

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

Nbr. 57 – January, 2024

The C-WOWs

This See? **WOW!** newsletter is published nine times a year to give news and encouragement for **C**ircuit **W**itness and **O**utreach **W**orkers. All back issues of See? **WOW!** are archived at

<https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-cwow.html>

At its 2018 convention, CID endorsed the unofficial position of C-WOW to provide a liaison between CID's Evangelism Committee (and Executive) and congregations. As refined in 2022, the position is open to pastors, commissioned church workers, or laypeople.

Here are CID's current C-WOWs. (Those marked with an asterisk are also Circuit Visitors.)

- Pastor Pablo Dominguez, Rock Island
- Pastor Mark Gearig, Decatur
- Pastor Jeff Gross, Springfield E. & W.
- Pastor Mark Gruden, Bloomington N. & S.
- Pastor Brian Lesemann*, Jacksonville
- Pastor Marcus Manley, Altamont
- DCE Scott Rauch, Peoria and Tazewell
- Pastor Nathan Woolery*, Shelby

At the recent C-WOW annual meeting, the group asked me to include in newsletter distribution the visitors from the six CID Circuits that have no C-WOW. If you are one of these men, welcome! Please pass along what you find here to your circuit pastors and churches. Perhaps your Circuit will consider appointing a C-WOW.

"Back page" item

Our "Worth Considering" feature is part of a presentation I will make this month to the Lutheran Concerns Association. Thanks to LCA for permitting me to share these thoughts with you in this form.

Questions of the Week

Starting on Monday, Dec. 11 (looking ahead to the following Sunday, Dec. 17), the CID office will each week send all District congregations a question and a link to an audio sound bite that contains an answer to that question.

For example, on Dec. 11 the question will be: *Is God impersonal, a remote being way out there?* The audio answer is available at <https://www.cidlcms.org/myth-or-faith/1.1.m4a> CID's Dec. 11 message to congregations will conclude with a "fill-in-the-blank" sentence for a church to use to invite people who see the blurb in a church bulletin to ask that the church send them subsequent blurbs electronically each week. For details, see page 5 of the *GatePost* issue at <https://www.cidlcms.org/resources/gatepost/2023.GatePost.5.pdf>

With these Questions of the Week, CID is trying to provide congregations a tool to entice at least some of our non-churched visitors at church services to provide our churches with their contact information. If they give you their e-mail address so you can send them questions and answers each week, you can also send them other things too, e.g., your Christmas service schedule, a personal greeting, and more.

CID plans a trial period, sending out Questions of the Week every week until the end of February. In early February, CID will send all its congregations a survey to help us determine how many nonchurched people the Question of the Week seems to be helping you to reach. It will also ask how you are reaching out to them.

Please encourage your Circuit churches to use the Question of the Week!



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Worth Considering:

The church is not only the result or end of broadcasting the Gospel; it is also a means.

The Lutheran Confessions remind us that in the world today, God's saving activity occurs both *in* the church and *through* the church. First, the Holy Spirit brings people onto the rescuing ark of the church through the faith-creating proclamation of Christ and His work. He preserves them in their faith through the same Word. As the Large Catechism famously says, everything in the church is set up so we obtain full forgiveness daily through Word and Sacrament (LC Creed 52, 55). The church is the result or end of Gospel proclamation.

This is a perennially important point to maintain. These days, a more or less mainstream and self-styled "missional" movement within Christianity has insisted that "the church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness" (*Missional Church* [1998], 5). This missional movement may mention God's Gospel and the Sacraments, but I do not find its adherents affirming that the Lord grants forgiveness and life through Word and Sacrament. They then fail to distinguish between Law and Gospel when they go on to look for signs of God's activity in the neighborhood, figuring that the church as church needs to pitch in and lend a hand to such efforts and so follow the Lord's lead. Sooner or later our work, say, of giving a cup of cold water becomes Gospel. The proclamation of God's real Good News in Christ is upstaged.

Yet the Lord wants His genuine Good News to be broadcast, and the church is His means to do so. The Large Catechism says: "The Holy Spirit will remain with the holy community or Christian people

until the Last Day. Through it he gathers us, using it to teach and preach the Word" (LC Creed 53). God's saving activity occurs not only *in* the church, then, but also *through* it. The church is the "mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God" (LC Creed 42).

So the church is not only the result or end of broadcasting the Gospel; it is also a means to spread this saving Word. The mainstream missional enthusiasts are correct to note that the church is God's means or instrument, yet they short-circuit the genuine means of grace that the Lord has given the church. But Evangelism needs to proceed in the assurance that we give people Jesus and everything He has bought for them through the Gospel.

This message really is the power of God unto salvation. It de-thrones the devil. It extends the saving Lordship of Christ. As the church and her members tell the Good News about Jesus, the Lord catches us up into His own mission of seeking and saving the lost, which He now carries out not via His own visible, local presence (as He did on the pages of the Gospels) but through His people.

Why would we not want that? In 2018, a Lutheran Hour Ministries/Barna research study found a characteristic of "eager conversationalists," Christians who engage in evangelistic conversations: they desire them. They want to have such talks. How can it be any other way for the church, the mother that begets and bears every Christian by the Word of God? Let us then encourage church members not to avoid various opportunities to tell the Good News, or to wipe their brows in relief if they narrowly avoid one, but to welcome such talks and cherish them. We believe; how can we not speak? - Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org

