NLS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 26, 2026

E. C. In Attendance:

Brian Comeno, Pastor G. Karl Gaston, Carolyn Witham, Jerry Gray, Karen Weires, Tom Kirk, Heidi Schneiter

E.C. Absent

Brian Schwarz

New Secretariat Discussion

- **Review of Prior Board Actions and Publication Requirements**
    - The board reviewed a previously approved document concerning requirements for new secretariats. It was acknowledged that the document had been approved via email vote and submitted externally but was not published as required. The board agreed that any document approved by vote must be formally published, and failure to do so was an administrative error.

- **Secretariat Membership Requirements – Lutheran and Non-Lutheran**
    - The board discussed the need for consistent, transparent requirements for becoming a Via de Cristo member secretariat. It was proposed that two parallel sets of requirements be maintained: one for Lutheran secretariats and one for non-Lutheran secretariats. This approach was affirmed as consistent with Via de Cristo's ecumenical and welcoming identity.
    - Key points of discussion included:

- The movement's commitment to welcoming participants from multiple Christian traditions
- Theological emphasis on inclusivity and an open table
- Concerns regarding perceived inconsistency in applying requirements to new versus existing secretariats

    - It was clarified that the requirements document largely reflects existing expectations, with two additions:
        - An explicit statement welcoming all people regardless of sexual orientation

        - A requirement that non-Lutheran secretariats include at least one active Lutheran member from a neighboring VDC secretariat on their inaugural board for the first year.
        - Motion: To formally accept the document approved at the September board meeting and post it on the Via de Cristo website as the official checklist and requirements for incoming secretariats.
            - Jerry motioned to accept the document; Pr.G. Karl seconded
            - Vote: Motion carried by consensus. No objections were raised.
    - Leadership acknowledged the potential for difficult conversations regarding theology and inclusion. The board reaffirmed Via de Cristo's commitment to welcoming all people, grounded in scripture, theology, and the movement's ecumenical identity.

Website and Administrative Updates

Positive feedback was shared regarding improvements to the website, Palanca coordination, and document accessibility. Significant progress has been made in organizing and maintaining Google Drive resources, resulting in improved access for national leaders and archivists.

Financial Reports and Minutes Approval

Jerry confirmed that financial reports had been distributed prior to the meeting. No questions or concerns were raised.

Meeting minutes for EC meeting April 28, 2026 were reviewed and approved without corrections.

AG Travel, Attendance, and Registration Tracking

The board reviewed attendance and registration status for the upcoming Annual Gathering.

- Approximately 18 individuals were identified for board-covered expenses.
- Clarifications were made regarding individuals attending in national roles versus as delegates.

Grant Application and Compliance Training Update

Jerry provided an update on grant compliance training and application progress. One of four required courses has been completed, and the application for one particular grant is approximately 70–75% complete. Executive Committee bios and a projected national budget are still required.

Scholarships and Awards

Updates were provided on scholarship and Circle of Awards applications. Multiple scholarship applications have been received, and review is ongoing by the designated committee.

AG 2027 Discussion

Discussion held regarding AG 2027, including possible themes.

Bylaw Amendment Discussion – RC Voting Rights

The board revisited discussion regarding potential voting rights for Regional Coordinators. It was clarified that no formal amendment has been submitted. Any change would require a written bylaw amendment submitted by an affiliated secretariat or its delegate and distributed according to bylaw timelines.

Future Annual Gatherings

Preliminary interest was expressed by several regions regarding hosting future Annual Gatherings, including possible options for 2028. No formal proposals have been submitted at this time.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Pastor G. Karl offered a closing prayer and blessing.

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 PM Pacific Time.

Next NLS EC meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2026 @ 4:30 PDT.