

# Statistics Underscore Need for New Church Workers



## HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

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Concordia House  
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One of the main reasons the Concordia House of Studies exists is to bring church work programs to students attending state university campuses. This is especially valuable for those interested in attending one of the LCMS' seminaries. CHS will provide all of the pre-seminary

incoming class of seminary students at Concordia Seminary-St. Louis. This year there are 107 students beginning their studies toward the pastoral ministry and their average age is almost 30. Some 63% of the students are married, and they bring 42 children with them to the Seminary.

Fully 75% of the students are lifelong LCMS members; 51% of the students are second-career students meaning they have been employed in another field before starting seminary study.

The 107 new students at St. Louis continue a downward trend over the past three years. From a high of 170 in 2003, the numbers have slipped to 151 in 2004, to 117 in 2005. Unfortunately, there are no students from the Florida-Georgia District in this new class.

The number of new seminary students is a critical one for the church because of the age of current clergy.

At the recent Florida-Georgia pastoral conference, President Michael shared some

competency of its workers. To achieve the level of excellence desired, a church must intentionally search out and identify individuals with the characteristics that provide for good church leadership.

This is an intentional process, and the responsibility for identifying future workers for the church must lie not only on the pastor and the teachers, but also on all the members of the congregation. Fully 38% of the incoming students indicate that a pastor was the most influential person in encouraging them to consider service in the church.

While there is a tendency today for more adults to serve the church in a second career,

the future of the church is dependant upon its youth for its future vitality.

The encouragement for service in the church may begin at home, but the affirmation of other peers and leaders is vitally important to confirm an individual's intent. With the goal of starting 200 new missions by the year 2017, we simply are going to need more full-time leaders in the church.

We are facing the same question that Paul posed to the church in Rome twenty centuries ago:

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not*

*heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15)*

If you feel the Lord may be calling you into full-time service in the church, or if you would like additional information about how the Concordia House of Studies may be helpful to you, please contact me in Orlando locally at 407-857-5556, ext 5, toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 5, or via e-mail at [wwilke@flga-lcms.org](mailto:wwilke@flga-lcms.org). □

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course work the student needs to begin academic preparation at the seminary.

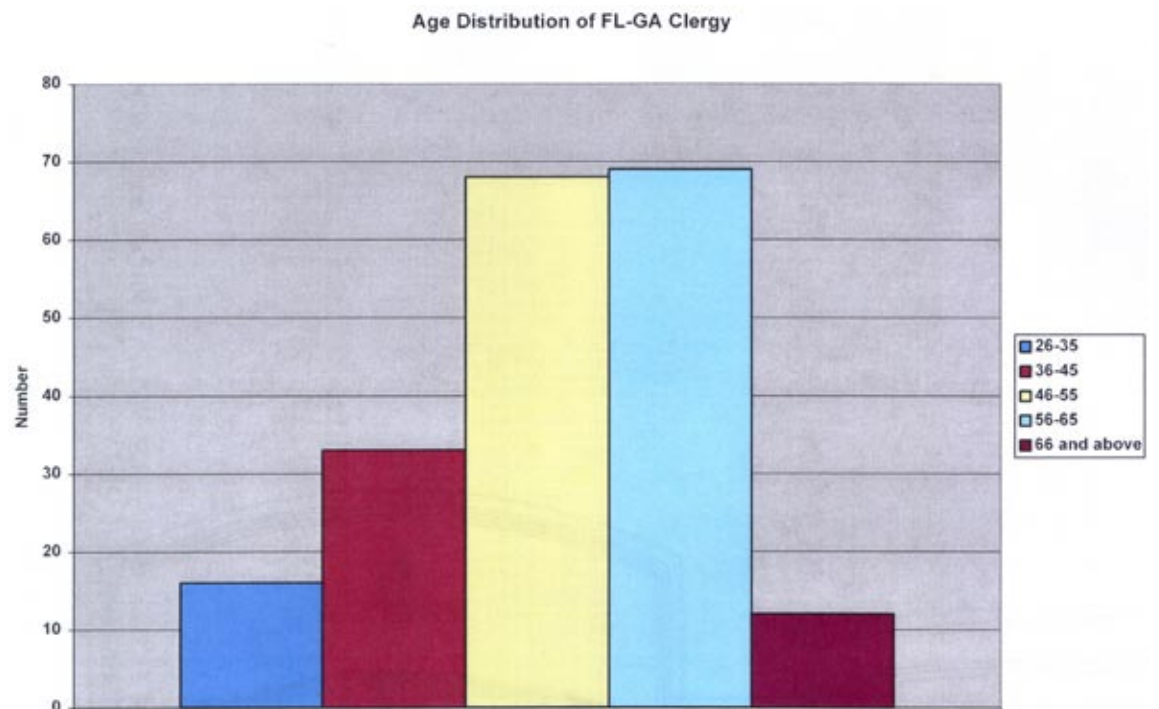
Last month, I re-interviewed one of our pre-seminary students, Eric Estes of Orlando. Eric has completed his CHS courses, and the first two years of study at Concordia Seminary -St. Louis. Eric, his wife Jen, and their young son Benjamin are serving Eric's one-year vicarage, or internship at Shepherd of the Coast-Palm Coast, FL.

I thought you might find it interesting to glimpse the

very interesting statistics about the 198 active pastors in the District. In the 26-35 age bracket, there are currently 16 pastors; 36-45 age bracket, 33 pastors; 46-55 group, 68 pastors; 56-65 group, 69 pastors. There are 12 pastors serving who are 66 years of age or older.

In other words, 75% of the pastors currently serving are 46 years of age or older. The drawing to the right shows what this looks like graphically.

The life of the church is distinguished by the quality and



## District Library Offers Valuable Resources

A little-known treasure at the Florida-Georgia District Lutheran Ministry Center is the library.

"Though the library has existed for a number of years, it is being reorganized and made more readily available to members of the District who are seeking practical and theological resources in various areas of church activity," reported Rev. William Hassold.

Hassold is assisting District Librarian Marge Meier with the reorganization by labeling and shelving the books.

Donations to the library throughout the District's almost 60-year history "have enhanced the value of the collection in various areas of theological and practical church life," Hassold said. "Concordia Publishing House has been especially generous in providing a complete set of *Luther's Works* and of the *Concordia Commentary* as well as other publications."

Former District staff members including Ben Eggers, Erdmann Frenk and Tom

Zehnder as well as other individuals have also contributed to the collection.

Included in the library are almost complete sets of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, *Concordia Journal*, *Concordia Theological Quarterly* and *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. A number of sets — such as commentaries of the Old and New Testament — are almost entirely complete.

"The librarian will be happy to provide a listing of items that would complete these sets, or of other works that would enhance the collection," Hassold said.

In his report to this summer's District Convention, Florida-Georgia President Gerhard Michael Jr. thanked Meier for her service in reorganizing the library. Meier is a retired faculty member of Concordia University-Seward, where she worked in the library.

For additional information regarding the District library, contact the Florida-Georgia office at 887-457-5556. □



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