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The Gospel Breaks Down Barriers

From a lecture by Dr. Gerhard Aho

[The Good News of the newborn Prince of Peace] unites people with Christ and with each other.

Thus, Christians do not need to assert themselves over others by being aggressive or defensive. Under Christ, Who has made them one body, they are able to love one another and serve one another, to the building up of the body in every way in Christ.

*See? **WOW!*** When we bring the Gospel to people, it does things. It breaks down barriers.

“Partners and Practice in the Gospel”

. . . is getting off to a bit of a rocky start. This is CID’s cooperative effort with the Southern Illinois and South Wisconsin Districts, along with Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ, to deploy OAFIC adult teams to do work supporting evangelism in congregations of the three respective Districts.

The vision is for teams consisting of 3 to 5 older adults to assist churches in neighborhood canvassing, “dry run” practice of evangelistic skills, and enhancing the congregation’s evangelistic outreach in a nearby nursing home. Details, model schedules, and a printable publicity brochure can be found at

<https://www.cidlcms.org/ppg/index.html>

We had preliminarily scheduled a training session for adult team members at Camp CILCA in late October, 2025. However, as October began, there were only 3 or 4 registrants for this event, not the 10 to 15 we were expecting. We decided to postpone training.

As it turns out, most of those who were interested in the training are from southern Illinois. All of them have extensive and relatively recent experience with OAFIC, having served as leaders and mentors for more conventional OAFIC weekends involving youth. These are people who do not require extensive training. And, even though they live in southern Illinois, it would be feasible for them to lead events here in CID. At present, discussions are underway about precisely what training these folks do need, and how to deliver it to them relatively soon.

Now is no time to lose sight of the prospect for involving this OAFIC adult team in one or more CID congregations. No, let’s keep this prospect in view. *So, would your congregation, or some other in your circuit, be potentially interested in utilizing the team’s services sometime during the first half of 2026, maybe after we get out of winter months?*

Also, do you know of people in your Circuit who might be interested in serving on such an adult team in CID – even if they would need more extensive training? (Do not overlook retired pastors and teachers!) Let me know!

Stoke the Fire!

Michael Green, author of the substantial study *Evangelism in the Early Church* (1970), was not concerned only about ancient evangelism. He had a maxim for evangelism in the present. It went something like this: stoke the fire so people will want to gather around its warmth.

Green was not a Lutheran, but his point is welcome in Lutheran ears. What will motivate people to tell the Good News about Jesus and invite others into their churches is that very Good News!

See? **WOW!** News and Encouragement for CID **Circuit Witness & Outreach Workers**

Worth considering:

In addition to the good news, there is also some bad news.

In this case, I am not referring to the fact that there is Law as well as Gospel in the Bible. I am talking about more recent data.

As reported in the September issue of this newsletter, Barna is reporting a rise in U.S. adults who claim to be following Jesus. Numbers are particularly up for Millennial and Gen Z men. That is the good news.

The bad news comes in the case of young women. Among Gen Z adults, women seem much more likely now to give up on church, even prayer and faith itself.

Specifically, for those age 18-24, some 38% of females say they are agnostics, atheists, or have no faith. The percentage among men of the same age is 32%.

This is reflected in church attendance. Of women in this age group, a very low 30% say they have been to a worship service within the past week. This is the lowest figure for any demographic cohort in the survey.

Not so incidentally, this pattern also reaches down into the teen years (age 13 to 17). There, some 28% of females think of themselves as not affiliated religiously, compared with 22% of the males.

All of this may come as a surprise, given the perennial incidence of Christian involvement among women, going back to the days of the early church. Already then, women seemed to outnumber men in the church. For well over 100 years in the U.S. – and not altogether helpfully – church was widely regarded more as the province of women than of men.

A factor that may play into the statistics among women's so-called "religiosity" is that Gen Z women also say they lack meaningful support from the older folks in their lives. Just 23% say they feel supported by their fathers, and only 36% feel supported by their mothers. A mere 32% say they believe that their parents understand them, and about a third say they think older adults value them. Some 40% of Gen Z women affirm the statement, "older people don't seem to understand the pressure my generation is under."

These sobering statistics should come under consideration in evangelism and also in general congregational life. They tend to suggest that the growing recent attention to inter-generational ministry is not amiss.

Within a congregation, modeling and mentoring stand out as of great importance. In some ways, small churches may be better positioned for these activities than larger ones.

For evangelism, listening to young women and forming relationships with them seems more important than ever. What do you think?

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Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers