

EXPLORING THE
**GROWING
EDGES**
OF CHRISTIAN
MINISTRY



THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION **2013** ANNUAL REPORT

Does a changed world call us to change, too?

Dear Friends,

Where are the growing edges in Christian communities? How are young adults exploring these edges in pursuit of Christian ministry? What do the church and academy need now to shape leaders whose work is at the edges of what is yet to come?

The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) has spent the last year listening deeply for answers to those questions.

The world has changed significantly since FTE awarded its first fellowships in 1954. As we approach our 60th anniversary, we made 2013 a time to discern what God is up to—and where that leads us.

So FTE listened intently to its stakeholders. We visited with partners. We sought out new connections. We evaluated our programs. We assessed how the landscape has shifted for different communities of Christian believers—including theological schools—and what the world needs now.

We learned that FTE has built relationships and reaped insights that allow us to effectively convene national, ecumenical conversations on Christian leadership.

We learned that we have the *most impact* by creating forums for young people to explore vocations in Christian ministry, and by building forums of support for theological scholars of color.

But the context for our work has changed. To be good stewards of the resources that prepare aspiring leaders, FTE needs to change, too.

We will continue to cultivate young leaders for ministry and teaching—but we will expand beyond awarding fellowships. FTE will invest more in mentoring, in leadership development, in resources for institutions, in partnerships and in forums where diverse networks of people plant and grow the church's future.

“We will continue to nurture future leaders for ministry and theological scholarship—but we will expand beyond awarding fellowships.”



“FTE will invest more in mentoring, in leadership development, in resources for institutions, in partnerships and in forums where diverse networks of people plant and grow the church's future.”

FTE must help young leaders think creatively and flexibly in the midst of a changing church and a changing economy. We must find new ways to help Millennial Christians see the church and academy as viable places where they can be devoted—and even disruptive—difference-makers.

We must offer opportunities for young adults to explore deeply rooted ministries in traditional Christian communities. We must also free them to bravely branch out from those solid roots—to take risks and to innovate with new models for ministry.

Change is inevitable. We believe that FTE can adapt for the future while building on the enduring impact of its past.

Faith tells us that when the earth moves under our feet and the wind suddenly stirs, it may be that the Spirit of God is doing something new. Attentive to where the Spirit leads us, FTE will continue to sow the seeds of calling deep into the fertile minds of compassionate young people who long to be the heart, hands and feet of Christ in their communities.

Join us at the growing edges of Christian ministry. Together, let's inspire a new generation of courageous leaders. They are the future church—and as bearers of the Gospel, they will have a profound impact on God's work in the world.

Stephen Lewis
FTE President



Will we inspire young leaders of change?

Purpose. Passion. Calling. Vocation is about discovering *meaning*—the place where one’s gifts intersect with the world’s needs.

How well do we inspire young adults to explore deep questions of purpose and identity? Can they clearly see Christian leadership as a path to change the world?

We offer young leaders a diverse learning community—a forum—where they can imagine how they will join in God’s work, for the good of the world.



A graphic recording of young adults’ conversation during the 2013 FTE Leaders in Ministry Conference

2013 MINISTRY PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

86 young adults explored the “Growing Edges of Christian Ministry” at the 2013 FTE Leaders in Ministry Conference

86 

66

66 students gained financial support for seminary & mentoring opportunities

MINISTRY PROGRAM

To spark imaginations, seed opportunities and chart new pathways for ministry, FTE:

- Hosted preaching events, discernment retreats and leadership training for young leaders.
- Convened diverse groups of students and connected them to a larger network of leaders who are exploring ministry. This fostered the relationships and social support these young people need to pursue pastoral ministry.
- Awarded grants that give young people access to mentoring and internship opportunities in a variety of ministry settings.

WE LEARNED:

-  Young leaders hunger to form a community with others who are drawn to Christian ministry. This community experience—and the support network it generates—can be as valuable as financial assistance.
-  Christian communities operate in different contexts. Inviting diverse partners to nominate young adults for FTE ministry programs develops leaders who are able to serve their communities’ distinctive needs.
-  Young leaders want innovative Christian leaders as mentors. They also want more opportunities to build relationships and explore creative ministry models that take the church out into the community.

WE WILL:

-  Invest in more mentoring opportunities and ways for young people to explore ministry in different contexts.

“For the first time, I started to see church as a place to build real community—to create change in people’s lives.”

DOCTORAL PROGRAM

To lift every voice of insight, sustain scholars of color and prepare culturally competent leaders for diverse communities, we:

- Launched new fellowship programs for doctoral students of color. Fellowships focus on student completion of doctoral programs, mentoring and professional development, and close collaboration with partners who prepare students of color for leadership.
- Gathered FTE Doctoral Program Fellows and school representatives at Chicago Theological Seminary for the 2013 Leaders in the Academy Conference, “Exploring the Edges of Theological Scholarship.”

