

Nbr. 70 – May, 2025

Clear Conscience because of Christ

Franz Pieper's 1916 Southern Illinois District Convention Essay pointed to the role of conscience (paragraphing supplied):

"Even if nature should cease to bear witness, or if there were no Law of God revealed in Scripture, conscience would still remain active. As we hearken to its voice, this is the damning verdict that we hear: 'You are guilty before God. God is angry with you'. . . .

"This was Adam's experience. When he committed sin, this fact was registered upon his conscience, and instinctively he sought to hide from God.

"The same experience befalls all men, even Christians. The sins which we commit are registered upon our conscience as guilt before God.

"Let us thank God . . . that we know of the precious blood of Christ, the only means of appeasing the guilty conscience."

See? WOW! "Because we know of this, we do not fall asleep each night with a guilty conscience, but with this confident prayer:

Should I, Lord, have gone astray
From Thy path this closing day,
Of Thy grace let me partake.
Pardon me for Jesus' sake."

My Modified Service Status and the C-WOWs

Rumors of my retirement have been greatly exaggerated. Plans do *not* call for me to retire.

I will be going on modified service on Sept. 1, which will not be unlike what sometimes happens with professors at a certain age. They have the option of teaching fewer courses, with reduced pay.

In the present case, others will take up activities related to missions, stewardship, and human care. I will keep working in evangelism.

I am to administer CID evangelism efforts, working under Evangelism Commission and with the rest of the District staff and others to coordinate, communicate, and use resources wisely. I will remain your contact for demographic studies and *re:Vitality* tools from the national Synod.

I am to promote CID evangelism efforts, preaching, teaching, and consulting in evangelism as feasible, emphasizing *Every One His Witness* and CID's Witnessing Helps. District media will be used.

I am to work at expanding CID evangelism efforts, gathering information on new opportunities and working to implement new initiatives. I will continue *Beyond the Classroom* trainings, with Trip Rodgers, for churches with Lutheran schools; seek to cooperate with Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ; and otherwise offer help to congregations.

The Evangelism Commission thinks that two current activities should particularly rise to the top for me. One is the semiannual Small Church Summit, which often includes plenary or sectional topics of an evangelistic nature. The other is my work with you C-WOWs, which features the production of this newsletter. As you can see above, the present issue is the 70th since our start in October, 2018.

At times, various aspects of my work have done what other duties all too often do to pastors' efforts in evangelism: crowd evangelistic work out. Focused as I will be on evangelism after Sept. 1, albeit investing only a single day each week, I am looking forward to this situation in which nothing should pre-empt my attention to evangelism.



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Worth considering:

Evangelism and the Seminary Student

Of all the fields in practical theology, preaching is the one in which LCMS seminaries seem most invested, judging by the number of required courses. Although one could take a simplistic approach to preaching, our seminaries do not wade in the shallow end of the homiletical pool. Instead, they exercise every preaching muscle with some rigor. Rightly so! Improvements can keep being made, of course, and one can always wish for more. Still, our seminaries lead students through substantial learning when it comes to preaching.

By contrast, other practical specializations receive much less emphasis, e.g.: teaching the faith, counseling, stewardship, parish administration, youth work – and, yes, evangelism. There may not even be an entire course specifically devoted to some of these areas. Now, to be sure, merely tallying specific courses is inadequate to measure seminary student engagement, say, with evangelism. The entire curriculum delivers vital content for telling the Good News about Jesus.

Still, pastors can be asked, and asked fairly: what did you learn in seminary concerning evangelism? Specifically:

- In which courses was the subject treated head-on? How well did these courses prepare you for the evangelistic challenges you actually face in the parish? Were they geared more to another time and set of circumstances, or were they on-point for today?
- Did you find your instructor(s) well-prepared to teach evangelism, both on the basis of both academic study and practical experience?

- Which other courses in the curriculum impinged on evangelism? Did they reinforce the instruction about evangelism, or somehow conflict with it? Did seminary discourage evangelism in any way?
- Did your seminary study provide you a theological basis for evangelistic efforts in the congregation, those of pastor and of people?
- Did seminary instruction impress upon you the importance of your own evangelistic work as a pastor? How so or how not?
- Did all your preparation in evangelism fall under the heading of individual witness? What about corporate congregational evangelism efforts? Assimilation? Inactive members? Apologetics?
- What role did your field education and vicarage play in your formation for evangelistic work? Would it have been beneficial to try and make the impact of this “on the job training” more regular and intentional? If so, how?
- What were the overall strengths of the instruction you received in seminary as regards evangelism? How about its weaknesses?

As you can perhaps tell, I have these and similar questions “on the brain” at the moment. This summer, I will join a few other evangelism executives in a consultation with a couple of professors from Fort Wayne, including the president, to discuss these matters. Anything you wish to pass along that can help me prepare for this meeting would be most welcome!

Summer Hiatus: Monthly *See? WOW!* issues will resume, D.v., in September.

– Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers