

**National Lutheran Secretariat for Via de Cristo
2012, November 16-18 NLS Mid-Year Meeting Minutes
North Palm Beach, Florida**

Friday, November 16, 2012

The NLS mid-year meeting began at 1:00PM on Friday, 16 November 2012, with lunch in a meeting room at Faith Lutheran Church in North Palm Beach, Florida, followed by devotions and communion led by Pastor John. Present were Steve Barnett, Pr. John Bradford, Ed Broestl, Steve Gielda, Carolyn Hawkins, Judy Laabs-Foss, Diane Purcell, Magdala Ray, and Nancy Peterson. Our devotional thoughts focused on the unity we have in Christ Jesus and His prayer for us that we work for His kingdom in that unity.

Magdala led the next activity, an exploration of the application of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) to strengthening relationships within the EB and the entire NLS. Through recognition and awareness of the types represented on the EB, our own stress triggers, and the coping mechanisms available to us, more effective communication and teamwork can result.

Ed asked the members of the board to provide their reports, including planned activities for the remainder of the year, any joys, worries or concerns, and a brief summary of their activities since the NLSAM in Denver, CO, July 2012:

VP – Administration: Carolyn’s activities since the NLSAM have included working closely with the 2013 NLSAM HC, where there is great evidence that the Holy Spirit is active.

VP – Outreach: Steve G. reported that he has been working with the Regional Coordinators to launch the training program; the goal is to have one program done in each region by July. A December 2nd teleconference is planned. He has also published a book.

Financial Advisor: Diane has been addressing technicalities of trademarks and copyrights. She assisted Sonrise VdC in WI in setting up their 501(c)3 status. She has also been working with Rainbow VdC to resolve an involuntary dissolution due to neglect in sending in the annual report to IRS, and she is revising her job description. She will continue to seek ways to communicate her willingness and availability to help local secretariats.

Secretary: Magdala has been working on the action items list, creating an “open” and “closed” list for each calendar year. She has accepted the call to serve as assistant LD for Gold Coast VdC beginning in January 2013.

Newsletter Editor: Judy has published the fall newsletter. With the new January 2013 requirement of bar codes on the newsletter, she questioned whether they should continue to be printed as hard copies or distributed as links in emails. The newsletter’s emphasis on love and commitment to the VdC method, the joy of sponsoring, and the strengthening and encouragement of the 4th Day community may be more effectively communicated electronically.

Executive Director: Nancy has sent the updated database to Rick. She attended the international Emmaus conference, learning that they have dealt with many of the same issues we are facing. She also visited the two WI secretariats – Northern Light and Sunrise. She feels that the ED needs to be out and traveling more to meet with the local secretariats. She is revamping the survey and preparing it for distribution in January.

Treasurer: Steve B. distributed all financial reports to the board via email. He sees great benefits in our continued prayers and contacts with the local secretariats. His concerns include finalizing plan for the funding of the ED position, locations for the 2014 and 2015 NLSAMs, and whether the information provided at the 2012 NLSAM has been passed on to the next leaders in the local secretariats. His joys include the completion of a local weekend in which the pilgrims grew in their walk and demonstrated much unity in Christ at the Ultreya.

Spiritual Director: Pr. John has written a newsletter article and has provided his thoughts on reading material which could be suggested during a Study rollo. He is still learning this position and loves the VdC movement.

President: Ed is continuing his internship training in the trauma hospital. He praises God for the VdC movement and the leadership group that God has put together to focus not on us but on God's ministry.

The group took a brief break from 4:30-4:45pm.

Resuming the meeting, Ed asked the group to provide input regarding the prayer partner system employed this past year. There was discussion concerning the “busyness” of switching partners every month and the possibility of working on quarters or even longer to establish relationships and closer bonds through prayer and communication. One suggestion was to have regional quarterly prayer partners.

A general discussion was held concerning our goals for local secretariats after the 2013 NLSAM – an increased, deeper connection with the NLS, improved relationships, and the ED position solidified in both concept and application to their needs. Nancy noted that she has seen evidence of trust and respect being strengthened in the relationships she has been building with the local secretariats. The ED position is aiding the understanding that the NLS is more than just an advisory group and that we have a great deal to offer each secretariat.

Further discussion focused on the reasons for local secretariats to commit to attending the NLSAM, the responsibility of the delegates, and the signing of the constitution every three years for consistency and recommitment. The group agreed that one of the goals for the 2013 NLSAM was that every person present will understand that the ED is accessible, available and knowledgeable for questions, information, conversation – a resource for every secretariat. This effort will provide credibility – “one face, one place,” which will also be communicated in Ed's monthly “Musings” to the LDs.

