

Remembering a Beginning

By Pastor Ed Simonsen

In 1972, the first two Lutheran Cursillo Weekends were held in Florida (June) and Iowa (October). Neither group was aware of the other's existence. I heard about the movement through a prison letter and called the Iowa Synod office to get a contact person. Pastor Gene Hermeier was that person. He invited me to attend the closing of a men's weekend the following weekend and I accepted. We spent several days sharing our Cursillo© experience. Pastor Hermeier was invited to come to Atlanta to experience the second men's weekend, sponsored by the Miami movement. Leaders from the three groups had a chance to get better acquainted.

On June 16, 1977, after an Eastern District Convention (A.L.C.) the possibility of forming a National Protestant Cursillo movement was discussed. Four major functions were proposed: (1) to locate Cursillo© centers throughout the country and ask them to participate in the organization of a National Secretariat; (2) to produce Cursillo© literature; (3) to coordinate new Cursillo© areas and help in their initial development; and (4) to promote the exchange of information and ideas among local Cursillo© centers.

My responsibility was to locate and contact existing movements. Sandy and I decided to sponsor and host a meeting of Cursillo© leaders at Community Lutheran Church, Sterling, Virginia. Mr. Gerald Hughes, Executive Director of the Roman Catholic National Cursillo© movement and Mr. Dwight Otto, chairperson of the National Cursillo© movement were also present.

Each Cursillo© representative shared his history and organization. It was decided that a national network was desirable and each representative would return to his local secretariat for approval to continue.

The next meeting was scheduled to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, where the following was approved on January 12, 1981: "Whereas we the undersigned, and others associated with us, desire, for the sake of our common purposes, to band ourselves together into a National Cursillo© Secretariat for Lutherans; therefore be it resolved that we, and others of like mind who are or may become associated with us, constitute ourselves into such a Secretariat."

The rest is history as recorded in this booklet.