In 2014, I was hired into my dream job. I didn’t know it was my dream job at first, but as time passed, I realized it was the perfect fit for me. I loved the excitement, the challenges, and the opportunities afforded me. But a few months ago, I was actually considering quitting. I didn’t have another specific job or employer in mind, but I knew I was unhappy. I grumbled to my family and friends and circulated my resume.

My feelings did not stem from one particular thing, but an accumulation of perceived slights—small incidents that when added together made me question if I was experiencing gender bias. At first, I discounted each event—perhaps it was just me blowing things out of proportion. Then I began to add them up. I started analyzing every situation, considering every word spoken to me, evaluating all my interactions with workmates. Going to work became stressful and discouraging.

I hesitated to bring any of these things up to senior management until I was sure I was seeing a pattern. I told no one, except my husband and a few friends. During all of these conversations, the idea of praying over the situation never came up. Eventually, my frustration and anger boiled over and our senior management team became aware of it. I was called into a meeting and confronted directly by HR and a member of the senior management team to explain the situation.

During that meeting, I laid down a laundry list of incidents with indignant rage. But as the conversations unfolded, my indignation turned to embarrassment when I realized that I was the one that had not handled the conflict well. There was understanding on the part of the management team as to my feelings, and some situations required follow-up to resolve. However, they were also concerned that I had not stepped forward early on, instead of looking for a pattern.

I needed to take responsibility for not letting them know what I was experiencing and feeling, rather than letting my emotions fester. By approaching each concern with a cool mind and rational consideration, the situations could have been addressed individually and the conflict minimized. If I had prayed and listened to God’s advice, I believe I would have approached the situation differently. Rather than keeping tally of all the perceived offenses against me, I could have been open without being confrontational.

It’s easy to discuss touchy subjects without letting our emotions take charge, especially in a society where opinions tend to be seen as fact and people have become polarized. Wherever we look we see a lot of anger being expressed, breaking down the fabric of our society and at times, our Christianity. We need to understand that each of us sees the world through our own prism and that open discussion, love, and forgiveness can quickly defuse emotional situations. The Lord gives us guidance all the time, if we take the time to listen. He desires us to remain open with one another—understanding of each other’s point of views—even if the messages make us uncomfortable.

Redemption is defined as the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt. It’s also defined as the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. We all know what Jesus did for us.

CIC has redeeming value to the world and God has personally asked us to help him with his plan to redeem it. God wants to keep us in his service until his work through us is complete.

Have a blessed Easter season!

Jennifer Frankenberg lives in Orange County, CA, and is an operations consultant working with private equity clients. She founded the Orange Women’s County Chapter of Christians in Commerce in 2015. She and her husband, Rich, were married in 2002 and have one son. Jennifer can be reached at caligirl949@gmail.com.
Living in the Spirit  
By Doug Demetre

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves... (Colossians 1:13)

Forty years ago, I opened an advertising agency. In short order, all the local TV and radio stations were recommending my company. One of my best clients became a good business friend. Craig and I were both all about business, money, and materialism. I wasn’t following the Lord in those days.

One day I received an angry call from Craig. It seemed that his company had an unauthorized advertising order for tens of thousands of dollars spread over four stations. The spots had run. The payments were due. My sales manager had placed these TV orders for this client, and for two other large clients. The general manager thought that these companies would not notice and pay. I fired him but did not pursue legal action. Without trusting in the Lord as I do now, I had many worry filled nights. The amounts of money were enormous. After months of negotiations between my agency and the TV stations, the stations allowed me to pay off the reduced sums.

Thirty years later, I had a new real estate career. I purchased a property for a young couple from Craig who had since become a real estate broker. He reminded me of the huge bill from years ago and that I had taken care of him and kept his record clean with the TV stations. He noticed that something was different with me. The difference was my being involved with CIC.

Soon after this purchase (during the economic downturn) my broker closed our local real estate office. The main office was 20 miles away, and my wife and I accepted Craig’s offer to share his offices. Within a few weeks, it was obvious that the cutthroat culture in his office was driven by money and not leaving anything on the table.

