

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

Nbr. 14 – January, 2020

Called by Name . . . Now, Whose Name Was That?

I greatly respected a brother pastor in the first Circuit where I served, in Indiana. He told me that he had learned something about Isaiah 43:1 through the years. At first he had thought that when the Lord says, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you, *I have called you by name*, you are mine,” the name by which He calls His people is His own name. So today we could apply this passage to baptism, where God places His name on people.

But as time went by, my friend said, he had come to see the passage as most of us do. He now understood that “I have called you by name” means that God gets to be so intimate with us as to call us by our own individual names. He calls me “Ken,” and He calls my friend “Jeff.” There’s great comfort!

I thought Jeff was exegetically right the second time. Still, I was a bit sorry that Is. 43 turned out to be silent about God putting His name on us.

Yet, not so fast! Read vv. 6 & 7: “bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name . . .” There, people are definitely called *by God’s name*.

See? **WOW!** In baptism, you are called by God’s name. AND because of Christ, God calls you by your name. He does this with others, too, when His Word is spread.

Circuit Pastoral Conference Visits

Between us, Pres. Mark Miller and I will visit every CID Winkel during the first few months of 2020. One purpose is Stewardship follow-up, from Bring Giving Home workshops. Also, we will talk about Circuit-level potential for church planting.

Assimilation Study

Trinity Lutheran Church, Springfield will host a short study, four sessions, on congregational assimilation this winter. I will teach, using a lot of the materials from the course I took last summer. We discussed this material a bit on Nov. 23.

Here is the schedule, at a glance:

- Jan. 22: Introducing Assimilation – better termed, Incorporation
- Jan. 29: Fleshing it Out, Learning from Scripture
- Feb. 5: Planning it Out, Thinking of the Congregation
- Feb. 12: Living it Out, Starting in Church

Sessions will be held at Trinity’s Parish Center, adjacent to Trinity’s school, 515 S. MacArthur Blvd., from 6:30 p.m. to about 7:45 on these Wed. nights.

I know that you may not find these sessions especially accessible. If, however, they can help you or someone else in your Circuit, great! Or, if you’d like me to take this teaching “on the road” elsewhere in the District, I’d love to talk.

Springfield Circuits Convocation

The Springfield East and West Circuits have asked me to be the presenter for their 2020 Convocation at Immanuel, Springfield on April 4, the



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Saturday before Palm Sunday. Registration is at 8:30; presentation starts at 9:00 and ends at noon.

The topic will be *Meeting 21st Century Religious Challenges* – specifically, Atheism and the New Atheism, Islam, and Postmodernism. These topics are from my apologetics series. All are welcome!

I have been encouraging Circuits to feature evangelism and mission in their Convocation plans for 2020. A listing of presentations I can offer is at <http://www.cidcms.org/missionpresentations.html>
Worth considering: *Taking an apologetics course, I was on a team of “Christians” debating classmates who portrayed Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Below, an edited version of our opening statement –*

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the eternal, uncreated, uncaused God, Who took on human nature. He is “our great God and Savior” (Tit. 2:13). “It is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9, *New World Translation*). The Good News of God is “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” Then this Jesus “appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve,” then to 500+ people (1 Cor. 15:3-6). His bodily resurrection was the “sign of Jonah” that confirmed His message (Mt. 12:38-40). Jesus is the Lord, Jehovah, to whom every knee shall bow (Is. 45:23; Phil. 2:10).

Jesus repeatedly spoke of His Father and of the Holy Spirit as divine, terming the latter another Comforter (like the First, *allos*, Jn. 14:16). Yet “there is no God but one” (1 Cor. 8:4). Isaiah quoted the

Lord: “. . . you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none” (Is. 44:8). “He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other” (Deut. 4:39). Conclusion: three persons in one God! Jesus commanded baptism “in the Name [singular] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). This biblical teaching of God challenges our understanding. But any God we could understand would not be much of a God! Yet the teaching is not so much *contrary to* our reason as *beyond* it.

We know of this incomprehensible God only because He has revealed Himself to us. Besides His general revelation in nature and the human conscience, God revealed Himself when He became incarnate. Prophets foretold His coming in the flesh, and Christ Himself accepted their writings (OT). Christ’s apostles, along with their assistants, wrote of Him after He did the work of salvation (NT). The latter writings were written and copied relatively soon after Jesus died and rose, and they come to us today in thousands of manuscripts. They claim to be eyewitness testimony, or to be based on eyewitness testimony. Other ancient documents attest their authenticity. They refer to real, verifiable places. Their contents correlate well with archaeological finds. They also claim to be scriptures, inspired by God. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). No additional revelation is needed. No



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elaborate explanations need be added. “Even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

For Jesus died to save. The Bible calls Him “the author of salvation,” Who was made perfect “through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father.” Jesus became the “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:10-11, 17). In Jesus, our heavenly Father has given not a mere *plan* of salvation, but salvation – without a need to prove yourself by keeping God’s law, or a need to dread repeating a sin! Those in Christ by God-given faith are sanctified and perfect before God. They have passed from death into life (Jn. 5:24).

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