



# Christians in **COMMERCE**

Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians  
**2:20**

March, 2010

## Christ in the Workplace

### Focusing on Faithfulness

by: Steve Becker

These are trying times. Economic downturns are opportunities to focus on being faithful, leaving the outcome in God's hands.

For the last four years we've worked to build a business at Trademark Transportation that reflects the culture, values and life of the Kingdom of God.

In April 2009, all was threatened when we received news from our largest and best client (we'll call them Best Company). A new joint venture was being formed with a larger company and logistics would be handled by the new company (we'll call them Mega Corporation). We had no contacts, no relationships and no previous history with Mega Corporation.

Best Company highly valued the unique niche we filled for them handling their toughest types of shipments. Just a month prior, they named us carrier of the year over 100 other carriers. During the remainder of the year, Best Company's business doubled with us.

Throughout 2009, we worked hard to tell our story to Mega Corporation. The key decision maker pushed us down the ladder to his front line staff. They quickly communicated to us that it was all about service and price. Since service was pretty equal, it was really about price.

We were able to get a contract signed and in their system and to negotiate a couple of orders, but it looked pretty bleak. The word back from the decision maker was they didn't need any new companies like ours.

Losing the business was a great fear and anxiety throughout the year. It would often come up in our executive discussions. One day we reminded each other that this was all in God's hands.

Our prayer was that righteousness and justice would triumph. We would do our part but the outcome was in his hands.

Faithfulness was to be our focus, not success. If it didn't work out, he'd help us figure something else out.

The first week of January, the move to Mega Corporation was made. Our key contact was no one we had talked to. We scrambled to introduce ourselves.

We desperately needed to get her on board and meet her boss, the key decision maker, and present our case face to face. After introducing ourselves to her, we were told to look at the orders they had, confirm the timing and quote our pricing. They would let us know. I asked if we could come down. They said it wasn't necessary. It looked bleak.

On the way to work the next day, I prayed "God make a way for us to bring honor to your name and show them how we could help."

Not a half hour after I arrived at work, the phone rang. It was the decision maker. "Can you come down and see me next week? I think it would be good for us to get together and learn about you."

This led to a meeting where we were able to introduce ourselves, present our case and get his endorsement for his team to work with us. As he walked us out to the lobby, he began to tell us of other opportunities that might be available to us.

"It's clear you provided a valued service to Best Company and we would like to find ways to work with you," he commented.

After our first week of working with them our key contact at Mega Corporation went to him and said, "I think I'm in love with Trademark." Not a bad start.

We have a long ways to go in this relationship. As we develop it, we will be faithful to God doing what he has given us to do, the way it's done in the kingdom. We will do it because it is the right thing to do, not for any specific outcome.

### Upcoming Events

#### Men's Weekends

**Sacramento**  
March 12-14, 2010  
**Palm Desert**  
March 12-14, 2010  
**Duluth**  
April 9-11, 2010  
**Mesa**  
April 23-25, 2010  
**Salinas/Monterey/  
Santa Cruz**  
April 23-25, 2010

#### Women's Weekends

**WCIC-Central Coast**  
March 5-7, 2010  
**WCIC-Sacramento**  
March 19-21, 2010  
**WCIC-Santa Cruz**  
April 23-25, 2010  
**WCIC-Phoenix**  
May 21-23, 2010

### Christians in Commerce News

Orange county  
Challenge Weekend

Salinas Valley's  
Challenge Weekend

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# Life Pleasing to God

week 1

## If you can

by: Ken Balestrieri

*"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." Mark 9:23-25*

God enjoins us to use his supernatural power to change the world before us; to live above our circumstances and resist the devil and his lies; to confront evil and defeat it. Jesus shows us how. Even to his death, while evil relished in the victory of the crucifixion, Jesus once again rises above his circumstances in victory three days later.

*"Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." (Acts 2:33)* Most of us have attended a Challenge Weekend where we have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but many are still living beneath their circumstances. This is a distraction of the devil to keep us focused on earthly things and not on things above. (Colossians 3:2) Jesus has so much more for us but we must expand our limits. Can we really do all that Jesus was doing and even greater things? We all can take hold of the promise and exercise the power of the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives.

