

Nbr. 42 – April, 2022

**From Nov. 19, 1942 – A Word for Today, too?**

“The judgment of God that is seen on earth today opens the eyes of many men to the reality of God and the reality of men. It opens the hearts of many men anew to the blessed message of the Reformation . . . the justification of sinners.

“This should not be understood as if masses of men will suddenly find their way to church. . . . God’s judgment never works in such a way that it only awakens repentance and faith. It also works obstinacy. . . . It is just as hard for the natural man today to believe in the Gospel as . . . any other time.

“But something else has happened. There are today more men . . . who once again know that there is a judgment from God. They know that it is not God who has to be justified before us, but we who need to be justified before Him. . . . [I]t may be that without their even knowing it the primeval question of man, the question of a gracious God, has become the one great question of their lives. These men are asking for the Gospel even if they have no idea at all what the Gospel is. They, who are estranged from the Church and from her proclamation, knock on the door of the Church. . . .”

*See? WOW!* “Oh, what a great hour for the church of the Lutheran Reformation that would be! Because they ask for that which God entrusted to our church during the Reformation . . . the message of the Reformation [that] is none other than the Gospel of the New Testament, the sanctifying news of the salvation of forlorn men.”

- from Hermann Sasse, *Witness* (Magdeburg Press, 2013), 299-301. Used by permission.

**Spring (Church) Planting Season**

Church planting is not some sort of end-all strategy. But, as also noted last month, it is nonetheless an important way to reach the unchurched.

CID will be talking about church planting at our convention this summer. It would be very good for at least some discussion of this subject to take place in the District’s congregations before then.

That’s why I have taken to calling the month of May “Spring (Church) Planting Season.” During May, talk church planting at Bible classes. Discuss it at some regularly scheduled meeting, or hold a special meeting. Or encourage people at least to read the brochure and view the videos that we are cooperating with the Synod to produce. Go to <http://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-church-planting.html>

**Coming to a Winkel near you**

As noted last month, Joel Cluver and/or I will be making the rounds of Circuit Pastors’ conferences to talk church planting, and to encourage such conversation in congregations. Here is the schedule as we have it so far:

- March (already done!): Shelby/Effingham
- April: Decatur
- May: Peoria/Tazewell
- September: Bloomington North/South
- November: Mattoon
- December: Lincoln
- March, 2023: Altamont

Still to be scheduled: Champaign, Iroquois, Jacksonville, Quincy, Rock Island, and Springfield East/West. If any of you can help to get us into one of these, we welcome the assistance.



**Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers**

Worth considering:

### **A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism**

April 26, 2022 is the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Evangelism forms part of the Synod's history. The Synod's 1975 Resolution 1-02A contained the following six points, verbatim, summarized as "a Lutheran understanding of evangelism, to wit, that"

1. Evangelism, in its general sense, is *sharing the Gospel* of Jesus Christ. Such sharing occurs in whatever form and with whatever means or methods may be most relevant for the particular situation of serving the total need of mankind, whom Christ has redeemed. In a more particular sense, evangelism has special reference to sharing the Gospel with those who do not yet confess "Jesus Christ is Lord," to the end that they, too, may enjoy with us all the benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Evangelism, in the particular sense, is always a natural extension of evangelism in the general sense. Thus, evangelism in both senses is as much the due and responsible service of each baptized Christian as it is the due and responsible service of those who minister in Word and Sacrament or of the organized agencies of District and Synod.

3. Evangelism on the part of each baptized Christian will take place naturally and appropriately in whatever opportune time and with whatever gifts the Lord of the church has bestowed upon the baptized individual. However, inasmuch as the Spirit-endowed gifts for evangelism can grow, be nurtured, developed, and enhanced through

training, each pastor will want to equip God's people for evangelism. In addition, each pastor will want to alert his members to reject any evangelistic method or technique which has the effect of binding people under a yoke of law, or solidifying people in fear and guilt, mixing Law and Gospel, or taking no account of the particular human situation of the individual who is to be "evangelized."

4. Evangelism on the part of the congregation will utilize a variety of means, methods, and agencies for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with one another, being particularly aware that we are called to evangelize people of all ethnic origins and cultural traditions.

5. Evangelism has as its goal the conversion of the whole world to the confession that "Jesus Christ is Lord." Thus, each Lutheran congregation will support the evangelism efforts of District and the Synod. However, while supporting global evangelism, every Lutheran will remember that evangelism begins with each baptized Christian sharing the Gospel with the members of his own family, and with the person next door, in the same community, in the same place of occupation, in the same dormitory, hospital, or wherever the Lord of the church provides opportunity.

6. The motivation for all evangelism is the baptized Christian's Spirit-born compulsion to share the Gospel. However, because our sinful human nature is inclined to neglect witnessing or sharing the Gospel, the pastor ought to remind himself and his people to "do the work of an evangelist."

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