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### Lilly Endowment awards 47 grants to “sustain pastoral excellence”

In a new effort to focus attention and energy on maintaining the high caliber of many of the country’s pastoral leaders, Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded 47 grants totaling \$57.9 million to religiously affiliated organizations across the country.

Announced last winter, the “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence” program will establish projects to allow ministers of nearly every Christian tradition to create environments for ongoing biblical study, theological reflection and spiritual renewal, as well as the development of sustained friendships and mutual support opportunities. The three- to five-year awards range from \$252,355 to \$2 million.

Said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion: “The Endowment’s current religion grantmaking revolves around two major and interlocking considerations: identifying, nurturing and educating a talented new generation of pastors and, second, recognizing and supporting the excellent ones we have. Not surprisingly, we know that healthy, engaged, thoughtful, dedicated ministers go hand in hand with healthy, vibrant and effective congregations.

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Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
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“Frankly, as busy and as ‘people-oriented’ as pastors’ lives are, many feel a sense of isolation,” he explained. “Over time, this results in diminished opportunities to engage in some of the crucial activities that led them to ministry in the first place—intellectual and spiritual searching and discovery, pursuit of scholarship and writing, fellowship with colleagues, strong relationships with loved ones and with God. “Most of these renewal programs address the need to reconnect and to engage in an ongoing way in the kinds of experiences and practices that keep ministry alive.”

Over the past few years, the Endowment has put several programs in place to encourage current pastors in their work. One route has been to establish clergy renewal programs that enable pastors and their families to take some time away from the daily pressures of pastoral life, replenish their energies and deepen the spiritual reservoirs of their ministries. The fifth season of the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations was announced this summer, and the recipients of the third National Clergy Renewal Program will be announced this fall. The Endowment also has supported small pilot programs of peer-learning groups on a limited basis.

“It became obvious, however, that many more pastors would be candidates for such programs and would benefit greatly from participating in them. So we invited ‘any nonprofit organization committed to supporting pastoral work and prepared to create or

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Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
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enhance a high-quality pastoral leadership program' to submit a proposal in our Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program," Dykstra said.

"Judging from the response to our invitation, we seem to have tapped into a wellspring of interest. More than 700 institutions put time and thought into proposals for this competitive program. In the beginning, we were considering awarding about 25 grants, but the enthusiastic and well-thought-out responses warranted an expansion of our original intentions," he said.

In its request for proposals the Endowment noted that "we would be particularly interested in supporting programs that are shaped by pastoral experience and designed with and by pastors and that we planned to encourage efforts to create environments for ongoing biblical study, theological reflection and spiritual renewal, as well as the development of sustained friendships and mutual support among pastors."

Represented among the grantees from nearly every major Christian faith tradition are theological schools, regional and national judicatories from large and small denominations, church-related colleges and universities, ecumenical organizations, retreat centers, and a congregation, among others.

Most programs serve racially mixed groups of pastors, but two programs are aimed explicitly at African Americans, two at Hispanics, and one at Korean pastors on

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Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
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the West Coast. Most offer opportunities for pastors at any stage of their career, though several focus particularly on new pastors.

“Peer group” learning”—that is, small groups of pastors who meet regularly for several years for ongoing renewal and mutual support—form the basis for most projects. Many programs include a mentoring or coaching component. Most projects involve some form of sustained study or training, but they employ a variety of educational settings and methods.

“We will be most interested in following these projects over the next few years,” Dykstra said. “They offer the promise of meaningful renewal for many pastors in this country.”

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**NOTE: Attached is a list of “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence” grantees. For a fuller description of each project, please go to the program’s Web site, [www.pastoralexcellence.org](http://www.pastoralexcellence.org).**

*September 2002*

The following institutions have received grants in Lilly Endowment's "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence" program:

**ALABAMA**

North Alabama Conference, United Methodist Church, Birmingham  
Institute for Clergy Excellence  
\$2 million

Samford University, Birmingham  
Pursuing Pastoral Excellence  
\$2 million

**ARKANSAS**

United Methodist Center (State Headquarters), Little Rock  
Connected in Christ  
\$2 million

