



Christians in COMMERCE

Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians
2:20

September, 2011

Christ in the Workplace

Putting God First

by: Chuck Wagner

After being introduced to CIC back in 1997, one of the first challenges was getting my priorities in order. Through the years I have had the pleasure of doing business with some of the men who have challenged me to put God first. I have witnessed them putting their faith in action, specifically in this area of putting God first.

One such brother is Steve, a real estate agent. I have done business with Steve from both sides of the table. It makes no difference whether Steve is in the role of the employer or employee; he will bring Christ to the situation.

Embarking on a business deal without beginning in prayer is out of the question for Steve. You will also quickly notice his honesty and boldness. When you get his voice mail you are reminded that, "The Good Lord Jesus Christ loves you."

Six years ago Steve and I were on our way to a fairly important meeting with the county regarding a piece of property. The meeting had been set up far in advance. On the way there, I received a call from the wife of an employee, Danny, who was battling lung cancer. Danny was more than an employee, he was a dear friend.

Danny realized he was dying, was very scared and wanted to know if I would come and pray with him. I decided to go. When I arrived at Steve's house I suggested he go to the meeting alone. He refused. He called and canceled the meeting and insisted on going with me. Steve led the prayer and Danny accepted Jesus Christ that morning, only three weeks prior to his passing.

Circumstances in our business have recently led to my family's relocating from Arizona to Iowa. Initially my mother was planning on remaining in Arizona.

As the time for our departure grew nearer, my mother grew anxious so we suggested she move to Iowa with us. She decided to move but in a down economy it was a very difficult time to sell.

My mom's friend is a real estate agent and would have been the logical choice for her. I encouraged Mom to instead give Steve a call before committing.

What a blessing! Steve met with my mom, prayed with her, and literally took care of every detail, even to the point of lining up contractors to complete pre-sale repairs. Countless times over the next several weeks my mom would tell me that Steve stopped by to help her and to pray with her. Steve went above and beyond his responsibilities as a realtor to be Christ to my mom and give her peace through the entire process.

Many of us are familiar with the Uganda well projects. This effort, which has provided fresh water to hundreds of people in Uganda, was Steve's brainchild. Recently, the means to transfer the money to Uganda was no longer available.

Steve didn't let this obstacle stop him. He established his own 501c3. The time and effort he has put into this will provide the means to allow the funds and the water to continue flowing.

What stands out in these stories is that when Steve accepted the challenge to put God first, other peoples' lives were changed. Is God first in your life?

Chuck Wagner has been a member of CIC since 1997 and has served on the CIC Board of Directors since 2008. He owns and manages a construction business, Blacktop Service Company, and resides in Iowa with his wife, Michelle, and their family. He can be reached at chuckw@blacktopservice.com

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

Sacramento

September 23-25, 2011

Scottsdale/ Gilbert-San Tan

September 30-
October 2, 2011

Salinas

November 11-13, 2011

Santa Cruz

November 18-20, 2011

Christians in Commerce News

Two-Day Challenge Weekend

Testimonies from Uganda

Phoenix Women's Challenge Weekend

Please send your stories to:
Terry Cassell
Fax: 703 205-0485
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2853 Meadow View Road
Falls Church, Va. 22042

Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Reconciling Judgment and Accountability

by: Ken Gray

Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. (Luke 6:37)

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. (Galatians 6:1)

Over the years I have grappled with reconciling these scriptures. While Jesus admonishes us not to judge others, Paul encourages us to hold one another accountable for our sins, which could involve an act of judgment.

So, if we adhere to Jesus' admonition and ignore Paul's teaching we could easily turn our back on those who are immersed in sin, or cavalierly take the world position of "live and let live", thereby taking no responsibility for or interest in the actions or words of others.

To me these seemingly contradictory statements are woven together by a conscious commitment to observe and listen to one another with the goal of expanding our own awareness of God's purpose for us. With that increased awareness we are given an opportunity to truly make a difference in the lives of others. A recent experience helped underscore the proper approach.

A few years ago, I became a certified Life Coach. I lead seminars to assist others in improving their results in business and in life. The courses are held in a secular environment. I do not typically quote chapter and verse from the Bible during my seminars, but neither do I hide my faith.

I often show the similarities between scientific and theological points of view in such areas as personal responsibility for our actions. I always acknowledge God as the creator of all and recognize people as his greatest creation as a basis for the teachings.

Recently, one of the participants announced he was an atheist, that all religion was nonsense, and that he

would have no part in it. Two of the other members of the group, devout Christians, were appalled.

