



*The President's Letter*

# LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ASSEMBLY

## And a Chance to Answer Your Questions



Let me tell you my personal story—how it happened that a guy named Paul Weis finds himself writing a letter as President of an international Christian ecumenical organization known as Tres Dias.

After my weekend, I felt a real calling to begin serving the Lord through Tres Dias in every way possible – on teams, on the local Secretariat, on teams for the other community nearby, etc. Through the Tres Dias Website, I was able to gain a better understanding of the full scope of Tres Dias, not just in Illinois, but around the world. By the summer of 2003, I had discovered that all pescadores were welcome to attend the Tres Dias Annual Assembly, wiping out my assumption that the meeting was open to the select few. The Annual Assembly for 2003 was to be held in Cleveland, a drivable distance for me. I talked to some people in my local community, and for the first time ever, Illinois actually had representatives at an Annual Assembly.

When I arrived, I discovered that I had become a member of a much larger community than I realized. Being united in the body of Christ, having shared the common experience of Tres Dias, I felt right at home with my new brothers and sisters.

Then I discovered something else. All of those attending (not just members of the International Secretariat and delegates) were invited to sit in on the committee meetings. Before long, I found myself being welcomed as a voting member of a committee—and making plans to attend future Secretariat meetings. Eventually I found myself on the Membership Committee, subsequently becoming Membership VP and ultimately President.

So, who am I? Just another Tres Dias pescador like you, who happened to hear a calling to serve this ministry.

Is the Lord calling you? Maybe you just need to invest a little time to find out. You are under no special obligation when you attend an Annual Assembly, but if you are coming, let your Secretariat know. It's not too late to arrange to attend the meeting as a delegate of your community. And if you can't come as

a delegate, come as an observer. At the very least, you will be blessed by the fellowship.

Of the various workshops and breakout sessions, I especially look forward to the President's Forum, which I will be conducting for the second time. A large portion of the forum consists of a question-and-answer session. This builds on a theme I have been emphasizing during my term as President—more frequent, more meaningful communication between those of us on the International Secretariat and persons like you, who serve Tres Dias in the local communities.

There's no reason why the President's Forum can't continue long after the Assembly. The editors

**“There's no reason why the President's Forum can't continue long after the Assembly, , , and we're going to make it happen with the next issue.”**

Send your questions for the next Forum to [Newsletter@tresdias.org](mailto:Newsletter@tresdias.org).

and I have often talked about introducing a question and answer column, and we're going to make it happen with the next issue. Send us your questions. Maybe you have a question about the Tres Dias Essentials and traditions, or about how to get in contact with

someone to serve on another community's weekend. Anything that interests you, personally, or that you think would be of interest to others is fair game. Don't be afraid to try to stump us with a challenging question.

Of course, we are always available. If you have a question that needs a more immediate response you can email directly to [tresdias@tresdias.org](mailto:tresdias@tresdias.org).

### **New Communities—At Home and Abroad**

Personally, I am amazed by the way Tres Dias is growing internationally, as Membership VP Richard Thornhill describes in his article. But growth is also taking place here in the U.S. From north to south, east to west, new communities are in various stages of development. There are emerging communities in New York, North Carolina, Georgia, Colorado, Pennsylvania, California, Texas, New Jersey and Idaho. There are possible communities budding in Arkansas, Missouri, and other places around the country.

In Christ,  
Paul Weis

**Needed! Pescadores willing to travel! For a listing of new and emerging communities in need of support, see page 6.**

## *A Message from the Membership Vice President*

# NURTURING NEW FOREIGN COMMUNITIES



There's no doubt that Tres Dias is an international organization. In the past decade, we've seen new communities take root and flourish in Jamaica, Peru, Canada, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Russia, Ukraine, and Korea. Currently, we are looking at the possibility of communities in Denmark, Mexico, the Philippines, and South Africa.

It seems to be happening all over. Why? It's because the people who lead the way in establishing these communities have mobility, because they have a love for a particular place, and most important, because they have an incredible message in their heart about the love of God, and need to find a way of delivering that message.

There is, however, a proper way to lay a foundation for a Tres Dias community, which is very different from simply "having a weekend." We've learned a lot in the past ten years about how to lay that foundation, and about nurturing a community into maturity and independence.

Our experience has reinforced the critical role the sponsoring community plays at each stage. The first stage involves helping to develop reunion groups in the new location. For example, right now, in Denmark we have a set of weekends scheduled for October. Germany is the sponsor. The people in Denmark went through their weekends in Germany and now meet regularly as reunion groups, and have also formed a steering committee to look at the future.