How has your life changed since you called on the Holy Spirit in your workplace?

Lord, I am yours. I ask you to give me your spiritual guidance to move through each day. Strengthen me Father.

Caren and I faced a dilemma—the language in the office was vulgar and the treatment of people was degrading—not only in the office but also at home. Surprisingly, he said, “You’re right. My wife has been telling me I should change my language.” Later, I invited him to a Challenge Weekend. He came and then started attending weekly challenge group meetings. A year later he had a stroke and I took him to meetings.

He told me that he loved the men of CIC and how they were living as Christ. Prior to closing his offices for medical reasons, his language and the culture of his company had changed. He was praying more and going to church. He shared how appreciative he was of what CIC taught and offered him. The CIC brothers and sisters prayed for him many times during his final months.

2018 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

We continue 2018 with a BOLD VISION for a BRIGHT FUTURE. With a goal to influence 20,000 lives by 2020, let’s invest in our mission together with prayers, financial support, and personal effort.

We’ve opened doors to thousands of Christians at several large corporations. We continue to grow our social media outreach. The Annual Conference provided inspiration and a sense of renewal for attendees to face future challenges. We have launched a new monthly podcast series. Join us in realizing this bold vision to support others in being Christ in their workplaces.

How can you help?

Encourage a new generation of Christians to meet the call to align their careers with God’s mission by donating online at www.cicintl.org/agc18. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!
Paying It Forward

By Ginny DeSanto

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.
(Proverbs 19:17)

I help people get health insurance when they don’t get it from an employer. Because of changes in our health care laws, many people get help paying for their health insurance based on their income. And that has now caused me to work more closely with my tax preparer.

PRAY:

Lord, help me be kind to those who annoy me and help me see them as you see them.

REFLECT:

I want to help those around me who can use my services. How can I do that more often?

DISCUSS:

Are there opportunities you can use to help others with your skills?

A Better Way

By Doug Demetre

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

When I was a realtor in 2005, I landed a contract to list 40 plus homes in a new development. The economy was at the start of a major downturn. Within a month I had a buyer for all the homes who intended to resell them through a lease option program. The buyer’s system utilized other people’s money. And that has now caused me to work more closely with my tax preparer.

PRAY:

Father thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to take on our sin and carry forward our redemption through the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be one with you.

REFLECT:

How do I portray to others the changes Jesus has made in me?

DISCUSS:

When you are around others, are you working with God or on your own? How are you using the same power as Jesus, the Holy Spirit, in your marketplace?
The Angry Client

By Ginny DeSanto

Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. (Ephesians 4:29)

My husband, Will, and I sell life insurance and we often meet clients who surprise us. One day we responded to a man’s request for information on life insurance. When we arrived, the man pulled open the door, welcomed us in, and led us to his table. Then he turned and facing me, told me, through clenched teeth and red face, how much he hated insurance companies. His eyes bulged as he spoke angrily about how he had been treated by others and how he treated them in return. He told us how he had called his homeowner insurance agent and had cussed him out over the phone.

He made it very clear to me that he did not trust insurance companies! So why had he filled out a form with his name, birthdate, phone numbers, weight and height, and signature? He had a son who wanted to be a neurosurgeon and he was trying to protect him if he died. He wanted the house paid off in the event of his death. I told him I would not promise what I could not deliver and would be honest about his options.

As it turned out, he had a long-term medical condition that was expensive to insure. I began to understand the anger. I asked the Lord, “What should I tell this man?” As I thought about it more, I came up with some options that would not necessarily involve purchasing a policy on him. He liked our suggestions and we agreed to meet again. At one point he said to us, “I really like you guys!” As we said goodbye at the door, he turned to me and said, “Hey, how about a hug?” I was glad I asked the Holy Spirit for help.

Ginny and her husband, Will, were married in 2008 and have five children. They live in Minneapolis, where they own a life insurance business. Ginny can be reached at mvdesanto@yahoo.com.

