“Is that your boy?” asked the salty eighty-two-year-old owner of the marina as we backed the boat into the slip, my son, Steve, and son-in-law, Greg, handling the lines. “Yes,” I answered, “He’s my son,” and then pointing to Greg, “and he’s my son-in-law.”

We were on a three day boat trip that would take us down the Potomac River, across the Chesapeake Bay to Tangier Island, then back to the Occoquan, south of Washington, D.C. It was early October and God had blessed us with absolutely beautiful weather – warm, sunny days and cool nights, picturesque sunrises and scenic sunsets. We lunched at various crab houses along the way and anchored out each evening with one of the boys cooking dinner on the boat. We were all easy to be with.

Visiting Tangier Island is like stepping into a time warp. Discovered by Captain John Smith in 1608, its population of 569 still speaks with a trace of the Elizabethan accent, all connected either directly or indirectly with the crabbing industry. No cars, only golf carts and walking paths populated with houses and front yards filled with gravestones of the preceding generations.

It may sound like a small thing, but for the owner of the marina to see enough resemblance to ask the question, “Is that your boy?” made me feel kind of proud. Forty-three years separate my son, Stephen, and me. He is thirty and vigorous. I have white hair and am not quite so vigorous.

In today’s society, families tend to become so dispersed that we can easily lose our sense of family and identity from generation to generation. We go our separate ways, lives filled with work, children’s activities and busyness, seldom doing things together, living far apart, seeing each other only on an occasional holiday. In prior generations, like on Tangier Island, families tended to live together more, or at least in closer proximity; sons worked with their fathers and were a continuation of the father, both in work and in life.

Tradition tells us that Jesus initially took on the work of his earthly father, Joseph, working as a carpenter before he began his public life: Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them… And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:51-52) In his public life Jesus also took on the work of his heavenly Father, becoming his presence in human form in the family business of salvation, offering the fullness of life from God, the Father to all people.

This is the natural order established by God: man, woman, and family cooperating with God’s creative act to fill the earth and to work and care for the garden of creation, extending God’s plan and leading each generation to God, so that God may one day be “all in all.” (1Corinthians 15:28)

Let us pray that God may be as proud of us, his extension in this world, as I am of my son, Stephen, my son-in-law, Greg, and all my children, their spouses and families, who are an extension of our family and of our heritage.
REFLECTIONS

Be Attentive to God

By Andrew Svorinic

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. (James 4:13-16)

The book of James is focused on teaching about virtue. James writes about moral and proverbial wisdom. In the above chapter, he is asking us to submit ourselves to God’s will. I have learned from experience that God is in control and that he can interrupt my life at unexpected times in order to remind me that I serve him. I have two such experiences to illustrate.

The first occurred during a training session. A supplier was teaching us about their product and providing information as to how we could successfully gain business while bringing value to our customers. The training went on for about four hours. Afterward, we decided to break for fifteen minutes. During the break, I walked into our business lobby and found Larry, one of the trainers, face down on the floor, apparently unconscious. I immediately went over and tried to revive him. After a few minutes, Larry opened his eyes and started to become more attentive.

I sat him up and got some water for him. After some dialogue and watching him talk, I decided we needed to go to the hospital. During our drive, I called his wife to let her know what was happening. I spent the rest of the day and evening in the hospital. During this time, God was guiding me the whole way, keeping me calm for the both of us. He was asking me to forget everything else I had planned for that day and to stay with Larry until he was stabilized. Larry made a full recovery and is working hard every day as of this writing.

The second story is about a friend and business associate whom I had known for many years. I heard that he had been diagnosed with cancer and that it did not look very good. Mike was a very good man. How can I work on being more open to the Lord? How can I come to see his urgings as a regular part of my life instead of interruptions?

Andrew Svorinic has been a member of CIC since June of 2002 and belongs to the Mesa Men’s Chapter in Arizona. He has been married to Carolyn for twenty-two years. They have two children, Elizabeth (20) and Matthew (18). Andrew works as a sales representative for an electrical manufacturer. He can be reached at svorinic@cox.net.

May we all strive to obey the Lord’s promptings rather than our own “arrogant schemes!”

PRAY:

Lord, open my ears and heart to your urgings and guidance. Help me say yes and be obedient to your will at anytime and in any place. Give me the courage to be interrupted and serve you.

REFLECT:

How can I work on being more open to the Lord? How can I come to see his urgings as a regular part of my life instead of interruptions?

DISCUSS:

Share one or two experiences where you cooperated or did not cooperate with an unexpected urging from the Lord. Share with one another and pray for more opportunities to be “interrupted.”

WORKING FOR OUR FATHER: NEW, IMPACTFUL WORKSHOP

Working for Our Father is designed to help Christians align their careers with God’s mission. Written and produced to impact all age groups, particularly the next generation, this series utilizes professional, engaging videos that have captured the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for their Father by the power of the Holy Spirit!