We've learned that a community has a far greater chance of success if it starts with a minimum of about 20 pescadores (10 men and 10 women). Ideally, these numbers should be doubled, but this is precisely where things get complicated. Visa requirements and transportation costs can limit the number of candidates the sponsoring community can bring in from abroad to experience a Tres Dias weekend.

As with new US communities, inviting candidates from a variety of denominations, with an eye for individuals with leadership ability, helps build a foundation. With foreign start-ups, it's especially critical to involve local pastors from the beginning.

Often, the teams for the first weekends will come from the sponsoring community, but sometimes a call will go out to other communities, "A new community is starting in Denmark, or South Africa, or wherever, and we need people to support them."

**“The people who lead the way . . . have an incredible message in their heart about the love of God, and need to find a way of delivering that message.”**

Usually, the first teams consist almost entirely of pescadores from established communities. Although people in the emerging community have gone through a weekend, they've not had the experience of serving on the team. Often, the sponsor will continue to invite pescadores from other communities to join teams for several years, gradually reducing the supportive commitment until the teams can be composed entirely of experienced pescadores in that emerging community.

In developing countries, the team fees may be higher than candidate fees. For example, for Peru, the cost for supportive and sponsoring team members is \$150, compared with \$50 for candidates. That extra \$100 goes to support the community by sponsoring

candidates and helping team members return to serve. A lot of times, the developing community doesn't have funds to buy palanca. In Peru, the camp ground is an hour away from the meeting place, and the community needs to rent a bus for transportation.

In many ways, the things people do to put on a weekend are the same regardless of location—but with the added complications, and added cost, at each stage, that come from working in a different culture, and often in a foreign language.

We learned that it is important for funding for a new community to go through the sponsoring community, and that the sponsor should provide complete accountability for funds received (sources, amounts) and dispersed. Remaining funds collected for the weekend, over and above expenses, should be left with the developing community.

The sponsoring team members will continue to work with the local pescadores to form a secretariat. A new community takes a minimum of two to three years before it can be self-governing. No individual or sponsoring community should "hold a weekend" without fully committing to help the new community become mature and independent.

To affirm this commitment, the International Secretariat asks both the sponsor and the new community to sign an Emerging Communities Agreement. Both parties affirm that they will follow the Essentials and that they will take the steps needed for chartering the new organization. This also helps protect Tres Dias' copyrights.

In Christ,  
Richard Thornhill

Fourth Day Talk

## A Story of Four Miracles

*The first time she attended a weekend, she asked to be taken home...and then, the facility caught on fire!  
Here's what happened after the second weekend.*

My name is Cheri Dreska. My husband, John, and I attend St. Patrick's Catholic Church with our children, Joshua, Christopher, Catherine, Nicholas, Sarah, Alexis, David, and Zachary. I attended Northern Illinois Tres Dias number 14 in the fall of 1999, where I sat at the table of Hannah.

When I was asked to give this talk, I had to laugh at the journey my life has taken since that October weekend ten years ago.

First of all, there was my weekend....

John had come home from his spring weekend so excited and raring to go that I couldn't help looking forward to going in the fall...until two days before the weekend when I changed my mind.

Well, I did get on that big yellow bus, but I have to say I was the candidate the team spends a lot of time praying about. On Friday night, I approached one of our pastors after the evening service, not to discuss my insight from the weekend, but to tell her I would be going home. Yep, going home.

She responded with, "Do you want me to wake up a team member to take you all the way home now? Or do you think you could wait until morning?" Well, yes, I could stand it that long, but I was completely out of place, not "getting" what everyone else seemed to be getting, and I was certainly not enjoying myself. So why the heck stay?

Then, a short while later, the smoke alarms went off. The Bishop Lane facility was on fire!

Oh, you want misguided guilt? I had plenty of it. Especially when I returned home in the middle of the night and my husband, John, looked at me saying, "What did you do?"

Wow! What a change ten years have made. It turns out I was one of those in whom the seeds are planted and just take time to grow...quite a while! In 2005, John and I ended a three-year term as Weekend Chairs, and we apparently decided we needed something to fill all that time we had been spending in the storage closet—so John and I, along with our four biological children, became a foster family. Over the past four and a half years, our family has been on a God-driven journey, where we have experienced unspoken joy, sorrow, frustration, anger, love, and unconditional support from others. We have relied on and continue to rely on our Tres Dias family for an abundance of prayer on this very challenging path.

On September 6, 2005, our lives forever

changed when a set of three little siblings were dropped off on our gravel driveway—and the case-worker actually drove away, leaving them with us!