PRAY:

Lord, show me what to say when I don’t know what to say to someone who is hurting or is in a difficult situation.

REFLECT:

Am I able to see hurting people through the lens of Christ?

DISCUSS:

How to slip the shoes on of someone very different from myself and think what life would be like in those shoes.

2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION RATES

CIC is pleased to announce that we are keeping the Annual Conference registration rates at 2017 levels. Early bird registration rate is $205 and runs through September 6. Beginning September 7 the rate is $225. The spouse rate is $155.

This year’s CIC Annual Conference will be held on October 5-6 at the Embassy Suites Bloomington, MN. Please mark your calendars! An Annual Conference Planning Committee is already hard at work to ensure this will be a conference of inspiration, renewal, and fellowship for all attendees. Minnesota is beautiful in the fall. We hope you can join us!

Room reservations are now being accepted at the conference hotel. Contact Embassy Suites at http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/M/MSPWEES-CIC-20181003/index.jhtml

Or call them at 952-884-4811 or 1-800-Embassy. Ask for Group: Christians in Commerce or Group Code: CIC.
What If?

Isaiah 43: 19
See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

What if every Christian realized they have truly been given the power of the Holy Spirit to transform their workplaces and their eyes were opened to the impact of those workplaces on the world?

Would we find more strength to resist and overcome the influences of greed, the hunger for power, and manipulation in the marketplace? Would the quality of our work improve? Would customers be treated with more honesty, fairness, and justice?

What if every Christian realized they actually had responsibility for the physical world we live in—for its well-being, its future, and the way it sustains life?

Would employers and business owners look more carefully for ways to use the limited resources of this earth and protect the environment and for ways to moderate and restrain consumption? Would we work to leave the world a better place for those who will follow us?

What if every Christian realized they have a real responsibility to combat evil in all of its manifestations in their piece of the marketplace?

Would employees dare to risk their position and job security to stand up for what is right and good? Would they seek the good and advancement of their peers and those they supervise?

What if every Christian acted on their call to live as brothers and sisters in the Lord, as people called to bring mercy, understanding, compassion, and forgiveness to those around them?

Would fellow workers, superiors, clients, and customers all be treated with the love, respect, and honor they deserve as the sons and daughters of the living God?

Would our understanding of God’s call lead us to find ways to reduce poverty, secure better treatment for people in need, and seek ways to ensure that our workplaces, products, and services are not detrimental to our shared well-being, but rather contribute to the well-being of everyone?

If we could be more of what God has called us to be, would we start to see change following in our paths, light coming into darkness, hope replacing despair, freedom overcoming personal constraints, joy overwhelming sorrow, and new life and energy springing up everywhere?

Would we see the earth become more fruitful, rather than more strained and exhausted of its resources?

The need for people who will answer God’s call for change in this world only grows. What if we actually decided to answer that call fully, all in, with nothing held back?

God is looking for men and women who are willing to join him in becoming an overwhelming force for the transformation of this world and for building a new creation. What if we said, “Yes”? 
Triumphing over TOIL, TRIALS, AND TEMPTATIONS
An Excerpt from the Working For Our Father series

Christianity at the Crossroads of Culture and Commerce

Two of the greatest influences of our age – culture and commerce – converge in the marketplace. Our business and workplaces are ground zero for us in facing the dual demands of culture and commerce; yet, it is the least likely for Christians to impact. Because of this, Christians have minimal influence over business decisions and working relationships. This is not what God intended. As Christians we should be making a positive impact on our workplaces.

We know life lived fully in Jesus Christ has power. As the world becomes more individualistic, materialistic, and hedonistic, lives of Christians should become more attractive and authentic.

But what detracts us from working for our Father in our careers and influence our workplaces?

The Toils of Work

The sweat of work, its thorns and thistles can choke the good of work. Toil is a result of sin. This toil can be relentless and exhausting, taking a physical and emotional toll. It can wear us down. Mechanical things don’t always work well; people aren’t cooperative or supportive.

