

International Catholic Engaged Encounter Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

October 4-8, 2004
Smithfield, VA USA

Opening Mass Main celebrant Fr. Jay Biber

Gerry Bach officially welcomed all. The meeting was opened. The handouts for the Agenda, Minutes and a revised Handbook were distributed. Gerry asked that all review the handouts for discussion later.

Introductions:

Finance Team: Terry & Jackie Greely married 40 years 4 children, 5 grandchildren Involved in EE 18 years and are finishing their term on the Executive committee this weekend.

US NET Fr. Jules Arceneaux Ordained 15 years, 15years in EE

US NET Paul & Carolyn Trahan Married 24 years 1 son 22 yrs old EE 25 years ago, involved ever since

Host Couple - Jim & Sandy Dyk Married 38 years, 2 children 1 son, 1 daughter. 1 Grandson, just finished as US NET

Fr. Jay Biber-retired as NET Priest serving with Jim & Sandy Dyk. Ordained 20 years in May, In EE 15 years.

Central America & Spanish Speaking Caribbean Fr. Rafael Cruz - Ordained 25 years October 13th in EE 11 years.

Cesar & Gilda Liranzo – Married 28 years. 4 children expecting a grandson. EE 13 years 6 years as a National Team for the Dominican Republic discerned as Regional Team in February.

Mexico Fr. Jacinto Rivera, ordained 23 years, EE 13 years

Victor & Maru Vasquez Married 28 years in EE for 11 years 2 Boys oldest son married 1 ½ years expecting a grandson. Youngest son a recent graduate electrical engineer.

Interpreters – Paco & Mali Rocha Married 34 years 3 married children 1 grandson. EE 21 years.

Financial Team Elect – Francis & Annette Wattie Married 22 years 2 children EE 14 years. Regional Coordinators for English Speaking Caribbean and will assume the role of Executive Committee Finance Team after this weekend.

Fr Leonard Alfonso Born in Trinidad, Works in Barbados. Ordained 18 years. EE 19 years.

Statistics and Post Weekend Resources - Fr. Angel Heredia- Ordained 32 years, is a parish priest at Our Lady of Peace in Quito Ecuador. 10 years in ME 3 years in EE.

Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado – Married 18 years 2 children boy 16 girl 13 EE 9 years. Former South American Regional Representatives.

Outline and Weekend Resources – Fr. Gilberto Gomez - Ordained in 1959 IN EE since 1977 Started EE in Colombia in 1978. Completing their second term on the executive committee.

Jairo & Claudia Duque Married 36 years 3 children 2 grandsons. ME 10 years EE 16 years.

International Executive Team Gerry & Ann Bach Married 31 years. 3 children 3 grandsons. Involved in EE for 20 years. Starting their second term serving the International family

Fr. Gary Gummersheimer- involved in EE 15 years ordained 25 years this past June.

Fr. Tony Kerin- absent and will arrive soon. Fr. Gary offered, on behalf of the entire ICEE community condolences to Claudia on the death of her brother.

The US was thanked for the donation of the laptop computer. They explained that a second one is on the way.

AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed and the following changes were made.

- Breakfast will be at 8:00 a.m. each morning
- Prayer service on Wednesday at 4:00 p.m.
- Prayer service on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

Gerry explained this is an Executive Meeting and how voting procedures work. While other regional teams are present and welcome, the voting is done by the Executive Committee trios.

Tuesday, October 5th

9:00 am Mass (Main Celebrant – Fr. Gilberto Gomez Botero)

Fr Gilberto led us in a votive mass of the Holy Family.

9:30 am Review Minutes from the 2003 General Board Meeting

Fr Gilberto pointed out that the five main points of the previous meetings minutes were the five resolutions decided at that meeting.

There were two corrections to be made to the minutes. First, the Cardinal's name is Lopez Trujillo, not just Trujillo (His parents were married). The second change is that it appears that the international outline changes are approved by the outline team, but in fact it is the whole Board who approve changes to the outline.

Handbook Approval

The new handbook was circulated, as per the resolution 4 from last years meeting. There were a couple of typographical and numbering issues that needed to be changed.

To the latest draft of the handbook, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile and Antigua need to be added to the list of countries.

Resolution 1.

Subject to these corrections the revision of the handbook was approved.

10:30 am Break

10:45 am Regional Reports (15 to 30 Minutes per report)

Fr Jay handed out the US Bishop's Committee summary of the meeting with ME, EE and Retrouvaille.

Paul and Carolyn Trahan presented the US regional report. Key points included the roll out of the revised Married Sexual Intimacy Talk. They are also providing audio and video presentation of Christopher West on Pope John Paul II's theology of the body. A demonstration presentation of the talk will be given by a presenting team at the Convention this weekend. The entire outline is being looked at by a committee headed by Stan Isham to check for content, theological accuracy and updated language. Online registration for weekends is being piloted at present. Web site development continues. International CEE is a prominent link on the home page. Horizons is now on the website and it has been requested that regional web pages be available in Spanish. Expansion continues in response to requests from Memphis TN, Fairbanks AL and Detroit MI. Fr Jay is also visiting Seminaries and the response is promising. The joint Flyer with ME EE and Retrouvaille is available on the International Site (pdf file in current news page of ICEE website). The liaison with other ministries through the Smartmarriages Conference and NACFLM continues. The International Fund Drive will start earlier (in January this year) so that the US contribution to International may return to previous totals. This year the check is not as large as they would have liked. It is a matter of awareness and promotion. The 2006 Convention is to be in Houston Texas.

