



Christians in COMMERCE

Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians
2:20

May, 2009

Christ in the Workplace

Judicial Appointment

by: Walt Seale

Hazel DeSanto encouraged her son, John, to be a lawyer because he "talked so much." After years practicing law, the Governor of Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty, confirmed her word by appointing him the newest Sixth Judicial District Court Judge in Duluth, Minnesota. His appointment came on what would have been his mother Hazel's 96th birthday. "I believe my dear mother had something to do with all this," he said.

John, his twin brother Will and his father Bill attended a Challenge Weekend in November of 1984. During the course of that weekend Hazel was suddenly taken ill and passed away. John and Will have often recalled how Christians in Commerce supported them and their father that weekend and in the days and years afterward. "The brothers in CIC were an answer to prayer during that weekend in 1984 and have been the face and hands of Jesus to Will and me in our careers and family lives right up to today," he said.

John has worked for the cause of the Lord through Christians in Commerce since then and is a past-president of the Duluth chapter. He has worked as a prison fellowship volunteer at the Federal Prison Camp in Hermantown, MN, and as a pro bono attorney with the Volunteer Attorney Program in Duluth.

John graduated from the law school at the University of Minnesota and has dedicated his life to serving the cause of justice. He worked for 35 years as a prosecuting attorney for St. Louis County in Duluth. "It is an honor to be selected to serve as trial judge in the courthouse where I tried criminal cases for so many years," he commented.

Society depends on judges to act as fair and impartial guardians of the Constitution and the Rule of Law. In John DeSanto Minnesota has gained a man who is dedicated to that ideal and to his faith in God.

"I am anxious to start this last chapter of my legal career. I promise to work as hard and as long as it takes to get the job done each day. I need and ask for your prayers and for the help of my esteemed colleagues already on the bench to do this most difficult job of judging — delivering equal justice to all," he said.

"Because I know that I must approach my new vocation as a judge with a heart and mind that is uncluttered with partiality, I pray in the words of King David in Psalm 51, '...create in me a pure heart...and a steadfast spirit,' and to that I add the words from Micah 6 that ask that he would 'act justly and love mercy, while walking humbly with God,' John said.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends Uganda

May 1-3, 2009
May 29-31, 2009
June 5-7, 2009

San Jose

Sept 11-13, 2009

Sacramento

October 2-4, 2009

Salinas

November 13-15, 2009

Fresno

November 20-22, 2009

Women's Weekends Uganda

May 1-3, 2009
May 29-31, 2009
June 5-7, 2009

WCIC-Sacramento

September 18-20, 2009

WCIC-Santa Cruz

November 13-15, 2009

Christians in Commerce News

Twin Cities' Challenge Weekend

Northern Virginia Challenge Weekend

Sacramento Challenge Weekend

Please send your stories to:
Walt Seale
Fax: 703 205-0485
walt.seale@cicintl.org
2853 Meadow View Road
Falls Church, Va. 22042

Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Where is God in all this?

by: Perry Benson

Can God make a banquet in the desert? Psalm 78:19

It was after midnight at the Denver International Airport as my first officer and I closed up the airliner. As we rolled our flight bags out to the pick-up point for the hotel van, I could see one of our flight attendants, Angela, standing apart from the others. I realized I was going to have to ask her if she needed prayer, something I had previously offered only to my CIC brothers. During my captain's briefing earlier that day, Angela had seemed anxious and pre-occupied. After the briefing she told me her husband had recently suffered a heart attack and she feared he would start smoking again in her absence. My suggestion that she just trust him didn't seem very reassuring to her.

Until a few weeks prior, captain's briefings had been just a routine for me: exchange names and give a quick summary of weather and flight time. I had had a long and successful flying career, centered on being a thoroughly competent pilot and a creative manager of resources. But as the ever-worsening working conditions of the industry made that more difficult every day, I was forced to decide whether my career was all that God was calling me to. In prayer, I discovered a calling which added a whole new purpose to my work: when at work, to respect, support and love everyone I encountered, to be open to their stories and to discover with them how God loves us in all circumstances. Despair about my career became anticipation. What did God have in mind for me? Would this new calling bear fruit?