We want to accomplish more than we are able, both because of lack of ability and resistance from the environment around us. Work includes pain, conflict, envy, and fatigue. Not all our goals are met. We become discouraged. The toil of work causes jobs to seem pointless, fruitless, and boring.

God still wants his creations to fulfill his purpose. It was made that all might flourish; a fallen and broken world just makes the job harder.

A Gallup study showed that only 30 percent of people are actually engaged with their work, 50 percent are disengaged, and almost 20 percent hate their jobs. That means that 70 percent of working people spend half of their waking hours in jobs they don’t enjoy, aren’t fully engaged in, or at worse, despise.

Most experience work, not as a gift from God, but as a hard, depressing, grinding toil. Monday isn’t something they look forward to. As Christians this is particularly sad. God has something better in mind.

In our time, while toil can’t be separated from work, toil and work are distinct from each other.

Working For Our Father

Focusing on working for our Father is key. This enables the good of work to minimize the toil of work. It makes a difference in our lives and the lives of others.

Working for our Father puts life in balance. We engage and bring our service and devotion to God to work. We leave a divided and compartmentalized life behind. We become active influencers in the culture of our workplaces. We begin to live a life of integrity. It’s a life that’s conscientious and honors our Creator while resisting the “idols” of the world that cause us to compromise our devotion to God at work.

The Working for Our Father series uses professionally-developed, engaging videos to capture the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for our Father, as coworkers in Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the videos, the program is complemented by 20 brief audio podcasts that draw insights from first-hand accounts of faith in the workplace.

If you are interested in previewing the series and learning more go to www.workingforourfather.com/wfof-series
On Purpose

A compilation of quotes on purpose and God's calling in work

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says: “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” (6:27) Of course, Jesus is not of the opinion that we shouldn’t work with our hands. He himself had worked as a carpenter for more than twenty years. What he means to say is that there is one significant work which we all must devote ourselves to, a ‘job’ that inspires and drives every other ‘job.’ Jesus wants us to focus our attention: Be wholehearted in all you do, he says. Nothing can be allowed to distract you from your main purpose. Always have eternal life before your eyes. Work for eternal life and do not settle for what is passing.

It is so easy to get consumed by our work, and we are only too willing to exaggerate its significance. But the only thing about our work that has lasting value is the love and faithfulness with which we carry it out.

- Wilfrid Stinissen
This Is the Day the Lord Has Made

“At its core, the idea of purpose is the idea that what we do matters to people other than ourselves.”
- Angela Duckworth
Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

We didn’t give ourselves the personalities, talents, or longings we were born with. When we fulfill these—these gifts from beyond ourselves—it is like fulfilling something we were meant to do…. The Creator of all things knows the name of each of us—knows thoroughly, better than we do ourselves, what is in us, for he put it there and intends for us to do something with it—something that meshes with his intentions for many other people…. Even if we do not always think of it that way, each of us was given a calling—by fate, by chance, by destiny, by God. Those who are lucky have found it.

- Michael Novak
Business as a Calling (1996)

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one…

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.” (John 17:11, 20-21)
What’s the difference between your vocational calling and your career, occupation, or job?

Vocational calling is the call to God and to his service in the vocational sphere of life based on giftedness, desires, affirmations, and human need. Vocational calling is usually stable and permanent over a lifetime. Discovering our vocation is possible because it is based on giftedness, interests, passions, and human need, which are all fairly easy to identify.

A career should be based on the opportunities for service that are presented to a believer enabling him or her to fulfill their vocation. Finding the right occupation at any one time is a matter of God’s specific leadership, guidance, and provision.

A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in all his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without Him, who can eat or find enjoyment? (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25)

Vocational Calling

As the Common Thread Between Jobs

Vocational calling stays the same as we move in and out of different jobs and careers. Our vocation is directly related to the discovery of our God-given talents. Over time, we develop and hone them into useful competencies for the glory of God and the service of others, often in various jobs and occupations. Our vocational calling from God to the workplace is something above any given job or even a career.

CNN recently reported that the typical college graduate today would have not just one career but several during their lifetime. And each career will have numerous occupations and who knows how many jobs. The days of putting in 35 years for the same company and retiring with a gold watch are long gone.

