CIC co-founder Bud Rose has a favorite expression, “Glory to God!” which he often shortens to an emphatic, “Glory!”

We might think “Glory!” just refers to all the good that happens in our lives. We can certainly echo Bud’s “Glory!” for all God has done through CIC. But I’ve learned that Bud’s “Glory!” is referring to everything in life—the good, the bad, and the ugly. He means we can say “Glory!” in all our struggles, challenges, tribulations, and in all the tough things that happen to us and around us. We can say “Glory!” in all circumstances!

For the mean or nasty or worldly person in our workplace who does not yet know Jesus, we can say “Glory!” We can take an opportunity to pray and intercede for that person and perhaps be the only light of Christ that person might see.

Could we begin to see the immoral or unethical boss who is in the way of our job promotion through the eyes of Christ rather than with critical or judgmental eyes? We could say “Glory!” What about our adult children who abjectly refuse to accept Christ or church life and are not in the least bit interested in any “spiritual” discussions? Perhaps the “Glory!” here is another opportunity to pray and intercede for them, to witness the light of Christ in a new, loving manner, and to encourage them with kindness, gentleness, and compassion.

Could we begin to see the immorality or unethical person in our workplace who does not yet know Jesus, we can say “Glory!” We can take an opportunity to pray and intercede for that person and perhaps be the only light of Christ that person might see.

A friend’s colleague had an elderly neighbor. A registered nurse, she cared for the man, helped him run errands, and provided loving assistance to him with nothing expected in return. He passed away recently. Shortly thereafter, she received a letter from a local law firm stating that her entire mortgage had been paid off by this neighbor. Talk about “paying it forward.” “Glory!”

A few CIC brothers have recently started CIC groups at their workplaces with younger co-workers. In each case, these brothers first went to individuals and said, “I’m thinking of starting a Christians in Commerce group right here in our office. These are the kinds of topics and discussion we’d like to have. These are the proposed times and days we’d meet. Would this be of interest to you?” The vast majority of the young men said yes. They are seeking more of the Lord! In these situations, young workers are being exposed to Christ in their fellow workers. These work environments are being transformed for Christ. “Glory!”

Jesus says, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Maybe we feel particularly unqualified or inept to be doing things to glorify Christ. We realize, however, that “with God, all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26); he infuses us with the powers and fruits of his Holy Spirit to build his kingdom, here and now. “Glory!” Let us resolve today to glorify and serve him and others in all ways—small or great—with kindness, gentleness, and compassion.

Lord, may we honor and glorify you in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. “Glory!” That we could be people of prayer for a world gone astray. “Glory!” That we could be your people of solace, wisdom, reason, and compassion for others. “Glory!” That we could think first of others all around us, rather than ourselves. “Glory to God!”

Greg Aitkens has been involved in CIC since 1986 and helped to start the Orange County Chapter in the mid-90s. Greg is married to Ginny, and they have three adult children and one grandchild. He is a past Board member and an avid golfer and road cyclist. Greg can be reached at gaitkens@fmncc.com.

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

“Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.”
– Benjamin Franklin

The above quote is one of many Benjamin Franklin quotes I take to heart and appreciate about all of our newsletter writers. As a friend once told me, “Writing is h*ll, having written is divine”!

In compiling each and every Challenge Newsletter, brothers and sisters use an enormous amount of their valuable time, energy, and talents to write their personal stories for us to share at our chapter meetings. Reflecting and discerning what the Lord wants to share with our readers is the first part of the process. Constructing the story in a way that will leave an image and an encouraging message in their minds is the second. Doing all this within a set word count adds yet another challenge. Because they have written something worth reading, please honor them by taking the time to enjoy their stories and to reference them at your chapter meetings. These reflections are just some of the examples of how we all live our lives.

We welcome your stories as well! Pray and ask the Lord if he wants you to submit one too. Our brothers and sisters are blessed by all who write. God be with you.

