



Daily CONEXIONES

Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat of Via de Cristo

Volume 16.3

Saturday Edition

July 26, 2008

FRIDAY FORUM

Speaker **Tracy Schmidlin**, President of the NLS, opened by asking for our spirit of Idealism, Cooperation and Charity. She asked a series of questions about who belongs....



- On a Via de Cristo weekend
- In our neighborhood
- In our church
- At our Ultreya's

She asked us to examine our practices in our own Secretariats and in our own lives. We then opened together with the Holy Spirit prayer.

Tracy referred to the song *Amazing Love* from the previous service and said this is what we are to pass on to others. We each need to find answers for ourselves with the help of the Holy Spirit.

What is our job? Is it to put on weekends or to be Christ's hands and feet? If it is the latter, we cannot feel a sense of failure when a weekend has a small attendance. Rather, it is part of God's plan.

Who belongs? If we are talking about who should enter the Kingdom of God, we should leave it alone; that is God's decision. If we are talking about who should enter our church, we should leave it alone; it is God's decision. If we are talking about who should be invited to a Via de Cristo weekend, this is up for discussion.

Is the person on our heart in the midst of a life struggle? If so, this may not be the best time. Does that person even *desire* God? How do we find out? The only real way to know a person well enough, is to **talk** to them. Via de Cristo/Cursillo is a method of renewal; it is all about Grace. Tracy stated, "We cannot be arrogant, pompous, or stubborn." Remember the song "*Amazing Love*". Tracy is passionate about the fact that we can trust in God more and do marvelous things. When we "play God" however, we do not do marvelous things.

How about Secretariat? Who belongs on our Secretariats? Tracy stated that the most important thing is to talk to them and find out their heart. If their desire is for God, they belong. We go back to our method which is Piety, Study, and Action so others can walk closer with God. Talk to people, pray about them. Find people who are *practicing* their fourth day.

Tracy summarized by saying that we are further the kingdom, one person at a time. That it is most important to be **intentional** about the people we are seeking. Be diligent and listening to others at all times. What is on your heart? Who is

in your heart when asked who belongs? Did you talk to God about that person? Via de Cristo/Cursillo are methods that help the church. Are we going to be issue-oriented or GRACE oriented?

The Time: Summer 2007

The Place: Indianapolis

Who: Singing Bar-B-Q Kettles,
Dancing Hamburgers
Piano Playing Chickens
Crooning Charcoal Briquettes



The Hot Dog did WHAT????????? He's singing what? Did you say Get Hot for Jesus?

2 Tim 1:6 Fan into flames the gift of God which is in you.

Last summer our very own Puppet Ministers went to Indianapolis to invite the National Meeting to Arizona in 2008. They wowed our mid-west friends with a puppet version of Get Hot, Stay Hot sung by hamburgers and hotdogs, and their friends did a fantastic reprise after worship last night. Do you think any of our visitors are surprised by the desert weather after that?

According to Joyce Dickerson, Puppeteer Extraordinaire, the puppet ministry is a way to witness for Christ that is a lot of fun for everyone - and besides - a puppet can get into a lot of places and say a lot of things that just wouldn't be possible for anyone else. Joyce has been working with puppets for over 15 years - beginning as a mom helping in her church and growing into taking teenaged puppeteers on a national tour where they grew in discipleship for Christ.

Now, Joyce devotes her gifts to Arizona Cursillo with the help of talented Greg Ahlborn, Karon Bailey, Dave Jeffery, Barb Maglich, Harry Scholz, and Betty and Bill Thompson. Wait till you see "The Popsicle Kid" which performed after worship on Friday evening. Some of the puppets who will perform are professionals - that is they were professionally made - but many have been made by Joyce and her family and kids of the Tirosh community - no wonder they are so neat!

Dave Jeffery captured this ministry perfectly saying that the *Puppet Ministry is a multi-generational way to link faith and fun - witnessing to Christ in a way that everyone can identify with and relate to - even a piano playing chicken*. He was kidding about the chicken. Seriously, Dave says the joy in participating in the Puppet Ministry and watching the people who see the skits is an uplifting, wonderful thing. He thinks you'll recognize the theme of "The Popsicle Kid" right away.



MORNING WORSHIP

MEMORIES ... AND MOVING FORWARD

Entering to the sound of wonderful pre-service music provided by our praise band, worship got off to a rousing start. As we sang of God's great love and grace – his sacrifice for us, we began to see a picture of what Heaven will be like.



