



# Christians in **COMMERCE**

Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians  
**2:20**

August, 2011

## Christ in the Workplace

### A Call to Arms

by: Ken Balestrieri

*For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory. Let his faithful people rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.*

*May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them— this is the glory of all his faithful people. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 149:4 -10)*

Although I had read this psalm many times in the past 25 years, I was now ready for the Lord to reveal his message in verses 4 -10: a call to arms.

My wife, Jennifer, and I often spend time praying after dinner. We worship and praise the Lord for 30-40 minutes, then begin intercessory prayer for whatever the Lord puts on our hearts. One recent evening, while engaged in intercessory prayer, I began to come against corruption in our government and world leaders. I invoked the Lord's power as it states in the Psalm verses above: ... *inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples.* I also said, "Lord, we want to read about your victory tomorrow in the news."

The next day, the former Governor of California was exposed in a scandal, and the following day, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was removed from office and put in jail. As I shared this with one of the brothers, he said the Holy Spirit had prompted me to pray the prayer I had said the night before. I realized then that I was not

alone in my endeavor. *And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. (Romans 8:27)*

As we were praying, we were open to the will of God, and he led us, along with many others that night, to this task. The results were clear.

Another time last year, I was alone interceding against world terrorism and I prayed to the Lord to stop any terrorist attacks that night. Once again, I asked that we read about it in the news the next day. The next day's news revealed a terrorist arrest in London and a foiled train bombing.

Are we open to the will of God in prayer? Psalm 149 is a call to engage in the battle for God's creation that has been turned over to evil powers in the world. We are not helpless serfs, but conquerors, and we should act like it. We have the victory assured through the cross and resurrection of Christ. We have the power in the Holy Spirit.

I remember that the first CIC Challenge Weekend pamphlets had this quote from G.K. Chesterson: "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried."

*Ken Balestrieri is from the Salinas Chapter and has been married to his wife, Jennifer, for 38 years. They have two daughters and five grandchildren. He is in the agriculture industry. Ken may be reached at [kenb@mixproduce.com](mailto:kenb@mixproduce.com).*

### Upcoming Events

#### Men's Weekends

**San Jose**  
August 26-28, 2011

**Sacramento**  
September 23-25, 2011

**Salinas**  
November 11-13, 2011

**Santa Cruz**  
November 18-20, 2011

### Christians in Commerce News

#### Meet the Real Holy Rollers

**Please send your stories to:**  
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## Life Pleasing to God

week 1

### The Greatest of These is Love

by: John Ruzzo

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1: 3-5)*

We have a granddaughter. When she was three, my wife Shirley and I were vacationing on the northern coast of California. We were strolling through a small town when we passed a bookstore. I saw an illustrated children's book in the window, McDuff Moves In. We went in and I bought the book for her next birthday.

When her birthday came, I gave her the book and she loved it. It became her favorite. McDuff is a white West Highland Terrier who has many adventures. A couple of years later, we heard that her father, knowing this book was her favorite, ripped it apart in a fit of rage. I remember being filled with anger towards her father at the time, but what could I do?

Eventually, her parents began the legal process of divorcing, which was very hard on our granddaughter and her brother. What could Shirley and I do?

We could, as disciples of Christ and as grandparents, take up the challenge of providing them with as much love and support as we could. With their mother now a single parent, we babysit her son and daughter often.

We also see them quite often, because they love to come to Grandma and Grandpa's. Every time they come over, we greet them with love and hugs and kisses. We make sure they have a good time. They love watching TV in Grandpa's TV room, so with a loving heart, Grandpa catches up on his reading in the comfortable chair in his bedroom instead.

This year our granddaughter turned nine. The thought came to me to try and replace the destroyed McDuff book. I am a big fan of "Googling", but when I searched for "McDuff", the links that came up were not leading me to the book. Finally, after a couple

of hours of internet searching, I discovered that the book's author was Rosemary Wells. From that I was able to access several sites where I could order McDuff books (As it turns out, McDuff is a series of books).