The board took a break for supper at 6pm and resumed meeting at 7:45pm.

The meeting resumed with Ed leading a prayer of thanks for the meal and fellowship with the HC co-chairs, prayers for the weekends being held – North TX 86 and MN Co-ed, and concluded with the group praying “Come, Holy Spirit.”

The next agenda item was the planning and scheduling of the 2013 NLSAM. The 2012 NLSAM focused on strengthening the 4th Day. Carolyn provided evaluation form feedback. The transportation, registration, downtime, and “learning and growing” were rated highly, while the LD dialogue, food service, dormitories and Back to Basics forum received low scores. There were positive comments about the business meetings being well-organized and timely, the emphasis on The Essentials, and the “Rediscover, Recommit” campaign being a step in the right direction. Suggestions for improvement included providing printed materials earlier, utilizing just one trained technology person for all business meeting applications, omitting oral regional reports by asking regions to submit written bullets, finding ways to avoid one person dominating small group discussions, and having representatives of the NLS board be present at regional meetings. Carolyn is revising the NLSAM HC manual; Diane suggested updating the manual with a health position to monitor older attendees’ medical needs.

It was agreed by the group that the emphases for 2013 included bolstering ultreyas, building reunion groups, and sponsorship, and the group also determined that the benefits of making connections, sharing and building relationships outweighed the expense of an annual meeting.

The group also noted that the mid-year meeting should not be scheduled again on the weekend before Thanksgiving. However, the idea of holding a local Ulteya in conjunction with the mid-year meeting should be encouraged for every HC.

The meeting adjourned for the night with prayer at approximately 9:30pm.

Saturday, November 17, 2012

The board began the day's meetings with devotions and prayers led by Ed at 7:45am, followed by breakfast from 8-8:30am. Carolyn provided assignments for the working lunch meeting with the HC: Pr. John and Magdala with SD, Worship, and Music; Ed with Palanca and Facilities; Steve G with Hospitality; Nancy with Meal Liaison and Transportation; Steve B and Diane with Treasurer, Fundraising/Publicity; and Judy with Communications, IT, and AV/Sound. Carolyn also provided the group with guidelines for their discussion with the HC sub-committees.

The group discussed the idea of providing materials electronically prior to the meeting. It was decided to provide notebooks. It may be that in the future the registration form could include a choice of options for receiving the materials onsite or via links to the website. It was also noted that the EB will be prompt in forwarding materials to the HC; the following deadlines were set:

- Ed will send a reminder to the EB members of materials due on June 16th.
- EB members send all reports and documents for the notebook to Carolyn by June 30th, 2013.
- Carolyn will forward all materials for notebook to HC no later than July 10th.

The board next discussed the registration costs and deadlines. It was noted that Transportation, Registration and Housing should be ready for X number of people on Wednesday and X number of people on Thursday. Likewise, they should be ready for X number departing on Saturday and then again Sunday morning. The numbers in the manual may be low. Bags with notebooks should be ready by a certain set time on Thursday (perhaps 10am). Pr. John suggested that we prepare the HC for expecting a certain number of people on Wednesday.

At 9:15am, the group traveled to the Palm Beach Atlantic University campus in West Palm Beach, the site of the 2013 NLSAM.

After a 10AM tour of the Palm Beach Atlantic University campus, the site of the 2013 NLSAM, the board and the Host Committee met on the second floor of the student center campus. Present were the board members – Ed Broestl, Carolyn Hawkins, Steve Barnett, Steve Gielda, Magdala Ray, Pastor John Bradford Diane Purcell, Judy Laabs-Foss, and Nancy Peterson – and the Host Committee – Beverly Abt and Watson Ray (Co-Chairs), John and Penny Klein, Dottie Schwartz and Tamre Hammer (Hospitality), Bill Steffen (Transportation), Janet Vigilante (Registration), Katie Sistar, Jonette Bishop, and Chip Spear (Communications), Michael Warnock (Facilities), Tom and Jeanne Scott (Worship), Susie Dowd (Secretary), Tedd Smith (Palanca), Tom Accola (Emergency Coordinator), Brenda Accola (Meal Liaison), Lori Deibel (Volunteers and Hospitality), Larry and Jeanne Schone (Gold Coast LD and Music), Janet Cunningham (Music), Pr. Gerry Olsen and Deaconess Kathy McCoy (SDs).

Pr. Gerry opened the meeting with prayer. Carolyn led the meeting by first asking all present to share their name, position on the NLS board or the HC, a special moment from an NLSAM attended or a VdC weekend, and a special gift they would be sharing as part of the group.

