



THE COLORS OF TRES DIAS INTERNATIONAL

Communities in Denmark, Colorado, Texas, and California Hold First Weekends

Each of these communities prayed and planned for more than three years to make the first weekends happen. Teams sent e-mails, teleconferenced with Skype, critiqued rollos posted on YouTube, and managed road travel and airline reservations across the continental US. They solved complex problems of luggage and logistics, as when 30 women from the US arrived in time to serenade the men at Denmark men's # 1.

In short, it all came to-

gether this fall—with the Lord's hand visible in each accomplishment. And each community has a story to tell about how it happened. Northern California

The story for the Northern California community started, as do so many other Tres Dias stories, with prayer. Four years ago, a pastor, Cary Duckett, relocated from Birmingham to the Sacramento area. He left behind a group of friends praying that a community could take root in northern California. Those prayers gained substance

after a meeting with a director for a Christian camp, Mike Bivins. Mike was originally from Georgia. As the two talked over Southern style barbeque and sweet tea, Cary told about a "different retreat." Mike attended Birmingham # 29—and personally sponsored 12 candidates within the next 18 months.

The "Open Letter" on page 8, from a Birmingham team member (Birmingham was the sponsor), fills in the rest of the story and shows how both communities were blessed.

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The Story Behind the Cross

This stained glass cross, above, also appears on some community websites, as well as on T-shirts and coffee cups. Very few people, however, know the history of the cross and its symbolic meaning. Note that there are 15 pieces of stained glass, one for each of the 15 rollos. Each piece of glass has its proper place and fits together to form this symbol of God's love, just as each rollo fits together in a sequence to communicate that love. The cross was made for a rector on a North Georgia weekend and originally had only 14 pieces of stained glass; the community had combined two of the talks. The "corrected" version is on the North Georgia home page (www.ngtd.org), among other places.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Bruce Cato, a former president of the International Secretariat and a member of the North Georgia community, for supplying this information.



Find out how to use Google maps to locate Tres Dias communities anywhere in the world. See page 5.

First weekends, continued

Denmark

Tracy Skondin, the president of Denmark Tres Dias, was 19 years old in 1978 and a student at the University of North Texas when he made his candidate weekend. Tracy recalls a singular event from his weekend: reading a hand-made poster sent all the way from Korea. “It said that people in that country were praying for me by name. I stood in the foyer reading, and I was so touched that I just stood there and wept. *Think about it! Someone I never met was bringing my name before the throne of God the Father.*”

As a college sophomore, he traveled to Denmark on a short-term mission trip to help plant an independent church. There he met Janne, the woman who would become his bride after two years of transatlantic courtship. Tracy relocated to Denmark two days after graduating with his teaching degree. He had just served as a team member on a Tres Dias weekend, and he left praying that he could help take Tres Dias to Denmark.

Life events—marriage, gaining Danish teaching certification and starting a family—put the idea on hold until 1997. That was the year he and Janne drove five Danish pilgrims to a Tres Dias weekend in Germany. They continued to travel to Germany by car, plane, or train a year and a half, bringing back new pescadores who would form a local secretariat. Thirteen men and four women were ready to serve on team for the October weekends.

Agua Viva

The Agua Viva community is the first Spanish Speaking community in the US. The vision for such a community began to take shape four years ago, not on US soil, but in Peru. Willy and Maria Arce had attended the first Peru men’s and women’s weekends. Subsequently, they helped to establish an emerging Tres Dias in Ecuador. In the process, the Arces translated over 1,700 pages of Tres Dias and other Christian

material into Spanish. “When it was over, we decided to come back and start praying to bless the Spanish community here in Texas,” Willy told us.

North Texas was Agua Viva’s sponsoring community, and as was true for the other sponsors, they didn’t go it alone. On the contrary, they drew team members from a broad spectrum of sister communities: Sabine Creek Tres Dias, Trinity Valley Tres Dias, Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo Cristiano, and the Atlanta Georgia Tres Dias community, with additional help from communities in Costa Rica and Peru.

Colorado Front Range

This “cross pollination”—a bringing of team members from different communities and even different fourth-day organizations—is no more evident than in the Colorado Front Range weekends. Pescadores came from fourteen states and one foreign country to launch the community. Two of the leaders, John and Joan Green, first experienced Tres Dias in Korea. The rollista (professor) who presented the study rollo had his candidate weekend on Long Island, moved to the RIMA (Rhode Island and Massachusetts) community, and now serves on the Colorado secretariat along with his wife.