I ordered several different McDuff books, including, of course, the treasured and destroyed McDuff Moves In. When the books arrived by mail, I stored them in my office and anxiously awaited our granddaughter's birthday. I told her I had gotten her something very special, and that it would fill a gap in her life.

Her birthday came, and I gave her the box. When she opened it and saw McDuff whole again, as well as several other McDuff books, she was really excited and happy. She later told her mother, "Grandpa really did fill a gap in my life".

What I didn't know until after I gave her the books is that her mother had taped back together the damaged McDuff Moves In, missing pages and all, and that it had always remained her favorite book.

I suppose, in our heart of hearts, we would like for nothing bad to happen to those we know and love. But bad things do happen, and those very bad things do give us the opportunity to act with love and be Christ to help repair the damage.

For myself, I am also presented with the challenge of praying for and loving our grandchildren's father, who continues, from time-to-time, to inflict emotional damage upon them. He is a child of God as well.

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)*

*John Ruzzo has been a member of the San Jose Chapter since 2003, having been introduced to it by his brother-in-law, Don Gagliardi. He is currently Chapter President. John is an attorney, sole practitioner, in the fields of estate planning and Elder Law. John and Shirley have 12 grandchildren, nine of whom reside in California. Of those nine, five live just five minutes away! John may be reached at [jruzzoatty@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jruzzoatty@sbcglobal.net).*

**Pray:** Lord, help me to act always with love towards my family, friends, coworkers and especially my enemies.

**Reflect:** Right now, where are you acting with love and where are you not?

**Discuss:** How can you act with love towards your enemies and those with whom you do not get along?

# Men's July Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Sacrifice

by: Rick Slager

*For you formed my inward parts; you wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139: 13-14)*

Each day I wake up in the morning and pray that I will be my best self; a noble mission for the day, if I allow myself to be the very best self in God's eyes and not my own. In my world, being my best self is never good enough because it's often all about me – my growth, my achievements, my goals, my accomplishments, my development, my objectives, my, my, my, my. I strive to be a better businessman, better entrepreneur, better athlete, better student, better leader, better financial steward, you name it - better, better, better. It's exhausting, unachievable, frustrating and endless – a vicious cycle.

This is not the case in our Father's world. In his world, we were made the way he wanted us. Imagine that; we don't have to be anything we're not. He loves us unconditionally the way we are. The only thing he asks is that we get to know and love him as he knows and loves us.

How simple is that? It's not about us at all; it's about knowing and loving him unconditionally – an ever maturing, ever growing, ever deepening, ever believing relationship. That's how we become our best selves in our Father's world. We just have to become fully who he made us to be. When we do that, the vicious cycle becomes the virtuous cycle. Peace at last!

Each one of us was made in God's image and likeness. How do we improve upon that? There is no contest or game, mountain to climb, or pinnacle to reach. We are all winners in God's eyes and we have been that way from the very start. Now let's act like it.

**Pray:** Lord, help me remember that it is all about you and that I was made in your image. Help me to grow in you and not me, being my best self in your eyes, not mine.

**Reflect:** What do you struggle with in being your best self? What is the feeling you get when you are your best self, and how do you keep that feeling alive?

**Discuss:** When do you feel that you are your very best self? Talk about the things in your life that take you away from that. What brings you back?

## week 3

### Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Rick Slager

*Before destruction the heart of man is proud, but before honor is humility. (Proverbs: 18:12)*

It was the first home game of my senior football season at Notre Dame. The game was nationally televised. It was a time of great pride, inflated egos and high expectations. Many in the sporting world were predicting that the game would catapult one of the two teams to the national championship. It did, but not our team.

I began the game 3 for 3, with the third going for a touchdown. The stadium erupted. That moment lasted for only a moment, and three plays later our opponent's all-American tailback, Tony Dorsett, ran 80 yards for a touchdown and never stopped. I did not complete another pass for the remainder of the game, going 0 for 15. The end result was a 31-10 shellacking. Fans booed, sportswriters were brutal, "friends" disappeared, and the mere thought of walking back onto campus, let alone showing my face, was absolutely paralyzing.