Comments: The tri ministry cooperation was seen as very important work and the relation of these three ministries to the Matrimonial Tribunal was discussed. It was noted EE is a good preparation for people who have an annulment and are planning to remarry.

Central America & Hispananic Caribbe

Gilda Y Cezar Liranzo and Fr Rafael Cruz presented their report. They started with a quote from Lukes Gospel (13:19). At the regional meeting at they were discerned as the regional team. Due to a policy agreement with ME, the post encounter experience is limited to the

first five years after the wedding. They are working on a guidance document for the communities to assist them with their history, by laws and themes of the region's communities and their growth. There are also background resources that may help with the talks and the weekend, but especially with things that are not covered such as liturgy, bio ethics and the like. They have a CD with all the information concerned with EN to promote it in parishes and Dioceses. It is available to whoever wants it. The Bishops have responded well to this initiative and the Cardinal has endorsed with a letter the concept of the weekend. They are also presenting a session to priests during the week to inform them about the ministry of EN.

They have an important issue with regard to Costa Rica. The bishops of Costa Rica have decided to establish a catechetical program for marriage preparation. From 2005 it will be the only approved marriage preparation. EN will only be seen as supplementary.

Discussion ensued concerning how best to assist EN in Costa Rica with this problem. It was thought best not to interfere as an International executive in the affairs of a particular country and the decision of its bishops. It may be more an issue between Fr Eladio Solano and Jose-Luis Pacheco, both of whom work for Bishop Vaquero and both of whom have divergent ideas about what is best for EN and for the couples preparing for marriage. Personal approaches rather than a written letter might be best to address this issue. Perhaps the Bishops need more information about EN.

12:30 pm Lunch/Siesta

Late arrival introductions:

Fr Tery Runstedler, 20 years ordained this year.

Peter & Paulette Amsden married 37 years 2 children, 6 grandchildren. Involved with CEE for 10 years.

Fr Tony Kerin, ordained 27 years this year and involved with CEE since 1982. (22 years)

2:30 pm 10/10 Dialogue Question (Jairo & Claudia Duque & Fr., Gilberto)

God's plan is often revealed to us through prophets who have lived since the evangelist St John died. Fr Gilberto distributed an example from Mother Teresa. It is a poem she wrote. Read it twice and then reflect on it. What is the personal message I receive after reading this poem. How does this make me feel?

3:00 pm Continue Regional Reports

Central America Discussion continued

We need to pray for this intention and to hand over the solution of this problem to the Spirit of God. The regional team are looking for a written response from the ICEE Executive Committee to take back to the region.

We have a number of documents already endorsing CEE and these will be posted on the web site. Please note that a letter from the Pontifical Council for the Family is available under the District III resources on the www.engagedencounter.org website.

Mexico

The Mexican report was a stunning new media presentation in Powerpoint. It is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Oceania

As we write this report, our thoughts, prayers and thanks go to the communities of the Oceania Region - Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Wellington. All communities have been under threat in some way or another and are struggling to keep the values of the weekend as a process and to build community.

We will have this meeting in our prayers throughout the week too. We thank you for the support, encouragement and enrichment of ICEE. We wish we could be with you all as you farewell the Greelys and Fr Tony and welcome the Watties and Fr Leonard, renew old friendships and make new ones. May your generosity of spirit be rewarded with an abundance of God's love.

Getting couples to the weekend

All communities have had a slight increase in numbers this last year. All scheduled weekends have been held. Having said this, numbers remain unpredictable and uncertain. Weekends are still being promoted by word of mouth, through pamphlet distribution to churches, universities, community centres etc. Some websites have been updated although some still need this done. Several communities have addressed meetings of priests and Wellington has been represented at a Wedding Show.

The two-day weekends and Melbourne's two Saturdays seem to cater well to the needs of today's couples.

Recruiting team

Many of the Oceania communities have had difficulties in finding priests, senior and, most often, junior couples to present weekends. In some cases weekends are given without a priest or junior couple. We think there are only two new couples recruited in the

whole region this year! Support couples are also increasingly hard to find. That all scheduled weekends have been held reflects the high value placed on having the weekends in the face of so many obstacles.

CEE Communities

Just as there is a slight increase in the numbers of couples attending weekends, the number of couples willing to commit to community seems to be dropping in all areas. Couples off weekends are often invited to community social or enrichment events. Then it is suggested that they might like to take some responsibility or to become presenters. It seems as if few couples have the time to commit to regular meetings and couples are reluctant to be tied down to a particular task.

As a wider regional community it has scattered over vast distances, it is difficult to get together for our three-yearly meeting. We have to make do with phone calls, email and newsletters to keep in touch. Some of us are writers - some not!

