

Connecting National and Local Secretariats

CONEXIONES



Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, UdC

Volume 17, Number 3

SPRING Edition

May 1999



Web Pages for Saginaw

Here is the Lutheran Via de Cristo of Central Michigan's web site for the upcoming annual meeting. We have maps and directions to both the motel and the meeting sites on the web site. Three URLs are:

NLS Annual Meeting:

<http://users.mdn.net/jrbedite/lvccm.htm>.

Business web site:

<http://users.mdn.net/jrbedite/editech.htm>

Church web site:

<http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/homerumc/>

Jim Birch

Annual Meeting Seminars

We're starting to get serious about planning for our seminars for Saginaw. Presently, we anticipate having three seminars Friday afternoon. They would begin at 1, 2, and 3pm and last approximately fifty minutes. Each of the seminars (currently, "Ultreya," "Group Reunion," and "Authentic Palanca" would be repeated in each of the three time slots.

Saturday morning seminars would be at 10am and 11am - again for fifty minutes. "Mixed weekends" and "VdC as a tool of the Church" would be repeated. Ellie Henning's Hosting Seminar will be from 10am to 12pm.

Committee times are scheduled concomitantly. Yes, this dual scheduling may turn out to be tricky, but the Executive Board believes the risk to be worth taking, since our increased number of attendees has challenged us to provide a more diverse experience at the annual meeting.

Looking Back

I had wondered what it would be like — looking back at seven years on the NLS Executive Board. What would I be remembering? The answer is faces. Faces. I'm surprised at myself. I thought it would be numbers (# of new secretariats) or achievements (website). No, it's the faces.

I close my eyes and see the faces of Max and Judy. Max and Judy and I had great plans for meetings and sharings, but I ruined those plans by getting sick. Their faces, though — caring for me as a stranger away from home. They never groused about how I had spoiled their plans.

There's the face of Pastor Bill. My son had called to tell me that his mother-in-law was continuing to have post-surgical complications. My son's father-in-law was running himself ragged driving several hours daily to be with his ailing wife. There was the face of Pastor Bill — opening his home to this man in need.



Randy Mullin, NLS President

There's the face of Tom. Tom represents a fellow Fourth Day movement — a movement to which I might have once felt adversarial. Tom's face comes to mind, because I have learned to respect and love this brother in Christ.

There's the face of Debbie. That beautiful, smiling face that served us tirelessly at our annual meeting. Early in the morning and late at night, her sparkling eyes and ever-present smile that personifies cheerful servanthood.

And the face of Beverly. That silver-haired charmer who loves the Lord and gives so much to others. Beyond that she winks at me when I call her either "Old Lady" or "my girlfriend."

More faces — in fact, a sea of faces. Memorable faces. Loving faces. Physiognomies. Visages. Faces of those who have heard the message of the weekend: that we who have been graced are enkindled to become little Christ's in daily lives.

As I think about it, that's what is so special about my faces — they are each the face of Christ. Thanks for a great seven years.

In Christ's service, Randy

Mullin *Randy*

Inside Conexiones:

New Movement Outreach

page 3

Letter to Editor

page 3

SD, VP Admin, & TEC

page 4

Conference Minutes

pages 5 & 6

Ground

(Parable of Soils)

page 6

Palanca/TEC/Prison

page 7

Prison Ministry

page 8

National Lutheran Secretariat Executive Committee

President

Randall (Randy) Mullin
806 Hummingbird Court
Geneseo, IL 61254-1177
309-944-6904 (H)
309-944-5342 (O)
309-944-8192 (FAX)
randyvdc@geneseo.net

Spiritual Director

Rev. Richard Dow
First Lutheran Church
2115 Line Avenue
Shreveport, LA 71104
318-861-2944 (H)
318-221-9795 (O)
rdowsp@juno.com

Vice President of Administration

Debbie Speights
1336 12th Street NE
Hickory, NC 28601
828-327-6108 (H)
828-328-8101 (O)
828-328-8103 (FAX)
debs@abts.net

Vice President of Outreach

Doug Burrows
1102 Hepplewhite Street
Westerville, OH 43081-1118
614-882-8930 (H)
614-891-9991 (O)
800-726-9991 (O)
614-891-3558 (FAX)
dwbagcy@aol.com

Secretary

Myra Hogan
4250 NE 26th Terrace
Lighthouse Point, FL 33064-8054
954-784-0890 (H)
mydenhogan@aol.com

Treasurer

Philip H. Lustig, III
9937 Majorca Place
Boca Raton, FL 33434
561-487-2481 (H-O-FAX)
plustig3@gate.net

