

# **Ministry Needs and Resources in the 21st Century**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**Report and Recommendations**

**July 1, 2000**

***Ministry Needs and Resources in the 21st Century*** is a report prepared by staff of the ELCA Division for Ministry and the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation. Field interviews were conducted by the Rev. Norman D. Eitreheim, former bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA. Research materials were prepared by Kenneth W. Inskeep and Martin H. Smith of the Department for Research and Evaluation. The primary author of the report is the Rev. A. Craig Settlage, in consultation with the Rev. Joseph M. Wagner of the ELCA Division for Ministry.

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## Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Historical Perspective	7
Key Question: “Is there an adequate number of ordained ministers in the ELCA?”	
The Changing Face of Congregations in the ELCA	8-11
Pastoral Vacancies	8
Diversity among Synods in Clergy Supply	8
Patterns in Serving Congregations Without a Called Pastor	10
Multiple Point Parishes	11
Ministry Resources in the 21st Century	12-15
Ordinations	12
Age at Ordination	12
ELCA Seminary Enrollment	13
Candidate Indebtedness	13
First-call	14
Beyond First-call	14
Retention of Ordained Ministers	15
Setting of Ordained Ministry	15
Retirement	15
Findings and Recommendations	16-17
Next Steps—Response to the Findings	18-20
Conclusion	22

## Index of Charts and Appendices

Chart 1	Number of Congregations and Clergy in Congregations	20	Chart 12	Age of Clergy with Congregation Calls in 1999	25
Chart 2	Changes in the ELCA Roster of Congregations	20	Chart 13	Lutheran M.Div. Enrollment at ELCA Seminaries	26
Chart 3	Total Number of Congregations and Number of Very Small Congregations	21	Chart 14	Lutheran M.Div. Graduates at ELCA Seminaries	26
Chart 4	Congregations Reporting No Called Pastor	21	Chart 15	Average Debt for ELCA M.Div. Seminary Graduates with Debt	27
Chart 5	Very Small Congregations Without a Called Pastor	22	Chart 16	ELCA Active Ordained Ministers	27
Chart 6	ELCA Congregations Without a Called Pastor by Length of Time	22	Chart 17	Number of Ordained Ministers by Source of Call	28
Chart 7	Number of ELCA First-Ccall Candidates Assigned During Each Assignment Period	23	Chart 18	Number of Clergy Retiring	28
Chart 8	Number of ELCA Clergy Ordained by Gender	23	Chart 19	Average Age at Retirement for Clergy	29
Chart 9	Number of Clergy Ordained	24	Chart 20	Retirement Ages of First and Second Career ELCA Ordained Ministers	29
Chart 10	Average Age at Ordination for ELCA Clergy	24	Appendix 1	Responses to Questionnaire on Congregational Vacancies for Synod Bishops/Staff	30-32
Chart 11	Average Age at Ordination by Gender	25	Appendix 2	Characteristics of First-call Congregations	33

# Ministry Needs and Resources in the 21st Century

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Executive Summary

In 1999, concern about the apparent imbalance in the stated needs of many synods for pastors and of approved candidates for ordained ministry led the Conference of Bishops to request the Division for Ministry and the Department for Research and Evaluation to conduct a study of the need for and supply of ordained ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The study began with the primary question: “Is there an adequate number of ordained ministers in the ELCA?” The Division for Ministry and the Department for Research and Evaluation believe this report demonstrates that:

- 1 The number of pastors in the ELCA has declined slowly over the past decade so that some synods now experience a near critical shortage, while other synods have sufficient or greater numbers than needed.
- 2 The critical shortage in some synods is related to one or more of these factors:
  - a rising need for first-call pastors as the result of an increase in the number of smaller congregations with very limited financial resources;

- the difficulty of finding ordained ministers willing to serve for extended periods of time in smaller congregations in very rural or very urban settings;
  - the loss of pastors due to reasons other than retirement, such as resignation and removals.
- 3 The critical shortage experienced in some synods is not primarily due to:
    - fewer first-call candidates being assigned;
    - fewer candidates being ordained;
    - a dramatic increase in the number of retirements (or a decrease in the age of retirement).
  - 4 Without a churchwide strategy, the critical shortage in some synods may become worse given:
    - the likely continued increase in the number of smaller congregations with limited financial resources;
    - the number of pastors leaving ordained ministry through on-leave-from-call, resignation, removal and retirement;

- a continued decline in M.Div. enrollments at ELCA seminaries;
- an underutilization of strategies for providing leadership other than ordained ministers to serve in congregations.

The Division for Ministry and the Department for Research and Evaluation, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary and the Department for

Synodical Relations, will respond to the findings of this study and report to the October 2000 and March 2001 meetings of the Conference of Bishops. The response will include further research and the interpretation of data, as well as the development of next steps in response to the issue of ministry needs and resources within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

# Ministry Needs and Resources in the 21st Century

## EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

A report on ministry needs and the resources to provide that ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America prepared by the Division for Ministry and Department for Research and Evaluation

July 1, 2000

## Introduction

**“W**ithin the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and sacrament. To carry out this ministry, this church calls and ordains qualified persons.”<sup>1</sup>

It is for the sake of the Gospel, the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God’s mission in the world, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America needs strong and faithful men and women to serve in the ministry of Word and sacrament. An adequate number of pastors who are effective and properly prepared for ministry is essential for the ministry of Word and sacrament within the life of this church, so that the people of God are equipped for their ministry in the church and the world. It is also necessary that congregations and institutions have the capacity to support these ordained ministers in their work.

The Division for Ministry, working with the Department for Research and Evaluation and in consultation with the Department for Synodical Relations and the Office of the Secretary, has con-

ducted an extensive survey of the present and anticipated leadership needs of the ELCA regarding ordained ministers. This study has included substantial research, including the gathering of data from each synod in the ELCA regarding the need for pastors in the congregations of the synod. More than 100 interviews were held with synodical bishops and their staffs, seminary presidents and staff, first-call pastors, and candidates regarding the needs of this church for ordained leadership.

The focus of this study is to answer questions regarding the present and anticipated need for ministry resources. While focused primarily on ordained ministers of Word and sacrament, the study recognizes the importance of lay commissioned associates in ministry, consecrated deaconesses and diaconal ministers in responding to the ministry needs within the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in congregations and specialized ministry settings. Among the questions this study seeks to answer are these:

- How do we account for the apparent imbalance in the stated needs of many synods for pastors

1. 7.21, Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

and the number of approved candidates for ordained ministry?

- How do second-career candidates impact the number of ordained ministers?
- Is there a change in the age of pastors at retirement?
- Is there reason for concern related to the first three years of service for new pastors?
- Are there strategies for the use of ministry options that are being underutilized by the synods of the ELCA?
- Are new strategies and policies needed to address the changing face of ministry in the 21st century?

These and other questions have been widely discussed within the ELCA for the past several years. The Division for Ministry, in consultation with the

Conference of Bishops, has developed strategies for flexibility in providing for ministry within the congregations and synods of this church. These strategies, which will be discussed later in this report, were recommended by the 1993 Study of Ministry. The emergence of diaconal ministry as a new category of rostered lay ministry, together with the existing ministries of associates in ministry and deaconess, give congregations and synods ministerial resources to utilize other than ordained. There has been significant collaboration between the division and the ELCA seminaries to develop programs that seek to identify and encourage gifted and qualified persons to serve in the ordained and rostered lay ministries of the ELCA. Yet the complex issue of “supply and demand” continues to be of significant concern to the leadership of this church and needs to be examined carefully and forthrightly. What follows are the findings—both conclusions and questions—which have come from this study process.

# Historical Perspective: 1965-1998

In 1965 there were 9,104 pastors serving in 11,463 congregations. In 1998 there were 9,583 pastors serving in 10,862 congregations. In this 33-year period while the number of congregations declined by 601, the number of pastors serving in congregations increased by 479. However, in the past decade this pattern changed with both the number of congregations and the number of pastors serving in congregations declining. In 1988 the number of congregations in the ELCA was 11,120. By 1998 that number stood at 10,862, a decline of 2.3%. In 1988 there were 10,030 ordained ministers serving in congregations; in 1998 the number was 9,583, a decline of 4.5%. This historical perspective is displayed in Chart 1.

## Key Question: Is There an Adequate Number of Ordained Ministers in the ELCA?

This is the question that prompted this study. In some synods the clear and apparent answer is an emphatic no. In other synods the number is quite adequate, with both approved candidates awaiting first-call and ordained ministers on-leave-from-call not engaged in full-time pastoral ministry.

As will become clear in this report, one may describe the whole of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with some broad categorizations which do not accurately describe particular synods within this church. What then is the need for ordained ministers in the synods of the ELCA? Is there an adequate number with a problem of distribution, or is there clearly a shortage?

A precipitating factor for this study was the sharp increase in synodical requests for approved first-call candidates in 1998, 1999, and 2000. It may be helpful to note that since the beginning of the ELCA there have been assignment meetings in which representatives of the synodical bishops and

Department for Synodical Relations and Division for Ministry staff meet to assign approved candidates to regions and/or synods. The primary assignment period has been in February of each year. Over the years additional assignment dates have been added in June, September, and December. These additional assignment dates are a factor in understanding the perceived shortage of candidates.

A primary factor in the perception of a clergy shortage has been the significant increase in the total requests for first-call candidates from synods. In February of 1996 there were requests for 290 approved candidates for ordination. Two years later the number of requests had increased to 436, a 50% increase. This pattern was continued in the February 1999 assignment when the number of requests totaled 455, and again in February 2000, with 559 requests for 211 available candidates. These figures do not include the request for candidates in the alternate assignments (in 1999 the requests totaled 739). There is no definitive answer to the question of why this dramatic increase in requests, although a likely reason is the increasing number of congregations with declining financial resources who may be turning to a first-call candidate out of necessity. It may also reflect the accumulation of unmet needs within synods from prior assignments, with synods requesting candidates repeatedly for the same congregations. Do synods use different criteria as they identify congregations for first-call candidates? Are some synods requesting more candidates than they have actual need for?

It is also worth noting that the perception of this shortage has been influenced by the alternate assignment periods in June, September, and December, which have the effect of reducing the number of candidates assigned in the primary February assignment. We will return to the issue of the supply of candidates and pastors later in this report.

# The Changing Face of Congregations in the ELCA

**M**embership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies has been basically stable over the past thirty-five years with a trend of slightly decreasing membership. However, since 1988 the number of congregations in the ELCA has decreased an average of 26 per year. From 1988 to 1998 the number of congregations in the ELCA decreased from 11,120 to 10,862, a loss of 258. Chart 2 details the changes in the roster of congregations over the period 1989 to 1998, showing the net decline in each of those years. Even more striking than the modest decline in the number of congregations has been the increase in the number of small congregations with limited resources. This appears to be a significant factor in the increase in requests for first-call pastors.

From 1988 to 1998 the number of smaller congregations with average worship attendance of 50 or fewer increased from 2,058 to 2,329 (Chart 3). In 1998 there were 2,329 (21.4%) congregations reporting average weekly worship attendance under 50; 4,000 (36.8%) congregations reporting 75 or fewer; and 5,453 (50%) congregations reporting 100 or fewer. It is clear that the number of small, financially struggling congregations is increasing within the ELCA. This single factor will be seen to be a major influence in the requests for first-call candidates, their deployment across the ELCA, and in the retention of these pastors in the early years of ministry.

Another factor will impact on the need for both first-call candidates and experienced pastors. The Division for Outreach has a strategic goal to develop 2,000 new congregations over the next twenty years. This strategy increases the need for the ELCA to identify and equip persons for ordained ministry in these new ministry settings.

## Pastoral Vacancies

A significant indicator of the challenge facing many synods regarding ordained leadership is the increase in congregations reporting no called pastor (Chart 4). In the period 1988-1998, the number of congregations reporting no called pastor increased from 1,144 to 2,102, an increase of 83.7%. The overall percentage of small congregations without a called pastor climbed quickly and dramatically, from 21.3% in 1988 to 38.4% in 1998 (Chart 5). While small congregations make up one-fourth of all ELCA congregations, they are twice as likely as the other three-fourths of congregations to have no called pastor.

