Farewell but Not Goodbye

By Rich Preuss

With hearts of gratitude, we say farewell to our president, Terry Cassell. Terry steps down effective December 31. He leaves an enduring mark on Christians in Commerce and we are indebted to his dedication to CIC and to building the kingdom of God. Terry has been both a symbol of what CIC stands for, and a friend and mentor to many.

Terry has been the embodiment of our vision and has driven our mission forward these past 11 years by empowering us and encouraging us to be God’s presence in the workplace. For me, he has truly been Christ.

We honor Terry for his service and commitment to the Lord and CIC:

“When I think of Terry,” says Bill Dalgetty, “I think of St. Paul’s list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Terry exhibits all these characteristics in how he relates with people. He walks into a room of total strangers with his warm smile and gentle nature, and in no time at all he is relating as friends to most everyone there. At the same time, he can be as bold as Christ when it comes to offering to pray for a person in need.”

CIC cofounder Louis Grams relates, “Sometimes, Terry would call me when I was really tired asking me to write something for CIC or to give a testimony. I just couldn’t say ‘no’ to Terry. It would be like saying ‘no’ to Jesus!” His kindness, love of the Lord, devotion to the work God gave him, peaceful persuasion and love for others above himself all compelled me to say ‘yes.’ All of my conversations with him are meaningful. He has a place in his tender heart for everyone. I just love the guy.”

“We so loved having Terry visit our chapter,” says Judy Foudy of the Palm Springs Women’s chapter. “He’s such a good listener and gave us wonderful words of encouragement! He knows us all by name and is God’s gift to us.”

Pat Drechsler notes that, “Terry was instrumental in making CIC reflective of the whole body of Christ in the workplace. He was very supportive of WCIC which eventually led to the inclusion of women on the board of directors. It was a privilege to work with Terry, a gentleman of wisdom, grace, generosity, and honor.”

According to Cathy Glover, “Terry was instrumental in bringing the leaders of the women’s chapters together to form, initially the Women’s Advisory Board, ultimately the Women’s Board. We are forever grateful.”

Says CIC cofounder Bud Rose, “From the beginning of his tenure, Terry was asked to be CIC’s coach. His commitment to engagement, creativity, travel, and laboring for the kingdom, has furthered the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and spread the good news of Christ alive in the workplace. Well done!”

“Under Terry’s guidance, CIC has become the most significant Christian group in which I have participated, says Diane McGinty. “In our sisterhood, we are authentic, loved, trusted, cared for, mentored, inspired, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Terry has led us to develop the most effective way to build the Kingdom of God in our workplaces, homes, and communities.”

Caren Demetre adds, “One of my fondest memories is of Terry’s generosity was the personal care he gave to my family. When he visited CIC in Sacramento he made a point to visit with our son, Josh. He touched our hearts with his kindness, support, and love.”

As John 21:25 tells us, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” Well done good and faithful servant.

May the Lord’s love, and peace be with all of you.

cassell@cicintl.org • (703) 205-5600

Caren Demetre is the chairman of the CIC Board of Directors. He can be reached at richpreuss@alumni.nd.edu.
Faith on Display  
By Kevin Weilbacher

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Perhaps you’ve been asked: “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” I first heard the question as a student at Florida State University. I was a new Christian and I remember thinking to myself, “Evidence? What kind of evidence would be acceptable?” Would saying “I go to church every Sunday,” or “I read my Bible every day” be enough? The answer I gave then was from the refrain of a popular prayer meeting song, “They’ll know we are Christians by our love.” Is that good enough? How do we show or even measure love? Would there be enough evidence of love in my life to be found guilty?

I ran the IT department for a regional non-profit organization for many years. As a manager I often struggled with how I should express, or even disclose, my Christianity, especially to my staff. One of my employees worked for me for 12 years. She was dedicated to her work and like all of us, she had to deal with personal issues and challenges. I tried to encourage her, but never knew if my words made a difference.

A couple of years after I left that job, I had a chance encounter with this employee. She greeted me with a great big smile. I was interested to find out how things were going for her, both personally and at work. So, imagine my surprise when the first words out of her mouth were, “I’m so glad to see you. I just have to tell you: ‘I’m going to church!'”

I was stunned. Not only was this was the most important thing for her, but it was important for her to tell me. As we talked, I realized I had never really discussed religion with her. But she shared with me that she saw how I conducted myself at work, not perfectly, but with integrity. She saw that I would not engage in negative humor and would walk away from jokes and conversations that were offensive or in poor taste. She laughed when she recalled the time she heard me curse at work. She was shocked, telling me “I never expected you to say that!”

St. Paul says that “perseverance produces character.” Our actions do speak louder than words. Our mission in Christians in Commerce is to “exercise integrity.” We have to work every day at being men and women of integrity, and to bring the light of Christ into the workplace.

If love is the evidence required to be found guilty, remember St. Paul’s words, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us!”

Kevin Weilbacher runs his own IT management company serving small businesses in the Tampa Bay area. He is a founding member of the CIC Tampa chapter. He and his wife, Susan, live in Valrico, FL. He can be reached at kw@kwsupport.com.

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Keeping Your Word
By Barbara Brophy

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13)

Since we were in college, my friend Mary has helped me navigate my professional life. About a year out of college, Mary helped me research and prepare to interview with my current employer.

A year later, Mary told me she was looking to change companies, and she expressed interest in roles related to her field—finance—at my company. Without thinking, I immediately responded, “I’ll connect you with my friend Kyle who works in the finance department. Maybe you can talk!” Later, I regretted it.

I was feeling possessive about the blessings my job afforded. Not only had it helped meet my material needs, it also let me move to a new city and gain independence. I was not comfortable with sharing my company and my life with Mary, even though she’d been working for a different department and in a different city.

I considered not emailing Kyle. “No one will know,” I figured, “and Mary can just apply on her own.” If she asked about the email to Kyle, I could just tell her it slipped my mind.

But that would have contradicted my values and disregarded Mary’s past generosity to me. The words of Jesus, “No greater love has man than this to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13) came to mind. After considerable internal vacillating and talking to my older sister, who helped me process my misgivings, I emailed Kyle.

That week, Mary and Kyle spoke on the phone. A month later, Mary interviewed with and later accepted a position at another company. Mary later told me that Kyle’s description of the finance department at my company did not appeal to her.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit, and the counsel of a more seasoned Christian, helped me to reframe my thinking and do the righteous thing.

PRAY:
Lord, help me see your blessings as gifts to be shared. Give me a humble, generous heart.

REFLECT:
Have I chosen to ignore a friend or colleague’s need for support when I should not have?

DISCUSS:
Share about a time the Holy Spirit helped you choose to act with generosity at work.

Emulating Perfection
By Kevin Weilbacher

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

We expect well-known people, such as politicians and religious leaders, to act with integrity. We hold them to a high level of moral and character perfection. A single error or faux pas on their part and we are quick to “throw them under the bus.” Building a trust relationship with someone takes a long time, a lifetime in fact. But it only takes a second to destroy that trust, perhaps speaking badly about them behind their backs, or sharing confidential information. Repairing a broken trust is a huge and difficult mountain to climb.

Company mergers are an area where trusts are easily broken, pride being a big factor. I was part of a merger where our company was the larger one, but the management team of the smaller firm took over most of the control. I found myself dealing with a bruised ego.

The front office secretary, a wonderful person, came from the second company. Because of my attitude, I allowed things she did to annoy and bother me. The old saying “if looks could kill” described my actions perfectly.

I came in one morning and found her in tears because of my actions. We talked privately, and over time we ended up being on good terms. Twenty years later, I still ask God every day to forgive me for those unkind actions.

What does perfection have to do with integrity? We are all sinners. Being perfect doesn’t mean never making a mistake. Our Father is perfect in his love. He is rich in showing mercy and forgiveness. To be perfect as he is, I need to work every day to be more loving and compassionate than I was the day before.

PRAY:
Father, transform my heart so I can reflect your perfect love to the people I meet today.

REFLECT:
Ask God to remove your critical spirit, and give you eyes to see someone you don’t get along with as God sees them.

DISCUSS:
Is Jesus’s command “to be perfect” an impossible task?
Speaking with Kindness

By Barbara Brophy

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

A lot of people, including me, problem-solve and relieve stress through conversation. In my professional life, this looks like discussing with my manager how to tackle a perplexing task, confiding in a trusted colleague about an area of insecurity, and—unfortunately—gossiping.

I once worked on a four-person team to complete a yearlong project. My colleague Nicole and I got along well, worked diligently, and produced good results for our manager, Frank. Another colleague, Ariel, was not producing the same strong work, which upset Nicole and me, since we had to pick up Ariel’s slack.

In several instances, I gave into complaining to Nicole about Ariel, and Nicole and I would pick on Ariel’s perceived laziness. In the moment, it felt good. Gossiping about Ariel was a quick way to relieve my irritation and validate my own performance.

But what if I had been overheard? Or, what if I didn’t have all the facts? What if Ariel was dealing with a crisis at home, preventing her from doing her best work? Or, what if Nicole’s and my words pointed to real weaknesses? If I were Ariel, would I like someone to shame me by poking at my weaknesses behind my back?

Looking back, it would have been more productive for me to speak with my manager Frank confidentially about Ariel’s performance. He may have been able to solve the problem. More importantly, choosing not to talk negatively about Ariel would have aligned with my faith. The Bible warns us about the dangers of gossip, slander, and detraction; nothing good comes from them.

Moving forward, I can ask Jesus to guide my words. Since this is an area of temptation for me, I know I must depend on him, not just my own willpower, to speak in a way that reflects what I believe and hold dear.

PRAY: Lord, help me to speak with prudence and kindness. Let my words bring your light to the world.

REFLECT: Have I given into the temptation to gossip recently? What might I do the next time I’m presented with that temptation?

DISCUSS: What are some ways we can refocus the conversation at work when it turns to gossip?

Get something going. Meet up regularly as a Challenge Group.

Our Challenge Newsletter reflections and other resources will help you launch meaningful conversations.

To learn more go to cicintl.org/cgroup
At this year’s Annual Conference we were excited to introduce WorkLight, an initiative developed to help CIC reach new audiences. WorkLight continues our long-standing vision to be Christ in the workplace. It also provides a way forward for existing chapters as we continue to expand our reach.

Presenters included Brian Dahl, president of DKY Marketing, and Steve Becker, Luke Cahill, and Dan Kuplic, members of the CIC board.

Brian outlined the role of DKY Marketing in helping us analyze and assess our current identity, develop a name and new goals, and design our expanded strategy; Luke shared feedback on current trends among the next generation; Steve outlined how the new direction fits in with our ongoing call; and Dan gave an overview of plans for near-term funding.

Roughly a year ago, DKY Marketing offered to work with CIC to clarify our new direction. Our goal was to create an identity that positions us as an organization that helps unite Christians around the call to build the kingdom of God in their workplaces.

Steve led a section on uniting Christians under the WorkLight name.

“Our goal has never been to build a ministry,” Steve stated, “But rather to spark a movement of the Holy Spirit.” WorkLight is designed to make that possible.

In order to fuel this effort, WorkLight will focus on three primary functions:

- Using the power of personal stories of the Gospel being lived
- Providing practical, adaptable, and on-demand resources
- Fostering small groups across traditions, occupations, and positions.

Steve wrapped up this session by sharing where WorkLight fits in among other efforts in the Faith and Work movement.

“Our desire is to complement all that God is doing in this greater movement and to be faithful stewards of our part.” Steve noted.

Dan Kuplic concluded the presentation by outlining the investment needed to bring this new direction to fruition.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session in which attendees encouraged us to move forward quickly with the new initiative. They were enthusiastic about WorkLight and eager to implement it.

Chapters can continue to use the Christians in Commerce name. However in early 2020, all our materials and resources will be rebranded under the WorkLight identity. New content being developed will also be branded WorkLight.

The mission of Christians in Commerce has not changed. In fact, the name WorkLight is intended to encompass all work traditions and occupations. It’s the call to be the light of Christ in the world, especially in the workplace.
Annual Conference Roundup

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Although the Minneapolis skies never wavered from shades of light and dark gray, the interior of the Christians in Commerce Annual Conference on October 4-5 could not have been more bright and uplifting. A weekend filled with the Holy Spirit was a testament to this year’s theme: Shine Bright—Light the Darkness!

Following a greeting by CIC founder Louis Grams, the first day of the AC featured the WorkLight gathering that included workers from the greater Twin Cities area. Joyful Praise & Worship led by Jim Rolland set the tone for the weekend and included musicians Louis Grams on keyboard and his son Andy Grams on guitar.

A panel including Brian Dahl, president of DKY marketing, and CIC board members Steve Becker, Luke Cahill, and Dan Kuplic unveiled the new WorkLight initiative targeted at reaching new audiences for CIC. (For more details on WorkLight see page 5.) The panel discussed the goals of WorkLight, introduced the new logo, and released an inspiring video that can be seen at worklight.org.

The WorkLight session speakers included David Betz, president of a leadership consulting group, who shared stories of individuals who relied on faith to help them survive challenging situations; Jeanne Buckeye, associate professor at the University of St. Thomas, who described the positive outcomes for those who seek the good of others in the workplace; and Bob Cunningham, who also served as the AC photographer, who shared his experience as an Uber Missionary whose “divine appointments” give him a unique vantage point to encounter others and provide opportunities for him to be the light of Christ to them.

Brian Dahl told how his marketing agency is led by a Christian perspective and how that impacts relationships among coworkers at the agency and with clients and competitors. Rebecca Maslow, a registered nurse, shared her experience as a young nurse at a major hospital in the Twin Cities. She often asks God for direction and if she’s seeing her patients through his eyes. Cathy Schmidt, president of a marketing company, has often been the only woman in male-dominated industries. She described how she has navigated her career and how she has mentored women who are early in their careers. Ed Varevice, Management Analyst at the State Revenue Department, shared a story about a dramatic health crisis that occurred only a few weeks into a new job. He described how the event had a big impact on his team and helped them to grow together and share their faith.