One said nothing to me, but simply dropped away from the group. He later told someone he could not stand being around the self-proclaimed atheist. The other believer spoke privately to me about how offended he was by the outburst, but had decided to continue with the group because his life was improving so dramatically. I prayed for guidance on how to proceed. The message I received was to continue, without confrontation, to teach the information in conscious respect and harmony with biblical scriptures.

A couple of weeks later, the person who said he was an atheist expressed his appreciation for my not taking him to task. He had since realized there had to be a supreme being and that faith was important. He also confided experiences from his childhood that had led him away from God and church.

Near the end of the ten-week course, the Christian who had continued with the group shared his amazement at the transformation of this "atheist". He had not only been speaking of God, but had actually been overheard offering to pray for someone in need.

When I reflected on the actions of the other believer, who had dismissed this man and walked away, I was reminded that judging others is only damaging to us. When we turn our back on the opportunity to love another back into a relationship with God, we stunt our own spiritual growth.

We are called to persist through caring actions and words that appropriately fit each new circumstance. We need only ask for guidance and the Holy Spirit will direct us to our next step in spreading the good news of eternal salvation.

Ken Gray is a Past President of the Santa Cruz Chapter and has been an active member of CIC for over 20 years. Ken is Controller of Anderson Behel Inc. in Santa Clara, California, and is a certified Life Success Consultant and Life Coach. Contact him by e-mail at ken@kengraycoaching.com.

Pray: Lord, you know our faults and our failings. Please lead us away from the temptation to judge others and guide us into being gentle lights to them. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Reflect: Examine your views and actions with respect to your own sins and your perception of the sins of others. How can you become a gentle light that leads others into the loving arms of a forgiving God?

Discuss: Share situations you've been in, either in judgment of another, or having been judged by someone else. How could it have been handled more effectively?

Men's September Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Dan Trevino

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being. (Ephesians 3:14-16)

Receiving greeting cards from my children brings me joy by giving me insight into the impact I have made in their lives. My heart was filled with emotion on Father's Day from their cards that read, "A daughter's love for her Dad is forever" and "Seeing my father go to the Father everyday – that was probably the best thing you could have done for me". This describes the deeply intimate, personal actions of a Godly person she has observed that have left a lasting impression.

I've wondered at times if my Christian witness and conduct have led my family toward a closer relationship with our Lord that will prepare them to face this world. Have I properly introduced them to the truly loving and trustworthy God that I have come to know? This has been important to me because as our children were growing up I chose selfish career pursuits above the needs of my family and was a "no-show dad".

In our calling to encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ, the best way has been to be transparent in my journey. Now that our kids are mature, young adults, my wife and I have shared with them the challenges we endured over the years. We've spoken of the numerous occasions when the Father unquestionably provided for our needs, gave us strength to move forward and guided us to make wise decisions. Many times it's been said that our little ones are watching us. It's good to know we can positively influence lives if we continue to humbly seek God's best for us in all that we do.

Pray: Father, I thank you for the family you have entrusted to me. May those with whom I share my life be attracted to you, my source of love and life.

Reflect: When I face challenges during the day, do I take my concerns to the Father for guidance and wisdom?

Discuss: Does your conduct as a Christian positively influence those with whom you come in contact? If not, what two things can you improve that will attract those around you to desire a closer relationship with Jesus Christ?

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Dan Trevino

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)

Eight months ago, our company received a disappointing answer from a major customer that did not want to move forward with our products despite strong market test results. We had all been very hopeful that our big deal was imminent after several years of investment, planning, and execution. Obviously it wasn't our time.

We promptly regrouped and focused our attention on pursuing other significant opportunities that had been in development, the most promising of which concerned a large overseas retailer. The project is progressing well with enthusiastic support from our customer and has real potential to springboard into other large contracts abroad. This possibly would not have occurred had we received an affirmative answer from our former U.S. based customer.

Despite our continued optimism for the future, the difficult economic times are pressing our company to make further adjustments. These actions have required our staff to work harder and more efficiently as well as learn new skills for our expanding job responsibilities. We've had to quickly learn about foreign laws and customs and to make changes in our processes to accommodate inventory demands.

As these events unfold, particularly during the many challenging days, I find myself expectantly asking the Lord to reveal what he has in store for us. I'm thankful for the business no matter where it may come from, but I marvel that the chances for success could be much greater in foreign countries than in our own native land. The many doors we knocked on and tried to pry open - the ones we thought were the right fit - were not the ones the Lord had selected for us. These amazing events have once again given us the confidence to realize that God always has greater wisdom and whatever happens will be for his glory.