**CALIFORNIA**

Westminster Theological Seminary in California, Escondido  
Center for Pastoral Refreshment  
\$868,174

**CONNECTICUT**

Yale University, New Haven  
Faith as a Way of Life  
\$1,558,387

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Dominican House of Studies, Washington  
Sustaining Excellent Pastors  
\$429,228

Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Washington  
Building Networks, Broadening Visions  
\$1,995,266

**GEORGIA**

Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur  
Cultivation of Pastoral Excellence through Sabbath, Study and Service  
\$1,299,468

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Atlanta  
Initiative for Ministerial Excellence  
\$1,995,748

**ILLINOIS**

Center for New Community, Oak Park  
Rural Pastors Institute  
\$752,855

National Association for Lay Ministry, Chicago  
Developing and Sustaining Pastoral Leadership in the Catholic Church  
\$2 million

**INDIANA**

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, Beech Grove/Indianapolis  
Women Touched by Grace  
\$451,895

Board of Church Extension of Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis  
Sustaining New Church Pastoral Excellence  
\$1,670,920

Church of God Ministries, Anderson  
To Sustain and Nourish  
\$1,654,207

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame  
Sustaining Excellence in Episcopal Ministry  
\$930,205

**KENTUCKY**

Church of the Apostles, Lexington  
The Pastor in Community  
\$289,615

**LOUISIANA**

Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$701,600

**MARYLAND**

St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore  
Mantle of Elijah, A Training Program for Priest Mentors  
\$591,946

**MASSACHUSETTS**

Boston University  
Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence Program  
\$1,998,850

Emmanuel Gospel Center, Boston  
Institute for Pastoral Excellence  
\$631,500

Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge  
Promoting Excellence in an Underserved Area  
\$1,593,117

Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, Framingham  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$1,508,707

**MICHIGAN**

Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids  
Creating a Culture of Pastoral Excellence  
\$1,999,278

Western Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, Holland  
Journey Groups  
\$814,746

**MINNESOTA**

Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Minneapolis  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$867,711

**MINNESOTA (cont.)**

St. John's University School of Theology, Collegeville  
Cultivating a Pastoral *Conversio*  
\$1,970,508

St. Paul's Monastery, St. Paul  
Called for Service, Formed in Christ  
\$644,935

**MISSISSIPPI**

Foundation for the Mid South, Jackson  
Building Pastoral Leadership in the Low-Income Communities of the Mid South  
\$2 million

Millsaps College, Jackson  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$1,999,288

**NEW JERSEY**

Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton  
Project in Pastoral Theological Excellence  
\$891,069

**NEW YORK**

Auburn Theological Seminary, New York City  
New York Sabbatical Institute  
\$824,630

Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Syracuse  
Ecumenical Pastoral Excellence Initiative  
\$439,071

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Triangle Pastoral Counseling, Raleigh  
Sustaining Congregational Pastors  
\$685,393

**OHIO**

Akron Area Association of Churches  
Pastor Parish Peer Study Group of Northeast Ohio  
\$513,450

**OHIO (cont.)**

Ashland University, Ashland  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$998,106

**OKLAHOMA**

Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa  
Program of Pastoral Renewal  
\$344,231

**PENNSYLVANIA**

American Baptist Board of Education and Publication, Valley Forge  
Together in Ministry  
\$1,975,810

**TENNESSEE**

Church of God School of Theology, Cleveland  
Walking in the Spirit  
\$252,355

Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence through Scholarship, Piety and Justice  
\$1,920,145

Upper Room, Nashville  
Companions in Ministry  
\$627,053

**TEXAS**

Asociacion para la Educacion Teologica Hispana, Austin  
Program of Latino Pastoral *Tertulias*  
\$851,220

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
College of Pastoral Leaders  
\$1,563,641

Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio  
International Priest Internship Program  
\$1,053,141

**VIRGINIA**

Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, Alexandria

The First Three Years

\$833,199

Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond

*Rehoboth*

\$958,500

**WASHINGTON**

Seattle University

Pastoral Leadership Program

\$1,896,915

**WISCONSIN**

American Baptist Assembly, Green Lake

Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership

\$2 million

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