NLS Distribution Center

Jerry Vehrs, Director
101 Sherrie Lane
Woodbury, MN 55125-1135
612-738-3479 (H)

NLS Newsletter Editor

Rev. Carroll Lang
19903 225th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8473
515-576-6810 (H)
515-955-3579 (O)
800-214-1155 (NLS Fax-24 hrs)
cdlng@aol.com

Palanca Coordinator

Leona Fox
4 Wedman Way
Stafford, VA 22554
540-720-9694 (H)
thefoxes@mindspring.com

Web Page Coordinator

Oran Gough
825 Fortunegate Drive
Westerville, OH 43081-3521
614-899-1210 (H)
614-895-2600 (O)
OGOUGH@aol.com

Host Committee Chair

For 1999 Annual Meeting
Bob & Mary Ruppel (co-chair)
Les & Julie Miller (co-chair)
2526 Weigl Road (Miller's add)
Saginaw, MI 48609
517-781-2063 (H)
800-859-7331 (O)
517-781-4792 (FAX)
julie@Enc-1.com

Subscribing to Conexiones

Note to subscribers: the number in front of your name on the last page of Conexiones is the last issue included in your subscription. The numbers before the period are the volume number and the number following is the issue number. This issue is 17.3. If no numbers appear near your name, you are receiving a complimentary subscription to Conexiones as a secretariat member, ELCA bishop, or a leader in another movement or denomination.

Keep your copy of Conexiones intact. Please copy this form and use the copy to subscribe.

I wish to subscribe to Conexiones in order to keep abreast of what's happening in the Via de Cristo world of Cursillo®.

Enclosed is my check, number _____, dated _____, in the amount of \$6.00 for a one-year subscription (four seasonal issues) Make checks payable to: National Lutheran Secretariat.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Mail to: Conexiones Subscriptions
Rev. Carroll Lang
19903 225th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8473



Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, VdC

Volume 17, Number 3

May 1999

CONEXIONES is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 50,000 who have participated in 29 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, ELCA bishops and the Directors of the Division for Ministry and the Division for Ministry in Daily Life about the activities of the National Lutheran Secretariat and its affiliated secretariats. Subscriptions to the above are free. If you know one of the above is not receiving CONEXIONES, call 800-214-1155.

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 Editor, Carroll Lang, 19903 225th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501; 800-214-1155; or by e-mail: cdlng@aol.com (please note there's no "a").

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 above address. DEADLINES: January 1 for February (spring) edition; April 1 for May (summer) edition; August 15 for September (Annual Meeting) edition and December 1 for December (winter) edition.

Letters to the Editor

Randy, the NLS:

I attended Indiana men's VDC #29 this past weekend. As your website summary says, all the conversation in the world will not be able to describe your weekend. My life has taken on a whole new meaning. I think the weekend was only surpassed by my wedding day! Thank you to all of the people on the national level who make the organization of Via de Cristo weekends possible. God loves you and so do I!

Dave Henkel, King of Glory Lutheran Church
Carmel, IN

P.S. Based on the results of our weekend, I would imagine you receive letters like this all the time. Nonetheless, I felt I had to let you know how much VdC is appreciated.



New Movement Outreach

As you may recall I presented a forum at our last NLS meeting in Milwaukee about New Movement Outreach. The presentation was based upon the role of each secretariat and each of each of us as individuals in the work of outreach. The term "outreach" is easily misunderstood, I believe. I gave some definition to terms as a part of my presentation and would like to restate some of my thoughts.

First, let us consider the term "movement." We often talk of new movements, but I believe we need to understand that there is one movement. We call it Via de Cristo. All of our secretariats are of one movement. United in the work of the Via de Cristo with its message to renew intentional Christianity within each of our environments.

Secondly the term "secretariat." This is really a small group of people involved in the leadership of the work of the Via de Cristo movement in a geographical area. The size of the area can be large or small depending on the wish of the people involved.

The third word is "outreach." As we discuss outreach within the community of the Via de Cristo we think of creating new secretariats. This is the purpose of the committee that I am responsible for as set out in our constitution. But there is more. I also have revitalization and the health of existing secretariats. So I will define the word outreach to mean establishing and supporting secretariats. There is a better definition, however. Reaching out with the hand of Christ to support our Christian brothers and sisters by sharing this tool, Via de Cristo.

I believe my second definition is better because it makes all of us responsible for the work of outreach. I suggested that any secretariat that had a waiting list would probably do a better job if they created a new set of weekends to take care of the waiting line. I suggested that we could create secretariats in environments. Maybe a large employer or school or college, etc.

