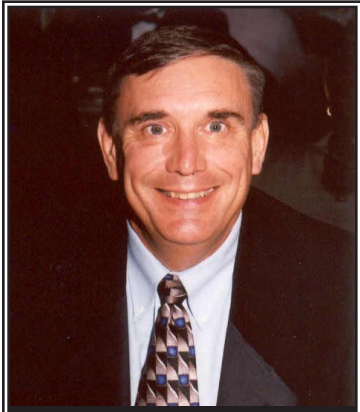


Why a Concordia House of Studies?



HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

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Concordia House
of Studies

Over the past six years, I have been asked a very basic question: "Why a House of Studies?" The short and simple answer is that because the need is great, the potential is unlimited and the opportunities are immense.

The Concordia House of Studies was initiated by the Florida-Georgia District in Convention in June of 2000. The Convention voted to "dedicate itself to a program

of intentional recruitment of professional workers for the church so that more men and women can be identified and recruited to serve as laborers in the Lord's harvest." That resolution succinctly sums up why the Concordia House of Studies exists and what is seen as its mission.

of a student's education including the bachelor's degree. In the case of teacher education students, the state university also awards the student's state teacher certification.

Schools in the Concordia University System (CUS) must offer the whole

Georgia District subsidizes all of these courses by its support of the Concordia House of Studies.

Overcoming the barrier of distance means offering quality religious education that prepares people for church vocations relatively close to where students live. Research studies done by colleges and universities around the country indicate that the overwhelming majority of students desire to attend a school that is within 200 miles of home. Fully 87% of Florida high school graduates in 2006 went to college within the state. There is no Lutheran college in Florida or Georgia, and the CUS schools are at least 1000 miles from Central Florida. By offering courses

in our two states, we are surrounded by more than 10 million people who claim no religious affiliation. The fields are indeed ripe for the harvest. We are called into mission because we know that Jesus Christ died for all of these people, and we know that everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.

Quite simply, we need to be about the task of recruiting workers to meet the ministry challenges that lie before us. As its share of the *Ablaze* movement, the Florida-Georgia District has a goal of starting more than 150 new ministries in the next ten years. That will require a goodly number of church leaders. At the same time, it is anticipated that

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The Concordia House of Studies has offered courses throughout Florida and Georgia over the past five years to meet the needs of students in our District.

The largest barriers that prevent many men and women from going into church work are dollars and distance. To overcome the barrier of dollars means keeping the cost of education as low as possible for church work students. The Concordia House of Studies does this by offering only the courses that are needed for church work certification. The state university provides the rest

range of course options in addition to church work programs plus all of the capital costs. This makes their cost of education four to five times higher than state universities. The Concordia House of Studies is able to overcome the barrier of dollars by using the resources of the state university to provide the student's general education. In addition, in-state students are able to use their state scholarship programs at the local institutions.

Tuition for all classes has been set at \$400 per course starting with the August, 2007 classes. The Florida-

in Orlando and other sites throughout the District, the Concordia House of Studies overcomes the barrier of distance.

The churches in Georgia and Florida face both tremendous challenges and opportunities for expanding the mission. The population growth in Florida and Georgia is astounding. Using data from the 2000 census, the population of Florida and Georgia grew by a total of 4,752,689 people in the last ten years.

To put that growth number in perspective, the 4.7 million would rank as the 22nd largest state in the union. The 4.7 million in growth is larger than the total combined population of Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, Vermont and Alaska. Estimates from the Census Bureau show that growth continuing. It is estimated that the two states grew by an additional 2.7 million people from 2000 to 2005 for a growth of almost 7.5 million people over the past 15 years.

Not only are there large numbers of people in our two states but, tragically, there are many people who are spiritually lost. Using figures from the American Religion Data Archive based on the census of 2000, we learn that of the 8.1 million people living in Georgia, only 4.5 million (55.5%) claim to be members of a Christian church. In Florida, the numbers are almost 16 million people with only 9.4 million (59%) claiming church membership. What these numbers tell us is that

more than one in three pastors currently serving in the District will retire within the next ten years.

We again hearken back to the words of St. Paul to the Romans: "How can people pray to him if they have not believed in him? How can they believe in him if they have not heard his message? How can they hear if no one tells the Good News? How can people tell the Good News if no one sends them?" (Romans 10:14-15).

The Concordia House of Studies was created to find new and creative ways to meet this need. CHS exists as a tool to increase the number of church workers in the District, so that God's people can be equipped to share the Gospel with those in need.

So, it bears repeating. **Why a House of Studies?** Because the need is great, the potential is unlimited and the opportunities are immense. Stay tuned to these pages for updated information about traditional college class offerings in Orlando and other sites for Fall 2007. We would also like to start weekend classes in Southeast Florida, in the Tampa - St. Petersburg areas, and in North Florida, but we really need to hear from those who are interested in taking these classes.

If you have any questions about how CHS can assist you in your educational plans, please feel free to contact Dr. Wilke. You can contact him in Orlando locally at 407-457-5556, ext 113, toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 113, or via e-mail at wwilke@flga-lcms.org.

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