



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians
2:20

October, 2014

Christ in the Workplace

Comparison is the Thief of Joy

by: Kirby J. Falkenberg

It started at an Italian restaurant. I ordered spaghetti with meat sauce. My wife asked me why I would order this entree and reminded me that every time I finish my meal I tell her it's not as good as her homemade version. My daughter said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." I was struck by this statement, attributed to Theodore Roosevelt.

Why does each spaghetti sauce need to taste like my wife's? Each chef has a signature way of preparing the dish with his or her own special twist that would be pleasing to their family or customer.

This lends itself to being judgmental. For example, when I was 16, I started my first job at Kroger grocery store and every time we had a new hire, our crew would speculate by the end of the first day as to whether that person was going to make the cut. How we labeled and treated them often ensured the outcome. With more guidance and understanding, we could have encouraged and supported a new person in order to give them the best chance of continued employment.

In my YMCA career, I moved five different times. Each of the YMCAs were quite different, none of them "cookie cutter" operations, and it was easy to start comparing staff and members with personnel from previous jobs. A better way would have been to prize the gifts and talents of the staff I'd inherited and would re-hire in the future.

I've been playing racquetball for a long time in my hometown and I really love my fellow players. Now that I spend our winters in Florida, I play with some gentlemen at a different YMCA. For some reason I had a hard time liking one of these guys. It seemed to be a combination of his mannerisms, method of play and a few other factors.

Feeling judgmental, I refused to fall into that old pattern. I started to encourage him between games and really worked on learning about him and his life story. I discovered what a unique and special person he was and when we met again on the court six months later, he greeted me warmly and asked me to be his partner.

Last month, I was facilitating a men's group at a halfway house for offenders. A new member had just been released from prison after 32 years. He was like a deer in the headlights. Everyone in this group had a prison experience and we talked about how we could each be Christ to him and help him with his transition and future employment to keep him on the right path so he would not return to prison.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis observes that we judge people from the outside and by what they achieve. We do not know how far they've come from where they started or the natural gifts they were given. God looks from the inside out and knows exactly how far people have come from their starting point and their natural gifts. They may have accomplished more than the people we rank as successful.

If we live in the past, we rob ourselves of our present gifts and opportunities. We have a purpose in life to be Christ to every person and every situation.

Kirby Falkenberg is married to Claudia and splits his time between South Bend, Indiana and Sarasota, Florida. He is a retired YMCA director and serves on the CIC board. He can be reached at kjfalkenberg@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

Greater Phoenix Area

October 3-5, 2014
November 14-16, 2014

Salinas Valley

November 14-16, 2014

Orange County

January 16-18, 2015
Monterey

May 15-17, 2015

Women's Weekends

WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill

May 1-3, 2015

Annual Conference

October 17-18, 2014

Christians in Commerce News

Palm Desert-Palm Springs Day of Renewal

San Jose Challenge Weekend

Palm Desert-Palm Springs Challenge Weekend

Please send your stories to:

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Dwell on the Love of God

by: James Hannan

May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant. Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight. (Psalm 119: 76-77)

Twenty years ago, CIC board member Greg Aitkens challenged me with the question, "Do you have a personal relationship with God?" I had no idea what he was talking about, but something told me I should want this. Sometime thereafter, I found myself at my first Challenge Weekend, wondering where the TV was. I left reading Fr. Michael Scanlon's Appointment with God.

Waking early is tough, but I'm an engineer and I believe in formulas and proper procedures. If the morning appointment is the sure way to a personal relationship with God, I will follow it. I didn't know God had a plan for my heart. Slowly, he began transforming it, making me a better husband, a better father, and a better manager, preparing me for his kingdom work.

Fifteen years later, as a volunteer in my daughter's Teen Youth Program, I was teaching fellow core members how to pray and began mentoring a young man. Little did I know how much I would learn. We agreed that the focus of my mentoring would be to teach him how to pray; knowing good prayer leverages God's powerful word against our life experiences to change our hearts and behavior.

Years later he called me with worries, fears and doubts, overwhelmed by some of the instructions he had received at a recent retreat. I encouraged him to replace them with "Pray" and "Dwell on the love of God." I suggested he make a sign and post it on the mirror where he shaves reading, "Dwell on the love of God." If I dwell on God's love for me, God invites me to dwell in his love, and in God's love all things are possible.

