It’s hard to watch those we care about experiencing pressure and stress as they move into different areas of life, complete with new experiences and responsibilities. The pressures of life, the world, other people’s expectations and their expectations for themselves can make it seem like everything depends on them. We may wonder how often they reach out in prayer to ask God for help. From the outside looking in, it can appear to us as though they have fallen overboard into the ocean and are trying desperately to tread water and stay afloat. They are exhausted and helpless. Jesus is in the boat with a life preserver, as always, ready to help at any time.

I had been feeling burdened by such thoughts concerning some of my loved ones. Then, I thought about high-pressure situations in my own work life and my leadership role at the company. I realized I was doing the very thing that I worried about other people doing; trying to stay afloat on my own without asking for help.

I have a fairly strong prayer life when it comes to personal and family-related issues. But, what about my work life? Am I missing a great opportunity to seek wisdom, knowledge, and discernment for decisions and relationships in the workplace? What about people I encounter in the workplace, including stores, restaurants, and volunteer functions? Am I seeking guidance, support, and help in all areas of my life through the power of prayer?

There is no shortage of topics to pray about in the workplace. At the top of the list is being thankful for employment, opportunity and benefits. Other areas include employee performance and employee relations, which consume a lot of time in any company. Non-productive discussions and backstabbing are probably the most damaging element to any company culture.

When it comes to investing in new product development and a pipeline for the future, could prayer have impact there? Since we are in the healthcare marketplace, what about the patients we serve? Have I considered praying for them and their families? How do we create opportunities for personal growth, learning, and progression? How do I create a culture that allows others to see Christ in the workplace?

There is one specific workplace topic to which I have begun to dedicate prayer time. We started a big project at the company a few years ago with a sizeable investment. If it worked, it would continue to benefit the company long after I retired. The launch of the product was slower than expected, which caused much frustration within the company. At first I prayed for specific performance-related issues. One day during a prayer session, I was inspired to ask for wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. Were we making the right moves in the marketplace? Did we have the right teams in place?

I found great peace in this approach. Do I still have a lot of room for growth for prayer in other workplace areas? Yes. I need to expand my prayer commitment to allow for less fighting it out on my own and more reliance on our Lord.

Geoff Hunziker is a member of the Monterey Men’s Chapter. He is married to Tammy, with whom he has four daughters: Ellen, Olivia, Camille, and Claire. Chip “The Wonder Dog” is the only male counterpart. Geoff is president of PARI USA, a medical device and pharmaceutical company. He can be reached at geoff.hunziker@pari.com.
WEEK 1 • LIFE PLEASING TO GOD

REFLECTIONS

Life Pleasing to God

By Doug Demetre

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews...To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

A supplier to my Ace Hardware store was a follower of the Sikh religion. I felt that there was no common ground between us, or even any way for me to communicate with him. However, after the teaching at one of our CIC chapter meetings, I decided not to let our faith differences get in the way of developing a relationship with him.

Over a period of a few months, things changed. I even prayed with him in the store for a problem he was having. Our relationship grew stronger, and when his home burned down, my wife Caren and I supported them with clothes and food.

A couple of years later, my friend died suddenly. He was well known regionally in the Sikh community, yet even with all of those connections, his family turned to me for many of the dilemmas and problems that occurred thereafter. Why? I believe they trusted me because I had been a servant to them, and that they had seen Christ in me through my interaction with their deceased loved one and their family.

One year later, the last time I saw him, the husband proclaimed in a loud voice so that everyone in the store could hear, that he knew where we went to church and wanted to go with us. Praise God!

In my real estate business, at a time when home prices were going down, a man who was an atheist asked me to sell his million-plus dollar home. The house became a short sale in quick order. I always say, “God bless you” as a farewell. After a few weeks the seller told me that he had been talking with some real estate agents and the consensus among them was that I shouldn’t be saying “God bless you” and mixing business with religion.

Before answering, I asked him why he had chosen me out of all the real estate agents he knew. He said it was because he trusted me. I reminded him that I had been saying “God bless you” from the first time we met. He asked me not to say it anymore. I said I would try.

However, after almost a year of very difficult negotiations with his bank, I noticed that my atheist seller was saying, “God bless you” to me (before I did) each time we parted or said goodbye. He even began talking with me about God.

