



# Daily CONEXIONES

Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat of Via de Cristo

Volume 16.2

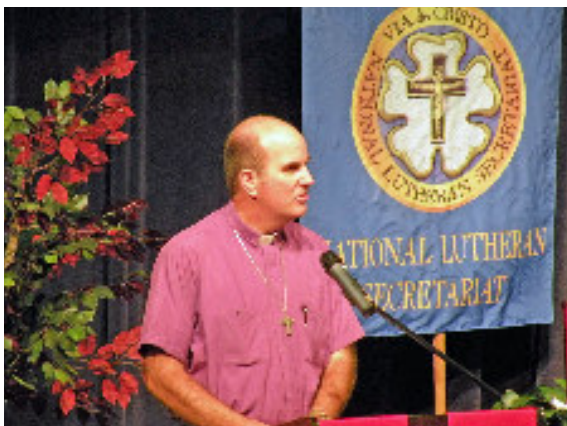
Friday Edition

July 25, 2008

## KEY NOTE: BISHOP STEPHEN S. TALMAGE

### Bishop Stephen Talmage

shared his background of growing up in a Lutheran church with the commitment to his par-



ents that he attend until confirmation. Like most teens, after being confirmed he quit going to church. When Stephen was a freshman in high school, his father died. He was then mentored by several adult males and became involved in Young Life. Bishop Talmage learned the gift of a strong Christian community and began to feel the call into ministry during his junior year in high school. His commitment was reinforced by his friends who helped him deepen his understanding of grace.

As a pastor, he answered his first call to American Lutheran in Tucson, Arizona and in 1989 attended Lutheran Cursillo #28.

Comparing and contrasting the Cursillo movement to the Church, Bishop Talmage feels the church is often shame, guilt and law oriented and Cursillo is grace and love oriented.

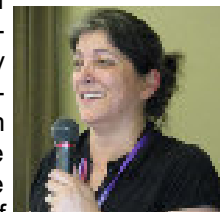
The VdC community is not without its challenges. Similar to how an MRI looks into and evaluates the body, Bishop Talmage suggested we use the following MRI to evaluate our Church communities:

- M – Missional
- R – Relational
- I – Incarnational

Bishop Talmage stated that our lives are impacted by the relationships we have. He encouraged the participants to 'make a friend, be a friend and bring a friend to Jesus'. We are here because we Love the Lord, our church and the VdC movement. God uses this movement to reach others. We were challenged to consider how can we invite pastors and bishops to become involved in Via de Cristo communities.

## HOT 2008 NLSAM Orientation

Nanette Helgager ("Nu") welcomed 65 participants (35 first time attendees) to Grand Canyon University for the 2008 annual meeting orientation. An air conditioning malfunction ensured that the meeting would be brief and yet informative. The theme, "Fan into Flames the Gift of God" brought new meaning as we braved the heat using paper fans.



Doug Burrows, past National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS) president and long time board member, presented a brief history of NLSAM, noting the first meeting was held at Cross & Crown Church in Atlanta in 1981. The movement proceeded through the early years, meeting in churches and staying in homes until 1994 when we first met at a retreat center. Now university campuses host our annual event. We learned that the movement has expanded from 4 to 47 secretariats as of this year and changed from Lutheran Cursillo to Via de Cristo in 1981, to denote an interdenominational theme. The NLS has six elected and seven appointed board members, and they will be introduced in the business meeting.

Nu pointed out items found in our notebooks and these reminders:

- Please visit the Palanca Room in the Nursing Science building (room 208) to sign posters for our Secretariats.
- Attend the Pastoral Involvement seminar with pastors Charlie Carlson and John Propst presenting.
- Please be respectful in using your cell phone throughout the weekend and no flash photography in worship or business meetings.
- Remember your card key gets you into dorms and purple lanyard admits you into meals.

Lastly, at the business meeting we will meet our hosts for this year; **Joyce Dickerson & Richard Knopf**. Plus we were told the 2009 annual meeting will be held at Barry University in Miami Florida.



## OPENING WORSHIP

The opening worship for the 2008 NLSAM began with uplifting music to charge our spirits and souls. As the music concluded, we had the opportunity to hear from **Rev. John Propst**, Spiritual Director for National Lutheran Secretariat. Pastor John served as officiator for the service. He noted that it was appropriate for the crowd, as they used their hand fans, that we were here to “Fan the Flames with the Gift of God. He noted that we are praising as we seek to be in God’s presence. Pastor John reminded us to think, act, and live in God’s presence as we experience the wonders that God unfolds for us.

