

Informed Consent for Participating in Human-Subject Research

Title of Project

"The Religious Workforce in the DMV"

Study Background

This research study includes approximately 50 congregations in the metro Washington, DC area. The study includes congregations that are small, medium, and large, and it also includes congregations across religious traditions.

The principal investigator of this study is Dr. Tim Snyder who serves as Senior Researcher at The Lewis Center for Church Leadership and Visiting Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary. In addition to his scholarly training as a researcher, Dr. Snyder brings a decade of experience in congregational ministry to this project.

Participants in the study will be asked to complete a questionnaire, participate in an interview, and allow a member of the research team to observe a worship service and an organizational meeting.

Purpose

The research team is interested in learning more about how these congregations staff the mission of their churches, and how their pastor/ministry staff (paid and unpaid) understand the nature of ministry today.

Procedures

If you choose to participate, participants in the study will be asked to complete:

1. Congregational Questionnaire – completed by anyone who has thorough knowledge of the church, its ministries, and its operations.
2. Interview with Researcher – ideally the interview would be with the head of staff or another pastoral leader.
3. Access to Observe Congregation – a member of the research team will come and observe a worship service and an organizational meeting.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You may also choose not to participate in certain ways or choose not to allow use of certain research procedures. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provide will be destroyed and no identifiable materials will be included in study findings.

Benefits and Risk

Benefits to participation include the opportunity to contribute to theological research intended to better resource Christian congregations. Many participants will find the interviews to be personally enlightening and they may benefit from such reflection.

Some autobiographical questions may yield sensitive information or uncomfortable memories. While every effort will be made to secure research notes, transcripts and recordings, there is a very slight risk that these could be compromised. In such a case, any personal information shared could lead to negative social implications within the congregation or beyond.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to keep any identifiable information obtained through this research study confidential. All research data will be handled with care. Research notes will remain under lock and key at the private office of the principal investigator and electronic files will be stored on a password protected computer and encrypted cloud storage. The identities of all participants will be protected by pseudonyms and will never be intentionally disclosed without the written permission of the participant or as required by law.

Members of the research team will have access to all data for this project. No other individuals will have access to this data, including those affiliated with the Lilly Endowment, Inc. which has provided the funding for this research.

Contact Information

If at any time you have any further questions about the study, you may contact any member of the research team:

Tim Snyder, PhD
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Project Director

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Agreement to Participate

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read this form, been given an opportunity to have questions answered, and are voluntarily giving your informed consent to participate in this study in the ways identified above. You will be given a copy of this form to keep if you wish.

Representative of the Congregation

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

Representative of Wesley Theological Seminary

Tim Snyder – Senior Researcher

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