God Working in New Communities

As on every Tres Dias weekend, there were moments when the Spirit broke visibly and triumphantly into the lives of individual candidates. Spokespersons from the weekends described some of those moments without revealing personal information. Marriages were restored, a schism within a congregation healed, a father asked his son for forgiveness, a new pescador emailed everyone immediately after the weekend, inviting them to his baptism the next Sunday. A pastor said he had never attended anything as rich spiritually in 30 years of attending retreats.

For those at Denmark Men’s # 1, a powerful moment came at night, on the beach. Participants had written nota-

tions of their personal needs to forgive and be forgiven—as well as concerns for the sins pervasive in Danish society—on heart-shaped scraps of paper. (Tracy notes that Denmark was the first country to lift all legal restrictions on pornography.) The papers were nailed to a wooden cross. Then, the head prayer chanted the Shofar as the papers were ripped from the cross and tossed into a bonfire. Tracy reports that everyone stayed on the beach until after midnight praising the Spirit for the confession and cleansing that had taken place and praying for a national confession and cleansing.

Tracy sees God helping the Tres Dias community “arise out of the ashes of Danish Christianity.” It’s fitting that the Tres Dias Denmark mailing address is in Ribe, said to be the oldest city in Denmark and the place where Ansgar, the Carolingian “monk of the North” helped to found Christianity in 860. “God is on the move,” Tracy says. “Denmark is in a transition and there is revival coming to the Church. Please pray for servants to be sent to the harvest!”

Yes, God is on the move in each of these locations. But God works through his people. Each of these communities is in transition, and needs our prayers and support. Specifically, the Agua Viva community needs spiritual directors who speak Spanish. The Denmark community needs a rectora for the next women’s weekend. All need experienced team members to offer encouragement and serve as mentors.

Spend a few moments in a prayer of thanksgiving for what happened this fall, and then look at the MEETING section at www.tresdias.org to get the dates and contact information for the next weekends. Maybe God is calling you to serve on a team in an emerging community.

President's Forum

Q The Google map on the “Locations” section of the Tres Dias Web site (see also page 5) shows general locations for 19 emerging communities. What, exactly is an “emerging community?”

A An “emerging” community is on its way to meeting all the requirements of a fully chartered community. Typically, the community has a steering committee in place, and has submitted a document—appropriately called an “Emerging Community Agreement”—to the International Secretariat’s membership committee. Three parties sign the document: a representative of the emerging community, the International Secretariat’s membership VP, and a representative from the sponsoring community.

No organization can use the name Tres Dias, the trademarked Tres Dias logo, or the Tres Dias materials without a charter or authorization from Tres Dias. The Emerging Community Agreement authorizes the new community to use the name and materials, using the sponsoring community as a proxy. The sponsoring community’s task is to support the new community in whatever way is necessary to be a separate viable community.

Q The International Secretariat is placing a lot of emphasis on supporting new and emerging communities. Is there also support for established communities that are facing challenges of some kind?

A This question was on the agenda at the last Secretariat meeting. The problem that we hear about most often comes from those communities that have been around for a long time. The excitement and enthusiasm of the early years has worn off. There may be fewer candidates for the weekends and escuela attendance is down.

At the same time, we hear about some very creative—and very effective—things happening in the communities. For example, to get more pastors involved in supporting TD, one community came up with the idea of a special “pastors only” weekend. (Actually, the event was held mid-week, so as not conflict with Sunday worship.) Sure, Tres Dias is a lay led movement, but pastors often become our most vocal supporters.

Other communities have staged a “reunion day,” when they make a systematic effort to reach out to pescadores who have been inactive for a while and invite them to a day of celebration. I know of two communities that make Essentials Training an all-day happening, with table leaders, poster sessions, skits, and so on. We are working to find

ways to share this kind of practical information.

The International Secretariat is developing a clearinghouse of names of people willing to travel to serve on team for another community’s weekend and names of pastors who will travel to serve as spiritual directors.

We have people from all over the world with all sorts of expertise in different areas. One secretariat member suggested the idea of developing consultants in specific areas (e.g, acquiring 401c3 status, improving escuela attendance). At the request of a local community, these “experts” would answer questions by phone, by email, or, perhaps, even travel to a the community for a problem-solving session. Our Services Committee already offers this kind of help for developing a database, and the Policy Committee is doing research to identify “best practices” and offer their expertise in sponsorship.

