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Lilly Endowment continues major initiative to interest young people in the ministry

Continuing its efforts to enable talented young people to draw upon the resources of religious wisdom as they think through their vocational choices and to consider the ministry as a profession they might pursue, Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded \$55.3 million in grants to 28 colleges and universities. The numbers represent the second round in the major initiative called "Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation."

"One of the Endowment's highest priorities is to interest bright young people in the ministry," said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion. "The need for talented young people to enter the ministry is great, but the supply has been down for a number of years.

"Colleges and universities have a lot of influence on the vocational choices their students make," he noted. "We are finding that many schools are eager to do a better job of making sure that the ministry gets the attention it deserves, so we are eager to support them.

"We also hope that young people – whatever their profession turns out to be – will have plentiful opportunities to think deeply about what they want to do with their lives and how their faith can enlighten and shape their choices," Dykstra said.

In the initial round of this competitive initiative, the Endowment announced in September 2000 that 20 American colleges and universities had received \$37.7 million in implementation grants. (See addenda for lists of recipients in the first two rounds.)

(more)

Theological Exploration of Vocation
Add 1

In September 2001 the Endowment announced round three, widening the invitation to all four-year, church-related liberal arts schools in the country. (The deadline for planning grant proposals in that round is Jan. 1, 2002; up to 50 such planning grants may be awarded.)

According to Dykstra and church leaders across the country, the need for talented young ministers is serious. A recent issue of *Congregations* magazine shows the percentage of clergy 35 years old and under is at just 4 percent in the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ, 6 percent in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Roman Catholic Church, 7 percent in the United Methodist Church and Presbyterian Church (USA), and 11 percent in the Southern Baptist Convention.

“All professions – from medicine and law to teaching and engineering – need a pipeline of enthusiastic, intelligent young people to carry on the knowledge and skills that society needs. Certainly, the ministry is no different,” Dykstra said. “In these uncertain times, there is a great need to have access to the knowledge, wisdom and talents of an engaged clergy. The schools have been tremendously encouraged by the enthusiastic responses of their students, faculty and staffs, and we have been extremely impressed with the creativity these schools have employed in developing these programs.”

The 28 colleges that have received grants in this second round – from Howard University on the East Coast to Seattle Pacific University on the West Coast – have devised a rich variety of programs that include the following activities:

- ◆ crafting new courses that connect religious literature with students’ reflections about their life’s work;
- ◆ enhancing service-learning opportunities in congregations and faith-based social-service agencies;
- ◆ developing faculty and staff expertise to help guide students through these explorations;

(more)

Theological Exploration of Vocation
Add 2

- ◆ launching summer leadership academies and internships in religious- and service-based vocations;
- ◆ establishing close connections with theological seminaries and divinity schools; and
- ◆ hosting special conferences, discussion groups and public forums.

“The Endowment is concerned not only about the ability of clergy to fulfill their responsibilities with imagination and intelligence, but also about the health of congregations across the country,” Dykstra said. “While we have many programs available to help congregations, we know that the ministers are pivotal – that their talents have a lot to do with whether their congregations are vital and strong.

“We certainly realize that not all young people engaged in these programs will become ministers,” he said. “We do hope, however, that their experiences in the colleges will lead a great many of them to adult lives of conviction and faith and that they will be informed and involved members of congregations and their communities.”

Other programs the Endowment has undertaken to encourage young people to consider the ministry include grant awards of \$54 million to 45 theological schools to develop programs to educate and support strong candidates for congregational ministry. In another initiative the Endowment has awarded more than \$27 million in grants to 55 theological schools to develop programs for high school-aged youth.

Founded in 1937, the Endowment is an Indianapolis-based private family foundation that follows its founders’ wishes by supporting the causes of religion, community development and education.

See addenda

Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation

November 2001 Recipients

Alma (Mich.) College, \$2 million

Support for the Discovering Vocation Project, a set of programs to empower students to find meaning and a calling in their lives and thereby to develop leaders who will think critically, lead wisely, serve generously and live faithfully. Programs include student opportunities to explore ministry in congregations, faith-based organizations and seminaries; faculty support for new course development and workshops on vocation; strengthening campus worship and religious life; and community outreach to high school students and lay leaders.

