SHINE BRIGHT!
LIGHT THE DARKNESS

A Conference To Remember
By Mike Pingel

I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. (Daniel 5:14)

I’ve attended a number of business conferences–some focused on investment property management, others on how to increase sales and marketing in my company. By the end of each one I had additional insight, I was energized, excited, and determined to do better in my industry. I especially had a renewed vigor to go out and implement these new strategies. The speakers were inspirational, dynamic, and exciting. My experience at the 2018 CIC Annual Conference was no exception, but it had the added bonus of increasing my love and desire to work harder as a Christian for my Lord and God.

Prior to last year’s conference I was anticipating what God would do with me there. I was ready to fully engage and participate. During Saturday prayer time I received a spontaneous and renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I was open and willing to receive this gift from God and boy was it fantastic. I was glowing with joy and peace like never before. That alone would have made the conference worth it. But there was more to come.

I enjoyed the panel with young professionals from the West Coast who were actively trying to combine work life with prayer life by having meetings of Christian fellowship and prayer at their workplaces. How exciting that corporations such as Exxon, Google and others were allowing employees to embrace their faith at work. How could I encourage my employees to deepen their faith at work?

Another part that moved me was the personal and engaging story of Louis Grams, a founding member of CIC, and his wife Nancy. They shared how they relied on God to help them through serious health challenges. Louis was on his death bed and had a miraculous recovery that even the doctors had a hard time comprehending…the healing power of our God!

The final positive outcome for me was the number of wonderful new and great people I met from other CIC chapters around the nation. Conversations of living out their Christian faith in both good times and hard times were a witness of great faith and endurance to me. I’m so thankful for those conversations.

While traveling back to Minnesota this fall I look forward to continuing conversations, making more great connections, and being inspired. I am willing to shine bright and light the darkness more in my own work and life. Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to give you a boost in your own work life? I look forward to seeing you there!

Mike Pingel is the owner of a kitchen and bath remodeling company in South Bend, IN, with 3 employees. He has been married since 2002 to Angela who is an author and quilting and fabric designer. They have one daughter.

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before others” (Matthew 5:16a). He explained that no one lights a lamp just to hide it under a basket. A lamp is meant to be placed on a stand to give light to everything around it.

Jesus provided the reason why it’s important to shine: “so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”. Our goal should never be to bring recognition to ourselves, but to bring glory to God.

We are called to emulate Jesus and be a light to others. This is true for the workplace as well. The vision of CIC is being Christ in the workplace. By treating our coworkers with respect and dignity, being available to pray with or for them, and acting honorably and with humility, we can transform the workplace in his image.

Let his light shine!
Speaking Truth and Hope  

By Rebecca Maslow

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

One of the greatest joys of being a nurse is getting to see that you’ve made a positive impact on someone, and made a little better what is usually a difficult thing for them. I’m grateful for the times that I can see the fruits of my efforts, and they strengthen me to keep going. However, frequently this is not the case.

Recently I had a young patient who had grown up in the foster system, bouncing from one place to another, and at one point in my shift she became anxious and agitated. She spilled out her frustrations and sadness over her life, repeating versions of, “no one stays, I push them away and they leave me, no one actually cares.” All I could do was listen to her. I sat with her for a long time, and at certain points interjected with truths that seemed contrary to everything she’d experienced and thought she knew—“we are here for you,” “you are worth loving,” “there’s hope for you.” At moments she seemed to hear me, but most of the time she did not.

Leaving my shift that day, I had no idea if any of the seeds of what I said planted themselves in her heart. I prayed for her but felt helpless and grieved over her situation. But this experience as well as countless others have been good lessons of trust for me—to remember that though I might not know the impact of my actions, it is God who brought me into that moment.

I spoke truth and hope into darkness the best I could, and he will use that, along with the countless ways he is loving her, to transform her life. I loved her for a moment, he has loved her since before her birth. It’s a good reminder that in all our actions, we shine light into the world not in isolation but with all the Body of Christ, and we can trust that God will use those things together to transform the world.

Rebecca Maslow lives in St. Paul, MN, and works as an RN at one of the metropolitan hospitals. She can be reached atrlmaslow@gmail.com.

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, help me to say the right thing at the right time to someone who needs love and encouragement.

REFLECT:

Consider a time when you were struggling and someone’s words of encouragement made all the difference.

DISCUSS:

We often don’t know the good we do in the lives of others but that shouldn’t keep us from trying.