Fifty-two synods responded to a survey<sup>2</sup> about the congregations who had no called pastor in February 1999. Synod bishops were provided a list of the congregations in their synods that had no report of a called pastor on the roster of congregations of the ELCA. This list included 2,102 congregations. The information received included data on 1,714 congregations (82%). Of these congregations 934 now had a called pastor. Of the remaining 780 congregations without a called pastor, 62 had not been served by a called pastor for more than ten years, 26 for nine to ten years, and 157 for three to nine years. The remaining 535 congregations (69%) had been without a called pastor for less than three years (Chart 6).

## Diversity among Synods in Clergy Supply

There is a markedly diverse experience among the synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the adequacy of the supply of pastors to serve their congregations. By comparing the smallest-congregation synods (average size of

2. "Questionnaire on Congregational Vacancies for Synod Bishops/Staff," Winter 1999. Appendix 1.

congregations) with the largest-congregation synods it is evident that the smallest-congregation synods experience:

- Less growth in the general population
- Greater loss in average weekly worship attendance
- More pastors leaving calls before three years
- More first-call pastors leaving the synod after the first-call is completed
- More congregations with pastoral vacancies
- Longer pastoral vacancies in congregations

These smallest-congregation synods also have fewer resources to deal with the issues of clergy supply and demand. In 1999, the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, for example, had 65 congregations, 39 active ordained ministers, and 10 retired pastors under the age of 75. In this synod there are fewer pastors than there are congregations. The synod lists 15 congregations without a called pastor. About half (53%) of these congregations have been without a called pastor for more than three years. Their average worship attendance is 32 and their average annual current operating expenses are \$18,377.

Contrast this with the Greater Milwaukee Synod, which has 141 congregations, 232 active ordained ministers, and 43 retired pastors under the age of 75. In 1999 the synod listed two congregations without a called pastor. Neither congregation had been without a called pastor for more than three years. Their average worship attendance is 241 and their average annual current operating expenses are \$236,756.

The synods with the smallest congregations historically and consistently have the largest number of vacancies and experience the most difficulty providing pastors. They face a set of circumstances very different from the larger congregation synods.

Synods with the smallest congregations experienced the most difficulty calling a pastor and their periods of pastoral vacancies negatively affected

church attendance and growth. Those congregations in smallest-congregation synods without a pastor decreased the most in their average worship attendance from 1990 to 1998:<sup>3</sup>

Smallest Congregation Synods	-11.3%
Small Congregation Synods	-5.8%
Moderate Congregation Synods	-3.7%
Large Congregation Synods	-2.2%
Largest Congregation Synods	+3.5%

In interviews, synodical bishops and their staff reported that synod staff who assist congregations in the call process are frequently challenged by the expectations of congregations. A former synod staff person with significant interim experiences said of congregations, "Their vision and dream of the future is to be like the way they were in the 1950s. The biggest problem is that people remember things the way they were and they aren't any more."<sup>4</sup> One bishop of a synod with many rural congregations said that more and more congregations request first-call candidates for economic reasons related to the rural economy and an aging and declining membership. A regional staff person reported that "many congregations in our area have slipped from being second-and third-call congregations to first-call congregations because of the changed economics of the congregation."<sup>5</sup> In these interviews a recurring theme was that congregations are frequently unable to meet the synod's minimum compensation guidelines. In the survey referred to earlier in this report a significant majority of bishops and synod staff reported difficulty in filling congregational requests for pastors, with the result that many congregations remain vacant for a significant period of time.

3. "Questionnaire on Congregational Vacancies for Synod Bishops/Staff," Winter 1999. Appendix 1.  
4. Interviews conducted by former bishop Norman D. Eitheim in the period March-October, 1999.  
5. Ibid.

# Patterns of Serving Congregations Without a Called Pastor

The 1993 ELCA Study of Ministry<sup>6</sup> recommended a number of strategies related to “flexibility for mission.” The Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, developed these strategies that include the category of “synodically authorized ministers,” an expanded definition of on-leave-from-call, and a new category of non-stipendiary service. These are significant to mention at this point because of the clear need for alternatives in providing pastoral leadership for congregations without a called full-time pastor. Historically the vast majority of the pastors serving congregations have been full-time and fully compensated by the congregation. The “tentmaker” or bi-vocational model found in other Christian traditions has been uncommon in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies. It would appear that while synods use a number of approaches to fill congregational vacancies, very few synods report utilizing all of the alternatives available for providing pastoral leadership. The more “traditional” strategies (interim and retired pastors) are utilized far more frequently than the newer strategies (synodically authorized ministers and non-stipendiary ordained ministers). Synodical bishops reported that the following categories of persons were used “very often” to provide pastoral leadership during vacancies that are either temporary or permanent:

Supply pastors	36%
Interim pastors	52%
Retired pastors	22%
Synodically authorized ministries	6%

Interim pastors include both those who are trained (or “intentional”) interims as well as those who are identified by the synod bishop as “supply” pastors. Interim (or supply) pastors are the most frequent choice for vacancies of two years or less. Contract pastors are the most frequent choice for vacancies lasting more than two years. Some synods have interim pastors who are called by the synod council to interim ministry.

Retired pastors under contract are frequently used to provide pastoral leadership for both short- and long-term congregational vacancies. Bishops observe that recently retired clergy are often not willing to make long-term interim or supply commitments to congregations, but they are an important resource to synods in providing pastoral leadership.

Synodically authorized ministers, one of the newest categories of ministry resources, is utilized differently among the synods of the ELCA. More than half of the synods have lay schools of theology, many of which provide training for persons to serve in synodically authorized ministries. This category of minister is trained and authorized by the synod to serve in a specific setting of ministry, including the ministry of Word and sacrament. Only when the ministry needs within a synod exceed that which can be met by rostered persons does the bishop authorize persons for such ministry.

Pastors from other Christian traditions provide pastoral leadership in some synods. In light of the Full Communion relationships now established there may be more utilization of this as a pastoral leadership resource. The synodical bishop must authorize an ordained minister from other Christian tradition to serve in an ELCA congregation.

Non-stipendiary ministry is a strategy that is utilized only infrequently by the synods. This may emerge as a ministry resource that becomes more important as the synods seek to provide pastoral leadership within congregations that are unable to provide the compensation needed for a full-time pastor.

Clergy couples, where both spouses are ordained ministers, are both a challenge and a resource in the life of this church. Clergy couples often serve in interims while awaiting calls to full-time ministry. They often face a situation where one spouse receives a call in a synod and the other does not. Clergy couples are also more likely to face issues of parenting related to on-leave-from-call. A 1998 survey of clergy couples described the specific chal-

6. “Together for Ministry Final Report and Recommendations,” Task Force on The Study of Ministry, 1988-1993

lenges involved in placing clergy couples within a synod and asked for greater flexibility in the placement process.<sup>7</sup>

On-leave-from-call pastors are another resource for ministry in congregations unable to provide for a full-time pastor. Bishops report that many of those “on-leave-from-call” are limited in their availability for full-time service because of geographical restriction and family care issues, but they may be able to serve in a more limited way.

## Multiple Point Parishes

The “yoking” or linking of two or more congregations is a strategy utilized by many synods, particularly in remote rural areas. In some synods over half of the calls to congregations are to these multiple point parishes, while in other synods there are no multiple point parishes.

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7. “Clergy Couple Survey Report and Recommendations,” Luther Seminary, January 1999.

# Ministry Resources in the 21st Century

**A**re there enough qualified candidates for the ministry of Word and sacrament to lead the members of this church in the 21st century? Are there adequate numbers of gifted and qualified persons who are preparing to serve? As one ELCA seminary president described it, "This is not just a question of clergy supply and demand; we need a larger screen. The Holy Spirit is giving us a new time and we need pastors who can lead in an apostolic age, in a time of mission."<sup>8</sup>

Is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America facing a shortage of clergy similar to that which faces other church bodies?<sup>9</sup> The perception among many synod bishops and other leaders is that the ELCA has a significant shortage of pastors and first-call candidates. Yet the ELCA has not experienced a dramatic decrease in the number of candidates available for assignment in the church.

Why then the widely reported disparity in the past three years between the number of candidates requested by the bishops for assignment, and the number of candidates available? As was noted earlier in this report, in the February 2000 assignment there were 455 requests for candidates for ordained ministry and only 211 available candidates (46.4%). In this most recent assignment, however, there was one synod that acknowledged requesting more candidates than there was actual need in the synod. If there are other synods making similarly inflated requests it might explain the continued increase in requests.

While the need for first-call candidates may be also be increasing due to the changing face of congregations in the ELCA described earlier in this report, the number of those first-call candidates has remained basically stable (Chart 7). It may also be helpful to note that while the number of candidates assigned in the February assignment has declined, the number of candidates assigned in the alternate assignments in June, September and December has

increased. The total number of candidates assigned in the past ten years has remained basically constant, with the number ranging from 300 to 350 candidates.

## Ordinations

In the past decade the ELCA did not experience a significant decrease in ordinations. There were fewer ordinations each year in 1991-1994 than there were in the recent period of 1995-1998. Ordinations to the ministry of Word and sacrament remain basically stable, with the average for the past nine years being 322 (Chart 8). However, while the final number is not yet certain, it does appear that the number of ordinations in 1999 declined to a figure below 300.

Year	Number Ordained
1990	346
1991	298
1992	313
1993	310
1994	298
1995	338
1996	333
1997	327
1998	342

It is important to note that while the number entering ordained ministry in recent years has remained relatively stable, it is clear that over a longer period (the past 35 years) there has been a decline in the number of persons serving in ordained ministry in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies (Chart 9).

## Age at Ordination

The average age at ordination has increased over the past ten years from 33.3 in 1988 to 37.8 in 1998 (Chart 10). The average age of female candidates remains consistently higher (about four

8. Interviews conducted by Norman D. Eitheim, March-October, 1999.

9. "The Clergy Shortage Study," Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, January, 2000.

years) than that of male candidates (Chart 11). However, many seminaries reported a drop in the age of entering students in the past three years. The decrease in the average age of ordination seen in 1998 may be an indicator as well that the age at ordination will not continue to increase as it has in the past. Chart 12 displays the present age distribution of ordained ministers with congregational calls. This distribution indicates that, while there is no anticipated surge in the number of retirements, it does portray a cadre of pastors who are older, on average, than a generation ago.

## ELCA Seminary Enrollment

The number of persons preparing to serve in the ordained ministry of the ELCA in M.Div. programs at ELCA seminaries has declined in the past ten years (Chart 13). Enrollment in M.Div. programs in ELCA seminaries does not represent the total number of candidates for ordained ministry. Historically, approximately 10% of ELCA M.Div. candidates have attended non-ELCA theological schools. While data is not complete, it appears that this number may be increasing. There are also a number of persons who enter the roster of ordained ministers through the non-M.Div. program, Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM). Chart 14 shows a gradual decline over ten years of Lutheran M.Div. graduates from ELCA seminaries.

The Division for Ministry will seek to work closely with the seminaries in watching these enrollment and graduation figures. Will there be a continued trend of declining M.Div. enrollments at ELCA seminaries? Will the number of candidates for ordained ministry enrolling at non-ELCA schools continue to increase? What needs to be done in the synods of this church to encourage qualified persons to consider serving in ordained ministry? How might the ELCA encourage its candidates to do their theological study at the seminaries of this church? These extremely important questions will need to be addressed in the follow-up to this study.

## Candidate Indebtedness

The Division for Ministry, working in collaboration with the seminaries of the ELCA, has conducted a study of the indebtedness of the 1999 M.Div. and M.A. graduates. In order to put the data into some perspective, this study utilized a 1995 report conducted by Auburn Theological Seminary.<sup>10</sup> The Auburn study reported that the average debt of 1991 M.Div. graduates in denominational schools who borrowed was \$11,237; the average of ELCA 1991 graduates who borrowed was \$10,378.

In assessing how big a problem debt is for theological and rabbinical students, the Auburn study concluded that “two percent of seminary graduates indicate that high debt caused them to leave religious professions...debt is a problem for those who borrow heavily...it influences choice of ministerial assignment and, in a few cases, it may cause ministers and rabbis to leave their profession.”<sup>11</sup>

Since that study, data reported by six of the eight seminaries of the ELCA shows that the average debt of M.Div. graduates has increased significantly. In 1999, approximately 70% of ELCA seminary graduates had seminary debt (the range among the seminaries was 40%-92%), the average of which ranged among the seminaries from \$15,033 to \$33,328. The amount of students' debt ranged between \$1,400 and \$91,764. The “average of the average” amount of indebtedness among all borrowing ELCA M.Div. graduates in 1999 was \$24,592, which when compared with the Auburn study would indicate that the average indebtedness has increased 137% since 1991 (Chart 15).