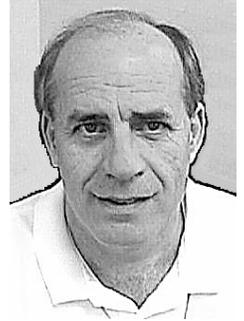
I have found over my term in office that people will generally travel a long distance for a period of time but then they want to stay close to home. This has caused a number of secretariats to divide and weaken as a group. I suggest that we consider the nature of people and find ways to bring them together in smaller areas. That way we involve more people in the work of the community so they do not feel detached. New people are very important, because they expand the ring of people touched by the movement. We must find a way to involve new people and to involve their friends. Try to hold more weekends as that will require more team experiences, involve new people more quickly, and generate excitement within us as we see more results from our effort. Add a person to your leadership team that will look for new opportunities to start another set of weekends or establish contacts with our sister movements to aid them. You will be surprised at the results.

We are having some new efforts come to fruition. New York will be with us at the summer gathering. We are hoping that Oklahoma-Arkansas and Western Montana will arrive as well. There are people already at work in all of these areas. We look forward to seeing some old friends as well.

If the National Lutheran Secretariat can help you in any way, or if you are not sure what to do about some of your efforts, please contact me. We have identified people across the country that can help. There are also several persons who will go on assignment, if necessary, to help. If you keep reaching out, outreach will do fine.

God Bless

Doug Burrows



National Lutheran Secretariat:

I am a inmate at M.P.C.F. in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. I just had the experience of a lifetime. I just got done with VIA-DE-CRISTO!! It will be something I care (carry) in my heart for a life time. The whole weekend moved me in so main (many) ways I could never put into words.

That brings me to why I am writing. For the last week the Holy Spirit has come to me in my dreams, telling me to go spread the Word! What could one do to become a Ordain Minister? I would like all the info you have on being a Ordain Minister. I don't know who to turn to for help! This is what the Lord what's (wants) me to do.

God be with you, John E. Gage, Brother in Christ.

1999 Host Committee

Co-Chairs: Bob/ Mary Ruppel

1416 Dover
Saginaw MI 48603
517-790-1716
E-mail soon

Co-Chairs: Les/Julie Miller

2526 Weigl
Saginaw Mi 48609
517-781-2063
Fax 517-781-4792
E-mail Julie@Enc-1.com

Registration

Linda Geiersbach
920 Timberwood Lane
Saginaw MI 48609
517-781-0906

PALANCA

Diana Halstead
3255 Barnett Lane
Bay City MI 48706
517-686-5487

De Colores: the Movie and the Life

Our family often makes a Friday night to the video store where we rent a video to watch sometime during the weekend. Our criteria: something with a *story*, with a minimum of gratuitous violence, and with dialogue that is okay for what may prosaically be called "mixed company."

Last time we came home with a video called "Pleasantville." You readers have your own high standards of what is okay and what is not in the video department. I'm neither reviewing nor rating movies in newsletter columns these days. What I'm saying is that after viewing this film, I see some things in a different way. Technically, the film is pretty interesting. The story is about a "gray" world coming to life by its inhabitants discovering some personal and collective truths while this gray world gradually fills with color (the technical feat that, I believe, won the film an Oscar).

The point: I hear this same theme in the talks that pilgrims give at the close of every weekend I've staffed, no exceptions. It's also been my personal experience. If "Pleasantville" is De Colores, the Movie," then Via de Cristo is "De Colores, the Life."

In the film, the young hero drives through a park where the trees are in the first bloom of spring. He and his girl are in a vintage



(maybe 1949) Buick convertible. As they drive through the park, the trees and grass come into full color as they advance through the transforming grays of the park. They bring the color with them by virtue of how they feel about each other, their day, and the world. This, I thought, was exactly how I felt during my weekend. And, I've seen the process repeated perhaps a hundred or more times.

Of course, a few of those times the "De Colores" transformation has been repeated in myself. In April I spent what I thought was a "gray" morning filling in for a speaker at a breakfast who couldn't come (family emergency), telling

people about Via de Cristo. This was going to be a big deal, and even though my wife volunteered to help me with the presentation (talk about saving graces!), I was sure God's plan for Via de Cristo in our community had taken a step backward. When those close to me found out I was disappointed, they said, "Don't worry, God has a reason for this, you'll see. God's still in control."