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Praying with Conviction
By Nathan Barrett

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:19-20)

Three years ago I found out that my colleague’s father was in the hospital and not doing well. Betty and I had been working together for around a year and a half. When her mother couldn’t wake Betty’s dad that day, she called 911. She told Betty she was afraid he was not going to make it.

I asked Betty if I could pray with her. “Oh, yes please,” she answered, and she took hold of both of my hands.

I prayed with her, “Dear Jesus, we call upon your power to heal Betty’s dad. We ask you to give him life and strength and give the family peace. Be healed in the name of Jesus.” Then I praised God quietly in tongues. Betty prayed along with me, “Yes Lord, Yes Lord ...” Two days later, she told me with a big smile, “He’s home, and he is doing great! Thank you for praying. God answered your prayer!”

Since then, Betty has sent several people to me to pray with, and we have prayed together with them for healing and for particular situations in their lives and our prayers have been answered. It’s now become part of our workplace culture. And although

Betty had previously prayed with people on her own, it was new to her to pray the words “Be healed” and to speak them with conviction. It served as a next step in Betty’s faith walk, as she learned to speak authoritatively in the name of Jesus and see her prayers answered.

Pray:
Lord Jesus, thank you for empowering me to do your will at work. Give me courage and power to shine forth your glory at work.

Reflect:
Think about situations at work in which someone has revealed to you a personal problem or need. How did you respond?

Discuss:
Have you offered God’s help to someone in the past? What was the result?

BRINGING LIGHT TO SADNESS
By Rebecca Maslow

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die...” (John 11:25)

Part of my job as a nurse on certain days is to respond to emergencies throughout the hospital. On this particular day, I was called to a room, and I and a group of other health care professionals began to try and revive a patient who had become unresponsive.

We worked long and hard, but eventually it became apparent that our interventions were futile.

The room, which had been loud and busy, slowly became silent as this understanding sank in, and the leading physician called the time of death. The crowd of people filed out. I’ve found it can be hard to get away from the feelings of failure that effect the whole medical team when our efforts fail. When death appears to win the fight, we walk away with disappointment, frustration, and frequently tears.

But as I and another nurse began the task of cleaning the room, the fog of adrenaline cleared from my mind, and I looked at the patient and thought, “this moment is sacred.” That recognition gave me the presence of mind to remember that as Christians we have a paradoxical peace and joy in the midst of pain and death because of our hope in the resurrection.

The same thing that just a second before had seemed a source of sadness and failure could quite possibly be a cause for great rejoicing as a soul meets her God. And I was able to pause from my tasks, walk over to the patient, and pray for her and her family.

Doing that changed my heart and motivated me to seek out ways to bring hope and a recognition of sacredness to future situations. How often is it that the thing we perceive as wholly bad is the very moment that God wants to shower his irrepressible mercy and joy?

Pray:
Lord, while there is always a sadness surrounding death please help me to show others that it can also be a time of hope and sanctity.

Reflect:
Consider a time when others saw a situation as hopeless and you were able to see the positive aspects.

Discuss:
For Christians, death is not the end but a beginning. Why do so many of us fear death?
Loving Prayers  
By Pat Malone

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

My wife and I had a total of 49 foster children come through our home. When we started, we had no idea what we were getting into, but it did not take long for us to realize that there was no way we could survive without God’s help.

One child came into our home who had been diagnosed as brain damaged and autistic. We loved him and prayed for him, along with others in our prayer group. We took him to church and to healing services. He was a failure to thrive baby who had stopped breathing at one point. Nobody had much hope for him. After six months my wife took him for his check-up. The doctor found him to be alert. He had gained several pounds. He was attentive and interactive. They scanned his brain, and the dead brain cells were gone.

Another child came into our home. She was a beautiful baby girl, but very underdeveloped. The prognosis was dire. The doctors thought she was autistic; her central nervous system hadn’t myelinated and they felt she would never walk. We gave her lots of love and prayers. She got sick and was hospitalized, and after several people prayed with and for her she improved and came home. Her brain myelinated and one evening she looked at my wife and walked to her. Her doctor’s comment was, “I don’t even believe in God but that is a miracle.”

I was teaching in a Christian school at the time and shared some of these stories at boy’s morning prayer. A tenth-grade boy came up to me after prayer and asked to talk. He wanted to thank me for sharing that story. He had a young sibling with similar health problems and had given up hope. Now he decided to hope and to start praying again.