The issue of first-call candidate indebtedness is a factor that will need careful attention. As educational costs increase in the seminaries of this church it will be essential for financial support to increase to a commensurate level, thus reducing the need of candidates to acquire excessive educational indebtedness.

10. Manna from Heaven—Theological and Rabbinical Student Debt. Anthony Ruger and Barbara G. Wheeler. Auburn Studies, No. 3, April 1995.

11. Manna, p. 17.

## First-call

The challenge facing newly ordained pastors in their first-call is a significant one. A study of first-call candidates for ordained ministry assigned in February 1998<sup>12</sup> determined that of those called as solo pastors fifty percent (50%) were called to congregations with:

- fewer than 267 baptized members
- less than 83 average worship attendance
- less than \$63,300 current operating expenses

In addition, there is the ongoing dilemma of responding to the needs of the church for pastoral leadership while also recognizing the range of personal preferences and restrictions regarding the setting for ministry. In a recent survey synod bishops were asked to indicate how often they encountered any of a long list of reasons attributed to candidates that make it difficult to place them in a ministry setting. The following reasons were cited by the bishops as “often” or “very often” factors:

- 71% a need or desire of a spouse
- 58% a desire to be near a large city
- 48% a need or desire of dependent children
- 36% opposition to serving in a small congregation
- 32% opposition to serving in a rural setting
- 32% an unwillingness to relocate for any reason

The issue of “preferences” and “restrictions” for first-call candidates has been a matter of concern to synods and to the Division for Ministry and Department for Synodical Relations for some time. Deployed staff of the two churchwide units meet with candidates and encourage them to be willing to serve wherever there is a need. Yet synod bishops and staff report that the number of restricted first-call candidates is increasing. The recent rate of geographical restrictions is approximately 25%. Some candidates have decided to be unavailable to a synod after assignments were made, and have sought reassignments. While it is recognized that there are legitimate reasons for geographical

restrictions, this is another factor in the disparity among synods of the availability of candidates.

Approximately 25% of all congregational calls terminate in less than three years, with approximately 45-50% ending in less than five years. However, there is no evidence to indicate that significant numbers of first-call pastors are leaving ordained ministry. Since 1988 3,817 persons have been ordained. Of that total number only 134 (3.5%) have left ordained ministry.

## Beyond First-call

The need for qualified pastors extends beyond first-call. In a survey of synodical bishops fifty-two reported on their experience of pastoral needs for congregations in the past five years:

- 17% reported “great difficulty” in filling congregational requests
- 68% reported “some difficulty” in filling congregational requests
- 12% reported difficulty only with first-call

Synodical bishops and synod staff who were interviewed in this study indicated the ministry settings in which they experienced the greatest difficulty in finding suitable pastoral candidates:

- Isolated rural communities where there is limited opportunity for spousal employment
- Inner city congregations
- Ethnic specific congregations
- Associate and assistant pastor positions with primary responsibility in youth and family ministry
- Senior pastors for larger congregations
- Mission development and redevelopment

12. “Status of Candidates for Ordination Assigned February 1998,” the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, December 1999.

## Retention of Ordained Ministers

The number of persons who leave the roster of ordained ministers each year through resignation or removal, not including retirement, is about one-third the number who are ordained each year. Since 1990 the ELCA roster of ordained ministers has decreased by an average of 131 pastors per year due to resignation or removal. In that period 443 persons resigned from the ELCA roster of ordained ministers, an average of just fewer than 50 per year. In that same period an additional 744 persons were removed from the roster, an average of 82 persons per year.

Chart 16 displays the decline in the number of active ordained ministers, with a cumulative loss during that period of 1,367 ordained ministers. This figure does not include retirements, continuing disability, or death. The Department for Research and Evaluation provided bishops with a list of the ordained ministers from their synods who had resigned or had been removed from the roster since 1990. Bishops indicated that approximately 20% to 25% of these persons were a “significant loss” to the synod and the church. This loss of otherwise gifted and qualified persons from the ordained ministry of this church is a significant factor to be addressed in the follow-up to this study.

## Setting of Ordained Ministry

Since the beginning of the ELCA the number of ordained ministers serving in congregations has declined by 542 or 5.4% (Chart 17). While this is significant, there has been an even steeper decline in the number of ordained ministers serving in non-congregational ministry settings. The largest decrease in these non-congregational calls has been in chaplains (military and institutional) (-105), missionaries (-76), education/administration (-60), and churchwide staff (-57). The only increases in specialized settings were ecumenical (+ 15) and synodical staff (+ 14). Military chaplains and specialized pastoral care chaplains have been identified as two areas of service where there is a growing need for ordained ministers.

It is clear, then, that any shortage of ordained ministers to serve in congregations is not due to more pastors serving in specialized settings. As indicated above, the largest decrease in the numbers of ordained ministers is among those serving in such non-congregational calls. From 1989 to 1998 the number serving in non-congregational calls decreased from 2,779 to 1,919, a decline of 31%.

Similarly, the number of multiple staff positions for ordained ministers has decreased. Since 1989 there has been an annual average decline of 24 multiple staff congregational calls for ordained ministers. There were 330 fewer pastors serving on two-pastor congregational staffs in 1998 than in 1988, and there were 81 fewer in three-pastor staffs. This has likely occurred both because of the increase in the number of rostered lay persons serving in multiple staff positions, as well as a decline in the overall number of multiple staff positions for ordained ministers.

## Retirement

There has been speculation that the recent strong performance of the equity markets, and the parallel return on Board of Pensions retirement accounts, would lead to earlier retirements among ELCA ordained ministers. Prior to 1999 there had been no apparent change in the number of retirements or the age at retirement in the life of the ELCA (Chart 18). Since 1988 an average of 321 ordained ministers have retired each year. The average age at retirement is 64.2 (Chart 19). The age distribution of ordained ministers serving in congregational calls shows no indication of a significant increase in earlier retirements. The pattern of retirement for second-career pastors is based upon the limited numbers of such persons retiring since 1988. Chart 20 indicates a somewhat average later retirement age than for first-career pastors. Preliminary data from 1999 does indicate an increase in the number of retirements among ordained ministers. There will need to be ongoing evaluation of the number and age of persons retiring from ordained ministry, and its impact on the congregations and institutions of the ELCA.

# Findings and Recommendations

**A**s this report has demonstrated, the issue of an adequate number of well-prepared and effective ordained ministers is a complex and multifaceted one. The Division for Ministry and the Department for Research and Evaluation do not assume that this report is a definitive or final description of the ministry resources needed within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we enter the 21st century. Further study and reflection will be needed, as strategies are developed to respond to the needs of this church for its mission and ministry. Nevertheless we believe that on the basis of this study there are already significant findings:

- The number of small-membership congregations with limited financial resources is increasing.
- The number of persons preparing for ordained ministry within Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seminaries is decreasing.
- While the number of candidates entering ordained ministry has been basically stable over the past ten years, the number of persons serving in the ordained ministry of the ELCA is gradually decreasing.
- The impact of these changes is significantly greater on some synods, particularly the smaller-congregation synods, than on others.

At the March 2000 meeting of the Conference of Bishops an earlier draft of this report was presented and discussed. Five entities within the ELCA were identified as key partners in this issue:

- 1) synods and bishops,
- 2) candidates and rostered leaders,
- 3) congregations,
- 4) ELCA seminaries, and
- 5) churchwide units.

The bishops were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Do the findings match your own experience and observations?
- If not, how does your experience differ?
- If the findings generally match your own experience, what specific helpful next steps do you believe should be taken by the key partners?

The following summarizes the responses of the Conference of Bishops participants to these questions:

## Do the findings match your own experience and observations?

There was overall agreement with the findings of the study, including the diversity of experience among the synods. There were some who thought the report “more positive” than the reality within given synods.

The issue of retention of ordained ministers elicited some of the most pointed comments, with some bishops indicating that the church should not seek to retain those who are incompetent or ineffective leaders, while others identified the long-term issue of clergy morale as a reality that should be a concern of the church.

There was concern expressed that there is a growing need for persons to serve in the area of youth and family ministry, as well as a need for persons equipped for mission development and redevelopment.

## In what ways do your experience and observations differ from the study’s findings?

The unwillingness of small congregations to merge or share in ordained leadership is a major factor affecting many synods. Regarding the report’s

observations on ordained ministers several issues were identified as needing greater attention:

- clergy morale
- the lack of mobility among first-call candidates and pastors
- the difficulty in providing leadership for ethnically specific congregations, particularly African-American congregations

### **What helpful next steps might be taken to respond to the study's findings?**

The participants identified a number of potential "next steps" in response to the study, which included:

- a churchwide emphasis that would involve congregations and their pastors, synods and the synodical bishops, outdoor ministries, campus ministries and ELCA colleges and universities in an intentional effort to identify and recruit gifted persons to serve in rostered ministry.

- a review of "roster" matters including: the definition of what constitutes a "first-call" ministry setting; the process of mobility between the synods and regions of this church (including the possibility of a churchwide leadership data bank); the criteria for an initial call to service and continuation of roster status; and the "synodically authorized" or "licensed" category of ministry.
- greater utilization of alterative ministry resources, including non-stipendiary, bi-vocational and TEEM candidates.
- assistance to congregations in merging or in sharing ordained ministry to more effectively carry out their mission.
- building on the First-Call Theological Education (FCTE) program in assisting first-call pastors in their new ministries.

# Next Steps— Response to the Findings

**T**he Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Department for Synodical Relations and the Department for Research and Evaluation, will be developing a series of “next steps” in response to the findings of this study. These next steps will be developed by staff of the Division for Ministry and reported to the October 2000 meeting of the Conference of Bishops. Included in these next steps will be the following components:

## Development of a Churchwide Recruitment Strategy

The Division for Ministry, in consultation with the synods and seminaries of this church, will complete the development of a churchwide strategy related to Christian vocation and church occupations. This “invitation to service” strategy will report on those programs and activities which invite youth and young adults to reflect on Christian vocation, and will recommend new initiatives and strategic alliances to encourage some to enter one of the church’s rostered ministries—ordained ministry of Word and sacrament, consecrated deaconess or diaconal ministry, or commissioned associate in ministry.

## Strategy for Smaller Congregation Synods

In consultation with the Division for Outreach and the Department for Synodical Relations, the Division for Ministry will develop a proposal to convene key leaders of smaller congregation synods in multi-regional gatherings to consider the implications of this report and to develop strategies that respond to the leadership needs of small-membership congregations.

## ELCA Seminary Enrollment

The Division for Ministry will convene a consultation with representatives of the ELCA seminaries to discuss current and projected enrollments in M.Div. and M.A. degree programs leading to ser-

vice in one of the rostered ministries of this church. Related to the churchwide recruitment strategy, this consultation will explore how to encourage and support candidates preparing for rostered ministry at a seminary of this church.

## Retention of Ordained Ministers

The Department for Research and Evaluation and the Division for Ministry will develop a survey of persons who have left the ordained ministry of the ELCA to determine the factors leading to their decision to leave, and the impact on the church of their loss. Attention will be given to the gender and ethnicity of those who have left to determine whether these are significant factors.

## Young Pastors

There are at present 737 active ordained ministers under the age of 35. This represents 7% of the total number of active ordained ministers serving in the ELCA. The Division for Ministry is developing a proposal for a “transition into ministry” program of first-call theological education for young pastors that will include convening a representative gathering of young pastors to discuss issues of entry into first-call ministries and how the church might better support rostered leaders in their early years of ministry. The ELCA needs to learn from this important cadre of leaders the particular challenges and satisfactions they experience, and to invite them to assist in the development of resources to encourage youth and young adults to serve in rostered ministry.

## Flexibility for Ministry

The Division for Ministry will continue to review policies and procedures related to the ordained and lay rosters and will develop proposals for greater flexibility within those rosters as seems appropriate and helpful. In particular, the issues of criteria for first-call and continuation of call will be reviewed and recommendations developed for review by the Conference of Bishops.

# Conclusion

It should be apparent to the careful reader of this report that the issue of needs and resources for ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a changing and ongoing reality. The Division for Ministry believes that there is now a clearer picture of both the needs for ministry within the ELCA as well as presently existing and emerging resources to provide that ministry. This report does not describe a reality that leads to despair or panic. It does indicate that the word “crisis” may be used accurately to describe the need for leadership within parts of this church.