When my father was ill, the frequency of my visits home increased. Mom called one day saying I needed to come immediately, and I obeyed. Clear as day, I knew I needed to be at

her side. Knowing that I was with his life-long love, my father passed away. It was scary, but beautiful. God's love was everywhere, and in God's love we found peace. God, my appointment and CIC enabled me to truly rejoice in the rebirth of my father. Mom and I shared those next few hours grieving, but full of joy.

When I accepted the invitation of a brother to walk with Christ, I did not know where it would lead me. I said, "I want a personal relationship with God" and set out to get it. Central to the strategy is my daily appointment with God. Ten years ago, at the urging of my wife, I added journaling to the appointment. Journaling has added many dimensions to my prayer, including self-accountability, a reference record, and an intimacy with God's thinking.

Lately, pressures and attacks at work have been very difficult. Grounded in the love of God, I come out of my appointment wanting to fearlessly pursue excellence, not feelings of rejection or desires for retaliation. Others come to my aid, knowing that my heart is right. I'm still under pressure, but immersed in God's love, I trust in his providence.

Recently I heard the story of a doctor who knew he only had six months to live. He said nothing changed that day, but everything was different. Suddenly he had no jealousies, stopped judging, and stopped competing. All those accomplishments, worries, fears and doubts lost their influence on him. All his earlier earthly cares evaporated. He found himself at peace and totally focused on loving his family and friends.

God offers this "evaporation service" to us. He invites us to live in his love, where he promises comfort. Dwell on the love of God! In God's love, his law is our delight.

Jim Hannan has been a member of CIC for about 24 years and is currently a member of the Scottsdale Chapter. He lives in Scottsdale with Diane, his wife of 34 years and occasionally enjoys visits from their two daughters, Lily and Rose. Jim has enjoyed a long career in Cable Television. He can be reached at james.hannan@cableone.biz.

Pray: Thank you, Lord God, for inviting us into an intimacy with you that promises peace, love and mercy. Help me to stay in your love as I encounter the world.

Reflect: Do I truly give God a chance to recharge me every day? Do I listen to God's love when I encounter the world's challenges?

Discuss: How do you use your appointment with God to grow in intimacy with Jesus Christ? How do you escape the worries, fears and doubts the world throws at you?

Men's October Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Will DeSanto

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.
(Proverbs 3:5)

Over the last year, I have tried to put this verse into practice while facing stressful and difficult situations in my life.

The divorce of one of my children living half a continent away saddened me. I was concerned as to how to help. I listened, encouraged, and prayed over the phone. I prayed in the morning and said the same prayer during the day.

One day I realized I was holding onto this situation by thinking and praying about it all day. I decided to leave it in God's hands. Over time, this child grew in prayer, developed a closer relationship with Jesus, and began stepping out of their comfort zone to draw closer to siblings, family and friends.

Then there was the wedding of my wife Ginny's daughter, 650 miles away. Again I wondered how I could help. What financial obligations would there be? How would I deal with the issue of wedding plans that included Ginny's former husband, father of the bride? All this would play out in front of hundreds of wedding guests.

Through prayer and talking about it with Ginny, I decided to trust that Jesus would guide me. What a Spirit-filled wedding it was! We basked in Jesus' blessings as we all left the church singing, "Proclaim His Marvelous Deeds." I said to the father of the bride, "I can see Jesus has blessed our families in coming together with care, love and support." He replied, "Yes, we are brothers in Christ", as we gave each other a confirming hug. It was a most blessed time of joy and celebration; one that reflected the truth that God is always for us, and as the Psalms tell us, "The Lord is King!"

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me to empty myself of wanting control over situations. Come and dwell in me and let my thoughts and actions reflect your control over my life.

Reflect: How can I grow in my trust in the Lord as I experience the challenges of the day?

Discuss: What can you do each morning to live out the day by putting your trust in Jesus? What works and doesn't work?

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Will DeSanto

... I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

My wife, Ginny, and I are blessed to work side-by-side as self-employed life insurance agents. The people we call on are from all walks of life, and many of them tell us how their lives and finances are in disarray. Often, there is an opening where we can ask them, "Would you mind if we prayed for you right now?" Almost always, they are open to this, so we are blessed to be able to bring the light of Christ into their lives.