Through CIC, I have learned from the examples of others how to be Christ, through my words, deeds and actions. I don’t just want to talk about being a Christian; I want to bring as many people as possible into God’s kingdom!

PRAY:

Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, as you are with me each day, teach me where, when and how to be a servant to others in their culture, work environment or situation, so you can work through me.

REFLECT:

When have I been or seen others being a catalyst for change in workplace culture?

DISCUSS:

What are you doing to be involved in your Christian walk with your mind, body and soul? In your workplace or other circumstances? Describe what you are doing.

WORKPLACE STORIES NEEDED

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We are especially looking for personal stories related to fulfilling our mission in the workplace.

Don’t worry if writing is not your talent!

We will edit all submissions as needed. If you don’t know where to begin, simply tell us your story over the phone or via email, and we will take care of the rest.

We are also looking for individuals in the local chapters who are willing to be Workday Reflection stringers/ghost writers for others in their chapters, who have inspiring stories to tell.

To serve in this capacity, or to share your story, please contact the CIC offices by calling (703) 205-5600 or send an email to info@cicintl.org.
WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Personal Sacrifice

By Frank Rodriguez

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

My faith became real when I released control of my life to Jesus Christ. I had been making over $100,000 a year, with a nice house and car, enjoying all ways of the world. Then the economy went bad and I lost everything – my house, my car, and my life in the world. Suddenly I was homeless and living behind a local gym.

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Then CIC came into my world. I drew closer to God through the support, prayers and wisdom of my brothers in Christ. I started to ask God, “What do you want of me?”

The answer was to put my faith in him with all of my heart, soul, and strength, so I did. That is when God showed me his power. I had always been the main caretaker of my family, which included supporting my ex-wife. So I said to God, “If you want me to go on this journey, please make sure my children, my parents, and my ex-wife are never without, including their finances, health, and spiritual needs.”

As the result of my obedience, God has taken care of my family. Even though I was destitute and making it by with only whatever God provided for five years, I never lost faith. As a matter of fact, it helped me appreciate the little things in life that I took for granted such as food, water, or even a penny I would find on a floor.

Today I own my own car, have repaid all my debts and have recently been blessed with a house. What makes this journey so miraculous is the fact that the amount of money I owe on this new house is the same amount I would currently owe on the one I lost. The Lord truly has brought me full-circle!

PRAY:

God, continue to open our eyes and hearts so we can fully understand the true meaning of faith. Help us to apply it and live it no matter what our circumstances are.

REFLECT:

Faith in God is powerful, but we have to release our lives to God in order to experience the full effect of his grace. Ask him to show you where you may need to more fully release your life to him.

DISCUSS:

Share how your faith has grown over the years. What particular experiences have been catalysts for that growth? What is different today in your walk with Jesus Christ as a result?

WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By Frank Rodriguez

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

I would have never imagined working in the pawn industry but because I trusted in God, it is where I now find myself. We give loans to people who have fallen on hard times and are in real need.

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, continue to grant me the strength and wisdom to trust in you and receive the grace of your blessing as I take the journey you have given me.

REFLECT:

During my work day, I am blessed to be able to speak with people who are also in spiritual need. I try to speak God’s message to them. It seems sometimes that the words just flow from my mouth.

For example, I once spoke to a man who had stolen items from our store as the police were getting ready to take him to jail. He apologized for stealing the items. I could tell he was very sincere and that his sorrow came from the heart. I know God touched his heart and humbled him. This is how God works.

ASK: God to show you the people he has brought into your life through your work. Ask him to show you how you can be a blessing to them. What is he asking you to do or change in your relationship with them?

DISCUSS:

Talk about the opportunities you have to share God’s love through your words and actions at work. How would you describe your faith in God to work? What do you find challenging about this?
Holding Each Other Accountable

By Frank Rodriguez

So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Galatians 3:6)

Being responsible for others is not an easy task. When God asks us to be accountable for a task he always provides us with the grace and help we need. This is what happened to me.

I was asked to lead a Challenge Weekend for the first time. Before I could decline, I felt the urging of the Holy Spirit to take on this responsibility. I had never done anything like this before. However, I had so much confidence in God that I was not worried about anything I might face.

Because of my faith, all of the resources I needed in order to be successful were given to me, including the wisdom and support of all my brothers. Not once did I ever feel alone. When Satan tried to put obstacles in my path, God intervened and gave me a calm spirit.

