



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians
2:20

September, 2014

Christ in the Workplace

Changing A Culture: The Slow Work of Love

by: Louis Grams

Three and a half years ago, my wife, Nancy, and I made the "life simplifying" shift from single family home ownership to condominium ownership. No more chores that go with owning a house.

No one warned me about condo home owner associations. We attended a meeting after we moved in. It began with a shouting match between the president of the association and the angry former president who had been ousted.

They were joined in the fray by others in the room. Attempts at order were made with shouts of "Shut up" accompanied by various expletives. We discovered that there were multiple lawsuits going on and suspicious relationships between board members and various service contractors. A second visit was even worse.

On my third visit, one of the three board members announced she was resigning because she could not take the fighting and arguing anymore. An appeal was put out for nominees. The room was silent. I finally raised my hand and asked what would be involved. "Why hardly anything, just a monthly meeting."

I threw my name into the hat. It was the only name and I was on the board. Within two months the other two members had moved out, and I became president, scrambling to assemble a new board. I was joined by a Ukrainian Jew and a Chinese Buddhist, both men of outstanding character.

I begged the Lord for "peace in the house" and the guidance to help make that happen. It began with the development of respectful and caring relationships between the board members. We shared stories from our lives, encouraged each other and agreed to some standards which you and I would find in the Gospels.

We determined: that every owner would be listened to with respect; that we would build a culture of welcome and friendship rather than the culture of judgment and resentment that prevailed; that we would befriend offenders; that we would be fully transparent in our dealings and make our records accessible to all. We also decided to open each of our meetings with "pot luck" suppers to foster friendship.

We settled the law suits, raised everyone's fees to offset drained reserves, and we found that everyone was willing to move along with us because they knew that their voices were listened to. Hope appeared.

Nancy and I got to know the Christians in the building and took opportunities to pray with them for the needs of our building and our members. We also engaged them and others in doing projects to make it a better place to live. We created multiple committees that involve many people in real oversight and care for the property.

At our meetings, the room was filled with shouting, name calling or judgment. Instead, there is laughter, affection, mutual encouragement and an overall sense of working together. Recently several of our long term owners commented that we have become a very happy family. Love has appeared.

It's taken three years, but love, respect, good meals and the grace of God have made this a better place to live. We're building a new culture that quietly reflects the goodness and love of God. Our board and many of our owners have come to accept their responsibility as stewards of our little bit of creation.

Louis Grams is a co-founder of CIC. He and his wife Nancy live in Eagan, MN where they both do program development, writing and pastoral work for the People of Praise Christian Community. They have five grown children and three grandchildren. His email is gramslwg@aol.com.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

South Bend/Elkhart
September 19-21, 2014

Sacramento
September 26-27, 2014

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
Sacramento
September 26-27, 2014

Annual Conference
October 17-18, 2014

Christians in Commerce News

New CIC Chapter
Tampa, Florida

South Bend/Elkhart
Challenge Weekend

What's Your Answer?

Please send your stories to:

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Intimate Friendship

by: Andrew Svorinic

... So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, (Col 1:10)

God wants each of us to have an intimate friendship with Jesus Christ, just as we do with our relationships here on earth. Our Lord and Savior asks us to grow closer to him in a deeper way, though, than in any other relationship. Developing this friendship, like any other, takes time, discipline and dedication on a daily, consistent basis.

In our relationships with family and friends, we invest and schedule time on a regular basis. For me to grow in my marriage I mark out quality time with my wife. To increase my relationships with my children, I schedule time with each of them and also time together as a family. In my relationships with friends, I also schedule time to be together. The only way to grow these relationships is to invest my time with them to learn, to laugh and to love.

My ongoing friendship with the Lord continues to evolve and be under construction. He is always molding me in our ever-changing relationship that over time has produced abundant fruit and blessings. There are three areas I'd like to mention that have helped me in my daily walk with the Lord, as well as having produced tremendous results with my other relationships.

The first area is obedience. About ten years ago I was sitting at our CIC morning meeting sharing in our small group, after the speaker challenged us with the scripture and question of the week. I learned from listening to my fellow table teammates that growing a relationship takes daily scheduled action. One of my brothers discussed how he read Proverbs every morning. Because there are 31 chapters in Proverbs and the same number of days in most months of the year, he would read a chapter each day as he grew in his intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

This made sense to me and I began doing the same. It is still part of my daily practice and helped to jump-start me

in building a solid foundation with him. This has not always been easy. Similar to our earthly relationships, there have been challenging moments with time and uncomfortable conversations communicating with God. Overall, though, this time has been unbelievable! It has produced a greater obedience in listening to our Lord and has brought my human relationships to a higher level.

