

June 22, 2020

Letter of Solidarity and Accountability from White Deans & Presidents of ATS Member Schools and Affiliates in Response to [Black Presidents and Deans](#)

Dear Colleagues in the Association of Theological Schools,

We white deans and presidents join the Association of Theological Schools community in grief and outrage over the ongoing racism and anti-black violence in our country. We proclaim unequivocally: Black Lives Matter and No More Stolen Black Lives!

The recent murders of Black women and men occur within a history of racial violence by white people including the genocide of native peoples, the monstrosities of the slave trade, Jim Crow laws, lynching and white terrorism, mass incarceration, and an overarching mentality of colonization. The power and principality of whiteness and its systemic evils rest upon destructive and defective theologies that are antithetical to our core faith commitments.

We confess our complicity in perpetuating white supremacy. This confession must be backed by actions. The personal and collective work of antiracism is intellectual, spiritual, and embodied. As presidents and deans of theological schools, we must act to end racial violence and injustices in our nation, cities, institutions, and ourselves.

We write to be held publicly accountable and to hold each other accountable for anti-racist work in our institutions. We recognize that we have been slow to organize and add our voices to those of African American, Latino/a, and Asian descent presidents and deans. Our failure to speak is a measure of our complicity in white supremacy. We commit to: 1) following the lead of our colleagues of color in the Association of Theological Schools, pursuing in solidarity the work of racial justice; 2) decentering whiteness, unlearning white supremacy, and reimagining theological education; 3) shouldering the ongoing work of ridding our institutions of racism; and 4) confronting the damages of whiteness and dismantling its hold on our systems and structures as central to our collective work.

Sincerely,

Alison M. Benders, Interim Dean, Jesuit School of Theology

Peter L. Jones, Interim Dean, Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University Chicago

Michelle A. Clifton-Soderstrom, Interim Dean of Faculty, North Park Theological Seminary

Beth Tanner, Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Peter R. Gathje, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean, Memphis Theological Seminary

Beverly Lapp, Vice President and Academic Dean, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
David Cassady, President, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky  
David W. Kersten, Dean & Vice President for Church Relations, North Park Theological Seminary  
Gabriella Lettini, Dean and CAO, Starr King School for the Ministry-GTU  
David Boshart, President, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
Esther Menn, Dean of Academic Affairs, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Jody Hill, President, Memphis Theological Seminary  
Ruth Meyers, Dean of Academic Affairs, Church Divinity School of the Pacific  
Deborah Krause, President-Elect, Eden Theological Seminary  
W. Mark Richardson, President and Dean, Church Divinity School of the Pacific  
Scott Woodward, President-Elect, Oblate School of Theology  
Douglas R. Cullum, Vice President and Dean, Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College  
Jacqueline Lapsley, Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Princeton Theological Seminary  
Craig Barnes, President, Princeton Theological Seminary  
Alan Ehler, Dean, Southeastern University School of Divinity  
David Mellott, President, Christian Theological Seminary  
Dalen C. Jackson, Academic Dean, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky  
Jennifer L.S. Bader, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry  
Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., Dean, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry  
Robin Steinke, President, Luther Seminary  
Andrew H. Wakefield, Dean, Campbell University Divinity School  
Tim Sensing, Associate Dean, Graduate School of Theology, Abilene Christian University  
Heather Hartung Vacek, Vice President for Academic Affairs /Dean of Faculty, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Serene L. Jones, President, Union Theological Seminary, New York  
Pamela Cooper-White, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Union Theological Seminary, New York  
Gary M. Burge, Dean of the Faculty, Calvin Theological Seminary  
David Esterline, President, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Michael Koppel, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Wesley Theological Seminary  
Raymond Pickett, Rector, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary  
James Nieman, President, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Drew University Theological School  
Jiří Moskala, Dean, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
John Vissers, Principal, Knox College  
William D. Shiell, President, Northern Seminary  
Bryan Stone, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Boston University School of Theology  
Robert W. Canoy, Dean, M. Christopher White School of Divinity, Gardner-Webb University  
James R. Hart, President, Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies

Micah T. Jackson, President, Bexley Seabury Seminary  
Therese B. DeLisio, Academic Dean, Bexley Seabury Seminary  
Thomas V. Wolfe, President & CEO, Iliff School of Theology  
Ken Cukrowski, Dean, Abilene Christian University: Graduate School of Theology  
Philip Wingeier-Rayo, Dean, Wesley Theological Seminary  
Peter Spitaler, Chair, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Villanova University  
Peter M. Donohue, OSA, University President, Villanova University  
Michael S. Koppel, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Wesley Theological Seminary  
Michelle Voss Roberts, Principal, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology  
Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Dean and President, Seminary of the Southwest  
Ora Horn Prouser, CEO and Academic Dean, Academy for Jewish Religion  
David H. Crawford, President, McCormick Theological Seminary  
MaryKate Morse, Dean, Portland Seminary  
William Harrison, President, Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon  
Gordon Jensen, Academic Dean, Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon  
Craig L. Nesson, Academic Dean, Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Craig D. Atwood, Interim Dean, Moravian Theological Seminary  
Ian S. Markham, Dean and President, Virginia Theological Seminary  
David T. Lamb, Dean of the Faculty, Missio Seminary  
Frank A. James III, President, Missio Seminary  
Nancy Claire Pittman, President, Phillips Theological Seminary  
Kristine Stache, Interim President, Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Melody Knowles, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Virginia Theological Seminary  
Jeffrey Carter, President, Bethany Theological Seminary  
Steven Schweitzer, Academic Dean, Bethany Theological Seminary  
Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, Claremont School of Theology  
Chip Aldridge, Associate Dean for Admissions, Wesley Theological Seminary  
Deana L. Porterfield, President, Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College  
Nancy R. Heisey, Associate dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary  
Jacqueline Regan, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry  
Jan Love, Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean, Candler School of Theology, Emory University  
Jonathan Strom, Senior Associate Dean, Candler School of Theology, Emory University  
David Williams, President, Taylor Seminary  
David F. McAllister-Wilson, President, Wesley Theological Seminary  
David D. Grafton, Academic Dean, Hartford Seminary  
Dale Launderville, OSB, Dean of St. John's University School of Theology and Seminary  
Richard Benson, C.M., Vice President and Academic Dean, Catholic Theological Union  
Mark Francis, CSV, President, Catholic Theological Union

Dr. Ron Walborn, Vice President & Dean, Alliance Theological Seminary  
Jennifer A. Herdt, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Yale University Divinity School  
Gregory E. Sterling, Dean, Yale University Divinity School  
Robert E. Johnson, Provost & Dean of the Faculty, Central Baptist Theological Seminary  
Suzanne Cockley, Dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary  
Jesse Zink, Director, Montreal School of Theology  
David H. Johnson, President, Providence Theological Seminary  
Emily Vogt, Associate Dean, Chicago Theological Seminary  
Joel B. Green, Associate Dean for the Center for Advanced Theological Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Trevor Eppheimer, Academic Dean, Hood Theological Seminary  
Craig C. Hill, Dean, Perkins School of Theology/SMU  
Ann Clay Adams, Associate Dean for Academic Administration, Columbia Theological Seminary  
David H. Scott, Associate Dean of School of Theology and School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Kirsteen Kim, Associate Dean for the Center for Missiological Research, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Lallene J. Rector, President, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary