

## *From the Editor*

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**I**N THE APRIL ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL, AS PART OF MY regular message, I gave news on the formation of a new World Society, formed to represent in democratic fashion the views of cardiac surgeons dealing with diseases of the heart as seen in children, and congenital cardiac malformations as encountered in those of all ages. In that review, I promised more news of the Society subsequent to its initial meeting. It is now my privilege to give the remainder of this item for this issue to the President of the Society, Christo Tchervenkov, its secretary, Jeff Jacobs, and Richard Jonas, the local host of their first scientific meeting, who have kindly prepared in rapid time a comprehensive review of the events occurring during this meeting.

Robert H. Anderson  
Editor-in-Chief

### **The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery**

The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery just held its inaugural meeting on May 3 and 4, 2007 in Washington, District of Columbia. The meeting was attended by 367 registrants from 62 countries, representing all the continents of the world. The proceedings of the meeting have already been published in electronic form as a supplement to the journal.<sup>1</sup> We report here on the activities of the meeting itself. The first day addressed tetralogy of Fallot and covered the entire breadth of the topic with 35 presentations by speakers from all over the world. The highlight was the Stella Van Praagh Memorial Lecture, “History and anatomy of tetralogy of Fallot”, delivered by her husband, Richard Van Praagh. It also included a feature presentation by the Kirklin Fellow of the Congenital Heart Surgeons’ Society, Edward Hickey, entitled “Making sense of Congenital Heart Disease within the Congenital Heart Surgeons’ Society”. The format was fast paced and a huge amount of material and data was delivered in a very efficient way. Testament to the interest generated was the fact that, at the end of an 11 hour day, the conference room was still packed, with standing room only.

The second day of the meeting was devoted to the scientific session, during which 17 outstanding papers were presented from 4 continents on a diverse number of topics. Highlights of the second day were first, a presentation from the founding President, Christo I. Tchervenkov who was introduced by Jeff Jacobs. In his opening presentation entitled “Bridging Cultures”, Jeff emphasised why Christo, as founding president, was uniquely positioned to bring together and unite people, having lived on 3 continents. Jeff also reviewed the importance of collaborative efforts that span both political and subspecialty boundaries. During the subsequent Presidential address, entitled “Hearts for Life across the World”, Christo discussed the problems facing children born with congenital heart defects, with most of them being born in the developing world, either without adequate services, or even totally devoid of services. He summarised his vision of how the problem could be addressed, with “Medicine with RESPECT”, based on the acronym RESPECT or Responsible Education Sustained by Partnership, Empowerment, Care & Commitment, and Teamwork & Trust. He finished his presentation by reading to the audience a letter of support for the World Society received only days before the meeting from Nelson Mandela, an Honorary Patron of the Walter Sisulu Pediatric Cardiac Center for Africa, located in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The second highlight was the presentation by the honoured guest speaker, Aldo R. Castañeda, who was introduced by his former student and colleague, Richard A. Jonas. During this presentation, entitled “Pediatric Cardiac Surgery: A Challenge and Outcome Analysis of the Guatemala Effort”, Aldo described how, after his retirement from the Children’s Hospital in Boston, he moved to Guatemala, where he helped establish a sustainable program of paediatric cardiac surgery that now performs over 400 operations per year and is receiving referrals of complex cases from other countries in Central America and the Caribbean. He made the point, during his presentation, that sustainable success is based on training the local teams to do the work themselves, based on

education and building partnerships. During his presentation, Aldo discouraged totally what he called “medical tourism”, or “medical/surgical safaris”, based on large teams from the developed world going to an underdeveloped area to operate on a dozen children at great expense, and leaving nothing behind after they leave town.

At the end of the second day, a general business meeting was held, attended by the founding members of the World Society from all continents. The highlight of this gathering was the formal and unanimous adoption of the Constitution of the World Society, which can be downloaded and viewed at the website of the World Society: [www.wspchs.com](http://www.wspchs.com).

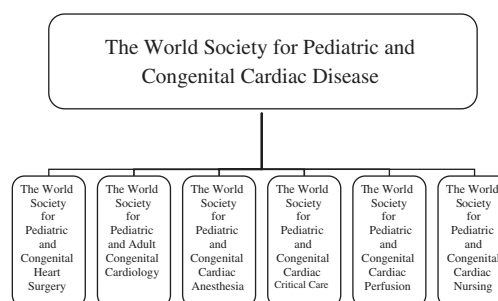
The conclusion of the meeting was celebrated with a Gala Dinner, having the theme of “World Beat”, which was held at the spectacular Atrium of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. During the evening, special certificates were presented to those honorary founding members who were in attendance. It was also announced that the two special lectures delivered at the inaugural meeting would become permanent lectures at future scientific meetings, and would be known as the “Stella Van Praagh Lecture” and the “Aldo R. Castañeda Lecture”. This was made possible with the generous support and commitment of the Dr. Ivan C. Tchervenkov Memorial Endowment Fund of the Montreal Children’s Hospital Foundation. The Gala Dinner also featured music from different parts of the world, as well as the spectacular singing of a local choir of African American children, whose finale rendition of “We are the world” brought the audience to tears.