After a long Discernment Process with much consultation and discussion, Jackie and Terry and Fr Tony have decided that they cannot continue to keep running weekends in Melbourne on their own. The support is not available in the area so the November weekend will be the last. Our heartfelt thanks to them, especially Jackie who did so much of the work needed to keep going throughout this last year. You will all know of their love and commitment to EE and the people involved and will appreciate what a loss they will be to us personally as advisors and to the EE movement. You will realise that it was not a decision lightly made and that they will be grieving for the loss. We thank God we do not lose their friendship and trust we will still meet again somehow.

On-going contact with couples from Weekends

As people resources are so stretched to present weekends, this is becoming increasingly difficult. Most communities manage to have some contact but Wellington is the only community with a regular programme to follow. As this is run in conjunction with the other marriage preparation programmes in the Archdiocese, it is not possible to share with you for copyright reasons. As it is dependent on the marriage preparation co-ordinator, we have little say in timing or content. Having said that, we, Christine and Peter, are currently presenters with other couples and are pressing for re-writing some parts of the programme. It is designed as a day of enrichment with some skill based learning. We see it as weak on the spirituality of marriage and are trying to address that.

Other Marriage Preparation Programmes, National Organisations, Funding

In Australia the Catholic Society for Marriage Education (CSME) is a national body which can distribute state funding within the Church for the purpose of marriage education. Some Australian CEE communities have been successful in obtaining this funding. Others have felt under pressure from other marriage preparation courses funded by CSME and basically undercutting CEE.

In New Zealand no state funding is available for CEE. We liaise with the Wellington Archdiocese Family Life office. This has been challenging because the Office runs another marriage preparation course and we are sometimes in conflict over the approach to be taken. On the positive side the Office has provided training and

enrichment resources and been an avenue for us to pursue the integration of FOCCUS and post-wedding events with CEE. New Zealand has a network of National Catholic Marriage Educators (NaCME).

Vision

To be an extended family that prays together because we know that our primary work is to make space for God to work.

To foster our own vocations within the CEE community and reach out to more couples in our region with the wonderful gift of EE.

To make an opportunity for God to transform marriages and society.

Fr Bill Warwick and Chris and Peter Rawnsley
Liaison Team, Oceania Region

4:00 pm Break

English Speaking Caribbean

314 couples attended the weekend last year. For the first time they were able to contribute the US\$1 per couple to International. Antigua has started the weekends. St Vincent has stopped giving the weekend. Trinidad gives 8 weekends per year. They use the Saturday afternoon alternative. Are preparing for non residential weekend. Use the evening prayer on Friday. Use new compilation of music. Are printing a marriage and family booklet to give to the couples in their take home package.

Things seemed to be going very well until 7th Sept when Hurricane Ivan arrived to wreak havoc. It went straight over Grenada and 90% of the buildings in the country were destroyed. We have organised a relief effort for the Grenada community. The retreat house is gone. So weekends will not be held for some time. Grenada needs assistance to get back on its feet.

Jamaica remains an attractive idea for expansion but it would be better to be done from the US since Trinidad would not be as acceptable in Jamaica due to Caribbean rivalry.

Canada

They have embraced the Holy Family's patronage as requested by ICEE. French Canada West district leadership burnt out and closed its doors. The leadership has now been replaced by another couple. In French Canada East district the Saturday/Sunday program has been well received and the schedule is being distributed to others to use if they wish.

English East have regathered some communities and are hosting the national meeting at the end of this month. English West is hosting the 2005 convention in Calgary Alberta.

Peter & Paulette Amsden, Fr Tery Runstedler.

Discussion ensued about the shortened weekend. The integrity of the weekend and the central components were mentioned. The 44 hour weekend is a core value but there can be reasons that make such a change compelling. A two day weekend is better than no weekend. But the dynamic is different. The time taken for concepts to soak in is reduced.

South Africa

Our successes:

We have continued with the same amount of weekends in all the regions and the number of couples attending is more or less the same. In Cape Town there had been a problem amongst their team and thank goodness that has all been ironed out. Their community is positive and they are getting along with a greater commitment to their ministry.

Our struggles:

Recruiting team is the biggest struggle. In all regions the teams seem to be getting smaller and some of the presenting couples should have moved on and one couple who has written senior talks are still having to present junior talks. Time and commitment to the ministry is also a struggle.

Outline concerns:

The outline is good and evaluations are always positive but we feel in South Africa with the racial mix that perhaps we need to be more aware of cultural differences eg. AIDS, NFP, is it real for young couples today?

Need for assistance:

We seem to be managing but need lots of prayers to highlight the importance of our ministry to engaged couples, to the couples themselves and to the community at large.

Expansion news:

We have been in touch with Fr Kevin from Kenya via email – no call for your help as yet. Mauritius is happy with their program they use.

Expansion funds:

We do not need any funds at the moment.

