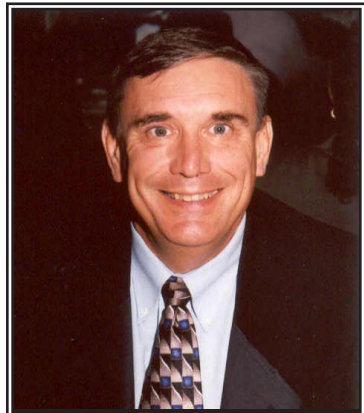


Church Worker Recruitment Needs to be a Priority



HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

Wayne Wilke
Concordia House
of Studies

The first several months of the New Year are filled with mission activity in the Florida-Georgia District. On January 27, we celebrate "Servants for the Future" Sunday, a special emphasis on the recruitment of full-time workers in the church.

When God calls his workers now through the prayers, encouragement and selection of his people, you could argue that's a step above, not below, the "old way."

On February 17 we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our district under the theme "Following in Faith." And in April, all 22 circuits of the District will gather in convocation with an emphasis on

"heroes of the faith." The challenge will be to "follow in faith" as we seek to carry on God's mission.

All of this activity is designed with an eye on the vision statement of the District: "Every

"Where's the fire?"

Moses saw a bush that was burning and heard a voice calling from it. Samuel heard his name called. Saul was struck down by a blinding light and

You're not a burning bush, you're not the voice of God — but you might very well be one link in a chain of events that helps this person hear that voice of God.

congregation is a church in mission, and every member is a missionary; with all of us working together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, empowered by His Gospel to share his love."

The role of the Concordia House of Studies in this venture is to assist and encourage congregations in the shared task of identifying, encouraging and preparing workers for the Kingdom.

The Advisory Council for Church Worker Recruitment and Student Aid is a group of hard

heard a voice from heaven. Peter, Andrew, James and John heard the voice of Jesus saying, "Follow me!"

But where are the burning bushes now?

How do God's servants know that he has called them into ministry today?

While there are still some pretty dramatic stories, most of the people who serve God in full-time ministry didn't see a miraculous fire or hear a voice from heaven. How can a person know that God is calling him or her into direct, full-time service as what we call a "Church Worker?"

Don't forget that there were other ways that God called people into service in the Bible. Most of the time in the Old Testament the priests and other "church workers" were simply born into a church worker family! And most of those were very faithful workers who helped make sure that the faith was passed on to each new generation.

working volunteers who assist in preparing resources to help in recruiting church workers. Pastor Jeff Moore of Trinity-Orlando has written a brief reflection on church worker recruitment that I would like to share with you.

In the New Testament there's a transition once churches were planted. Church leaders seem to have risen by a very natural process, confirmed by the "laying on of hands" in prayer and affirmation. For two thousand years now God's people have been placed into service without any burning bushes or voices from heaven.

Does that mean that today's calls are less holy, uncertain and questionable? Hardly! If God could speak through a bush, a thunderous trumpet, a still small voice (and a donkey!), surely he can speak through his people, too! In fact, when God calls his workers now through the prayers, encouragement

Then, if you really feel God might have gifted this person to be a church worker, tell them! Remember, you're only providing them with a piece of information, the fact that you see these qualities and think God might be calling. You're not a burning bush, you're not the voice of God — but you might very well be one link in a chain of events that helps this person hear that voice of God.

What if no one comes to mind when you think about this? Pray! Pray that God will raise up the next generation of workers, and that he'll use you as he chooses! And keep your eyes open for that young person who has a kind heart, who looks

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and selection of his people, you could argue that's a step above, not below, the "old way."

That's where you and I come in. Imagine that you feel God is calling someone you know into full-time service as a pastor, teacher, deaconess, director of Christian education or outreach, etc. What can you do? Start by praying for God's guidance. As you pray, think about the qualities you see in this person that cause you to think they might be called by God. Ask others if they see the same qualities in this person.

you in the eye, who is using his or her talents in a God-pleasing way. Tell them what you see in them, and God will do his work of calling!

The need is indeed great; the opportunity God has presented us is one we can't pass by. If you believe God is calling you to serve in a ministry careers, or if you would like more information about how CHS can assist you in your educational plans, please contact Dr. Wilke in Orlando locally at 407-857-5556, ext 5; toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 5; via e-mail at wwilke@flga-lcms.org. □

CHS Announces Spring 2008 Classes

In partnership with Concordia University-St. Paul, MN, the Concordia House of Studies (CHS) will be offering the following classes at St. Luke's-Oviedo, FL, for the Spring term of 2008:

ED454 Teaching the Christian Faith (2 credits)

Theories of spiritual growth and development of children and adolescents, organization and distinctive characteristics of various religious curricula, theories and methods of effective teaching of the faith and material for instruction at both elementary and secondary levels are studied from the Lutheran perspective.

The instructor for this class will be Rev. Gary Schuschke of

St. Luke's. The class begins on Tuesday, January 22, and will meet from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

RLG206 New Testament (3 credits)

An introduction to the historical context and literature of the New Testament. Students master the stories and teachings of early Christianity, practice the uses of the tools of biblical interpretation, and grow in their ability to read texts of the Bible in their historical and literary contexts.

The instructor for this class will be the Rev. Adolfo Borges, Prince of Peace/Principe de

Paz-Orlando. The class begins on Thursday, January 17, and will meet from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

These are 15-week classes that meet one night a week. Students receive college credit through our partnership with Concordia University-St. Paul.

This program offers the complete sequence of courses needed for the Lutheran Teacher Certificate. It also provides all of the religion courses for the Director of Christian Education program. In addition, the courses will prepare pre-seminary students for the competency exams in Old and New Testament plus Christian Doctrine required by the seminaries of the LC-MS.

Individuals interested in taking classes for their personal enrichment are welcome.

Each class is offered for college credits, and tuition is \$135 per credit hour. Persons taking the classes for personal enrichment can enroll for a \$200 course fee.

St. Luke's is located near the campus of the University of Central Florida. This site is convenient for students at UCF, Valencia and Seminole Community Colleges and other local colleges.



The Concordia House of Studies and Concordia University-Wisconsin are jointly offering the Lay Ministry program in Florida-Georgia.

Classes this term include REL201 Old Testament and REL 203 New Testament Introduction classes at First Lutheran-Clearwater and at Trinity-Delray Beach starting in January 2008. The OT class begins on Saturday, January 12, and the NT class will begin on April 5. The classes will meet from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon and from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

These classes will meet for four Saturdays over a two

month-period, usually every other Saturday with allowance for special weekends such as Easter.

Classes can be used to meet the requirements of the Lay Ministry program which leads to certification as a Commissioned Minister – Lay Ministry. The classes can also be used in partial fulfillment of the Teacher Colloquy program. For teachers seeking credits for State of Florida re-certification, each class taken for credit can be converted into 60 in-service hours.

These classes are also open to lay people interested in upgrading their skills and understandings for a reduced fee.

Tuition cost for each class is \$135 per credit hour for academic credit or \$200 for personal enrichment.

To enroll for any of these courses on-line, go to www.flga-lcms.org, click on the "House of Studies" icon, then go to "2008 Courses" and select the desired location.

For additional information, contact the Concordia House of Studies at 407-857-5556, extension 5; toll free 877-457-5556, extension 5; via e-mail wwilke@flga-lcms.org or cham-merstrom@flga-lcms.org. □

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