Greg Aitkens

2016 Annual Conference Announced
page 6

Joint Service Project in Scottsdale, AZ
page 7

2015 Member Gift Campaign Honor Roll
special insert
Reason to Hope

Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:13)

Julia is a nurse at a large research hospital. The young cancer patients in her clinic receive last-resort, experimental treatments. Nearly all of them die prematurely; they are the kids you hear about who go to Disney World and meet celebrities through the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Patients may receive treatments the clinic for months or years, getting to know the nurses and staff along the way. The majority of patients face recurring cancer. “They know they’re dying. We know they’re dying,” Julia said. One of these patients was a joyful, energetic teenager named Ashley. Although her forehead bulged with a tumor, she joked with the staff and doodled on the dry erase boards at the nurses’ station. She dyed her hair crazy colors and seemed to know everyone in the hospital by name.

When Julia and her husband found out they were expecting their first child, Ashley became the unborn baby’s biggest cheerleader. At work, Julia would distract Ashley from her discomfort—and the emotions that came with her diagnosis of terminal melanoma—by talking about the baby. Ashley wanted to know the baby’s name (Lucia), how the nursery was coming along (slowly), and whether she could see a picture after she was born (of course!). Ashley took a turn for the worse the weekend Julia began her maternity leave. She died 24 hours before Lucia was born. Julia was far from angry, although it was sad news.

“I felt like it was the Lord giving me a personal consolation that I was bringing new life into the world as she died,” Julia said. “And Ashley was free from suffering. Lucia is one of the most joyful children in the world and Ashley was too!” Julia has the hope-filled perspective of a Christian. She believes in the resurrection of the dead and in God’s trustworthiness. She says it’s the only way she can stay joyful in her line of work.

Not all the other nurses in the clinic have reason to hope. Julia once found one of her coworkers in an exam room sobbing. A young mom of two kids with rare leukemia had just lost her battle, and the nurse was devastated for her family. “She looked at me and said, ‘Julia, it’s so unfair.’ I said, ‘I know.’” Afterward, the nurse said, “Julia, I don’t know how you handle death so well.” Julia was able to encourage the nurse to trust God—that he has a plan. She also talked about the power of praying for people, including the families of their patients.

In a cancer clinic like Julia’s the need for encouragement and hope is constant. It’s a daily spiritual battle that requires Julia to stay grounded in the promises of Scripture. Sin is “deceitful,” as it says in the Book of Hebrews. Satan wants suffering and death to be a cause for despair. As Christians, we cling to the belief that God is good—worthy to be blessed and praised—even in times of suffering. This is a witness of encouragement to non-believers and people struggling to have hope. It is a belief that brings relief and freedom. “Being a Christian has helped me be a good nurse,” Julia said. “It’s why I don’t cry all the time!”

Julia often stops throughout the day to take a deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit for grace. At home and at work, she cultivates the habit of encouragement. It truly is a habit, not something that comes naturally to everyone. But it’s also a reflection of God’s goodness, discernible even in the midst of difficult situations by any Christian who looks with eyes of faith.

Kathryn Elliott is an editor for The Word Among Us magazine. She lives in Washington, D.C. and is a member of the People of Praise community. Kathryn can be reached at kat.elliott90@gmail.com.

REFLECTIONS

Reason to Hope

By Kathryn Elliott

Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Help me to have hope in challenging times, to console the people around me, and to have joy that points to your goodness, Lord.

How do I react to the most difficult aspects of my life and work? Is there an opportunity for encouragement that I might be overlooking?

What “reason for hope” does your faith give you in your work? What experience can you share with your co-workers as encouragement?

WEEK 1 • LIFE PLEASING TO GOD

PRAY:

Reflect:

Discuss:

WORKPLACE STORIES NEEDED

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We are especially 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 know where to begin, 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 are 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 the CIC offices by calling (703) 205-5600 or send an email to info@cicintl.org.
WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Personal Sacrifice

By Doug Demetre

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” (John 21:15)

As I read this verse, my first thought was how much God loves me. But how does my love compare?

