



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

August, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

Are You a Minister?

By: Jon Cassady

My prayer this year is to be more available in service to others by decreasing pride, increasing compassion, and listening more. I've recognized there are many individuals who are lonely, isolated, depressed, hurting, and yearning to be loved. They are strangers, acquaintances, coworkers, friends and family. These individuals are looking for a coach, not a judge.

Ask and you shall receive! So far this year I have been blessed with many opportunities and conversations. Through my willingness and vulnerability, these appointments have been genuine, sincere, joyful, raw and humbling. Here's just one that our Father used to give me a better perspective.

Recently, I was in Evanston, IN with some missionaries living in the poorer part of town. While I was walking with them one day, they introduced me to an elderly woman. Though it was late afternoon, she still had not dressed for the day. She was depressed and feeling sorry about her situation. I asked her questions and listened. I encouraged her to trust in the Father and to rely on his grace and protection. We also prayed with her.

At one point during our conversation she asked, "What do you do? Are you a minister?"

I explained that after almost 30 years in the corporate world, I was now working for a non-profit ministry. Through all these jobs, I had gone from part-time Christian to full-time worshipper. All members of Christians in Commerce are Kingdom builders, wherever they are. It was truly a "God moment". I then stated that I was a minister and so was she. We are all ministers.

In recent reflection, I've felt encouraged to do the following:

- 1. Take the Initiative** – Awake each day ready to give and to serve others. Get up with a positive mentality geared towards giving, not getting, looking not to my own interests, but to the interests of others.
- 2. Live with Humility** – Remove all pride and serve as Jesus did, willing to wash the feet of others.
- 3. Aspire to Servanthood** – Get over my pride. While it is easy for me to serve my family, friends, and people like me, I'm called to hospitality, and I've heard one definition of hospitality is "to love strangers".
- 4. Embrace the Sacrifice** – Pay the price. Jesus paid that price on the cross for each of us. Die to sin, self, and pride so I may live a new life in Christ.

God is calling everyone to be a minister. All can be equipped for ministry work in expanding the Kingdom by being Christ in the workplace. To that end, I invite you to attend the upcoming 2015 Annual Conference in Tempe, AZ on October 16-17, 2015. Themed "Living Extraordinary Lives in Ordinary Ways", it will give practical insights into making a difference at work, influencing our work and the workplace, and touching the lives of coworkers.

We are all ministers. Our destiny is not only to give our lives to Jesus, not only to give our lives to one another, but also to give our lives to the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Jon Cassady has been a member of the Northern Virginia Chapter for over 20 years. He lives in Vienna, Virginia, and serves as the Operations Manager for Christians in Commerce. Jon worked as a sales and marketing executive with IBM for over 27 years and most recently as a Senior Director of Marketing for a non-profit in the DC Area. Jon may be reached at cassady@cicintl.org.

Upcoming Events

Annual Conference
October 16-17, 2015

Men's Weekends
Sacramento Chapter
August 28-29, 2015
Northern VA
September 11-12, 2015
South Bend/Elkhart
September 11-13, 2015
Salinas
November 13-15, 2015
Orange County
January 15-17, 2016

Women's Weekends
WCIC-South Bend/Elkhart
September 11-13, 2015
WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill
April 16-17, 2016

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Please send your stories to:
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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Mark Emmanuel

By: George Kane

... do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:11)

What does Jesus mean by this? What does it sound like when the Holy Spirit speaks through us? Can we be sure that we're really doing it right? Questions like these have been on my mind since beginning missionary work here in Evansville, Indiana nearly two years ago.

I've had to wrestle with the temptation to think that I can't really know exactly what God wants to say in a given conversation; that he can only give general advice and instruction in the faith that applies to the situation of the person I'm speaking with. That sounds credible enough, right? I mean, who could fault me for quoting the Bible or encouraging the practice of virtue? But to actually speak on behalf of God himself... Who do I think I am, a prophet?