The "De Colores" moment came when I spoke about the Fourth Day, it's emphasis on study, piety, and action. Blank looks from my audience prompted me to move one step forward in my description. I mentioned the common small group practice of describing for others one's moment closest to Christ. Their faces lighted up (De Colores!). I described a recent such moment when I baptized a three-year-old boy, gently talking this fearful baptismal candidate through the sacramental application of water to allay his nervousness. It worked, but then I looked up to realize that, because of my microphone, the entire congregation had heard what I said. A casual act of caring had become joined to a sacramental gift: Christ was there in an unusual way.

At that point, I felt I had "colored in" the Via de Cristo process, as my audience had for me as well. They had assured me not to worry, for "God has a reason for everything." Our service is constantly given color and depth by these things.

Richard W. Dow

Pastor Dow

From the Vice President
of Administration

Putting Pen to Paper

Debbie Speights

Waiting to Hear From You!

As our Host Committee from the Lutheran Via de Cristo of Central Michigan are busy readying themselves for this year's Annual Meeting of the National Lutheran Secretariat to be held July 22-25 in Saginaw, Michigan, many of you have completed your registrations and finalized your plans to attend. However, for those of you who are planning to attend but have put off completing your registrations, the time is now! We want to hear from you!

The proposed agenda promises to offer something for everyone. Our keynote will set into place this year's theme, "Make a Friend, Be A Friend, Bring A Friend to Christ". Our forum offering on Friday will be on the "Essentials of the Flow of Dynamics on the Weekend". The topics for this year's teaching seminars will be: Group Reunion, Palanca, Ultreyas, Via de Cristo as a Tool of the Church, Mixed Weekends and Hosting an Annual Meeting. Additionally, there will be time for small group sharing on Thursday and Friday evenings. All of this, coupled with our business sessions, committee meetings, worship, good food and lots of fellowship, has the makings for a dynamic weekend of exchange, learning and sharing.

I would ask that you continue to lift up in prayer our Host Committee, our speakers, committee chairs, Executive Board and all of those involved in the preparation for this year's Annual Meeting. Again, if you haven't completed your registration, please do so immediately. We're looking forward to seeing you in Saginaw.

God's Peace,
Debbie Speights

No Host Bidding in 1999

The NLS has accepted invitations from Central Michigan, Florida and Minnesota, taking us through July 2001. There will be no bidding at the 1999 meeting in Saginaw. We will be accepting bids at the meeting in Florida for the year 2002.

TEC = Teen Ministry

September 1999 - North Carolina:
**Western North Carolina
Hand-in-Hand TEC #21:**
September 4-6, 1999. Send
palanca to: Linda Parton,
2150 Colonial Lane, Hickory,
NC 28601.



NLS Minutes

NLS Conference Call

April 25, 1999

Present: Randy Mullin, Doug Burrows, Pastor Richard Dow, Debbie Speights, Phil Lustig, Pastor Carroll Lang, Myra Hogan.

President, Randy Mullin, welcomed everyone and began the meeting with a request that Phil lead us in prayer.

Randy asked for approval of the January 17, 1999 conference call minutes. There being no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Phil reported the balance in the Treasury is \$18,579.86 with a check for \$200.00 to be deposited and a bill to Randy yet to be paid.

Randy asked if we have funds to use in Outreach to assist new secretariats in getting their representation to the annual meeting? Phil responded that there is. Phil said that he had had a request from Damascus of New York to pay their dues for this year. As a matter of policy, he said that in the past he has excused dues when requested by new secretariats or in some instances, financially troubled secretariats, but has not paid their dues. It was determined that he should ask Diane which way he should handle this.

Secretary's Report:

Myra said that she has received 23 Annual Survey forms back, which is about the number received at this time in years past. She will send communication, either by mail, or E-Mail to those secretariats not yet heard from so that she can determine the number of delegates eligible for seating at the annual meeting. Randy suggested that she let each secretariat she contacts know how many delegates they were entitled to at their last meeting. Myra asked if she needs to keep any data on the website and Randy said "no".

Website:

Randy said that he is disappointed that the website hasn't gone forward. It appears that Ed Hillers doesn't want the responsibility of keeping NLS information up to date. He is interested in doing graphics, etc., but not the job of keeping data current. Oran is searching for someone willing to do this. The website is badly in need of updating.

Vice President of Administration Report:

Debbie asked Phil if he had received any money of the left-over funds from Wisconsin. Phil indicated he had not. In the past overages have gone into Outreach, but at the end of the annual meeting last year, Pam indicated they would send their overage to

Michigan for "seed money". There doesn't seem to be anything about this in the manual, only "precedent". The board felt that a policy needs to be established and Doug made a motion that the overages be returned to the NLS for discretionary use by the First Vice President for NLS expenses connected to the annual meeting. Motion seconded by Myra. Motion passed. Randy will ask Ellie to put this in the guidelines.