**Rev. Steve Holm**, Pastor of Desert Cross Lutheran Church in Tempe, AZ, began sharing the message with a “cool” welcome to Arizona. The sermon text came from Matthew 8:18 - 27, when Jesus was with his disciples and a storm approached while they were in the boat.

Pastor Steve reminded us that spiritual transformation does not take place on Sunday morning or in a sermon, but rather that it happens in community. The gift of a Cursillo and Via de Cristo weekend is an experience of sharing in community. We are called to invite folks into community and share the life of grace. He reminded us that the work of the Holy Spirit is fanning the flames of our faith. From the embryo faith is born. We need to share and encourage our communities.



He asked “Why faith?” Because it calls us into relationship with God. Jesus calls us into discipleship. Through discipleship we are taken into new, different, and exciting places; and through our service dreams are realized and fulfilled. Pastor Steve continued by telling us that faith is the antidote to fear and allows us to stay by the side of Jesus. There are times when our faith can turn into an ember, so we need to seek renewal and allow the Holy Spirit to fan our spirit back into a flame.

Pastor Steve closed by saying the importance of our individual ministry, is important, vital, and crucial, for there are those who need to hear. Through the fruits of our work, the Holy Spirit can be felt by those in community with us.



## THURSDAY BUSINESS MEETING



Pastor John Propst, NLS Spiritual Director, opened the business meeting in prayer.

Shannon Landers of Grand Canyon University welcomed Cursillo to GCU. GCU was founded in 1949 and has approximately 1800 students on campus and 15,000 offsite students in attendance.

President Tracy Schmidlin introduced board members, appointed positions and past board members that were present. She then explained that delegates would be reelected based on the Region to Region system.

Dave Erdman introduced new Secretariat “Journey in Faith VDC” from Pennsylvania and thanked district 5 for bringing them in and assisting and shepherding them into the movement.

Three elected positions will be filled this session and the nominating committee has made the following recommendations:

VP of Administration:

**Nanette Helgager**

Spiritual Director

**Pastor Charlie Carlson**

**Pastor Doug Givan**

Treasurer

**Bob Northrup**

The job descriptions and biographies of the nominees' can be found after the yellow section in your notebook. Nominations will be accepted from the floor on Friday with elections to be held on Saturday.

Tracy also noted that the appointed position of Website Manager/Administrator is available to be filled this session. That job description follows the biographies in the yellow section. Questions can be directed to **Bob Northrup** who currently holds this position on the board.

The business meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 5:05.

## REGION TO REGION

The gathering of secretariats from the various regions began with sharing their names and the communities that they represented. Discussions then turned to conversations and sharing about the concerns the numerous communities were facing.

As we listened to comments from several of the regions, it was apparent that many similar issues are facing the secretariats across the country. There is the issue with the facilities where the weekends are being hosted in, problems with the costs associated when putting on a weekend, concerns with finding enough people who are willing to attend a weekend, plus with finding enough team members to serve on a weekend and finally issues with consistency and changing to meet the needs of the people attending.

It was interesting to note that some communities are able to secure a church location for no cost, with the community making a memorial to the church. Some weekends held in church are costing up to \$2000. Some weekends are held at camp sites with the cost of a weekend exceeding \$6500. Then there is the cost of insurance. Many of the communities do not have or cannot afford insurance. There is the concern of charging the persons who attend as well as team fees getting so high that the per person cost exceeds \$350. Some regions suggested making their needs known to the larger community so they would have an opportunity to respond and offer their gifts. Other comments talked of asking different parishes for help with food and other items needed for the weekend to help defray costs.

More discussion occurred on finding enough people to attend weekends. One idea was to ask team members to invite at least 3 others to attend. Others suggested making a similar request to candidates, pilgrims or weekenders who have recently attended. Some communities that were short of candidates or pilgrims also had an excess list of names of people willing to serve. It is important to note that neighboring states were willing to share names with others in their regions to help those communities who had plenty of candidates or pilgrims, but not enough team members to serve. We give God thanks for this time to share and help each other.