Although we feel called to this work, there are times when we pull up to an address and find ourselves outside our comfort zone. At those times, I hold onto Jesus' hand and say, "The Lord is my refuge and my fortress, in whom I trust." (see Psalm 91)

Many times I misjudge people. After a young single mother cancelled her policy protecting her children, I commented to my wife that the woman was immature and irresponsible. The woman then called, crying on the phone, and told us she had lost her job. We told her we would pray for her and help her when she found work.

There are also times when our hard work results in no sale or a very modest one. There was the single woman who, when we reviewed her policy, shared that she has to deal with depression most days. We ended up praying with her and asking for Jesus' healing touch. There was an older farmer who wanted insurance coverage, but because of his medical situation, we could not help him. As we were preparing to leave, I asked if we could pray with him. He was receptive, so we joined in a circle of prayer in his yard, asking that he be healed. It has been a blessing to find ways of building the kingdom through our work!

Pray: Come Holy Spirit; transform my mind and heart, so that I can be the hands and feet of Christ in my work.

Reflect: Do my thoughts center on your ways, Jesus? Do I guard my heart and mind to reflect you, Jesus? Do I truly want to make a difference?

Discuss: Give an example of how you made a difference in building the kingdom. Discuss a situation where you think you could have done more to make a difference.

Men's October Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Will DeSanto

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. (Psalm 133:1)

What a blessing it is to live within a couple of blocks of my CIC brother, Gordy! One morning I got a text asking me to help him hang a dining room light fixture. I thought, "This will be easy," and indeed, the wiring was easy to figure out. The goal of surprising Gordy's wife looked like a sure thing.

Hanging the fixture, however, was another story! Several hours passed with us getting the base and globe supports in. As we both stood on the dining room table examining the hardware, we discovered that a small but vital connection piece was broken and a trip to the store for a replacement was needed.

Before heading out, we called the store to make sure they could help us, but to our surprise, they said we had two choices: order the part needed, which could take a week, or exchange the fixture we had partially hung for a new one. Neither option was good. We decided to go to the store and deal with them in person.

We prayed that God would resolve this problem simply as we drove to the store. At the store, we found there were no other models like ours on the shelf. But, we also discovered that a manager had learned of our problem; he found the model and the part we needed, and offered it to us. Problem solved! We were on our way in just a few minutes.

As we drove home, we offered praise and thanks to God. We got the chandelier hung and lit up in a short time. Gordy's wife was so happy. Later, at dinner with our wives, we told how the manager had given us what we needed before we had even asked for it. Jesus had responded to our need and brought about an outcome we had not expected!

Will has been in CIC since 1983. Ginny, his wife, has been a member for six years. They have been married for six years and have brought their five children together. They live in Minneapolis, where they are active locally in CIC. They have also been consistent attendees of the Annual Conference for many years. Will can be reached at 612-759-8301 and willglorybe@earthlink.net.

Pray: Give me a heart to share life with my brothers and sisters by helping them in times of need. Help me to serve others, even when I am concerned about my own agenda for the day.

Reflect: How can you bring Jesus into the details of your life?

Discuss: Give a situation where you brought Jesus into the details, or could have but did not. What was the outcome? How did it build (or not build) the kingdom?



2014 Annual Conference: October 17-18, 2014

... and that life was the light of all mankind. (John 1:4)

Join with us as we grow in living the life of Christ - a life that is the light for those we meet in the marketplace. There is a new wave of the Spirit and evangelization sweeping across our land! We are a part of this as we build his kingdom and share his Gospel in our workplaces.

The 2014 Annual Conference will take place October 17-18th at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in San Jose, CA.

Go to christiansincommerce.org/2014EarlyBird to register now and get the Early Bird discount!

Women's October Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Gail Cardwell

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few... (Matthew 9:37)

My work colleague attended the funeral of his best friend's father recently. The eulogy so moved him, he felt compelled to share it. The deceased was called to ministry as a college student, but initially ignored the call in order to seek his fortune. He failed to achieve monetary fortune and instead enrolled in the military, serving as a physical therapist for burn victims. He realized that, despite excellent physical care, the patients' spiritual needs were neglected. This led him to his calling as a pastor. He eventually left the U.S. Army, devoting his life to labor instead for God's army – spreading the Good News and spiritual healing worldwide.

