

Nbr. 35 – August & September, 2021

The Church Calls: “Behold Your God!”

The prophet Isaiah pictured the church going up a high elevation, lifting her voice, and declaring good tidings: “Behold your God” (Is. 40:9). For in our Lord Jesus Christ we do behold Him. He exegetes God (Jn 1:18), and in Him and His work we see and we have love from the Father’s wide-open heart (Jn 14:9). Notice that this is the church, not only preachers, called upon to tell the Good News about Jesus and to tell it without fear.

Then the inspired prophet switched the picture, to that of a mighty conquering Hero (Is. 40:10). Christ came to do battle with the devil and destroy his works (1 Jn 3:8), taking away Satan’s power to hold people in lifetime bondage through the fear of death (Heb. 2:15). By His death and resurrection, He won. Through the centuries, He has brought this victory into the lives of people via His Word. Like a conquering hero of old, He has in His retinue those for whom He has fought and won.

One more switch, this time to a Shepherd tenderly feeding and caring for the flock (Is. 40:11). “I am the Good Shepherd,” said Jesus. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life” (John 10:27-28). When we put people in earshot of His voice by telling His Good News, we invite them to join the flock gathered around the Good Shepherd.

See? WOW! The message is short and sweet, but what a message: “Behold your God!”
-- *Condensed from a sermon by Reinhold Pieper, in Mission Festival Toolkit on CID website at <http://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-mission-festival-toolkit.html>*

Meet YOU at the Fair?

This year I am planning to spend a lot of time at the LLL Illinois State Fair tent, where volunteers are needed in general and theologically trained volunteers are needed in particular.

If you are planning to visit the fair (August 12-22), why not build an extra hour or two into your schedule so you too can hang out at the tent and help us talk with those who drop by? Your presence would be much appreciated!

College students tell the Good News

As they tell it, they also need to hear it, of course. And they need a campus ministry to which to invite their friends.

Please remind pastors and others that CID office will make referrals of college students to our CID campus ministries and to LCMS U chapters nationwide. Provide us contact information for the students, especially their campus addresses (in addition to e-mail addresses), and we will get it to the appropriate places. Student contact information can be e-mailed to me.

Before college students head back to campus, they can be encouraged to be in the Word at campus ministries, and to encourage others to join them. Students in CID campus ministries will be reminded of “The Christian’s Mission” in a retreat at Camp CILCA, Sept. 24-25.

Looking Ahead

How’s Sat., Nov. 20 for our annual C-WOW meeting? It’s the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and fits our past pattern. We can conduct the meeting via Zoom. If anyone would like to suggest an alternative date, please speak up soon!



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

CID Website Updates

Over the summer, several pages of the CID website have been updated, including the “Revitalization” page under “Ministry.” Check it out! It can help you direct a congregation toward these synodical resources.

That’s not all! A paper by Minnesota South District President Lucas Woodford on Critical Race Theory is available in “Studies,” under “Resources.” The Mission Festival Toolkit (under “Outreach”) offers an English translation of a sermon on Isaiah 40:9-11 by former Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield President Reinhold Pieper. (See page 1 of the present newsletter.)

Remind people of the CID website. Thanks!

Book Study on “The Modern Self”

At 3:00 in the afternoon on Wednesdays, October 20 and November 3 and 17, I will make one-hour presentations via Zoom based on a recent book by Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Crossway, 2020). This insightful and well-written book goes back to the late 18th century to trace the beginnings of our present expressively individual and therapeutic culture. These sessions will prove valuable for pastors, teachers, or anyone else who wants a better understanding of the mind-set to which we address ourselves with the Gospel in our society today.

Please help us spread the word about this study. I will present an overview session as a sectional at the upcoming CID Pastors’ Conference in October.

See the September *GatePost*, and the next issue of this newsletter. There you will find information on how to register for the book study.

Worth considering:

Better than Gimmicks

The Rev. Timothy Keller planted Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan over thirty years ago. It has not only survived there, but thrived.

He reports that visitors sometimes expect to find snappy music, screens showing video clips, dramatic sketches, or other forms of spectacle. But the service turns out to be traditional and simple.

One such visitor asked Keller where the gimmicks were. In turn, Keller directed him to some artsy-type members of the church. They told the visitor that at Redeemer, there was no sentimental language to manipulate the emotions. Rather, there was *irony, charity, and humility*.

People at the church addressed one another and visitors with self-deprecating irony. They were gentle. They welcomed folks from Manhattan, even if these folks disagreed with some of the beliefs at Redeemer.

Foremost of all, the members told this visitor, the preaching and teaching at their church was intelligent and sensitive. It showed sensitivity where people needed it.

If church members bring their unchurched friends with them to a service at your church, what will these people find - especially in the preaching? Would it speak to them in terms they can understand? Would it connect with questions that they wonder about? Would the preacher show sensitivity where sensitivity is due, not soft-pedaling Law or Gospel but putting his best foot forward with the Word of God?

That’s worth more than any number of gimmicks.

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