

## PRESS RELEASE

### Headline: Missio Seminary receives its second \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Missio Seminary of Philadelphia has received its second \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The first \$1 million grant was received in 2018 under the Thriving in Ministry Initiative to launch Missio’s PULPIT program. The recent award is part of Lilly Endowment’s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, which is designed to help theological schools strengthen and sustain their capacities to prepare and support pastoral leaders. Through the three-phase initiative, Lilly Endowment has made \$87.5 million in grants available to help seminaries in the United States and Canada enhance their effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Christopher Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion said “Theological schools have long played a central role for most denominations and church networks in preparing pastoral leaders who guide the ministries of Christian congregations. But today these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. This initiative is intended to assist theological schools in designing new approaches or accelerating their current innovative efforts to adapt to changes in higher education and church life. We hope that this support will help them sustain their abilities to prepare pastoral leaders for years to come.”

Missio was one of 84 theological schools to receive a grant through the second phase of the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. With the \$1 million grant, Missio Seminary will establish the Polis Center, an innovative hub that will train and equip church and lay leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century ministry. Polis will give special attention to programs and training opportunities for bi-vocational pastors (people who serve as clergy and have other employment) to thrive in ministry, for congregations to diversify their revenue streams, and for Christian business professionals to better live out their faith in the community.

The Polis Center has been a vision of Missio’s president, Dr. Frank A. James III, for over 20 years. Dr. James said “I am persuaded that the Polis Center is precisely the kind of innovation that seminaries need to prosper in the future. Polis will be a multi-layered platform to nourish flourishing churches and communities--in word and deed. I look forward to the adventure. ”

As part of the Polis Center, over the next 3 years Missio will launch three new certificate programs to equip and empower church and lay leaders these include:

***The Certificate in Social Enterprise*** which will be launched in conjunction with the Social Enterprise Institute.

***The Certificate in Christian Entrepreneurship*** which will be developed in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia, the Social Enterprise Institute, Christian business leaders, and bi-vocational pastors.

***The Certificate in Missional Business*** which will be developed in partnership with a variety of well-known business consultants, Christian business leaders, and bi-vocational pastors.

Further, Missio will establish a mentoring program at the Polis Center to ensure success of certificate graduates.

Missio Seminary is a missional seminary committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and purposed to prepare missional leaders to Follow Jesus into the World.

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For additional information, please visit [\*\*www.missio.edu\*\*](http://www.missio.edu)

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