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Media contacts: Deidre Malone or
Alayna Adams, The Carter Malone
Group, (901) 278-0881

Lott Carey Receives Grant To Support Youth Leadership Initiatives in 5 Churches

(Washington, DC - December 19, 2007) Selected from a competitive pool of 60 grant proposals, Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention was one of nine organizations chosen to receive from *The Fund For Theological Education (FTE)*. The grants range from \$5,000 to \$12,000 and are a part of the *FTE Calling Congregations* initiative, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.

FTE's Calling Congregations is a national, ecumenical effort to encourage and equip churches to play a leading role in the vocational discernment of young men and women—and to increase the number of gifted young people considering ordained ministry as a profession.

“Quality leadership in ministry matters to congregations and communities,” said James Goodman, FTE Calling Congregations regional director and grant program administrator. “Our aim is to empower people to identify future pastoral leaders at the grassroots level and to support the faithful aspirations of the young people in their midst.”

Grant recipients for 2007 awards, representing six denominations, are:

- **Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, Washington, D.C.**, \$12,000 to fund the Lott Carey Calling Congregations Network, an initiative of five congregations that encourages adolescents to share church leadership roles and to consider the call to ministry. Impact teams in each congregation will support young people's service and discernment.

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- **Church of the Apostles, Seattle, Wa.**, \$9,000 to support Kaleo, an ecumenical program which invites young adults to participate in an intensive process of discernment and spiritual preparation towards candidacy for ministry.
- **Covenant United Church of Christ, South Holland, Ill.**, \$8,400 for Youth Called to Ministry, which offers teens a “safe, sacred space” for vocational discernment, including special programs and conversation with church leaders, parents and peers.
- **First United Church of Christ, Northfield, Minn.**, \$6,800 to support Leadership for the 21st Century, a program for college students and other young adults that incorporates music, poetry and visual arts in vocational and theological reflection.
- **Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio**, \$5,000 for Ministry Exploration, a partnership in mentoring between leaders of local congregations and a Mennonite high school to introduce students to the profession of ordained ministry.
- **Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, Memphis, Tenn.**, \$11,600 to support Gideon’s Army: Exploring Your Call to Ministry. This mentoring program involves youth and young adults in congregational ministry and outreach. It also helps students develop leadership skills and assess their spiritual gifts.
- **Mt. Olive Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hickory, N.C.**, \$8,300 for Calling All College Students, which offers service opportunities at church and in surrounding communities to students from Lenoir-Rhyne College, with a focus on the leadership and spiritual gifts needed for ordained ministry.
- **St. John’s Episcopal Church, Ellicott City, Md.**, \$12,000 for Holy Discernment: Teen Vocations. Building on St. John’s Journey to Adulthood curriculum, this program seeks to integrate the language of vocation in a program of service and theological reflection for teens, their parents and mentors.

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Concerns about the supply of gifted clergy have increased as a generation of baby boomer pastors prepares to retire and local congregations seek qualified ministerial candidates. A 2006 study by the Lewis Center for Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary shows a significant 20-year decline in clergy under age 35 across denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. At the same time, student enrollment in Master of Divinity programs, the graduate degree typically sought by candidates for ordained ministry, are flat or declining.

FTE's Calling Congregations program seeks to establish a national network of 500 congregational and church-related partners by 2009. In addition to grants for local programs, the Fund offers workshops and conferences; national training for adults mentoring youth; teaching tools; Web-based resources; and up to 40 fellowships annually which match a congregation's financial support toward tuition and expenses for a young church member's first year of seminary.

Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention is the premier global missions agency of African-American Baptist heritage. Its international mission is to cultivate ministry, education, and health programs around the world. Since it was founded in 1897, Lott Carey has grown to a network of missional partnerships in 20 countries throughout six regions of the world. Last year, Lott Carey raised more than \$3 million for mission support around the world. For more information visit www.lottcarey.org.

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