A year ago I had biopsies done on a lump on my prostate. The next night, the leader of a Service Council meeting I was attending told us to think of a biblical word or phrase for 10 minutes in silence. I thought, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). I really got into it. The next words I heard the leader say were “Be still, and know that I am God.” Wow! I was surprised that those were the same words I was thinking about. Was this God telling me something?

The next day the doctor called, saying the 23 biopsies showed more than 50% cancer. “I have cancer!” Tears started to form. “What about my wife, Caren, and son, Josh, if I am not around? Okay, Father, what do I do? Am I supposed to pray for myself?” Then, “Be still, and know that I am God” came to me again. In the quiet, I understood that God was telling me, “Ask everyone you encounter to pray for you. When they do, I will bless them.”

I was immediately blessed knowing God was in charge; he loved me and was there for me. I asked everyone I met to pray for me. All my brothers and sisters in CIC prayed for and supported me and my wife. As I was going into surgery, someone at the CIC National Conference called, saying that everyone was praying for me right then. I was confident that God was in charge and loved me.

Recently, my blood tests showed that my prostate is once again healthy. Trusting what God wanted—not what I wanted—and loving him as he showed me how he loves me have become everyday events now. God is in charge of everything!

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us all the time. Help us love and be aware of everyone you place before us each and every day.

REFLECT:

Have you faced any major life events recently? What happened? How was Christ present to you, or how were you able to be Christ in the situation?

DISCUSS:

How do you spend quiet time listening to the Lord? How do you make a conscious effort to love like Christ loves you in the marketplace?

WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By Doug Demetre

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

One of our son’s nurses was going through many struggles with her boyfriend, finances, car, housing, and family. Additionally, the previous year her son had been killed in a car accident.

One morning while I was reading the Bible, she mentioned that she had a real sense of peace when she came to our house to care for our son (who is a quadriplegic, requiring constant care).

My wife, Caren, and I had prayed for her frequently. The nurse said she didn’t know how it was possible for us to persevere after seeing everything that we were going through. One morning, because her car was not working, she needed a ride to meet her boyfriend at her storage unit. I had a very busy day in front of me with no spare time, but I knew I needed to give her a ride. As we waited for her storage unit to open, I had a sense to pray for her and give her what I had in my wallet (which was not much). After we prayed, she told me she had rented a motel room and that she was going to start praying and going back to church. That morning, I was given the wisdom to give her a ride. Even though I was busy and had appointments, I had to take action.

A couple of weeks went by during which we had some very cold nights. During this time, our nurse had run out of money for the motel and started staying in the storage unit, until a family member eventually took her in. When she told us all this later, she said that our prayer had sustained her. On those cold nights, she would start praying and God would warm her with his presence.

PRAY:

Lord, help us remember to be like you and to look for opportunities to love and be compassionate.

REFLECT:

Who do you know who is in need? How could you be Christ in those situations?

DISCUSS:

Who is on your mind after you reflected? What action can you take to show them the love of Christ?
Father, thank you for being persistent with us so we can learn to be obedient and to do your will.

Doug Demetre has been a member since 1993 and is President of the Sacramento Chapter. He is a California Realtor and co-owner of a nationwide Lease Option company with his wife, Caren (past Chair of the WCIC Board). They have 3 children, 9 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter. Email him at dougdemetre@sbcglobal.net.

[Jesus] replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.” (Luke 11:28)

In my hardware store I once had a fully tattooed customer. He had a tough life. One day, he related that he was having a lot of physical pain. I asked him if he would feel comfortable if I prayed with him. He immediately jumped up and backwards saying, “No, everything is okay,” and left. It was quite a surprising reaction to me.

A few days later, I saw him again, and I could tell he was still suffering. I again asked if I could pray with him. He jumped up, his arms high, and said, “No, I’m okay.”

I was really busy a couple of nights later when I saw him yet again. There was a nudge again to ask if I could pray with him. It was late. I was trying to get to a CIC meeting and thought, “Lord, he doesn’t want me to pray with him,” so I continued what I was doing. I saw him again as I was leaving and ignored yet another nudge to pray with him.