The second area is forgiveness. The daily time I have spent with Jesus Christ has helped me in both giving and receiving forgiveness. This is still a work in progress, but like anything else, as my intimacy with Jesus Christ has grown, the forgiveness has gotten easier, even though much work still needs to be done.

A friend once told me that if he were to have the choice to do anything at all in the world he would become a "Doctor of Forgiveness." He went on to explain that when we learn how to accept and provide forgiveness, the majority of the world's problems, if not all of them, would be resolved. I have never forgotten this concept and I believe my friend had it right. He came up with these ideas from walking and talking with Jesus Christ as a daily routine.

The third area is faithfulness. When I walk and talk daily with Jesus Christ my faith grows and shows in my personal and professional life. At work when I find myself in seemingly unsolvable situations, the Lord has continually provided just what I've needed and it has been noted also by my coworkers. In conversations with my kids, I am able to speak the truth to them about difficult situations because they know the Lord is faithful and will never abandon them.

God sent his only Son to sacrifice for all of us and the victory has already been won. What do we have to lose in saying "yes" to him in all of these areas? Our faith assures us that if we live a life pleasing to God now, together we will also share in that same life with him forever.

Andrew Svorinic lives in Gilbert, Arizona. He has been a member of CIC since June 2012 and part of the Mesa CIC Chapter. He has been married to Carolyn for 20 years. He has two children. He can be contacted at svorinic@cox.net.

Pray: Lord, help us to grow in an intimate relationship with you each and every day. Friendship with you provides us the ability to be obedient, forgiving and faithful to your call in each of us here on earth.

Reflect: Consider your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Of the three areas, where would he most like you to grow?

Discuss: What do you do on a daily and regular basis to grow your intimate friendship with Jesus Christ? Provide examples. Where can you improve increasing this intimacy friendship with our Father? How does your friendship with Jesus Christ help you with your family, friends and/or co-workers?

Men's September Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Larry Favor

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

I'm in the building business. A few years ago I had been going through the "courting" of a prospective, very successful client who was planning to build a beautiful beach home. I had been referred by the architect. The client trusted my references, my price was right, and he was very impressed as I walked him through several completed projects.

As we got out of my car and we were shaking hands, confirming the agreement, he looked on my backseat and obviously noticed my Bible. He dropped my hand, turned on his heel, and over his shoulder as he moved away said, "We definitely can't work together if you read that book."

This project would have anchored my business for at least a year, providing several million dollars in cash flow during our desperate construction cycle.

I am a working man "who does not need to be ashamed." I did my best to present myself as "one approved." Did I "handle the word of God correctly?" It was a troubling conclusion to what had appeared to be a gift from God.

Paul continues to teach and strengthen Timothy throughout four short chapters. Paul and I were similarly deserted in our own way. However, via his experience and teachings to Timothy, I am inspired to be faithful, to be strong, to endure...competing as an athlete who does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Tim 2:5)

As men in the marketplace, our rule is never changing — Thy will be done. (Mt 6:10) 2 Timothy is inspired reading shared by men just like us, who battle in the marketplace on a daily basis — fully equipped and trusting "the rule."

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Larry Favor

David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you." (1 Chronicles 28:20)

As sons, are we blessed to have fathers that spoke those words to us? If not, have we encountered men of conviction at times in our lives that have taken the time, given of themselves, and built up our courage with God's word meant for his sons?

If your answer is, "Yes, I did have a dad like that" or "Yes, I have known men who cared for me and made an effort on my behalf", then the torch has been passed, brothers. It is our opportunity and our responsibility to make a difference in the marketplace.

Our opportunity is now to share the best we have to give, with all of the working men we encounter along the way. We are equipped to be more enlightened employers; we are empowered to speak the truth.

How about "retirement?" It doesn't mean we stop working. No. Retirement really is a greater opportunity to share the truth in all situations without the concern of the Human Resources department firing us from the company.

The man that stepped out of his comfort zone to invite me to my first Challenge Weekend had been fired from two high-ranking positions for speaking the truth while on the job. He actually was the Human Resources department in one of those companies — how about that!

However, if you're one of the millions of men that didn't have that father in your life, or that man that demonstrated he sincerely cared for you, or you're the guy with his head down "putting in time" on the job, there's good news. The men of CIC care. Why? Simply because someone cared for us and the torch has been passed.

Pray: Heavenly Father, I accept the challenge of "Thy will be done." Teach me your ways.

Reflect: Sit quietly and ask the Lord to clarify those situations that appear so troubling. Listen.

Discuss: Has there been a recent occurrence where society attempted to 'shame you' for your Christian character?

Pray: Help me to be the man I was created to be.