Pray: Father, we pray that whatever we seek to accomplish in this life will align with your desires for us.

Reflect: Think about the times that you set out to fulfill the plans you designed and fell short, only to have a better outcome after you drew close to God for his guidance and help.

Discuss: Do you seek the Lord's counsel before making significant decisions? What plans or decisions are you facing right now that need to be brought before God that need his wisdom?

Men's September Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Dan Trevino

Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. (Acts 26:16)

Our chapter is blessed to have many fine speakers who deliver powerful talks. Several have been called upon to increase the frequency of their scheduled talks with the recent expansion of three new Phoenix area chapters. The incredible graces and spiritual breakthroughs are worth the time commitment necessary to properly prepare to honor God at our meetings. I am grateful to have many dear CIC brothers who saw the potential in me and constantly stretched and molded me to become a witness for the kingdom.

It's been a privilege to participate in one of the first CIC Leadership Institute classes with nine other brothers. Together, our understanding of the Word has grown to new levels with an expanding confidence that God's presence is active in our lives. It's remarkable to witness the transformation and holy boldness of our brothers. One in particular has literally taken his faith and leadership into action.

At a recent event, I learned of his intense desire and conviction that he has been called to be a conduit of the Holy Spirit in the physical healing of a seriously ill brother. This anointing compelled him to bring comfort and restoration by any means he could at a crucial time.

As countless acts of faith are shared, let us fervently encourage one another with the opportunity to give testimony as to how Jesus is working in our lives. A special brother and I share a saying: "I can't run through walls by myself, but together with others, we can run through anything". May we foster a welcoming environment that invites and supports us all to develop the leader within.

Dan Trevino has been a member of the Mesa Chapter for almost 15 years. He and his wife, Karen, live in Chandler, Arizona, where Dan is the Executive Vice President of a paint technology company. Dan may be reached at dktreviso@cox.net

Pray: Father, you commanded us to preach of Jesus' love wherever we are. May our answer be "yes" to your calling and may we bring honor to you in our testimony.

Reflect: What can we do to encourage our brothers to actively accept the role of service and leadership that God has called them to perform?

Discuss: What ministry and service are you performing for his kingdom? If you are not currently in ministry, what could our chapter do to prepare and assist you in becoming a minister?

Women's September Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Susan Rymer

This is my command-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

After much prayer, my husband and I put our home on the market. Despite the poor economy, we sold our home within a few days. Our objective was to find a home with a little property for storage for our business and space for Richard to have his pigeons.

We've been in contract for two other homes, but each time the disclosures discouragingly revealed issues that were too cumbersome for us. However, we're currently in contract for a lovely home we hope will be IT.

It took me a long time to admit we'd outgrown our sweet little house in Santa "temporary storage". We prayed about it over and over. Even though I saw the need for more space, it was so very hard to let go of our little sanctuary. When the house sold, I couldn't see the words to sign the final papers through my tears. That is when I heard the Lord say to me, "Trust ME, I'll provide".

We're not done yet, but I've learned important lessons through this experience. God is faithful and he desires to bless us. Many times, I have not opened my eyes to his special blessings or his grace, missing joy and contentment because I was seeking something other than what God intended for me. I've also learned that I won't become faithful on my own; it is enduring through difficult trials that brings me to the Lord's feet.

Pray: Lord, you are faithful and wise beyond measure. Thank you for having a plan for our lives that is for good, not evil.. Thank you for your promise to always be with us.

Reflect: Think about a time when God directed you to step out in faith when you were comfortable where you were.

Discuss: Talk about how God has used a challenge or difficulty to grow your faith and your witness.

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Susan Rymer

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2)

I was able to witness to a couple at church who had been through very difficult trials. They lost their jobs and home due to the economic downturn; as a result, they moved to be nearer their daughter and granddaughter, which turned into a difficult family breakup. In the process, they lost their confidence and what little faith they had. They were fragile and at the end of their resources.

As our conversation continued, I realized that I was not able to meet all their needs. However, I did share about the family of God, how we are a part of the body and if one part is hurting, the rest of the body hurts and those who serve the hurting are blessed in turn. I also shared how the Lord provided after my first husband died, allowing me to support my children. Having someone to listen, encourage and pray with them was part of the support they needed.

I then connected my new friends with an organization at our church that was aware of their situation through mutual friends. These wonderful friends had purchased gift cards for gas and groceries to the tune of \$175; within minutes, the needy couple was the recipient of the anonymous financial gift.

This was a divine appointment. I am grateful I was available. God worked through me to show his grace and love, advancing his kingdom mightily.