This man's son said that his father chose less to **talk** about, but rather simply to **demonstrate**, holiness. Near retirement, he and his wife became missionaries to Russia. During his initial medical review, lung cancer was found, but he recuperated and they left for Russia. While there, a gang assaulted him and left him for dead. A witness alerted authorities and he was flown to the U.S. for treatment. In his semi-conscious state, he could only say, "We must forgive them." As soon as medically permissible, he returned to Russia. Cancer was discovered again and the doctors told him it was likely terminal, yet he continued his pastoral work by training other missionaries. God once again healed him. Despite a job offer as a local pastor and his family's pleas, he chose to return to Russia alone.

It was in Russia, a foreign land, alone, where the Lord called him home. His son had difficulty understanding his choice to die alone and far away. Over time, however, he was honored that his father chose instead the true path. He grew to comprehend his father's desire to serve Christ above all. By electing to serve as God's laborer, his personal sacrifice yielded a fruitful and plentiful harvest.

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Gail Cardwell

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:13)

As parents delight when their children smile, I believe our Father savors moments when his children approach the day with childlike delight, trusting in him as our shepherd and freeing us from fearing "Today".

Over the past several months, a lack of resources has created roadblocks to our group's professional success. Given inadequate administrative support, our group has worked long hours to compensate for this resource gap. Despite a looming industry downturn, other groups have received additional resources based on their relative ability to raise revenues. While I respect this organizational decision, I have harbored subliminal resentment. When I have greeted the work day, I have overtly demonstrated enthusiasm to our group, but these hidden feelings remained.

Despite a 100 percent staff retention rate, employee satisfaction survey results demonstrated my group's lack of confidence in the organization. The results led me to Scripture and reflection upon my role in this survey outcome. At a subsequent CIC chapter meeting, a sister selected a scripture during our evening's reflection time. The verse spoke to me and I realized that I should be very grateful for my work. I digested the meaning of its application in my approach to "Today". I found my dearth of gratitude particularly troubling in that I had not exercised the Lord's spiritual gift to me of encouraging people. I had walked through "Today" with a resigned approach to daily toil, in lieu of encouraging my team. I had buried the talent the Lord had entrusted to me and allowed sin's deceitfulness to harden my heart.

To embrace a childlike approach to the day, I have since scheduled appointments to celebrate victories with our group. I pray with colleagues to welcome "Today" with open arms. Gratitude for my work fills my heart and has yielded positive morale!

Pray: Father, please bless us with the courage and grace to labor for you above all, to spread the Good News and to plant the seeds of a plentiful harvest.

Reflect: What obstacles in my life are holding me back from total service to the Father?

Discuss: How can I overcome these obstacles? What changes in my life do I need to make in order to bring greater glory to God?

Pray: Father, please bless us with the grace to approach each day with a childlike innocence, encouraging one another and glorifying you in the workplace.

Reflect: How do we use our spiritual gifts to encourage others in the workplace?

Discuss: When have we failed to encourage one another daily and what were the results? What changes in our spiritual approach to "Today" did we make to encourage others?

Women's October Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Gail Cardwell

... As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Joshua 1:5)

Upon exiting services one Sunday, I glanced to my left and recognized an old friend, whom I hadn't seen in years, engrossed in prayer. We had spent many weekends together as 'hockey moms' in years past. She looked up just long enough to smile at me, which filled me with joy. Encouraged by my CIC sisters who had taught me to act on my faith encounters, I invited my friend to coffee. Over breakfast, she shared her story with me. She had left the faith because her husband was not a believer, and therefore, they had not raised their children as Christians. She deeply regretted this decision. Legalism and prayerlessness had contributed to her feelings of isolation, guilt and homesickness. She longed for the Lord and to reunite with other Christians.

