

# Genesis

The Monthly Newsletter of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church  
Mequon, Wisconsin

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## SALES

1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

In the last two months I have been bombarded by salespeople—from siding contractors, to HVAC installers – from Yellow Page advertising reps to outreach ministry organizations. It has surely taken its toll on me. Between the promises made, the research involved in choosing, the frequent hard-pressure phone calls, and the guilt I feel at rejecting the proposals of seemingly kind people, I have found myself feeling like there is a dark cloud hovering over my head.

I don't like making decisions, and I especially don't like being prodded, pressured, and hassled. Most people don't.

I sometimes wonder if that's how people view the Church – as one mega-sales organization seeking to get people in the door so that they become ingrained into the base of support. I wonder if the outside world feels prodded by all the "welcome" post cards, the interior-lit signs, the outdoor banners, the newspaper adver-

tisements, the swag handed out at county fairs and parades, and the like.



While reading the book of Acts throughout the Easter season, I was struck by the approach of the Apostles of Jesus just after His resurrection and ascension. As the civil and religious authorities challenged their proclamation of the Gospel of Christ and threatened their livelihood and well-being, they said:

"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. **For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.**" Acts 4:19-20

The Apostles didn't see themselves as salesmen. They saw themselves as people whose lives

had been transformed by a Savior – as people who had found peace, joy, and hope through Him who gave His life to rescue them.

It has never been about increasing the support base or wooing people through the doors so that they bring more bodies, more energy, more ideas. It has always been about opening up the floodgates of God's grace to a world steeped in loneliness, emptiness, and pain.

Jesus is the answer to all of life's most important challenges – and we would be doing a disservice to our unbelieving friends, neighbors and coworkers if we didn't take the time and opportunity to let them know the benefits we have found in our relationship to God.

Don't sell the church. Don't prod your neighbors to visit on a Sunday. You're not a salesman for Beautiful Savior. It's the Holy Spirit who builds the Church.

But tell them "what you have seen and heard" and share with them "the reason for the hope that is in you." That's what love is all about.

In Christ,

Pastor Hillenbrand