Pastor Shealds Smith, led us in the liturgical portion of the service, including fervent prayer and the always-present Lutheran confession and absolution. Before communion, he also improvised and taught us the "I'm inright, outright, downright, upright happy all the time." It was a

true reflection of our lives in Christ.

The message was eloquently delivered by **Pastor James Hoefler**. He talked about remembering and how Scripture is full of admonitions to remember: the deliverance from slavery in Egypt at the hand of Moses, the deliverance from slavery to sin at the hands of Jesus Christ. We receive the ultimate gift of Christ in remembrance of Him at communion.

Based on John 10:6-10, Pastor James' message led us to an understanding of what memories mean for us. They help us define who we are and the attitude we have. Sometimes we need to reprioritize our memories so that our attitudes can be readjusted. He quoted: *"good things have to be engraved on our memory, bad things stick there all by themselves."* All of us are in a mess – we have something from our past that we feel very deeply. It is Jesus who can cleanse us and help us to reprioritize our memories so that we can move forward. Nowhere is this more profound than when we partake of Holy Communion. Christ is saying to us, *"let me pass through your body and cleanse it, let me get rid of all the stuff that sticks, let me rearrange."*



We were encouraged to remember Jesus' calling in our lives. It was here that the analogy of the sheep and the shepherd became a modern day parable. Pastor James reported that there is an ugly rumor going around that sheep are dumb. But, he said that is not the case. Sheep are as good as we are at recognizing faces and voices. They know their shepherd, and when a stranger comes into the fold, pandemonium reigns. Sheep prefer to be led, not prodded and pushed like cows. Like the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, a good shepherd leads his sheep, talks to them and asks them to follow him.

Without our Good Shepherd, we have a tendency to get lost, to lose track of the plan. Like sheep who have built-in caller ID and know when their shepherd is calling to them, we are also equipped with caller ID to let us know when Jesus' voice is calling to us. He talks to us through the words and actions of others – we don't need to remember who or what was said, but we do need to note what Jesus was telling us through those people.

We also need to be aware of those who are "not of this fold." Pastor James told us that this Bible verse was significant to him when he was in high school and is no less so now. It is up to us to lift up those who are not yet of our flock. We need to take Jesus, who gave life to the dead, brought prodigal sons and daughters home, and found the lost, to those who are

not yet of this fold. Then in eternity, we will, indeed, be one flock with one Shepherd – The Good Shepherd.

As Pastor James closed, "This is the Good Shepherd's plan – and there's nothing dumb about it."

We moved into communion and partook of the great gift that God gives us in His body and blood. A remembrance -- using memories to move forward, seeking the lost and saving the world.



FRIDAY BUSINESS MEETING

Friday's business meeting was called to order at 10:25 and prayer was provided by **Pastor Bill Sistar**. The schedule for the day was reviewed, and it was noted that there is still room in the pastoral involvement seminar tomorrow, if anyone wants to sign up. Seminars were added in response to feedback. The "Optional Videos" sessions are videos that our distribution center has as resources for your community.

An update was given concerning the Coordinator Campaign to fund the position of a paid National Coordinator. Three years ago at the NLSAM, this community determined that there was a need for a paid National Coordinator. This position would provide a centralized place for people to call for information. It was decided that this position is important for the growth of the movement. Two years ago it was determined that an endowment fund would be set up to pay for the position. This committee, meeting in Fleming 105 later this afternoon will report to Secretariat on Saturday.

It was announced that there was a shooting at South Mountain Community College yesterday. Since many loved ones may not know exactly where we are meeting, it was suggested that people call them to let them know that we are not there and we are all okay.

Nominations rules were reviewed and then nominations were solicited from the floor. Two additional nominations for vice president of administration were made: Lynn Ryan and Karen Bennefeld were added to the slate. No further nominations for Spiritual Director or Treasurer were made. All nominees were introduced and said a few words about their work with Via de Cristo or Cursillo.

The board stated that it is important to have people who are willing to step forward. Just as the weekend has a progression, so service to the community has a progression of its own: we attend our weekend, then serve on team, to participation on our community's Secretariat, and then to the National Secretariat.

There were a couple of other announcements: there are snacks in various places throughout the facility, and water is everywhere. There is a prayer request box in the Palanca chapel. There are posters in Room 208 of the Nursing Building for signatures. Finally, the small group meetings and locations were clarified.