After being told that only a miracle could alter the heartbreaking legal course of their case, this community began to pray for exactly that—a miracle! On December 22, four years, three months, and seventeen days from the day they were dropped off, we received that miracle—Jersey, Brooklyn, and Dakota became Sarah Marie Dreska, Alexis Grace Dreska, and David Michael Dreska.

Nineteen-month-old Zachary is the biological brother of the three and has been with us since the day he was one-day old. When he arrived, he was virtually deaf and blind—a very sick baby who was likely severely mentally impaired, would never be able to walk, and apparently going through withdrawal.

Those first few weeks were beyond anything we thought we could ever handle. I can say his little lungs were working just fine! One evening I brought the little guy with me to a secuela. One of my Tres Dias sisters asked to pray for him. Several people gathered around him in prayer. We again found ourselves praying for a miracle.

A couple of days later, one of our older children excitedly called to me from the baby's room. When I arrived, she was yelling, "He followed me with his eyes! He could see me!"

Over the next few days, his eyes began to follow any and everything in his world. A miracle of prayer? You decide. I know what I believe! I know what I believe.

As time progressed, it became obvious he was not mentally impaired. In fact, he was a smart little guy. On the day he turned nine months old, he took his first step. Because of the numerous ear infections, we had tubes inserted. What a shock when it became obvious that he could hear us! He is now speaking important words like "cookie," "doggie," and of course, "mommy!"

While we realize he will have challenges in the future and will probably need ankle braces to support his legs, this child is truly a product of God's grace and mercy—combined with the power of prayer from those who honestly believe prayer can change everything! That would be you, the community.

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## A Gift of Song... From Tania Nicholson

Let's face it. Pescadores need palanca on their fourth day walk just as much as they do on the weekends. Songwriter and performer Tania Nicholson provided some very special palanca with her original song, "Livin' Our Fourth Day."

Tania performed the song at the Friday evening secuela prior to the Rockford, Illinois, meeting of the International Secretariat, and announced that it is a gift to Tres Dias communities worldwide.

The words are printed at the right. To hear the song, visit her web site:

<http://www.paw-printstudios.com/livinourfourthday.html>

For guitar chords and sheet music for lead guitar, follow the link for Tres Dias Tools. Don't leave Paw-Print Studios without seeing the video version for this song and two others.

### **"Four Miracles," continued**

We had been told numerous times that only a miracle could help—and this community provided the power behind those miracles, and we thank you from the deepest parts of our hearts. These children literally owe their lives to this community and to your prayers.

That being said, little Zachary remains on a "return home" foster care goal. We continue to ask for serious prayer to keep this little child safe, and for another miracle—that our adoption of him takes place quickly.

In addition to the power of the prayer chain, reunion groups are a place of immense support and accountability. Although I am now searching for a new reunion group, my sisters from past groups remain some of my closest friends. We call each other often, sharing our joys, our challenges, and our strides forward in our walk with the Lord. We hold each other accountable in our piety, study, and action. Without a reunion group, I easily become lazy in this walk, especially in study. Oh—I'll tell myself, I'll read that Bible chapter later, right after I read this magazine.

I strongly urge all of you, if you are not part of a reunion group, to find one that fits your schedule and personality. Maybe you are feeling drawn to begin one of your own. Go for it!

This is an amazing community and you are part of it! Realize what an incredible blessing it is! And never, never, doubt the power of prayer! Miracles do happen and I have four of them living with me to prove it!

Cheri Dreska presented her fourth day talk at the March 12 secuela in Rockford, Illinois. The secuela was a prelude to the March 12-14 meeting of the International Secretariat.

### Livin' Our Fourth Day

It takes a while to figure out, what our lives here on earth are all about.

The world can never satisfy, what we need deep down inside,  
what were we living our lives without?  
Spent a three day weekend with our Lord, we knew there must be something more.  
Never have we felt so close, to the One who loves us most,  
now He's the one we're living for.

(-CHORUS-)

Livin' our fourth day, givin' up our sorrow and our strife.  
Livin' our fourth day, and we will live it for the rest of our lives.  
With the body of Christ in action, always seeking His satisfaction,  
we will start a chain reaction, livin' our fourth day.

We've seen the bible in a new light, the word of God for us to study and recite.

The story of the King of kings, the Holy Spirit's whisperings,  
rest for the weary, strength for the fight.  
The call to action is not advice, but a command from the man who paid the price.  
So to our Father's sheep we'll tend, make a friend and be a friend,  
and then we'll bring a friend to Christ.

