

Nbr. 78 – April, 2026

**The church as “pillar and buttress of the truth”**

“. . . the household of God . . . is the pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15)

“Paradoxically the church, which supports the truth, rests on the truth. However, ‘church’ must not be understood in an institutionalizing sense, as if this verse were ascribing infallibility to the visible organization.

“That Jesus is the only foundation (1 Cor. 3:11) and that the foundation of the apostles and prophets still rests on the chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, are basic facts never to be lost from sight. The church is not mistress but servant of the truth.

“By believing, proclaiming, and defending the doctrines of the Bible, yes, by purging itself from errors, the church is a pillar and bulwark of the truth. As the visible organization continues faithful to Jesus Christ and the prophetic as well as the apostolic testimony to Him, as it combats the heresies that threaten the content of the Christian faith, it stands firm as the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

“But the mission of the church is not to build high protective walls around the truth and thus assure its continued purity by sealing it off from the defiling touch of sinners.”

*See? WOW!* “The church does not have the truth unless it proclaims it.”

- H. Armin Moellering and Victor A. Bartling, *Concordia Commentary: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 78-79. Used by permission of publisher.

**“Think Pieces”**

The second-page “Worth Considering” features in this issue and the next are an experiment. Each of the two will be what I am calling a “Think Piece.”

In June, CID will host an Evangelism Enclave, to be attended by a few Office of National Mission workers, District Evangelism Executives, and seminary professors. The two “Think Pieces” may be used to set up discussion topics for this meeting. You will note that each ends with discussion items.

You are seeing these “Think Pieces” before the summer enclave. I am hoping:

- That you will read these and perhaps respond to me with your observations and reactions;
- That you will take one or both of these “Think Pieces” to your Circuit Winkel, perhaps in May, discuss them there, and let me know the thinking of the pastors there.

Maybe other “Worth Considering” articles in the future ought to end with their own sets of questions for thought and discussion. I am eager to hear what you think of that prospect too!

**Partners and Practice in the Gospel**

In evangelism, as in several matters within church life and life in general, you try things. They do not always work out. Perhaps the Lord’s time for whatever-it-is has not yet come.

As this is written, Faith, Shumway is coordinating with the OAFIC adult team from SID for the team to do an event for them in April or May. This may be the only such event that will take place in CID. The grant period ends soon.

We can meet with setbacks and roadblocks. But we don’t give up. More thought and prayer . . .



*Worth considering:*

**“Think Piece” on Christian Education & Evangelism**

“The two Es,” a professor of mine called them – evangelism and (Christian) education. “They always go together,” he said.

They certainly should. After all, part and parcel of “making disciples” is “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Christian education forms part of evangelism.

And Christian education leads to evangelistic efforts. Understandably, people are reluctant to open their mouths and tell about Jesus if they are not quite sure what to say. The more they know of the faith, and the better they know it, the more confident they can be. Further, as we immerse ourselves in the language and the thought patterns of the Scriptures, the more all of this will find expression in daily speech. The better you know Jesus, the more you will think about Jesus, and the more easily will you speak of Jesus.

Much more than an accumulation of data, however, the powerful Good News of the crucified and risen Christ – as taught in the church – is what will move people in turn to tell the very same Good News to others. Through this Gospel, the Holy Spirit quells our fears and frees us from our inhibitions.

I knew a leader who said he had learned a lesson about motivation for evangelism. “I used to tell people that they had to get out there and do it, they had to do it, they had to do it.” But he found in practice that this approach got nowhere. “I used to try to motivate by the Law,” he said. “Now I motivate by the Gospel: I tell them how to do it.”

Strictly speaking, though, *how to do* it is not Gospel. The Good News is not about anything we do, or how we do it. It is about what God has done

to save the world in Christ. It is not a workaround for a roadblock we face in this life, but the answer to a plight under God’s wrath that threatened us eternally. Maybe its most focused expression was in the Lord’s own word from the cross: “It is finished.”

When, like St. Paul, we are persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of this Christ, our mouths will open in praise and in witness. A good tree produces good fruit. Enough said?

Think again. There has been a growing recognition throughout our churches of the place for biblical, Law-and-Gospel-shaped exhortation of Christians to love and good works. As the Formula of Concord pointed out, “believers are not fully renewed in this life but the Old Adam clings to them down to the grave,” so “the conflict between spirit and flesh continues in them. According to their inmost self they delight in the law of God; but the law in their members is at war against the law of their mind. Thus though they are never without law, they are not under but in the law, they live and walk in the law of the Lord, and yet do nothing by the compulsion of the law” (FC SD VI 18, Tappert). When it comes to the good work of telling the Good News about Jesus, why should this be different from any other area of the Christian life in which the saints need to be directed and exhorted as well as comforted and assured?

FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION:

- 1) Is this sufficient for a pastor to say? “I’ve taught and preached the Gospel. I’m sure my people will now go ahead and tell it to others.”
- 2) Why might a pastor say what is in #1 above?
- 3) Do pastors think that telling the Good News is a good work in which Christians should engage?

– Ken Schurb    [kschurb@cidlcms.org](mailto:kschurb@cidlcms.org)



**Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers**