

# Connecting National and Local Secretariats

# CONEXIONES

Volume 28  
Number 4  
Dec. 2010

**Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, VdC**

**NLS 2011 Annual Meeting: July 28 — 31, 2011**  
**Hosted by North Carolina**

*The Host Committee of Western North Carolina  
Cordially invites you to attend the  
2011 National Lutheran Secretariat Annual Meeting  
at Queens University of Charlotte, NC.  
July 28 – 31, 2011*

Western North Carolina recently enjoyed hosting the NLS Board in Charlotte at Queens University of Charlotte. The Board worked very hard and accomplished much over the 3 days.

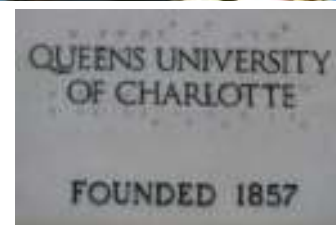
Since we will be celebrating the 25th year of our name change from Cursillo to Via de Cristo, the chosen theme for 2011 annual meeting in July 28-31 is "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). It was chosen because it clearly is representative of the "Way of Christ" which the Spanish phrase Via de Cristo means.

Our host committee team is forming additional committees under the guidelines given by our National Secretariat. Some of these committees have already been meeting and planning events for next year. Additional ones will be meeting on a regular basis, beginning early next year, and will work hard to insure that all of the details necessary for the NLS Annual Meeting next July are handled.

We expect to have the forms available for your registration early next year. Watch for the announcement in *Conexiones*, make your travel arrangements, and then register early for the best pricing.

We look forward to having you join us in North Carolina this coming July for some good ole' southern hospitality. Plan to join us for this special anniversary year and celebrate with your brothers and sisters of the 4th day community from all over the country. Sharing ideas with each other proves to be invaluable for all in attendance.

God loves you and so do we,  
Lois and Larry Witham



## CONEXIONES

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**NLS Executive Committee**

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**2011 Host Committee Chairs**

**2011 NLSAM in Charlotte, NC**  
**Queens University of Charlotte - July 28-31**  
Larry and Lois Witham  
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National Lutheran Secretariat  
**Conexiones-on-the-web**  
**E-Mail Notification Request Form**

**E-Mail Notification - [jhrnlsvdc@aol.com](mailto:jhrnlsvdc@aol.com)**

**Please notify me by E-Mail when the latest edition of Conexiones has been posted on the NLS Web Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: & State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Secretariate: \_\_\_\_\_

Position on Secretariate: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

*Write in large letters - be very clear, computers rely on EXACT information*

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**CONEXIONES**

Volume 28  
Number 4  
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**Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, VdC**

**CONEXIONES** is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 97,500 who have participated in 48 movements across the U.S. Via de Cristo is a Lutheran expression of Cursillo®, a renewal movement developed within the Roman Catholic Church in the late 1940s. The Lutheran movement had its beginning in Florida and Iowa in 1972. The purpose of this publication is to inform all members of each NLS affiliated secretariat, Lutheran Bishops and District Presidents about the activities of the National Lutheran Secretariat and its affiliated secretariats. Subscriptions to the above named positions are free. If you know one of the above is not receiving **CONEXIONES**, call a member of the board at the numbers listed on the side.

**Subscriptions** for the general public are \$6.00 per year, and are available by sending your name, complete mailing address, and phone numbers to **CONEXIONES** Treasurer, **Steve Barnett**, 5091 Oley Turnpike Road Reading, PA 19606 or contact him at; [610-301-9900](tel:610-301-9900) (C)

**Material for CONEXIONES:** If you have information for **CONEXIONES**, items, requests and/or information, address corrections, changes or additions - even inspirational bits - send them to the **CONEXIONES** Editor at the address on the side. **DEADLINES:** January 15th, April 15th, August 15th, and November 15th.

## V.P. OF OUTREACH REPORT

### How Can the VP of Outreach Help Your Secretariat?

Since the National Meeting in July, I have had the opportunity to speak with over a dozen different secretariats about successes and challenges they have faced over the years. I am amazed at the leadership talent and strong disciples we have in our community! Each of you has a servant heart and a desire to share what Christ means to you. It's because of you that our Via de Cristo movement continues to grow.

That being said, I get the sense many secretariats feel as if the challenges they face are unique or something only they are facing because of their geography, demographics, or some other criteria. The interesting fact is I have yet to hear of a challenge that at least three other secretariats are also facing or have faced in the past.

All of the secretariats received a tool called the "Wellness Checklist". If you haven't seen it, please go to: <http://www.viadecristo.org/resources/index.htm> and download a copy. I have heard from approximately 10 secretariats that have sat down with their leadership team and did an honest assessment of their community. It's important that this "Wellness Checklist" isn't completed by only one or two members of your community. You truly need the opinions of many. Whether you use the "Wellness Checklist" or some other method of assessing your communities strengths and weaknesses is important to put a plan in place that will leverage your strengths and overcome your weaknesses. This is where I believe the VP of Outreach might be helpful.

I am blessed to speak with many VdC Secretariat leaders every month. I have the pleasure of listening to their ideas to grow and strengthen their communities. I also get the opportunity to listen to plans that didn't work well and understand the roadblocks that may be preventing a community to expand or take the next step. The sharing of best practices is an under-leveraged, yet proven method for success.

The dues and donations you pay to the National Lutheran Secretariat have enabled me to visit some of the Secretariats, participate in their Secretariat Meetings and attend their Ultreyas. During these meetings I am able to listen to the concerns of the local secretariat as well as hear new ideas for growth. For example, did you know that we have one community that just had a fall weekend with SEVEN pastors who were all pilgrims! Can you imagine having seven new pastors who have a heart for Via de Cristo! What did they do to find seven pastors? What are their next steps to keep them engaged? Call me and I will put you in contact with that secretariat and share with you what I learned on my recent trip.

Your contribution to the Outreach fund has also enabled me to provide financial support to struggling secre-

tariats that are not able to attend the annual NLS meeting or to offset other critical expenses. When a request for financial support comes to me, the NLS Board and I first assess how what the requesting secretariat is doing to financially support themselves. It's important that we are good stewards with the resources God has granted us to use. Therefore, we like to see all secretariats have on-going fundraisers to support their movement. Some secretariats have fundraising down to a science and they are able to offer scholarships to pilgrims and team members attending the weekend. Some communities are so successful that they give money to local charities and use the donation as an outreach activity.

As you come to the end of this calendar year, I encourage you to sit down with your community and talk about your plans for next year. What is God calling your community to do? Is He calling you to find 7-10 new pastors in 2011? Is He calling you to engage 10 new churches that are not active in VdC? Or might He be calling you to raise enough money that you can donate to a new secretariat just getting started in their mission. Now is the time to pray and discern what God is expecting from your VdC Community.

Always know that as the VP of Outreach, I am here to listen, encourage and to support your plans to continue the mission work God has called each of us to do. I hope to hear from you and maybe I'll be invited to come and be part of your next Secretariat meeting.

God loves you and so do I,  
Steve Giolda  
Vice President of Outreach  
[sgiarda@cox.net](mailto:sgiarda@cox.net)



## NLS Board Minutes — Mid-Year Meeting

Friday October 22, 2010

Tracy opened the Mid-Year meeting in Charlotte, NC at 1:10 p.m. on Friday, October 22, 2010. Pr. Doug had a devotion and led in prayer.

Present: Tracy Schmidlin, Pr. Doug Givan, Steve Gielda, Carolyn Hawkins, Steve Barnett, Katie Sis-tar, Diane Purcell and Judy Laabs-Foss.

Pr. Doug provided copies to the Board of the Fourth Day Devotion Booklet he has been working on.

The Board discussed technology use at our national meetings. We need to do what is necessary to have quality productions of the seminars, keynote speakers and forum leaders.

We discussed the difficulty of moving ahead with the plans for a National Coordinator. We need to set up a foundation to hold the money for an endowment for the position. We need to have a beginning fund of \$25,000 and will need to raise 1½ million dollars to continuously fund the salary for the National Coordinator position. We discussed what other Fourth Day groups are doing to fund their coordinators. We need a paid position for continuity as we grow larger.