It was well below freezing the day I set out to knock on some new doors with fellow missionaries Paul and Abby. Paul was leading our team and stopped in front of a little white house with green shutters. "I was moved to knock here the other day," he said, "but I didn't act on it." "Me too!" Abby piped up through her scarf. "I'd like to give it a try!"

We decided to spend three minutes in silent prayer, right there, to ask the Lord what he wanted to say to the people inside. We stomped our feet every so often to keep the blood circulating.

"I hear the Lord saying, 'Emmanuel'," said Paul. "I think the Lord wants us to talk about the Gospel of Matthew," said Abby.

With that, Paul creaked open the storm door, took off his glove, and gave the door a friendly knock. The woman who answered the door was interested in hearing about who we were and what we had to say, but she was not dressed for the cold, so she invited us inside.

As we shuffled in, we realized that she was not alone; four surprised-look-

ing teenagers stared up at the three of us from a sofa that took up a third of the room. As it turned out, three of the four were interested in hearing news of how God was very much alive and active here in Evansville, and wanted to know more about how they could get to know God personally. The fourth teenager, Adrian, was not so keen. To tell you the truth, his appearance made me uneasy: multiple ear piercings, a scraggy beard, tattoos, and skull-covered clothes... the man looked dangerous. He glared at the ground and did not speak.

Then Paul said, "You know, the Lord put two words on our hearts to share before we came in. One was 'Emmanuel,' and the other was from the Gospel of Mark." I flinched for a moment, thinking "Wait, it was from Matthew!" but stopped short of saying anything when I saw a change come over Adrian. Were those tears?

Adrian got up from the couch abruptly and walked out of the room, only to return five minutes later, eyes red and cheeks moist. What was going on? He sat down on the couch amidst the silence, his friends staring.

"God sent you here for me," he declared firmly, "and I got the message." Abby, Paul, and I looked at each other quickly. "What do you mean?" we asked.

"This morning my grandmother had a heart attack. Since I haven't been home in long time, I asked God for a sign to tell me if I should go back and, well... 'Adrian' is just my nickname. My given name is Mark Emmanuel."

The Holy Spirit had spoken through Paul's "mistake" to give Mark an unmistakable sign! Truly, *the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit...* (Hebrews 4:12)

George Kane is a full-time street evangelist with the People of Praise community's mission team in Evansville, IN. Learn more about their work at www.peopleofpraise.org/about/out-reach/mission. After finishing his two-year commitment with the mission team in August, he will begin medical school at the Indiana University School of Medicine. George can be reached at gkane@iupui.edu.

Pray: Lord, grant me the boldness to speak your words with authority and love, especially in the presence of callous and resistant hearts.

Reflect: Do I ask the Lord what he wants said on a daily basis?

Do I believe that I can speak on behalf of God himself and prophesy? What other desires might be keeping me from wanting to speak God's word?

Discuss: What opportunities and challenges shape the role of your prophetic voice in your workplace? Have you had an opportunity to bring a personal message from the Lord to a coworker? What's it like for you to hear God speak?

Men's August Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Phil Nasser

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
(Ephesians 6:18)

Do you pray with others at work? If you're like me, the idea of praying at work was once a foreign one. Work was about finding new customers, taking care of existing customers, creating new products, building a competitive advantage, beating the competition, being first to market, etc. This was all hard work and didn't seem to leave much room for spirituality.

Several years ago we were working with a client on plans to grow his business. A part of the assignment was to assess the leadership and sales teams. The owner did not think very highly of one of the salespeople and asked me to determine whether she had the tools to be successful in their business. So I scheduled a meeting with her at nine the next morning. She was tardy and my first thought was, "This is not the way to make a good first impression."

When she arrived about 20 minutes late I could sense something was wrong. Before we started I asked if everything was all right. She said things were okay, but was not convincing. When I said, "The reason I asked is because you look upset," she began to tear up. She then told me that her husband had just told her that morning he wanted a divorce.

I was stunned and found it hard to react or say anything. I could not imagine what she must have been feeling. Then I heard myself saying, "Would it be okay if we prayed?" I don't know where that came from; the words seemed to spill out involuntarily. She said, "Yes" and I took her hand and prayed for her and her family. The prayer calmed her.