As I approached her at the curbside that night, it was a relief to hear that she was open to prayer. In prayer I acknowledged the Lord's power and asked that he make clear to us, "where is your hand in all of this?" A light flashed in Angela's eyes, and her hands shot up to heaven. Then, she was crying, saying "alleluia" and "thank you, Jesus," and quoting

Isaiah 55, where it says, "*my thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways . . . the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.*" We were in church, and this was not a dull service! After praying I asked Angela to tell me what had happened. She explained that she was seeing the answer to years of prayer that her husband be freed from smoking. It had not happened in the way she had expected, but in God's way. We enjoyed a wonderful moment of quiet gratitude and release from worry.

That night, the excitement still high, I couldn't sleep. Knowing that I would see Angela on the way to the airport in the morning, I pondered what words of wisdom I could leave with her — but came up dry. When I admitted this to her as we climbed into the van, she smiled and said breezily, "that's OK, I already got the message!" I smiled, but inside was a little disappointed — apparently, it wasn't about my wisdom or me. The Spirit had taken the opportunity and had done all the heavy lifting.

Don't let me leave you with the impression that I really know why Angela's husband suffered that heart attack. God has not given me that level of knowledge. Here's what I do know. On that night two Christians prayed together. They sought God's will. For Angela fears were relieved and joy rediscovered. For me, a new calling was affirmed, and with that affirmation came the trust in God and the humility needed to continue that calling. Both of us gained a clearer vision of how God builds his kingdom on earth.

Pray: Lord, give me the eyes to see the opportunities that you present to me to build your kingdom.

Reflect: Is there a calling for you in your workplace, beyond technical competence and management skills, even beyond a positive attitude and ethical business behavior?

Discuss: Have you ever encountered a roadblock in your career that led to a new way of thinking or doing? Where can you see God's hand in your new way of thinking or doing?

Men's May Reflections

week 2

Personal Focus

by: Chuck Wagner

"For if you had faith even as small as a tiny mustard seed you could say to this mountain, move! And it would go far away. Nothing would be impossible." Matthew 17:20

In the spring of 1997 my wife, Michelle, informed me that she was experiencing the early symptoms of Huntington's disease (HD) and wanted to be tested. HD is a hereditary, degenerative brain disorder that had not only claimed the life of her grandmother, but had also been passed on to her mother. A child of a parent with HD has a 50% chance of acquiring the gene. This was devastating news for Michelle, and it placed our two boys at risk. For the first time in my life, I was placed in a situation in which I had absolutely no control. My typical solutions to life's problems, work longer hours, make more money and fix things, wasn't the answer this time. Feelings of fear, anger and confusion quickly set in.

Realizing I couldn't handle this on my own, I discovered that Christians in Commerce held meetings every Wednesday morning at our church. What a "coincidence."

The following Wednesday I attended my first CIC meeting. I shared my story with the men and was especially distraught over the news we received regarding a six week waiting period for the test results. Because the suicide rate is extremely high for people who test positive, we were required to undergo a six week psychiatric evaluation to determine if we could handle the news.

The men immediately prayed for me and tried to convince me that this six week period was an opportunity to turn the situation over to the Lord. It shouldn't be six weeks of gloom and doom but rather six weeks of prayer and hope. I received countless phone calls from the brothers during this time and eventually came to believe that this situation wasn't too big for God.

To the amazement of the doctors, the tests came back negative. Praise to God who still moves mountains!

Pray: Father, help us to not limit your power by our perception of what is or is not possible.

Reflect: Do I turn to the Lord in faith or do I allow doubt and fear to creep in?

Discuss: What "mountain" are you facing right now? How are you handling it?

week 3

Marketplace Focus

by: Chuck Wagner

"No! For unless you are honest in small matters, you won't be in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." Luke 16:10

In these trying economic times it can be tempting to "loosen" our values in the marketplace in order to maintain profitability.

Our company recently faced a very difficult situation that presented us with a number of challenging decisions. We started working for a large General Contractor in January of 2007. Over the next eight months we contracted with them to complete five large grading and paving projects. Approximately six months into the relationship we noticed some inconsistencies in their accounting practices, the most troubling of which was when they applied an \$18k change order to the wrong project. They dismissed it as an honest mistake but we could not get them to correct the error. In June of 2008 the contractor went out of business leaving us to deal with property owners and banks in our attempts to receive payments. The largest project also happened to be the one with the \$18k of misappropriated funds. The owner of this particular property accused us of things we didn't do and proposed to settle for half of what was owed. These false accusations and ridiculous offers angered me to the point that I felt, if they indeed got stuck paying the \$18k that they really didn't owe, they deserved it.