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, \$2 million

Support for a comprehensive project to provide all students, from their first year through graduation, with opportunities to increase their understanding of and reflection on vocations. The program revolves around four themes: 1) vocation as a life approach, 2) vocation as a curricular focus, 3) vocation as education for service to train young people as servant-leaders, and 4) vocational awareness in faculty to build their capacity to help students in vocational exploration.

Austin College, Sherman, Texas, \$1,993,943

Support for a project to enable students to examine theologically the significance of their lives in order to live with a more profound sense of meaning and spiritual engagement. Projects will include student internships in churches, nonprofit agencies and other service industries; new courses on vocation; faculty and student research projects; student-led community service projects; visiting scholars and speakers; and scholarship opportunities for students heading for postgraduate theological study.

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., \$1,999,937

Support for its Prime Citizens for the Kingdom project, which strives to integrate more intentionally the theological exploration of vocation throughout all areas of the college. There will be four program areas: 1) student leadership initiatives, 2) faculty research on vocation and faculty development retreats, 3) a scholarship program and internship opportunities to encourage talented students to consider a call to serve the church, and 4) establishing a center to make available ministry resource materials.

College of Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass., \$2 million

Support for a project to advance the Jesuit college's mission to educate students for lives of commitment and service. The multilayered initiative will 1) teach the habits of spiritual and vocational reflection to all students through first-year orientation, retreats, convocations and other events; 2) revise current courses and develop new ones to incorporate theological themes; 3) train faculty in the practices of vocational discernments; and 4) provide opportunities for students to explore church ministry through internships, mentoring programs and spiritual retreats.

Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn., \$1,996,955

Funds for Support for Vocation: The Call to Serve, an initiative that contains 26 coordinated programs including internships, redesigning required courses for first-year students, faculty development workshops on vocational exploration, student research, strengthening the church music program, expanding a pastor-in-residence program, and on-campus workshops for pastors and lay leaders for identifying and recruiting young people for the ministry.

Dillard University, New Orleans, La., \$1,997,534

Support for a project to encourage selected students to choose careers in religious institutions as pastors, ministers of music, teachers and lay leaders and to aid all students in finding the path for their lives that is divinely intended. The project will include engaging all students in vocational exploration, faculty development, enhancing campus worship, collecting library resources on ministry, and support for students to visit theological schools.

Duke University, Durham, N.C., \$1,977,797

Support for a project to identify talented students and encourage them to serve as leaders of congregations and other religious institutions. The multitiered initiative will 1) provide all students with access to religious wisdom about vocation as they make choices about their future; 2) give selected students opportunities to explore Christian ministry through covenant groups, residential courses, internships, pre-seminary advising, and structured conversations with the chaplain; and 3) create an intentional residential community for recent graduates who seek to clarify and deepen their call to ministry.

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., \$2 million

Support for a project that will engage students in a vocational discernment process that helps them discover their gifts and how they may contribute to God's work in the world.

Programs will be in three areas: 1) activities to help individual students explore their individual calling as disciples; 2) community-wide activities to foster dialogue and incorporate vocational discernment into campus life; and 3) special opportunities for students to explore Christian ministry through internships, coursework, campus ministries and campus visits by pastors.

Fairfield (Conn.) University, \$1,996,559

Support to establish the Ignatian Residential College, a program that will assist a large group of selected sophomores to explore possibilities of religious vocation through engagement in the academic and spiritual practices of the Jesuit tradition. The effort will integrate theological study with opportunities for worship and communal prayer, attendance at lectures and cultural events with older mentors, and experiences of serving in local faith communities.

Georgetown (Ky.) College, \$2 million

Support for comprehensive project involving five initiatives: 1) programs to help students explore Christian ministry, 2) curricular programs for new course development, 3) faculty and staff seminars and retreats, 4) creating a central space on campus for focused conversation on vocation, and 5) community programs to build partnerships with local congregations and create mentoring and internship possibilities for students.

