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Lilly Endowment Makes Grants to Encourage High School Youth to Explore Theology

INDIANAPOLIS – Many high school students yearn for opportunities to ask difficult and probing questions about their faith and the moral dimensions of contemporary challenges. Now some private colleges and universities are creating summer institutes and other programs to encourage young people to explore these questions by studying theology and examining how their faith calls them to lives of service.

To support the effort, Lilly Endowment Inc. is giving \$44.5 million in grants to help 82 private four-year colleges and universities around the nation to develop high school youth theology institutes. The grants are part of the Endowment's commitment to identify and cultivate a cadre of theologically minded youth who will become leaders in church and society.

“These colleges and universities are well-positioned to reach out to high school students in this way,” said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, vice president for religion at the Endowment. “They have outstanding faculty in theology and religion who know how to help young people explore the wisdom of religious traditions and apply these insights to contemporary challenges.”

Reflecting diverse and rich expressions of theological traditions, the colleges and universities are located in 29 states and the District of Columbia. Although some schools are independent, many reflect the religious heritage of their founding Christian traditions, including Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed traditions, as well as Catholic, non-denominational, Pentecostal and historic African-American Christian communities.

With guidance and support from religion and theology faculty, chaplains and local pastors, young people will study sacred scripture and pivotal theological texts; take part in service projects and hands-on ministry experiences; examine the moral and ethical dimensions of contemporary issues; and learn about religious practices, including prayer, contemplation and worship. Most programs will take place during the summer and offer

short-term residential experiences to groups of students as small as 24 and as large as 300.

“Young people today want to make a difference,” Coble said. “These programs will connect them to faculty and religious leaders who will help them explore that longing by drawing more deeply on scripture and theology as they make decisions about their futures.”

The initiative builds on previous efforts to encourage young people to explore Christian leadership and service. In 1998, the Endowment made grants to seminaries to create high school youth theology programs. In 1999, it began making grants to support private colleges and universities as they strived to cultivate faith and vocation programs for undergraduates.

An additional grant to the Forum for Theological Exploration will establish a program that will bring together leaders of the high school youth theology institutes to foster mutual learning and support.

The Endowment has made high school youth theology grants to the following colleges and universities:

Asbury College, Wilmore, KY

Ashland University, Ashland, OH

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

Barclay College, Haviland, KS

Baylor University, Waco, TX

Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, FL

Brescia University, Owensboro, KY

Caldwell University, Caldwell, NJ

Campbell University, Buies Creek, NC

Canisius College, Buffalo, NY

Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

Carroll College, Helena, MT

Catawba College, Salisbury, NC

The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN

Concordia University, Portland, OR

Concordia University Irvine, Irvine, CA

Corporation of Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

George Fox University, Newberg, OR

Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY

Gordon College, Wenham, MA

Goshen College, Goshen, IN

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN

Hendrix College, Conway, AR

Holy Cross College, Notre Dame, IN

Hope College, Holland, MI

Huntingdon College, Montgomery, AL

Huntington University, Huntington, IN

Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN

Johnson University, Knoxville, TN

LeTourneau University, Longview, TX

Lewis University, Romeoville, IL

Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN

Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA

Loyola University, New Orleans, LA

Loyola University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Lubbock Christian University, Lubbock, TX

Malone University, Canton, OH

Marian University, Indianapolis, IN

Maryville College, Maryville, TN

Mid-America Nazarene University, Olathe, KS

Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA

North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC

Northwest University, Kirkland, WA

Northwestern College, Orange City, IA

Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City, OK

Ottawa University, Ottawa, KS

Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio, San Antonio, TX

Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA

Pfeiffer University, Misenheimer, NC

Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA

Roanoke College, Salem, VA

Rust College, Holly Springs, MS

Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN

Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA

Shenandoah University, Winchester, VA

Simpson College, Indianola, IA

Southern Wesleyan University, Central, SC

Southwestern College, Winfield, KS

St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN

St. John's University, Queens, NY

St. Thomas University Inc., Miami Gardens, FL

Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS

Taylor University, Inc., Upland, IN

Trevecca Nazarene University, Nashville, TN

Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL

Trustees of Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL

University of Findlay, Findlay, OH

University of Mount Olive, Mount Olive, NC

University of Saint Francis of Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, IN

The University of the South, Sewanee, TN

Virginia Union University, Richmond, VA

Viterbo College, La Crosse, WI

Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN

Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, TX

Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA

Wiley College, Marshall, TX

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family - J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli - through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly & Company. The Endowment exists to support the causes of religion, education and community development. Lilly Endowment's religion grantmaking is designed to deepen and enrich the religious lives of American Christians. It does this largely through initiatives to enhance and sustain the quality of ministry in American congregations and parishes.