We discussed how to obtain available funds. NLS can be a designated recipient of United Way. There are different ways that Thrivent can help. *Carolyn moved that the Board allow Thrivent to set up a table with brochures and be a presence for awareness purposes at the July 2011 NLS meeting. Katie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

Diane stated that we need a legal corporate address where the IRS, attorneys and others can contact us. *Diane moved that our corporate address be listed as it is listed with the Secretary of the State of Minnesota. Pr. Doug 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

The Board discussed best practices to compile for the Red Book which is a corporate book and will hold important documents and resolutions and the information on

policies and procedures.

*Doug moved that we accept the minutes from the September 13 Teleconference. Steve. G. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

Steve B. reported on the budget. *Carolyn moved that we accept the budget report. Steve G. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

We discussed a problem with getting receipts from the post office so the cost of mailing the Conexiones could be properly paid.

John Bradford sent a report from the Distribution Center. There is a Braille book available for \$15.00. He wants to make various materials available on the web as well.

Jim Ryan, Data Base Coordinator, sent information that new spam laws were causing a problem with sending out the many e-mails and Conexiones as we send out. Due to website issues the notification e-mail to all recipients for the Sept., 2010 newsletter did not get mailed out. Jim is working on solving the problem.

Diane had paper work on a 2004 Charities report that Tracy and Larry Witham needed to sign. She named the secretariats that do not yet have a 501(c)3 status. Steve B. will send a letter to them regarding the importance of that.

Carolyn went over the 2010 NLS Meeting Final Reports and evaluations that she had summarized for us. There were 187 people on the registration list for MN NLS. NC wants to go green and not use so much paper as in the past. We discussed ways to help people have information ahead of time for the NLS meeting and the possibility of having the small groups smaller to have better discussion to mirror a reunion group.

We recessed for supper at 5:50 p.m. We met again at 7:00 p.m.

Diane let us know that she and Deb Grzywinski are meeting on Monday, October 25 with the liaison from Northwestern College to finalize the billing from the July National Lutheran Secretariat Meeting. Then

the final financial report will be worked out.

*Pr. Doug moved that the \$100 expense check which Bishop Chil-strom returned be sent to a charity of his choice. Carolyn 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

The Board discussed various aspects of the History Book which is being compiled for distribution in Charlotte at the 2011 meeting. We sent ideas and suggestions to Ron Millard.

We discussed locating early members and past officers of NLS. We would like to have as many special guests as possible come to the anniversary celebration in Charlotte. We plan to have earlier and more announcements inviting everyone to attend the NLS meeting in Charlotte next July 28-31.

The Board spent much time on planning a tentative schedule for next year's annual meeting, and they set the fees needed.

We recessed at 10:15 p.m. Pr. Doug closed with prayer.

Saturday October 23, 2010

The Executive Board and two appointed Board members met with twenty members of the Host Team from Western North Carolina in Trexler Student Center at Queens University at 9:20 a.m. on Saturday October 23. The Board and Host Team introduced themselves. Pr. Doug led in a devotion and prayer. Tracy shared information regarding hosting with the group. Judy Laabs-Foss read Ministry Versus Job, and Carolyn Hawkins led in a communication team building activity.



Amanda Taylor, the Director of Facilities, met with all of us and

guided the group on a tour of the beautiful campus. Carolyn and Tracy had seen the buildings the day before and had suggestions for the way the different sized rooms and buildings could be used effectively. We looked at technological needs and ways to facilitate the use of all the possible rooms and buildings. The Board and Host Team met in small groups in the cafeteria for lunch and discussion of different aspects of hosting.



The Board then returned to the hotel meeting room at 2:20 p.m. We discussed the college tour and the ease of getting from place to place. We discussed the ways of using the dining facility and the other rooms, the seating of delegates in Dana Auditorium and methods for better quality taping of our speakers in the various locations.