Debbie said that registrations have been coming in and that the motel will be in pretty good shape in July. Some renovations will be going on. Michigan has had some fundraisers. Debbie said that in the next couple of days she plans to have a telephone conference with the Michigan people. They have sent out about 199 registration forms for the meeting, and now, of course, we will also have forms in the recently published Conexiones. Michigan wanted clarification on when and how often to take up offerings. Pastor Dow had suggested to them that one offering be taken up on Saturday night. These funds come back to the NLS. (This is in the guidelines. Randy will make an explanation of at the annual meeting.) Les Miller suggested that we abandon the display of the website. He wasn't sure of what equipment might be needed. The question was brought up as to whether we could make some overheads? It was decided this could be done without going "live". Randy felt it is important to have the display. He will talk to Oran about this.

Debbie wanted to know how to handle the information we want new-timers to have. It was determined that printed information could be mailed out ahead of the meeting and that those involved in the past; Rose Lundquist, Dennis Hogan, Ed Hansen, might be helpful since they were involved with orientations in the past. Doug asked if we could have a calendar of events to hand out...something other than what is in the notebooks? Discussion followed as to different ways this has been done at other conventions in the past.

Debbie wondered if another mailing is necessary to explain all the options at the meeting. She wondered if everyone understands that they may attend seminars along with committee meetings. Randy said that some committees will only require 2 hours while others want the full time allowance of 8 hours. This will determine how many seminars one might attend. (There are five seminars.) Randy said that since this is something new and different, we need to do a good job of explaining. Perhaps we can put the information on the website? He will talk to Oran.

Randy said that he has heard from all speakers and presenters and everything is all set up. He suggested to those present who are presenters that they might consider having some "take home" information printed up. He has asked each committee chairman to be specific about the time they think they need.

Doug asked Phil if he planned to meet with Diane before the budget meeting; that she is willing to come a day early to go over books, etc. with him. Phil said that in fact, he has been sending Diane all the materials concerning the books and will continue to do so. He has also sent the Finance committee materials so that a budget will be formulated before we get to Saginaw. (We want to circumvent the kind of problems we had over the budget last year). Randy said that committee heads already have been asked to have their budgets ready ahead of time as well as being able to give a time for finalizing their work. He has mentioned to Tim a couple of times about videoing the three addresses and believes he understands and will do it.

Doug asked if the question of the spouse paying for Wednesday night had been resolved? Debbie thought that the motel expects to charge on an individual basis, in which case the spouse would pay an extra \$50. for Wednesday night. She will check on this.

Spiritual Director's Report:

Pastor Dow said that he has finally mailed off two rollos which completes the work on the Spiritual Director's Manual. He told Pastor Carroll that he should be receiving it right away. Pastor Carroll said that if possible it will be printed for the meeting this summer.....Pastor Dow said that his committee will be exploring the role of the Spiritual Director in the movement at his committee meeting. The worship services in Saginaw are well-organized. He has no special concerns as Pastor Birnbaum has control and there are no problems. Pastor Dow said that he hasn't made much headway yet in introducing the VDC to northern Louisiana, but will continue his effort with the help of North Texas. As a side note, Randy said that Living Water had just completed their weekends and that he was pleased that five seminarians were either in attendance or serving on the team. This is a great "in-road". Phil reported that Pastor Braaton has resigned from the Gold Coast Secretariat due to health problems and most likely won't be present this summer.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

Vice President of Outreach Report:

Doug expects Tucson of Arizona to send delegates and hopefully Phoenix as well. (He will talk to Larry Tripke) He's not sure that anyone from ECCOI can come. The person most interested, John Bracket, can't come. The Los Angeles Cursillo group may also send someone. (Doug will write them.) Doug reported that the Damascus movement from upstate New York has been trying to work on getting Synod Council approval of the movement. They are waiting for the results of a vote. This would be of great help if the vote is positive for the whole area. Doug asked Phil to send a \$250.00 donation to Linda Hill from Outreach for their new secretariat. He will send an address.....AOK and Western Montana expect to send delegates and we will need to help them. The Executive Board suggested to at least cover registrations and one or two transportation costs. AOK needs registrations paid for perhaps two; they plan to cover transportation. Doug also thinks we need to assist Sonshine North who plan to send delegates. We may need also to help Pittsburg and Nebraska; both seem to be rejuvenating and expect to be in Saginaw. Philadelphia is on "right now. Randy said that there is an Episcopal movement putting on a weekend in Pittsburg (he thinks in August) and would issue an invitation to the VDC in Pittsburg to participate.