There are significant—and growing—concerns about how to provide the ordained and lay leadership needed within the congregations and institutions of the ELCA. There is an apparent continued trend toward an increase in the number of smaller, financially struggling congregations. There is a striking need for ordained ministers who can provide leadership for newly developing congregations and for congregations needing redevelopment.

At the same time there is considerable energy and commitment among the synods, seminaries and church colleges, bishops, pastors and rostered lay leaders, congregations and institutions to address the challenge of ministry in the emerging century. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has significant resources which enable it to respond to the needs identified in this study.

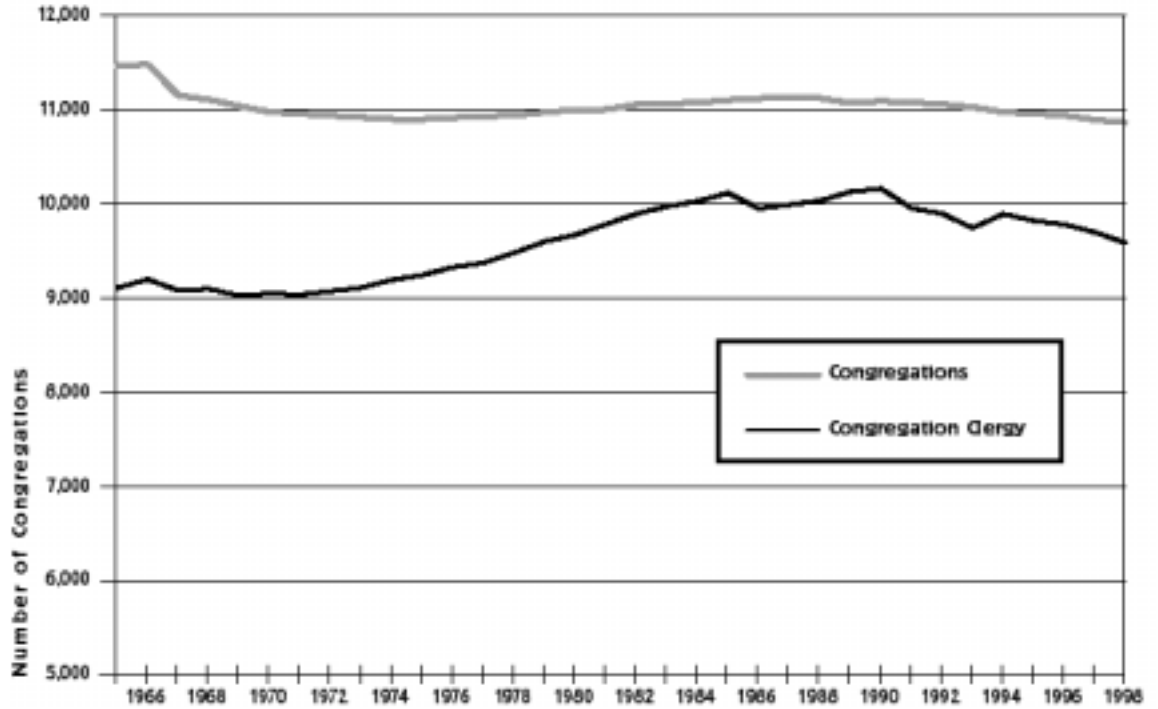
The Division for Ministry, as one among many partners, will address many of the issues identified here. We will seek to collaborate and join with others in developing strategies, programs and resources to respond to these identified ministry needs.

We conclude this phase of the study convinced that by the power of the Holy Spirit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will find ways to provide ordained and lay leaders who are committed to Christ and are well prepared for effective and faithful ministry, so that the people of God are equipped for their ministry in the church and in the world.

Chart 1

**Number of Congregations and Clergy in Congregations**

From 1965 to 1998 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and predecessor church bodies



Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 2

**Changes in the ELCA Roster of Congregations**

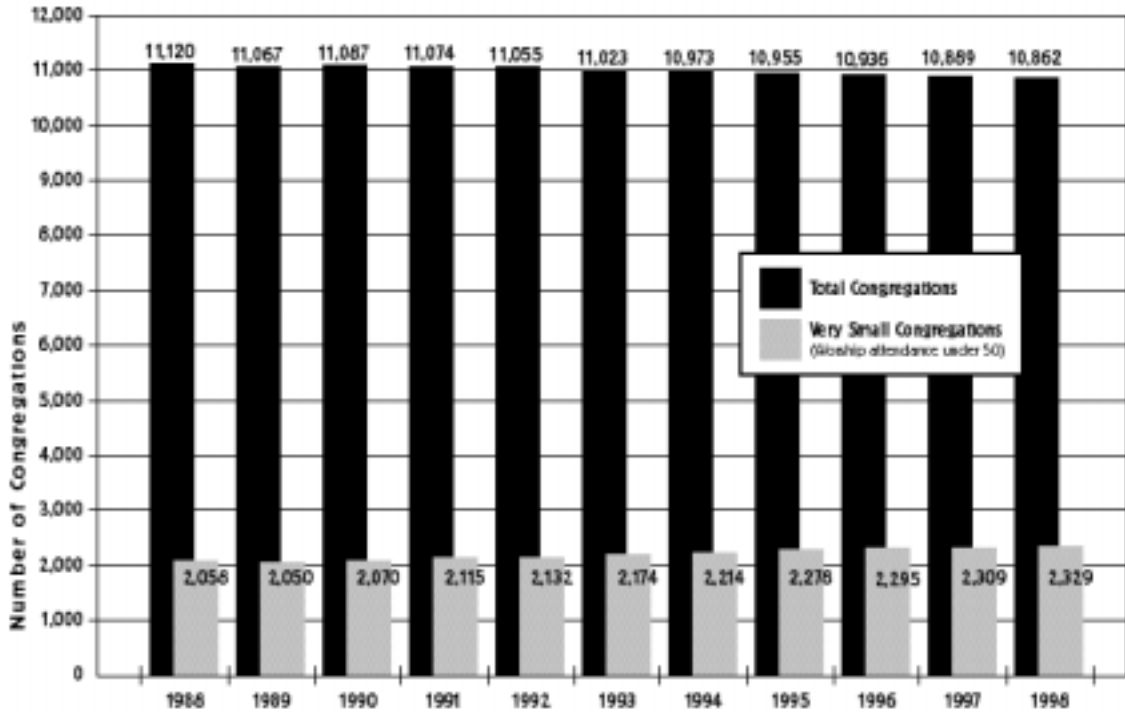
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Additions</b>										
Received by Synodical Action	37	32	22	25	22	30	20	17	23	19
Resulting from Consolidations	4	1	6	5	3	6	4	8	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Removals</b>										
Withdrawn	4	6	4	4	8	8	2	4	5	2
Disbanded	34	27	31	30	36	32	33	34	37	24
Merged	4	3	4	6	7	7	5	5	10	3
Consolidated	9	4	10	11	6	13	10	18	10	15
Removed	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-36</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-21</b>

Source: Report of the Secretary, ELCA, 1995 and 1999. Prepared by the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 1999.

Chart 3

### Total Number of Congregations and Number of Very Small Congregations

from 1988 to 1998 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

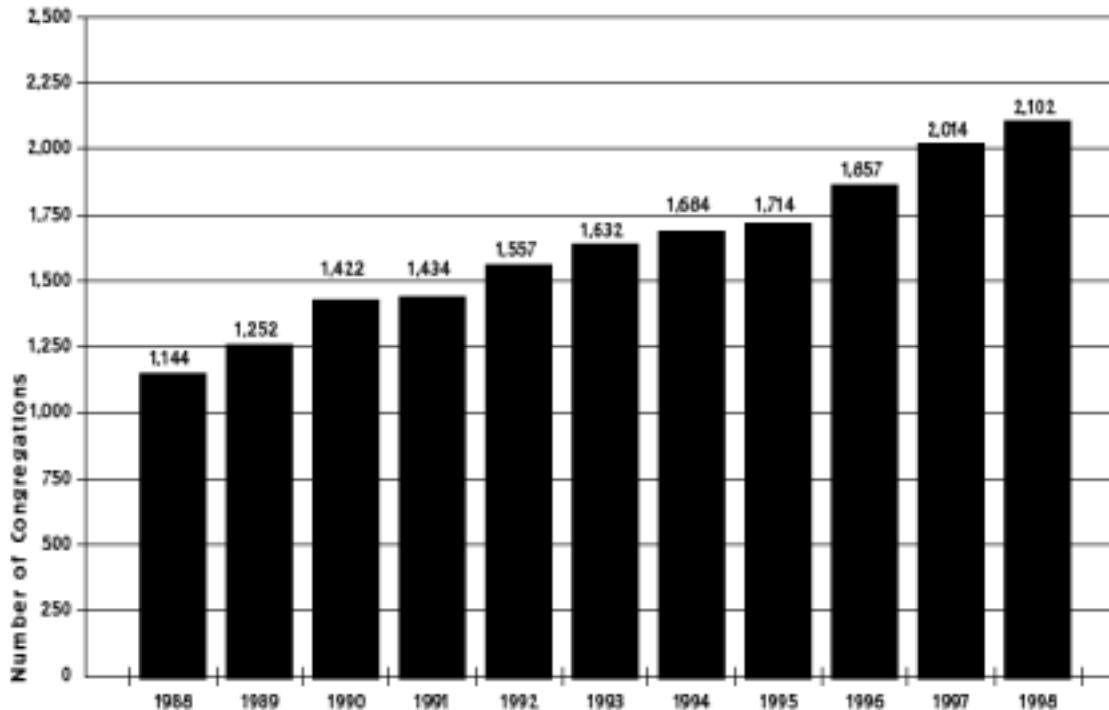


Source: Annual Congregational Reports, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 4

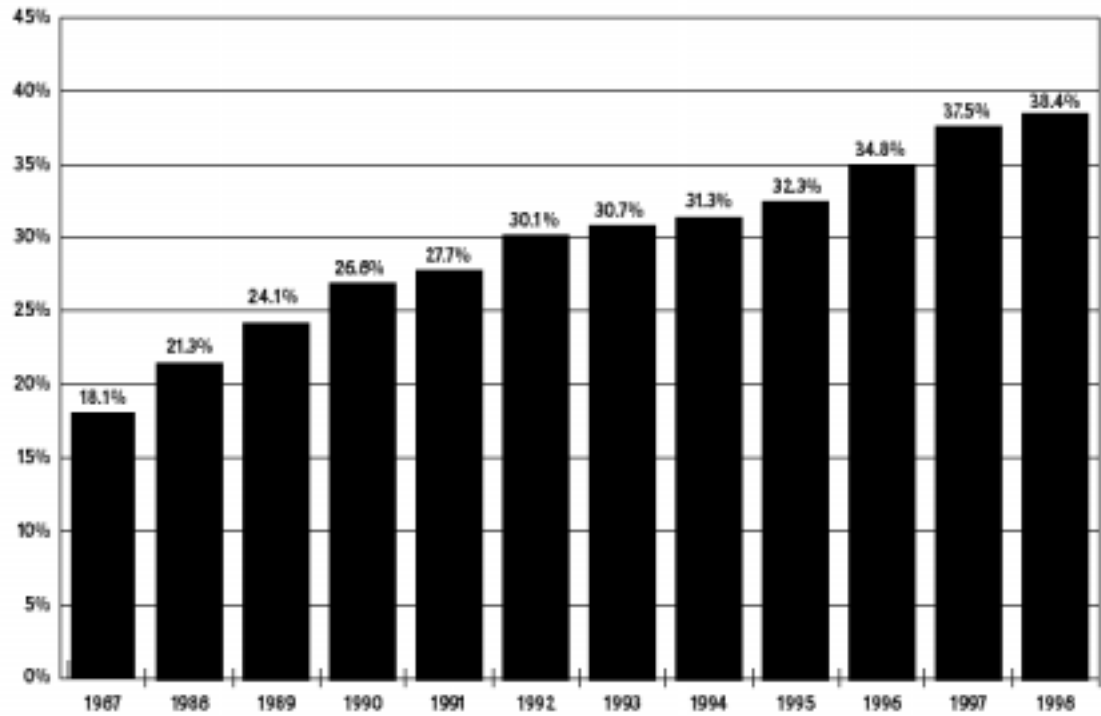
### Congregations Reporting No Called Pastor