WE LEARNED:

- 💡 Junior scholars of color need networks of support to compete for a dwindling number of tenure track positions; 70% of higher education faculty positions are now contingent appointments.
- 💡 Doctoral students need models, pathways and mentors to help them live into their calling as theological educators. Teaching is likely to become one part of a professional portfolio that includes other roles.
- 💡 Stipend support in the latter stages of doctoral work remains a key intervention for students’ timely completion of degrees.

WE WILL:

- 📖 Invest in support networks and explore new vocational models that blend theological scholarship, teaching, ministry and community-based leadership.



Doctoral Fellow Cori Tucker-Price reflects on a site visit during the 2013 FTE Leaders in the Academy Conference

“I understand my work as the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of justice.”

2013 DOCTORAL PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past three years 70% of FTE Fellows in latter stages of doctoral programs had no stipend support other than their FTE fellowship

70%

36

36 Ph.D. students & faculty from 24 theological schools & religion departments connected at the FTE Leaders in the Academy Conference



VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING VOCATION

To fuel discernment and discovery among young leaders in volunteer service programs, FTE:

- Hosted vocational discernment events in Atlanta and Chicago for young adult volunteers in faith-based programs. Participants reflected on their year of volunteer service, learned from pastors, theologians and community leaders, and explored next steps toward Christian ministry and lives of service.
- Awarded fellowships to former young adult volunteers who are entering seminary to pursue ministry. They join a national network of 20 other volunteers who received FTE fellowships during the past two years and are completing graduate theological degrees.

WE LEARNED:

- 💡 Intergenerational mentoring for young leaders helps prepare them to be bridge builders and social architects of the Christian church's future.
- 💡 Questions about God, faith and service abound among young people across North America. In an increasingly secular society, they need affirmation of their hopes, values and callings.

WE WILL:

- 👉 Seek new partners and co-host discernment events where, together, students from different backgrounds can explore their sense of calling.

“Talking with peers made me really want to jump into the church’s future more than I had previously imagined.”



Karl Heimback talks with peers in a small group at the 2013 Volunteers Exploring Vocation (VEV) National Event

2013 VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING VOCATION BY THE NUMBERS

100

100 young adults from 18 faith-based volunteer programs connected at two national VEV discernment events



10 fellowships awarded to young adult volunteers entering seminary

10



TRANSITION -INTO- MINISTRY

To strengthen peer support, build strong bonds and rejuvenate young pastors, we:

- Coordinated key aspects of Lilly Endowment’s pioneering support program for young pastors. At its 2013 conference, Transition-into-Ministry (TiM) convened young pastors to discuss the joys and challenges of pastoral ministry. They explored ways to adapt to the shifting landscape and changing demographics that impact congregational life.
- Identified young pastors to receive “friendship grants.” The grants help strengthen relationships and create a network of colleagues who sustain one another throughout a lifetime in pastoral ministry.

WE LEARNED:

- 💡 Young pastors want an active role in identifying and cultivating the next generation of church leaders. They seek to be more involved in grassroots recruiting and mentoring strategies.
- 💡 TiM’s well-developed pastoral residency programs in congregations can be extended to powerfully impact young students in their communities.

WE WILL:

- 📖 Invest in models for TiM congregations to engage high school and college students in internships that explore the possibilities of pastoral ministry.

“I’m now part of a cohort of people who provide great support for me.”



A TiM participant leads worship at their program site



2013 TRANSITION-INTO-MINISTRY BY THE NUMBERS

43 43 new pastors joined the TiM leadership development network



\$42,000 funded grants for ventures to renew and sustain young pastors

\$42,000

How are communities called to support young leaders?

To thrive, every community needs leaders who are faithful, wise and courageous.

Thriving faith communities especially need leaders who are innovators. Risk takers. Agents of change.

Where will we find these inspired Christian leaders for the future?

Partner with us. Come explore fresh new ways to grow diverse young leaders with a passion for serving the common good.



Bishop Yvette Flunder encourages FTE Ministry Fellow Kamilah Bywaters at the 2013 FTE Leaders in Ministry Conference

2013 CONGREGATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

200 stakeholders joined national conversations focused on cultivating young leaders

200



4 new grants seeded different models for pastoral internships

4

CONGREGATIONS AND CHURCH-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

To team with diverse partners and infuse new energy into leadership development, we:

- Explored needs and strategies with 34 organizations that develop young leaders in the Latino church community. We also formed a partnership with The Jesse Miranda Center for Hispanic Leadership.
- Connected with six church networks that reach a diverse constituency of young leaders, church planters and educators in both mainline and evangelical churches.
- Brought together grant recipients from across the country to share effective models for youth discernment about ministry.

WE LEARNED:

- 💡 Our partners need customized resources and tailored strategies for vocational discernment work with youth in different contexts.
- 💡 Mentoring is vitally important for women in ministry and the academy. They contend with difficult cultural and gender-based expectations and have fewer ministry opportunities.
- 💡 Pastoral internships are powerful experiences for young adults called to leadership in traditional and emerging settings alike.
- 💡 People with similar goals but different backgrounds benefit greatly when they connect to a broader network of colleagues.

WE WILL:

- 📌 Invest in diverse networks and partners, new mentoring strategies and pastoral internship ventures.