Before CIC, I used to think that business and God were separate. In this situation I was very thankful to have been given the opportunity and the courage to pray at work.

Pray: Lord, help us to understand and learn that when we come to you in prayer, all will be well, because you are with us at all times; good and bad.

Reflect: When have I ignored or avoided an opportunity to pray at work or elsewhere?

Discuss: What is it that causes us to be unwilling to pray at work? At home? In other social situations? Describe situations where you have (or have not) taken the opportunity to pray with others.

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By: Phil Nasser

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

There were seven co-founders of our consulting firm, and I was chosen to be the first president. Initially, as we struggled with the business plan, there was excitement, high energy, and lots of learning. We were all pulling together. It was heady and fun. Over the course of the next couple of years, the business began struggling and factions started to develop. A couple of the founders contributed a lot, but for some reason they made me feel undermined in my leadership role.

What was my immediate reaction? I started judging them and trying to undermine their efforts in return. In some ways, my reaction was natural. There should always be disagreements in organizations. It is healthy. It's only when the disagreements become personal and we are driven to actions that not only fail to advance the business, but actually harm it, that it becomes unhealthy. I was too wound up in my ego. My energy was negative and I knew it. My behavior was self-serving but I indulged it anyway.

Jesus says, "For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38) Fortunately, in my heart, I knew this too. I finally decided to stop judging (as best I could), meet with the opposing group, try to understand their goals and, assuming they made sense, see if I could help achieve them.

Following through on these resolutions was a challenge. Initially, my colleagues were incredulous and skeptical. I had to prove that I had their best interests at heart. Ultimately, we agreed to make changes that were very good for the firm. This only happened because I subordinated my need to be right (i.e., my pride and ego) to my need to care for others and contribute to the larger good.

If we want others to be more loving, we have to choose love first. Lead with love. As the saying goes, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Pray: Lord, open our minds to recognize when we are in judgment mode. Help us to understand whom we are really serving at those times.

Reflect: Does any good come from judging other people?

Discuss: Give specific examples of situations when you have been judgmental at work, home, or elsewhere. Did it do any good? How is it harmful? What will you do to change?

Men's August Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

By: Phil Nasser

The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

We learn in many ways - experience, our parents, formal education, books, elders and observation, for example. Sometimes, however, we learn from the least expected sources.

My oldest son was coming home and needed to be picked up at the bus station. I arrived early and parked on the street across from the station. When my son arrived we greeted one another, walked to the car and loaded his luggage into the trunk. As we started to get into the car, a big man, who appeared to be homeless, was approaching us on the sidewalk.

My initial reaction was to hurry up, get in the car and pretend I hadn't noticed him. After all, what were his intentions? However, my son walked up to the man with a smile on his face and said, "Can I help you, brother?" I nearly yelled, "What are you doing?!" But there was no stopping my son. The man mumbled something unintelligible in what sounded like an eastern European accent. My son patiently asked him to repeat himself. Apparently, the man needed directions. My next thought was, "Oh no, are we going to have to take him somewhere?"

After several clumsy exchanges, it was determined that he had the address of his destination written on a piece of paper. The stranger was only a couple of blocks from his destination. My son offered him a ride but the man said he'd prefer to walk.

We were soon on our way home, having lost little time talking to the stranger. Here was my son, convicting my heart and modeling how to treat our fellow man. I also learned how to take the risk of being helpful to a stranger. We really do learn from the most unexpected people!

Phil Nasser has been married to his wife, Reed, for 35 years. They have three grown children and reside in Mission Viejo, CA. Phil has been a member of the Orange County Chapter for ten years and helped form the new Chapter in Mission Viejo. He is a managing partner of a consulting firm and an adjunct professor at California State University Fullerton. Phil can be reached at phil.nasser@cox.net.

Save the Date: 2015 Annual Conference



October 16-17, 2015

Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Phoenix Tempe

The theme of our 2015 Christians in Commerce Annual Conference will be "Living Extraordinary Lives in Ordinary Ways". More information to follow. Mark your calendars!