from 1988 to 1998 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



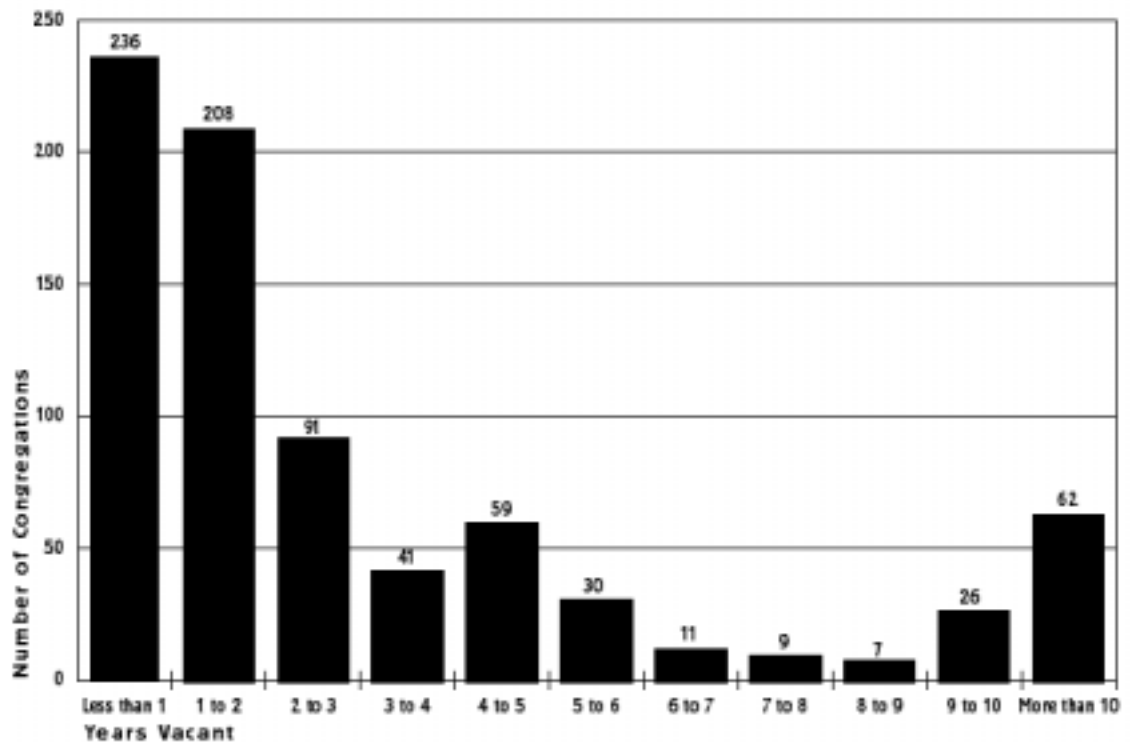
Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 5**  
**Very Small ELCA Congregations without a Called Pastor**  
 (175 baptized members or fewer) by percent



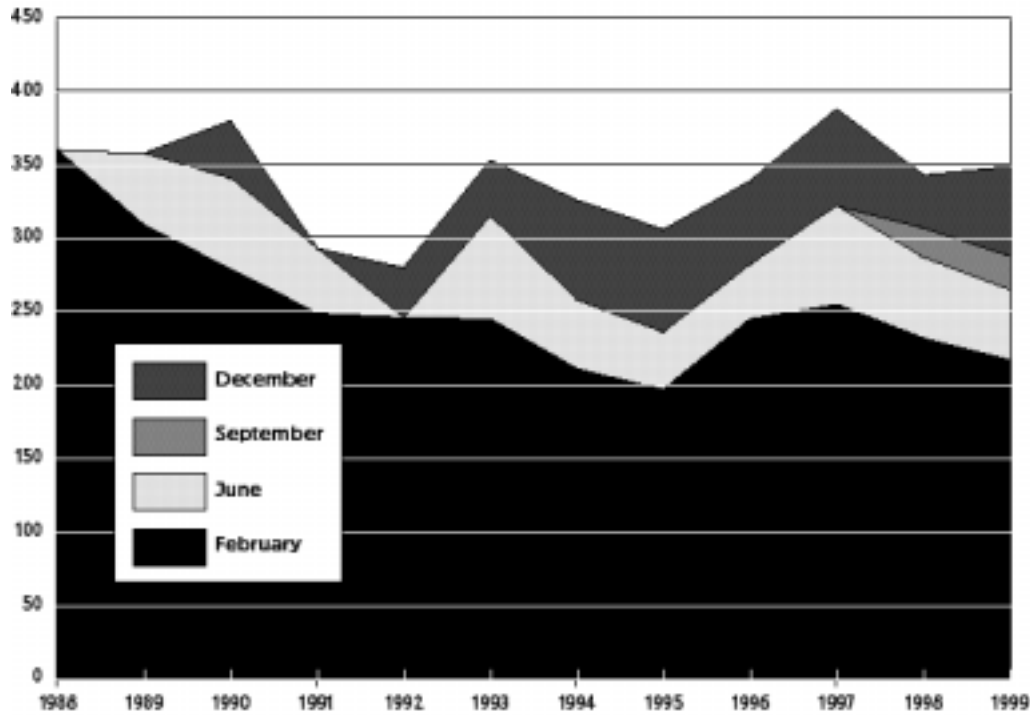
Source: Annual Congregational Reports, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 6**  
**ELCA Congregations without a Called Pastor**  
 By Length of Time



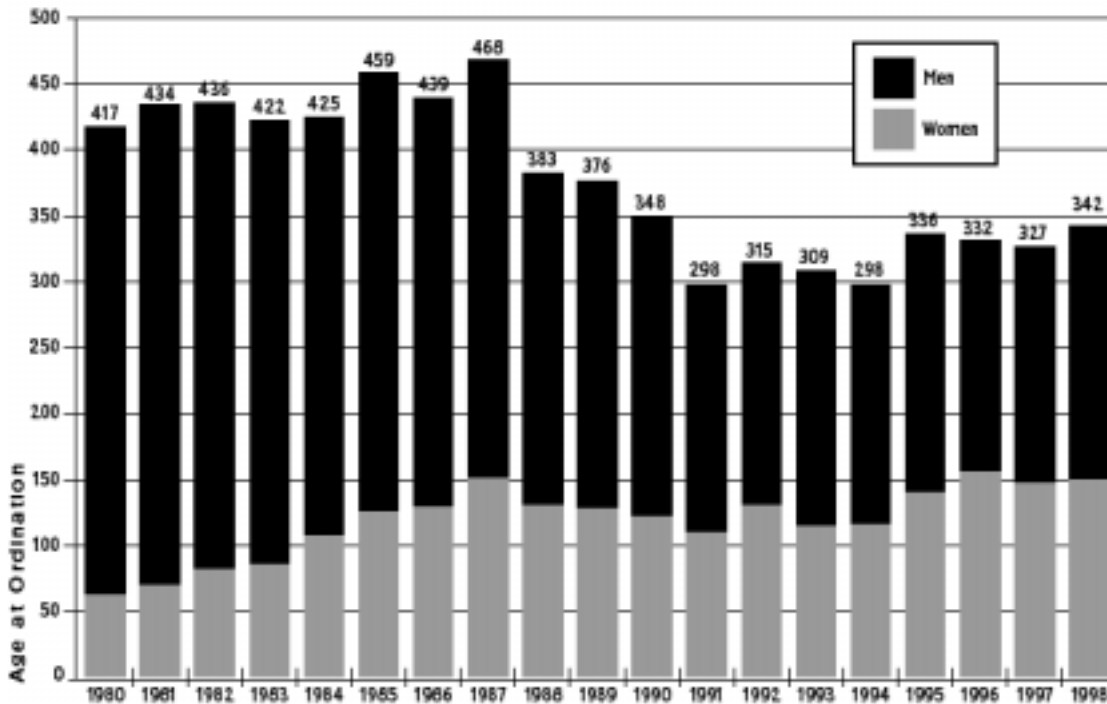
Source: Vacant congregation data sheets. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 7**  
**Number of ELCA First-Call Candidates**  
 Assigned during each assignment period 1988 to 1999



Source: ELCA Assignment Books. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 8**  
**Number of ELCA Clergy Ordained**  
 from 1980 to 1998 by Gender

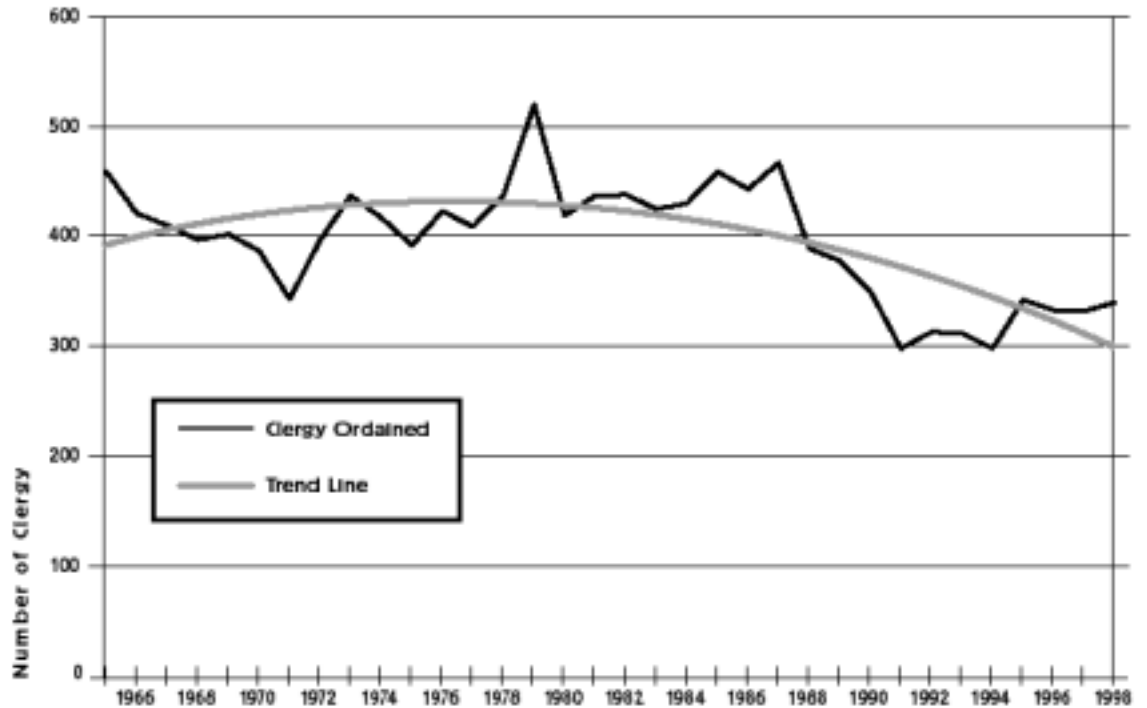


Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 9

### Number of Clergy Ordained

From 1965 to 1998\* in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and predecessor churches



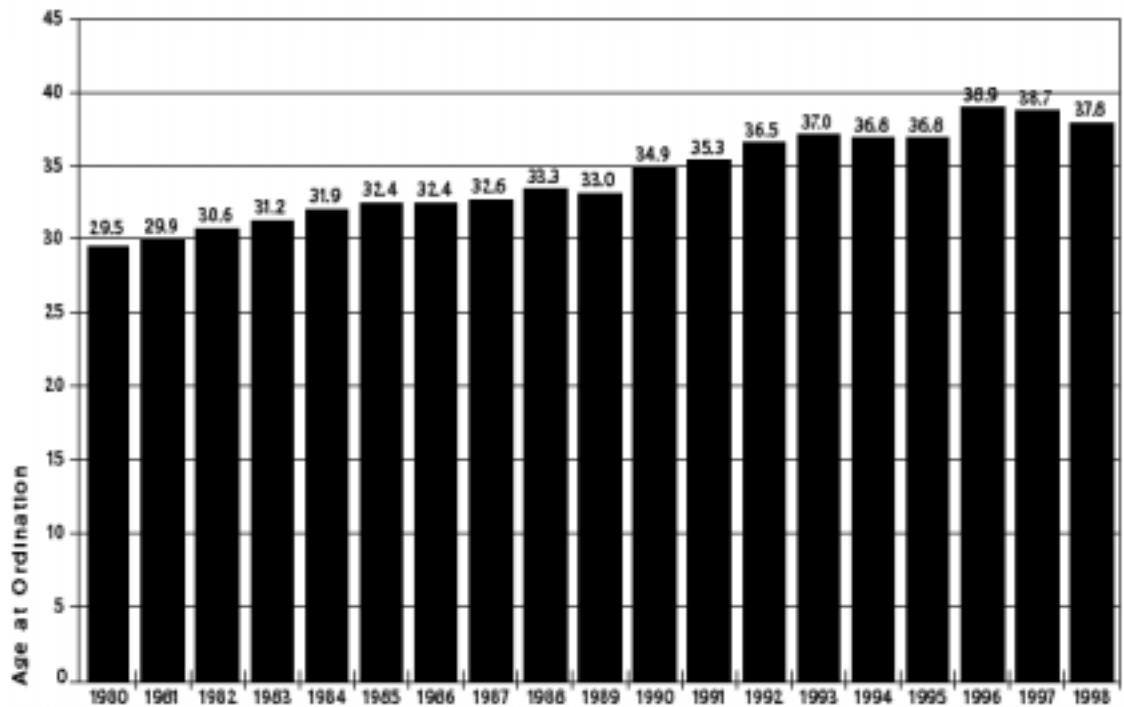
\* Figures before 1988 may underestimate the number of persons ordained.

