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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Honorary Doctorates to be Awarded at Commencement 2021

**BERKELEY, CA (May 16, 2021)** — Berkeley School of Theology to award the honorary Doctorate of Divinity degrees to two distinguished national and international leaders, Carolyn M. McKinstry and Louis P. Barbarin, at their 147<sup>th</sup> Commencement ceremonies taking place virtually on May 16, 2021.



**Rev. Dr. Carolyn McKinstry** survived the racist bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL in 1963, that killed four of her Sunday School classmates. She survived a second bombing to her family's home testifying at the trial of one of the perpetrators of both bombings who was convicted. From those days until now, Dr. McKinstry has traveled the world, appeared on many television, radio and other venues, including the Oprah Winfrey show. She has not stopped speaking, and marching, and publicly protesting against racism in all its many forms and promoting the vision of a more beloved community of hope, justice and reconciliation. Her story is told so poignantly and powerfully in her memoir, *While the World Watched*, published by Tyndale. She served as the commencement speaker at this year's graduation ceremonies. She served as the vice-president of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the co-chair of the "Four Spirits Committee" responsible for placing permanent life-size sculptures in Kelly Ingram Park of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carol Denise McNair, her four friends killed in the '63 church bombing.



**Dr. Louis P. Barbarin** is the first African American and first non-ordained leader to become the Executive Director of the Minister's and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB), a multimillion-dollar financial services partner of ABCUSA and other denominational bodies. Under his leadership MMBB established the basic vision for training churches, clergy, seminarians, and young ministers nationwide in financial literacy. U.S. Representative, Barbara Lee, says of Dr. Barbarin, "When the history of American Baptist Churches, USA, is told, it must include names of courageous and visionary leaders such as Thomas Kilgore, Floyd Massey, Ella Pearson Mitchell, Samuel B. McKinney and Samuel D. Proctor who envisioned opportunities for African Americans to serve and lead as agency heads, in top positions withing the ABCUSA."

The Doctor of Divinity degree is BST's highest honorary degree awarded to candidates of outstanding character and achievement whose lives have made a positive impact on others over a lifetime of service. Recipients of this award are deemed worthy of imitation by others as they have imitated Christ in whatever field to which they are called.

#### 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](https://www.bst.edu).

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