There are four presentations:

- Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work
- Triumphing Over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
- Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
- Operating in the Fruit of the Spirit

For more information, visit cicintl.org/wfof.
**WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

### Personal Sacrifice

**By Brad Prose**

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

It’s easy to be disappointed in our jobs; there are targets we miss, bills we must pay, and ladders we struggle to climb. Choosing an attitude of faith instead of fear is one of the greatest challenges.

Last month, a position opened up in our company’s Phoenix branch. A number of friends and associates wanted to apply and reached out to me for guidance. I've known most of them for years, so it was easy to draw an early opinion of who could potentially be a great fit for our team.

A particular friend was not on the manager’s radar and I wanted to make sure I prepared her for the potential rejection. A few years ago, we discovered that we are both followers of Christ. I was very blessed by her response. This sister welcomed the idea that God was working for her through the interview process and that she would end up learning through the experience no matter what the result was.

Psychologist Simone Caruthers says, “Life is a series of outcomes. Sometimes the outcome is what you want. Figure out what you did right. Sometimes the outcome is what you don’t want. Figure out what you did so you don’t do it again.”

We must move through our reservations and into the confidence of God’s provision and protection!

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**PRAY:**

Father, teach me to press on, especially when things fall short of what I desire. Help me to pursue you first in everything I do. Align my heart so that its primary focus might be on you.

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**REFLECT:**

Am I focused on worldly success or godly success? What would the Father say if I fell short at an important task in my life? What can I learn from him?

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**DISCUSS:**

Examine your recent past. What have you learned from your struggles and shortcomings? What have you learned from successes? Share this within your group. Who else can you share this with?

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**WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

### Making a Difference in the Workplace

**By Brad Prose**

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:19)

Sunday is a slight pause before Monday comes around. Generally there is church, lunch, and quality time with family. Sometimes there are more activities such as Bible study or community events. What stuck with you from the sermon? Was there something eye-opening in your studies?

Monday rolls around and everyone is talking about what they did over the weekend. Did you watch the game? See a movie? What did you cook? What did you have to fix? No one else is talking about church and suddenly you realize you have lost your spiritual edge.

God was completely present yesterday. The switch flipped and now it’s Monday. I often feel overwhelmed and empty on Mondays. I’ve been away from work for two entire days; there are emails and voicemails to follow up on. God takes a back seat because I focus on getting through it all. Sometimes I feel like I’ve conditioned myself to work without God.

In fact, Monday launches our “spiritual work week.” We spend more hours working than on any other activity in life. Work is where the majority of our relationships are, however impersonal. And as Christians, it is where we face most of our faith challenges.

God wants us to live and work in a way that is useful and productive for all, including ourselves. What does that mean to you? The answer is distinct for everyone and discerned through prayer and reflection.

I don’t know about you, but the last thing I want is to start every week with a “Monday Moan” and end it with “Thank God it’s Friday” for the next thirty years.

---

**PRAY:**

Lord, help me stay focused on you when the work week begins. I want to maintain my fire within throughout everything I do. Use me at work to reflect your glory.

---

**REFLECT:**

Are you involved with church or your community on the weekends? Think about what might stop you from sharing your Christian experiences at work. Are there ways to share without being forceful?

---

**DISCUSS:**

How can you bring your weekend experiences to work? Think about an experience with God that stands out in your mind and discuss how you could share it with others.
Holding Each Other Accountable

By Brad Prose

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (1 Corinthians 3:7)

Youth ministry was the most fulfilling area of service I ever participated in. Ironically, I didn’t realize this until many years later when the kids reached out to share their stories and the impact we coaches had on their lives. I remember wondering many times throughout my time in the ministry, “Do I really have any impact on these kids - real, spiritual impact?”

It took a few years to understand that this approach was selfish. When the youth started reaching out in recent years, that’s when the realization came that God doesn’t keep track of how many people we convert to Christ. He simply wants his followers to be talking about and showing his love on a day-to-day basis.

Many of us have had that one person in our lives we are simply not able to compel to Christ. It’s that brother, that long-time friend, or the depressed coworker. The challenge is to realize that you may not be the person that gets to flip the switch and see that person converted to Christ. In fact, you may never see it. It may happen and you might not be there for it.

We are not the Gardener; we are his tools.

How freeing is that, knowing God does not keep score? He doesn’t expect us to win, win, win. He expects us to talk about what we are most excited for every day. Our walk with him in our daily lives transforms the way we view everything!

We should think about and pray for others at work. We should desire that our efforts be fruitful. Nevertheless, growth is God’s business. He takes the seeds we plant and cultivates them. It is for us to pray and to trust him with that part of the process.