Lots of love

Jeanine and Bruce Forrest

SOUTH AMERICA DIVISION IN SOUTH AMERICA NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA SOUTH REPORT (SAN Y SAS)

In October, 2003 in Trinidad, we assumed the responsibility to establish the Regions North and South of South America according to the decision taken at that ICEE Executive Committee Meeting.

When our proposal was accepted by ICEE Executive Committee for the division into two regions we looked at the best ways in order to establish them formally. Relying upon on financial support for it, we thought of carrying out a two regions meeting but for high costs of displacement this could not be carried out and rather we thought of doing two meetings with the presence of ICEE Executive International Team.

NORTH REGION SUD AMERICA (SAN)

For South America North Region (SAN) we proposed that it take place in Bogotá, Colombia taking advantage of the celebration of the 25 anniversary of CEE in that city. In that way, on December 6th and 7th, 2003 this meeting was carried out in that city with the presence of CEE Ecuador and Colombia National Teams. Also Gerry and Ann Bach delegated Jairo and Claudia Duque and Fr.. Gilberto Gomez and us in order to be present in that celebration and in the establishment of the new Region.

For this, we proposed that Colombia takes on the responsibility like new SAN Regional Team to give interchange to this responsibility, because Ecuador had had this responsibility and we had finished our functions in order to assume as Statistics Team at ICEE. Ecuador and Colombia accepted this proposal and we requested from CEE Colombia National Team the names of couples and priests to be considered for that responsibility. Colombia designated Germán and Sofi Hurtado and Fr. Darío Valencia and in this meeting they were designated the new CEE SAN Regional Team.

Besides this designation, the Regional Handbook was analyzed and approved at that meeting; also Ecuador and Colombia gave the reports of the two active countries, we presented our regional report as 1999-2003 regional team, the meetings frequency was established, the strategies for new expansions was analyzed, regional fund creation was analyzed and steps taken to improve CEE diffusion and communication in the future.

The Regional Handbook established the regional responsibility for three years and it was established that the regional meetings will be each three years in order to change the leadership, although it could have other meetings whenever it is necessary.

The new 2003-2006 CEE SAN Regional Team is made up of Germán and Sofi Hurtado and Fr. Darío Valencia Uribe from Pereira, Colombia

CEE SAN REGIONALTEAM

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SOUTH AMERICA SOUTH REGION (SAS)

In the same way, to South America South Region we proposed that it begin in a regional meeting planned for April, 2004 but it could not be carried out for multiple factors and we requested to ICEE Executive Team to authorize us to establish the Region and to design the Regional Team. Because the diverse countries circumstances and for all work carried out in the past two years in Paraguay as National Team and because their commitment and love to CEE we proposed for this responsibility to Hugo and Mirtha Alcaraz and Fr. Gabriel López Heras.

This designation was made by e-mail on February 20, 2004 when we delivered them this responsibility for 2003-2006 period. They accepted pleasantly and they have begun making the efforts in order to fortify the Region

We also sent them the Region Handbook and our regional report.

With the Alcaraz and Fr. Lopez we maintain a close and permanent communication about the steps to take in the future to fortify CEE and to plan the expansions.

CEE SAN REGIONAL TEAM

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ICEE FUNDS

The Trinidad Meeting approved funds which were only utilized in trip expenses in order to be present in the Bogota meeting in December, 2004. The remainder funds assigned by ICEE, we proposed be used if necessary, for future expansions of two regions.

CONTACTS WITH MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Upon there we being been Regional Team of South America of the 1999 at 2003 and we have made contacts with Marriage Encounter, we thought that for South America Regions North and South and for future expansions is necessary have contact with

them, so that they support positively this possibility and so that they have clear knowledge about the autonomy and independence of the two movements.

We believe that the best way in order to establish CEE in other countries and dioceses is with couples and priests who have lived ME and even better if they have been ME Teams, because they have more experience and we could speak in the same topic.

However, because the difficulties that exist now and that have existed in the past, we believe that ME should be very clear about the autonomy of EE and its leadership responsibilities.

For these reasons, we propose to strengthen the communication between two Movements in order to support the expansions in South America and we concretely propose to analyze the possibility of carrying out a meeting with ME leaders (Worldwide and Latin American ME Teams) in order to analyze this relationship and a possible mutual support. An option could be taking advantage of the ME Worldwide Team who will be present in Quito, Ecuador for the ME 25 anniversary, in November, 2004, and at the same time it could assist South and North Regional Teams besides ICEE Executive International Team.

JUAN SIMÓN Y PATRICIA MALDONADO P. ANGEL HEREDIA

South America South

ACTIVITIES AND STATISTICS REPORT

Country: Paraguay

City: Asuncion

CEE present Diocese: Asuncion

Number of Team couples: 4

Number of couples with complete International outline Talks: 1

Number of couples with complete Equator outline Talks: 1

Number of couples in the process of writing International outline Talks: 1

Number of Priests: 2

ACTIVITY 2004

Number of EE Weekends: 4

Couples that attended:

Weekend N° 7: 11 engaged couples and 2 young marriages.

Weekend N° 8: 12 engaged couples

Weekend N° 9: 7 engaged couples

Weekend N° 10: We expect to have between 15 and 20 couples.

