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RTCA Network News

RACE TRACK CHAPLAINCY OF AMERICA

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RTCA: Let's Maintain the Connection

The 21st century has brought us many new electronic tools that enable us to live our lives more efficiently than ever. Our newest technological computers and gadgets are extremely complex and we are awed by these discoveries that are presently taking place. It's amazing to see how far along technology has gone. Nevertheless, just when we think we've seen it all, what we thought



was the ultimate, soon enough becomes old and obsolete and replaced by something even more superior. However, as advanced and complex as our technology becomes, any kind of technological equipment needs to be connected to some source of power in order to carry out its purpose. Without a power source, even the most highly developed equipment is rendered useless.

On the same note, our Christian lives and the RTCA function in a

similar manner. When God created you and I, He said that we are very special. "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Likewise, in God's eyes, the RTCA is a precious group of dedicated Christians that established this organization by His grace. By His grace, the RTCA has been richly blessed in the past, and He continues blessing our ministry today in the same manner. With confidence and assurance, we also know that He will continue blessing us in the future. However, we must remember that the call of God, in us as individuals, as well as an organization, is to always be connected to Him. Without this "connectedness," the power source that enables us to become what He intended is interrupted. God must always be our one and only essential source of energy. If we begin to do things on our own will, or under our own human desires without the necessary connection to God, no matter how complex and great our organization becomes,

we will soon enough become fruitless and unproductive.

The Lord has called us to have great faith and great dreams. Yes, the RTCA is walking in faith and dreaming great dreams, but once again, our faith and dreams will only be sustained to the level where we are connected with God. The harsh reality is that when a Christian individual or Christian organization walks in the right direction and is pleasing the Lord, satan is looming about, thinking of ways to derail the efforts we placed forth. Satan knows that when we preach the gospel in words and deeds, many lives will be lost from his hands into the family of God. After realizing this, how can we be assured that we are continuously "connected" to God, our one and only power source of life? The answer is with genuine **prayer**, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ. The word of God says, "If my people humble themselves and pray, I will bless them and their land." God is

calling us to be faithful – faithful in faith, hope, love, and prayer.

The dreams that the RTCA has set forth will become a reality if we, as one united family, pray together. Likewise, our dreams will remain only dreams if we disconnect ourselves from God's great source of power. Let's keep connected to the power source by constantly praying for our Chaplains, the people on the backstretch and front side of the racetracks, for the councils, horse farms, individual donors, and every individual that contributes to the RTCA. Jesus says, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32); "And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith" (Matthew 21:22).

Dr. Enrique Torres,
Executive Director,
RTCA



RTCA Family News:

Arlington Park - Chicago, IL:

Our Director of Development, Reverend Ed Donnally, visited Arlington Park Racetrack on May 23rd and 24th. He was able to meet with the council and many different leaders of the racing industry. Amongst the people he visited was Frank Gabriel, who is the Arlington Park Vice-President. In addition, Rev. Donnally was very pleased with his meeting with Chaplain Luis Peralta. He was able to personally see the excellent ministry that Chaplain Peralta is doing at Arlington Park. Our prayers are for Chaplain Peralta, the Chaplaincy ministry, and for the possibility of a day care center at this location.

Hoosier Park - Anderson, ID:

The Executive Director, Dr. Enrique Torres, visited Hoosier Park Racetrack on the 29th and 30th of May. Chaplain Claudean Webb is currently the Chaplain at Hoosier Park. We praise God for the excellent ministry that Chaplain Webb does. Most impressive is the great commitment that Chaplain Webb has for this racetrack and the people. The Executive Director was able to walk the backside with Chaplain Webb and witness his incredible Christian dedication. The management, the leader of HBPA, and many others expressed their gratitude for our Chaplain. In addition, Dr. Torres was also able to meet with the council, which is under the leadership of their president, Reverend Rob Smith



Chaplain Claudean Webb (right)

Thistledown - Cleveland, OH:

On May 31st and June 1st, the Executive Director visited Thistledown Racetrack in Ohio. He was very appreciative of the excellent work that Chaplain Vincent Harris does here. The president of this racetrack interviewed with the Executive Director and described our Chaplain by saying, "He has a heart of gold - he loves everybody and everybody loves him." Chaplain Harris has been at this location for seven years and he has developed a number of ministries. We praise God for all of the accomplishments Chaplain Harris has achieved at Thistledown.