Last spring my wife, Jennifer and I came home after undergoing two separate medical tests. Each one was more serious than the other. Within two weeks the test results were in and the respective doctors shared the results with her. Both tests were positive. Jennifer came home that night with the bad news. Immediately we took the situation to the Lord and in the power of the Holy Spirit we rebuked those test findings. We continued to pray through the night. Two days later each doctor called her and

reported that the test results were incorrect and reversed their findings. The results for both reports were reversed!

*"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1Samual 17:26)* The victory is ours. I challenge you to invite Jesus to exercise his power through the Holy Spirit in all your circumstances. Don't just ask for a little, ask for a lot. (2Kings 4:3) God doesn't want us to make it easy for him. (1Kings 18:30-38)

During our last Challenge Weekend team preparatory meetings we rehearsed the praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We asked each man what gift he earnestly desired. One asked for the gift of knowledge and another for the gift of healing. I asked for the gift of distinguishing between spirits. The next week we each shared about our experiences. One shared how he exercised the power of healing over a family member and they were healed. One shared that while at the dentist he was given a word of knowledge about his hygienist, who had a shoulder injury. He confronted her and prayed for a healing. (She was healed 30 days later.) On that Monday before the weekend I had an attack of anxiety. I felt very bad and heavy laden. I went to prayer that night and reflected. Everything in my life was in order, so where was this coming from I asked? The Lord revealed an attack by an evil spirit. I rebuked that spirit and declared a fast. The next day I fasted and went to daily mass and communion. Upon rising Wednesday morning I was completely restored with vitality and eager expectation for the weekend ahead.

*"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." (1Corinthians 4:20)*

**Pray:** Father, give us a new heart for you. Let us fall in love with your Son, Jesus, through praise and worship and fellowship in your Word. Expand our faith and grant us boldness in exercising the power of your Holy Spirit in our every day circumstances.

**Reflect:** What obstacles must I overcome in order to be operating in the full power of the Holy Spirit?

**Discuss:** Share experiences when you or someone exercised the power of God over your circumstances and they were supernaturally changed.

# Men's March Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Focus

by: Hal Mack

*"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."* Luke 1:45

These words were spoken to Mary by Elizabeth when Mary visited her relative who was six months pregnant with her first child, John the Baptist. Mary's visit followed the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah in the Temple announcing the pregnancy of the barren and aged Elizabeth, and the rendering mute of Zechariah who would be ". . . speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Luke 1:20

Mary's visit also followed the appearance of Gabriel to her announcing that she, a virgin, would conceive and bear a son to be named Jesus who will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. After hearing Gabriel's explanation that her conception would be through the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded to Gabriel with these words: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Luke 1:38

Mary's example of faith is one of the most powerful in Scriptures. What could be less believable to a young virgin than a vision telling her she would be pregnant without relations with a man and the child would rule a kingdom lasting forever? A more expected response from Mary might be: "O sure. You're kidding me. O well, whatever." But Mary's faith, unlike that of Zechariah, led to immediate and complete obedience that the Lord's will be done. Is our faith more like Zechariah's or like Mary's?

**Pray:** Lord, let your will be done in my life. Pour out your Spirit upon me to strengthen my faith and hone my obedience to your Word.

**Reflect:** In what areas of my life am I most often tempted to disobey the Lord?

**Discuss:** What are practical means of deepening my faith? In my quest for obedience to the Lord, do I obey reluctantly or begrudgingly, or with the complete trust and surrender of Mary?

## week 3

### Marketplace Focus

by: Hal Mack

*"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."* John 20:25

We are all familiar with the story of "doubting Thomas" and his refusal to believe his fellow disciples that the Lord had risen and spent time with them. According to John's gospel, it was not until a week later that Jesus again appeared to the disciples in the room with Thomas present. We are left to speculate about the interpersonal relationships between Thomas and the disciples during these seven days. Was Thomas ostracized? Did Thomas taunt the disciples about ghosts or visions? Although such questions arise from pure speculation without any guidance from John, they are worth asking as they apply to our interpersonal relationships in the marketplace.

How many of your coworkers, customers, suppliers are afraid to trust, or too insecure to really listen to the other person? Are we quick to ostracize the unpopular person with whom we disagree? Do we become the beacon of light and truth in our workplace or initiate or tolerate rumors, untruths, back stabbing and the like? Can our coworkers trust us? When in such situations, we must remember that Jesus didn't reprimand Thomas, but in mercy simply told him to place his fingers and hands where he wished and "do not be unbelieving but believe." John 20:27 We are commanded to be Christ to everyone in the workplace.