ACTIVITIES 2005 (MARCH-DECEMBER FORECAST)

Number of EE Weekends: 5

Diocese: Asuncion

Dates: To be confirmed

Place: San Lorenzo – Retreat home of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY

Date beginning CEE apostolic activity: June 9th, 2001 / 1st EE Weekend in Paraguay: May 24th, 25th and 26th, 2002

TYPE OF APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY:

- Autonomic and independent (organization as an Apostolic Movement): YES / With Statutes and Regulations.
- Part or area of the Marriage Encounter: NO
- Parochial activity using CEE material (specify type of activity): NONE

POST-ENCOUNTER OR FOLLOW-UP EXPERIENCES: We are trying to reinforce the follow-up process, seeking for methods more suitable for our reality. We first insisted on strengthening our community and not on the training process, but in “forming a community”. This is highly important for the later recruitment.

We are currently inviting the engaged couples to be part of the CEE Community in Paraguay. We believe that the couples are not completely aware of the training process –so necessary- and they seem to be more interested in their studies, wedding plans, children, work, getting goods, etc.

TEAM TRAINING EXPERIENCES: None. We intend to have a “Flourishing” Weekend next year.

COORDINATION:

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REMARKS:

In the process of updating International outline talks: 3 couples.

2 Priests with updated and complete talk, following the International outline.

Goals for the rest of the year:

- Updating talks of all teams following the International outline.
- Stablishing a follow-up mechanism according to our needs and idiosyncrasy.
- Registering our logo.

NOTE:

Right now we need to consolidate CEE within the Asuncion Diocese, so then we can plan to spread it to other Dioceses.

We want to strengthen the relationship with the new Bishop of Asuncion, Minister Monsignor Cuquejo, and with the Familiar Pastoral; therefore our two Team priests are part of the Advisor Team of the Familiar Pastoral.

At the beginning of the year we (moved by our initiative) had an interview with the Minister Monsignor Cuquejo and with the Pastoral Vicar. It was a really interesting and positive encounter for our Movement, because several subjects were cleared out regarding CEE, as the validity as a pre-marital course, handing out the certificates, the methodology, etc.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER AND WITH RETROUVAILLE:

Good. At the beginning of this year we got in touch with the national coordinators of ME and Retrouvaille. We purposed mutual cooperation, mainly in the popularization of the three movements.

RECRUITMENT:

This is difficult, with some inconvenience. The more effective way for bringing couples to the EE Weekend, is by other couples who lived the experience previously; but as the desertion in the follow-up process is significant, the couples don't recruit the couples they committed to recruit in the weekend. We are currently promoting the EE Weekend by paid-advertisements in newspapers.

We also have free spaces thanks to the Advertisement Department of the Archdiocese of Asuncion..

TEAMS' COMMITMENT:

With difficulties, due to the lack of full understanding of the CEE Service. The commitment of some is limited to read their talks in the EE Weekend. We are constantly motivating and accompanying them.

CONTRIBUTION:

We haven't contributed so far, because:

1. Lack of funds. We have supported the movement on a shoestring so far, and we have devoted the movement to grant scholarships to those couples with low resources, providing materials and everything needed for the weekends.
2. All these costs were covered with our contribution.
3. We give some money to the priests for their service.
4. The costs of the Retreat Home are very high and the participant couples are charged the minimum possible, just to cover the cost of the rooms and the food. Every Friday's dinner is paid by the Movement.

From this year we will contribute US\$1 per couple, established by the Financing team.

HOURS OF THE EE WEEKEND:

The weekend starts on Friday evenings. We consider that it is very important that it starts on Friday so on Saturday we have a favourable ambience for couple work. Besides in Paraguay, people are a little unpunctual, if it started on Saturday morning, we would have an important delay in the development of the program.

The closure mass is planned to be on Sunday, 4:00 pm.

OUTLINES:

We started writing the talks with the international outline, but then, by the regional team recommendation, we wrote the talks following the outline of Ecuador 2002, believing that this is more suitable for our reality.

We started the orientation to all of the teams with this outline, but then because of the changes the people in charge of the area of ICEE, they recommended to us again the international outline, which caused us some troubles, delays in the process, and objective detours that were first purposed.

We suggest the implementation of one unique outline.

PRIESTS:

Very committed. It's a delight to work with them, due to their good predisposition and open mind.

FOLLOW-UP:

Without definition. We consider that it is necessary to have a uniformity in the follow-up process, with materials very well studied, in order to satisfy the couples' expectations. We've observed that the engaged couples are not very interested in the methodology of the workshop-kind encounters.

RENEWAL OF COORDINATORS:

Although we consider of high importance an alternation of coordinators, we think this is not the right time yet; nevertheless we hope that the team couples can understand soon this apostolate and show more predisposition, enthusiasm and affection toward the CEE.

SAS COORDINATION:

We've gotten in touch with couples from Brazil, who seemed to be very open and interested on the CEE; nevertheless, they are in charge of the diocesan coordination of the ME; that's why we are still interested in contacting other people, so there will be no inconvenience such as the one occurred in Chile.

