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THE PENSION FUND OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) AND LEXINGTON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY PARTNER TO STUDY WELL-BEING OF MINISTERS

(Indianapolis, Indiana, 07/01/11) – The Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the Ministry Life Choices Initiative at Lexington Theological Seminary is pleased to announce its partnership with the Flourishing in Ministry Project and Dr. Matt Bloom.

The Flourishing in Ministry Project focuses on the emotional welfare of clergy and their families. The goal of the project is to discover what makes pastors tick -- and what ticks them off -- in order to better understand how to bring joy to those who work so hard to bring it to others. The project is another step in the work of University of Notre Dame Management Associate Professor Matt Bloom, who in 2009 was awarded a five-year, \$500,000 Lilly Endowment grant to study the sense of well-being at work among people in the caring professions.

In Phase I of the study, Dr. Bloom will survey a cross-section of Disciples clergy regarding life and ministry and in Phase II conduct interviews with a targeted group of Indiana clergy.

“We want to understand well-being at a really deep level, rather than just forming a few survey questions,” said Bloom, who has worked with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church. “We are trying to understand what constitutes well-being for clergy. What are the factors that shape it? What are the outcomes?”

“We are pleased to facilitate this work and ministry. This is an ideal partnership for the Pension Fund,” said James Hamlett, president of the Pension Fund. “We are keenly aware that the more we know about the daily lives of pastors and their families the more we are able to support and encourage them in the vocation of ministry.”

Disciples of Christ clergy and family members will have the opportunity to participate by registering during General Assembly this summer in Nashville, Tenn., July 9-13 at the Pension Fund booth. “We are particularly interested in the ways in which families help to shape the ministerial context and I am hopeful that a sufficient number of will register to share their experiences,” said Dr. Charisse L. Gillett, LTS vice-president and project liaison.

Lexington Theological Seminary President James P. Johnson added, “These kinds of creative partnerships offer the Seminary a chance to gather and apply relevant data that help us to prepare clergy for a 21st century church.”

For more information on the Flourishing in Ministry project and to **register** by July 22, please visit <http://wellbeing.nd.edu/Flourishing/DOC/> or call Ms. Bethany Cockburn at 574-631-4803. For more information on the Ministry Life Choices Initiative and to **discuss** participation in the survey, please contact Dr. Charisse L. Gillett at cgillett@lextheo.edu.

“We are grateful to Dr. Bloom for his work and to the Lilly Endowment for its willingness to fund this research. Ultimately we hope to foster conversations that will engage the church in discussions on ways to nurture and sustain those called to pastoral ministry,” said Eugene Fisher, vice-president of member services for the Pension Fund.

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