For example, on the day the Challenge Weekend was starting I was told there was a bad accident causing a major traffic jam. Some worried that this would result in a low turnout.

Throughout the whole situation I had a calm spirit. I had all of the confidence I needed that everything was going to turn out all right. It did. The Challenge Weekend had a great turnout and a real impact on the men’s lives.

Though I was serving others, I also experienced others serving me. Throughout the planning and the weekend itself, I was aware of God’s presence and care. Walking through this with other brothers and trusting together made a real difference for me. It was good to be called on by them to serve the chapter in this way. It helped me to grow in my own relationship and trust in God that would not have been possible otherwise. I was blessed in many ways by my service.

PRAY:

Lord, let our faith in you lead us to grow spiritually in new ways. Use the CIC brothers and sisters to hold each of us accountable to grow and serve you in greater ways. May we bless and be blessed through our service.

REFLECT:

Think about how you could serve your chapter in greater ways. How can you be a blessing by helping a brother or sister in need?

DISCUSS:

Share with one another when you have been encouraged to help a brother or sister in need. Share when others have blessed you with their service. Share what holds you back from being of greater service.

CIC SOCIAL MEDIA – JOIN US!

We at the Home Office are excited to announce that we are increasing our social media presence! We want our various social networks to be a resource that helps keep you up-to-date on the latest happenings in CIC.

If you haven’t already, we encourage you to like our page on Facebook, add us on LinkedIn and Twitter, and follow our newly-established Instagram account. This initiative will help us stay connected with the chapters, help the chapters stay connected with one another, and make it easy for you to share about life in CIC with your family and friends!

Here’s a quick acronym to remind you of ways to promote our content on Facebook (especially info on our 2016 Annual Conference!):

C: “Comment” on our Facebook and Annual Conference pages.

L: "Like" our Facebook page and posts.

A: “Add” the Conference to your Facebook events. Click “Interested,” then “Going.”

S: “Share” the Conference event. Click “Invite,” then “Share Event.”

H: “Hashtag” Be sure to include the hashtag #cicconf16 whenever you post about the Annual Conference!

We’re very excited to see where this new venture will take us. We would love for you to join us on our journey and connect with us today!
Personal Sacrifice

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. (1 John 3:16)

Earlier this past summer my 89 year-old father died unexpectedly, just sixteen days after complications following a routine medical test. We seven siblings have been on quite a journey ever since.

Since my mother passed in 2013 after a brief, intense illness, the reality of being orphans suddenly became up-close and very personal. To further complicate matters, one of my brothers, whose health is already compromised after two kidney transplants, sustained serious injuries from a biking accident. He landed in a different hospital 20 miles away on the very same day that our father did. The serious bone fractures and subsequent repair surgeries adversely affected his new kidney, keeping him hospitalized for over five weeks. We siblings are and continue to be his only support system.

Before he died, my father, a twenty-year hospice volunteer, gave us his children a beautiful, heartfelt commission from his sickbed: “Love one another; take care of one another as I have cared for you.” Straight from the gospel; we had no doubts about what we were being asked to do. With our father’s strong lifelong example, we were being reminded of our call to lay down our lives for one another.

Life’s challenges and daily trials are rarely convenient! The call to love really does mean sacrifice; a laying down of our preference, our convenience, even our very self. All of my siblings have full lives with extended families that include many responsibilities. Their witness of selfless service amidst real sacrifice calls me on even more to serve and always pray for our brother, whose needs will be life-long. I am incredibly grateful for these practical opportunities, beginning here in my own family, to be the hands and feet of Christ today.

PRAY:

Lord, open my eyes and my heart to seize the daily opportunities you offer, that I might lay down my life for family, friends, co-workers and strangers.

REFLECT:

Ask the Lord to reveal any obstacles that hold you back from loving as Jesus loved us.

DISCUSS:

Share stories of unexpected ways you have been called to love others.

Redeeming Our Father’s Creation

Again Jesus said, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” (John 21:16)

I love the challenge of engaging new people in conversation, be it at the grocery store or in an airport. On a recent return flight from Canada, however, I was actually looking forward to a bit of R&R. A nice long, uninterrupted nap was all I needed before re-entry to daily life back home. I settled quietly into my space with a window view, blissfully thinking the seat next to me would stay empty, and began imagining myself to be in first class… when along came Vic.

