

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

Nbr. 33 – April, 2021

“HIM we proclaim”

Sometimes important bits in the Bible come within larger sentences. We might pass too quickly over these as we read. Whenever this happens, it is too bad. For then we miss important things.

One such bit could stand as a sentence in its own right. St. Paul wrote: “Him we proclaim” (Colossians 1:28).

There are only three words here, and two of them receive emphasis. The first word is emphasized strongly, by position. It comes first. Paul did not write, “We proclaim Him,” but rather, “HIM we proclaim.”

HIM, WHO? Christ, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Christ, who reconciled sinners to God in His body of flesh by His death. Christ, who presents His people holy and blameless and irreproachable (1:21-22). Christ, Who is the Creator and Preserver of all things (1:15-17) and Head of His church (1:18-20). Christ, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (1:14). This One we proclaim.

And we proclaim Him. A minor emphasis falls on the *we*.

In the next verse Paul added, “For this I [Paul is part of the *we*!] toil, striving with all the energy . . .” – and then next we might be expecting to see all “that I’ve got,” or all “that I can muster.” But instead Paul wrote of all the energy “which He mightily inspires within me” (Col. 1:29). It’s the Lord’s energy, the energy that works itself out in me.

See? **WOW!** Christ gets the spotlight again, front and center even when an emphasis falls on His working in us. Yet His working and His Word come *through* us. (After all, we too are part of the *we*!) This also receives due emphasis. HIM we proclaim.

The GatePost

CID’s flagship publication, *The GatePost*, is available only electronically. (CID prints none.) Back issues are available on the District website, but we send new issues via e-mail to subscribers on our list.

Roughly 1200 people are currently on the list. This number can grow, and it certainly should!

Please make people in your Circuit aware of how they can sign up for the GatePost and other CID news at <http://www.cidlcms.org/news-gatepost-newsletter.html>

Recruiting Pastors and Other Church Workers

A convocation on church worker recruitment, particularly that of pastors, will be sponsored by the Shelbyville, Effingham, and Altamont Circuits at St. John Lutheran Church, Effingham on Pentecost, May 23, 3 to 6 p.m.

Dr. Dale Meyer, President Emeritus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will be the featured guest speaker. Representatives of the seminaries, Concordia-Chicago, and Concordia-Wisconsin will be there, also folks from LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and Camp CILCA.

Register for this convocation, starting April 1 but by May 7, at www.stjohnsLCMS.net
See the video at <https://youtu.be/gpHT0EcWpAU>

Continuing Education: Overcoming Life’s Sorrows

Dr. R. Reed Lessing will teach this study of Jeremiah on June 21-23 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Decatur. It is a Concordia Theological Seminary continuing education course.

Teachers and laypeople are welcome, in addition to pastors. Contact Pastor Matthew Verseemann at (217) 420-0586 or e-mail pastorverseemann@msn.com



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Worth considering:

With the Body after Receiving the Body

There are lots of reasons to go to church. We need to keep highlighting these reasons, as we now find ourselves engaging “pandemic inactives” – that is, church members who have not come back to services much or perhaps at all since the pandemic started over a year ago. Our last couple of *See? WOW!* issues have mentioned these folks.

Among reasons to go to church, however, watch out whenever anybody suggests that the leading reason is to do something for someone else. I have heard people advance this faulty idea by contrasting it with what they sometimes derisively call the “filling station” view of churchgoing, which is that we stop in at church to take on spiritual fuel in Word and Sacrament. This reasoning continues that the really important thing is not some incidental refueling stop, but rather what we are being fueled *for*. Just think, though: even the President’s car cannot take its place in the motorcade if it is out of gas.

Let us delight to see and maintain that we go to church first in order to receive. An article in the new *GatePost* quotes a grateful churchgoer, who put it this way: “I go for the gifts.”

At church, the once-crucified and now-risen Christ is our Host. We are His guests. He has so much to give, all that He won for us on the cross. He grants us the forgiveness of sins. And where there is forgiveness of sins, the catechism adds, there is also life and salvation. Really, we go to church not simply for fuel. We go for LIFE. See 1 John 5:6-12.

As Christ gives His gifts, He draws us closer to Himself. He also draws us closer to one another. Something of this is seen in the Lord’s Supper. “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

At this point it becomes quite proper to note that, after having received – in the Lord’s Supper, after having eaten the body of Christ given for us and having drunk the blood of Christ shed for us – we will not be the same. In a 1528 sermon, Luther said: “Thus we eat the sacrament bodily and spiritually, to strengthen our faith and thereafter to fulfill the meaning. . . . I place my sin and death upon Christ; he gives righteousness and eternal life. Thus I say to my neighbor: If you are poor, come to me, that you might have bread, coat, etc. In the same way if you are ignorant of the faith” [translation by Aaron Moldenhauer]. Having received love from Christ, we pass on His love. Having been made rich by the incomparably rich One Who became poor for our sakes, we now share freely with others. Having gotten all good from Him, we bear the burdens of our neighbors.

Our service to others certainly does include strengthening them and encouraging them by our very presence at church. How in the world could we get very far in helping our brothers and sisters in Christ if we keep ourselves apart from them?

So, yes, one of the reasons to go to church is to do something for our fellow Christians, starting with being present with them. Yet I repeat: this is a result. We love because the Lord first loved us. We serve others, even going out of our way to do so, because He served us – even unto death. Having received the body He gave and the blood He shed, we will not be the same! We will be there for those with whom we share His body and blood.

-- Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org

