

See? **WOW!** News and Encouragement for CID Circuit **W**itness & **O**utreach

Workers

Nbr. 11 – October 2, 2019

Angels Awares

“. . . some have entertained angels unawares,” says the book of Hebrews (13:2). This past Sunday we all had opportunity to renew our awareness of angels in celebrating St. Michael and All Angels Day. So now, angels awares!

Angels help us in many ways, and of these ways we are often unaware. Hebrews, again: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (1:14).

We are helped by the very fact that there are such angels. Angels help us to *belong* and be at home in our Father’s world. As they proclaimed the Good News at big times like Christmas, Easter, and the Ascension, they help us *believe* in Jesus our Savior. And having angels as our fellow-servants of God helps us ever more to *become* servants ourselves by the Holy Spirit’s power. Just think: we’re on the same team with the angels.

Now think again. *See? WOW!* In His grace, the Lord has put these powerful creatures on the same team with – us! For we, not they, are the ones for whom Christ died. They “serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.”

“Angels” are “messengers.” By God’s grace, so are Christians! So are you.

Connect to Disciple News

It turns out that both Our Savior, Springfield and Christ, Clinton have postponed workshops and will re-schedule. Maybe the best thing we can say at present is that the CTD workshop is available whenever CID churches are ready for it. Please continue to make them aware.

Next C-WOW meeting

In the last issue I just gave you a “save the date” mention in this newsletter. This month, I want to say some more about our meeting and training session that is set, D.v., for Sat., Nov. 23 at the District office from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We have a lot to talk about. Mission Insite has been refining and improving the tools for demographic studies. I will participate in a webinar later this month, and I can pass info along to you in November.

Please note well the page two “Worth considering” items in the September, October (that is, the present issue) and November *See? WOW!* newsletters. These pieces will serve as an entrée into thinking about congregational assimilation. I will bring some thoughts and practical ideas from the course I took this past summer in Ft. Wayne.

The week before our November 23 meeting, Trip and I will have been in the Twin Cities at the Synod’s Rural-Small Town Ministry conference. I can bring info from that, I’m sure.

And, speaking of the Twin Cities, C-WOW Mark Gruden and I spent a couple of days there last week at a Church Planting training session



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sponsored by the Center for U.S. Missions. Mark and I can tell you about some learning and several ideas that emerged from that enclave. For it seems pretty clear that circuits will be crucial to progress in church planting within the CID for the foreseeable future. So there will be contributions for C-WOWs to make.

I know November 23, the Saturday before Thanksgiving, may prove to be a busy day. Please make every effort to be with us for this meeting anyway. I think you'll be glad you did!



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Worth considering:

Assimilation Is, so Assimilation Does

As noted last month, Christians are not incorporated together even by delightful experiences of Christian brotherhood. Finally, it is *by faith* that we are united in our fellowship with Christ and so with one another. Yet the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” is maintained partly in outward ways, which we are eager to follow (Eph. 4:3) as we “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which . . . [we] have been called” (Eph. 4:1).

Christians are called by the Gospel, which comes quite outwardly through the apostolic and prophetic word (2 Thess. 2:14-15). As this external word is delivered by “shepherds and teachers,” the body of Christ is built up and Christians are guarded against false doctrine (Eph. 4:11-14). The church is not some sort of unreal Platonic republic which no one can locate in this world. Its marks, the pure Gospel and sacraments, *create* the church by making people Christians – giving them forgiveness and faith in Christ (Ap VII 20; LC II 54).

God’s gift of pastors reminds Christians, old as well as new, that the faith is not whatever they make it out to be. Through pastors, the Lord stimulates us to growth in His Word. He helps us to “abhor what is evil” and “hold fast to what is good” (Rom. 12:9). He warns against the attacks of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:12), whose prime objective is to impede the growth of Christians in the Word.

Walking worthy of our calling amounts to *being* who we *are* in Christ. This entails assenting

to God’s judgments. Not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought (Rom. 12:3; see Gal. 6:3), we boast in the cross (Gal. 6:14). Recognizing the dreadful gravity of our sin, we daily repent of it. A major key to spiritual incorporation is learning to confess one’s sins and receive absolution. For “whoever remains alone with his evil remains totally alone” (Bonhoeffer). Having been forgiven, we turn to be “forgiving [to] one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:32; see Col. 3:13), since we know how disruptive sin can be for the fellowship of Christians.

From forgiveness springs love, *agape* love. Members of Christ’s body, *saints*, are *holy* in view not only of their forgiveness by Christ but also their mortification of sin. Even common courtesies in speech, keeping one’s temper, and everyday business ethics become arenas for Christian love to overcome the alternatives (see Eph. 4:15, 25, 26, 29; 5:4; 6:5-9). For “love . . . binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Col. 3:14; see Eph. 4:2). Love leads Christians to go out of their way for one another, to be available to one another. “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

Simple and humble as it is, however, love within the Christian community also stands out as extraordinary. It differs from a so-called love that “cannot stand the breaking up of a fellowship that has become false for the sake of true fellowship.” Nor can such pale imitation love set itself to “love the enemy, namely, the one who seriously and



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obstinately resists it" (Bonhoeffer). For Christian love does not encounter the brother directly, but always through Christ and with the mind of Christ.

All in all, Christian incorporation centers in Christ and His Word, and issues from worship: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16).

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