Pray: Lord, open my mind and heart to those in need around me. Give me the courage to help them.

Reflect: Do I avoid those around me who are in need? If so, why? If I am fearful of helping them, what is the root cause of my fear?

Discuss: In what specific ways are you helping your fellow man, especially at work? Are you called to do more? If so, what specifically?

Women's August Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Pat Gangi-Drechsler

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven... (Matthew 5:11-12)

I wanted to leap out of my seat and yell, "That's not true! How can you stand there with a straight face and tell such lies?!" It was only by God's grace that I was able to remain seated and externally calm in the hearing room. Internally, I was boiling mad at the attorney's falsehoods and emotional exaggerations. Our request to establish a small, no-fee, contemplative Christian house of prayer was being purposely mischaracterized as everything from a potential "halfway house" to a "cover-up for a commercial bed and breakfast."

Never before had I experienced my Christian faith, beliefs and intentions being so insulted or disparaged, and so publicly! It hurt deeply and my heart ached for all of the ministry team members. Our intentions were pure and holy, not tainted and self-seeking as they were being portrayed.

My first reaction was very human. I was angry, wanting to "shake the dust from my feet" and get out of town! But as I moved from anger to prayer, I realized that this was exactly what Jesus must have felt during his ministry years. As he walked the countryside bringing the good news, healing the sick and offering salvation, he was consistently misunderstood, insulted, mocked and driven out of town. So, our difficult permit hearing was actually a reason for rejoicing; we were sharing in the cross of Christ!

If you follow the news, it's clear that Christian persecution is on the rise worldwide. Our group was only denied a permit; other Christians are being denied their very lives! Are you prepared to be Christ in the marketplace in times of persecution? Are you ready to "rejoice and be glad" and receive the blessings that come from bearing your cross with Jesus?

Pray: Lord, in times of persecution and difficulty, help us to recognize that we are being invited to share in your cross. Give us the grace to overcome pain and disappointment with divine rejoicing.

Reflect: When have I felt persecuted or ridiculed for my faith? How did it feel? How did I respond?

Discuss: Talk about a time when you felt persecuted for your faith. What happened and what did you learn from the experience?

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

By: Pat Gangi-Drechsler

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one... so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22-23)

The above scripture makes it clear that when Christians are united, the world will know the love of Christ. This also implies that Christian disunity can be a stumbling block to those who don't yet know and accept God's love.

About 18 months ago in Phoenix, AZ, the local Catholic Bishop and several influential Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal ministers met together to talk about the need for Christian unity. This simple question emerged: "Why can't we just pray together?"

Within months, joint ecumenical evenings of praise and worship were being held around the city, focusing on what we Christians have in common rather than on the doctrinal differences that separate us. As we asked each other's forgiveness for contributing to disunity through judgement or ignorance and symbolically washed each other's feet, the tears and the healing flowed!

A city-wide "John 17 Celebration of Christian Unity" was then scheduled for Pentecost eve at the Phoenix Convention Center. I served on the leadership team for the event and watched in amazement as the Holy Spirit led various Christian groups to work together as never before! Over 2,000 people attended the multi-lingual event, (including many CIC/WCIC members) which featured local and international speakers from various Christian traditions and a video exhortation from Pope Francis on "unity in diversity".

To promote unity, CIC operates as an ecumenical organization and works hard to ensure that each person's Christian beliefs and traditions are acknowledged and respected. CIC has created an excellent set of guidelines to help us create and sustain a unified, welcoming environment for members and guests. We would all do well to study these guidelines and put them into practice!

Pray: Lord, help me to remember that others will know we are Christians by our love. Help me to focus on what unites us as Christians rather than on what divides us.

Reflect: How have I related to Christians whose traditions are different from my own, particularly those in my chapter? What could I do to make them feel more respected and loved?

Discuss: Review and discuss the CIC guidelines on Ecumenism (www.christiansincommerce.org/christians-commerce-ecumenical-ministry).

Women's August Reflections

(continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By: Pat Gangi-Drechsler

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord... Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:4-5, 12)

Organization does not come naturally to me. Paperwork tends to overwhelm me (and my desk)!