Because of the topic discussed at the CIC meeting that night, I knew I was supposed to be obedient and ask to pray with “tattoo guy.” My brothers prayed with me and challenged me to ask him the next time I saw him. Guess who was the very first person in the store the next morning? I procrastinated a little in asking to pray with him, but as he turned to leave, I finally did ask him.

He said, “I would like that,” and bowed his head immediately.

God was teaching me to be obedient even when I didn’t see the immediate or expected results.

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**Holding Each Other Accountable**

By Doug Demetre

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**PRAY:**

Father, thank you for being persistent with us so we can learn to be obedient and to do your will.

**REFLECT:**

How do you hear the Lord speak to you? How do you respond when he does?

**DISCUSS:**

What are you are hearing from the Lord? Has he asked you to do something? How can you tell that it is the Lord, and how will you answer his call?

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**2015 MEMBER GIFT CAMPAIGN RESULTS ANNOUNCED**

We’ve achieved our 2015 Member Gift Campaign objectives by receiving pledges of $267,311.15 or 105.49%. This was obtained through the support of many chapters, 443 members and friends to our ministry.

Inserted in the February 2016 Challenge Newsletter is our 2015 Member Gift Campaign Honor Roll which recognizes Christians in Commerce (CIC) members and friends whose generosity supported our mission during our 2015 fiscal year. These individuals inspire and enable us to meet the needs of our ministry and provide for the next generation of Kingdom Builders in the U.S. and Africa.

Thanks to all who support us either financially or through daily prayer. We cannot do the work we’ve been called to do without your support.

Blessings to all of you!
Personal Sacrifice

By Sophia L. Norman

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

Christ put the definition of true love into practice when he suffered on the cross. For us, he denied his needs and desires to conquer darkness. A few months ago, God gave me the opportunity to be obedient and show selfless love to a sister.

One day I received a message from a colleague who was more than a fellow teacher; she was my friend and prayer partner on campus. Over the last thirteen years, our relationship evolved into a deep-rooted sisterhood planted by the Lord. And we witnessed the fruits in the lives of our families,

PRAY:

Father, help us to place your desires before our own. Remind us that everything is for a season and that you are always in control.

REFLECT:

Think about one of your most precious relationships. Are you willing to sacrifice this relationship for God’s plan?

DISCUSS:

Which characteristics make relationships so binding? What should we do to maintain a sober perspective?

Redeeming Our Father’s Creation

By Sophia L. Norman

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

Since 2010, I have endured numerous vicious cycles of events, including surgeries, depression, sick parents, financial hardship, and blindness—just to name a few. Ironically, God continued to allow leadership positions to be assigned to me in my workplace throughout all these struggles.

I finally became more intentional in showing encouragement and making myself accessible to my colleagues. Whether it was through a warm smile or an email, I began to take advantage of my opportunities to share and plant seeds. As a result, our department has become more productive and has a better spirit.

PRAY:

Father, forgive us for any opportunities we miss to be a viable witness. Help us to recognize new opportunities in the future to expand your kingdom.

REFLECT:

Have I allowed my suffering to deter me from sharing the good news?

DISCUSS:

In what ways can I be more deliberate in demonstrating God’s love in the workplace?
The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters  

By Sophia L. Norman

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said: “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

Whenever I attend a WCIC meeting, I know that I will be held accountable to answer the call in my heart and to say with Isaiah: “Here I am, Lord. Send me.” When I listen to the prayer requests, God is showing me who needs to hear his good news and why it is critical to answer the call. When my sisters share their gifts and testimonies, God shows me a variety of styles and talents that I can use in future opportunities to share the good news with my colleagues.

But the one thing our sisters never do is encourage one another to rest in our excuses. Instead, we challenge ourselves to look inward and pray for each other. God has blessed our chapter with an aura of passion and ambition. During last year’s Challenge Weekend, the Lord blessed me with an opportunity to give one of the talks. I must admit that in the process of writing and giving the talk, I experienced personal conviction. The Lord not only reminded me of how great and mighty he is, but also that he doesn’t call us because he needs us but because he wants us. He loves us so much that he wants a personal relationship with each and every individual.

We should be humbled. Who are we to say “no” to this great and loving God? Thanks to WCIC, I am less hesitant to reject the Lord’s call and more willing to work with him and watch him produce the fruit. Are you willing?

Father, please give us the courage and conviction to answer the call and say, “Here I am. Send me.”

What do you believe is in your way of sharing the good news?

Which of your gifts or talents would be most effective in answering God’s call for sharing the good news? How can you use these gifts in your workplace?

Sophia Norman has been a member of the WCIC Fresno Chapter since 2012. She is a full-time high school teacher and a part-time adjunct instructor in the Fresno Area. She can be reached at slnorman73@gmail.com.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

2016 Annual Conference

OCTOBER 14–15, 2016

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Golf Resort  
Palm Springs Area  
Cathedral City, CA

More information to follow. Mark your calendars!
JOINT SERVICE PROJECT IN SCOTTSDALE, AZ
By: Diane Hannan
You might be wondering what would bring this motley crew of CIC brothers and sisters together in a commercial kitchen! You will see that there is plenty of food around because we have been preparing for the arrival of five homeless, Scottsdale families to have dinner with us on a Sunday evening. Yes, mothers and fathers, toddlers, teens, and even Grandma are about to walk through the door to be served by the eight of us, plus other dedicated volunteers. Do we look like the hands and feet of Christ? I hope so!

There are many service organizations that will provide the framework if your group can provide the volunteers. Family Promise is one such organization based in the Phoenix area that works with faith communities to house and feed qualified homeless families. St. Patrick Catholic Community (Scottsdale, AZ) offered their Fenlon Hospitality Center for two weeks in July of 2015. A portion of the main gathering hall usually reserved for large gatherings was divided by floor-to-ceiling curtains. Within these curtained areas, Family Promise set up rolling beds with mattresses and linens, allowing the spaces to function as family bedrooms.

Just Faith, the coordinating ministry at St. Patrick’s, contacted the heads of many parish ministries, including CIC, requesting volunteers to host evening meals, provide breakfast foods, or prepare daily lunches. The men and women of CIC in Scottsdale combined our efforts to host a nice welcome dinner for the arriving families.

Family Promise seeks to assist homeless families by helping participants find housing, employment, and whatever else is needed while the family is in crisis. The children attend school daily at their Day Center. At the end of the day, a bus transports the families from the center to the hosting faith community for the night.

While Family Promise cannot provide a true “home,” Just Faith and St. Patrick’s ministries did our best to make the hospitality center feel like one. One of the classrooms was set up as a safe playroom for toddlers. Other classrooms had a television and age-appropriate videos, board games, coloring books, and markers. Another area had been set up with crafts for the children to work on with a supervisor while the adults visited after dinner. Older children were able to play table tennis and electronic games in the “teen room.”

Should any needs arise during the night, a parish couple is asked to sleep over as well and serve as hosts for the evening. This is a great way to show hospitality and assure the guests that they are cared for. It is about affirming their dignity and going to great lengths to serve them and make them feel secure. It should surprise no one that the same couple that organized the CIC effort to provide a meal also offered to stay on as hosts for the evening. It is with great appreciation that those of us in the greater Phoenix area CIC chapters express our gratitude to Ric and Cathy Glover!

From a volunteer’s perspective, I can say that working with Family Promise is a very sobering experience. One feels that “but for the grace of God,” I could be one of these souls experiencing homelessness and the loss of so many familiar things. Family Promise gave us the opportunity to be Christ to these brothers and sisters in need in a practical, concrete way.

Please send your events and stories to:
Terry Cassell
Fax: 703 205-0485
cassell@cicintl.org
7515 Lee Highway
Falls Church, VA 22042
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