



## **Garrett Seminary Receives Multi-Million Dollar Grant to Support Collaboration with AETH to Empower Hispanic Pastors and Churches**

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**Garrett Seminary** has received a \$6.79 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help it collaborate with the **Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH)** through Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Strengthen Hispanic Pastoral Leaders and Congregations. Together AETH and Garrett will support other organizations being funded through the national initiative, which is designed to strengthen Hispanic pastoral leaders and congregations and to build and expand the capacities of organizations and networks that support their ministries.

This groundbreaking collaboration between Garrett and AETH will empower, accompany, and equip organizations serving the Hispanic-Latiné church, its pastoral leaders and communities. "Our collaboration reflects a shared commitment to strengthening and sustaining Latiné communities as their influence and presence continue to expand," says Dr. Emma Escobar, Director of the Hispanic-Latinx Center at Garrett Seminary.

"We seek to prioritize the coordination of efforts, gatherings and integration of participants' cultural insights to support them as they build their capacities to better serve our Hispanic community," says the Rev. Dr. Jessica Lugo, Executive Director at AETH. "Crucially, this effort will be grounded in resources created for Hispanic Christians by Hispanic Christians, centering the expertise of leaders who know these communities best."

"This partnership unites AETH's unwavering dedication to the Latiné community with Garrett's academic excellence," says Dr. Oscar Merlo, who will co-coordinate the program with Dr. Escobar. "This initiative goes beyond building institutional capacity—it invests in the broader faith community to ensure their kingdom work remains impactful and relevant."

Garrett and AETH will convene annual gatherings of organizations that have received funds through the Lilly Endowment initiative, enabling the organizations and other stakeholders to share knowledge and foster innovation. Participants will take part in workshops and ongoing peer groups to deepen this communal learning. These efforts will be guided by the foremost theologians and subject matter experts, who will offer specialized training to help organizations thrive as vital pillars within their communities.



“Local parishes and faith-based non-profit organizations are essential to heal the fractures across our world,” says Garrett Seminary President Javier Viera. “As we enter a period of dramatic change for Latiné peoples, we must empower organizations that ground their work in God’s unwavering love and justice.”

Because both Garrett and AETH understand that Hispanic/Latiné communities are not monolithic, the coordination program will offer a variety of options tailored to organizations’ particular contexts. “In an ever-changing world, it’s crucial that we birth a powerful synergy between leaders, pastors, and organizations,” Dr. Merlo says, “So we can walk together in addressing the church's present and future challenges.” This grant is one of more than 40 intended to support a variety of Hispanic-serving organizations from across the United States, including congregations, denominational agencies, church networks, theological schools, colleges and universities, and parachurch organizations, among others.

### [About Lilly Endowment Inc](#)

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its founders’ hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A primary aim of its grantmaking in religion is to deepen the religious lives of Christians, principally by supporting efforts that enhance congregational vitality and strengthen the leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment values the broad diversity of Christian traditions and endeavors to support them in a wide variety of contexts. The Endowment also seeks to foster public understanding about religion by encouraging fair, accurate and balanced portrayals of the positive and negative effects of religion on the world and lifting up the contributions that people of all faiths make to our greater civic well-being.