Last month Father Gabriel traveled to Uruguay, where he contacted couples and priests. We hope that this journey be fruitful shortly.

Regarding Argentina, we think that the process of independence from the ME will be troubled and even traumatic, therefore we prefer that it continues with what it started and what was proposed in the Illinois Meeting (USA), before initiating any other contact from us.

Looking forward to hearing that our report can collaborate with the strengthening of the Movement, we wish that Jesus Christ and Mary spread on you lot of blesses.

Hugo and Mirta Alcaraz; Fray Gabriel Lopez Heras (O.P.)
CEE National Coordination-Paraguay
CEE SAS Coordination

South America North

With warm greetings to all of you gathering in the international meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, we want to send this brief information about the present situation and activities developed lately in the area.

Since December 2003 when we were selected in Bogota meeting as North South American region coordinator team, we knew there was much work to be done since it was necessary to fortify some communities, foster others and start all over again with at least two of them

COLOMBIA

As to Colombia, it can be said that thanks God, CEE keeps on growing and counts now 8 active communities, the last one established in Barranquilla city in 2003.

Besides that, there is a project well under way to expand the influence of CEE to suburbs or near towns located around main cities. By the experience undergone, we can say it is something worth doing. For one thing there is not need to increase the number of presenting teams and in the other hand expenses are reduced for sure.

CEE's relationship with ME in all communities of Colombia has been from the very beginning one of respect, independence and mutual help.

As in several other countries, in some communities in Colombia, weekends take only two days, Saturday and Sunday and it can be said it really works since attending couples have just one restful beginning on Saturday morning instead of two difficult ones. When you start on Friday evening, many persons get in late because most of them had difficulty in getting permission to leave working places earlier. If time for presenting talks is duly controlled in keeping with outline suggestion, there will not be any problem in having time enough to share the whole program. Finally there is not need to think about dinner on Friday night.

VENEZUELA

Maybe because of the civil and politics troubles or maybe because of lack of compromise of last weekend attending couples to help the Santanas, CEE in Venezuela regretfully became stagnant after three weekends. For some time we have been trying to get in touch with The Santanas and have not been able to get any reply. We know that much can be done and much should be done to revive CEE in Venezuela. We intend to establish reliable contacts with the help of father Gilberto Gomez with bishops and Dioceses of Merida or San Cristobal, two cities located near the Colombian border. Being so near, the travel expenses would be lower and the chances to initiate and supervision greater. To do this we will need your economical help so we kindly ask you to study our request of US\$1.000 to cover first trip expenses. In the name of Venezuelan community we thank you very much in advance.

ECUADOR

CEE was born in Ecuador in Nov. 1996 and is positively active since then. Ecuador has 12 million inhabitants with a catholic population of 80%. Its language is 95% Spanish and 5% Quechua. Total number of Dioceses in the country is 23, but just in two of them, CEE is established. There were 10 weekends in 2003 with an attendant average of 17 couples. 9 weekends were held in Quito and 1 in Cuenca. A post-encounter follow-up program is operating with good results. The main purpose is giving support to newlywed couples and help, in its compromise, to still single ones. Now they have 10 team couples: 4 with less than 7 years of marriage and 6 with more. Priests sharing talks: 3

Team Formation Process.

After the weekend, all engaged couples are invited to attend the follow-up meeting that is held once a month. Those that show major promise and after one and a half or two years of marriage, are invited to spend an enrichment weekend. This process helps couples evaluate both their desire and ability to serve the Church in this way at this time in their lives. The enrichment weekend takes place once a year.

Short and long term plans

There are 8 couples carrying out the formation process and a priest that will start to share in November.

They look forward to take in a short time the CEE to Guayaquil and Ambato.

A special weekend took place already in Quito in which poor couples did not have to pay anything. They intend to have one event of this kind once a year.

This coming year they plan to make real a weekend just for priests who have decided to be part of the team and also for those who just want to know what CEE is all about.

As to the relationship between ME and CEE there has not ever been trouble
To fulfill each one's job in a frame of mutual respect.

PERU

As far as we know, there is an organization or movement that uses part of the CEE outlines and looks like Engaged Encounter at a parish level, ran by an aged priest since many years ago. He does not like to belong to another group and refused to follow the CEE standard or model

Anyway we are looking for some other way to reach a focal center to sow a good seed.

BOLIVIA.

No communication at all so far, however we are doing our best to get in touch with a Diocese or a couple that may be from ME or similar apostolic movement to ensure once and for all that CEE is well established in that beautiful country

Finally there is a topic on which we in the name of the north south american region are very much concerned. It is about a new outline that showed up and is being introduced to some countries lately.

We understand that in 1995 it was suggested to form a working team to decide only one outline to be followed in all Spanish speaking countries. At the 2000 meeting the USA Outline was approved as the one that should be assumed as international outline and any suggested modification would need the international team approval. Why is a new or different outline now allowed?

We hope that all is well with you, ask for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit for all attending and May God bless you all in the meeting.