PRAY:

Lord, forgive my impatience. Bless those whom I have shared the gospel with. Bless those whom I have not yet spoken to. Bless those who will continue to nurture the seeds I have planted in others.

REFLECT:

Do I feel an urgency to speak about Christ? Have I prayed for the growth of our work in CIC and for spiritual growth in others? Spend time with the Lord, dwelling on the excitement of being under his wing.

DISCUSS:

When were you most excited to be a Christ-follower? Have things changed? If so, talk about how you can encourage each other once again.

2017 CONSOLIDATED INCOME/EXPENSE PROJECTION

Brothers and Sisters,

Each year we provide our income and expense projections for the current year to date in the April issue. We hope CIC has given you a reason to help meet our goals for 2017. The workplace needs Christ, and CIC is bringing him there. We are making a difference in the marketplace and, ultimately, in people’s lives! Please contact the Home Office if you need any additional details. Thank you and God bless you.

Terry Cassell, President

2017 Operating Budget Income: $643,643

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| TOTAL EXPENSES              | $624,877        | $646,543              |

Please contact our office if you need any additional details.

*These funds represent local chapter expenses only (rental space, Challenge Weekends, fundraisers, insurance, etc.); not used by the Home Office.
Personal Sacrifice
By Jennifer Frankenberg

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

My son plays cello in his school’s orchestra program. At the beginning of the school year, I was approached by the president of the Music Boosters group, who asked me to serve as chairperson of fundraising activities. I told her my schedule was intense and unpredictable, filled with last-minute travel. But she pressed me, assuring me that I would have help, so I accepted.

As the year progressed, I was unable to fulfill my duties. I planned on discussing this with the president of the group after our board meeting. I showed up to that board meeting and was informed in front of the group that the president had found a new chairperson to replace me. She then went on to make very insulting comments about my lack of performance. Even my replacement had some words about my lack of commitment!

I was shocked by the negativity surrounding the entire situation and personally wounded. I sat and listened to the two of them, looking around at the surprised faces of the rest of the board members. I wanted to tell them how small-minded they were - I was so angry! I must admit that in past days I would have created a scene, stormed out, and felt perfectly comfortable with my actions. Instead, I took a breath and asked the Lord for strength and humility.

I stood up and walked around to where the president and new chairperson sat. I put my hand gently on the chairperson’s shoulder and apologized to both that my work schedule had interfered with my responsibilities. I said I was appreciative of the one who had stepped forward to fill my shoes. I then walked out to the smiles and nods of the rest of the board.

Yes, I was still angry and hurt by the situation, but I know the Lord was with me in that moment, guiding my words and actions.

PRAY:
Father, give me the wisdom that only your Spirit can give. Open my eyes to the barriers holding me back from spiritual progress.

REFLECT:
How much influence does prayer have on your daily interactions with people?

DISCUSS:
Talk about a time when you had to “turn the other cheek.” Do you think it had an impact on others around you?

Redeeming Our Father’s Creation
By Jennifer Frankenberg

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

A year ago, my company hired a young man into a junior analyst position. This young man is kind and has a good heart, but after one year with our firm, he still struggled to meet our expectations. As he reported to me, I consulted with our COO and we decided to place this employee in a Performance Improvement Program (PIP).

During our meeting when I told him that he was being placed on a PIP, he became angry and accusatory. This made me angry in turn, and when the meeting ended I felt drained and unhappy. When I shared about it at my CIC meeting that night, one of the ladies in the group asked me if I had prayed before going into the meeting with the employee. I told her that I had not. I realized then that I had not prayed to the Lord, asking for his strength and wisdom. Rather than trusting him to “lead” the meeting, I had relied on my own decisions and actions.

The following week I was unsure as to how to approach this young man. I prayed to God and asked him for his guidance. As the gentleman and I began to talk, I felt a sense of peace. He too appeared to relax. We discussed a current project and I reviewed some of his work on it. The difference was evident - he had completed several analyses in a shorter period of time than usual and all were error-free.

The next day, he showed up at work with a cup of coffee for me as a peace offering. His future right now is uncertain, but at least he and I are communicating. Ultimately, only the Lord knows the outcome - but with his guidance, I have no need to worry or be anxious.

PRAY:
Lord, I reach out to you for your guidance. Calm my anxious thoughts and speak into my mind.

REFLECT:
Do you take time to pray and listen to God to guide your actions?

DISCUSS:
Discuss a time when you prayed prior to a potentially stressful event.
The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By Jennifer Frankenberg

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

At one of our chapter meetings, we discussed how we could bring God’s grace to the people around us on a daily basis. We discussed everything from handing out money to people on street corners to randomly praying over people. Some of our ideas were big, and others more modest. I talked about a book I had read in which a man had carried five small smooth stones in one pocket. As the day progressed, each time he did something for someone else, he would move one of the stones to his other pocket. By the end of the day, his goal was to have all five stones in the opposite pocket. Sometimes, he helped people in great ways and sometimes he provided simple kindnesses.

