



March 28, 2025

Beloved Broadway,

Hello from Washington, D.C., where I am attending the Alliance of Baptists 2025 Annual Gathering! I bring you greetings from this group of faithful and committed Baptists, forged in the fire of the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention and convened in our nation's capital.

I'm grateful for the Alliance's prophetic witness over these past 35 years and for such a time as this!

Though I am away, I leave you in good hands. Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady, President of Brite Divinity School at TCU, will be Sunday's preacher. Brite Divinity School has become an essential partner, and President Cady is a faithful friend and colleague. With the loss of the Southern Baptist Convention to the fundamentalists, we also lost our local connection to Southwestern Baptist Seminary. So, over the years, Brite has become a stronger and stronger partner in ministry, sharing our common vision for the beloved community and a more just and inclusive society. I understand Broadway is now the church with the largest number of members currently enrolled as students in the school. We are grateful for our shared witness and ministry with Brite and Dr. Cady.

And a joyous example of this: the keynote speaker at the Alliance Gathering in Washington D.C. is Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney, theologian, scholar, and Sam B. Hulse Professor of Hebrew at Brite Divinity School.

Dr. Gafney joins with other womanist scholars preaching and teaching here this weekend. Womanists speak from and of the wisdom of Black women in the world. It is from the experience of God lived in and through the experience of Black women. And, in fact, the theme for this year's Gathering is "I Met God and She's a Black Woman." The point being that the Black woman's experience is an important lived experience through which we learn about the heart, character, and resilient incarnation of God.

Today, we hear from Dr. Gafney and other womanist speakers here in Washington, D.C., on the day after President Trump released an executive order targeting diversity programs in the Smithsonian

Institution, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the National Women's History Museum. Perspectives purported to represent "improper ideology" have been ordered to be removed. Let us have no doubt, the true intent is to silence the voice of those who speak from perspectives which complicate and challenge more traditional narratives and interpretations. This is exactly what the womanist speakers here at the Gathering are doing. We need more of their voices, not less.

Our cultural and educational institutions are at risk of being taken over today just as our seminaries were in former years. This is distressing. Yet, we are not dismayed. For we continue to find friends like those in the Alliance of Baptists and at Brite Divinity School who are committed to teaching which resists the coercions of fundamentalism and will stand up for voices at risk of being silenced by ideological extremism. These are good and faithful partners for which I am very grateful to have in times like these.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reynolds".