

## **ENGAGED SCHOLARS STUDYING CONGREGATIONS**

### **A program of mentoring, networking, and study support**

Supported by the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

#### **What sorts of projects can be proposed?**

Any topic touching on the practices of congregational life is welcome. The focus may include any of the ministries, missions, education, worship, or practical administration involved in congregational life. The project proposed may involve whatever methods are appropriate to the Fellow's discipline and the project at hand – e.g., an historical study, theological engagement, ethnography, pedagogical or clinical programs, interviews, and the like. The only constraint is that projects must involve some direct engagement with on-the-ground congregational life.

#### **Are these research grants?**

They are grants that provide support for research and study activities, but the program involves more than that. It also includes intentional mentoring and network building and two summer consultations.

#### **What is the time frame?**

The grant period begins 1 June 2012 and concludes 31 December 2013, with final reports due no later than 1 February 2014.

#### **How much are the awards?**

Fellows receive \$9,000 in each of the two summers (2012 and 2013). These funds may be used for any expenses related to the study being proposed, including summer salary support. An additional \$2,000 is available during the nineteen month grant period to be used for travel. These funds are intended to enhance the networking capacity of the fellow and should be used for activities such as visiting the assigned coach, consulting with another fitting conversation partner, or attendance at professional meetings.

#### **Who should apply?**

Applications are encouraged from scholars in a variety of disciplines – from practical theology to the social sciences, from history to biblical studies and contextual education. Applicants should have completed their graduate work and be placed in a professional position at the time of application. We especially encourage early-career scholars to apply, but will consider applications from persons who have recently been tenured.

#### **What is the Congregational Studies Team?**

For nearly thirty years, the Congregational Studies Project Team has led the way in inviting scholars to engage in serious, rigorous research on congregational life and encouraging religious leaders to draw on academic research to enrich their ability to provide effective leadership to local religious communities. Together, members of the Team produced both the original *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (1986) and its successor, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (1998). Current members of the Team are Nancy Ammerman, Anthea Butler, Bill McKinney, Omar McRoberts, Larry Mamiya, Gerardo Marti, Joyce Mercer, James Nieman (project director), Bob Schreiter, Steve Warner, and Jack Wertheimer.

### **What kind of mentoring is involved?**

Fellows are paired with a “coach,” either from the Team or someone invited to participate in the project specifically to work with the fellow. With long experience in studying faith communities, these coaches help fellows to hone their research skills, add new ideas to their analytical repertoire, and lay firm foundations for their careers.

### **What are the summer consultations all about?**

The summer consultations allow the entire Team, along with cohorts of fellows and guest coaches, to participate in a mutual mentoring process. During each summer consultation, fellows have a significant block of focused attention given not only to their work, but also to how their work grows out of their vocation and engages communities of faith. Both formal presentations and informal interactions during these events are important opportunities for reflection and learning. *Attendance at these two meetings (one each June) is required*, and all expenses are covered. The summer consultation for the first year of the 2012-2013 cohort is set for 16-20 June 2012 on Cape Cod, Mass.

### **Why networking? How will that work?**

The mentoring relationship and the summer consultations are themselves designed to facilitate building a broader and more interdisciplinary network to support the work of fellows during and beyond the program. Past cohorts of fellows have included people working in history, ethnic studies, public health, anthropology, sociology, and theology—across religious traditions as varied as the American religious landscape. Fellows have connected with each other and with the Team, and through those connections outward into religious and academic arenas with which they might not otherwise have had contact.

### **What do I have to produce?**

At the end of the fellowship period, fellows provide a report on their fellowship activities and accomplishments, including an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. They must also show significant progress toward a set of products they and their mentor agree is most appropriate to their position and career goals. This will likely include an article to be published in a place appropriate to their academic guild, but it will also include some combination of (a) an account of their study of congregations that is oriented toward a broad public audience of leaders and others concerned about the well-being of congregational life, (b) a brief essay on the challenges of engaged scholarship, (c) products to be shared on the Congregational Studies website, and/or (d) a syllabus or other resources for instructional use.

