20,000 people at the Church of God in Christ, Inc.'s annual fall convention, been a lecturer for the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church's Pastor's Conference at Philips School of Theology and has preached at the Potter's House in Dallas, Texas for the *Men Are Builders Conference*. Additionally, Dr. Watley has preached on six of the seven continents.

A mentor and educator, Dr. Watley has served as President and Distinguished Professor of Religion at Paul Quinn College in Waco, TX. He was a visiting professor at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New York and Princeton Theological Seminary, and a guest lecturer at Harvard University, Payne, and Turner Theological seminaries

An ecumenical leader, Dr. Watley served as the Associate General Secretary of the Council on Church Union (COCU), a member of the Missions Unit for the World Council of Churches (WCC), and a member of the Governing Board for the National Council of Churches (NCC). He has served on The Board of Directors for The United Negro College Fund and the Fund for Theological Education. In addition, he was a member of the Advisory Boards for First Union Bank, the African American Pulpit, and the Interpreter's Bible Commentaries.

The public is invited to attend the exercise. For more information, call 404-527-7718.

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