The dates for our anniversary years are the following:

**1972** – First Lutheran weekend. 40 years to 2012.

**1981** – Established National Lutheran Secretariat. 30 years to 2011.

**1986** – Lutheran Cursillo name changed to Via de Cristo. 25 years to 2011.

The Board sent a letter acknowledging the withdrawal of the Arizona Lutheran Cursillo from the National Lutheran Secretariat. The NLS will miss them and should the Arizona Secretariat reverse their decision, they will be welcomed back.

We reread and discussed the NLS Constitution. We noted the constitution states that each secretariat shall send at least one delegate to the annual meeting. We had 12 secretariats that had no one in attendance last year.

Due to website issues the notification e-mail to all recipients for the Sept., 2010 newsletter did not get emailed out.

The Board recessed for supper at 5:30 p.m. Larry and Lois Witham kindly hosted supper for the Board at their home.

The Board met back at the hotel at 8:00 p.m.

The registration fees were set by the Board.

*Steve G. moved that we place on our registration form that the registration fee is \$200 per person with an early bird special of a 10% discount) if registered by May 1, 2011. Carolyn 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.* This means that early bird registrations would be \$180.00.

*Steve G. moved that the special guest registration form shows a registration fee of \$180 with a \$20.00 deduction as an early bird discount if registered by March 1, 2011. Carolyn 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

*Carolyn moved that the board pays the difference between \$200 and the actual registration fee paid by the special guests. Steve G. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

*Carolyn moved that the remuneration for the special guests' subsidy be eliminated in the event that the Host Committee does not attempt to do community fundraising. Steve G. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

Board members are going to try to contact Charter members and past board members requesting them to attend next year's annual meeting for the anniversary celebration.

The Board reviewed the Constitution and the job descriptions of the officers. The dues structure for secretariats will be added to the agenda for 2011 Annual Meeting.

*Judy moved the Mid-Year meeting be closed. Carolyn 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.*

Meeting closed with prayer by Pr. Doug at 11:50 p.m., October 23, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Sistar  
National VdC Secretary



## NLS Distribution Report

### ***NLS Annual Meeting 2010 Presentations Now Available!***

The NLS 2010 Annual Meeting presentations are now available on DVD Video Discs. These can be ordered from the NLS Distribution Center by visiting this link:

[www.viadecristo.org/Formsite/nlsdc.html](http://www.viadecristo.org/Formsite/nlsdc.html)

which is also the place to order other VDC materials you may be needing.

There are two 2010 Meeting DVD disks available. The first contains the three seminars and the keynote speech. The second disc contains the two forums, the presentation called "Life of a Church Pew", and three recordings of worship service.

The discs are \$7.00 each and are in standard DVD Format, viewable on computers and also on home entertainment equipment. These items are at the bottom of the order form.

In addition I have recently purchased more Braille Pilgrim's Guides at a good price which allowed me to reduce our selling price from \$15 to \$10 each. Order these on the same order form.

Please order your VDC items early, so I won't need to "Rush" your order.

Thank you,  
John Bradford  
National VdC Distribution Center



**SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Today as I type this our building has been used for several groups and events. I am glad for that because that is why our building is here, we are available for the community and I know that the other church buildings in town are the same way (policies do exist!).

Obviously, all church buildings are used on Sunday mornings and some on Saturday's and Wednesday's and so on. I've served or been a part of 5 church buildings in my ministry. I recall my home congregation in Fishers where the new "mega" building was so impressive, and I recall a relatively new building I once served in.

I will always treasure my thoughts and memories over my own congregation, before the new one was built, and how I think of that building. I have great memories of where I used to sit during worship, the room a men's Bible study met in and so on. I loved that building.

However, I know that a church is not a building. It's not bricks and mortar, espresso bars, big libraries and so on. The church is people! It is the body of Christ that gathers for worship and then is sent out to the world to share the Gospel Good News. The building will stay put, not go anywhere, we are the sent out ones to share God's love.