Chaplain Vincent Harris (left) and former Chaplain Paul Hershey (right)

Executive Director Met with Executive Director of

Christian Horsemen's Association:

On June 2nd, close to the city of Columbus, Ohio, the Executive Director and Chaplain Vincent Harris, in representation of the RTCA, met with Reverend Weldon Stockwell, who is the Executive Director of the Christian Harness Horsemen's Association. This was a very blessed and productive meeting. They concluded that day with the accord that both organizations, the RTCA and the CHHA, are serving the same Lord and the same needs at the racetrack. There is now a mutual agreement to continue working together at the Standard breed tracks. Reverend Stockwell offered a list of potential sites at the Harness tracks to establish possible new ministries. In addition, he is willing to be a con-

sultant to the RTCA when we need him in the process of establishing new ministries at particular Harness racetracks. The Executive Director of the United States Trolling Association, Mr. Fred J. Noe, was in touch with our Executive Director a few months ago and even more recently with our Chaplain, Vincent Harris, offering all of their support to our organization with the process of establishing new RTCA ministries at the Harness racetracks.



Reverend Weldon Stockwell (right)

Ken Boehm installed at Churchill Downs:

On June 2nd, at Churchill Downs Racetrack, Ken Boehm was officially installed as a full time Chaplain with the attendance of the Kentucky council leaders and many guests as witnesses to this joyous event. On April 28th, the council had a fund raising Gala event at the Kentucky Derby Museum that went beyond expectations with God's gracious presence and also with attendance. Our RTCA family rejoiced when the news was received that more than \$100,000.00 was raised that evening at Churchill Downs. Praise the Lord for His incredible Grace!

Los Alamitos - Cypress, CA:

Our Vice-President, Sam Ed Spence, flew over from Texas to California on June 3rd and stayed until the 5th. He was invited by the Los Alamitos RTCA council to visit Chaplain Aurio Bermeo. This

visit was very beneficial for the council as well as for Chaplain Bermeo. The RTCA is very grateful to Chaplain Spence for taking the time to visit Los Alamitos. His suggestions will have lasting results at this time and in the near future for Los Alamitos.

Hot Springs, AZ:

On June 17th on a severe rainy evening, the Executive Director met with the RTCA council of Oaklawn Park. This is a great council formed by leaders of the racetrack and by people from the community. We need to celebrate with great joy in our hearts for the tremendous accomplishments achieved here. Chaplain Gary Stinson, with his many years at this location, has been able to establish a strong and comprehensive ministry. The highlight for the Executive Director was to view the most beautiful RTCA facility he has seen thus far. The facility was built with the help of many friends of the RTCA, the local council, and also with the dedication of our Chaplain. The result is a first-rate building with office space, children's lounge, kitchen, food pantry, a closet for clothing, doctor's office, rehabilitation office, and a large lounge for worship and recreation, plus a barbeque area just outside the building. This facility cost several hundred thousand dollars, yet it is completely paid off and they still have a surplus to aid them in maintenance for this structure. Praise the Lord for this achievement.



Chaplain Gary Stinson
and his wife, Becky

Calder, Gulfstream, and Pompano Beach:

On June 18th and 19th, the Executive Director made a friendly visit to two of these three tracks in Florida where Rev. Tom La Pointe serves as Chaplain. Chaplain La Pointe entered in this ministry under the influence of one of our own members, Tanna Dawson. During several years of hard work, he has developed an incredible ministry in these tracks. However, the most impressive ministry, among others, are the Sober Dorms. These Dorms are in the racetracks with the purpose to aid in rehabilitating people from drugs and alcohol abuse. Chaplain La Pointe maintains an excellent balance between the spiritual and social needs of these people. He is loved and well respected by all. He is not an official RTCA chaplain, but he is willing to be on our mailing list and is willing to go to the Chaplain School in January in order to become better acquainted with the RTCA ministry. Our prayers and congratulations for Chaplain Tom La Pointe.



