Work-Life Peace, our 2018 Annual Conference, welcomed nearly 150 attendees to Bloomington, MN, for a crisp October weekend of leadership, mentorship, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit. Friday kicked off with the Coworkers in Christ gathering that included many new faces from local businesses and launched into the first video of the Working for Our Father series, Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work. Following a time of reflection, Dr. Andrew Hanson, Ruth Godfrey, and Dr. Michael Naughton delivered 10-minute lightning talks.

Hanson, program director of Anselm House at the University of Minnesota, discussed A History of a Serious Error about the unintended consequences of the Reformation. He described how the separation of the sacred and secular is a recent phenomenon and one that God didn’t intend, resulting in our lives being divided between faith and work.

Ruth Godfrey, a life coach and founder of Learning Journeys International Center of Coaching, presented Falling in Love with your Life. She encouraged recognizing the unique journey that God has designed for each of us. Godfrey explained that we need to celebrate life as a gift and cherish God’s splendor.

Dr. Naughton, Chair of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, discussed the Three Habits of Leisure to Get Work Right. He described these habits as the habit of solitude, celebrating (being grateful for what God has provided to us), and service (helping others in need).

A Christ at Work snapshot followed each lightning talk and featured a story of how Christ has used them in the workplace. Ed Karbowski, Jim Ganther, and Christine Ziegler discussed how they were led by the Holy Spirit to be Christ in their work.

A panel discussion moderated by CIC board member, Luke Cahill, included a panel of three lightning talk speakers and focused on the bigger picture and core strategies for addressing the challenges that lead to a divided life.

Additional talks included Christ at Work stories presented by Gail Cardwell, Craig McLain, and Jennifer Frankenbreg.

Roy Tinklenberg, founder of the Faith and Work Movement, presented Overcoming the Imposter Syndrome, a condition in which someone doubts their accomplishments and has a fear of being exposed as a “fraud.” Tinklenberg said we can resolve this syndrome by putting our identity in Christ rather than in our jobs, money, or possessions.

Tammy Krings presented Living a Life of Significance in a Distracted World. She suggested ways to prevent common distractions such as computers and phones. To help us improve work results and workplace relationships, she recommended collecting phones during meetings and creating morning routines such as exercising and reading devotions.

Paul Larsen presented Advancing Life-Giving Kingdom Culture at Work. Larsen expressed the importance of recognizing our own leadership in our workplaces, homes, and communities. He shared the significance of bringing our faith into the workplace to create Shalom or God’s intended harmony that allows employees and coworkers to flourish with the gifts that God has given them.

Roy Tinklenberg led a panel discussion featuring Jermy Jamison from Exxon Mobil, Nick Kim of Google, Mike Russell of Medtronic, and Ben Lorence of Ameriprise. Each discussed the Christian groups in their workplaces and the benefits and challenges they have encountered.

Friday concluded with CIC board member, Steve Becker, describing the new CIC initiative of Coworkers.

I love this quote by Tim Tebow, “My integrity means more to me than any fame or money. When I say something, I want people to take it to the bank that I mean it and believe in it.”

Have you ever been in a situation at work where your integrity was challenged? During my sales career I encountered many challenging situations where I needed to rely on integrity. Integrity is having the moral courage to do the right thing regardless of friendships or other alliances. Integrity is also the inner strength and the will to do the right thing—even if it’s unpopular or comes with personal risk.

Martin Luther King Jr. put integrity in perspective when he said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

Integrity is behaving with right values consistently and predictably both inside and outside the workplace.

Workplace integrity is at the very heart of CIC. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas!
The Power of Consistency

By Rachel Goodling

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

Several years ago, I worked as a teacher at a GED center in a rough neighborhood in Southeast Washington, DC. The management implemented many rules that the students struggled to follow and the teachers struggled to enforce. One rule was that the student would get sent home if he or she fell asleep in class. As my boss would say, “You can always sleep at home.” Another rule was that students had to wear uniform shirts every day or they would not get credit for coming to class. They were only provided one free uniform shirt. Donors came to tour the school and the CEO wanted things to appear orderly.