Doug has made arrangements with the people he'd talked to about providing shirts, etc. with the VDC logo for the annual meeting. He is planning on 50 "t" shirts (\$15-\$20), 50 sweat shirts (\$25-\$30), 50 polo shirts (\$25-\$30) and mugs. The total amount will be around \$4,000.00 and these would be sold at cost. The idea would be to put out brochures and for orders to be from the manufacturer. We don't want to make a profit. There are other possible items to order, but this will be a "trial" offering to see if there is an interest. Since the board had approved a lesser amount last November, Phil moved that we increase the amount allowed for the summer sales to cover the cost of \$4,000.00. Seconded by Myra. Motion passed.....Myra told Doug that she still had not received the signed constitution from New York and AOK. He will get them to sign them and send them back to her.

Newsletter Editor:

Pastor Carroll needs all articles for the Conexiones right away so that he can get another publication out before the July meeting. Phil told Pastor that none of the secretariat from Gold Coast are receiving theirs. Randy asked Myra if she is about ready to send the updated data base to Pastor Carroll. She will do so.

Randy said that we need to put discussing "back-ups" again on our agenda in Saginaw at our Wednesday meeting before the annual meeting begins. There is concern about who will do our jobs in the event we are unable to do them.

Randy said the Nominating Committee doesn't have a candidate yet for Myra's position. He intends to send a list of eligible people for the position of Secretary of the NLS to Vi Christiansen, Chairman, based solely on the data base. The criteria will be 1. Female, 2. Having been a delegate, 3. Having attended an annual meeting in the past five years. Myra said that it also needs to be someone who is "computer literate" and has writing skills. Randy feels we, as a board, need to stay apart from the process except to offer eligible people's names.

Phil told everyone that we now have a trademark registered. (Myra has a copy for the files).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Doug Burrows.

Respectfully submitted,

Myra S. Hogan

Myra Hogan, Secretary, NLS

NLS 800 Phone Service

A decision was made at the 1997 NLS Annual Meeting: to establish a National Lutheran Secretariat "home base." It was decided to try this by placing a business phone with an 800 number in the home of Rev. Carroll Lang, Conexiones Editor. There was also to be a fax machine installed.

The new NLS phone number is 800-214-1155. If you prefer to pay for the call yourself, the business phone is 515-955-1877. The fax machine has several features: an answering machine can receive messages. If you wish to send a fax, the machine will recognize the incoming call as a fax transmission. If you wish to leave a message AND a fax, simply call, leave the message and then press your "start" button.

Carroll Lang was chosen to start this new service because he knows much about the movement and can get in touch with the right person when a job needs to be done.

1-800-214-1155 (toll free)

OR

1-515-955-1877 (toll call)



The parable of the seed - Ground

Beautiful ground.
Fertile ground.
Productive ground.
Not all ground is beautiful,
fertile, productive.

Hard-packed ground.
Impenetrable. Hard as stone. Trod upon.
Seeds falling there have little chance.
Eaten by birds.
Stepped on and crushed. Washed away.
Unless a miracle happens.
Only God's gentle,
compassionate love can
soften the ground, sprout the seed.

Beautiful ground.
Seeds sprout.
No depth. Shoots wither.
Invisible rocks hidden beneath the surface.
Rocks that damage the plow.
Who will remove the rocks,
the hidden sins?
Back-breaking work. Wrenching work.
Uncover the hidden rocks.
God lifts them from willing hearts.
Now the soil is deep.
Seeds can grow, root unimpeded.

Fertile ground.
Seeds sprout. Grow.
Weed-infested ground.
Too much competition for the good seed.
Crowding. Choking. Killing.
How does it get sorted out?
God knows. Recognizes his seed.
Pulls the weeds.
Discards the impediments to growth.
Delicate work. Loving work.
Now seeds can grow freely, produce fruit.

Productive ground.
Fertile ground.
Beautiful ground.
Loved. Nurtured.
Tended. Weeded.
Fed. Plowed deeply.
Producing fruit 30, 60, 100 fold.

Thanks be to God.

— Karen Schneider

Palanca!

FOR FUTURE WEEKENDS

All pending weekends for six months from publication will be printed in each Conexiones.