The next morning I arose to a knock on my door and my former head coach, Ara Parseghian, standing in my doorway. What he said forever changed my attitude and my life: "You cannot change what happened yesterday. None of us can. You can change tomorrow. Now pick yourself up, brush off your pride and ego, and get back in there. It all begins again right now, and tomorrow we will all find out who you really are."

It was a rebirth, a chance to change what I would become. God gives each of us that chance every day. No matter what's happened in the workplace in the past, we have a new chance today; a chance to start anew and to humble ourselves before our heavenly Father.

The preseason hype had filled my head and emptied my heart, but I got another chance. So do you. Tomorrow we will find out who you really are.

**Pray:** Father, help me to be mindful that I am nothing without you. My gifts and my talents all come from you. Keep me balanced in pride and humility.

**Reflect:** Where am I today on the pride meter; headed towards my best self or headed for a fall? Is my pride healthy and moderate, or unhealthy and destructive?

**Discuss:** Share about a time when your pride resulted in a fall. What needs to take place with your ego and pride today to positively impact tomorrow?

# Men's July Reflections

## (continued)

### week 4

### Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Rick Slager

*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)*

As a child my parents told me, "Nothing good comes out of your mouth when you are upset or angry. Nothing gets resolved amicably, nobody goes away feeling better, and surely no meaningful wisdom is conveyed or received." They were right.

When things get heated, I often get heated. As a redhead, nothing conceals it. My face reddens and my neck stiffens as my emotions skyrocket. Despite this, it doesn't get destructive until I open my mouth and say things which, if I had remained calm, would not have been said at all. It may have felt good in the moment, but I have usually walked away wishing I could get a "do-over" to say something more thoughtful and gentle.

Whoever said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" never lived in the real world. Words can and do hurt. They can break us emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. On the other hand, gentle words can and will tear down destructive walls, ease pain, quiet discontent, and more often than not, go a long way towards healing broken wounds.

Far too many friendships have been destroyed, relationships discontinued and wars waged out of misguided or misinterpreted words spoken in anger or retaliation; words that, if spoken gently, could have diffused the situation and helped to rebuild rather than to tear down.

In our Challenge Groups and our relationships with others, let us speak gently to one another in heated moments.

Next time you feel the veins popping out of your neck, steam flowing out of your ears, and the urge to say something unkind or insensitive, be the better person and seek the higher ground. Listen carefully to what is really being said and then speak gently. You'll be amazed at how much wisdom is conveyed.

*Rick Slager is a member of the Scottsdale Chapter. He and his wife, Brenda, reside in Scottsdale, AZ, where Rick continues to carry out his passion for providing healthcare options that cost-efficiently improve the lives of the ever-growing senior population. He can be reached at [rick.slager@gmail.com](mailto:rick.slager@gmail.com).*

**Pray:** Lord, help me to be a better listener and to speak gently. Help me to be supportive in everything I do and say.

**Reflect:** Do I have a tendency to say things before thinking about what I am about to say? Do I need to seek forgiveness from anyone I may have hurt or offended by something I said?

**Discuss:** Discuss a time when you experienced or witnessed the positive impact of a gentle word spoken.

# Women's July Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Sacrifice

by: Kathleen Shaffer

*He took one of the seedlings of the land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water. (Ezekiel 17:5)*

I grew up in San Francisco, born into an Irish Catholic family who taught me the knowledge and love of God. Unfortunately, my family also struggled with the demons of alcoholism. We looked happy and well adjusted from the outside, but the disease ravaged our household for years, causing rage and abuse to fill our lives. I grew up feeling abandoned, resentful, and ashamed. When I married and began my own family, I found old habits resurfacing in my life as I struggled to find joy and allow others to love and care for me.

Due to the disorder of my childhood, I had grown distant from God during my late teen and adult years. Because I did not know his will for my life, I resorted to manipulation and anger to dominate my relationships. I told myself that since I was unable to control my parents' marriage, I was definitely going to control my own.

