

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

Nbr. 12 – October 31, 2019

“You Have Forgiven . . . until now”

The Lord had given Israel so much. He rescued them from bondage, brought them through the waters of the sea, and made them a people for His own possession. He made them His kingdom of priests, His holy nation.

But when 10 of 12 spies reported how forbidding Canaan seemed, the people trusted them. Hearts failed. Courage ran off like sand. It's as if God's people had never heard of Him, knew nothing of Him. They rebelled. So the Lord threatened to strike them and disinherit them.

Then Moses interceded. He reminded the Lord of His great and divine name, that the Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. “Please pardon the iniquity of this people,” Moses said, “just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now” (Numbers 14:19).

That could be a subtitle of the whole Bible. God forgives sinful rebels. He has done it all along.

God forgives. He does so only on account of Christ. Jesus, full of grace and truth, truly comes with forgiving grace even to the worst rebels. For He took our place, answered for all our sin, and lives to tell the tale.

See? **WOW!** God has forgiven you, too, every step of your way, not leaving a step without His forgiveness. That's justification by grace through faith – in Christ. And it is news worth sharing!

Connect to Disciple

We are still waiting for Christ, Clinton and Our Savior, Springfield to reschedule. We have the potential to offer several workshops during 2020.

Schedule for 2019 C-WOW Meeting

Saturday, November 23, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at CID Office, Springfield (See you there, D.v.!)

10:00-10:10 Opening Devotion

10:10-10:20 Introductions

10:20-11:00 What's New in Demographic Studies

11:00-11:10 Break

11:10-12:00 Assimilation (better, “Incorporation”)

Please bring this newsletter and the last 2

12:00-12:50 Lunch at nearby Subway (CID pays)

12:50-1:40 Report on Church Planting training by Mark Gruden and Ken Schurb

1:40-1:55 Miscellaneous news, announcements

List of E1HW Context Modules presently online:

Witnessing to LGBTQ People

Witnessing to New Veterans

Responding to Scientism (elevation of science)

Witnessing to Dechurched Adult Children

Witnessing to Jewish People

Witnessing to Muslims

Witnessing to Mormons

The above are available to those who have had the E1HW Core Module. They can be found at everyonehiswitness.org

Some “LHM Learn” Courses



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Lutheran Hour Ministries offers several online courses that can help people in Evangelism, including courses in these categories:

Christian Foundations (4 courses)

Cultural Concepts (3)

Barna/LHM Household of Faith research (2)

Barna/LHM Spiritual Conversation research (4)

These can be accessed online for free after one registers at www.lhm.org/learn

Worth considering, on assimilation:

A book: Joel D. Heck, *New Member Assimilation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988).

Heck began by stating that assimilation is preventative. His subtitle was “Practical Prevention of Backdoor Losses through Frontdoor Care.”

The author defined *assimilation* etymologically, as *making similar*. He continued: “We assimilate people when we help them to acquire similar knowledge about Christian beliefs and our congregation, similar attitudes towards [sic] Christ and His church, similar feelings of belonging, and similar patterns of behavior” (12).

Heck advised churches not to overlook assimilation but to work on it quite deliberately. He recommended that churches advertise the importance of assimilation and encourage many of their members to give it their attention. He urged churches to form Assimilation Committees.

Assimilation begins even before people formally join a church, Heck observed. It also continues thereafter. The first six months of membership are very important, especially the first

three, but Heck termed any new member’s entire first year a time for assimilation.

Heck identified several important factors in assimilation. One was helping new people develop friendships in the congregation, from offering to have lunch with them or inviting them over for dinner to taking them on as their “sponsors.” Another was small groups, and constantly starting new small groups where newcomers are rather readily welcomed. Still another was putting people to work, whether in formal positions/offices or informal roles and tasks. Heck also mentioned the importance of attending church services.

A thought: James K. A. Smith, in his books *You Are What You Love* and *Desiring the Kingdom*, advocates an approach to forming people in the Christian faith which he sets in deliberate contrast with a cognitive method that treats people as essentially *thinking* beings or even, Smith says, basically *believing* creatures. Explicitly following St. Augustine, he instead finds the key to human existence in *loving*, understood acquisitively. You are shaped by your desires. You are what you love.

Such desire, or love, exists before you think much about it. It may be rudimentary, yet it is not isolated; it aims toward a vision of flourishing. It entices us toward this vision in ways of we may not be fully aware of – primarily through habits established by bodily and communal practices. Smith therefore advises Christians to think less in terms of spelled-out worldviews and more of “social imaginaries.” People relate to the world not so



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

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much by having thought through complex meanings, but more via elements that fire their imaginations such as stories, myths, and pictures.

What does this have to do with Christian formation? First, Christians with their loves properly ordered should give attention to distinct practices, practices that set them apart from the world and inform their imaginations – especially practices of worship. Rather than just giving people ideas, we should cultivate practices together with them.

We should also be aware that the world's own cultural practices draw people toward un-Christian ends. So we need to counter the worldly formation that takes place through commonplace, seemingly innocuous cultural institutions. Ask: where are these trying to direct our love?

-- Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org



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