A very bright, pleasant man in his early fifties, Vic was traveling to Minnesota for business to complete his computer training in finance. We exchanged general family information, our work histories, and then started into some enjoyable political talk about the elections coming this fall. The flight attendant was suddenly upon us taking our order for snacks. Somewhere between “Yes, I take cream in my coffee” and “The shortbread cookies, please,” Vic turned to me with a very serious look and asked, “Do you think that people can actually talk to God?”

Any thoughts of an hour-long nap vanished. Instead began one of the more incredible conversations I have ever had on an airplane with a stranger. Vic had clearly been raised Christian, but was looking for more. Three times he shared, “I just want to know what my purpose in life is.” He also quietly mentioned that he had tried to commit suicide three years ago, so deep was his desperation.

Needless to say, I listened. Soon I began talking about Jesus and his personal love for Vic. In my heart, I begged the Holy Spirit for wisdom, love and grace. By the end of the conversation, I asked Vic if I could pray with him, and he gladly accepted. We exchanged business cards. Offering some further help to know Jesus, I assured him of my prayer. How much the Lord loves Vic! I pray Vic knows that too.

PRAY:

Lord, may we take seriously your call to be disciples to all the world, seizing every opportunity to share the Good News. Give us the courage, wisdom and love of your Holy Spirit to lay down our plans, ready to serve where you lead.

REFLECT:

When have you allowed the Holy Spirit to use you at a moment’s notice?

DISCUSS:

What actions can you take to be more available to the Holy Spirit?
WEEK 4 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By Nancy Grams

... make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control... and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

When Christians in Commerce was conceived back in the early 1980s, it was a men’s movement. However, from the beginning, several of us women played an active role by helping to create and manage a women’s track at the CIC Annual Conferences. Those were formative years for us. We overcame a lot of major obstacles to serve; living in different states around the country before smart phones and laptops, raising many children and simply not traveling as so many of us do today. We did make the most of our times together though. Whether strategizing on the phone or working at the conferences together, we grew in friendship, filled with joy, gratitude and mutual support.

I still look back on that early formation period as a gift from the Lord and an untold blessing for us and our families. When CIC was founded I was thirty-two years old with three (of our now five) children. How grateful I was that Sharon Rose was ahead of me in marriage and family experience. I relied on her wisdom and culled not a few child-raising ideas that were true life-savers! Marilyn Dalgetty, I well recall, was such an accomplished and gracious hostess. I was blessed to be the recipient of much hospitality in her lovely home. As Diane McGinty and Joan Mangino joined us, we grew even more in support, sisterhood and love.

Together we pooled our gifts and talents for all the women who attended those first “Wives Tracks” at the national gatherings, helping one another to be better Christian women in every sphere of our lives. The world was changing quickly. More and more women of every age were joining or returning to the workplace. All of those early efforts at formation and friendship in Christ were bearing fruit. Our experience became directed and focused now to incorporate women who could fully participate in being Christ in the workplace. So many others throughout this last decade have poured out their lives for the Lord’s work and vision of CIC. I am eternally grateful and richly blessed by the witness of so many dear, faithful sisters, who continue to answer the call to serve the Lord in the marketplace year after year. God bless you all!

PRAY:

Lord, thank you for the untold gifts of grace you have given to so many women who serve you in the marketplace around the world. May we please you in bearing much fruit.

REFLECT:

How can I grow even more in generosity and love in the marketplace?

DISCUSS:

Share how women in CIC have influenced your life to help you bear fruit for the Lord.

CIC APPAREL ON SALE NOW AT DISCOUNTED RATES!

Now is a great time to purchase official Christians in Commerce apparel at a discounted rate from Signet Screen Printing & Embroidery before attending this year’s Annual Conference! Visit CIC’s online catalog at http://shopsignet.com/cicwearables.

Signet Named as CIC 2016 Annual Conference Apparel Sponsor

Signet SCREEN PRINTING & EMBROIDERY
COACHELLA VALLEY BUSINESS & CIVIC LEADERS LUNCHEON PRIOR TO 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2016 Annual Conference Marketing Team, comprised of local Coachella Valley and Orange County men’s and women’s chapters, discussed the concept of informing the local business community about the mission and purpose of Christians in Commerce prior to this year’s Annual Conference.