Sources: Reports and minutes of the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America; Rostered Leadership File, ELCA Office of the Secretary. Prepared by the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 1999.

Chart 10

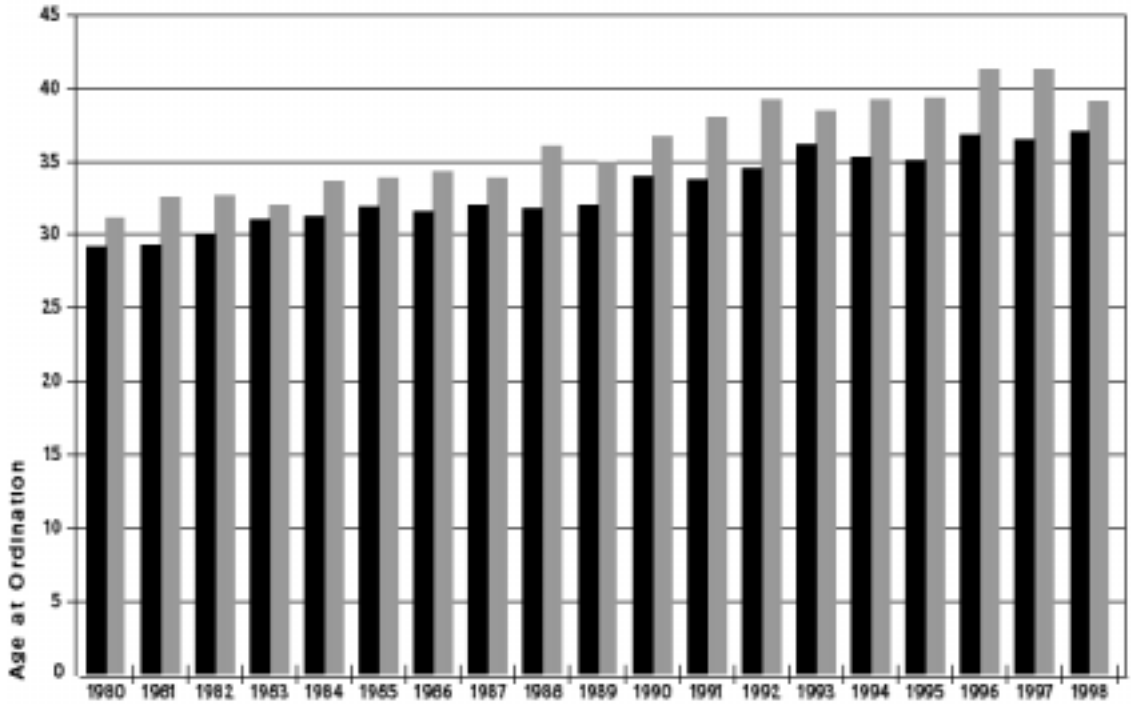
### Average Age at Ordination

For ELCA clergy from 1980 to 1998



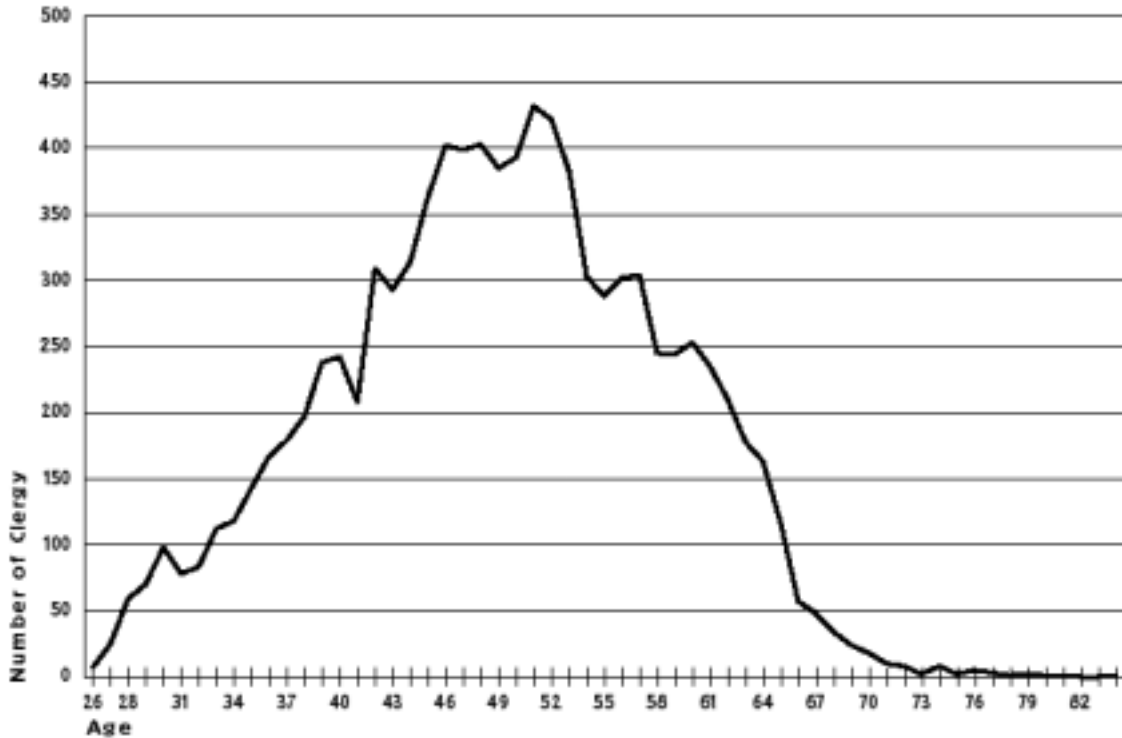
Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 11**  
**Average Age at Ordination by Gender**  
 For ELCA clergy from 1980 to 1998



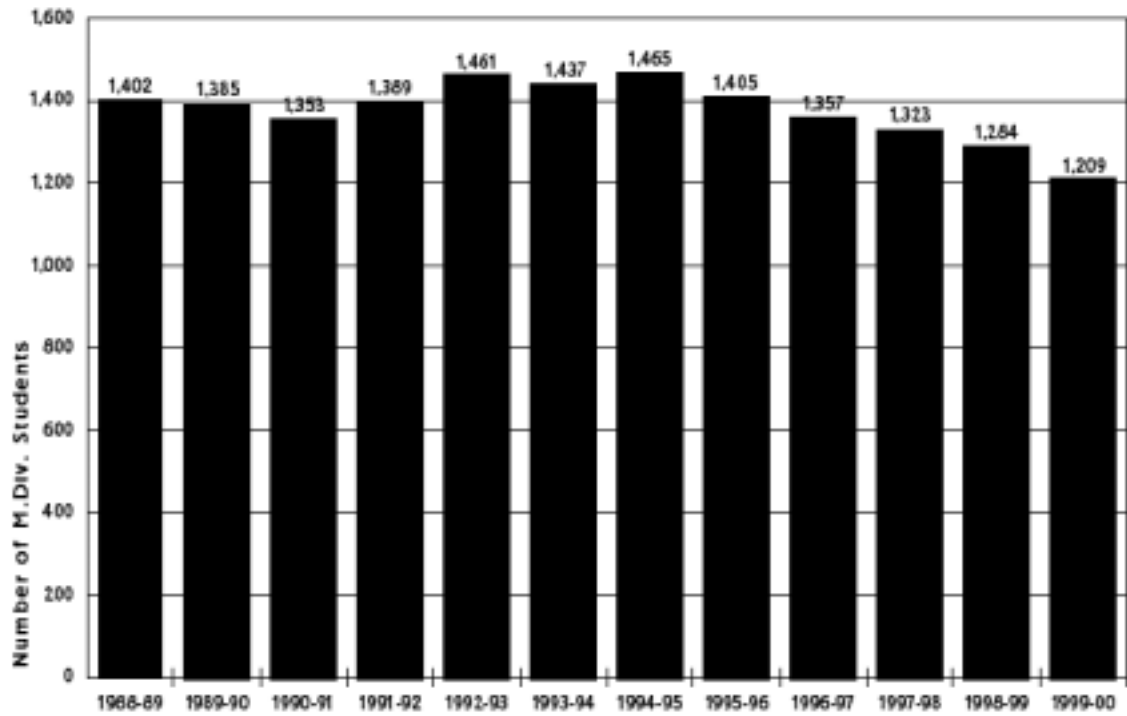
Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 12**  
**Age of Clergy with Congregation Calls**  
 in 1999 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



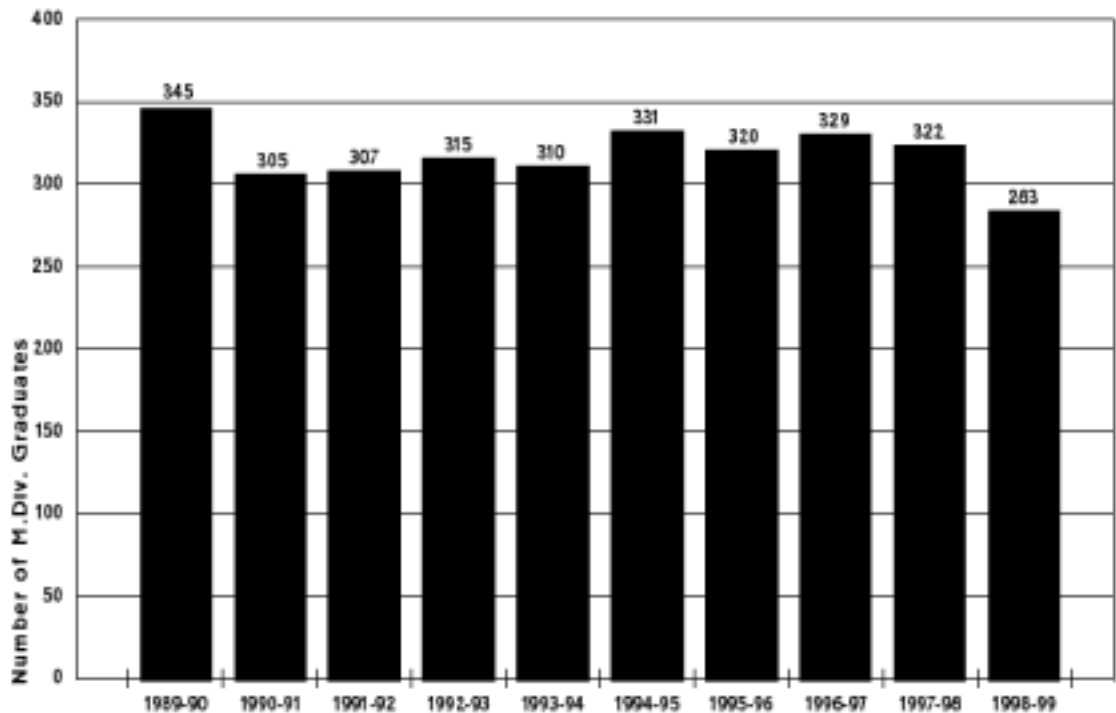
Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 13**  
**Lutheran M.Div. Enrollment**  
 At ELCA Seminaries from 1988-1989 to 1999-2000



