

Nbr. 63 – October, 2024

A Care to God

For Reformation month, here is a thought from the Augsburg Confession: “The person who knows that he has a Father who is gracious to him through Christ truly knows God. He also knows that *God cares for him*, and he calls upon God” (XX 24).

At the point of the italicized words above, the Latin literally reads: such a person knows that *he is a care to God*. That’s a stronger way to say it!

Evangelism amounts to telling people that they are a care to God. He created them. And although they both have sinned and are sinners, He is gracious to them on account of the Christ Who gave Himself for them. That is, they have a Father.

See? WOW! By faith, poor sinners can not only know *about* their God and Father but actually know *Him*. In evangelism, we bring people the sin-forgiving and faith-creating Gospel Word!

Fall CID/SID Pastors’ Conference

The pastoral conference this month, where we will be joining SID, will feature an evangelism-oriented program with 2 CU Chicago professors.

New professor Dr. Kirk Clayton will present on *apologetics*. A fellow of John Montgomery’s summer apologetics institute, Kirk is writing a two-volume apologetics textbook for the upper grades of high school and the first two years of college.

Lutheran identity dean Dr. Chad Kendall will draw on his doctoral dissertation to introduce us to *protreptics*. This was a gateway to evangelism used by the 2nd and 3rd century church when it found itself in a minority position. Sound familiar?

If your Circuit would like to follow up on either of these talks at a Winkel, let me know!

Witnessing Helps

This month, CID will release on its website four one-sheet (both sides) evangelism helps. Each concentrates on a specific witnessing skill.

These particular witnessing skills were mentioned by the Synod in 2023 Res. 1-01A: beginning a spiritual conversation, listening discerningly to a nonchurched person, making a simple statement of the Gospel, and defending the resurrection. The Synod asked its congregations and church workers to assess how well they are doing at giving people opportunity to learn these skills.

CID’s about-to-be released helps do not substitute for the Synod’s *Every One His Witness* training. They supplement it. They provide sharpening for a person who has completed the core E1HW module, while they are not as specific or detailed as the various E1HW context modules.

At an 8:00 a.m. sectional on Oct. 9, during the fall pastors’ conference, I provide hard copy of the four helps. I will also engage participants in strategizing ways to utilize these helps. Please make others in your Circuit aware of this sectional.

One subject we will discuss in the sectional, D.v., is a point from Res. 1-01A: that congregations need to offer people not only presentations on witnessing skills, but also *practice* in these skills. How to find time and opportunity to do this? We will talk about it.

Annual C-WOW meeting

Generally, we have met annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. This year that would be the morning of Saturday, Nov. 23. I am hoping this date is agreeable, since I have few alternatives.

Please let me know before October 15 whether the Nov. 23 date works for you.



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Worth Considering:

Help from the Creed in Evangelism

Have you ever noticed this? Christians can find it difficult to speak Jesus' name, even when talking with other Christians. Maybe you have felt this yourself. Why would this be?

"I'm no theologian," someone might say. "I'm sure a pastor can talk about the Lord on the spur of the moment and off the top of his head. As for me, I wouldn't be able to find the words." Of course, avoiding any subject is no way to become more conversant in it. Besides, it doesn't take a seminary degree to say something about Jesus.

"But I don't want to pretend to be something I am not" someone else might add. "I don't want to come off like an expert or appear 'holier-than-thou.' And this is the way I'm afraid it's bound to look, at least to somebody. Really, I know so little that as soon as anyone adds anything, even if they agree with what I've been saying, that will put me right out of my depth." Of course, there's nothing wrong with saying that you do not know.

"Exactly!," another can interject. "There is so very much we *don't* know about God. Questions lurk around every corner: Why did He do this? Why does He allow that? And on and on. When talk about God comes down to nitty-gritty everyday life, watch out! Whatever I might say concerning God is going to come out syrupy, sentimental, and vague. At best, it is liable to be pure speculation: well-meaning and pious, perhaps, yet speculation all the same." Of course, you don't have to make anything up. God has revealed Himself.

"But not everyone thinks so," yet another person might insist. "Sad to say, we Christians have learned to follow the world's etiquette even talking among ourselves. You simply don't discuss religion. It's a private matter. From little up, this is how I've

been 'wired'." Of course, there are many Christians who make an effort to conduct devotions and speak about the Lord with their young children, at least read them Bible stories or lead them in prayer. But the kids grow up, leaving a couple of empty nesters. Then these two may find little or nothing to say about the "private matter," even privately.

Behind all this: are we ashamed of Jesus?

We repent, and thereby return to our baptism. God forgives us because of the crucified and risen Christ, and puts our old self to death and gives us new life by the Spirit's power.

The gifts of God are summed up in the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. What's more, via these Creeds, the Lord helps us to meet our misgivings.

- You may not be a pastor, but you know the Creed. You can recite it, or say it in your words.
- If you fear that other Christians may think you are showing off, convey your confession by sticking closely to the words of the Creed, or Bible passages or hymn stanzas you have memorized. Don't hesitate to use this "canned material" that other Christians know well.
- If you are concerned that another Christian may raise some knotty personal problem and you won't know what to say, with the Creed and its contents you can still draw attention to what is most sure and most important. Don't dismiss your friend's troubles. But the Creed's contents can center you both again on Jesus and His love.
- There is nothing private about the Creed you confess with the church. Utilize it as a vehicle to convey your confession of faith in the Triune God to your fellow Christians. Then you will be set all the more to tell someone else.

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