At 10:55, the meeting adjourned with a closing prayer.

REGION TO REGION

During the Region-to-Region meeting on Friday, Region 4 focused on three issues: how the National Secretariat can help the region; how can the region help National; and how can the secretariats within the region assist each other? Discussion was lively about these questions, and some definite specifics emerged from that discussion.



With regard to how National can help the secretariats, the discussion turned to provision of resources, including having Board members available to assist, as needed and providing resources through the National website. In addition, it was suggested that a DVD with pastors and/or bishops promoting the weekends would be helpful. Finally, some type of pastoral involvement including a "Spiritual Director swap," where an area that is short of pastors could "borrow" a pastor from another area. This could involve retired pastors who would not mind traveling. The issue of team formation was brought up as a possible obstacle to this suggestion.

The participants in the Region 4 meeting determined that they could assist the National Secretariat by identifying those pastors within the region who may be willing to swap. Communication regarding successes, and challenges, including lessons learned, may be helpful to National and to other secretariats. Communication of changes to the National Secretariat with regard to weekends, personnel, and officers was also suggested.

The secretariats of Region 4 indicated that they could help each other by sharing information with each other, implementing the "Spiritual Director swap" within the region, and, perhaps, even serving on each other's teams for weekends. They also thought it may be helpful for secretariats to share "snowbird" information with each other. There may be some people who live in one region during the summer, but who travel to another region for the winter and who would be willing to be available to serve on team in their winter region. To assist in furthering intra-region communication, it was proposed that a retreat be scheduled for members of the region's secretariats.

The members participating in the Region 4 meeting prioritized their suggestions. The most important issue appears to be communication at and among all levels. This encompasses the website concern and the sharing of information that can be facilitated by that venue. Following that discussion is the issue of NLS assistance to secretariats, as needed, and before there are major problems that must be dealt with. Finally, a sharing of successes and challenges, including lessons learned, was also a priority for the region.



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EVENING WORSHIP

As the hot Arizona outdoors proclaimed the power and splendor of our Lord with a darkening sky, a magnificent fiery sunset with wind and lightning, the inside of Ethington Theatre filled with worship and praise for our wonderful God! Pastor Shealds Smith led the worship and joined the band, who needed to wear red bandanas, while they fanned into flames their gift of music leadership!

The lesson in I Thessalonians 5:12-24 reminded us to encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient, be kind, be joyful and give thanks in all. Do not put out the Spirit's fire!

The Gospel in John 14: 11-14 reminded us, "If in My name you for anything, I will do it."



In her message **Pastor Pat Reed** shared about being "real people" in a real world. Real people, who laugh, cry, appreciate life and are less than perfect. She was a former Catholic, but had a calling to be a Lutheran pastor. She has been a pastor for seven years, the last two years at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. It has been a struggling church with many challenges and lessons to learn in their mission to be "a priesthood of all believers."

Cursillo and VdC have created space for real people to give and serve, love and lead, pray and teach. With such a gift one would expect our communities would be enthusiastic and our weekends full. Pastor Pat reminded us of the reality of a broken world, reminding us that it is not about what we think, what we want or what we are so sure is right, but first and foremost about God - what God is doing and what God will continue to do through real people like you and me.

We are at risk of blending into the world and need to be reminded of our calling to "fan into flames the gift of God". We must be reminded what it means to call ourselves Christians, what it means to be a child of God, what it means to lead the church and fan the flame of the gift of God. For that is what we are called to do! She challenged us to lead God's church, take our calling seriously, and practice Piety, Study and Action. "Seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

The service ended with the sound of resounding voices and raised hands as we responded:

Here I am Lord. It is I Lord!
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart.



EDUCATIONAL FACTS

Welcome to Phoenix, Arizona or what we affectionately call *The Valley of the Sun!* It can get quite hot here in the Sonoran Desert. But something which may have caught you off guard is the higher humidity currently in the atmosphere. It has been said that Arizona has a dry heat. Yet this is only true from May to mid June and late September through October. During these months it is quite common for the mercury to climb upwards of 110°+. In fact, the hottest temperature ever recorded in Phoenix, Arizona was on June 26th, 1996 when the thermometers nearly burst at 122°F! And on such a day the humidity values can typically be less than 5%, leading to a skin cracking dry heat!

