

2024 Annual Report of the NLS Executive Director

As I write this report, the story of Mary and Martha is on my heart. While Jesus was clear that there is only one thing needed, and that is to turn our eyes and ears toward Him, I believe that Jesus expects us to be a healthy mix of “Mary” and “Martha”. Over the past several years, coming through the pandemic, I believe Christ wanted more “Mary” from me. Discernment and understanding what was needed to connect a movement that has such a focus on “in-person” interaction and living in community. As we transitioned into the current year, I felt Christ calling me to mix more to “Martha”.

In Tom Krause’s previous Distribution Center report, he talked about wanting to move on after many years of dutiful service as our leader there. My first pull for more “Martha” came after reading that report. I spoke with my wife Robin and prayed for guidance...from that insight, we asked the Executive Committee to take over the NLS Distribution Center from Tom. I want to thank Tom again for his many years of hard work in this position serving the Lord and our movement so diligently. The Distribution Center is one of the 3 main cash generation pillars that fund our National Secretariat (Annual Secretariat dues and Annual Gathering proceeds are the other two), and as weekends have come back, so have the demand for materials. I enjoy serving in this capacity with my wife, learning the new processes and praying over the materials that go to every part of the country to be used in Christ’s plan.

During the Mid-Year planning meeting of the Executive Committee for the year, the next call of more “Martha” came. I have heard many versions of what the “Executive Director” position is or should be. Every President has a different version depending on what is important to them and every permutation of the Executive Committee is a different mix of “Martha” and “Mary” which changes the work content. I have served in this role for a little over 4 years and in that time, I have served 3 presidents and over 25 different elected and appointed members of the NLS during one of the most challenging times in the history of our movement. God has called me to lead the host committee for 2 Annual Gatherings in the past 5 years. I believe firmly that God has given me the blessing and honor to serve in this capacity with these experiences to help advise the Executive Committee and provide continuity. With 2-year terms on elected positions, change comes fast and I believe God calls me to minimize that impact. I have been working with the current Executive Committee to set up the appropriate infrastructure to help minimize the impact of that change. The continuity is going to require more “Martha” from me than the “Mary” I have been providing advice. But I am praying and asking for your prayers for continued discernment to be the right balance of “Martha” and “Mary” to serve our movement the best I can.

Whatever way I serve this movement, it fundamentally comes down to prayer. I will continue to pray for Via de Cristo, for our communities, for you, and for discernment for the future. God loves all of you and so do I.

Brian Schwarz
Executive Director

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