So, we have a lot going on. Help us by telling us, specifically, where you might need some help, and by sharing ideas you have used to solve problems.

Q A number of readers responded to the last issue by saying that they had not been aware of what the International Secretariat is and what it does. What can community leaders do to make people more aware?

A We’re developing a one-page introduction to Tres Dias to put in the fourth-day packets given to new pescadores. The greatest resource, however, already exists—the Tres Dias Website, tresdias.org. Make sure you and the other community leaders are familiar with it and make the whole community aware of it. Use the site to list your weekend dates and to exchange palanca. Put a link on your local Website so that people can find the international site easily. Make sure this newsletter and other communications from the International Secretariat get to your secretariat and the community.

Start making plans now to attend the Annual Assembly in July, so that we can exchange ideas face to face, rather than through a page in a newsletter.



Paul Weis

The President’s Forum is a regular feature in this publication. Send your questions for the next Forum to newsletter@tresdias.org.

Why I Am a Christian

By John McKinney



First, let me say that I do not think of myself as a particularly outstanding Christian. For that reason, I thank God that as Christians we are forgiven.

The reality is that if I had been raised in Palestine, I might be a Muslim. If I had been raised in China, I might be a Buddhist. Fortunately I was raised in the United States and fortunately

my parents started me in Sunday school. Also, there is some reality to the statement that I am a Christian today because there were pretty girls at the Idlewild Presbyterian Church in Memphis. Moreover, it was fun to go to church. I also remember that there were very successful businessmen who gave their time as Sunday school teachers to help me know Christ. That was very impressive. I also remember a special time late at night when I was alone in the courtyard of that church, when I felt the presence and power of God's love.

The basic reality is that I am a Christian because God loves me. The fact that He loves all of you does not diminish the joy and excitement that He also loves me. He sent His son to this earth 2,000 years ago to tell me of His love for me. He does not love me because I am perfect or because I am special. He just chooses to love me with all my sins and imperfections. Thank God we can be forgiven. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16

Let me give you some background. When I was a young U.S. Navy officer in the Protocol office in the Pentagon, I thought I was pretty hot stuff. I went to two embassy parties a week; acted as Aide to the Secretary of Defense on one occasion. I almost worshiped power.

At the same time I went to church at the National Cathedral because they had a 4:00 PM service Sunday afternoon that was more convenient for a young man with things to do on Saturday night. The Lord was calling me in the midst of all this.

I followed my worship for power to Harvard University to the Business School and then to management jobs at IBM. I

sat next to Chairman and CEO Tom Watson at a dinner and reveled in the glow of power. At the same time the most powerful force in the universe was calling to me... God calling with the power of LOVE.

I never found the power that I was seeking, not in the Navy, not in business. In fact, there were times in my life I felt powerless. In fact, I am no different from those scared disciples who, after Christ was crucified, sat in a locked room because they were afraid of being arrested and crucified.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Luke 24:36-39

God, our parent, raised Christ from the dead so that we would know of His love. He broke into history 2000 years ago with this startling event so that we might know. He broke into my life as a young man that night in the courtyard of that church in Memphis. He broke into my life many times since. It happened when my first wife died, in 2000, and I had to rely totally on my reunion group to sustain me. It happens every time I drive a New England highway and see the autumn foliage—the grandeur and magnificence of His creation!

Now I am beginning to understand that power is not important. What is important is to follow Christ as a servant, to be His disciple, and to help others know Him so that they may become His disciples.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28: 19-20

He is with me. . . . He loves me. And because He is with me and because He loves me, that is why I am a Christian.

John McKinney was the first president of the National Secretariat and currently serves as Executive Director for Tres Dias.

North and South America



Chartered and Emerging Tres Dias Communities Worldwide

Europe and Asia



For a Closer Look...

These images are from a Google-based map accessible from www.tresdias.org. (Click the LOCATIONS button on the home page.) Like other Google maps, you can focus in on a location by sliding the bar to the left of the map. A second feature allows you to locate the nearest community to any place on Earth. Simply enter a location, such as Kingston, NY, USA or Kingston, Jamaica and press “search.” A Google map will appear, providing distance and directions to that location.

Note: Ned Heffington, Chairman of the International Secretariat Services Committee, set up the maps and marked community locations.

Pacific Rim



How To Tell Your Pastor about Tres Dias

By Dan and Peggy Woody

If Tres Dias prepares laypersons to become leaders in their home congregations, why do pastors sometimes hesitate to get involved?