Early in my career I took a job that initially focused on my gifts of teaching and encouragement. When the company was sold, the new owners required me to track and report increasing amounts of detailed information. These clerical tasks eventually became so burdensome that I left the company to take a job that aligned better with my gifts.

Knowing my strengths and weaknesses in practical tasks as well as in my spirituality has helped me both in business and in working with my WCIC sisters. At one point I was asked to serve as WCIC Chapter Secretary, but I knew from experience that I would probably not be successful in the position. I graciously declined the Secretary role but offered to serve as Speaker Trainer. I've found that most service will have some elements we don't like or enjoy, but if the majority of it plays to our strengths, it should be a good fit.

Most leadership positions encompass a number of different skill sets. When I was asked to serve as Co-Chair of the Women's Board of Directors for WCIC, I initially declined because it would require significant organizational skills. We found a way around it by appointing a wonderful fellow Co-Chair who excelled in this area and welcomed this aspect of the position.

Unfortunately, I've also seen sisters take on service roles for which they were not suited because they felt guilty or pressured. Many of them burned out, some to the point of becoming disillusioned and leaving ministry altogether. I thank God that for the last 18 years I have been surrounded by WCIC sisters who care about and know me well enough to call me to serve in my areas of strength, and to support me in my areas of weakness.

Dr. Pat (Gangi) Drechsler is one of the founders of WCIC, a member of the WCIC-Phoenix Chapter and immediate Past President of the WCIC Board of Directors. Pat is semi-retired, and when not working on CIC projects, is very active with the John 17 Movement. She also serves with her husband Rob (Scottsdale Chapter) on the City of the Lord "Simply Ready" Christian Simplicity/Emergency Preparedness team. Pat may be reached at drangani@cox.net.

Workplace Stories Needed

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We especially are 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 even know where to start, 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 would be 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 Therese Rosenthal at info@cicintl.org or 703-205-5600.

Pray: Lord, give me eyes to see my own strengths and weaknesses, courage to put my strengths into service for WCIC and the marketplace, and humility to ask for help in areas that need strengthening.

Reflect: How does it feel when I am serving from my strengths? From my weaknesses?

Discuss: How could you put your strengths to better service for your WCIC sisters and your chapter?

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Uganda Youth Conference

By: Aloysius Mugisa

We recently concluded a three-day Youth Conference with the theme *Do Not Be Ashamed of Proclaiming Christ*. We bless the name of the Lord for this very successful ministry.

Our last Youth Conference in December attracted 800 young people. Three teenagers later approached me and requested that a conference be held in their area to help the youth who could not afford to travel to where the current Youth Conferences are held. I agreed somewhat hesitantly, and a local conference took place May 14–17, 2015.

As always, we used our radio program to promote the event. We also visited churches and spoke to congregations. Currently we do not have any CIC Challenge Groups in that area, but hundreds of people listen to our evangelical radio shows. Many of the youth readily accepted our invitation, and many parents promised to send their children.

On Thursday, May 14th, a three-man team started an eighty-mile journey to the conference venue, arriving at 10 AM. The leaders told the team we were expecting about 70 teenagers. As of that evening, 78 youth had registered. The following day, starting very early in the morning, more and more young people began flocking in, and by that evening we had registered 193 teenagers!

While blessed by the increase in attendance and delighted with the turnout, we were not at all prepared for this number. We engaged with the local leaders, who hurried to secure more supplies.

Interestingly, some parents came with their children and stayed to participate in the Youth Conference. They said they wanted to hear what their children were learning. These parents were very happy with the team and thanked them profusely.

Many teenagers gave moving testimonies at the end of the conference. Here are just a few of their statements:

"I am going to make dad and mum my best friends so that they will bless me and support me."

"I will not waste time any more. I am going to plant two thousand eucalyptus trees by the end of this year."

"I have learned a lot in this conference that has disproved what I have been hearing from my friends. In fact, most of my friends have been giving me misleading information."

Glory to God the Most High!



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

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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