(-CHORUS-)

A church is not wood and stone, it's made of, you and I who have been shown;  
that we need to spread the word, to anyone who hasn't heard,  
and share the truth till Christ is known.  
We need the Christian community, to become the leaders God wants us to be.  
Working with the ministries, in our churches and cities,  
we'll shine like stars through eternity.

(-CHORUS-)

Livin' our fourth day, with the Lord above to guide.  
Livin' our fourth day, serving our Father side by side.  
We lift our hands up to the sky, by His word we will abide,  
God loves you and so do I, livin' our fourth day.

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**Pray for places around the world where God is placing it on someone's heart to be the catalyst for starting a reunion group that will grow into a steering committee and eventually launch a new Tres Dias Community. Here are the names of a few that have been mentioned—several cities in Mexico; Brian/College Station and near Corpus Christi, TX; Vietnam; Memphis and Knoxville, TN; Honduras; Raleigh, NC; Jamaica; NW Arkansas; South Africa; Kansas City; eastern Russia; other US Spanish communities; and Treasure Valley Idaho where they just held their #1 weekends.**

**If you have an interest in any of these locations or additional ones, please inform Richard Thornhill, Vice President of Membership at MembershipVP@TresDias.org**

## Needed: Pescadores Willing to Travel

### Can you come and serve? Can you sponsor?

A number of new and emerging communities have issued standing invitations for pescadores from other communities to support their weekends. To issue a similar invitation in a future issue, send a message to [newsletter@tresdias.org](mailto:newsletter@tresdias.org). The secret to being blessed is to bless, so here are opportunities for you to be blessed as you go and serve in 2010. You can also sponsor people to attend or assist by sending financial help and other palanca.

**Agua Viva Tres Dias** will launch as a Spanish speaking TD community in the Dallas area, sponsored by **North Texas Tres Dias**. The Men's #1 will be August 12-15 with Willy Arce, [wga1956@hotmail.com](mailto:wga1956@hotmail.com), as Rector for the men. The Women's will follow August 19-22 with Gloria Esqueda as Rector, [gloriaesqueda@att.net](mailto:gloriaesqueda@att.net).

*Plans are in place to help a Tres Dias form in Costa Rica as an outgrowth of the rapid expansion possible within Spanish speaking nations as well as communities in the USA. Visiting team from Costa Rica and Ecuador are expected to come and serve.*

**Denmark** Tres Dias will hold its first men's weekend October 14-17 and the women's October 21-24. **Tres Dias in Germany is the sponsor**, with rectors from America. Jim Langdal, Chairman of Tres Dias in Central Arizona, will lead the men's and can be reached at [jim.langdal@emerson.com](mailto:jim.langdal@emerson.com). Veteran Rector Dawn Fossnes will lead the women. Reach her at [dmcfdawn@aol.com](mailto:dmcfdawn@aol.com). Coordinator and leader in Denmark is Tracy Skondin at [tracyskondin@hotmail.com](mailto:tracyskondin@hotmail.com). You don't have to speak Danish, but if you do, or have a Scandinavian heritage, please pray about serving.

**Northern California** Tres Dias, just north of Sacramento, is having the first set of weekends October 14-17 (Men) and October 21-24 (Women), in Alta, CA. **Birmingham Tres Dias** is honored to be the sponsoring community, and has selected Tim Real ([realdoc@bellsouth.net](mailto:realdoc@bellsouth.net)) and Pam Real ([realpam@bellsouth.net](mailto:realpam@bellsouth.net)) as Rectors.

*The developing Northern California Tres Dias core group is excited about bringing Tres Dias to this area for spiritual renewal and the unifying of churches; 30 candidates are expected at each weekend and seven churches are already represented.*

**Colorado** Front Range Tres Dias # 1 will hold their women's October 21-24 and men's the following weekend, 28-31, at a camp between Denver and Colorado Springs. John Green is the local contact at [papa.green@comcast.net](mailto:papa.green@comcast.net). Rectors will be Joy and Wilson Burton from the **Music City Tres Dias**, sponsoring community. Reach them at [huntandfish@comcast.net](mailto:huntandfish@comcast.net). Website is [cfrtd.com](http://cfrtd.com)

*The Rockies are always beautiful, especially in the fall. Hiking, hunting and even some early skiing may be possible.*

### Will you come and serve? Will you sponsor? Send Palanca?

*The Colors of Tres Dias International is published three times a year by the Services Committee of the Tres Dias International Secretariat. Don L. Bohl serves as editor, Ned Heffington chairs the Services Committee and serves as proofreader. Special thanks to Rosann Miloscia who helped to launch this publication and served as art director for prior issues.*