



Lay Director, Ray Gage

I have never been to or in the seminary and have not experienced what it would be like to be a part of that particular experience. With that noted, I do have a mental construction for how I would like it to be if it were something that I was going to experience.

In the perfect world of my imagination, that is allowed to be naïve and pure of intention, the seminary experience would be absolutely free from all the considerations for the workings or trappings of cultural expectations, traditional functions, human habits, organizational management or any of the other vanities of the world. In my imagination, all of our education would be directed towards an understanding of the Holy Scriptures. One might even say that our education was Sola Scriptura based.

In my perspective of a seminary, we would learn, in depth, the Holy Scripture's content, have an understanding for every passage or message, and be blessed with an uncommon wisdom for its application in every situation that is presented to us in our own lives and the lives of others. We wouldn't learn about how to give sermons, or how long they need to be, because the Holy Spirit and Scriptures would guide us. Rules, guidelines, ByLaws, Constitutions, organizational structures, and things like it would be determined

through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, and not by sociologists, psychologists, marketing firms, legal-theological staffs, etc.. We would truly exist and function in and by Faith alone.

Impractical? Certainly!

Faithful? Absolutely!

With such a blessing of knowledge and Faith, we could speak and act not from opinion, nor preference, nor even by theory; but live in the world with the utmost confidence knowing our lives are eternal in Christ Jesus. As such a faithful circumstance would certainly qualify as an abundant gift, the sharing of the "overflowing cup" would naturally, and unavoidably, spill all over those with whom we come in contact and the blessing would get all over everything we touched!

But... Wait a minute — We do know this!

We don't need to attend the seminary to know that we have been blessed by God's Grace and Mercy; not to mention all of our other blessings that we have the privilege of sharing, do we? We don't need to attend the seminary to know in the very depths of our souls that we have been chosen by God to know His Beloved Son, and that we live in this world with His Spirit in and amongst us, do we? We don't need to attend a seminary to be aware of such things, do we?

Certainly not!

We are not chosen to be clergy; yet, we have been chosen to serve as its laity. And, this function requires much faith. I make this point as a reference to my own individual challenge. Do I actually live by Faith, or do I add some of my own will to maintain some control? — just in case. In other words, is my step a "leap of Faith" or do I simply inch my way in the general direction while my finger remains within reach of the on/off button?

Maybe we haven't been guided to the seminary experience; but we have been directed to

flourish in the Body of Christ as its laity. I mention this as a reminder to us all, that the service of God's Will is not just our duty; but even more so, our privilege. And, that the blessings from God (which each one of us actually is) are by His design and for His divine plan. We cannot defer our service to the clergy, to governmental agencies or programs, to the Law, or to others who we think to be "more qualified" — even if they are! We serve one another because we can; we get to!

I truly enjoy Paul's characterization of himself as a "slave" of Christ. To what better option could one be a slave? To which better Master could one be a slave? What better function could one have than that of sharing with others God's Love for us? We need only share what we already have, and with no requirement to even break a sweat! This is the easiest job a slave could have. Imagine a slave goes to his or her master and asks what it is that the master requires. The master simply says, "Go love one another; give to them what I have already given you. You have no work to do; I have already created what is needed. Your job is simply to give it away — to everyone." Not a bad job for a slave, is it?

In VdC terminology, I'd like to refer to this function of our slavery in Christ as our 4th Day. Our 4th day is our Christian seminary. Our 4th Day Piety/Study/Action is the fruitful enterprise that gives value to everything that precedes it. How you got here, what you brought or left behind, what you worry about or have confidence in, and everything else that is a part of you are all wonderful elements of your testimony as one in the membership of Christ's Body, the Church.

As the current Lay Director of SALVdC, and more importantly, as another willing slave serving in Christ's kingdom, I am encouraging all of us to remain mindful of our place in God's plan and for how our activity serves the very same! It doesn't seem right to me that we consider *Via de Cristo* an organization, a club, a movement; nor is it a retreat weekend. It is what its name identifies: a way of Life. For the Way of Christ IS LIFE. Let us all

continue in our prayers for the whole Church and for the Holy Spirit's guidance for our faithful part within it. Seek first the Kingdom...