To help get the word out, Peter Richardson (Palm Springs Men’s Chapter) visited with his longtime friend, Cathedral City Mayor Stanley E. Henry, who is also a retired Chief of Police, and invited him to attend our first CIC Annual Conference in Cathedral City. Mayor Henry accepted Peter’s invitation, and will be extending a welcome to our conference attendees on Friday, October 14th!

This meeting led to other local CIC members inviting additional civic, governmental, business, and church leaders from the Coachella Valley to an introductory luncheon on Tuesday the 11th at the Annual Conference host hotel to meet with CIC President Terry Cassell, as well as some of CIC’s other leaders, and to share with them about our Christian workplace ministry.

SALINAS VALLEY MEN’S CHAPTER ANNUAL BARBEQUE FUNDRAISER

By Clem Richardson and Al Parolini

The Salinas Valley Men’s Chapter held its 20th annual barbeque fundraiser at Royal Oaks Park on August 27th. Over fifty CIC members and their families and friends attended the “Family Picnic”, as they have come to call it. The event took place on a mild Saturday afternoon. Jon Cassady joined them from the CIC Home Office in Northern Virginia.

“It was a great afternoon of fellowship with the Salinas brothers and their families. The food was awesome! Mike Komenda wouldn’t even share his secret rub or barbeque sauce recipes!”

As has been the practice for the past several years, Mike McNama and his crew, which included Mike Campos, Mike Komenda and John Oberto, barbequed and prepared the excellent meal - ribs, chicken, rice, bread and a big salad, with strawberry shortcake for dessert.

Many items were donated for the fundraiser by various individuals and organizations, allowing the chapter to raise approximately $3,000.00. The funds will be used to provide scholarships to Challenge Weekend attendees and to finalize the chapter’s pledge to the home office in support of the fine work they perform both nationally and internationally in expanding the Lord’s kingdom.

In short, it was an excellent venue for families to gather together, celebrate a great meal and support the Lord’s kingdom in the marketplace!

SANTA CRUZ 12TH ANNUAL BARBEQUE AND FUNDRAISER

By Mike Croghan

The men’s and women’s Santa Cruz chapters hosted their annual barbeque fundraiser on Saturday, August 27th. It was held at beautiful Shaffer Park in Santa Cruz in a natural setting amongst towering redwood trees.

There was a great turnout of over 125 people this year and a wonderful mix of regular CIC members and invited guests. Probably about 25% of the turnout was made up of first-time attendees. Many guests were getting their first exposure to CIC, and I think we made a very good impression!

We also made a special effort to reach out to past CIC members and ended up seeing five men we hadn’t heard from in quite a while. Steve Bogner, a professional Bocce Ball player who is also one of our newest members, gave Bocce lessons and organized a Bocce tournament for the event.

There were plenty of children’s activities as well. We had a record number of children this year. One family had four generations represented! There was very spirited bidding at the silent auction this year, and it was a lot of fun. Between the auction items, ticket sales, and other donations, we brought in about $5,000.00.

The delicious steak and chicken dinner was prepared by Dan Casagrande and his crew.

The barbeque has become something people look forward to all year. Members Angelo and Rita DeBernardo even rearranged their trip to Italy in order to be back in time to attend!

All in all it was a glorious, warm sunny day at a superb venue filled with great people. We are truly blessed. Glory to God!

MEN’S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

South Bend/Elkhart
September 30-October 2, 2016

Greater Phoenix
November 4-6, 2016

Fresno
November 11-13, 2016

Santa Cruz
November 11-13, 2016

Salinas
November 18-20, 2016

Mission Viejo
January 13-15, 2017

Orange County
January 13-15, 2017

WOMEN’S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Gilroy-Morgan Hill
May 5-7, 2017

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Palm Springs Area
October 14-15, 2016

Please send your events and stories to:
Terry Cassell
Fax: 703 205-0485
cassell@cicintl.org
7515 Lee Highway, Falls Church, VA 22042
CHRISTIANS IN COMMERCE PRAYER

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: Being Christ in the workplace
MISSION: To encourage and equip Christians to be God’s presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence
VALUES: Christians in Commerce is an ecumenical organization committed to:
   • Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
   • Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
   • Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
   • Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”
Galatians 2:20