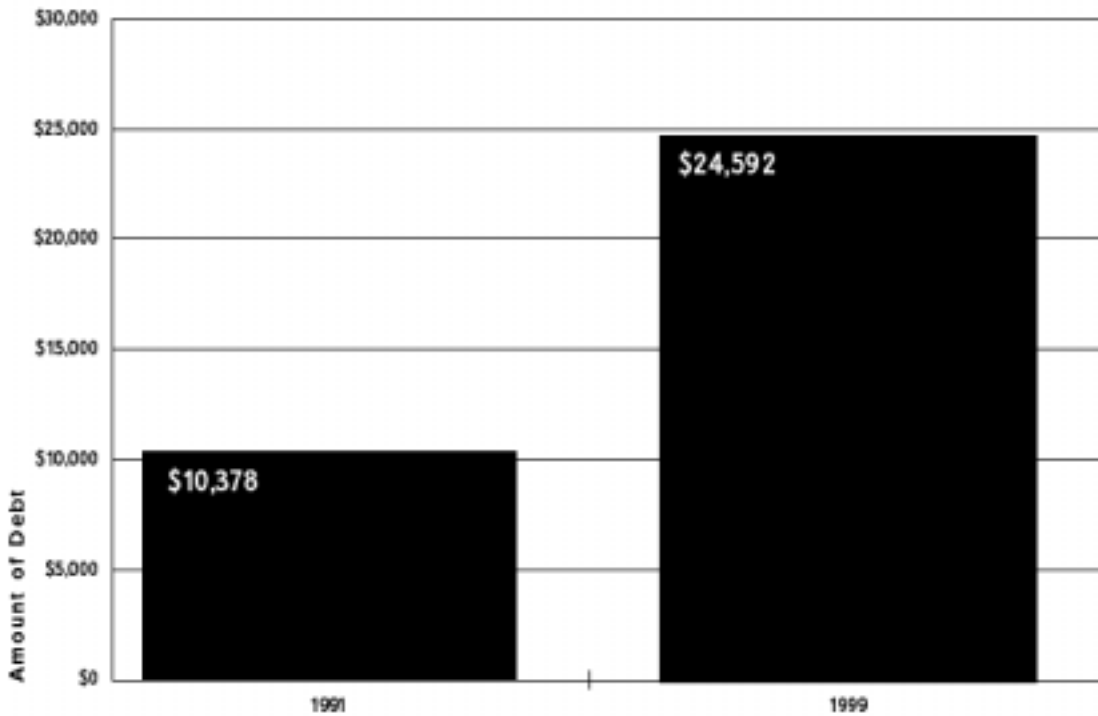
Source: ELCA Division for Ministry. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 14**  
**Lutheran M.Div. Graduates**  
 At ELCA Seminaries from 1989-90 to 1998-99



Source: ELCA Division for Ministry. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

**Chart 15**  
**Average Debt**  
 for ELCA M.Div. Seminary Graduates with Debt



Source: 1991 data from Auburn Studies, "Manna from Heaven?" 1999 data from ELCA Division for Ministry survey of ELCA seminaries, December 1999.

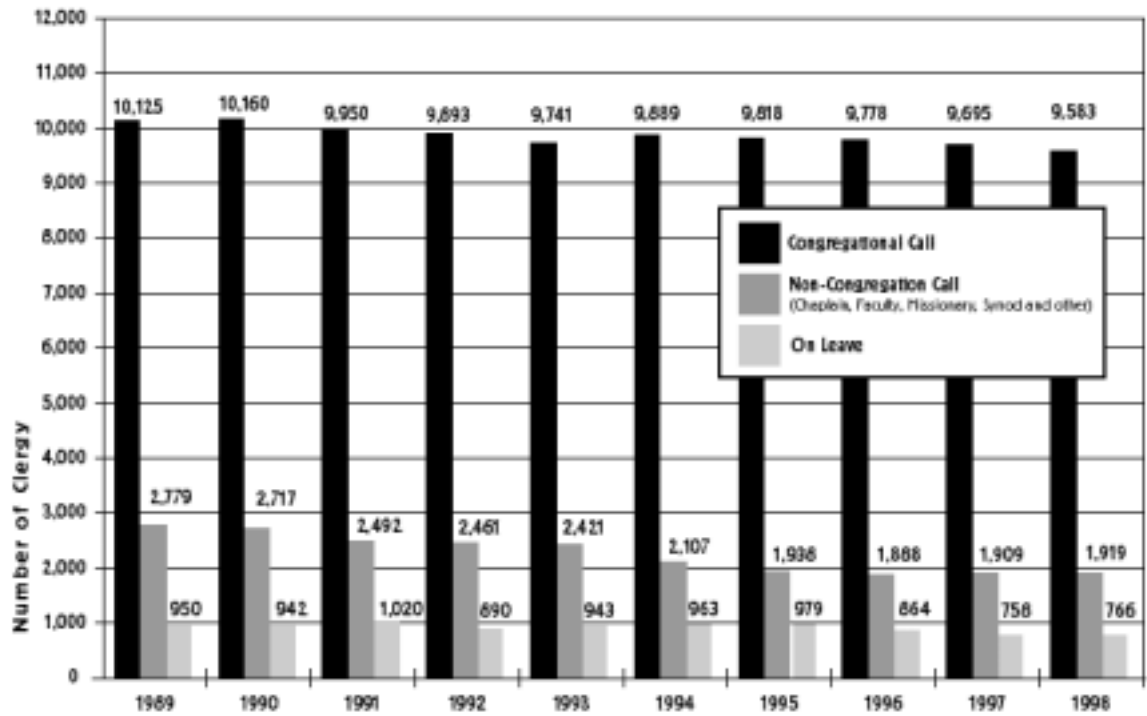
**Chart 16**  
**ELCA Active Ordained Ministers**  
 from 1990 to 1998

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Additions</b>									
Ordained	346	296	313	310	298	335	332	328	342
Reinstated	18	26	20	17	12	18	15	19	16
Received	19	22	8	32	15	15	17	21	21
<b>Total Additions</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>379</b>
<b>Removals</b>									
Retirement	327	309	311	325	318	331	325	344	332
Continuing Disability	23	24	28	26	30	27	30	27	25
Resignation	37	58	50	51	41	48	46	56	56
Removal	99	95	119	73	88	55	92	74	49
Transfer	3	1	1	5	2	4	3	1	1
Death	24	30	23	20	20	25	29	30	27
<b>Total Removals</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>490</b>
<b>Yearly Loss</b>	<b>-130</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-191</b>	<b>-141</b>	<b>-174</b>	<b>-122</b>	<b>-161</b>	<b>-164</b>	<b>-111</b>
<b>Cumulative Loss</b>	<b>-130</b>	<b>-303</b>	<b>-494</b>	<b>-635</b>	<b>-809</b>	<b>-931</b>	<b>-1,092</b>	<b>-1,256</b>	<b>-1,367</b>

Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 1999.

Chart 17

**Number of Ordained Ministers by Source of Call**  
from 1989 to 1998 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

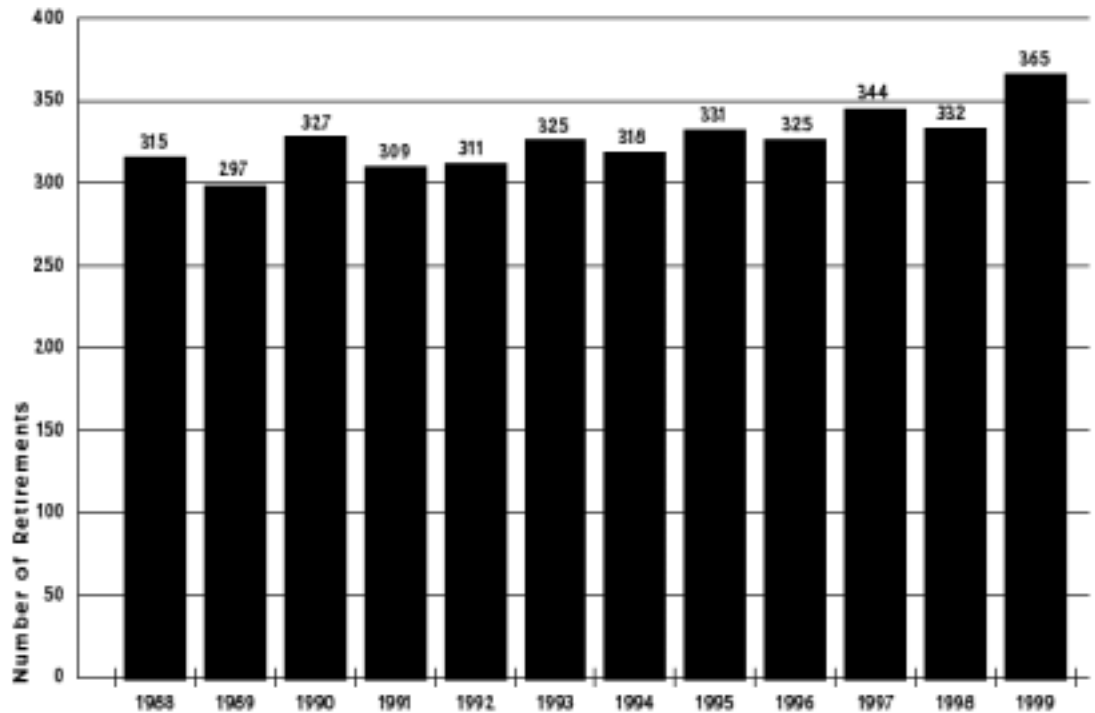


Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 18

**Number of Clergy Retiring**

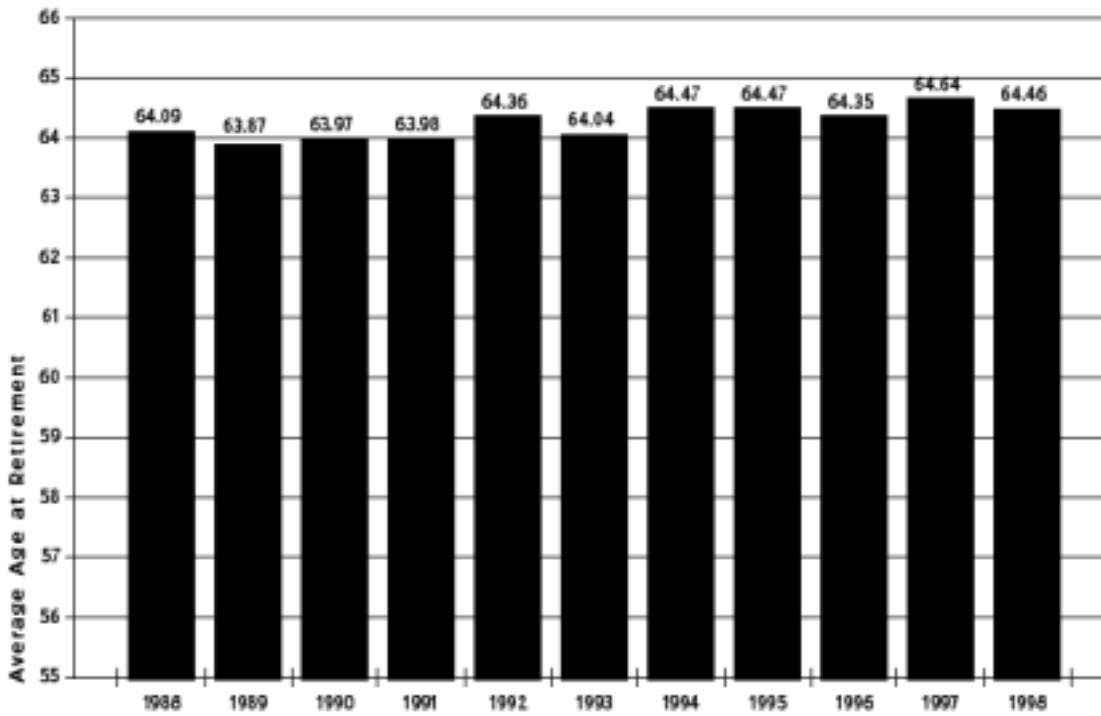
Per year from 1988 to 1999 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Source: Rostered Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 19