Special Note:

Last February, a new 4th Day activity was inspired through the Holy Spirit and coordinated through Pastors Dan and Kim: "Silence Retreat". This was a welcomed addition to our 4th Day. I pray that we continue to have our Silence Retreat and many more activities similar to it that serve as support for our continued Christian development. Keep an eye out for the specific date. It will be (around) the weekend prior to the Ash Wednesday 2018. Make some space in your calendars! May God continue to flood us with His blessings!

As we truly are livin' the dream...
Ray

2017-2018 Secretariat Board

Lay Director	Ray Gage
Assistant Lay Director	Dan Curtis
Secretary	Bev Kircheval
Treasurer	Paul Cassity
Spiritual Director	Pastor Tom Dunham
Pre-weekend	Bridget McMurtrey
Palanca	Patricia Johnson
4th day	Dave Grieser
Communication	Toni Joyce
Shed Steward	Emmet Sweat

Early registration ends Sunday the 30th of April
Register now and save \$20



Via de Cristo
Annual Gathering
July 27th - 30th, 2017

Please plan now to join us in
North Carolina for the
Via de Cristo Annual Gathering
located on the lovely Wake Forest University campus in
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Easy online registration will
save you time and if you register
before May 1, 2017 save money too!!!

For registration and additional details:
www.hihtec.org/vdc



If you are interested in attending this Annual Gathering, please contact Ray Gage.

REMINDER:

Ultreya on June 4, 2017 at Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please bring something to share for the potluck. Service project – canned goods for Streams' Food Pantry.

It's so easy to read the Bible and only pull out of it what we want or what seems pertinent to our life at the moment. But the truth is, there is so much wealth to be extrapolated from the Word of God that we should feel like some of the richest people in the world to get to read it. Let me explain.

Today I was reading Joshua 14. In this chapter an 85 year old man by the name of Caleb, comes to Joshua to retell his story and after all these years, claim what is rightfully his. You see, when Caleb and Joshua were 40 years old, they were sent with 10 other men to spy out this Promised Land. You'll remember that Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies who came back with a positive report - all the others said the giants in the land were too big and the city walls were too high and too thick. They gave a negative report and all the people lost heart. That's why the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Lack of faith.

Now as Joshua is distributing the land to the tribes of Israel as God directs him, Caleb claims the promise God gave to him 45 years ago saying...

"... I promise that the places where you went as a spy will belong to you and your descendants forever." Joshua 14:9
CEV

Talk about holding on to a promise of God!

But what I want to talk with you about is the land that Caleb chose. 3500 years ago, Caleb chose the land of Hebron. Today, Hebron is the center of controversy. Hebron is the oldest Jewish community in the world founded by Abraham some 4000 years ago (Genesis 13)

Today, there are about 1000 Jews living in Hebron with 150,000 Palestinians (descendents of Esau) surrounding them and many of those Palestinians are self-proclaimed Islamic terrorist.

Hebron is the second most sacred piece of real estate in the world for the Jewish people - Jerusalem being first. Hebron was purchased by Abraham as a burial site (Genesis 23) and paid for in cash.

There is a great Jewish heritage in Hebron from the past, but the present situation is very controversial and will continue to be until Jesus returns to deal with the enemies of the Jewish people.

But why do I tell you all of that? Because it's good for us to reflect on the past, remembering the promises of God, as we look to the future.

Here's my word of encouragement for you today: Don't ever forget God's promises to you. Keep them. Cherish them, like Caleb. God is not slow in fulfilling the promises He made to you. Doesn't matter if it was 45 years ago. Maybe He's just waiting for you to get in the right place.

Father,

Thank You for Your promises to us. We're especially thankful for the promise of a Savior, Your Son, our Lord - Jesus, who freely gave His life in our place. It's in His name we pray, Amen.

Rev. Dr. MM Marxhausen, National Spiritual Director