With love

German y Sofy Hurtado de la Roche
Fr. Dario Valencia Uribe
South American North Region Coordinator Team

5:00 pm Prayer Service (Jairo, Claudia & Fr. Gilberto)

6:30 pm Dinner at Retreat Center

After dinner the executive committee met to discuss and resolve some matters arising from the day's deliberations.

In response to the Resolution 6 from last years minutes, there was a need to clarify the definition of Active self sufficient, active non self sufficient and inactive communities.

RESOLUTION 2

It was resolved that

1. Active and Self Sufficient Community

This means a community that is running weekends with their own team couples, priests and finances; who are faithful to the CEE outline and who are active members of their region.

2. Active but not self sufficient Community

This is a community who use the ICEE outline but who cannot provide wither their own finance or full team, but who are active in their region.

3. Inactive Community

This is a community who has been presenting weekends, but who no longer are able, or interested to do so.

Wednesday, October 6th

9:00 am Mass (Main Celebrant - Fr. Tony Kerin)

9:30 am TEAM A Report - Statistics & Post W/E Resources

Juan Simon and Patricia Maldonado and Fr Angel Heredia presented their written report in Spanish and English. The pointed out the current subscriber list who receive messages from the Information group via the yahoo group. To subscribe simply send an email to

ICEE-Statistics-Subscribe@gruposyadoo.com and to send an email to the list send it to icee-statistics@yahoo.com

The information group not only collect the statistical information about EE throughout the world but they also maintain and update the ICEE directory. All regions and countries should email any changes to this group so that it can be kept current.

The Friday prayer has proven to be a valuable spiritual resource. Each Friday the email arrives to those on the list reminding us all to pray for the weekends and ICEE.

A FRIDAY PRAYER FOR CEE (TO BE PRAYED EVERY FRIDAY)

Our Father:

Today is Friday and we want to put into Your hands Catholic Engaged Encounter throughout the world. Protect all who serve You in this apostolate, guide us in everything we do and give us the wisdom and commitment needed for building Your Kingdom and trusting in the strength of our Church.

Jesus, our brother:

Today is Friday and we want to offer you our service in Catholic Engaged Encounter in gratitude for the love poured out on the cross on Good Friday. We ask that you help us so that all we do will be as you want, that we transmit your love and that we serve others with love and joy for the future of marriage and the family.

Holy Spirit:

Today is Friday and we ask that you enlighten all engaged couples who today will begin a CEE weekend in many places around the world, so that Your love will be present, that they will find You in their love and that they discover the value of living the Sacrament of Matrimony for a lifetime.

Mary, our Mother:

Today is Friday and we ask that you protect with your mother's love all the couples and families who serve in CEE all around the world, the team couples and priests, the engaged couples who have experienced the weekend and especially those who will begin their weekend today.

Amen

RESOLUTION 3.

As a clarification it was suggested that in the statistics report the distinction between senior and junior presenting team couples was different from country to country. It was resolved that the report in future would just list presenting couples and not distinguish between senior and junior.

10:15 am Break

10:30 am TEAM B Report – Finances

It is important to note that the finances are not for the same dates as the statistics since these figures are for the current year.

It is also very important that contributions be

1. in US Dollars
2. made out to ICEE (not to a person)

otherwise the funds are eaten up with bank charges.

The figures were tabled.

There was no comment or discussion since the balance sheet appeared self explanatory.

2005 Meeting Site Bids

Canada

Alberta August 8-12 2005 to coincide with the National Canadian Convention, 12-14 August 2005.

South Africa

Accommodation in a retreat house in Johannesburg, costing about \$40 per day fully inclusive. The local community would host it. Dates would be for the first week of October or thereabouts.

12:30 pm Lunch/Siesta

2:30 pm 10/10 Dialogue Question (Terry & Jackie Greely & Fr. Tony)

Write separately, then share as a team. How do I prepare spiritually for a CEE weekend?

RESOLUTION 4.

During the Siesta break the Committee met and discerned

The 2005 meeting will be in South Africa.

The 2006 full board meeting will be in Houston Texas and

The 2007 meeting will be in Canada (East)

3:00 pm TEAM C Report – Outline & W/E Resources

The core concepts and core components document which was distributed in Trinidad last year by the US team, was presented for the meeting to ratify. It is a document to accompany the outline. It is in some senses a summary. Does it cover every element? Should it state that marriage is between a man and a woman? Perhaps stating that the weekend is catholic in thought, ritual and expression is sufficient. The theology of the body and the CDF document on the collaboration with women provide important background for the outline as well. The theological propositions on Christian Marriage prepared in 1977 by the international theological commission also bear close study. The suggestion was made that the Isham outline Review committee should consider the definition of marriage and couples.

The suggestion from Central America at the Trinidad meeting that a Spanish outline for the Central American region be approved as standardised and distinct from the international outline, was also considered by this meeting.

It is recommended that this not be approved.

RESOLUTION 5.

The executive team will write to Guatamala and indicate that they should resume using the International Outline.