**Pray:** Lord, teach me to trust in you alone. I surrender to you and acknowledge that you are in control. As you promised, send your Spirit to direct my paths.

**Reflect:** Does your workplace reflect mutual respect, trust and empowerment?

**Discuss:** Over the past week or month or year, when have you or your actions at work demonstrated your belief in our all merciful God? Share the results that God has manifested because of your belief.

# Men's March Reflections

(continued)

week 4

## Challenge Group Focus

by: HaL Mack

"I . . . urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace; one body and one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:1-6

The past two weeks we have reflected on faith and doubt, from the unquestioning and complete faith of Mary when Gabriel tells her she is to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God, to the doubts of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, who is temporarily struck dumb and of Thomas the Apostle who must see Jesus to believe.

How can we deepen our faith and from that increase in faith increase our obedience and holiness? I think this question is uniquely suited for discussion in our Challenge Groups. Although we know that our faith is a pure gift from God, we also know that God wants to give us the fullest measure of that faith. So, how do we open our hearts and minds to the Spirit to accept ever more of the gift of faith? In addition to prayer, reading the Word and worshiping in community, I believe that sharing and living in our Challenge Group by the above words of Paul to the Ephesians will continue to remove doubts and to increase faith through our witnessing and ministering to each other. Let's give it a try!

### WE NEED YOUR STORIES FOR CIC DAILY REFLECTIONS!

If you have a story you would like us to consider using as one of our CIC Daily Reflections, please submit it to us at [info@cicintl.org](mailto:info@cicintl.org) . Word count, including a scripture verse and challenge question should be 300-400 words.

**Pray:** Lord, open our minds and hearts to receive the full measure of your gift of faith. Guide this Challenge Group to grow in love and faith in you.

**Reflect:** On the faith that your fellow Challenge Group members witness to you, and you to them. How can you be God's instrument to bring about an increased acceptance of the gift of faith?

**Discuss:** How is each member's faith walk? Are we growing in faith or in doubt? Be specific. What doubts concern each of us the most? How can the group respond?

# Women's March Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Focus

by: Diane McGinty

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* Philippians 4:6

My faith has been strengthened as I have listened to some of my CIC sisters sharing their inner peace and confidence in God as they have lost their homes and jobs during these precarious economic times.

I am holding onto the peace of Christ as I too am dealing with a difficult and complex issue. I am trying to stay close to God and to express my gratitude for the circumstances which make it possible to even have such a problem.

We know that God has a plan for us and that he uses our trials to build our character and our faith. But our human nature craves security and certainty and a quick solution to our problems. I read recently an insight into Psalm 119:105 that says: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." We would prefer that God would light up the whole road of our future, but his word is a lamp to our feet—giving just enough light for the circumstances of today.

When I think about trusting God, I'm reminded of the poem about the child who brought a broken toy to God to fix. When the child complained that God had not fixed it, God responded, "My child, you never let it go." One of my CIC sisters remarked that we need to bring our problems to God and have confidence that he is handling them. Otherwise, we experience anxiety over and over again as we stew over those issues.

Another aspect of dealing with our trials is to keep them in perspective, and for this, God's directive that in everything we are to give thanks, is perfect advice from a loving Father. We are constantly and generously blessed. We know the end of the story of our earthly lives; we will end up in the arms of our Father. In the meantime, he gives us one another, his Word, and his constant presence in our lives.

**Pray:** Lord, thank you for the depth and breadth of your caring for each of us. Help us to trust you more completely--and with grateful hearts. Amen.

**Reflect:** How do you react to trials in your life? Do you bring them to God?

**Discuss:** Share an experience of trusting God to guide you through a trial. What stands in the way of trusting God with your problems? When you give thanks in the midst of your suffering, how does that affect you?

## week 3

### Marketplace Focus

by: Diane McGinty

*"Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell."* Psalm 43:3

We are so incredibly blessed that God has opened our hearts and minds to understand the total joy and fulfillment of living today in his Kingdom. To some extent each of us has experienced the wholeness and completeness that come when we know that we are fulfilling God's purpose in our lives—bringing his light and hope to others, building his Kingdom here on earth. That is an experience of the holy mountain, of being in the place where God dwells.

I thank God for the continuing opportunities to bring his presence into the lives of others at work. Recently I received a call from a business colleague who shared his discouragement over a soured business relationship. We prayed for God's guidance as he addresses that concern. Another friend and client came by my office to share his worry about the slow growth of his new business. I was able to give him some practical suggestions and reminded him that God has a plan for his life.