So why is it humid outside right now? It has everything to do with the North American Monsoon Circulation (NAM). In its simplest terms, a *monsoon* means the seasonal shift in prevailing upper atmospheric winds. In Arizona, winds during the spring and early summer are predominantly dry and out of the west. But as the desert floor heats, an extension of the Bermuda High breaks away, moves to the west and becomes situated near the Four-Corner's region (Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah). The clockwise circulation around the area of high pressure produces winds with a more southerly or southeasterly component ultimately leading to the transportation of moisture from Old Mexico into the desert southwest of the United States. Some of our most dangerous and amazing weather occurs during the monsoon season, but only when the right combination of moisture, upper level winds and instability are found. When this occurs it is not uncommon to have damaging winds greater than 60 mph, very heavy rainfall, amazing (but dangerous) lightning and the occasional hail stone.

For more information on the NAM and weather while visiting Phoenix please go to the National Weather Service homepage at www.weather.gov/phoenix.

Schedule for Saturday, July 26, 2008

Time	Event	Building	Location
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast	S C	Student Center
8:15 a.m.	Worship with Communion	TBA	TBA
10:00 a.m.	Region to Region	TBA	Various Areas
11:15 a.m.	Repeat Seminars	Flmg/NSB	Fleming & NSB
12:15 p.m.	Lunch	S C	Dining Hall
1:15 p.m.	Repeat Seminars	Flmg/NSB	Fleming & NSB
2:15 p.m.	Business Meeting	E T	Ethington Theatre
4:00 p.m.	Small Group Breakout Time	TBA	See Small Group Chart
5:00 p.m.	Dinner	S C	Dining Hall
	Memorial to Eduardo Bonnin	S C	Dining Hall
7:15 p.m.	Worship & Installation of Officers	E T	Ethington Theatre
	Hospitality	S C	Student Center

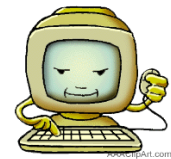
H D H – Hegel Dorm Hall, **S C** – Student Center, **NSB** – Nursing Science Bldg

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.
- 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, such as printing boarding passes.
- Each year the NLS takes one offering for outreach and that will be done at the 7:15 at tonight's Worship. If you are not able to attend this worship service and still want to donate to the NLS, please give your donation to one of the board members.
- The host team encourages you to take all of the Table Palanca at each meal. *Thank you!*

Web Master / Coordinator Position

Do you (or someone in your VdC Community) have a servant's heart and experience in Web Site design and Audio Video? If so, do we have your dream geek-job. Call **Bob Northrup** for more information at; [919-272-6560](tel:919-272-6560).



Don't forget to visit the NLS website:

viadecristo.org

EMERGENCY 24/7 PHONE NUMBERS:

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



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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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Seminar: WHAT ABOUT LEADER SCHOOL?

Dale Anderson, President of the Lutheran Cursillo Movement of Arizona's Secretariat, presented a portion of that group's version of Leader's School in one of the break-out seminars. After a short prayer, Dale affirmed that the National



meeting is a great place for an exchange of ideas. He reminded the participants that this is only one way – it may not be the best way or the only way – it is simply one way of accomplishing the task of training for team membership.

During the morning segment of Leader's School, the new Cursillistas are taken through their 4th day and sponsorship and what they both mean. The progression of the weekend is reviewed, as most of us don't remember exactly what transpired during our weekends.

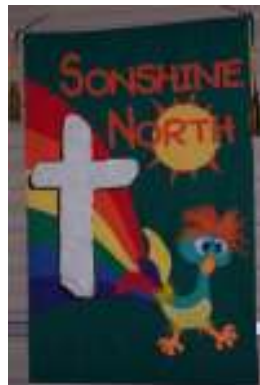
Dale asked the participants, as he does those participating in Leaders' School, to write the following statements: "The less you know about Via de Cristo/Cursillo, the more you want to change it." and "The more you know about Via de Cristo/Cursillo, the less you want to change it." Dale emphasized that while change is always welcome, it needs to be done with the proper perspective and for the right reasons.

Dale then walked the participants through the "preparation for team service" portion of Leaders' School. The common thread through every position on the team is PRAYER. It needs to dominate everything that we do. Leader's School participants are also reminded that the weekend is a gift from God; serving on team is also a gift from God and is a renewal experience.