Reflect: Remember how it felt when someone made the effort and cared for you.

Discuss: CIC is a "one-on-one" extending of the hand to another son of the Father. Do we have the courage of conviction to reach out?

Men's September Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Larry Favor

Select capable men from all the people — men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain. (Exodus 18:21)

The male Christian in Commerce experience is based upon trust, with trustworthy men who build God's love for all his creation.

We start again when we are invited or we invite a new man on the Challenge Weekend. We become awakened by the inspired program hosted by the brothers and enabled by the Holy Spirit. We nurture that awakening at the weekly chapter meeting, and exercise the power of transformation at our small Challenge Groups.

Our Days of Renewal and chapter social events continue to bring us together and smooth off our rough edges. Our Annual CIC International Conference delights us in being with a large group of men and women dedicated to bringing Jesus into the workplace.

While listening last Wednesday morning at our Chapter Meeting, I heard and understood, "The fabric of salvation is based in a faith shared community." The brother speaking was a trustworthy man speaking the truth which enabled me to have a fuller experience of God's love for his creation.

Finally we are able to release our fear and self-doubt because we begin to understand the power to be loved and to reflect that love into our personal interior, our families, and importantly where we spend most of our awake time, the market place.

Although accountability continues to be challenging, we feel the urge to open ourselves and welcome the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

We embrace the power of truth. God's love for his creation draws us together to work more, devote more resources, and to speak truthfully of our personal experience.

Those personal life changing stories transform conversations into hope, the best we have to give.

Larry Favor is a long-time member of the Santa Cruz Chapter in California, where he owns and operates Favor Construction. In addition to being a licensed General Contractor, he also holds an active California Realtors License. In his downtime, Larry enjoys spending time with his family and his horse! Larry can be reached at lfavor@sbcglobal.net.



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!

Pray: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – "Change my heart, oh God.

Transform us into messengers of hope."

Reflect: Why do I experience joy in my life?

Discuss: Most men are still lost in the darkness of the workplace.

What light can I bring? What stories of hope can I share? Share your stories of transformation with each other.

Women's September Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Kathye Burt

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
(Proverbs 13:12)

I am a part-time caregiver for a 95 year old woman. There are at least eight people who come in and out of her life on a weekly basis. One day she asked one of the workers for a prognosis. She was told she was declining physically and was offered no other option. I followed this person out to her car. Speaking the truth in love, I told her that after her visit my client suffered for days with depression, because her hope had been taken away. I also told this person that in my opinion this was not a dying woman. She heartily eats three meals a day and when someone is dying, their appetite decreases and they fail to thrive.

I spoke with my client, reminding her that God is in control. Our faith and trust needs to be in him. We are all declining; there is no guarantee of tomorrow for any of us. She is a faith-filled believer but still struggles with questions regarding the after-life. I continue to help her face her fears regarding death.

Pray: "Dear Lord, you are our creator & redeemer. We thank you for each and every day that we have breath and life. Help us to live each day to the fullest."

Reflect: Where has negativity brought me despair? How do I combat it?

Discuss: Is there someone or something that destroys your hope? Or, do you do this to someone else?

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Kathye Burt

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its' various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

Last summer I started praying for part-time work, where I could serve the Lord with my gifts and talents. I received a phone call from a friend asking if I could fill in that very day for a 95 year-old woman who needed someone to provide companionship, cook meals and chauffeur her to appointments, etc. I prayed, spoke to my husband and called my friend to say I would be happy to help out. Nine months later, I am still helping 30 hours a week. This has been a real gift from God! Not only has it given my life purpose, but it has filled a void from the loss of my own mother and grandmother. This job is an extension of the everyday ordinary tasks I already perform at home, but it is being used to bless a widow in need and to fill an emptiness that was missing in me. It's hard to call this job "work."

Pray: "Dear Lord, thank you for the gifts in our life that bring fulfillment and for creating us with a need to serve you by helping others through your love and grace."

Reflect: How has God fulfilled the desires of your heart?

Discuss: How has God blessed you with gifts you didn't expect, fulfilling the desires of your heart?

Women's September Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Kathye Burt

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:11b)

This past March the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter held our Challenge Weekend at St. Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista. Just before the retreat, three women who were signed up dropped from the list. It was a little disappointing because the retreat was gifted with seven different speakers, along with one of the sisters from the Gilroy chapter, who graced us with her beautiful voice, music and testimony. The total number of women including our team was ten, with one new person.

Despite the smaller numbers, we had a powerful retreat and everyone was blessed by attending. I was amazed by all the women on the team who said "yes" to serve God through their talks and testimony. Our Santa Cruz Chapter has dwindled due to health issues and various situations, but we have a mighty core of women united in love, who say "yes" to serve God and one another. For this I am thankful. We are praying for God to send more women to attend our retreat next year. It is truly a gift to be shared by many!