Grinnell (Iowa) College, \$1,425,486

Support for a five-component program to promote theological reflection on vocation and to increase the number of graduates who enter professional religious leadership. Components are: 1) curriculum development to incorporate vocational themes; 2) strengthening the student advising system; 3) enhancing campus worship; 4) practical experiences for students through internships, a semester away in a seminary and other activities; and 5) support for students preparing for postgraduate theological study.

Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C., \$2 million

Support for an effort to enhance and strengthen three existing leadership programs to help students discern their ministries and become transformative leaders in society. Building on the Quaker concept of vocation, the initiative will improve pre-term orientation, bring speakers to campus, create new internship possibilities in congregations and faith-based organizations, and strengthen a pre-ministerial track for the exploration of ministry.

Hendrix College, Conway, Ark., \$1,998,565

Support for Vocation and Integrity, an initiative to engage students, faculty and staff in exploring issues related to vocation and to help them discern and act on their own vocation. There will be three focal points: 1) personal—new student orientation, sophomore retreats, internship and mentoring experiences, visits to seminaries and covenant discipleship groups; 2) curricular—new course development, undergraduate research, seminary semester experience, and church music and visiting scholars programs; and 3) institutional—center on hosting Faith in the Academy conferences and enhancement of campus religious life.

Howard University, Washington, \$1,981,263

Support for the Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of Leadership Initiative, a project to identify, recruit and stimulate gifted students to explore vocations in the ministry and facilitate their religious and vocational development. The primary goal is to prepare future leaders for the African American church and spiritually focused leaders for society. The program includes: 1) a national conference on spiritual leadership development for the African American community; 2) interest groups, mentoring, course offerings, internships and seminary visits; 3) enhancement of religious life on campus; and 4) support for faculty and student research in religious education.

Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Ind., \$2 million

Support for the Life Calling Initiative, an effort to instill in all students a strong conviction of having a life calling and to challenge them to carry this out in leadership positions in church and society. The university will develop programs in three areas: 1) opportunities for all students to examine their unique strengths and how they might use them to serve others, 2) activities to help students think critically about how their lives are part of the purposes of God, and 3) leadership development to challenge and train students to enact their faith commitments and work actively in the world.

Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, \$2 million

Support for A Sense of Vocation, a project to integrate the concept of vocation more fully into the intellectual and residential life of the college. The project includes three initiatives: 1) an all-student vocation program; 2) a church ministry vocation program; and 3) more general programs to sustain the campus culture, such as faculty development, collecting library resources, and short-term residencies on campus for pastors and religious leaders.

Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis., \$2 million

Support for an effort that will assist students, faculty and staff in exploring how to use their personal gifts and talents to serve the needs of the world and advance the university's mission in preparing graduates for lives of service. Based on the Jesuit theological tradition and influenced by the spiritual exercises of Ignatius, the project will promote vocational discernment in 1) selected students who have expressed an interest in church ministry; 2) faculty and student leaders who will guide others in vocational discernment; and 3) the university community through reading programs, spiritual retreats, a speakers series and a Web page.

Maryville (Tenn.) College, \$1,999,906

Support for the Maryville College Initiative on Vocation, which will 1) give students sustained opportunity to explore the theological and philosophical roots of vocation and help them connect this to their faith convictions and 2) identify talented students and provide them with opportunities to explore a possible call to Christian ministry. The effort consists of 17 integrated programs, ranging from incorporating vocational discernment into student advising to summer student internships in congregations and faith-based organizations, and from workshops for faculty and parents on vocational exploration to a minister-in-residence program.

Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., \$1,999,730

Drawing on the Brethren, Pietistic and Wesleyan traditions, this school's comprehensive project will involve 10 initiatives, ranging from lectures and conferences on peacemaking to new courses on vocation, from faculty development seminars to senior capstone courses involving vocational reflection.

Pepperdine University, Malibu, Calif., \$1,999,049

Support for a project which will touch all aspects of the university: 1) a curricular dimension will engage all students in vocational reflection through coursework, lectures, retreats and writing assignments; 2) a co-curricular dimension will enhance service-learning opportunities and student leadership programs; 3) a ministry dimension will encourage selected young people to explore ministry as their vocation; and 4) a faculty development dimension will reinforce the university's mission and equip professors for teaching and advising in this area.