In the LCMA, there are 5 requirements for being on team: (1) be committed to Christ; (2) be practicing the Cursillo method; (3) be an active member of a Lutheran Church; (4) have attended sessions 1 and 2 of the Cursillo Leaders' School; and (5) be grouping.

Participants are then taken through the process for being called to serve on a Team. Team members need to realize that this commitment is *in addition to* other commitments they may have to church, family, and employment.

Dale presented a thumbnail of the Leaders' School session to those in attendance at the National Meeting and encouraged them to contact him or to look to the Arizona website for any other desired information.

**Seminar: ESSENTIALS**

The Essentials Seminar was presented by **Paul Schmidlin** who worships at King of Glory in Sylvania, PA. Paul attended Via de Cristo #2 and sat at the Table of Peter.

Broad shouldered, powerfully muscled, Paul looks every bit a former professional line backer, but his quiet, gentle voice and eloquent speech present the demeanor of a scholar as well. Paul's vision for the "Essentials" class is to think carefully through who we are as Cursillistas and Followers of the Via de

Cristo in the relationships we develop with each other and the Holy Spirit. He told a story of a man who had an opportunity to talk with Eduardo Bonnin the founder of American Cursillo. The man had a question that he was quite desperate to ask and was given the special moment to do so. He asked how Eduardo Bonnin developed the "method" of Cursillo – that amazing



short course in Christian living. The story goes that Bonnin was quite stern in expression and voice when he answered that the Cursillo Method was given by the Holy Spirit.

The ESSENTIAL aspect of Cursillo and VdC is a HOLY SPIRIT RELATIONSHIP – here is where we must always begin. Paul skillfully brought out group discussion to determine the classes' thoughts about the "Essentials" of VdC/Cursillo. The Weekend was mentioned first. Paul explained that this vital tool in the movement is so important that it can become easy to forget the other aspects. He explained the importance of both the Pre and Post Weekends and helped the class understand the penetrating environments involved and impacting both them. Important aspects are:

PRE-Weekend:

Prayer
Make, be, bring a friend
Sponsoring
Team formation, building, & Development
Site Selection

POST-Weekend:

Prayer
Group reunion
Ultreyas
Grouping
Spiritual Direction

We were reminded of the Environment Rollo given on the weekend, which stresses, prayer and finding leaders within the environment. The first three items listed under PRE-Weekend all relate to penetrating environments.

Paul closed with prayer asking for our renewed and increased relationship with the Holy Spirit in all activities of VdC/Cursillo and that He blow away all unimportant issues and thoughts leaving only a desire in our hearts for His holy work.

Sponsorship Seminar

Sponsorship Seminar presented by Marilyn Taulbee of the Good News Community in South East Michigan and North West Ohio. Marilyn's community produced all their own material – none of it is from the National Organization.

Marilyn presents herself as a lovely, calm, pretty and sweet school teacher – complete with a hand held bell ringing a clear tone to bring the class to order. She gave us a short overview of what would be presented and the warned there would be “a quiz.” What fun!

The group was polled regarding how many of us had been sponsors for participants in a VdC/Cursillo weekend, how many of those participants had remained active in their worshiping congregations and how many continued to attend Ultreyas and participate in an accountability group.

Marilyn said she would teach us about caring for participants before, during and after the weekend.

A wonderful handout was provided at the end of the training that summarized everything. We were also privileged to watch a CD that each delegate will take home at the end of the conference.

Here are the highlights of Good News VdC Sponsorship:

Responsible

- Talk to God about man before talking to man about God.
- Pray.
- Evaluate your Fourth Day.

Sponsorship

- Study the environments around you.
 - Identify the natural leaders in the environment.
 - Make a friend and pray for clear guidance.
 - Participants should be baptized Christians, reasonably stable and mature.
- Talk to their Pastor about the weekend.

Values and Invitation

- Does your life reflect Christian values?
 - Evaluate your Fourth Day and the example you provide.
 - Be a friend and tell your story.
- Extend the invitation and let the Holy Spirit work

Participants

- Pray for your Participant
- Be aware of your responsibilities before the weekend, during and after the weekend.
- RSVP – a catchy acronym – a lot of work to help us be better sponsors – a yogurt and fruit treat only a few calories and a great sweet taste. Hope all of you got to try it. Of course everyone at the seminar got 100% on the quiz – thank you Marilyn! De Colores!

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