Kathy Burt is the president of the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter. She lives in Aptos with her husband Barry. They have 2 grown daughters and one granddaughter. Kathy can be reached at proverb3v5@aol.com.

Pray: Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of the Challenge Weekend. We ask in advance that you will be preparing the hearts of the women on the team and the attendees for our next retreat.

Reflect: What does WCIC mean to me? Who in my life would benefit from attending WCIC or a Challenge Weekend?

Discuss: What is it about myself or my group that might be holding me back from inviting others to attend? How can we prepare in advance to invite others?

Living the Life – by Bob Neubauer

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance! (Acts 28:30-31)

Having been involved with two chapters of Christians in Commerce over the past seven years I have received many blessings, but one common thread has been my personal growth. In our Beaverton, OR chapter, brothers have shared how they were reluctant at first to share, but after participating for a time, it has helped their personal, professional and spiritual life. As we share in our small groups, we gain confidence in sharing Christ with people in the marketplace. As a result, I have become bolder for Christ.

Recently I ran into an old co-worker at the barber shop and felt that the Lord had placed this person there. In trying to be bold in my faith, I said to the man, "We should grab coffee together." Then I suddenly remembered the last time I extended an invitation and they mistakenly thought I wanted to talk about marketing, so I hesitated. He agreed to meet but also shared he was laid off again and was going through a divorce. Now I was happy that I invited him for coffee.

When we got together he shared many things that were going on in his life. As he spoke, I didn't offer solutions but instead listened and prayed. As we left I invited him to CIC and gave him a monthly Challenge Newsletter. A few days later, I followed up to see if he wanted to come to a meeting. He declined, mentioning it was too soon. I told him I would keep him in my prayers and reminded myself that reaching out is always the first thing the Lord wants me to do. Chapter growth will come in its time.

Christians in Commerce

NEWS

Christians in Commerce Prayer

New CIC Chapter in Tampa, FL

Ten men gathered at the Franciscan Center in Tampa, FL over the weekend of July 18-20th to conduct their first Challenge Weekend in years. Among the men present were four first-time attendees, three men who attended the CWE held in Tampa in 2001, along with Terry Cassell, Jon Cassady and Kirby Falkenberg, who helped conduct the weekend.

Jim Ganther, who organized the weekend, stated, "Thanks to all of you for making the effort to attend! I trust it will bear much fruit in the coming months and years and be part of the foundation of what the Father wants to build here in Tampa and beyond." Comments from the new participants included "The weekend gave me more of an awareness of the need of Christian fellowship and brotherhood in Christ in my life" and "Great weekend. God is with us so how can we go wrong?" By Sunday afternoon, all seven of the local men committed to launching the Tampa Chapter of CIC.



South Bend/Elkhart Challenge Weekend

The South Bend/Elkhart Chapter held their Challenge Weekend on March 21-23, 2014 at a local hotel in Michigan City, IN with 28 men attending and 12 of them as first-time attendees.

John Carnick, the Weekend Administrator shared "Our meeting room was originally set up for 20, so we removed the tables and squeezed in our 28, which made for a 'full' feeling that worked. We had a wonderful mix

of personalities and of stations in life - some just returning to broader society from a prison stint; some professionals; some blue collar; one looking for work; one from Eastern Europe. It seemed a real expression of the Lord's love for all, and his desire to bring all of us together into one tribe, one family."

Some of the comments from the participants regarding the most important thing that happened to them on the weekend included "The Lord revealed to me what was standing in the way in my life. After revealing it, he then healed me and removed it from my life", "Being able to share and cry with thirty other men about God" and "For me, the different men from different backgrounds all coming together in Christ was awesome. I feel like we are not alone in this walk and we have something to share."

"What Is Your Answer?"

We are often asked, "What is CIC?" What is your answer? What's your "elevator speech"? Sometimes the best way to answer this question is to give an example in the moment. We say that CIC changes lives, but how? We asked to hear YOUR "in the moment" stories. Below is one answer submitted to us:

"Christians in Commerce can help virtually anyone grow in their faith and Christian walk. At one time fear played a major role in my life. A member strongly "encouraged" me to give a talk at our weekly meeting but fear of public speaking nearly derailed me. Since then, I have given numerous talks and the fear of public speaking has been removed. This helped instill in me the courage to volunteer and serve at my church in different ministries. Christians in Commerce helped me become more confident in living and sharing my Christian faith. Thank you, CIC!" Gary Brown, Mesa AZ

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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