For those of you who do not have a church home today I know it can be intimidating to park in the lot and walk into an unknown building. Remember a church is not the building; it will be the people you find inside. I hope and pray wherever you attend, or visit, that the people there greet you and welcome you and love you just as you are! I once heard about a couple that chose their church by waiting in the parking lot to see how people interacted with each other on their way out of services!

Oh sure, the carpet will stand out, the colors will be noticeable, and the size of the sanctuary will contribute to how comfortable you are. But let that comfort be in the Lord and the love God has for YOU! Don't let a physical building be your guide for a church home, let God lead you, and let the people of God in a particular space and place tell you about that church.

A gentleman visited at our congregation last week (he had attended as a younger person) and he sat with both arms outstretched over his two sons. He looked so comfortable and relaxed. Be comfortable and relax...its God's House and no matter where you go, no matter who you are, no matter what the past, everyone is invited, welcomed, and loved! Visit a church today and see for yourself!

God Bless, Pastor Doug Givan  
National VdC Spiritual Director



**NLS ARCHIVIST / HISTORIAN REPORT**



DeColores and Greetings to All!

I am in the process of helping create a new NLS history booklet which will be distributed at the annual NLS meeting next year in North Carolina. When completed, this promises to be the best, most complete, and most current summary of all our secretariats and their history. But your cooperation is needed.

I have been contacting every secretariat to see if they wish to update what was in the previous booklet which was given out for our 25th anniversary. Secretariat lay directors: If by any chance I have missed YOUR secretariat, please let me know ASAP so I can make sure to include your latest information.

I hope to see a big turnout in Charlotte as we celebrate many milestones in our history. See you all there!

Ron Millard  
Archivist/Historian

# Palanca!!!

## Future weekends

Weekends for the next five months will be printed in this section. Check the Web for more updated information.

### 2011 WEEKENDS:

Jan. 2011 - Florida: **Sonshine VdC of South FL**, Men #105: Jan. 13-16, Send palanca to: Bonnie Freese 1150 Wren Ave. Miami Springs, FL 33166

Jan. 2011 - Minnesota: **Lutheran VdC of Minnesota**, Men #556: Jan. 20-13, & Women #557: Jan. 27-30, Send palanca to: Lenore Jesness 899 Sherwood Ave. St. Paul, MN 55106-1825

Jan. 2011 - So. Dakota: **So. Dakota Lutheran VdC** Men: Jan. 20-13, & Women #557: Jan. 27-30, Send palanca to: Margaret Svitak 86238 559th Ave. Randolph, NE 68771

Feb. 2011 - Minnesota: **Lutheran VdC of Minnesota**, Men #558: Feb. 17-20, & Women #559: Feb. 24-27, Send palanca to: Lenore Jesness 899 Sherwood Ave. St. Paul, MN 55106-1825

March 2011 - Colorado: **VdC of the Rockies**, Mixed #3: Mar. 3-6, Send palanca to: Loretta Hartten 5126 Alkire St, Arvada, CO 80002

March 2011 - Colorado: **Colorado VdC**, Men #33: Mar. 10-13 & Women #33: Mar. 10-13, Send palanca to: Audrey Hupp-Ellis 2755 Lavarie Dr. Colorado Springs, CO 80917

March 2011 - MO: **Rivers Edge VdC**, Men #16: Mar. 10-13, Send palanca to: Laurie Dunnette 2720 Stone Valley Dr. Maryville, IL 62062

March 2011 - Florida: **Gold Coast VdC of So. FL**, Men: Mar. 17-20 & Women Mar. 31 - April 3, Send palanca to: Ron Pusins 3160 NW 67 Ct. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

March 2011 - Florida: **Sonshine VdC of South FL**, Women #104: Mar. 17-20, Send palanca to: Bonnie Freese 1150 Wren Ave. Miami Springs, FL 33166

March/April 2011 - MI/OH: **Good News VdC**, Men #48: Mar. 31 - April 3, & Women #48: April 7-10, Send palanca to: Karen Warsop 5633 E. Grand River Ave. Howell, MI 48843

March/April 2011 - Tennessee: **Tennessee VdC**, Mixed #26: Mar. 31 - Apr 3, Send palanca to: Bill McComb 21 Meadowlark Circle Fairfield Glade, TN 39558

