

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Lake Union Herald

Lake Union Herald

9-2024

Lily Foundation Gifts Seminary and Local Pastors

Andrew Francis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>



▲ Ignacio Goya, CCC director, training pastors at the Upper Columbia Conference in Spokane, Washington

Lily Foundation Gifts Seminary and Local Pastors

The Center for Community Change (CCC) in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University is all about pastor and church revitalization, community social impact, innovative community projects, a healthy cycle of evangelism, and establishing pastors and church leaders as mentors.

This all started hands-on in 2023 with pastors and is part of a \$5 million grant from the Lily Endowment. The new initiative expands the rich history of Andrews University's 150-year impact on communities around the globe.

"Lily Endowment, LLC, gave us the money for transactional community projects, and we have changed the focus to be a transformational approach," says Ignacio Goya, CCC director. The CCC enters Phase Three in a multi-year donation cycle, which itself has a three-phase process. The CCC partnered with 18 United States conferences in 2023/2024 including Illinois, Lake Region and Michigan, to provide pastors and

churches with leadership training. Once a pastor begins this journey alongside CCC, the goal is to heal and transform both the pastor and their congregation, added Goya. This first year saw 84 pastors impacted. In 2024 they expanded globally adding 32 pastors and their churches.

According to Goya, equipping pastors in a three-phase process includes an official memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining expectations and responsibilities. Phase One is leadership transformation, Phase Two is community engagement, and Phase Three is discipleship and evangelism. The CCC team recognizes that each community is unique, so training programs

are customized with one-on-one mentoring of pastors with the CCC and their partnering organizations. Some of the North American CCC partnerships include: ADRA, Andrews University Department of Social Work, Kettering Health Network, AdventistHealth, AdventHealth, Adventist HealthCare, Adventist Family Ministries, Versacare Foundation, Adventist Learning Community, Adventist Community Services, Mission Disruption, NADMin and Adventist Leadership Institute.

In total, the Lily Endowment has provided the seminary with several grants that total over \$6 million to build curriculum for current students and equip future pastors. The three phases correlate with the Lilly Foundation's grant-giving phases. Andrews University's first gifted grant began in Phase One that created a \$50,000 grant for research to determine how best to proceed to train pastors. Phase Two was a \$1 million grant that focused on urban pastoral ministry training and it brought a new Master of Divinity with a concentration/online certificate in urban ministry and an urban clinical pastoral education (CPE) program. Phase Three is where the CCC comes in as it was established to provide training and mentor experiences for pastors and church leaders. A 2023 Barna study noted that pastors only feel 52% satisfied with their role (Barna Group 2024). Tina Leonor, CCC program coordinator, says the goal is to assist pastors in "reimagining their ministry to engage their churches in innovative and evidence-based programs that address challenges facing their communities."

Goya and his team of associate directors, Claval Hunter and Vadim Dementyev, know the local church pastor is the best place to begin. A 2021 study of 720 North American pastors verified this finding, sharing that 59% of pastors need enhanced cultural learning, 52% said they want a practicum in community service, 54% seek mentors in urban or rural areas, 45% desire community engagement courses, and more than 50% felt a need for continuous education in rural and urban ministry areas.

Once training begins, CCC collaborates with pastors and church leaders on community engagement using the Lily Endowment funds for community projects. Next, CCC creates customized training for the church leaders and pastors empowering them to action. Finally, CCC shares its partner network to connect pastors and church leadership and establish a healthy cycle of evangelism tailored to their community.

CCC seeks to use Christ's method from Ellen White's "The Ministry of Healing," saying His method alone gives true success in reaching out. "The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He invited them, 'Follow Me'" (MH, Page 73).

Phases One and Two saw volunteers serving in local community organizations such as Neighbor to Neighbor, a local family service center and thrift store in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Laura Meyer, the executive

director until recently, says seminary students worked on community-based internships. The interns typically served in the thrift store. Meyer said, "They offer to pray with people, they offer to listen."

Meyer added that this ministry is impactful, "sending the message that we care and that we are here for you. We are here to meet physical, spiritual and emotional needs," she adds. Neighbor to Neighbor wants to one day provide more programs to help customers.

Cedric Vine, director of the master's program in religion and seminary affiliations and extensions, served as the project director for the Phase Two grants, saying that assisting urban churches and communities was an emphasis.

"The problem that we addressed with Phase 2 was to strengthen urban pastors," says Vine. "North American churches are weak in the inner cities and in the small towns and rural areas." He shared that many church members move to the suburbs,

depleting the resources of inner-city churches. Many of the urban church communities and pastors are ethnic minorities so it was important to better equip future seminary graduates with urban-focused ministry training and relevant curriculum.

This desire to help inner-city communities also manifested in the city of Benton Harbor, Michigan, with the Boys and Girls Clubs. Arline Wilson, Fetting Clubhouse Youth Campus branch director, shared that volunteers have been a big help academically. "They help out with something called 'Power Hour,' which is our academic hour for our members," she said. Tutoring helped children strive for academic skills at or above their grade level and volunteers assisted with math and reading.

To learn more about the CCC, visit communitychange.world. ■

Andrews Francis is a junior digital communication major at Andrews University.

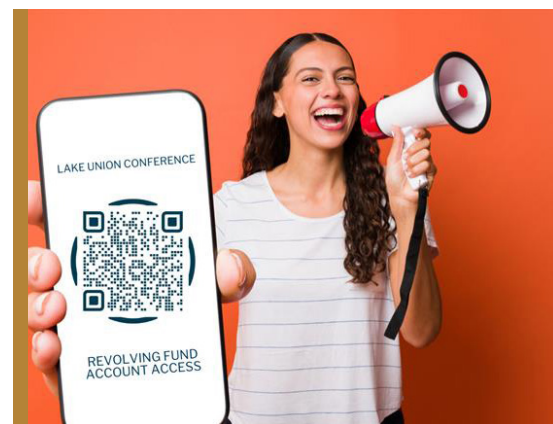
Access to Lake Union Revolving Fund Now Available

We are pleased to announce the arrival of the Lake Union Revolving Fund online portal. You'll be able to access your account from any computer or other smart device. You can open an account, make deposits and transfers, track your history, even assign beneficiaries, all in minutes—anytime and anywhere. It's highly secure, using today's leading security standards to protect your information.

In case you're not aware of the revolving fund, here is some background information.

In 1993, the Lake Union Conference established a valuable ministry, a monetary fund called the revolving fund, which allows our members to take their personal finances and deposit them into this investment fund, receiving quarterly interest. Your local church can participate, as well. This

may seem like an ordinary savings account with your local bank, but there's nothing ordinary about it. By depositing into the revolving fund, your dollars are assisting local schools, churches and even your local conference with ministry projects necessary to grow God's mission. Therefore, while your deposited funds are in an account receiving interest, those same funds are being used



to help build a church or school in the Lake Union territory.

So, take the next step and partner with the revolving fund. Depositing your funds, maintaining access at any time, earning quarterly interest above-typical savings account rates, all while allowing your funds to support and enhance local churches, schools and area conferences. ■

Jermaine K. Jackson is associate treasurer and stewardship director for the Lake Union Conference.