Chaplain Tom La Pointe (right)
And Chaplain Jorge Alvarez (left)

A Special Visit:

On June 18th, the Executive Director visited Tanna Dawson at her home. It was a great privilege and a wonderful blessing. Mrs. Dawson tells him that she tries to maintain her home exactly as when Rev. Dawson was still living. His office is the same since he went away to be with the Lord many years ago. Reverend Dawson was a professional artist and every corner of his house is

decorated with many of his own creations. Amongst all the beautiful works of art seen, Dr. Torres was most impressed by a painting of Mrs. Dawson at the age of seventeen. He stated that Mrs. Dawson continues to be just as beautiful now as she was then. Also, in the living room, there are three pieces of art, that when placed together, creates the scenery of the woods with a river running through. Mrs. Dawson also showed the Executive Director the very first logo of RTCA ever created by her husband. During that evening, Mrs. Dawson, Chaplain La Pointe, and the Executive Director enjoyed an excellent dinner in appreciation for all of the commitment and dedication of the Dawson's to the RTCA. Mrs. Dawson loves and prays constantly for the RTCA. Our prayers are also constantly made for her.



Mrs. Tanna Dawson at her home
with the three pieces of art on the wall
that creates the scenery of woods

Lone Star Park - Arlington, TX:

On June 19th, the RTCA had a special reception for our friends and supporters. Many leaders of the racing industry were present including Corey S. Johnsen and the president of Lone Star Park. On June 20th, a prayer breakfast was held by the RTCA-Texas with well over a hundred attendees. The speaker of this occasion was our very own president, Don Dean. We are very proud of the excellent ministry here. We are grateful for the council, Chaplains, and staff for all of their hard work.

Lexington, KY:

On June 20th and 21st, Reverend Ed Donnally and the Executive Director represented the RTCA at the well-known Racing Convention. All major racing companies were present and by God's grace, the RTCA was able to have a booth. There, both Rev. Donnally and the Executive Director represented the RTCA and was able to minister to many people. In addition, they were able to make contact with new people who are interested in becoming contributors towards the White Horse Award and to become members of the White Horse Fellowship.

Carol & Ray Marino:

On June 23rd Carol and Ray Marino visited the National Headquarters in Los Angeles, California. It was a great joy and privilege for everyone at the office to have these two distinguished guests taking their time to visit. Carol spent time with the secretary, Roxanna Ruiz, and the office manager, Leakana Houth. Carol and Ray were able to see the facilities and was very impressed by the way the Lord has blessed the RTCA. In appreciation for their commitment to the RTCA, the Executive Director took them out to a special lunch.



*Carol & Ray Marino
at the Executive Director's Desk*

Executive Director on the Field Representing the RTCA at the ABC Bi-Annual Convention:

On June 27th and 28th, the Executive Director, in conjunction with Chaplain Vincent Harris and Paul Hershey, attended the Bi-Annual Con-

vention of the American Baptist Churches, USA, in Richmond, Virginia. The RTCA had a nice display and many people who were interested formed a line at our booth to get more information about our ministry.

Colonial Downs:

On June 28th, the Executive Director visited Colonial Downs and met with the new Chaplain, Rev. Marjorie Bevans. Dr. Torres was very impressed with the great commitment of such a young Chaplain to the ministry. During his visit, a jockey was down and hurt and he was able to witness how true and caring Chaplain Bevans is as she performed her duties effortlessly by taking care of the hurt jockey. She was able to handle the situation easily and with expertise. Leaders of the Horsemen Association at Colonial Down have excellent comments about her ministry. Rev. Beavens is a former jockey and an ordained minister under the Episcopalian church and has been invited to go through the RTCA process of becoming a RTCA chaplain.

Chaplain Pedro Lizarzaburu:

On June 29th, the Executive Director met with Chaplain Pedro Lizarzaburu at Delaware Park. The Executive Director had the privilege to visit the Chaplain's farm and even enjoy a homemade lunch at his home. Our gratitude goes towards the excellent ministry Chaplain Lizarzaburu does at Delaware Park and also for his great commitment to be part of the RTCA.



*Chaplain Pedro Lizarzaburu, Family,
and two of his ponies*

Chaplain Dago Dupuy:

On June 30th, our Executive Director visited Chaplain Dago Dupuy at Laurel Park. The Executive Director also preached at the church of Reverend Dupuy. In addition, he was kindly invited to stay at the home of Chaplain Dupuy. The Executive Director is so thankful for all the time and attention that was given to him during his stay there. Throughout his visit, he dedicated a considerable amount of time in establishing strategies for the ministry at Laurel, Pimlico, and Buoy race parks. We are very pleased for Chaplain Dupuy and his commitment to the RTCA.



*Chaplain Dago Dupuy
offering home-made food*

Mountaineer Park:

On July 1st the Executive Director met with Rose Mary Williams, representing management of Mountaineer Park, Lora Bailey, HBPA Executive Director, and John E. Bailey, HBPA President, with the desire to explore the possibility of establishing a ministry at this beautiful facility in Chester, West Virginia. The management and HBPA are very optimistic about the possibility of establishing a new ministry. It is our prayer that the Lord may allow us to do this at Mountaineer Park.