The problem may come, in part, from the way we explain Tres Dias. The comic skit (see sidebar) exaggerates some common mistakes, showing what not to do.

Don't keep secrets about the weekend. Cults act in secret and hide their agendas. One of the quickest ways to turn off your pastor (or anyone, for that matter) is to act like everything about the weekend is secret. Be open, receptive and forthcoming about details. After all, the pastor can find out all about it on the Web by reading the Tres Dias Essentials.

Don't spill the beans about the surprises. Recognize that there is an element of trust for anyone accepting the invitation to go, so let them experience the serenade/mananita, palanca, letters, and other unexpected details that add to the weekend.

Here are some basic steps to take in explaining Tres Dias to a pastor.

Schedule a meeting with your pastor. Make sure the pastor can carve out part of his or her day to listen to you. Perhaps take the pastor to lunch.

Be well versed on the term "ecumenical" and how ecumenism affects the weekend. Remember, Tres Dias is a *Christian* ecumenical movement, not interfaith ecumenism, and not the kind of ecumenism that ignores basic truths in scripture. Events on the weekend "stress those things which the Christian denominations have in common and respect those things which are different."

Keep in mind that the pastor's heart is for his people. He or she wants them returned from the weekend safe and sound doctrinally—not with wild

and weird thoughts going through their head about how their church is wrong on something. The pastor needs to know that a Tres Dias weekend is a safe place. You need to convey that. Stress that the weekend focuses on our common bond in Christ.

Emphasize the Tres Dias mission. Discuss the idea of the weekend as a way of training laypersons to become leaders in their current church, and helping current leaders lead more effectively.

Give an extra measure of information. Tell about the talks, ten by laypersons five by pastors. Explain that there is singing, communion, table groups and discussions, chapel in the morning with communion, and so on. Over-communicate!

Offer to pay their way. Pastors often make just enough to get by. Have your community develop a scholarship fund for pastors and church staff to attend the weekend.

Provide the pastor, and others, with ample evidence of a changed life. The best "explanation" of what Tres Dias does is in how it has affected you, your spouse, and your family, and in how it has helped to give vitality to the spiritual life in your congregation. How the pescadores relate to one another, how they show love, and how they help others—not just those who have attended a weekend but all who are part of the whole body of Christ—becomes living evidence of how the Spirit works through Tres Dias.

Note: Dan and Peggy led the workshop "Sharing Tres Dias with Your Pastor and Friends" at the 31st International Tres Dias Assembly, July 9-11, in Houston. This article and the skit are based on the workshop.



How Not to Do It

A Skit

The scene is a pastor's office, nine a.m. on a Monday morning. The pastor is focused on his morning devotions when two visitors—call them Margaret and Daniel—walk in without announcing. They are singing.

Both: "De Colores! De Colores the fields love to dress in all during the spring-time."

Margaret: Oh, Pastor!! We just came off this weekend called Tres Dias and we just had to bust in here and tell you all about it! It was just... (getting emotional) just.... So wonderful (tears).

Daniel: We'd love to tell you all about it, but then we would have to kill you. Cause it is seeeeecret!

Margaret: But they do the best old stuff there. I mean, when those men came in and sang for us.

Daniel: Yeah, it was ladies for us!

Margaret: And when we got those letters from our family and all that palanca! All those presents!

Daniel: Yeah, and when we learned the secret handshake! (Invent a handshake and do it.)

Margaret: It was just wonderful!

Daniel: Just Wonderful! But we can't really tell you about it.

Margaret: No, we can't really tell you about it.

Daniel: We just wanted to tell how great it was! You have to go.

Margaret: Yes, pastor you just *have* to!

Daniel: Ok, we'll be our way! We're just so happy we had a chance to tell you about it! Bye for now!

Both: (Singing as they exit) "De Colores De Colores the birds have their clothing that comes every season ..."

From Candidate to Pescador . . . Understanding Your Role as Sponsor

By Tracy and Denise Davis

We can be easily lulled into the belief that sponsorship is as simple as asking someone to attend a Tres Dias weekend. On the contrary—it's much, much more than that. Successful sponsorship is thoughtful and planned, and it must be a prayer-filled process.

Sponsorship is best thought of as analogous to the three-legged stool we discuss on the weekend. In this case, however, we're talking about the three "legs" of the pescadore's journey (the pre-weekend, weekend, and fourth day phases). Your job is to walk with and support your candidate on each leg of that journey.

