

Nbr. 65 – December, 2024

### **Give ‘em Jesus**

President Harry Truman had the nickname, “Give ‘em hell Harry.” I have heard that Truman once said something like this: “I don’t give ‘em hell. I just tell it straight, and to them it seems like hell.”

The straight story on sin and sinners is no matter of appearances. It is quite real, and quite hellish. Hell is straight where everyone – you and I too! – is headed, by our sinful nature. In our sin, we do not and cannot fear, love, and trust in God as we ought. See Isaiah 64:6.

In order for people not to perish but to have everlasting life – that is, so He could give us heaven, not hell – God in His love for the world gave His only Son. As a Sacrifice – really, THE Sacrifice – He gave His best and dearest Treasure. He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Now that Christ has lived and died for us and rose again, He sends His Holy Spirit through the work of His church. We bring people the same Savior Who was born at Bethlehem: Christ the Lord. For we bring them His Word. “Him we proclaim,” wrote St. Paul (Col. 1:28). The Lord does some of His seeking and saving work (Luke 19:10) through us.

*See? WOW!* We give people not hell but heaven. For we give ‘em Jesus.

### **Better day and time?**

We have but one general C-WOW meeting a year. This forms a time to communicate, me to you and you as C-WOWs to me..

These have typically been on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, like the last one on Nov. 23. Not many attended via zoom then. Please give me your suggestions of better dates & times to meet.

### **List of Bible Passages for Inquirers**

At CID’s fall, 2024 joint pastoral conference with Southern Illinois District, Dr. Chad Kendall from Concordia University Chicago mentioned that as a parish pastor, he had a set of biblical passages he liked to use to lead inquirers about the faith into exploring the blessings of Christ. Sometimes he covered these passages with people one at a time, and at other times he gathered a group of inquirers for study.

This is in effect forms a step before our more familiar adult catechism studies, whatever these might be called in various churches. Ideally, people would pass through an “inquirer” stage into enrollment in an adult catechism class.

Dr. Kendall promised to make available a list of the passages that he found useful. The list is now available. Please point out to pastors in your Circuit that they can access it off the Witness and Outreach page of the CID website, at <https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-witness-ministry.html> Scroll down to the item marked “Bible Passages for Inquirers.”

### **Witnessing Helps**

The item just before Dr. Kendall’s list on the same webpage is a set of links to the Witnessing Helps unveiled in early October, at about the time of the pastors’ conference. These help people with four key witnessing skills: beginning an evangelistic conversation, listening discerningly to nonchurched people, making a simple statement of the Gospel, and defending the resurrection. Each set of Witnessing Helps fits on a single sheet of paper, front and back. On each sheet there are three suggestions for one of the four witnessing skills.



*Worth considering:*

**Reasons to Canvass**

(based on Joel Heck, *Evangelism* 8:3 – May., 1994)

In the September *See? WOW!*, community canvassing was an evangelistic suggestion I offered for our churches. I observed that even though canvassing cannot be done everywhere these days, there are places where it still can be done.

This past March, volunteers from two of CID's campus ministries helped to canvass an area around Immanuel Lutheran Chapel in Springfield, a new church start. On March 1, 2025, another "working" campus ministry retreat will canvass the neighborhood around Concordia Lutheran Church, Springfield. Again, Rev. Martin Herzberg from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ will be with us to teach canvassing to college students and others.

Here's my basic point: *where canvassing can be done, it should be done. Why?*

First, canvassing is relatively easy. The materials cost does not run very high in a canvass. It doesn't take long to prepare. Most of those involved in canvassing a particular area will commit one or two days to the work, not an extended period. Later, another canvass – perhaps, of a different neighborhood – can involve other folks.

Second, canvassing can be a great form of publicity. It tells people that THIS church is concerned about its neighbors. Canvassing gets the church's name "out there." Canvassers put into the hands of people Gospel tracts and information about your church. When Immanuel Chapel began, still during COVID restrictions in 2021, one lady came to the first service simply because someone put a knob-hanger on her door. Imagine how much

greater goodwill can be built by actually speaking with people!

Third canvassing identifies prospects.

Having identified them, you can focus attention on them. This prevents frittering time away on a "scatter-shot" approach to your community. You might define a prospect as someone who:

1. is not a member of any local Christian church
2. allows the canvasser to complete the canvassing form
3. is friendly toward the canvassers
4. says "Yes" if asked whether it would be all right for someone from your church to visit again

Fourth, canvassing benefits the canvass callers. Some of them may labor under rules that prevent witnessing in the workplace, but on canvass calls they can do their part for evangelism and offer at least a short witness to Christ. Even those who are not so hampered can gain more and more experience in the skill of making a simple statement of the Gospel on canvass calls. This additional practice may embolden them toward speaking of Christ with, say, a family member or friend.

Canvassers also at times encounter people who will set them to thinking. They will have new reasons to dig deeper into why they believe what they believe if their confession of faith is challenged by someone else.

By the way, it is a good idea to precede a canvass with some preparation. Mail a card to people in the area to let them know the date and time when your folks will conduct the canvass. Mention your intentions also to the local police. Make no secret of your intention to canvass!

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