As time went on with no progress I got the sense that this \$18k was the cause of the impasse. We advised our attorney to inform them that they didn't owe this money. Our attorney saw no reason to do this. He suggested that we leave well enough alone and keep our mouths shut. We declined this advice and volunteered the information to the owner.

Ten days before the arbitration date I received a call from the owner expressing a desire to settle the case. His offer consisted of paying the full contract price, all of our attorney fees and \$21k in interest!

Thank you Lord!

Pray: Lord, no matter what the circumstances, help us to conduct ourselves in a way pleasing to you.

Reflect: Do I truly trust the Lord to see me through the difficult times or do I take matters into my own hands?

Discuss: What situations or circumstances have tempted me to compromise my values? How did it turn out?

Men's May Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Challenge Group Focus

by: Chuck Wagner

"So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all-it is dead and useless." James 2:17

This past September the Mesa Chapter started planning for the annual CIC Christmas Celebration. A short term challenge group was formed to coordinate the event. The tasks were divided into numerous categories including: ticket sales, auctions, decorations, food preparation and entertainment. Our goal was to sell a minimum of 120 tickets and have the most successful celebration to date.

In the beginning we got together approximately every three weeks to monitor our progress. As the event date drew closer we increased our meetings to every other week and finally to weekly. Through the generosity of many people, especially chapter members, an impressive list of raffle and auction items was being assembled. The decorating team had things well in hand as did the food preparation and entertainment teams.

Two weeks before the event, at our group meeting, a small problem surfaced. The most important task, the one we were all accountable for, had somehow been overlooked. We discovered that we had a grand total of 20 tickets sold, 12 of which were bought by people sitting in the room. This proved to be a real test of our faith.

At one point it was suggested that we simply cancel the entire event. The fact that we, as a group, had allowed the situation to get to a point that canceling was a legitimate option proved to be the turning point. The ensuing discussion was combative, challenging and uniting. We challenged each other to pray earnestly and to get active. We moved forward trusting that God would hear our prayers and bless our efforts.

Two weeks later 128 people attended a most blessed Christmas Celebration. The fellowship was fabulous and a record amount of money was raised for the mission of CIC.

Pray: Father, help me to see the difference between faith and complacency.

Reflect: When troubled, do I pray and wait or do I pray, listen and act?

Discuss: Do I view faith as an action word? What areas of my life have I been faithful in prayer but not in action?

Women's May Reflections

week 2

Personal Focus

by: Diane McGinty

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

This principle of the Christian life is important to embrace and gives us assurance that God will take care of our needs and guide us through our trials. Knowing that we can trust God gives us peace as well as the confidence to step out and share our faith actively with others. When we see the big picture over time — how God does make all things work together for good — it builds up our faith and equips us to be bolder in bringing God's love and healing to the people in our lives.

Several years ago our daughter, Maureen, journeyed through the valley of the shadow of death with one of her best friends in college whose 16-year-old brother committed suicide. Maureen had visited and vacationed with the family and was close to all of them. Her friendship and companionship and faith were a big help to her friend and to her friend's parents. Maureen's life was changed as she was deeply affected by this experience.

Recently her co-worker's 17-year-old daughter dated a boy who later committed suicide. This was devastating to the girl and caused her mother great anguish as she feared for her daughter's ability to deal with this loss. I emailed Maureen that she was uniquely equipped to help this family since she had lived through a similar experience with her friend. In our trials, God provides us with genuine credentials to empathize and bring healing and hope to others.

It was gratifying to see my 25-year-old daughter step confidently into her role as a helping friend, knowing that God has prepared her to walk alongside those who are suffering because of a suicide. She understands that God will give her the words to say that will bring comfort and wisdom and peace to those experiencing grief and emotional pain.

Pray: Lord, thank you that you bring good out of all situations for those of us who love you. Prepare us to bring your hope and healing to others.

Reflect: How has God prepared you to be able to reach out to others with his caring love and wisdom?

Discuss: Share about a situation where God used a trial in your life to help someone else experiencing similar difficulties.

week 3

Marketplace Focus

by: Diane McGinty

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Our Christians in Commerce Vision statement admonishes us to "Expand the Kingdom." We know that this is our mission in life, and yet we deal with fear, doubt and uncertainty as we consider opportunities in our daily lives to share the Good News.

Shanna is a realtor and member of our CIC chapter and of our Monday morning Challenge Group. She regularly engages clients and co-workers in faith-sharing conversations by remarking that "God has a plan." Visitors at weekend Open House events comment on the state of the economy and their discouragement as they see that their future will not be what they had expected.