- June 1999 - Illinois/Iowa: **Living Water Via de Cristo**, Pilgrim Park, Mixed #1: June 10-13, 1999. Send palanca to: Paul and Carla Roome, 1021 14th Avenue A, Orion, IL 61273.
- June 1999 - California: **Lutheran Cursillo of Southern California**, St. Joseph's Retreat Center, Rosemead, Men's #62: June 17-20; Women's #63: June 24-27, 1999. Send palanca to: Wayne Beilman, 6708 San Haroldo Way, Buena Park, CA 90620.
- June/July 1999 - Michigan: **Lutheran Via de Cristo of Central Michigan**, Men's #50: June 17-20; Women's #50: July 8-11, 1999. Send Palanca to: LVCCM Palanca, Jeri Lowe, PO Box 408, Midland, MI 48640.
- July 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-North**, Atonement, St. Cloud, Men's #329: July 15-18; Women's #330: July 22-25, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- July 1999 - Texas: **North Texas Lutheran Via de Cristo #44** (Coed), Bishop Mason Retreat and Conference Center, Grapevine, Texas, July 29 - August 1, 1999. Send palanca to: Fran and Sonny Auld, 1806 Erwin Place, McKinney, TX 75069.
- August 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-Metro**, Our Saviour's, Hastings, Men's #331: MAugust 12-15; Women's #332: August 19-22, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- September 1999 - Florida: **Gold Coast Via de Cristo**, Men's #59: September 16-19, 1999. Send palanca to: Nancy Varian, 1399 SW 15th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33486.
- September/October 1999 - Maryland: **Vineyard Via de Cristo**, Camp West-Mar, Women's #4: September 23-26; Men's #4: October 7-10, 1999. Mail palanca to: Frances Ecton, PO Box 452, Funkstown, MD 21734-0452.
- September/October 1999 - South Carolina: **South Carolina Via de Cristo**, Men's: September 23-26; Women's: October 7-10, 1999. Send palanca to: Ginny Eiwien, 203 Whitestone Road, Bluffton, SC 29910-5724.
- September/October 1999 - North Carolina: **Western North Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo**, Men's: September 30 - October 3; Women's: October 7-10, 1999. Send palanca to: Deborah Young, 3450 Patterson Road, China Grove, NC 28023.
- September/October 1999 - South Dakota: **South Dakota Via de Cristo**, Men's: September 30 - October 3; Women's: October 7-10, 1999. Send palanca to: Ardana Bruns, 621 NW 8th Street, Madison, SD 57042.
- October 1999 - California: **Lutheran Cursillo of Southern California**, St. Joseph's Retreat Center, Rosemead, Men's #64: October 14-17; Women's #65: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Wayne Beilman, 6708 San Haroldo Way, Buena Park, CA 90620.
- October 1999 - Michigan: **Good News! Via de Cristo**, Men's #25: October 7-10; Women's #25: October 14-17, 1999. Send palanca to: Jean Mann, 30355 Tennessee, Roseville, MI 48066.
- October 1999 - Georgia: **Atlanta Via de Cristo**, Men's: October 7-10; Women's: October 14-17, 1999. Send palanca to: Jim and Kathy Boucher, 5200 Downs Way, Norcross, GA 30093-2450.
- October 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-Metro**, Vision of Glory, Plymouth, Men's #335; October 7-10; Women's #????: October 14-17, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- October 1999 - Illinois: **Heart of Illinois Vis de Cristo**, East Bay Camp, Bloomington, Men's #4: October 7-10; Women's #4: October 14-17, 1999. Send palanca to: Ron Millard, 1415 Flossmor, Washington, IL 61571.
- October 1999 - Ohio: **Via de Cristo of Ohio (Central)**, Holy Cross Catholic Cursillo Center, Columbus, Men's #40: October 7-10, 1999. Send palanca to: Jeff Albrektsen, 2793 Galewood Street, Kettering, OH 45420.
- October 1999 - Florida: **Lighthouse Via de Cristo**, Hollister Hall, First United Methodist Church, New Smyrna Beach, Men's #17: October 14-17; Women's #17: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Jeanne Constable Palanca Chairman, Lighthouse Via de Cristo, PO Box 628, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170.
- October 1999 - Illinois/Iowa: **Living Water Via de Cristo**, Men's #17: October 14-17; Women's #17: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Paul and Carla Roome, 1021 14th Avenue A, Orion, IL 61273.
- October 1999 - Indiana: **Indiana Lutheran Via de Cristo**, Men's #30: October 7-10; Women's #31: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Perry Powers, 621 North Main Street, Monticello, IN 47960.
- October 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-North**, Our Saviour's, Duluth, Men's #333: October 14-17; Women's #334: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- October 1999 - Florida: **Gold Coast Via de Cristo**, Women's #59: October 21-24, 1999. Send palanca to: Nancy Varian, 1399 SW 15th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33486.
- October/November 1999 - Arizona: **Southern Arizona Lutheran Cursillo**, Regina Clari, Tucson, Men's: October 28-31; Women's: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Richard Krohn, 5137 West Bluejay Street, Tucson, AZ 86742.
- November 1999 - Florida: **Sonbeam Via de Cristo**, Men's #34: November 4-7; Women's #34: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Gary & Rosie Karkheck, 8696 94th Street, Seminole, FL 34647-2512.
- November 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-Metro**, Augustana, Minneapolis, Single Women's #338: November 4-7, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- November 1999 - Ohio: **Via de Cristo of Ohio (Central)**, Holy Cross Catholic Cursillo Center, Columbus, Women's #38: November 4-7, 1999. Send palanca to: Jeff Albrektsen, 2793 Galewood Street, Kettering, OH 45420.
- November 1999 - Indiana: **Indiana Lutheran Via de Cristo**, Men's #31: November 4-7; Women's #32: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Perry Powers, 621 North Main Street, Monticello, IN 47960.
- November 1999 - Florida: **Sonshine North Via de Cristo**, Men's #37: November 4-7; Women's #37: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Marsha Woeshin, 1931 Highland Drive, Fernandia, FL 32034.
- November 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-Metro**, Augustana, Minneapolis, Moms in Transition #340: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- November 1999 - Minnesota: **Minnesota Via de Cristo-MSouth**, Grace, Waseca, Men's #341: November 11-14; Women's #342: November 18-21, 1999. Send palanca to: Carol Olsen, 440 57th Place NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432-5568.
- November 1999 - North Carolina: **Western North Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo**, Mixed: November 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Deborah Young, 3450 Patterson Road, China Grove, NC 28023.
- November 1999 - Texas: **North Texas Lutheran Via de Cristo #45** (Coed), Bishop Mason Retreat and Conference Center, Grapevine, Texas, November 18-21, 1999. Send palanca to: Fran and Sonny Auld, 1806 Erwin Place, McKinney, TX 75069.
- November 1999 - North Carolina: **Eastern North Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo**, Mixed #36: November 18-21, 1999. Send palanca to: Ann Thompson, 10008 Whitestone Road, Raleigh, NC 27615.



