



The Black Religious Scholars Group

Conveners. Thought Leaders. Witnesses to the Black Church tradition within the academy, church, and wider Black community. The story of the Black Religious Scholars Group is one of a commitment and fierce determination to theological work that is accessible and relevant to the larger African-diaspora church and society.

Growing out of a session of the Black Theology Group at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, the Black Religious Scholars Group was founded in 1997 by a visionary group of leaders driven by a mission to “forge bonds of communication for partnership and innovation among Black peoples.”

The initiatives and consultations created by this group have become a trusted and necessary resource for all who are committed to creating Beloved Community. This important work has honored and elevated Black religious scholars and has given them a needed voice to further connect them to those who most benefit from hearing their words.

In 2018, the Black Religious Scholars Group entered into a partnership with Seminary of the Southwest with the goal of helping this community live into the promise that diversity and reconciliation hold for all of God’s people.

This goal led to the creation of the Black Religious Scholars Group Scholar-in-Residence and Crump Visiting Professor program, a response to the call issued by the Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, for the church to focus on racial reconciliation, and to the needs expressed by Southwest students and graduates. Together, a recognition was forged that our communities are living in a time of racially motivated hostility that has created a new urgency in addressing issues of race in theological training.

Since then, five gifted scholars have joined the Southwest faculty for one-year appointments to teach, form, and share with this community the perspectives and charisms so important to ministering to God’s people in our complicated world.

This generous partnership brought to the Seminary of the Southwest community a most beloved resource: the gifts of the Rev. Dr. Melanie Jones, the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, the Rev. Yolanda Norton, the Rev. Dr. Brandon Crowley, and the Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray. This blessing has been made possible by the commitment and drive consistently displayed by the Executive Director of the Black Religious Scholars Group, Dr. Stacey Floyd-Thomas.

In gratitude for this partnership and in recognition of the significant impact you have had on the faculty, students, and staff of Seminary of the Southwest, we present you with this declaration of love, respect, and ongoing faithfulness on this day, April 24, 2023.