

## *From the Editors*

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OVER THE PERIOD 3 AND 4 MAY OF THIS YEAR, a historic meeting will take place in Washington, District of Columbia. Hosted by Richard A. Jonas, and under the Presidency of Christo I. Tchervenkov, the World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery will hold its inaugural meeting. The origins of this first World Society in the field of pediatric and congenital cardiac surgery, or indeed, in the field of congenital cardiac malformations, date back to the highly successful first joint meeting of the Congenital Heart Surgeons' Society of North America, and the European Congenital Heart Surgeons Association. This meeting, organized by Christo Tchervenkov, was held in Montréal over the period of October 2 through 4, 2004. The meeting was attended by 127 physicians, with 57 being members of the Congenital Heart Surgeons' Society, 25 coming from the European Congenital Heart Surgeons Association, 2 being honoured guests, 29 being guest surgeons sponsored by the members, and 14 being local guests from Montreal Children's Hospital of McGill University. During this joint meeting, initial discussions took place among several surgeons about the possibility of creating a World Society.

The next critical step in the creation of the new society took place during the Fourth World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery. At the World Congress, a meeting titled "Toward a World Society" was arranged in Buenos Aires by the "Society of Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery – Aldo R. Castañeda", known for short as the Castañeda Society. The meeting was open to all those attending the World Congress. Chaired again by Christo Tchervenkov, the attendees at this meeting agreed unanimously that a World society should be established. Aldo Castañeda<sup>1</sup> himself is completely supportive of this new World Society, and has asked for years for his name to be removed from the "Castañeda Society". So, in May of this year, the initial mission will come to fruition.

The continuing mission of the new World Society is to work towards the goal that every child, born anywhere in the world with a congenital cardiac malformation, should have access to appropriate medical and surgical care. We presume that no-one will argue with such a laudable pursuit. The purpose of the society is to promote the highest quality comprehensive cardiac care to all patients with congenital

cardiac disease, from the fetus to the adult, regardless of economic means, and with an emphasis on excellence in teaching, research, and community service. Detailed information about the World Society, including its committee structure and existing officers and councillors, can be found at the website <http://www.wspchs.com/>.

It is, of course, a fact that many paediatric and congenital cardiac surgeons are already members of the European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery, the European Congenital Heart Surgeons Association, and the Association for European Pediatric Cardiology. Similarly, many paediatric and congenital cardiac surgeons are members of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and the Congenital Heart Surgeons' Society. Furthermore, strong links already exist between the European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. It is also the case that a variety of other national societies for cardiac surgeons exist in Japan, South America, and throughout the world. None of these organizations, however, encompasses the entire planet. The reasoning underscoring the formation of a World Society is to create a democratic forum for paediatric and congenital heart surgeons from all continents, permitting those from the less well developed, or less well represented, areas to interact in professional fashion, and as equals, with their colleagues practising in North America and Europe. This World Society will function with complete respect for, and collaboration with, all of the existing regional, national, and continental organizations. This global collaboration has the potential to address multiple objectives, as set out in the website. The global representation now achieved within the society has never previously been seen in an organization of paediatric and congenital cardiac surgeons. After organizing themselves, the long-term objective of the surgeons in creating their own World Society is eventually to create a World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease, working to this end in collaboration with paediatric cardiologists, intensivists, anaesthesiologists, morphologists, perfusionists, nurses and so on. Indeed, a World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease, ideally, should include all those interested in the diagnosis and treatment of paediatric and congenital cardiac disease, irrespective of their discipline. The intensivists

already have organized themselves globally, with the creation of the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Society. The creation of the World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery, therefore, is merely another step in the process of creating truly global forums. Incredible progress has already been made on a global level with the phenomenal success of four World Congresses of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery. These sentinel meetings in themselves indicate the need for a new World Society of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Disease, so that those representing the disciplines on a Worldwide basis can be elected to represent their colleagues in true democratic fashion. Successful global collaboration has also been achieved with the International Society for Nomenclature of Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease. The eventual World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease could become an overarching infrastructure to link and complement all of these existing efforts.

For now, the initial step on this potential pathway to World union will be the meeting, hosted by Richard Jonas, that will take place in Washington on Thursday, May 3, and Friday, May 4. Included within this meeting will be a postgraduate course and scientific sessions. Aldo Castañeda will be the featured guest speaker, and the meeting will be

dedicated to the memory of Stella Van Praagh. The organisers hope that many of the readers of our Journal will attend this meeting. We do, now, truly live in a global world. It is our own opinion that the time has come for such a global organization. Cardiology in the Young is committed to supporting these activities, to providing a forum to facilitate exchange of ideas, and to promulgate the activities of the World Society on a regular basis. We encourage our readers to visit the web page, join the World Society, and in particular, attend the upcoming historic inaugural meeting.

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## Reference

1. Vida VL, Sade RM, Stellin G. Hall of Fame – Aldo R. Castañeda. *Cardiol Young* 2006; 16: 221–228.