

Nbr. 69 – April, 2025

Reconciliation: Cross, Resurrection, Proclamation

The 1916 Southern Illinois District Convention Essay was on the reconciliation of God with man. Essayist Franz Pieper went to the heart of it all thus (paragraphing supplied):

“Man’s reconciliation with God is an accomplished fact; it is finished. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.’ These words refer to the time when the Son of God sojourned here upon earth. . . .

[W]hen Christ suffered and died, God reconciled the world to Himself. When God raised Christ from the dead, He absolved the world from its guilt and sin and declared that He was no longer at odds with the sinful race of man. St. Paul thus places the death and resurrection of Christ in juxtaposition: ‘Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification’

God publishes this reconciliation throughout the world by means of the ‘Word of Reconciliation,’ the holy Gospel. . . . In Acts 20:24 St. Paul calls it ‘the Gospel of the grace of God,’ and in Ephesians 6:15 ‘the Gospel of peace’.”

See? WOW! “The preachers of the Gospel therefore are thus described in Romans 10:15: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’.”

Contemplated Grant Proposal

CID’s Evangelism Commission is contemplating asking for a grant to fund teams of adults from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ who can help District congregations with evangelistic work. I am asking for your thoughts on this.

On March 6, Evangelism Commission started considering a prospect in which teams of 4 or 5 adult lay volunteers gathered by OAFK could come by the invitation of congregations to spend EITEHR two and a half OR five days with them. While there, the OAFK team would:

1. Help the congregation conduct a canvass of a neighborhood of its choosing, probably the area right around the church and/or Lutheran school. (See related story on page 2.)
2. On weekends or in the evenings, offer to church members opportunities to practice witnessing skills such as those in CID’s Witnessing Helps.
3. Teach the congregation about outreach in nursing homes and accompany church members to visit at least one nursing home for this purpose.

If the contemplated grant is requested and approved, money from it would pay most expenses. The congregation would be responsible for lodging and meals for the OAFK team while it is in their midst. In rare instances, the church might also have to pay part of the cost incurred by team members to travel to the church. Members of the team will be from CID congregations or congregations in neighboring Districts, though.

Here is where Evangelism Commission could use input from you and your Circuit:

- a) If such OAFK teams were available within the next year or so, would churches in your Circuit utilize them for the 3 purposes outlined above?
- b) If churches seem hesitant, what might prompt them toward resolving to host a team, work with it, and learn as a result?

If your Circuit has Winkel on March 11, please discuss this prospect and get back to me.



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Worth considering:

Report on Laketown Canvass

Recent *See WOW!* issues (nbr. 62 for Sept., 2024 and Nbr. 65 for Dec., 2024) have included encouragements and rationale for canvassing. Here is a report on an actual canvass.

On March 1, 2025 four adult volunteers from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ and the undersigned canvassed the Laketown area southeast of Springfield on behalf of Concordia Lutheran Church and School. We formed two teams, which together approached a total of slightly more than 120 homes during three hours of canvassing – one hour in the morning and two in the early afternoon.

We actually met a bit more than 40 people face-to-face on that Saturday. Two of these appeared to fall squarely into the “prospect” category, while we thought another two were worth mentioning in our report as people with whom the church might well want to keep in touch.

In other words, and in round figures, we interacted with 1/3 of the people on whose doors we knocked. Of those with whom we spoke, 10% seemed to be priorities for further contact. What’s more, two of the four households in that 10% were VERY near neighbors of the church. One family, with children, lives across the street.

Here are some lessons from this Concordia, Springfield canvass:

- Sometimes non-churched people lie almost literally right under your nose. Yet you probably won’t reach them with the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ unless you reach out to them.

- Finding that 10% of those to whom teams speak might be contacted further in some way, or getting even 5% clear and immediate prospects may be a bit higher than what one usually finds when canvassing, but in some cases – as with the present one – this is how it turned out!
- Our teams made a Gospel witness, based on John 3:16, to the vast majority of those with whom we spoke. Only in a few cases did someone end the conversation before it reached that point.
- We gathered “on the ground” demographic data concerning the neighborhood that can help to inform future outreach by Concordia Church and School.
- In the cases of the 80-odd homes where no one answered the door, we left information about Concordia Church and School.
- Our two teams did not nearly exhaust the canvassing that can be done in Laketown on March 1. There remains much more to do.
- Two of our canvass volunteers were quite new to it. One had only a single previous canvass under his belt. Another had never even seen a canvass. Both learned quickly, though.

One of the “soft prospects” said he is not quite ready. Yet he fondly recalled that after his house burned down 20+ years ago, the principal from Concordia brought his family a small offering that he had quickly received from students, faculty, and staff that day to help a neighbor in need. The man has never forgotten this act of kindness. Our canvass reminded him that the church which cared for him in Christ then still cares about him now.

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