Another panel featured speakers including Aaron Cruit, an electrician; John DeSanto, a Minnesota Senior Judge; Chris Dietzen, Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court; Grant Snyder, sergeant with the Minneapolis Police Department; and Dave Mazanowski, CEO of a multimillion dollar landscaping business, who shared their experiences from all sides of the criminal justice system—with some who had served sentences and others who had imposed them. Every panelist shared moving testimony of how their faith was strengthened—whether they were the one doing the helping or were being helped—and how they felt the presence of Christ even in their darkest moments.

On Saturday, following another moving session of Praise & Worship, Jeanne Belmonte, president of the Northern Virginia Women’s Chapter and Dave Mazanowski teamed up for a Shining Bright presentation. Jeanne shared how she had turned to St. Therese of Lisieux, whose mother also died when she was young, for inspiration. She was always looking for “little ways” to join with and honor Christ. She also shared how she turned to a friend’s father to be a role model in business because of his success and positive attitude. Dave related part two of his story and how he interacted with the FBI and the criminal justice system after he was charged with fraud. Despite daunting circumstances, he was grateful for the incredible love of his wife and family, the powerful love of the Lord, and for being treated with dignity and respect by the criminal justice system.

Next was a short video presentation by Aloysius Mugisa from Uganda. He shared the works supported
by CIC in the past year including Bible studies, relationship workshops, *Hope for the Workplace* seminars, and a radio program that reaches 65,000 listeners. Aloysius also shared the good news that he is now a full-time staff member of CIC.

**Louis and Nancy Grams** gave a moving workshop that detailed Louis’ extreme health challenges and how he was completely healed by the Lord—twice. In both situations, the team of doctors agreed that he had experienced a miracle. Louis and Nancy shared their faith journey and the gratitude they felt for friends and acquaintances who had prayed with them and for them over the years. Above all, they were grateful for the incredible blessings they had received from the Lord and encouraged us to share the good word with others.

**Dave Betz** gave a workshop on using Choice Theory and how it can help coworkers appreciate their colleagues and learn to be more productive as a team. He explained that we choose our behavior and we are all motivated by five basic needs: survival (security); love and belonging (connection); power (achievement); freedom (autonomy) and fun (play and learning). He suggested that beyond the golden rule, there is a platinum rule, “Do unto others as they would be done unto,” and that we can bring light into the workplace when we treat colleagues with respect; satisfy their need for power; help them be productive, successful, and make a contribution.

**Steve and Vanessa Smith** led a workshop on the importance small groups—a vital resource for supporting and strengthening members. They shared strategies on how to develop and sustain groups. They also discussed obstacles to participation in small groups for both men and women.

**Gail Cardwell** and **Rich Preuss** led a workshop on how we relate to the Lord as our circumstances change in our later years. They discussed the transition from doing paid work, and as Christians, how we continue to do the work of the Lord. They shared a handout to help workshop participants assess where they are in their lives emotionally and physically and to view this chapter as an opportunity to realign ourselves with the Lord. Although we may choose to retire, our full-time work is to discern the Lord’s will in our lives and work to achieve his will.

**Steve Becker** and **Beth Preuss** led a session on storytelling. They shared a quote from Flannery O’Connor, one of the great American storytellers who wrote: “The story is a way of saying something that can’t be said in any other way.”

God has always spoken through story to his people. Jesus told stories. Paul told stories. Christ’s disciples have always reached hearts and minds with story. The same is true for us. Well-crafted stories have the power to change both the storyteller and the listener because they allow others to experience God. To know how God loves requires a story of the experience of his love in action.

Stories are found in ordinary, everyday life. They illustrate his faithfulness, and ours, and his call to give his love away for others.

We should all be working to tell stories, practice and articulate God’s work in our lives and the lives of those around us. Be full of hope and share the good news. As an organization, one of our most valuable resources is the vast collection of stories that we continue to gather and share demonstrating how to be Christ in the workplace.

The weekend culminated with a fulfilling Lord’s Day meal and the sharing of stories among friends, both old and new. Participants in the Annual Conference left the weekend with a renewed sense of the Holy Spirit, optimism for the future, and the commission to be a light to others.

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**Sharon Teitelbaum** is the editor of the Challenge Newsletter. She can be reached at sharon@cicintl.org.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**MEN’S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS**

Orange County  
January 10-12, 2020

Monterey  
March 20-22, 2020

Salinas Valley  
January 24-26, 2020

Salinas Valley  
May 1-3, 2020

**WOMEN’S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS**

Gilroy/Morgan Hill  
April 17-18, 2020

Fresno  
April 24-26, 2020

**WHEN JESUS SPOKE AGAIN TO THE PEOPLE, HE SAID,**

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

May your Christmas be filled with light!

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

Galatians 2:20