

Holy Play

A South Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo Publication

It's not normal for me to suggest you start reading by going to the last two paragraphs of the UEC Basics, and read it, however this time please scroll down to the paragraph that begins with, "However, not on a UEC weekend..." Open your heart and read to the end. Then return here.

At this writing moment, we have a full list of pilgrims with more coming in daily. Our prayers are being answered with abundance. Why? Could it be we are taking God out the box and allowing Him to lead us with His plan? When we listen to His voice and follow His direction, good things always happen.

The Secretariat election is tentatively set for Saturday, September 8th. Three openings are justifiability awaiting upper state candidates to step to the line to serve. It's time for the South Carolina Lutheran via de Cristo movement to unify as a state-wide organization. No excuses! Call and give me your name. Christ is counting on you! Peace...Gus Martschink

UEC Basics

Unidos en Cristo — Back to the Basics Part 3

Submitted by Mary Marcoux, UEC Clergy Coordinator

Through the years, many things have “snowballed” in UEC. This is the third in a series of columns to help us re-examine our UEC roots and get back to the basics. (See the June and September 2011 issues of the Palanca Press for previous articles.)

We have looked at two events that occur within the course of the weekend (the morning serenade and the Agape Dinner), their original intention, and the challenge to return to that intention. Another piece that seems to have become more detailed is the overall “theology” of UEC. During the Christmas season when all Christians worldwide seem to share common traditions, song, and belief—this might be a timely issue to examine our shared theology and bring that “back to the basics”.

Original Intention: “Cursillo”—upon which UEC is based—is a Spanish word meaning, “a short course.” The original intention of Cursillo was to be a short course in Christian living. What would this world be like if we truly lived in a totally Christian environment—if we genuinely loved each other as Jesus commanded? When asked, “Which is the greatest commandment?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest

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commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-40)

We can’t assume that we all share a common doctrine or set of guidelines just because we call ourselves Christians. If we did, we would all be part of the same denomination. No two people are created the same. Therefore, it seems only natural that people seek God in a variety of ways.

Several years ago I was invited to be a guest on a local “Christian” radio program. When I went to the station to discuss the program and what would be expected of me during my time on-air, the host asked me to let him field any callers that might be asking questions about controversial subjects. My thoughts immediately went to topics such as abortion or homosexuality— topics that often cause disagreement and make headlines. However, for whatever reason, I decided to ask the program host what he viewed as a “controversial” topic. He said, “You know, like dancing.”

I’ve no doubt that within UEC there are churches that prohibit dancing and others that sponsor dances! We are told, “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Don’t give offense to...the church of God...try to please everyone in everything...do what is best for others so that many may be saved.” (1 Corinthians 10:31-33) In other words, try to respect others’ differences.

The founders of Cursillo chose to stay within basic principles common to all Christians. This is especially necessary within UEC which includes conservative, mainline, and liberal churches and denominations. It is important to stay within the bounds of that which is common to all of us, the basic Christian Gospel message.

Take the Study Rollo, for example. One Rollista may present a reading list of material supporting his or her denominational doctrine and say that no other material is necessary. Another Rollista, prior to her practice Rollo, might ask the entire team to submit book titles and authors that they appreciated and then used the titles most frequently mentioned. He or she may acknowledge differences, and suggest seeking a Pastor for titles as well. The second Rollista has chosen an approach more appropriate for a UEC weekend, loving and respecting all and honoring each church involved.

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There are many different beliefs amongst us in UEC. Some practice a quiet, reverent faith and ask for God's will to be done. Others practice a more demonstrative faith, exercising the spiritual gifts of tongues and healing through laying on of hands. And everything in between. Outside of faith, we have different political views and different ideas about parenting and traffic laws. These are all topics of importance and there is a time a place to discuss these, debate them and learn from each other.

However, not on a UEC weekend. A UEC weekend is not intended to “convert” people to a particular doctrine of any one church. It is quite simply a “renewal” weekend, followed by a “renewal” group. This is a time to place individuals in a loving, Christian environment to give them the opportunity to move closer to God. Whatever happens in the course of that weekend is up to God and each individual. It is an opportunity for Weekenders to be renewed and refreshed and to go back to their respective churches with a new vitality; to be reminded of a very basic message — they are unconditionally loved by God and their brothers and sisters in Christ. For many, that simple message creates a profound change.

Challenge: A return to the basic Gospel message. When planning a Rollo or other message—clergy included—does it reflect the basic Gospel message (love God, love all others) or a denominational preference? As you serve on a team, are you serving out of your own agenda or, as Jesus taught, are you there as a humble servant of God? “This is all the Lord asks of you—to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8