3:45 pm Break

4:00 pm Prayer Service (Terry & Jackie Greely & Fr. Tony)

4.45 pm Shopping Excursion

8.00 pm Dinner at Restaurant

Thursday, October 7th

9:00 am Mass (Main Celebrant – Fr. Angel Heredia)

Feast of the Holy Rosary.

9:30 am Expansion Funds Requests

Availability

Accountability

Central America and Spanish Speaking Caribbean.

They are expanding to Nicaragua and Cuba. Nicaragua may be autonomous by next year but at the moment they need help.

\$400 for team travel would see them well on the way to self sufficiency.

Cuba needs help with everything from outside the country.

\$1,233 is needed for each weekend.

The report of the Cuba expansion will be submitted for reprinting in Horizons.

10:15 am Break

Mexico

They have more requests from bishops for EN expansion than they can handle (18). They propose to do 8 expansions this year. The economic situation is no so good and they are cutting costs. They have decided, in the light of what is happening in other countries that are more needy, not to ask for any assistance this year for expansion. They will trim and slow down the timetable for expansion so that they can cover every thing from their own resources. They have trusted in divine providence until now and they do not propose to change. They are confident that the human resources of teams and priests will continue to grow.

English speaking Caribbean

Plans for expansion to St Lucia were to cost \$1200. (team travel)

Plans for Grenada \$500. They would prefer that Cuba got its full allocation before any of their requests are granted since they have some Church support.

South America South

They were able to manage their allocated grants last year well and some is still left over. They propose that these extra funds be used for expansion in other places this year. They do not know now what their needs will be for this year. They have no requests this year.

South America North

Venezuela is planning anew to restart EN in different dioceses to Caracas. They are more religiously practicing in these new dioceses of St Cristobel and Merida. They are closer to the Colombian border. They are seeking \$1,000 for two or more visits by a team to organise the startup. There is also a better chance of local support than in Caracas.

Canada

No needs at this time

The total of expansion requests is \$4,333. We can accommodate all of these requests.

RESOLUTION 6.

The Executive Committee met and decided the following allocations for expansion.

St Lucia	\$1,200
Grenada	\$1,000
Nicaragua	\$ 400
Cuba	\$2,000
Mexico	\$ 900
Venezuela	\$1,000
Total for year	\$ 6,500

Reserve Funds for emergency \$ 3,000

12:30 pm Lunch / Siesta

On the feast of the Rosary, all were invited to pray the Rosary for the expansion regions of ICEE after lunch.

3:00 pm 10/10 Dialogue Question (Juan Simon, Patti & Fr. Angel)

3:30 pm Regional Concerns

A concern from South Africa.

As an international body, we do not legislate or determine how regions run their own affairs but Bruce & Jeanine Forrest would appreciate our advice on the issue of interchurch couples as presenting team.

We have to keep in mind that CEE is more than just a movement, it is a ministry in the Church. This is a delicate issue. The presentation of the weekend must be in conformity with the teaching of the Church. The partner who is not Catholic has the disadvantage of not having to be in conformity with the Church. They might claim that they have no objection to the Church's teaching. But they are also not obliged to be followers of the Church. The Church law is clear about other Christians being a godparent at Baptism. They cannot be a godparent, but rather a Christian witness who also requires the accompaniment of a

baptised Catholic at the Baptism. There are Christian non catholics in sacramental marriages who are of one accord with the Church's teaching and could present a weekend but you cannot simply accept all interchurch couples as suitable team.

The pre requisite for presenting team is not whether they are both catholic, but whether they live the catholic vision of marriage. We need to remember that a good deal of the original outline of the weekend was written by an interchurch couple. This particular couple also wrote the workshop training weekend. We should not presume that a catholic/catholic couple are automatically living a catholic vision of marriage. Christians who attend Mass with their Catholic spouses are growing in a catholic faith but may not yet be ready to be received as Catholics but their contribution is considerable and often more than some Catholics.

Our advice to South Africa is that they use the life giving decision making process for a community discernment to come to their decision. Perhaps, depending on the diocese, they could then run their decision past their bishop.

A Canada community asked whether they could put revolving banners of advertising on their website. We believe that it is their decision to make and have no objection, but the appropriate nature of the advertising should be considered.

Fr Gilberto mentioned that gratitude is an important Christian virtue. We should consider making a certificate or diploma of gratitude for those who have given great service to CEE.

6:00 pm Prayer Service (Juan Simon, Patti & Fr. Angel)

Candle Ceremony prayers

6:30 pm Dinner with the US National Board / Social

Friday, October 8th

9:00 am Morning Prayer Service (Gerry & Ann Bach & Fr. Gary)

Digo 'si' Señor

9:20 am Booth at the US Convention

All who are attending the convention are asked to hover around the booth as much as possible to enable people to meet us.

9:25 am Discussion of any Unfinished Business

The brochure of the agreement with ME and Retrouvaille with CEE has not been translated into Spanish yet and so this agreement is not widely known yet in Central or South America. Fr Gilberto is to translate it for us as soon as possible. Animated discussion followed on the difficulties that vary from country to country.

10:00 am Closing Mass (Main Celebrant – Fr. Gary Gummersheimer)

12:30 pm Lunch & Farewells