Pray: Father, help me to be available for those to whom I can give encouragement and prayer support. Help me to remember that it is not my responsibility to have all the answers.

Reflect: Is it difficult to extend myself to others, giving time to them without feeling burdened or responsible to solve their problems?

Discuss: Have I been available to listen, encourage, and pray with someone in need of support?

Women's September Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Susan Rymer

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak... (James 1:19)

As a new member of CIC, because I was welcomed so heartily, I felt comfortable right away. The women were open, kind and honest.

The comfortable status I enjoyed was slightly marred due to my own habit of interjecting in our group settings when someone shared, going as far as giving advice that was not asked for. I thought I had good intentions; instead I was invalidating someone's thoughts and feelings, showing disrespect as well.

Fortunately, one of the women commented on my interruptions. It was a painful lesson to have to be corrected; I didn't realize that I was doing the same thing by correcting others! I was a slow learner, but I began to see how valuable it is to allow others the freedom to be themselves without correction.

I am so grateful for the deep friendships and bonds that have developed in our chapter. I know it was not easy for my friend to correct me; however, it was done in love and that reveals a heart that is willing to risk a friendship for the truth.

Susan Rymer has been a member of the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter since 2009. She and her husband have been married for ten years and own a small antique business. They will be moving soon into their new home in Corralitos, CA. Susan can be reached at lavenderbee@sbcglobal.net

Pray: Lord Jesus, thank you for truth and wisdom that you have given us in your word. Thank you for friends who are available to speak the truth in love. Give me the grace to speak only with love and respect.

Reflect: Do I reflect my faith in my language and actions? If not, what can I do to change the way I respond to others?

Discuss: Share the difficulties you've had when you've either said something untimely, or had something said to you that was not helpful. Were you able to respond in love and grow as a result?

Save the Date

**October 28-29, 2011 CIC
Annual Conference**

Fiesta Resort, Tempe, AZ

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Christians in Commerce Prayer

The Two-Day Challenge Weekend

The San Jose Chapter hosted its first two-day Challenge Weekend on June 24-25, 2011. Comments from the presenting team and candidates, including seven first-time participants, were very encouraging.

Over the past two years, San Jose has had difficulty signing up new men, especially young men with busy work lives and young families. Offering the Challenge Weekend with only one overnight stay made it more affordable and offered more flexibility in meeting work schedules and family obligations.

The Holy Spirit was ever present, guiding and directing the team and all participants to open their hearts and minds to God and communicate in their small sharing groups of three.

Any chapter that would like more information about the two-day format should contact Ron Schoengold in San Jose. Ron can be contacted at ron-schoengold@yahoo.com or 408-309-9830.

Testimonies From Uganda

Beginning this month, we will be sharing stories periodically from brothers and sisters in Uganda whose lives have been changed because of CIC. Some have encountered CIC through a Challenge Weekend; others have experienced transformations in their marriages through the CIC Couples' Weekends in Uganda and some have heard about us through their radio program. Below are testimonies from one brother and one sister who share their own personal stories of how CIC changed their lives:

"I first got to know about CIC from Monday radio talk-shows. The preaching on the radio every Monday was talking about my situation. I learned that I had been created for a purpose but I was not living according to God's plan for me. The preacher challenged me, saying that living contrary to God's purpose for me was partly responsible for my sadness. I made up my mind to conform to God's plan of creating me and now my life is happier, though not completely trouble-free."

- Constance Biira -Kisomoro

"In May of this year an American visiting preacher helped me to fall in love with CIC. I had long stopped praying, apart from going to church on Sunday. In his teaching, he said that a prayerless life is like a discharged phone that is useless to its owner. As I examined myself, I found myself useless to myself and to others and to God. Now every morning I seek the face of God in prayer to change my life."

- Mwesige Deo

Phoenix Women's Challenge Weekend

From June 10-11, the Phoenix Women's Chapter held their first commuter Challenge Weekend at Church of the Holy Spirit in Tempe. The event was a huge success! The chapter had its largest weekend participation yet, with 24 women in attendance. Of the 24, 13 experienced the Challenge Weekend for the first time. The Holy Spirit had a huge influence on everyone. The commuter-style weekend allowed the women flexibility and affordability, and provided funds for charitable donations to CIC International and Church of the Holy Spirit.

When asked, "What was the most important thing that happened on the weekend?", some of the answers from the new sisters included: "Having sisters pray over me"; "I felt love and support and my heart opened up"; "Making new friendships with women holding the same values and goals"; and, "The Emmaus Walk most affected my retreat experience — I felt most connected to a sister in Christ."



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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