Even though I had walked away from God, he never left my side. Through all the broken relationships, lost jobs, and constant running away, I kept feeling the pull to return to the basic faith promises I was taught at a young age. God knew just when, what and whom to put in my path. His love never failed.

Through my association with Christians in Commerce and Celebrate Recovery, I am able to now say, "I am a grateful child of God and a faithful follower of Jesus Christ who struggles with co-dependency." I may struggle with past hurts and habits, but they do not define me.

The person I was created to be may have been initially planted in rocky soil, but my Father in heaven planted me where he knew I would receive fellowship, guidance and spiritual growth, allowing me to blossom into his blessed, beautiful child.

**Pray:** Lord, we surrender to your will. We ask you to manage our lives even when we turn away during difficulties and fear. Thank you for your unending mercy and love.

**Reflect:** Think about a time when your hurts or habits may have caused you to turn away from God and make poor choices.

**Discuss:** Share how the Lord stood by you, loved you and brought the right people to water your spirit with their love and acceptance.

## week 3

### Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Kathleen Shaffer

*He called you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:14)*

We are all missionaries, whatever our occupations may be: managers, secretaries, doctors. Last year's CIC Annual Conference logo, "Missionaries at Work", represents to us that this is our mission field. If I truly receive power from my relationship with Jesus, am I prepared to give it away?

I did not feel that I was struggling with idolatry in my personal or business life. I realized the idol God was convicting me of was my family. I was putting my children and my husband before my ability to surrender to him. Was I also doing this in my business associations?

This year God is calling me to true obedience in all aspects of my life. He is gently guiding me to evaluate my commitments to my daily devotionals, my church attendance and, most significantly, my business. What value does my little business bring to his kingdom?

Being a realtor during this recession has caused me to work with clients who are emotionally stressed and financially frantic. Our God is sovereign. He knows what they need. All I need to do is to begin the dialogue and the Holy Spirit will guide the conversation.

I spend many days counseling, guiding and just listening to customers. Sometimes I never even close that real estate deal; but I get a better deal — I get to be Jesus to them. God has blessed me with more business now since I have allowed him be my boss.

God will guide any conversation and enable us to share what is needed at the time. Tell people stories. Tell them where your life was before Jesus, how you found him, and how your life has changed. People love to hear stories with a happy ending.

**Pray:** We come before you, Lord, and ask for your Holy Spirit to guide us in reaching out to broken people who need to learn about your love and forgiveness.

**Reflect:** Remember a time that you were unsure about speaking to a friend or coworker about Christ and stepped out in faith.

**Discuss:** Share how you may have hesitated at first, but then allowed the Holy Spirit to guide a conversation. What was the outcome? How did it strengthen your faith?

## Women's July Reflections (Continued)

week 4

### The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Kathleen Shaffer

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)*

Sitting in church dealing with a hurt or habit can be a lonely experience. We look around at the neatly dressed people and feel as though we're the only ones experiencing struggles in life. We have read the Bible over and over again, attempting to practice the principles, but our lives are far from perfect.

The sisters I have met through CIC have given me a safe place to heal from the wounds of my past, a safe context in which to work on forgiving myself, and most importantly, a safe setting in which to experience the grace and forgiveness of Christ. I remember being at a Challenge Group meeting, still quite new to CIC, and reluctantly asking for prayers for the addictions within my family that had resurfaced. These women surrounded me in prayer, confidently asking for the power of Holy Spirit to fill me with wisdom and guidance. From women who were initially strangers, I immediately felt true love and honest friendship. I have been a member of CIC for four years this coming November.

We who have invited Jesus Christ into our lives are a product of God's grace. As we model this grace, we'll be able to offer forgiveness, make amends when needed, and accept forgiveness. My sisters have modeled for me true grace and have allowed me to share my imperfections without worrying about judgment or gossip. We are a family that cares deeply about each other and cheers when one of our own has broken through past hurts and habits.