I told her I had had similar feelings in the past, but spoke of how the Lord never leaves us and how the heavens rejoice when we return to him. I recounted how the Lord had surrounded me with Christian fellowship through CIC and how my sisters had prayed over me and led me to the Word. I invited her to study the Book of Esther with me. She related to Esther's isolation, her courage, and God's active deliverance of the faithful. Now, she studies the Word fervently and is on fire with the Spirit! Through his grace, he reunited us as sisters and we stand as evidence of the Lord's promise never to forsake us.

Gail Cardwell is from the Women's CIC Northern Virginia Chapter. She has been married to her husband, David, for 24 years. They have two sons. She is in the financial services industry. Gail may be reached at gailcardwell@cox.net.

Pray: Father, please bless us with the grace to act upon and share our faith with others who feel isolated.

Reflect: Do I seek those who have left the faith and encourage them to return?

Discuss: Relay an experience where you have acted upon your faith to help someone struggling with fear and isolation.

Christians in Commerce

NEWS

**Christians in Commerce
Prayer**

Palm Desert-Palm Springs Day of Renewal

On Saturday, August 23, 2014 the Holy Spirit was actively working in many lives in Walnut, California! Speakers from Christians in Commerce (CIC and WCIC) participated with two other kingdom building organizations, LOGOS Evangelical Seminary and Family Keepers International, to share "The Challenges, Solutions and Transformation of the Workplace: Creating a Healthy Balance of Family, Church and Workplace" with about 130 participants at the East Formosan Chinese Church of the East Valley.

Dr. Joshua Yeh began with the image of a triangle with Christ in the center surrounded by Family, Church and Work at each apex. Diane Hannan spoke on the challenges in the role of women and the difficulty of raising God-centered families. Jim Hannan followed with a reflection on how Jesus has a perfect plan for our lives through the Holy Spirit. John Sloan, quoting Matthew Kelly, talked about how God "calls us to be the best version of ourselves" as stewards of creation, so we can love, influence and increase for him. Although prepared separately, at the heart of all three talks was the necessity for a robust daily appointment with God as the foundation for doing our work in building the kingdom.

As in Uganda (where CIC has an active ministry), all talks were presented in two languages: English and Chinese. High praise goes to the meticulous organizers, Peter Chen and Jim Foudy, as God was truly glorified this day! Perhaps someday the CIC Challenge Newsletter will be translated into Chinese! Praise God!

San Jose Challenge Weekend

The San Jose Chapter held a successful Challenge Weekend June 27 & 28th. Eleven participants, including one first-time attendee, drove to and from the event instead of staying overnight, which worked out well.

Some comments from the weekend

included, "The weekend helped me to 'clear the fog,'" "I saw the spirit working on people's hearts," and "We are important in the lives of other men when we show them and share with them our faith journey so they can see that they are not alone."



Palm Desert-Palm Springs Challenge Weekend

By: Tom Kueneman

The Coachella Valley chapters of Palm Desert and Palm Springs hosted their Challenge Weekend on March 21-23 at the Sacred Heart Church in Palm Desert. There were 57 men in attendance with 19 attending their first Challenge Weekend. This was an amazing weekend where God moved powerfully! The team included CIC members from Arizona as well as other southern California chapters. Both Banning and Fallbrook Chapters had members in attendance and a couple of men also came in from northern California.

Some of the comments from first-time attendees were, "Wow, completely unexpected, I'm glad God got me here!", and "This weekend was a major affirmation of what God is doing in my life."



Father,

You are my Lord and Creator.

You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.

Fill me with your Holy Spirit:

That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;

That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people. A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;

That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and possessions you have given me. A stewardship that serves, is generous and brings honor to your name;

That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce. A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.

Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.

Amen

Vision

Expanding the Kingdom by being Christ in the workplace.

Mission

We encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ by releasing the power of the Holy Spirit that is in them. We challenge them to be Christ to the people and circumstances in their workplaces by bringing his truth, love, healing, justice and excellence to the marketplace.

Values

As Christians in Commerce, we are an ecumenical organization united with the body of Christ to:

- Know, love and serve God and others
- Embrace the beliefs of the Nicene Creed
- Release the power of the Holy Spirit in worship and work
- Share the time, talents and resources God has entrusted to us
- Enrich member participation in prayer, scripture, family and church life



Christ ALIVE!

Galatians 2:20

“...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

www.christiansincommerce.org



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