An amazing thing happened at a recent Chamber of Commerce mixer. This may have been precipitated by my reputation of being a Christian. (I have been making announcements for years about our annual retreat for "Women in Business.") A casual friend shared that she doesn't know if God even exists, and a couple of us Christians listened with love and told her that God really does love her and has a beautiful plan for her life. Several others meandered over to our group and listened to our conversation. Eventually I suggested that we say a prayer together and prayed for our friend and us all that God would open our hearts and minds to the wonderful life he has planned for us. There we were, a bunch of business people, holding hands and praying at the monthly mixer!

**Pray:** Thank you, Lord, for the opportunities you give us to bring your hope and new life to the people we meet at work. Open their hearts to your light and your truth.

**Reflect:** Who would be encouraged to know that God has a plan for her life?

**Discuss:** Share an experience where you responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to talk about God's love and plan into a conversation in your workplace or in your community.

# Women's March Reflections

## (Continued)

week 4

### Challenge Group Focus

by: Diane McGinty

*"Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits." Mark 6:7*

One gift of our intimate sisterhood is that we can be real with each other. Truly each of us has at one time or another had an important challenge or concern in our life. I remember a time when one of my loved ones was going through a very difficult season of life. God brought sisters to our Challenge Group who not only had experienced similar trials but could also give me excellent advice and meaningful encouragement. We prayed for years for the resolution of these issues and were able to celebrate together as God answered our prayers more wonderfully than I could have dreamed possible.

We all hope that our passing through this world will make a difference. One way this need is met is as we become intercessors. We know that God dispatches healing and grace into the lives of those for whom we pray. It is affirming to hear our sisters bring requests for prayer from their friends and co-workers. We write these requests into our journals and pray for them during the week. And we celebrate together as we hear of relationships and bodies healed and learn that lives have been changed.

God's plan of knitting our lives together is illustrated by the images of a circle of red-wood trees or stands of bamboo that are strong because their roots have grown together, and they support each other. Likewise, God's plan for the intimacy of our Challenge Group is illustrated by a bonfire built of many logs instead of just one log. The one log burns out quickly, while the bonfire not only gives off more light and heat but also wards off danger and serves as a beacon of light and hope for others.

**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 you know who could benefit from the experience of God's love that we share in our Challenge Group? How and when can you invite her?

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

# Christians in Commerce NEWS

## Christians in Commerce Prayer

### Orange County's Challenge Weekend

The Orange County Chapter hosted the first CIC Challenge Weekend for 2010 with 30 brothers gathering together January 15-17th at the Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, California. Eight of these men were first time participants to the Challenge Weekend.



Jerry McCloskey, Weekend Administrator, shared "the talks renewed our commitment to Christians in Commerce and to the Lord. We had an opportunity to introduce CIC to the new participants and to create closer bonds with our weekly members."

Comments from some of the other participants on the weekend included: "The weekend gave me the chance to be able to work with my sons on questions of faith, the Holy Spirit and how to live our lives. It was great!" "I want to thank everyone for their friendship and kindness and to bless all who were here." "The last two talks reminded me how CIC gives me peace in my life. I wish I had this opportunity 30 years ago." "It has opened my eyes to the importance of prayer."



### Salinas Valley's Challenge Weekend

The Salinas Valley Chapter had the first of three Challenge Weekends they have scheduled for 2010 on February 5-7th at San Antonio Mission. They had 29 participants and 15 of these men were new to the weekend.

The group of men who attended represented a variety of ages, as well as having three sets of fathers & sons together on this weekend. One of the younger participants said he was encouraged by seeing in some of the more mature guys that "you don't need to sell out to be successful in this world." Several men stated how clear it was to them that the composition of the discussion groups and pairings for the Emmaus Walk "was divinely inspired."

One of the new participants shared "I assumed Christians in Commerce would be about Christians and networking. I was right about the Christian part, but was pleasantly surprised about the networking: there was no talk about economic benefit. The focus was on our spiritual benefit through building relationships with Christians brothers. As one brother put it "I really want to develop this kind of substantial relationship with Christian men, based on depth and authenticity. This is so much different than most of the superficial relationships 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.



Galatians 2:20  
“...I no longer live, but  
Christ lives in me.”

[www.christiansincommerce.org](http://www.christiansincommerce.org)

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