

Conclusions-- In Summary Slide 11A

I. Present circumstances

- 1) In the U. S., of the approximately 6,000 LCMS churches, over 800 are without a pastor. Some are sharing a pastor with another congregation. Also some are isolated and lack resources to support a pastor. At any given time, up to one-half the churches with vacancies are extending a call. The number of pastors eligible for retirement is at the threshold of major increases.
- 2) At its 1995 Convention, Synod "directed" seminaries to cover "full" tuition. In 1998, both seminaries began providing major assistance to help cover tuition. This was accompanied by substantial increases in first year enrollments; by fifth year enrollments were 50 percent above the year before the support started.
- 3) Levels of support in last few years were less certain and support objectives are one-fourth to one-third total costs of seminary attendance. For the 2 seminaries combined, enrollment of first year students has declined. The number of men ordained in 2005 (162) was considerably fewer than the number of pastors retiring annually.
- 4) Due to substantial declines in level of funds received for its budget, Synod is no longer able to regularly cover a significant part of seminaries' operating costs. In the year ended June 30, 2005, seminaries current receipts were insufficient to meet their operating costs, including support for tuition.
- 5) The diminution in Synod's support potential largely reflects increases in churches' direct giving to missions of their choice and reduced allocations by Districts from deposits by churches. In total for all Districts, the ratio dropped from 47.4 percent in 1989 to 27.4 percent in 2004. This contrasts with over 60 percent in most years of the 1950s and 1960s.
- 6) The expansion in fund raising added a huge additional load for seminaries. In the summer issue of its Focus, Concordia St Louis reported receiving 30 percent of its income from Synod in 1980 and 1 percent in 2004. On the other hand, direct receipts from donors increased from 24 percent in 1980 to 63 percent in 2004. The proportion from tuition and fees (adjusted for financial aid) was 14 percent in both years. In constant dollars (1982-84=100) total income was \$4.6 million in 1980 and, including funds for tuition support, was \$8.2 million in 2004...
- 7) A serious information deficit exists among LCMS members regarding pastoral vacancies as well as the gravity and dimensions of the financial plight facing seminaries and seminarians.