The HC and board members enjoyed a working lunch in the campus cafeteria, where the NLSAM meals will be served. Carolyn assigned all the meeting participants to specific tables for discussion and Q&A regarding the weekend in July. At the conclusion of the lunch meeting, the joint HC and board portion was adjourned.

Both the HC and the board then returned to separate meetings at Faith Lutheran Church in North Palm Beach.

At 3pm, the board resumed its planning and discussion of the theme for the 2013 NLSAM, which will be “Springs of Living Water for Our Journey,” reflecting and expanding the 2012 4th Day strengthening theme moving from the experience into the Journey. It was decided to invite Pr. Al Sager to present the keynote address. The group discussed the need for an emphasis on preparing ourselves to sponsor. Steve G suggested the term “embracing irresistible sponsorship.” The group also discussed the concept of apostolic action in nurturing the cursillistas who have completed a weekend into discipleship and leadership in the 4th Day community and in their home congregations. One of the best practices mentioned was table leaders conducting a 30-50-90 day “touch” of their table participants after a weekend.

The group also examined the theme from a 4MAT perspective, around the natural cycle of learning, utilizing “The 4th Day Journey” as the concept, “Seeking, Inviting, and Nurturing Potential/Future Leaders” as the topic, with both seen through the “lens” of “Strengthening the 4th Day.” It was noted that this is a direct connection to the Environment rollo – “You have changed, but the world has not.” We have a responsibility to help cursillistas not fall back into their “old” ways. Pr. John noted that we are leading a “Reformation of VdC!”

The group also reviewed a suggestion made by HC SD Pr. Gerry Olsen of asking Pr. Al Sager to share with the NLSAM attendees his application of Scripture to the weekend structure and experience. Pr. Gerry suggested the tripod as a way to organize the NLSAM presentations –

Piety: Directing our lives to God as examples for those potential/future leaders;

Study: How Scriptures relate to the weekend in order to understand better the experience to which we are inviting potential/future leaders; and

Apostolic Action: Sponsorship to develop potential/future leaders.

Carolyn noted that piety, study and action are the foundation of the journey, making this approach very applicable. Perhaps adding a question about whether NLSAM participants are in a reunion group could be added to the registration form. More discussion focused on the journey. Created by God, baptized into faith by God’s grace, made a child of God – the

beginning of the journey which precedes the VdC experience in which many pilgrims come to understand the ideal of a life lived in grace and the calling to different paths of ministry. It is the NLS's job to support the VdC experience as it is presented in the local secretariats by equipping the saints with tools for effective apostolic action resulting in a strengthening of the 4th Day for every community.

The group discussed a variety of ways to carry out theme, concept, and topic through the above-mentioned "lens" by asking Pr. Al Sager to include piety in his keynote address on Thursday and then lead a Friday forum on study followed by a Saturday forum on apostolic action. Pr. John would then join these areas and summarize on Saturday evening or Sunday morning. A sample schedule was sketched.

The group then discussed the current prayer partner plan between the board and the LDs and the possibility of rotating prayer partners quarterly rather than monthly. It was agreed that the transition to quarterly prayer partners is appropriate. Current prayer partners will continue changing next in February 2013.

The next discussion on the agenda concerned the protection and proper use of the NLS logo and trademark. It was agreed that Ed, Diane and Rick will work together to provide guidance to the distribution center on how to protect NLS documents and to develop a memo of agreement for local secretariats to use the term "Via de Cristo" on Facebook and websites. Ed and Diane will also work on a format for all NLS policies – existing and new – including those for vendors, copyright, travel, and trademark and logo. This format will include a written purpose, definition(s), policy, procedures, references and attachments. Diane will review old board minutes in order to extract and preserve all standing resolutions, which by law must be preserved and accessible.

At 5:54pm, Ed and Steve G signed the Minnesota Charities Report statement, the summary of which read, "The undersigned execute the document on behalf of the organization. We have assumed responsibility and will continue to determine matters of policy and will continue to supervise the finances of the operation." This document is required annually because the NLS is registered for financial purposes in Minnesota. Steve B signed the required annual tax report documents earlier in the afternoon.

At 6:00pm, the group broke for supper and an Ultreya hosted by Gold Coast VdC at the same location.

At 8:20pm, the meeting resumed with the prayer to the Holy Spirit. The next agenda item was constitution and bylaws changes, many of which were minor but necessary changes in grammar, length of time, and means of notification to the body of NLS. As part of this discussion and work, it was noted that the group meeting has erroneously been called a "board" when it should be called an "Executive Committee" (EC). Henceforth, this group will be referred to as the EC in minutes and other written documents.

The meeting adjourned at 10pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Magdala Ray, Secretary