Generally, it would seem this initial session was to encourage the delegates and visitors to openly share what their concerns are. This first session was like an assessment session and the attendees were challenged to give more thought to the concerns and issues their respective communities face. It is noteworthy that so many people shared what is working in their communities and to offer help and encouragement and ideas for others within the region. The people who attended are looking forward to next sessions to continue their discussions.



## EVENING WORSHIP

As the last verses of “How Great is Our God” were sung, it was as if there were a choir of angels present. For there was a certain serenity and peace being experienced in the hearts of those gathered.

The message for tonight’s worship was given by **Pastor John Schaumberg**, of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mesa, AZ. First Evangelical is the host church for the Cursillo weekends for Lutheran Cursillo Movement of Arizona. The scripture text for the sermon was taken from Luke 15:11-32.



Pastor John began by welcoming everyone to the Valley of the Son and expressed the gladness in the Arizona Community for the opportunity to host the NLSAM and for all those who came.

Pastor Schaumberg told us that he would not preach on the Prodigal son, nor would he preach on the older son, and in fact, neither would he preach about the Father. He would instead preach on the topic of “*Holy Waiting*.” The topic is about the Father waiting for the son. In the story, the father had to make some decisions. First whether to give the inheritance to his son or not. He knew his son could die, for his heart was already wilting. The father had to decide not to rescue him. He knew that his son had to go and do the things he was to do. The father could have sent someone to watch over him and rescue the young man, but he didn’t. He had to wait for his son to experience the life he had chosen.

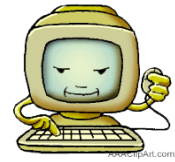
Pastor John then gave us a glimpse of what *Holy Waiting* includes.

- It means to be active in prayer. Always active for all who are in need.
- It means to surrender to God our fears. We need not be afraid, but rather turn it over to Him. We need to give the things or the people that we are fearful of, over to God, trusting that God will care for all those things.
- It means to surrender to God our worries and anxiousness. Someone has said that worry insults God. An interesting thought to ponder.
- It means to continue on with life. We still need to do the things we need to do, the things that God would have us do.

Finally Pastor John reminded us that while we can strongly feel a person should attend a weekend, we must not push too hard. A person’s attendance at a weekend is God given. The service closed as we sang “In His Time” together.

**FIRST TIMERS to NLS**

Each year many new people join us for their first experience of a National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS) annual meeting. This year isn't any different and we have a number of people participate as delegates, visitors and host team members. Here is just some of them:



Don't forget to visit the NLS website:  
[viadecristo.org](http://viadecristo.org)

**EMERGENCY 24/7 PHONE NUMBERS:**

The campus emergency phone number is 602-639-8100. Host Committee Nurse **Carol Widney**:602-686-2789. Other emergencies: Host Committee Co-Chair **Joyce Dickerson** at 602-620-3195.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices during all worship services, business meetings, and presentations. We request that no flash photos be taken.
- Only water bottles with lids are allowed in Ethington Theatre — NO Food allowed.
- Palanca Posters are available for signing in the Nursing Science Building (Room 208) through Sat. evening - 4:30 p.m.
- The Palanca Chapel (prayer room) is located in the Lobby room of Ethington theatre.
- A Computer Lab is available in Fleming Hall - Room 111 for you to use throughout the weekend.



Schedule for Friday, July 25, 2008

Time	Event	Building	Location
7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	S C	Student Center
8:45 a.m.	Worship with Communion	E T	Ethington Theatre
10:00 a.m.	Business Meeting	E T	Ethington Theatre
11:30 a.m.	Forum "Who Belongs" Tracy Schmidlin	E T	Ethington Theatre
12:15 p.m.	Lunch	S C	Dining Hall
1:15 p.m.	Seminars & Optional Videos	Flmg/NSB	Fleming & NSB
2:15 p.m.	Repeat Seminars	Flmg/NSB	Fleming & NSB
3:15 p.m.	Break	N S B	Lobby
3:30 p.m.	Committee Work	Flmg/NSB	Fleming & NSB
5:00 p.m.	Dinner	S C	Dining Hall
6:00 p.m.	Region to Region	TBA	Various Areas
7:00 p.m.	Small Group Breakout Time	TBA	See Small Group Chart
8:15 p.m.	Worship	E T	Ethington Theatre
	Hospitality	S C	Student Center

**CONEXIONES** is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 92,100 who have participated in 47 movements across the U.S. The purpose of this publication is to inform the delegates about the activities of the Annual Meeting.

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