*Kathleen Shaffer is a member of the WCIC-Central Coast Chapter. She lives in Morgan Hill, CA where she works as a residential realtor, leads a 12-step recovery program at her local church, and volunteers with the seniors of her community. She and her husband Steve have been married for 30 years and have two grown children. She may be reached at [Kathleen@KathleenShaffer.com](mailto:Kathleen@KathleenShaffer.com).*

**Pray:** Dear Lord, you are our source of love and mercy. You modeled forgiveness from the cross on the day you died for us. Please strengthen our resolve to provide a safe place to offer grace when needed.

**Reflect:** Where have you found a safe place to experience the grace and forgiveness of Christ?

**Discuss:** Describe the feeling of liberation you experienced when you offered your forgiveness to another person.

## Save the Date

# October 28-29, 2011 CIC Annual Conference

## Fiesta Resort, Tempe, AZ

# Christians in Commerce NEWS

## Christians in Commerce Prayer

The following article appeared in the *Arlington Catholic Herald*, Thursday, June 6th.

### Meet the Real Holy Rollers

by: Theresee Irene McNichol



Rob Reavis (Sacramento East) is known as "Old School" around his motorcycle club, Rolling Thunder. One doesn't usually picture bikers with names like "Viper", "Road Thing" or "Grizzly" praying at hospital bedsides or sitting in church together. For these and countless others however, these are regular scenes when they come together for the Run for the Wall, an annual ten-day mission taking them 3,200 miles from California to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., arriving Memorial Day weekend.

"We make this run for the 58,267 people on that wall who can't," Rob says. In his case, "we" consists of himself and three riding companions: Dan "Jelly Bean" McGillivray, John "Ice Plunger" Cox and Fr. Stephen "Got Brake" Foppiano.

Fr. "Got Brake" is a Catholic priest. Rob is a dedicated member of Christians in Commerce. Many others are pastors and ordained ministers. The first item on the group itinerary each morning is an assembly meeting and prayer. The word "MANDATORY" is printed beside it in big red capital letters. On Sunday, the itinerary includes a church service.

Prayer doesn't stop at the church steps. Among their stopping points are two Veterans Affairs hospitals. Rob has been visiting Bill, an Alzheimer's patient, ever since his son deposited him on the steps of the hospital and took off. Rob

prays with Bill and reads aloud from scripture.

This year, Rob arrived for what would have been his fifth annual visit to learn Bill had passed away. The news was heartbreaking for Rob, who sought out a member of the chaplain core for prayer. Fr. Foppiano plans to serve on the core in the future.

Wounded veterans experience a different kind of healing at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Greg "Fuzzy" Majesky, Virginia resident and Rolling Thunder brother, says, "For me, it's about closure." His wife, Joann, adds, "Have you been to the wall on Memorial Day? There are people praying all over the place!"

Rob agrees the experience is "very healing". He recalls being approached one year by a woman with a rose. She asked if he would place it at the wall for her. "Why can't you do it, ma'am?" he inquired. "I was a war protestor," she confessed.

Rob felt wave of anger surge through him. "I had no idea I was still carrying around that much pain and hurt," he says. "(Protestors) used to spit on us and throw trash." He checked his emotions however, and listened.

The woman explained how much she hated war. Taking her anger out on the soldiers was the only thing she could think to do. "Ma'am," Rob replied, "There isn't one soldier who loves war. Are you an American citizen?" She was. "Then you have as much of a right to be there as I have," he told her, "and pardon me, ma'am, but if you don't come with me to that wall, I will throw you over my shoulder and carry you there myself." Grinning, the heavy-set woman told Rob she doubted he would be equal to the task! They shared a laugh, and she finally relented. The two went side by side to the wall, where she set the rose. Then, the soldier and the war protestor wept together.

When thanked for taking the time to share his story, Rob responds, "Christians in Commerce has had such a positive impact on my life, if an article about me can bring other vets back to the Lord..." He trails off. "A lot of us forgot about God."

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

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