

Nbr. 40 – February, 2022

“Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be”

The following is excerpted from Augustine’s Homilies on 1 John:

“How should He be love, except He had first loved us? . . . He loved us when we were enemies so that we might be made friends . . .

“If a man who is ugly and ill-featured loves a beautiful woman, what can he do? . . . Can he by loving become handsome? He loves a beautiful woman, and when he sees himself in a mirror, he is ashamed to lift his face to her, his beloved of whom he is enamored. What could he do to become more beautiful? Could he wait for good looks to come? No, by waiting old age is added to him, and it makes him uglier. There is nothing then to do, there is no way to advise him, but only that he should restrain himself and not presume to love unequally . . .

“Our soul, my brothers, is unlovely because of our iniquity. . . . But [He loves us] not to leave us foul; no, but to change us, and from unlovely He makes us lovely. . . . ‘Let us love, because he first loved us’ (see 1 John 4:19).

“Hear the apostle Paul: ‘God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8), the just for the unjust, the beautiful for the foul.”

See? WOW! Our crucified and risen Lord forgives our sins. He makes the unlovely lovely. [Quotes above are from Scott R. Murray, *A Year with the Church Fathers* (CPH, 2011), 384-85; used by permission of the publisher.]

New CID Triennium Starts Later This Year

Our District will have its convention July 17-19, 2022. At the convention, elections will be held for CID Board of Directors (BOD). About two months later, at its September meeting, this board will ratify assignments for the various District commissions and committees.

Here, I would like to ask for your help. While each District BOD member (except the President) serves on one or another of the District’s commissions, BOD members constitute only about one-half of the personnel on these commissions. In other words, each commission needs two or three other members besides those from the BOD.

Therefore suggestions of other worthy candidates to serve can be quite valuable. These folks can come from the Synod’s clergy or commissioned rosters, or they can be laypeople.

Of most immediate interest to C-WOWs would likely be the District *Evangelism* and *Mission* Commissions. However, the District also has the following commissions:

- *Congregational Life*
- *Education*
- *Finance and Management*
- *Stewardship*

In addition, the BOD appoints a *Human Care* Committee consisting of two ordained members, one commissioned, one lay, and a fifth member of a District congregation who is not ordained.

Please let me know if you have questions. Your suggestions are welcome!



Worth Considering:

The Art of Asking Questions

(based on Joel Heck, *Evangelism* 3:1 – Nov., 1988)

Often in evangelism we reflect on what we are going to *tell* people. Maybe we should think more about what we can *ask* them.

Questions can set the stage for witness.

- Questions break the stereotype that Christians want only to talk, not listen.
- Questions enable you to learn about beliefs, misconceptions, personal concerns, and lifestyles of those with whom you speak. You can find out whether the door is shut tight against spiritual conversation, or whether it seems open – and if so, to what degree.
- Non-Christians seem less threatened by conversations in which they can decline to answer a question or change the subject.
- Asking a question can help you handle hostility. You can always say, “I was only asking.”

Below is a proposed model for asking questions in evangelism. It is not an outline to be followed slavishly, but it can be a helpful roadmap:

1. *General Informational Questions*

Even if you know someone, you still engage in chitchat with the person. Appropriate questions can be

- What do you do in your spare time?
- How do you like living here?
- How about those Packers? (or whatever)

At this first stage you establish rapport. You learn things that may help you in later conversation. You also in effect earn the right to be heard eventually. After all, if you don’t listen, why should your friend listen to you?

2. *Purpose Questions*

Usually you move to a purpose question that lies along the same lines as your previous talk.

- If you were discussing children, you could ask: “What do you want most out of life for your kids?”
- If you were talking about work, you might ask: “When your life is over, what do you most want to be remembered for?”

Purpose questions get at a person’s underlying reasons or motivations in life. They can lead to:

3. *Initial Spiritual Questions*

At this point, you start talking explicitly about God. One easy way to move here from any foregoing conversation is to say, “What do you suppose God thinks about all this?” Or, in what might be a change of the overall subject, you could say, “Do you believe that God is in control of what happens in our lives/this world?”

4. *Deeper Spiritual Questions*

If your friend received initial spiritual question or questions well, it is usually not too difficult to go deeper. Questions at this level can include:

- At what point are you in your spiritual life?
- Have you thought about life after death?
- Do you expect to go to heaven? Why?

Telling people the Good News about Jesus can follow pretty naturally from conversation about such deeper spiritual questions.

Basically, the idea here is: Ask a question. Then ask some more. And ask some more. But instead of asking a broad multiple of questions at one level, try to probe deeper and deeper. Steer the conversation toward spiritual matters via your questions.

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