Begin with prayer. Ask God who He would have you sponsor for a weekend. Our best advice is to recall the love that you felt for God during your weekend and open your heart for showing and sharing that love. This is indeed the best way to promote both Christianity and Tres Dias.

Recall how your sponsor invited you. Either they told you something that made you want more or you saw something in them that made you want to experience what they had.

Arrange for a time to speak to your friend. Be honest about your weekend and how it affected you. Give factual information about what goes on during the weekend, which you can do without spoiling the surprises. Promoting any kind of secrecy does more harm than good.

Once your candidate has agreed to attend, review the application with your prospect. Ask about special needs or requests. These can be sleeping arrangements, diet restrictions, allergies, or anything the candidate feels he or she will need to be comfortable for the weekend. Most communities do their best to accommodate all reasonable requests, but it is important to team planning to know these things ahead of time. Be sure to encourage equal commitment from the candidate's spouse if applicable.

Stay in contact with your candidate and his or her family during the pre-weekend phase. Make sure you let them know when send-off is

or when you will be picking up the candidate for travel to the weekend site. Also, make sure the family has accurate information on the length of the weekend and when to expect the candidate home on Sunday. Reassure the family and make sure they have contact information in case of emergencies.

Support the weekend with prayer and palanca and by attending all sessions open to the community. If you are not serving on the weekend, support the family by checking in on them and offering support or assistance. If you are serving, request that your spouse or close friend to check in for you.

Perhaps the most neglected leg of the sponsorship journey is the fourth day. Make a point to meet with, call, and/or mail a note to the new pescador in the first few days after the weekend. Talk through the experience with him or her; help the pescador get connected with a reunion group. Invite and accompany him or her to secuelas. Provide information for serving on future Tres Dias weekends. Encourage your new pescador to sponsor candidates by explaining the process.

Overall, remember that successful sponsorship is prayerful and purposeful. When done in this manner, we help fulfill our mission of training servant leaders for their churches, and we create healthy Tres Dias communities as a by-product.

Note: Tracy and Denise led the workshop on sponsorship at the 31st International Tres Dias Assembly, July 9-11, in Houston. This article is based on the workshop.

Your role as sponsor is to support your candidate on the three "legs" of a journey...the preweekend, weekend, and fourth-day phases of the Tres Dias experience.

Image: Graur Codrin



An Open Letter to All Pescadores

I am writing this on Monday, October 25, 2010, after experiencing the privilege of being God's hands and feet in His kingdom. My wife and I have just served on the first set of weekends for Northern California. We cannot help but think about the activities during the last four years, and about how God allowed and encouraged people to come together for His purposes.

Four or so years ago, the Birmingham community's head spiritual director was called to pastor a church in Auburn, CA. Shortly thereafter, he started talking to spiritual directors and pescadores in Birmingham, encouraging them to pray that God would help get a new TD community started in northern California.

In the meantime, a pastor who was also a camp director started praying that God would provide a means of helping hurting people to heal and hurting churches to be re-united in their efforts to serve the Lord. God brought these two pastors together at a pastors' conference. The more they talked, the more they realized that each had what the other one wanted, but more importantly, that God was working to make something happen. When God does things, He really makes the pieces fall into place.

The Birmingham community's secretariat unanimously agreed to be the sponsor, and the praying and planning started. Each of Birmingham's weekends was graced with several candidates from the northern California area. These candidates represented a broad spectrum of people and churches. After all, we were helping to build a community, not just have a good weekend. My wife and I had the joy and excitement to be there, firsthand, to see God bring it about.

It was then that we realized how people from Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida felt when they had the privilege of seeing Birmingham get started, and how people from Birmingham felt when they started the Gulf Coast community. Yes, there is a feeling of personal pride, even ownership, yet these feelings fade before the far greater personal excitement of being involved in God's plan.

We heard the new pescadores, at closing, express the excitement of their weekend and describe the changes in their lives. We heard team members and sponsors express the thrill that their friends and loved ones now enjoyed what they had experienced. We remembered that when good seed is planted, watered and fertilized, God gives the growth and resultant increase.

I personally would like to encourage all the pescadores of all communities, especially those who are retired and able to travel, to get involved. You will be greatly blessed. If you can't travel, be involved in whatever way you can to encourage and support new communities being started.

Tres Dias is God's tool, and it is a special blessing to be at work with Him as we use that tool. Praise Him!

--Ned Heffington



Visit the Tres Dias Web site at www.tresdias.org. Send responses to this issue of the newsletter and suggestions for future issues to newsletter@tresdias.org.

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