March/April 2011 - VA/MD/DC: **Rainbow VdC**, Men #57 Mar. 31 - Apr 3, & Women #61: Apr. 7-10, Send palanca to: David Russell PO Box 450, Bladensburg, MD 20710

April 2011 - Illinois: **Prairie Sunshine VdC of Central Illinois**, Men #11 Apr. 7-10, Send palanca to: Greg & Anna Bergschneider 127 Westminster Jacksonville, IL 62650

April/May 2011 - Illinois: **Heart of Illinois VdC**, Mixed Apr. 28 - May 1, Send palanca to: Evelyn Biegler 2717 N. Elmcroft Dr. Peoria, IL 61604

April/May 2011 - Washington: **VdC of Western WA**, Coed #7: Apr. 28 - May 1, Send palanca to: Jan Ozias 23609 NE 25th Way Sammamish, WA 98074

May 2011 - Florida: **Sonbeam VdC**, Men #57: May 12-15, & Women #57: May 19-22, Send palanca to: Linda Barnard 4700 46th Ave. No. #11 St. Petersburg, FL 33714

May 2011 - Minnesota: **Lutheran VdC of Minnesota**, Men #562: May 12-15, & Women #563: May 19-22, Send palanca to: Lenore Jesness 899 Sherwood Ave. St. Paul, MN 55106-1825

July 2011 - Florida: **Sonshine VdC of So. FL**, Men #106: July 7-10, Send palanca to: Bonny Freese 1150 Wren Ave. Miami Springs, FL 33166

July 2011 - Illinois: **Prairie Sunshine VdC of Central Illinois**, Women #12 July 14-17, Send palanca to: Greg & Anna Bergschneider 127 Westminster Jacksonville, IL 62650

July 2011 - Minnesota: **Lutheran VdC of Minnesota**, Men #564: 14-17, & Women #565: July 21-24, Send palanca to: Lenore Jesness 899 Sherwood Ave. St. Paul, MN 55106-1825

**See NLS Palanca Web page for current information of 2011 weekends.**



Queen's University in Charlotte, North Carolina



NLSAM July 28-31, 2011

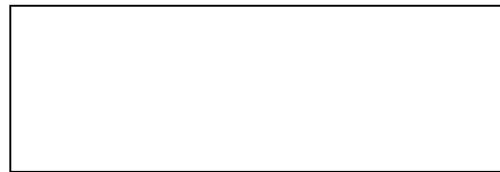


Judy Laabs-Foss  
4495 Margaret Street  
St. Paul, MN 55110-3773

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John Bradford, Director Phone: (801) 561-0122  
E-Mail: [joab@xmission.com](mailto:joab@xmission.com)

**Annual Meeting Items Available**

All the material that was available at the 2010 Annual Meeting along with video tapes can be obtained from the Distribution Center. Order forms for all NLS materials can be found on the web page.

**IRS UPDATE**

As was discussed at the financial seminar at the 2010 Annual Meeting, hundreds of thousands of 501(c)(3) non-profits had their tax-exempt status revoked on May 17, 2010. This includes several Via de Cristo communities. The IRS has issued procedures to be completed and filed no later than October 15, 2010 in order to reinstate the organization's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. The requirements are available on the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) under the Charities & Non-Profits tab.

The list of revoked organizations is listed at the IRS website. If you are involved in another non-profit organization, you may want to check the list for that organization as well and alert them of the situation.

In reviewing the IRS website, it was discovered that 14 Via de Cristo Secretariats do **not** have their 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. Please review the article in the December 2008 Conexiones Newsletter for the importance of obtaining the tax exempt status. If you need assistance with any of these issues, Please contact Diane Purcell, NLS Financial Advisor, [dspurcell@msn.com](mailto:dspurcell@msn.com)

Visited our *New Web Site* Lately?



[www.viadechristo.org](http://www.viadechristo.org)

*Webmaster: Larry Conway*

**CONEXIONES-ON-THE-WEB**

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