*Rose Mary Williams (left),
Lora Bailey (center left), and
John E. Bailey (center right)*

The Meadows:

On July 1st and 2nd, the Executive Director visited Chaplain Joe DiDonato. Chaplain DiDonato has created a great ministry here. Everybody at the racetrack is very pleased for his outstanding work. During his ministry at this track, a beautiful chapel and facility has been built. A local television station has recognized Chaplain DiDonato as a "Hometown Hero." Chaplain DiDonato and his wife, Marcy, are a great team in accomplishing their ministry at the Meadows.



Chaplain Joe DiDonato (right)

RTCA Information:

The Executive Director made a comprehensive research and has concluded that we are now serving the Lord at seventy-two locations. It is the vision of the RTCA to go beyond one hundred by the end of this decade. There are presently seventeen racetracks in our country with great potential for the RTCA to establish Chaplaincy ministries. In addition, Corey S. Johnsen, president of Lone Star, visited Uruguay in South America with the hopes of possibly establishing a RTCA ministry there. Furthermore, we have a lot of invitations to establish ministries in many different countries around the world, especially in Canada and Latin America. Soon enough, our ministry will not only be in the United States but also around the world. Praise the Lord for the extension of God's kingdom.

RACE TRACK CHAPLAINCY OF AMERICA

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Chaplains Can Take Part in White Horse Heroes Day

By: Ed Donnally

The RTCA, encouraged by one of our industry allies, has designated Thursday, October 23rd as National White Horse Heroes Day and is providing your ministry the opportunity to take part.

At a special White Horse Heroes Luncheon held the same day at Santa Anita's Seabiscuit Court, we will present to the one backstretch or racing farm worker judged to have performed the most heroic act in behalf of human or horse, the first annual White Horse Award.

The White Horse Award and Fellowship has given us new opportunities to share the gospel of Christ with many members of the horse racing industry not previously reached. Now, it has given us an opportunity to do the same with racing fans and to also minister to track workers on a national level.

TVG faithfully airs our 30-second Public Service Announcement, which features two RTCA Chaplains. Now, their president, Mark Wilson, has agreed to televise at least six minutes of the White Horse Award ceremony to a potential audience of 16 million viewers live. We believe, just as surely as we believe Jesus will return aboard a white horse, that this provides a wonderful platform for new ministry on a national level.

Sherwood Chillingworth, the Executive Vice-President of Oak Tree Racing, which hosts the October 25th Breeders' Cup races, endorses our national effort and is working with us to hold several special chaplaincy promotions at Santa Anita that day. We have some wonderful White Horse Award nominees and the industry is fast embracing the concept.

We are encouraging Chaplains serving at tracks operating that day to partner with track executives, horsemen's groups, churches and private individuals to host their own White Horse Heroes Luncheon. The Award is scheduled to be presented at 12:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time and the time difference stretching eastward means the luncheon will likely have to take place on the backstretch. We are building a special video tribute to backstretch workers that can be shown at the luncheon. Workers will gather, be served lunch and watch a live TVG telecast as a fellow backstretch worker wins the White Horse Award at Santa Anita.

The National Office will support your efforts through letters and calls to potential partners, national press releases, and other promotional information distributed to all track publicity departments and major media outlets.

Southern California Associate Chaplain Richard Mena will work directly with you and your council from our office. Chaplain Mena has a great deal of experience in organizing on-track Christian events and several years ago, implemented a yearly event at Santa Anita, in which the jockeys served a gourmet lunch to the backstretch workers.

We anticipate Chaplains across the nation to be hosting the luncheons and leading the local activities. Your own White Horse Heroes Luncheon can be as elaborate or as simple as you like. We realize that Thursday, October 23rd, is a work day for most backstretch employees and that the luncheon may have to be short and simple. Yet, this is a unique opportunity for the men and women you work with every day to share in the RTCA's efforts to honor their skills, courage, and overall contribution to the racing industry.

The Lord has richly blessed our efforts. Our friend and supporter, Corey Johnsen, a Magna Entertainment Corporation Vice President, and the President of Lone Star Park, site of the 2004 Breeders' Cup races, has already agreed to allow us to host the second White Horse Award there during the week of the famous races.