I tried to live up to these expectations while I was teaching and informally mentoring young adults. I felt as if I was being torn between helping my students with consistency and compassion, and enforcing the rules and being a team player. There had been many layoffs and firings, and I tried to walk a fine line out of fear for my job. I would get frustrated and tell the students I was just trying to help them. But I’m sure it didn’t seem that way to them.

Around this same time, I started grad school for my Master’s in Social Work. My eyes were opened to how hurtful and adversarial these rules were for the students. Sometimes they couldn’t afford to take public transportation to school if it weren’t for the $15 a day stipend for transportation and lunch. If they didn’t have access to laundry facilities or couldn’t afford to go to a laundromat, some students just wouldn’t come to class.

In my classes, I was also learning about the insidious effects of trauma and neighborhood violence. I realized that students were falling asleep in class because they either didn’t have a stable place to sleep at night or didn’t feel safe in their own homes. It was then that I decided that I would stand against the forces that were pulling me to and fro. As I continued to pray for the Lord to work through me in my workplace, I began to focus on teaching and interacting with my students with integrity and consistency.

The students found me to be more approachable because they knew what to expect from me. I was showing more compassion, and several students came to me for guidance or support. One young woman who was pregnant came to me for advice. Her boyfriend wanted her to have an abortion. Even though I was in a culture that accepted and even encouraged abortion, my faith called me on to speak life to this student. She ended up having the baby and was very happy with her decision. These were fruits of my prayers and my decision to stand in integrity and the fullness of my faith.

Rachel Goodling worked six years as a GED and adult education teacher in Washington, DC, and now is project coordinator for a program that helps find housing for homeless veterans. She can be reached at rachelgoodling@hotmail.com.

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 will provide inspiration and a sense of renewal for attendees to face future challenges. We have launched the Nine to Five 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!
Embracing the Storm  
By Marcus Curl

“I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me.” (John 10:14)

To many, peace is the absence of conflict or stress. However, the peace that Christ offers is not through the avoidance of conflict; it’s the calm that comes in the middle of the storm.

In my professional life, the storms came often. Every company I’ve worked for has been acquired—five times in 21 years. Early in my career, I worried how I was going to provide for my family if I lost my job. I would ask Jesus, “Why is this happening again?”

I recently read Heaven Starts Now by Fr. John Riccardo. He discusses the scripture passage where the Apostles beg for Jesus to calm the storm at sea. They spent day and night with the Lord, yet they didn’t understand that his presence was all they needed for peace in the middle of that storm.

How often do we ask for Christ to calm our storms? Jesus asks us to take up his cross and follow him. It’s an invitation to almost certain conflict in this life to prepare us for eternal life in his presence.

As I encounter conflict, I often think of a scene from Forrest Gump where Lieutenant Dan finds God in the middle of a hurricane. He embraced the storm...well, he’s actually asking for the storm. Do we embrace the storms that we encounter?

Let us pray to Jesus to be with us in the middle of the storm. Not to end the storm, but to strengthen our faith and to be our shepherd through it. Only then will we find real peace.

Marcus Curl has been a member of CIC since 2013. He and his wife Becky raise their six children in the Portland, OR area. He is an Area Sales Director for Servicenow. He can be reached at makasu@yahoo.com

PRAY:

Lord Jesus, it is only through you that I may receive salvation.

REFLECT:

Do I ever ask Jesus to solve my problems versus to be my guide through them?

DISCUSS:

What does embracing the cross of Christ really mean?

Nurturing Integrity  
By Rachel Goodling

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace. (2 Corinthians 1:12)

PRAY:

Lord, I thank you for your grace in our lives and seek to follow your will with integrity and sincerity. I ask you for a renewed outpouring of your grace and wisdom.

REFLECT:

What are some of the thoughts I have about my job that make it difficult to act with integrity and how can I redeem those thoughts in my time with the Lord?

DISCUSS:

What situations challenge me to act with integrity and what are some specific ways that I can respond to those challenges?

Over the years, I’ve had some rocky relationships in which I saw a lack of integrity. I’ve experienced broken promises, unmet expectations, and unpredictable behavior. From those relationships I developed a strong desire to be around people with integrity; people who showed consistency, dependability and follow through with commitments.

However, recently I realized these were areas where I needed to improve. My supervisor pointed out to me that I sometimes volunteer to do extra work and don’t follow through in a timely manner. I often needed several reminders and follow up conversations with her to ensure that my work was getting done. I realized that this has been a pattern over the course of many jobs.

With this insight, I developed a system that not only helped me complete work in a timelier manner, but also provided my supervisor with a way to hold me accountable without the need for multiple follow up conversations. I realized that these aspects of integrity are vital to the work that I do in serving those in need.
Lord Jesus, help me to remember to include you in all aspects of my life, especially in those instances where I am prone to temptation.

The tongue has the power of life and death; and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

Many times, it’s the little cuts to our soul, that when added up, do the most damage.

I work in a hyper-competitive industry which can be a breeding ground for stress. Sales goals are high and only exceeded by our goals for customer satisfaction. Further, my customer’s success and the success of my employees is heavily dependent upon an extended team of individuals to provide a meaningful contribution each and every day. When one person on the team loses focus, we are all negatively impacted.

Five years ago, my job stress was getting the best of me. I was hypercritical of others when I felt they did not perform to expectations. This led to many negative conversations with colleagues about these people. I rationalized these conversations as being work-necessary or justifiable—as if talking about these negative situations would reduce my stress. After an extended period of time falling into this daily trap, it should come as no surprise that my stress was not relieved. In fact, not only was I not improving my work life, I was damaging my soul—one little cut at a time. During these conversations, I removed Christ and placed him on the sidelines. He was not invited.

As it turns out, an invitation to Christ is all that’s needed for transformation. Upon being invited, he takes over and does all of the heavy lifting. And that’s how I now approach these difficult situations. I literally invite Jesus to be with me before placing a phone call or walking into a meeting.

Remembering to invite Jesus into my conversations all of the time has not yet been entirely successful. There are times that I still forget. However, when I do invite Jesus, I am successful 100% of the time.

The Working for Our Father series helps Christians align their careers with God’s mission. Engaging videos open up a world of possibilities when we are working for our Father, as coworkers in Christ–filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Conduct the series in a single four-hour session or in four separate sessions. Topics include:

- 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

Twenty brief podcasts complement the series and share firsthand accounts of Christians encountering faith in the workplace.

To learn more, preview a sample, or to register to host a series, go to www.cicintl.org/WFOF or contact the home office at info@cicintl.org or (703) 205-5600.
I gained so much from everyone’s sharing! Thank you for a beautiful reflection of how to bring my faith further into my work.

I was invited to CIC 25 years ago. The depth in Christ has increased ten-fold.

Liked the format and all the insights shared. Multiple speakers, short talks, and panels were excellent.

It was wonderful to hear how powerful God is when we allow his Holy Spirit to work in us.

Bringing in folks [from] outside was refreshing, God spoke to us.

Many touch points and notes for my journal. The spirit of each person was authentically shared and felt.

I loved hearing about how active God is in some of the larger, well-known companies.

The individuals who talked about their Challenge Group experiences were wonderful speakers. Again, their stories brought God’s presence to life.
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

Looking at the 2008 crash of our economy from a Christian worldview, we can clearly see the impact of the above verse, as well as the world and the flesh. Firms and individuals were driven by huge bonuses and profits without understanding or responsibility. Mortgages were sold to unqualified buyers, borrowers put themselves into debt and the poor were preyed upon. These mortgages had low teaser rates which ballooned in a couple of years, putting the payment out of reach. Mortgages with no hope of surviving were bundled into bonds and sold to unsuspecting investors. Bond traders manipulated rating firms to inaccurately rate the bonds. These firms seemed clueless as to what the bonds contained. Managers looked after their own interests instead of their investors' interests.

A few people realized the impending crisis and used this knowledge to make more money by betting that the bonds would fail. They weren’t concerned about the economy or what appeared to be its certain demise. Insurance companies seemed blind to the situation and “took the bet.”

It wasn’t until the loans began defaulting that some firms and traders realized what was happening. They tried to short the bonds they themselves had created. When things began to implode, everyone on both sides of the bet found themselves in the same sinking boat. Satan was certainly having a chuckle.

There is plenty of blame to go around. As Christians we have more empirical evidence of the forces at work in the marketplace: the world, the flesh and the devil. Eyes were blinded by greed, self-centeredness, and the evil one.

Now, more than ever, the call we’ve been given in Christians in Commerce is needed. Most of us work on a small scale to live out our vision and mission. We have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We have joined together to walk into battle filled with the Holy Spirit and wearing the armor of God. We call others to join with us and live the life of Christ to turn the tide and expand the Kingdom of God by being Christ in the workplace.

Since we’ve been called together, we support one another in this work with our time, talents and money. It is a noble work we do for the glory of God and the realization of his kingdom here and now.

In this world we will have trouble (John 17:1). We should cast our anxieties on the Lord, being alert and of sober mind. The enemy is still prowling around, let us stand together firm in our faith and resist him in this day and age. (1 Peter 5:6-9)
NINE TO FIVE PODCASTS: BRINGING CHRIST TO THE WORKPLACE

By Beth Bubik, South Bend Women’s Chapter

I listened to the CIC Nine to Five podcasts before joining a CIC small group. My coworker Jim introduced me to the CIC Challenge Newsletter at work by dropping it off on my desk on Thursday mornings. I enjoyed reading the stories. At the time, my work was stressful due to our company being purchased by a larger corporation and reorganizing in every way.

I have always been a faithful Catholic with an active prayer life, a crucifix in my office, and a few scripture passages on the wall. But, even with that foundation, my response to adverse situations was less than Christian. I found myself really praying about my actions on a daily basis and how I was going to handle this daily downfall of change. One morning, I came in to see the familiar newsletter lying on my keyboard and the bright Nine to Five Podcast ad caught my eye. I decided to take a listen while I worked out later that evening. During that month, I listened to all of them and gained strength to better manage my workday.

The idea of bringing Christ into the workplace and making him the center of my day became my goal. My job as a salesperson is all about achieving the numbers to succeed and I had judged my day by that success. If I had not reached my daily goals due to roadblocks that were out of my control, I would be distraught and shared my frustrations with my coworkers. I brought my frustration home, and prayed for help.

Through listening to the podcasts, I learned to climb out of that self-centered world and judge my day by how well I was able to handle adversity with my team. When I began to change, my work environment became more stable even in the midst of turmoil.

I am now clearly focused on bringing Christ to the workplace through my actions, helping others to succeed, and trusting that God has a plan—even from nine to five.

To listen to the Nine to Five podcasts, go to http://bit.ly/Ninetofive

FINDING WORK-LIFE PEACE (CONTINUED)

in Christ. Becker encouraged attendees to ask themselves "What works well we can build on, and what’s not working we can help fix? What is missing in our workplaces we can help foster?"

Saturday’s session started with CIC Chairman, Rich Preuss speaking on The Why of Christians in Commerce, focusing on participating in chapters and Challenge Groups. He highlighted the large increase in involvement within his own community as an example. Preuss said, "We are Christ, Christing. For God so loved the world that he sent each one of us into the world, that they might experience his love."

Christine Ziegler and Jeremy Stanbary shared stories about the positive impact of being in a Challenge Group. Randy Raciti and several South Bend Chapter members discussed the significance of Challenge Groups in their lives and useful strategies for starting new groups and inviting others to participate in CIC.

Attendees had opportunities to participate in three of six breakout sessions that covered topics including prayer, conflict, personal faith experiences, and even how to share Christ in today’s culture. Participants learned helpful strategies to bring back to their workplaces.

The conference wrapped up with CIC President, Terry Cassell, who discussed Why Now?, asking each of us to consider, "Are we making ourselves available to allow God to work through us in our workplaces?" He said, "There is a time for everything" and this could be the time to promote and share CIC with your coworkers, friends, or family.

There was a newfound sense of excitement at seeing the wide range of companies utilizing CIC’s resources and the increase in participation in Challenge Groups nationwide. Last year’s conference proposed a new action plan and this year showed those seeds starting to bear fruit.

For those who missed the conference, we will share talks from the weekend throughout the coming year in a variety of mediums including podcasts, reflections, and blog articles.

Alex Soholt is the CIC Communications Specialist and is based in Minneapolis. He can be reached at soholt@cicintl.org.
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:20

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