### **What if I've never written for a popular audience?**

Conversations among mentors and fellows at the summer consultation include attention to expanding avenues of publication and consulting, exploring how research finds its way into the hands of teachers and religious leaders through general audience periodicals, conferences, the web, and the like.

### **What is the application process?**

Complete applications are due no later than 15 January 2012. To be considered complete, applications must include the following four materials:

- (1) A brief essay (not more than five double-spaced pages) detailing the particular project you wish to

undertake and the way that study will grow out of and affect local communities of faith.

- (2) A budget outlining expected uses for the \$18,000 research stipend. This may either be direct research or study expenses, summer salary replacement(s), and/or other materials or activities that will enhance the goals of your work.
- (3) A copy of your *curriculum vitae*.
- (4) The names and contact information for two persons you have asked to write letters of support. One of these should be from someone such as a dean or department chair who can express the endorsement of your institution for your participation in this program. *Applicants are responsible for ensuring that these letters themselves are sent directly by your recommenders directly to the project director by the deadline.*

Send materials to [engagedscholars@hartsem.edu](mailto:engagedscholars@hartsem.edu). *With the exception of letters of support, electronic submission using e-mail attachment is the **only** accepted form of submission.* Letters of support must appear on institutional letterhead and may either be sent as a scanned e-mail attachment or mailed by recommenders directly to:

Engaged Scholars Fellowship Program  
c/o James Nieman, Academic Dean  
Hartford Seminary  
77 Sherman Street  
Hartford, CT 06105

Finalists will be notified by 15 February 2012 and provided an opportunity to sharpen their proposals before final submission no later than 20 March 2012. Awarding of the 2012-2013 cohort of three fellows will be announced no later than 1 April 2012.

**PREVIOUS ENGAGED SCHOLARS FELLOWS**  
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**2005-2006**

Russell Jeung, San Francisco State University

“Religion and Resiliency: Religious Participation and Low-Income Asian Youth”

Anita Houck, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame

“Rootless and Restless? Envisioning Single Life in Contemporary Congregations”

Gerardo Marti, Davidson College

“Congregational Music and Racial Diversity”

**2006-2007**

Kathleen Jenkins, The College of William and Mary

“Divorce and Uncoupling in Religious Community”

William Clark, College of the Holy Cross

“Community, Authority and Ministry: Ecclesiological Implications of Parish Clustering and Reorganization Plans in the Roman Catholic Church”

Arlene Sanchez Walsh, Azusa Pacific University

“Santidad, Sanación, y Salvación: Reimagining Latino Evangelicalism”

**2007-2008**

Tobin Belzer, University of Southern California

“The Weakness of Strong Ties: An Exploration of the Denominational Roots of Non-Denominational Churches”

Kraig Beyerlein, University of Arizona

“Saving Lives: Congregations' Humanitarian Efforts to Help Migrants Crossing the U.S.-Mexico Border”

Jenny Trinatipoli, Arizona State University

“The Role of Congregations in Providing Care in the AIDS Epidemic in Malawi”

**2008-2009**

Sascha Goluboff, Washington and Lee University

“African American Home Church: The Politics of Race and Religion in the Rural South”

Rebecca Kim, Pepperdine University

“De-westernization of American Christianity: Reverse Korean Missionaries”

Lance Laird, Boston University School of Medicine

“Mosques, Churches, and Religious Health Assets in Roxbury and Dorchester”

**2009-2010**

Christopher Brittain, University of Aberdeen

“Congregational Identity in the Wake of Denominational Crisis: The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh”

Margarita Mooney, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Engaged Scholarship on Religion and International Migration”

Christine Sheikh, University of Denver

“One Ummah, Separate Worlds? Discourses on Race and Ethnicity in Multi-Ethnic Muslim Congregations”

**2010-2011**

Orit Avishai, Fordham University

“Holy Unions: Faith-Based Marriage Education and the ‘Crisis in Marriage’”

Tricia Bruce, Maryville College

“Identity and Community in Personal Parishes in the U.S. Catholic Church”

Lynne Gerber, University of California at Berkeley

“Surviving the Plague: Remembering, Healing, and Growing Past Communal Trauma in an Urban Congregation”