St. Louis University, \$1,926,314

Support for the Voices Project, a program to enhance its capacity to help students in their explorations of vocation, leadership and faith. The effort has two goals: 1) to create supportive communities through which students are better equipped to discern their vocations in light of their faith commitments and 2) to develop faculty and staff expertise to guide students through this exploration. Specific programs include retreats for student leaders to reflect on their future careers, enhancement of career and academic advising, a lecture series on vocational and moral issues, and internships in congregations.

Seattle (Wash.) Pacific University, \$1,993,000

Support for Spiritual and Educational Resources for Vocational Exploration, an effort that entails 16 programs and will make theological reflection on vocation a central part of the university. Programs include providing more opportunities for students to explore possibilities in Christian ministry, encouraging faculty to incorporate vocational themes into their courses, enhancing campus worship, reorganizing career services, and hosting a summer leadership academy for Pacific Rim high school youth.

University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn., \$1,987,999

Support for a major effort to integrate more intentionally the complex dimensions of the university by focusing on the Catholic tradition's belief in the wholeness of human persons. The student-centered project will be based on three interrelated themes: 1) assisting students in exploring how their faith commitments challenge them to think about their future in terms of calling instead of career; 2) creating forums for young people to consider Christian ministry as their possible life's work; and 3) reinforcing the university's central mission by focusing the attention of faculty, staff and students on the challenges of Catholic social thought.

University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn., \$1,984,340

Support for a program that will strive 1) to attract young people to ordained ministry; 2) to provide more students with hands-on experience in religious- and service-based vocations through internships; and 3) to support activities to help students explore their vocation and values in collaborative programs that will involve academic departments, the chapel, career services and the seminary.

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., \$1,996,535

Support for establishing the Pro Humanitate Center, a program that will coordinate myriad activities to encourage students and other university constituents to explore the

meaning of vocation in their lives. These will include a campus-wide examination of the significance of the school's Baptist heritage and identity, seminars and workshops on vocation, incorporating vocational reflection in service-learning opportunities, and support for students to consider a call to Christian ministry.

Whitworth College, Spokane, Wash., \$2 million

Support for a project to help students develop a deeper sense of vocation as a way of responding to God's call into ministry and other professions. Drawing on the Reformed understanding of vocation, the project will pursue three objectives: 1) to provide opportunities for students to develop mentoring relationships with faculty and staff; 2) to give students chances to test their vocation in off-campus contexts such as internships in local churches; and 3) to develop additional programs and curriculum to help students reflect on their spiritual, moral and political commitments and how these relate to their vocation.

Willamette University, Salem, Ore., \$1,996,838

Support for a project to consider and explore careers as ordained or professional lay leaders in congregations or in organizations dedicated to religious education or public service. The project will provide opportunities: 1) for students to explore theological vocation through summer research grants, internships, volunteer service, career and academic counseling and retreats; 2) for faculty to engage in new course development, research and writing on vocation, mentoring and workshops; and 3) for the general public to participate in exhibitions, conferences, performances and lectures related to vocational exploration.

Announced in September 2000, the following 20 colleges and universities received a total of \$37.7 million in implementation grants in the first round of Programs for

the Theological Exploration of Vocation:

Baylor University, Waco, Texas, \$2 million

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass., \$2 million

Davidson (N.C.) College, \$1,979,770

Earlham College, Richmond, Ind., \$1,994,947

Furman University, Greenville, S.C., \$2 million

Goshen (Ind.) College, \$1,999,683

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn., \$1,963,425

Hanover (Ind.) College, \$2 million

Loyola University of Chicago, \$1,975,612

Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn., \$1,813,596

Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., \$2 million

Mercer University, Macon, Ga., \$1,999,880

Millsaps College, Jackson, Miss., \$1,107,381

St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., \$1,999,155

St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wis., \$1,996,657

Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky., \$1,556,754

University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, \$2 million

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., \$2 million

Valparaiso (Ind.) University, \$1,965,150

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, \$1,328,189