The simple statement that "God has a plan" opens the door to conversations that allow others to express the concerns that have been troubling them, to feel the consolation of being understood, to see the relevance of faith and God's hand in their emotional response and provision for the future. It gives them permission to talk about their faith in the marketplace environment. When God is invited into any situation, everything changes.

Shanna responds to the promptings of the Holy Spirit whether she is shopping at the grocery store or walking through a parking garage on her way to a meeting. God has drawn her to troubled-looking people whom she has asked, "Are you okay?" The woman who was also a late-night shopper thanked Shanna for asking and burst into tears, sharing that she was overwhelmed by all the stresses in her life.

Sometimes just a compassionate question and reassuring answer can make the Lord present to people in our life.

Pray: Lord, thank you for the plan that you have for our lives and for the confidence it gives us. Give us opportunities to share this Good News with others. Amen.

Reflect: Whom do I know who would be encouraged to know that God has a plan for her life?

Discuss: Talk about a time when you responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to bring God's plan, his love and trustworthiness into a conversation in your workplace or in your community.

Women's May Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

Challenge Group Focus

by: Diane McGinty

"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer, was permitted by King Artaxerxes to return from captivity to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall which was in rubble. The Jewish people labored with one hand and held a weapon in the other to defend against those intent upon thwarting the rebuilding of Jerusalem. After this arduous task was accomplished, the Jews assembled to hear Ezra read Moses' Book of the Law, and the Levites explained the passages. Then the people worshiped God, and Nehemiah told them to celebrate, using the words of Scripture above.

Reading that Scripture makes me think of our Friday morning Challenge Group. Kathy, our hostess, sets her table with candles, flowers, table runners and placemats appropriate for the seasons, and members of the group arrive with remarkable breakfast treats. It always feels like we're attending a Thanksgiving banquet! And we always have something to share with those at home or at work.

As I read of the difficulties the Jews faced in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, I am reminded of the trust and openness we experienced together over the years as we shared our struggles, prayed and counseled one another through life's challenges, and then celebrated the miracles that God has brought about in rebuilding our lives. Our time together is truly sacred to the Lord and to each of us as well.

"Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." It is astounding to find in Scripture the exact words that describe our experience together. We smile and say that we have more fun than anyone else, and we really mean that we are living in the joy of the Lord. This Spirit-filled community life of intimate relationships with God and one another is our closest experience to the Garden of Eden and our foretaste of heaven. Touching our hearts and guiding our lives through his presence in our CIC sisters, God fills our lives with his joy, empowerment, confidence, freedom and peace. That is what gives us strength.

Pray: Lord, thank you for your generosity in creating in our sisterhood a community of life-changing joy. Guide us to bring others into this community of your love. Amen.

Reflect: Whom do I know who could benefit from the experience of God's love that we share in our Challenge Group?

Discuss: How has participating in our Challenge Group changed my life and my relationship with God?

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

The Challenge Newsletter is published monthly by Christians In Commerce International (CIC). All material in the Challenge Newsletter is copyrighted by Christians In Commerce International and should not be copied without explicit prior written permission. All scripture taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version ©1978 by the New York International Bible Society, used by permission.

Founders

Louis Grams, John Mooney, Cyril Rose

Board of Directors

Greg Aitkens, Stevan Becker,
Terry Cassell, William Dalgetty,
Kirby Falkenberg, Art Klaum,
Cyril Rose, Tim Rowland, Chuck Wagner

Executive Committee

President: Terry Cassell

Vice Presidents:

Stevan Becker, Communications and Programs
Timothy Rowland, Chapter Life and Formation

National Office

Walt Seale, Director of Formation & Growth
Therese McNichol, Director of Administration

Members Advisory Council

Pat Gangi
Jack McCall
Diane McGinty
Clem Richardson

Challenge Newsletter Staff

Managing Editor: Walt Seale
Editorial Board: Executive Committee
Desktop Publishing: Mary Lu Barrett

For further information about CIC call or write:

Christians in Commerce
2853 Meadow View Road
Falls Church, Va. 22042
Phone: 703 205-5600
Toll Free: 877 205-5600
Fax: 703 205-0485
info@ciintl.org

www.christiansincommerce.org



Christians in **COMMERCE**

2853 Meadow View Road, Falls Church, Va. 22042