Improving Communication -

Flow of Info

At the 1996 NLS Annual Meeting, it was suggested that more articles and information be shared both from local secretariat newsletters in Conexiones, and also articles from Conexiones reprinted in local secretariat newsletters.

It has always been the policy to grant permission to any secretariat wishing to reproduce an article from Conexiones in its newsletter, in fact, it is encouraged. The NLS Executive Board only asks that you print the article as is and list the author and source (Conexiones, or credit at end or beginning of article).

I am willing to save you re-typing by sending the articles to you at your request via e-mail. If you, as editor of your newsletter are not online, find out who, in your movement, is online, or ask a computer friend for help.

This communication can be done two ways, too, and you editors could provide the articles via e-mail to the editor of Conexiones, Carroll Lang, at cdlng@aol.com and he would be very grateful.

- Carroll Lang, Editor

Permission to Reprint

Any original article appearing in Conexiones (that is not reprinted from another newsletter) may be reproduced in any local member secretariat's newsletter without calling or writing for permission, provided the article is reproduced in its entirety without revision and credit is given at the end or beginning of the article. Permission to reproduce an article that is reprinted from a member secretariat's newsletter must be obtained from the editor of that movement.

— NLS Executive Board



Visited our Web Site Lately?



High Returns Cost

Returned Conexiones newsletters cost up to \$1.01 each. Please notify us of any changes in address on a post card or in a letter. Include complete information, including complete address with Zip+4, Secretariat and position, if applicable, and both home and work phone numbers. If you no longer want the newsletter, please let us know.

Prison Ministry

September 1999 - Iowa: **Iowa Brothers in Blue Via de Cristo**, Medium Security Unit, Mount Pleasant, February 11-14, 1999. Send palanca to: Via de Cristo Palanca, c/o Medium Security Unit, Highway 218 South, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641.

October 1999 - Iowa: **Iowa Brothers in Blue Via de Cristo**, North Central Correctional Facility, Rockwell City, October 28-31, 1999. Send palanca to: Via de Cristo Palanca, c/o The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834.



NLS Distribution Center

Jerry Vehrs, Director FAX 651-578-8990



Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, VdC

Rev. Carroll Lang
19903 225th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8473

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL, PLEASE EXPEDITE

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fort Dodge, IA
50501
Permit No. 4