The next day at work, one of my coworkers was having a stressful day. I sensed things were not going well for her and offered to help. She refused, saying she could handle things. At our Christians in Commerce Annual Conference the previous year, I had been given some small wooden crosses. I had one in my purse that day. When my coworker stepped away from her desk, I took one out and placed it on her desk by her computer. I never told her I put it there and she never said anything when she came back to her desk.

Several weeks later, I heard this coworker speaking to one of our other employees about this little cross on her desk. She was saying how it had just “appeared” on a very bad day. She didn’t know who had left it, but talked about how special it made her feel. This small, grace-filled action had positively impacted her day.

Even small things, such as opening doors for people, making eye contact and smiling at them in the elevator, or taking time to listen when they need to talk, can be just as important as big financial donations or heroic actions.

PRAY:

Lord, help me listen so that I may know you more clearly. Make me an instrument of your grace.

REFLECT:

Consider different and creative ways you could positively impact a person’s life. Can you imagine people doing these things for you?

DISCUSS:

Talk about an instance where a small action made a large impact, whether it was something you did for someone, or something they did for you.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE THEME ANNOUNCED: “COWORKERS IN CHRIST”

2017 Annual Conference
Coworkers in Christ

OCTOBER 20-21, 2017

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Golf Resort
Cathedral City, CA (Palm Springs area)

More information to follow. Mark your calendars!

Watch our 2016 Annual Conference Highlights video
https://vimeo.com/196304693

Jennifer Frankenberg lives in Orange County, California and is an operations consultant working with private equity clients. She is active in her parish and founded the Orange County Women’s Chapter of Christians in Commerce in 2015. She and her husband Rich have been married for fourteen years and have one son. Jennifer can be reached at caligirl949@gmail.com.
YOUR GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING
By Randy Raciti

Many people ask how they can support Christians in Commerce (CIC) as we work together to be Christ's presence in the workplace. We’re all familiar with the concept of time, talents, and treasure. I’d like to share a few thoughts on treasure.

There are different ways to support Christians in Commerce financially. Certainly our annual Member Gift Campaign is the financial lifeblood of CIC and most important to support. Another way to contribute is through what is called “planned giving,” or giving at the end of one’s life.

I joined CIC during a very dark period in my life. Various brothers literally took me by the hand and brought me out of the darkness and into the light of Christ.

In gratitude to these brothers and to CIC, I want this work of God to continue well beyond my lifetime. I found the easiest way to do this was to name CIC as the primary beneficiary of one of my retirement plans. The reasons I selected this approach were the following:

**Easy:** Simply obtain a Change of Beneficiary form from your retirement company and name Christians in Commerce as a primary or contingent beneficiary. This took me three minutes to complete.

**Flexible:** You can name CIC as either a primary or contingent beneficiary, and for any percentage or dollar amount.

**Tax efficient:** Estates/Trusts are not subject to federal taxes when funds are donated to charities (CIC).

**Revocable:** Your beneficiary designation can be changed at any time.

I encourage everyone to prayerfully consider making some planned gift to CIC. After praying, act. Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do for the Lord today. There is no better investment we can make in life than in the building of God’s kingdom here on earth, and CIC is at the heart of this.

A reference document is available on our CIC website at www.cicintl.org/bequest. Contact Jon Cassady at the Home Office with any questions: cassady@cicintl.org or 703-205-5600.

SOUTH BEND/ELKHART CHAPTERS HOST WORKING FOR OUR FATHER
By Vanessa Cooreman Smith

For four weeks in January, the men’s and women’s South Bend/Elkhart chapters in Indiana presented the “Working for Our Father” series. Each week, between thirty and forty participants came together for this powerful presentation to learn how much more rewarding our careers can be when we view our work as part of God’s kingdom and plan.

Talks by Christine Ziegler, Joe Cramer, Steve Smith and Rich Preuss augmented videos produced for the series. They offered insight into how God designed work to be part of our relationship with him and how the way we view that work impacts our overall happiness. The speakers encouraged us to set aside the mindset that our “work life” is something isolated from our faith and instead to view work as an opportunity to grow God’s kingdom, serve his people, and discover the new levels of fulfillment and community that this life has to offer.

Since most working adults spend more time at work than with their families, the series was extremely relevant. Small group discussions held after the video and talks each week allowed everyone to get to know one another, discuss the concepts from the series, and pray together.

While the series is now complete, the good work has just begun. At least thirteen new people joined us for the series, and many expressed interest in joining a Challenge Group. Now, new groups are forming and new relationships are being forged. It’s exciting to see what God is doing!
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