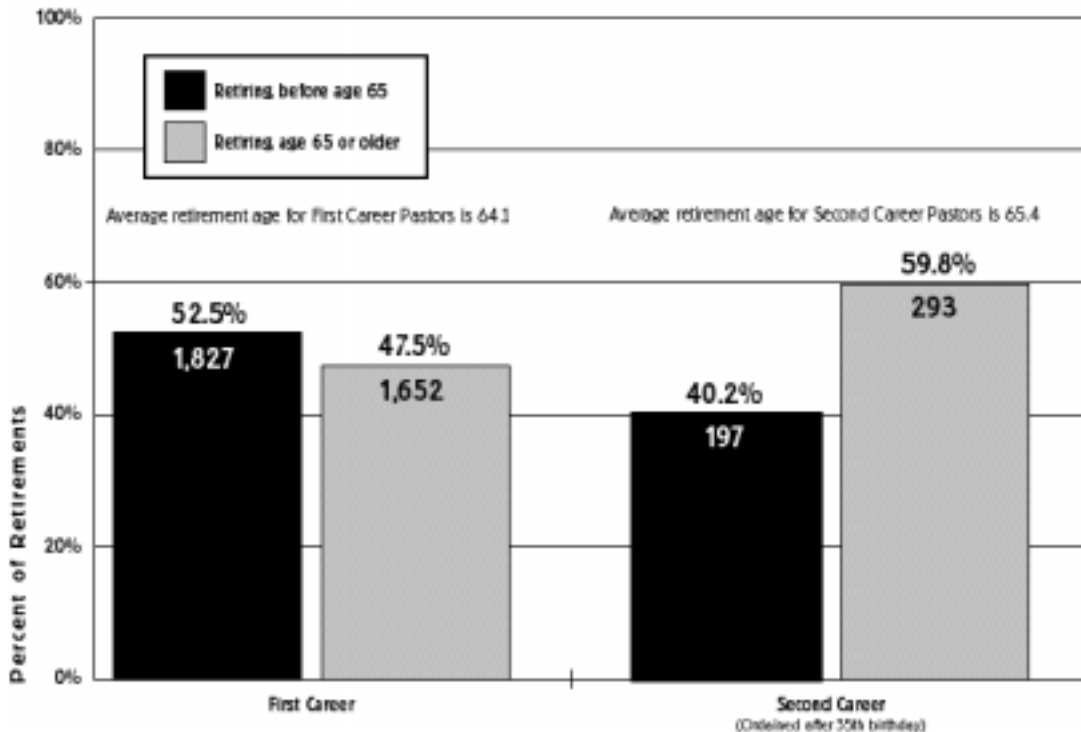
**Average Age at Retirement for Clergy**  
from 1988 to 1999 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Source: Roster Leadership File, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA, 1999.

Chart 20

**Retirement Ages of First and Second Career ELCA Ordained Ministers**  
Who have retired since 1988



Source: Roster database, Office of the Secretary, ELCA. Prepared by the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 2000

## Appendix 1

# Responses to Questionnaire on Congregational Vacancies for Synod Bishops/Staff

Division for Ministry and the Department for Research and Evaluation  
Winter, 1999

1. Over the last five years or so, have you experienced any difficulty in filling congregational requests for clergy in the synod so that clergy positions in congregations have remained vacant for an unusually long time?

2.1% don't know/not sure *(Please go to Question 3.)*

12.8 very little difficulty *(vacancies are filled in a timely manner with very few exceptions)*  
*(Please go to Question 3.)*

68.1 some difficulty *(for a number of congregations it takes considerably longer than in the past)*  
*(Please answer Question 2.)*

17.0 a lot of difficulty *(vacancies are left unfilled for an inordinate amount of time because we can't find persons to fill them, the congregation can no longer afford a pastor, etc.)*  
*(Please answer Question 2.)*

2. Is this difficulty only with regard to "first call" situations or is it more difficult to fill vacancies in general?

12.0 "first call"

66.0 in general

22.0 don't know/not sure

3. Please read through the following list of reasons why some have suggested it is more difficult to fill congregational requests for clergy. Based on your experience, please indicate how often you encounter the reason as a factor in filling vacancies.

	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Hardly Ever	Not Sure
<b>A. Issues related to the candidate's situation or the views/opinions of the candidate</b>					
a. an unwillingness to relocate (for any reason)	4.1	28.6	55.1	12.2	0.0
b. a concern about moving to an unknown or unfamiliar setting	2.0	14.0	42.0	40.0	2.0
c. a need of a spouse (occupation, unwillingness to relocate, etc.)	16.3	55.1	26.5	2.0	0.0
d. a need of dependent children (health, schooling, etc.)	4.0	44.0	40.0	10.0	2.0
e. a need of dependent relatives (parents, etc.)	2.0	14.0	54.0	28.0	2.0
f. a need/desire to pay off educational debts	2.0	16.0	52.0	26.0	4.0
g. a desire to achieve/maintain a standard of living incompatible with the setting of the congregation	0.0	14.0	36.0	50.0	0.0
h. a desire to be near an institution(s) of higher education	2.0	14.0	62.0	22.0	0.0
i. a desire to be near a large city with all that it offers	12.0	46.0	34.0	8.0	0.0
j. opposition to serving a congregation in a rural setting	4.0	28.0	52.0	14.0	2.0
k. opposition to serving a congregation in a highly urban setting	0.0	12.0	38.0	44.0	6.0
l. opposition to serving a small congregation	6.1	30.6	46.9	16.3	0.0
m. opposition to serving in a setting where the candidate feels that he/she will be isolated because of race/ethnicity	0.0	0.0	32.0	64.0	4.0
n. a sense of not having the ministry skills needed in the setting	4.1	2.0	30.6	59.2	4.1
o. a sense that the congregation's theology or ethos is incompatible with the candidates...	2.0	6.0	64.0	26.0	2.0
p. opposition to serving a congregation with a difficult "reputation"	4.0	12.0	54.0	30.0	0.0
q. the desire for a very specialized call	0.0	14.0	50.0	36.0	0.0
<b>B. Issues related to the congregation's views/opinions</b>					
a. opposition to calling a woman pastor	0.0	8.0	56.0	36.0	0.0
b. opposition to calling an older pastor	2.0	32.0	52.0	14.0	0.0
c. opposition to calling a second-career pastor	0.0	2.0	18.4	79.6	0.0
d. opposition to calling a person of color or language other than English	2.1	10.4	25.0	43.8	18.8
e. opposition to calling a person who has most recently served in a non-congregational setting	0.0	14.6	52.1	33.3	0.0
f. opposition to calling a first call pastor	0.0	2.2	38.0	58.0	2.0
g. an inability to meet the synod's minimum salary guidelines	10.0	18.0	58.0	14.0	0.0
h. unwillingness to meet the synod's minimum salary guidelines	2.0	18.0	46.0	32.0	2.0
i. a sense that the candidate does not have the ministry skills that are needed in the setting	4.2	25.0	47.9	22.9	0.0
j. a sense that the candidate is not highly committed to serving in the setting	0.0	18.0	52.0	30.0	0.0
k. a sense that the synod has not identified the "best candidates"	2.0	10.0	68.0	20.0	0.0
l. the desire for a candidate with very specialized ministry skills	2.0	2.0	42.9	53.1	0.0

C. Issues related to the synod's bishop/staff views/opinions

	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Hardly Ever	Not Sure
a. an inability to find a candidate with the right ministry skills for the setting	8.0	36.0	50.0	6.0	0.0
b. an inability to find a candidate willing to serve in the congregation's setting	8.0	46.0	40.0	6.0	0.0
c. an inability to find a candidate willing to serve for the compensation offered	6.0	38.0	44.0	12.0	0.0
d. a reluctance/refusal to recommend a candidate because of a past record of ineffectively serving congregations	8.0	28.0	58.0	6.0	0.0
e. the loss of a candidate due to a decision to leave the ministry for another occupation or to train for another occupation	0.0	0.0	34.7	63.3	2.0
f. the loss of a candidate due to early retirement	0.0	6.0	36.0	58.0	0.0
g. the loss of a candidate due to a decision to take a call outside the synod	0.0	34.0	56.0	10.0	0.0
h. difficulties related to placing a clergy couple	2.0	38.0	46.0	14.0	0.0

4. As you see it, what are the three most significant characteristics you look for in candidates as you seek to fill congregational vacancies?

5. How often does the synod use any of the following to fill vacancies either temporarily or permanently?

	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Hardly Ever	Not Sure
a. supply pastors	36.0	28.0	28.0	8.0	0.0
b. interim pastors	52.0	40.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
c. retired pastors under contract	22.4	34.7	34.7	8.2	0.0
d. synodically authorized ministers	6.1	8.2	38.8	44.9	2.0
e. pastors from other denominations	0.0	2.0	26.0	72.0	0.0

6. Allowed further expansion on above question.

7. Does the synod have in place (or is the synod developing) a special strategy for dealing with congregational vacancies?

0.0 not sure

34.0 no

66.0 yes (Please briefly describe the strategy.)

8. From your point of view and your experience in the synod, do you anticipate a significant shortage of clergy in the next 10 years?

22.0 not sure

6.0 no

72.0 yes (Please briefly describe what you think the critical components of that shortage will be. For example, do you think we need more pastors? Do we need pastors with fewer restrictions? Do we need to link more congregations together so they can be served with one pastor? Do we need to use lay persons more extensively?)

If you have additional thoughts on any of these matters or on the issue of candidates and congregational vacancies in general, please make them here or attach an additional sheet if necessary.

## Appendix 2

# Characteristics of First-call Congregations

for Candidates assigned February 1998 and called by September 15, 1999

## 125 Solo Pastors

	Baptized Members	Average Attendance	Regular Giving	Designated Giving	Current Operating Expenses	Debt Expenses	Mission Support
Average	279.6	90.1	\$71,425	\$10,186	\$69,382	\$3,929	\$5,884
Median	267	83	\$67,790	\$6,446	\$63,287	\$0	\$4,896
Minimum	56	17	\$16,387	\$0	\$14,013	\$0	\$0
Maximum	631	218	\$251,164	\$91,511	\$258,243	\$56,124	\$23,760
Percentiles							
10%	120	48	\$42,020	\$0	\$39,697	\$0	\$1,655
20%	151	60	\$49,505	\$395	\$48,147	\$0	\$2,531
30%	190	70	\$56,617	\$2,171	\$53,455	\$0	\$3,546
40%	229	77	\$60,491	\$4,361	\$59,303	\$0	\$4,123
50%	267	83	\$67,790	\$6,446	\$63,287	\$0	\$4,896
60%	306	95	\$71,617	\$7,443	\$68,416	\$0	\$5,757
70%	339	107	\$76,012	\$9,833	\$76,237	\$0	\$6,659
80%	388	119	\$83,624	\$16,910	\$83,143	\$4,821	\$8,528
90%	486	137	\$103,141	\$24,839	\$103,308	\$16,160	\$11,083

## 80 Multiple Staff Pastors

	Baptized Members	Average Attendance	Regular Giving	Designated Giving	Current Operating Expenses	Debt Expenses	Mission Support
Average	1,278.2	392.5	\$384,773	\$103,430	\$329,822	\$50,375	\$32,224
Median	988	308	\$331,230	\$38,356	\$280,238	\$31,005	\$26,000
Minimum	174	51	\$35,267	\$0	\$41,210	\$0	\$3,616
Maximum	5,858	1,997	\$1,293,760	\$1,206,027	\$1,275,584	\$436,969	\$110,000
Percentiles							
10%	486	159	\$148,654	\$6,622	\$127,325	\$0	\$9,008
20%	597	227	\$188,532	\$12,746	\$167,829	\$0	\$12,000
30%	738	259	\$203,300	\$21,227	\$196,805	\$1,650	\$17,409
40%	900	281	\$240,380	\$31,057	\$224,812	\$11,333	\$21,009
50%	988	308	\$331,230	\$38,356	\$280,238	\$31,005	\$26,000
60%	1,118	352	\$351,659	\$51,303	\$302,560	\$38,862	\$31,306
70%	1,403	394	\$462,911	\$75,179	\$364,588	\$54,219	\$39,670
80%	1,677	501	\$522,865	\$107,315	\$467,591	\$69,926	\$50,988
90%	2,512	671	\$730,705	\$229,605	\$644,216	\$132,837	\$77,300