In the wake of this highly successful inaugural meeting in Washington, we now seek to emphasise the vision, mission, and objectives of our newly established society. As already described in an earlier fascicle of this year’s journal,<sup>2</sup> our society is already the largest organization in the world representing paediatric and congenital heart surgeons, and now has 454 members from 68 countries. The Vision of the World Society is that every child born anywhere in the world with a congenital heart defect should have access to appropriate medical and surgical care. The mission of the World Society is to promote the highest quality comprehensive cardiac care to all patients with paediatric and/or congenital cardiac disease, from the fetus to the adult, regardless of the economic means of the patients, with an emphasis on excellence in education, research, and community service. The specific objectives through which the vision and mission will be pursued can be seen at the website: [www.wspchs.com](http://www.wspchs.com).

Three specific steps have already been taken in this pursuit of the vision, mission, and objectives. The first is working towards unity among all the health care professionals involved in the care of children and adults with congenital cardiac malformations by planning a multisocietal World Society or Federation for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease (Fig. 1). The second is the establishment of respectful collaboration with the World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, along with its steering committee. The third is the planning of a World Summit on Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery Services, Education, and Cardiac Care in Children and Adults with Congenital Heart Disease, to be held in the spring of 2008 in Montreal, Canada. We provide brief summaries of these three initiatives.

The first steps towards the establishment of the World Society or Federation for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease were discussed during a dinner that was held at the home of Richard and Katherine Jonas, which was attended by 33 of the 50 invited individuals, selected so as to represent every single specialty involved in the care of children with paediatric and congenital cardiac disease, including a representative of the parents. All present had the opportunity to present his or her views. It was unanimously agreed that a multidisciplinary society or federation incorporating professionals from all over the World is not only desirable, but a necessity. The first steps to establish such an organisation will be the establishment of a constitutional council, mandated to begin the process and write a suitable constitution. We will bring news of these activities in future issues of the Journal.

Plans for the next World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery are already well in hand, under the able direction of James Wilkinson, the chairman of the organizing committee.



**Figure 1.**

*A table showing the potential make-up of a World Society or Federation of Congenital Heart Disease, covering all aspects of diagnosis and treatment of children with cardiac disease, and those born with congenital cardiac malformations.*

Meetings have already been held between representatives of our new society and Jim, as well several other members of the local organizing committee, including Graham Nunn, Christian Brizard and Daniel Penny. In addition to this, Christo Tchernov made an official presentation to the Steering Committee of the World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery at its meeting in Washington, on May 5, 2007, a meeting also attended by Jeff Jacobs. The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery hopes to contribute and work towards the success of the next World Congress, and therefore proposes to hold its Scientific Meeting for 2009 during the World Congress, to be held in Cairns, Australia. This vision is shared by Jim Wilkinson, as indicated by his plan for the World Congress presented to the Steering Committee. The World Society will do everything in its power to work towards the success of the World Congress in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. In so doing, the World Society will encourage as many of its members as possible to attend, and will assist the organizing committee of the World Congress as deemed necessary.

Finally, in order to further its vision and mission, the World Society will organize its own World Summit in the spring of 2008, in Montreal, Canada. This summit will be open to all stakeholders involved in Paediatric and Congenital Cardiac Surgical Services, Education, and Cardiac Care for Children and Adults with Congenital Cardiac Disease. Between now and then, the officers of the World Society will continue their fact-finding mission to establish the current state of these

services around the world, and to determine the true needs, with emphasis on the parts of the world with inadequate or non-existent services.

*Christo I. Tchernov*  
*President*

*The Montreal Children's Hospital*  
*McGill University Health Centre*  
*Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

*Jeffrey P. Jacobs*  
*Secretary*

*The Congenital Heart Institute of Florida*  
*All Children's Hospital*  
*Children's Hospital of Tampa*  
*University of South Florida*  
*St. Petersburg and Tampa*  
*Florida, United States of America*

*Richard Jonas*  
*Local Host of the Inaugural Meeting*  
*Children's National Medical Center*  
*Washington DC*  
*United States of America*

## References

1. Jacobs JP, Tchernov CI, Jonas RA, et al. Electronic Supplement of the Inaugural Meeting of The World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery. *Cardiol Young* 2007; 17: E-S2 1–25. doi: 10.1017/S1047951107000637, Published online by Cambridge University Press 09 May 2007.
2. Anderson RH, Wernovsky G, Jacobs JP. From the Editors. *Cardiol Young* 2007; 17: 121–123.