



NEWS RELEASE

Berkeley School of Theology Receives \$1 Million Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative

BERKELEY, CA (July 8, 2022) — Berkeley School of Theology (BST) has received a grant of \$1 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish a strong pipeline of underserved students coming from a variety of cultural communities, most with no formal theological training, to find a pathway to ministry that is fast-track and affordable.

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. It is a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face as they prepare pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

BST will be working to enhance the training of church leaders for today and into the future. This grant will help BST reach into communities that have previously been underserved with theological training and will allow leaders access to high quality theological education. BST will work even more closely with denominational leaders, regional ministers, and other ABCUSA associate groups, to become co-creators with them in the denomination's efforts to grow more interculturally proficient pastors and lay ministry leaders.

"As we celebrate our 150th anniversary year of empowering leaders in Christian ministry, this gift from Lilly Endowment comes at a strategic time in our institution's history," remarked, Dr. Jim Brenneman, president of BST. "BST's spiritual DNA has always expressed itself most fully when we put equity, access, and opportunity for our students first. We are eternally grateful to Lilly Endowment for its generous support in opening new pathways to ministry and training for so many students for years to come."

Berkeley School of Theology is one of 105 theological schools receiving phase two grants. Together they represent the broad diversity of Christianity in the U.S. and Canada. The schools are affiliated with evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, Black church, Latino, Asian-American and historic peace church traditions (e.g., Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, Quakers).

"Theological schools have long played a pivotal role in preparing pastoral leaders for churches," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "Today, these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. Through the Pathways Initiative, theological schools will take deliberate steps to address the challenges they have identified in ways that make the most sense to them. We believe that their efforts are critical to ensuring that Christian congregations continue to have a steady stream of pastoral leaders who are well-prepared to lead the churches of tomorrow."

The Pathways initiative is part of Lilly Endowment's wider efforts to strengthen theological schools and other religious institutions and networks that prepare pastoral leaders to ensure that a diverse array of Christian congregations are guided by a steady stream of wise, faithful and well-prepared leader.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of [community development](#), [education](#) and [religion](#) and maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A primary aim of its grantmaking in religion is to deepen the religious lives of Christians, principally by supporting efforts that enhance congregational vitality and strengthen the leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment values the broad diversity of Christian traditions and endeavors to support them in a wide variety of contexts. The Endowment also seeks to foster public understanding about religion by encouraging fair, accurate and balanced portrayals of the positive and negative effects of religion on the world and lifting up the contributions that people of all faiths make to our greater civic well-being.

About Berkeley School of Theology (BST)

BST is one of the most interculturally diverse seminaries in the country. The core values of soul freedom, service leadership, social justice, public witness, religious liberty and the spoken and written word in Scripture and beyond have guided and sustained this seminary for the last 150 years. For more information on all our programs, visit bst.edu.

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