Your Identity in Christ As a Clue to Your Vocational Calling

Understanding who we are in Christ, individually, helps us to see more clearly our vocational calling, which may be defined as the fulfillment of our divine destiny.

Rather than equate vocational calling with a specific occupation or career, we are called to live out our Christian identity in whatever situations we find ourselves. “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,” Paul urged the Corinthians, “do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

So, as you seek to live “totally” for God, don’t get too wrapped up in figuring out if you’re in the “right” job or career, but focus on living out your identity in Christ through your unique calling that will transcend job and careers over your lifetime.

This article has been adapted and published with permission from the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. The original article appears here (https://tifwe.org/new-job-same-calling/)

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SERVICE IN SACRAMENTO

Doug Demetre of the Greater Sacramento Men’s Chapter shared: For more than 34-years, Bill Durborough has volunteered every Tuesday night to feed from 400 to 1000 hungry people at God’s Bounty. Now retired, he volunteers as the full time head of social services for his church, which has over 2800 families. On weekends he organizes, feeds, and clothes the homeless along the Sacramento River and other areas in Sacramento County. A member of CIC for more than 6 years, Bill has been a weekly challenge group leader and is currently on the Sacramento CIC Service Council.

In talking with one of my real estate clients last Christmas, I became aware of a divorced mother of four, including one with autism who requires full-time care. She has sole custody of the children, and has no physical or financial assistance. Struggling to keep things going, she is not able to work. When we learned that she didn’t have presents for Christmas, we immediately thought of our go-to guy, Bill. In short order, he had more than one present for each child and he set the mother up with food and staples. A few CIC members also gave her a financial gift.

Thanks to Bill’s enthusiasm, CIC members have joined him in a variety of fundraisers. For his church, he has spearheaded backpack drives for school children, Turkey and Christmas food basket drives, and he has distributed thousands of toys for those in need through Toys for Tots. Through his obedience to what God wants him to do—to just be there—he gets to see how God intervenes and distributes the needed items, whether they’re TVs, beds, chests of drawers, or children’s clothes. Bill responds to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit because he knows Jesus.

RESPONDING TO A NUDGE

Tony Brigantino from the Salinas Men’s Chapter shares: I heard the prompting and felt the nudge in early December. Surely God doesn’t want me to lead a CIC Challenge Weekend—I’m too busy, too involved with volunteering and other projects. A few weeks later, after turning away many times, I came face to face with the issue during a conversation with a CIC brother. I don’t recall the topic of the discussion, I just remember my response to him went something like this, “I know God is calling me to do something (lead the January weekend), I’ve just been ignoring it, hoping it’ll go away.” We both laughed, but I knew what I had to do.

Later that week, I asked if a leader for the weekend was still needed. The moment I listened to God’s call, and said yes, he began filling my heart and mind with ideas. He knew who he wanted on the team and who would give what talks. I listened as he asked us to accept, allow, and appreciate each man just as they are, just as he created them, and not how I/we thought they ought to be.

That spirit of acceptance flowed through our team meetings and into the weekend. The men that arrived were greeted with a spirit of love and appreciation. This was their weekend, God’s weekend. On Sunday, at the end of our time together, the participants shared their experiences and many a tear was shed.

Some common responses were how much they appreciated getting to know the other participants and making new friends, having the opportunity to open up and talk about real life issues, and being touched and inspired by the personal testimonies shared. Some suggestions for future weekends were to possibly rotate them among the small groups so they get the chance to work with other men. Another suggestion was to have open discussions with the whole group once or twice instead of the small group discussions. Overall, the group dynamic was strong and we all enjoyed being together.

We’re all part of the Body of Christ after all; we all experience struggles, challenges, pain and joy. There’s just something Godly amazing and miraculous about a group of men from such diverse generations and backgrounds coming together and supporting each other as we journey through life in the spirit of Christ. Healing happens, growth happens, love happens, and miracles happen!
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“Gallatians 2:20

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

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