

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

Nbr. 59 – March, 2024

From “Jesus, I Will Ponder Now”

If my sins give me alarm
And my conscience grieve me,
Let Your cross my fear disarm;
Peace of conscience give me.
Help me see forgiveness won
By Your holy passion.
If for me He slays His Son,
God must have compassion!
What else to say, but: *See? WOW!* ?

Questions of the Week

Great big “thanks” to all who participated in the recent Questions of the Week survey. In the main, there were two results: 1.) these don’t seem to be doing much good but 2.) keep sending them.

CID will keep sending them, thru April at least. I hope to have some time at spring Pastors’ Conference to talk with all the brethren a bit about how they can make optimal use of Questions of the Week and links to audio answers. A little thinking “outside the box” may prove helpful here!

Small Church Summit (SCS)

SCS had two meetings early this year, one in SID in January and the other in CID in February. Some 60 different people from both Districts attended, a distinct increase from past meetings.

A repeated recommendation was: make congregations aware of the SCS. I am asking for your help in doing so. You all have small churches in your Circuits. Note too, that SCS has never turned away any attendees from big churches!

The combined CID/SID June 8 SCS will focus on community outreach efforts and “bringing Jesus into them.” Keep your eyes peeled for more info.

Adult Instruction

However named, catechetical instruction for adults is an historic LCMS strength. Encourage pastors and congregations to capitalize on it! Use the items we have released as Questions of the Week to interest people. The entire list of items is at <https://www.cidlcms.org/myth-or-faith.html>

Adult confirmations in LCMS churches declined during COVID. They have not bounced back. Good adult instruction is a key to recovery.

Beyond the Classroom (BTC)

This is the “Connect to Disciple” *re: Vitality* module, adapted for congregations with Lutheran schools. BTC training for leadership teams within these churches begins next month, after Easter.

Churches with schools or preschools can expect to be contacted. We would like to reach them all! Please let them know they can reach out to Trip Rodgers or me first to schedule a workshop.

Some money matters

This is not C-WOW work, but I simply not for you the first five pages of the latest *GatePost*, at <https://www.cidlcms.org/resources/gatepost/2024.GatePost.1.pdf>

Also, I do ask you to remind your Circuits about a Dollar for Missions. Only about one-sixth of CID churches have contributed to DFM to date.

“Back page” item

This month again, “Worth Considering” is part of a presentation I made to the Lutheran Concerns Association. It appears here with LCA’s kind consent.

I understand that my entire presentation is to appear in the LCA newsletter *The Lutheran Clarion*. Watch for it this month!



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

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Worth Considering:

Pastors should play their proper role in evangelism. They hold the divinely instituted office in which they are called to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. They baptize and teach, activities mentioned at the end of Matthew as means for making disciples. How beautiful are the feet of those who announce salvation (Is. 52:7)!

Not that this command has been re-assigned from the church, though. As Kurt Marquart wrote: “Christ’s church . . . baptizes, teaches, consecrates, prays, serves, and does everything else, including the appointment of ministers – and in so far as she acts publicly and officially, she does all this with and through her (and Christ’s!) public, official ministry, without any competition between them” (*The Church*, 149). Therefore the Augsburg Confession says that “no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called” (CA XIV).

When pastors baptize and preach and teach and administer the Lord’s Supper within their congregations, they are carrying out the mission of the church. The Lord’s command was not only to bring new people in, but also to keep providing the Word to members already in the church.

Still more should be said, though. When pastors bring the Gospel to nonchurched people, here again they are carrying out the church’s mission. To what extent are pastors doing this?

Our Central Illinois District pastors’ survey last year found that pastors spend an average of 1.6 hours a week directly bringing the Gospel to the nonchurched. They spend an average of 1.7 hours a week on outreach activities that are aimed eventually at bringing the Gospel to the

nonchurched. Put together, we can say that a CID pastor averages just over 3 hours a week spent on evangelism, directly and indirectly.

This figure is not inconsiderable. It comes to more than 165 hours a year per pastor, which can be multiplied by the total number of pastors. This investment of time is nothing to sneeze at.

On the other side of the coin, 3 hours a week amounts to not even 10% of a pastor’s time. If he works 60 hours a week, it is more like 5%.

Pastoral practice manuals used to tell pastors to regard themselves as called not only to their congregations but also to their communities. In the latter role, pastors were to consider themselves domestic missionaries. Therefore they were to canvass the area and reach out to the nonchurched with the Gospel. I don’t think my generation of seminary students came away with this cast of mind strongly imprinted on us. I won’t say nobody told me, but I didn’t pick up on it – and it showed in my work as a parish pastor.

And maybe it isn’t only me. When our survey asked pastors to name various impediments that keep them from doing more specifically to bring the Gospel to unchurched people, almost two-thirds of the responses said, “lack of time.” But a bit more than one third added a need to step out of their “comfort zone” and a third also said that they were uncertain over how to go about the task.

It seems some progress is needed for pastors to step into their proper place in evangelism. They need the time, and at least some of them say they need confidence and they need skills. Then too, pastors can teach others to tell the Good News about Jesus. More on that next month.

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