“Mentors in our church are learning how to have vocational conversations with young people.”

VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING VOCATION

(VEV) NATIONAL PARTNERS

To multiply connections, design new resources and discover breakthrough discernment models, FTE:

- Convened and connected the directors of 18 volunteer service organizations at a national VEV meeting. We awarded capacity building grants to partners and supported the launch of two new VEV programs.
- Created a pilot program for FTE Alumni to mentor young adults in volunteer service programs. It debuted in California, Georgia and Tennessee.
- Awarded six grants to congregations and church-related groups to create groundbreaking discernment programs for young volunteers.

WE LEARNED:

- 💡 Vocational discernment is a deeply rooted focus of our partners; they are revising curriculums to offer more tools and resources.
- 💡 Our partners seek vocational discernment language that resonates effectively with young adults in different settings.
- 💡 Young people with adult mentors are better able to navigate vocational choices.
- 💡 Connecting at retreats helps young volunteers share knowledge, build networks, form daily spiritual practices and identify the opportunities they need to “try-out” different forms of ministry.

WE WILL:

- 📌 Leverage grant making and convening to more effectively support our partners, while we invest more in leadership opportunities, ministry exploration and mentoring ventures.

“Volunteers are glad to be in a place where they can fulfill their calling. They are forever changed.”



VEV National Partners gathering at the 2013 VEV National Event

2013 VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING VOCATION NATIONAL PARTNERS BY THE NUMBERS

24 church-related groups and national partners received grants for vocational discernment work with young volunteers

24



10

10 FTE grantee organizations (volunteer service groups & congregations) gathered for the first time to share strategies

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

To listen deeply, tap collective wisdom and meet the challenges of change, we:

- Convened the 2013 FTE Consultation on Doctoral Theological Education with partners and leaders of theological schools. Our purpose? To forge breakthrough strategies to cultivate scholars of color. A summary report and calls to action are on the FTE website (www.fteleaders.org/doctoralreport).
- Commissioned a review of historic shifts that impact scholars of color. Our report gives a “balcony view” of cultural trends that are shaping new norms and impact how schools think about preparing future faculty. Resources for higher education change-seekers are offered in “The Cultivation of Scholars of Color in Theological Education” (www.fteleaders.org/litreview).

WE LEARNED:

-  Progress in reversing the diversity deficit in graduate theological education is too slow and puts campuses at risk. Institutional leaders need resources and accountability structures to drive real change.
-  The need for scholars of color in theological schools is urgent. This need will accelerate. But traditional, tenure-track jobs are scarce. Institutions, faculty and students would benefit from a new paradigm for scholarly vocations and cultural competence in theological education.

WE WILL:

-  Invest in resources that explore how institutional leaders can spark systemic change and erase the diversity deficit.

“To nurture and raise the kind of teaching faculty needed for tomorrow’s church will take nothing short of a rethinking of our academic culture.”



Dr. Jeffrey Kuan speaks with attendees at the 2013 FTE Consultation on Doctoral Theological Education

2013 THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS BY THE NUMBERS

36 

36 leaders collaborated to design diversity-strong strategies for doctoral theological education

40+



40-plus diversity action steps recommended to transform institutions

DONOR SUPPORT

Will you invest in the church's vibrant future?

What would you give to shape the future of our faith?

Few opportunities give you the chance to help transform the world. Investing in young Christian leaders is one of them.

Your gift to FTE opens the leadership gifts of young adults who minister, teach, transform and serve.

The church needs them. Communities worldwide need them. With your support, a vibrant future for our faith begins right here, right now.



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Financial Highlights

2012-2011 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2012	2011
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 46,632	\$ 611,586
Investments	16,965,272	16,059,605
Prepaid expenses	19,776	10,223
Fixed assets, net	73,662	22,941
	\$17,105,342	\$16,704,355
LIABILITIES		
Accounts and grants payable	\$ 536,588	\$ 534,339
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	5,145,843	4,502,619
Temporarily restricted	10,611,734	10,859,220
Permanently restricted	811,177	808,177
Total net assets	16,568,754	16,170,016
	\$17,105,342	\$16,704,355

FRIEND US. FOLLOW US. JOIN US. AN ONLINE NETWORK OF COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Vibrant communities need a central place to gather. FTE is a central gathering space for socially engaged Christian leaders.

Are you a young adult ready to do God's work in the world? Gather here.

Do you help young people explore their purpose in life? Gather here.

This is your place. Bring your voice.

3,769

3,769 followers on 8 social networks



117% increase in Facebook fans

117%

46% increase in Twitter followers; 2,883 URL clicks



46%



301 minutes of audio resources; 3,817 plays

301

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206

206 Fellows & Alumni
connect on LinkedIn

22 contributors speaking
out on FTE's blog



200

Instagram debut:
200 Hearts/Likes



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have helped me throughout
my life. And I don’t know
of any other nonprofit that
focuses the same way on
tapping a living stream of
capable and compassionate
leaders for the future.”**





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Our Mission

The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) cultivates diverse young people to be faithful, wise and courageous leaders for the church and the academy.