



Contact: Gretchen Wolfram
317/916-7304
317/255-2640 (home)

For Immediate Release
Sept. 17, 2001

Lilly Endowment asks young people to think about faith when they think about careers

When talented young people think about what they want to do with their lives, what careers do they consider? Business? Medicine? Engineering? Computer science? Information technology? Law?

In the midst of this important decision-making, are college students pushed to explore what gives their work meaning? Are they encouraged to consider careers of service to others? Do they consider the relationship between their faith commitments and their career choices? Are talented young people encouraged to consider a career in the ministry?

The Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. is encouraging such considerations with a major initiative called "Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation," the most recent piece of a multifaceted effort to attract bright young people into ministry.

Encouraged by the reception to this program by a wide variety of colleges in earlier rounds, the Endowment is now inviting proposals from all additional accredited, church-related, four-year liberal arts colleges in the country. Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation 2002 is open and competitive in character. The Endowment expects the program to result in grants totaling up to \$50 million.

The Endowment has been increasingly concerned about the uninspiring numbers of young people who consider a career in ministry. A parallel and intertwining concern

(more)

Theological Exploration of Vocation
Add 1

has been the need for vibrant, healthy congregations in an increasingly complex society. Such congregations need the attributes of excellent young ministers.

As part of its efforts to address the situation, the Endowment since 1999 has invited selected, church-related, liberal arts colleges to imagine new programs for their schools to help talented students understand their future work in light of their faith commitments and provide them with opportunities to explore ministry, either lay or ordained, as their life's work. So far 20 colleges have received implementation grants totaling \$37.7 million.

“We have been so impressed with these schools’ interest and creativity in establishing these programs that we decided to issue an open invitation to all other church-related, four-year liberal arts schools to participate,” said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion.

“They know the seriousness of the situation and agree that – whatever decisions their students make – they should have the opportunity to think about the deeper questions of what they want to do with their lives. The broad goal is to identify and nurture a new generation of highly talented and religiously committed leaders,” he said.

“The conviction pervading this program is that, whatever future the students choose, they will be well equipped to recognize and deal with the religious and ethical components of their work, and they will be informed and involved members of congregations and their communities,” he said. “But we also hope that increasing numbers of talented young people will consider the ministry a member of the pantheon of careers before them. The scarcity of young ministers in the pulpits of this country is becoming alarming, while the need congregations have for a new generation of gifted pastors is increasing.”

(more)

Theological Exploration of Vocation
Add 2

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.

The colleges that have received grants so far in the Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation have taken a variety of approaches to the issue:

- ◆ Revising student orientation and career services and programs
- ◆ Establishing scholarships for students who have capacity for Christian leadership and a desire to grow in their faith
- ◆ Gathering students for special retreats and programs
- ◆ Setting up faculty development components that encourage professors to look for ways to integrate the theme of vocation into the content of courses they already teach
- ◆ Developing completely new courses that help students understand how religious and ethical values can affect their vocational choices
- ◆ Coupling community service work with systematic ethical and theological reflection
- ◆ Creating summer theology institutes
- ◆ Creating cooperative programs with theological schools, congregations and/or denominational offices
- ◆ Expanding student internships in congregations and other religious institutions
- ◆ Creating networks of co-curricular opportunities to prepare interested students for ministry or other leadership roles in religious communities

(more)

Theological Exploration of Vocation
Add 3

- ◆ Establishing new lecture series
- ◆ Promoting public discussion and debate around issues of work, religious values and ethics in a complex, secular society

“The colleges have been very creative, intentional and realistic in the programs they have undertaken,” Dykstra said, “and we expect to see more exciting new ideas as other schools consider this opportunity.”

The current competition has two phases: planning and implementation. Applicants may request a planning grant of up to \$50,000 to help them design a program for the theological exploration of vocation appropriate for their campus.

The funds may be used for activities such as gathering faculty and administrators to discuss and plan the program; engaging consultants to help the planning process; meeting with pastors, denominational officers and other officials to discuss potential partnerships, and consulting with other colleges and universities about vocational programs.

Planning grant proposals must be postmarked by Jan. 1, 2002. The Endowment will notify recipients by March 1, 2002; up to 50 planning grants may be awarded.

Those recipients will be invited to submit a proposal for an implementation grant ranging from \$500,000 to \$2 million, depending on the scope of the proposed program, for use over a three- to five-year period. Implementation proposals must be postmarked by Sept. 1, 2002, and notification of grant awards will be made by Dec. 1, 2002.

Proposals should be sent to Christopher Coble, Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation 2002, Lilly Endowment Inc., 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208-0068.

See Addenda

Addenda

In 2000, 20 schools received implementation grants in the first round of the Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation. They are the following:

Baylor University, Waco, Texas, \$2 million
Boston College, \$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, \$1,999,603
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., \$1,555,754
University of 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

An additional group of 35 schools received planning grants in a second round of the program. Implementation grant awards from this round will be announced in December.

Media Note: For insight and information on how Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation is working at colleges that have already received implementation grants, you may wish to contact any of the following:

Davidson (N.C.) College

John W. Kuykendall, president emeritus and professor of religion, 704/894-2262
Timothy A. Beach-Verhey, director of the Lilly Endowment program, 704/894-2095
e-mail: tibeachverhey@davidson.edu

Furman University, Greenville, S.C.

Elaine Nocks, professor of psychology, co-director of Lilly Endowment grant,
864/294-2220 (office), 864/242-0827 (home)

Loyola University of Chicago

Lucien Roy, executive director, Project EVOKE, 773/508-8016

Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.

Jeanne Halgren Kilde, director of curricular activities for Macalester College's Lilly Project in Work, Ethics and Vocation, visiting assistant professor of religious studies, 651/696-6597

University of Dayton (Ohio)

James L. Heft, chancellor and university professor of faith and culture, 937/229-2105
Maura Skill, Program for Christian Leadership, 937/229-4592

Valparaiso (Ind.) University

Marcia Bunge, associate professor of humanities and theology, Christ College,
219/464-6966

Mark Schwehn, dean of Christ College, 219/464-5022