

Green Lake Conference Center
For Immediate Release
April 2, 2007

Lilly Endowment grants additional \$1 million to fund Center for Excellence in Congregational LeadershipSM (CECLSM) at Green Lake Conference Center

Since its inception in 2003, the Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership (CECL) has helped almost 200 pastors realize God's dreams for them, their families and their churches. In recognition of the excellence of the program, Lilly Endowment has granted CECL an additional \$1 million to fund its fifth and sixth classes, extending the program out through 2010. This brings the Endowment's total investment in this program to \$3,000,000.

CECL is run by the Green Lake Conference Center/American Baptist Assembly located in Wisconsin. This initiative trains classes averaging 40-60 pastors in five one-week sessions over a two year period. CECL pastors and their leadership teams are leading their churches to an outward focus and health, while finding great personal and shared joy. They are experiencing growth through:

- Close relationships in pastor peer groups, with personal coaching and accountability
- Leading-edge speakers who challenge, inspire and equip them in areas of integrity; balance of family and ministry; spiritual growth; and discerning vision, building teams and leading change to build congregational health
- Creating the vision and planning the implementation with their key lay leaders at Green Lake
- Teaching and personal feedback in their preaching ministry
- Renewal, fun and learning with their spouse and children
- Energized physical and emotional health
- Awe of the Creation in a beautiful conference setting

The results have been impressive. Churches in the first class, on average, experienced a statistically significant increase on the Natural Church Development measure "need oriented evangelism." The pastors reported a 37% decrease in "my potential for burnout" and a 38% increase on "the congregational team is cooperating with me to bring about change." On average, CECL churches are growing in attendance and giving.

Green Lake's President Ken Giacoletto said, "The CECL Vision Team is delighted with how powerfully CECL has helped pastors and churches move from an inward focus to an outward focus as they have worked to reach their communities for Christ. We have also been thrilled by the testimonies of pastors re-discovering joy in their ministry. Lilly Endowment has enabled CECL to impact the trajectory of pastors and churches, many of whom would otherwise never have been able to afford such life-changing training."

CECL is a multi-denominational program with participants coming from the American Baptist Churches USA, Baptist General Conference, Southern Baptist, Conservative Baptist, Evangelical Free, Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America and Vineyard denominations.

The fourth class of CECL begins in April 2007 and the fifth class will begin in 2008.

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