Patrick Malone is a retired teacher. He taught for 10 years at the college level and 36 years at the high school level. He is retired and lives in Shreveport, LA. He and his wife have been part of mission there with the People of Praise since 2012. He can be reached at pmalone@trimityschools.org.
Anne Bell, a recently-retired researcher at the University of Northern Colorado, spent one of her first years after retirement volunteering with the 5280 Fellowship, a leadership program for young professionals in Denver. Bright and soft spoken, wearing dark-rimmed glasses that match her innate curiosity, she confessed one day to a group of early career professionals, “I’m really searching for what I’m called to,” she confessed, wiping a tear from her check. “I just want to know what’s next.”

Decoding the Culture of Retirement: Three Postures

The history of retirement began in America around the idea of a never-ending vacation. Using that theme, here are three postures toward retirement that dominate headlines today:

1. Let’s vacation.

Today, the dominant paradigm of retirement is about vacation – how to afford it, and then how to spend it. A kitchen wall-hanging with the acronym for R.E.T.I.R.E says Relax, Entertain, Travel, Indulge, Read, Enjoy.

2. I can’t afford to vacation.

If the dominant paradigm for retirement today is a never-ending vacation, the fastest growing group of retirees are those who know they can’t afford to vacation.

If the great American dream is “financial freedom” in a blissful retirement, the great American frustration is that such a dream is out of reach for the majority.

3. Vacation isn’t as satisfying as world-changing.

Quickly pushing out the Let’s Vacation paradigm is a widespread movement toward “encore careers.”

But there are three weaknesses to this movement. First, it often overlooks the realities of aging. Backs ache. Bodies change. Funerals become a regularity. Time changes us all.

Second, baby boomers are human (like all of us) – which means they are beautiful yet flawed. We’re deposed royalty, says Blaise Pascal, and when we’re honest, we’re drawn to greed as much as generosity, sloth as much as diligence, cowardice as much as courage.

The third problem with movements that stress social change as a story for retirement has to do with the human longing for purpose.

The motivation behind our service is critical. If it’s merely to solve social issues, we will always find more to issues to solve and that we have never done enough. Ironically, the same exhausting treadmill from our careers can follow us into “more meaningful” work.

Retirement needs a new story. Or better yet, a very old story.

Wisdom and Blessing

Gary VanderArk is a not-so-retired physician living in south Denver. In his late 70s, he continues to teach five classes of medical students at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Center, serve on nearly a dozen nonprofit boards, and bike almost 20 miles a day. Gary was also the founder of Doctors Care, a nonprofit that has helped thousands of Colorado’s medically underserved.

If anybody has a “right” to hang up his cleats and slow down, it’s Dr. VanderArk. Yet when I interviewed him about what motivates him, he said with a broad grin, “Well, I believe it’s more blessed to give than to receive. I’m enjoying myself too much to stop.”

White hair, bony fingers, and frail voice, to some Gary may seem “old.” But when you speak with him, he seems almost carefree, like a child on Christmas morning. He acknowledges human frailty and death yet keeps serving others as if death is of no concern to him. He keeps teaching and sitting on nonprofit boards not because of social duty, but instead out of sheer delight. He is quick to listen and slow to speak. His words hold genuine gravitas. He is like “the righteous [who] flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon...They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,” (Ps. 92:12-14).

Gary, like many of God’s people through the ages, isn’t living in a story that culminates on the seventh day, the traditional Jewish day of rest. The story he lives in culminates on Sunday morning. It is the first day of the week. It’s the dawn of a new world.

This article is an adapted excerpt from Jeff Haanen’s An Uncommon Guide to Retirement: Finding God’s Purpose for the Next Season of Life. Jeff is the executive director of Denver Institute for Faith & Work and lives with his wife and four daughters in Littleton, CO.
Many of us will retire but what comes next? What should I expect and anticipate in retirement? How should our faith impact this next phase of our life? These questions and many others are addressed in Jeff Haanen’s book *An Uncommon Guide to Retirement: Finding God’s Purpose for the Next Season of Life*.

In the Christians in Commerce tradition, this book is rich in storytelling. It’s a quick and easy read but with much to think about. As an investment advisor this book was a timely read for and would be helpful for many of my clients. It provides a Christian perspective rather than the worldly view prominent in our society. It is true that most of the conversation and thoughts around retirement, especially in my industry, revolve around the ideas of retirement as a never-ending vacation. The actual reality of this view is not accessible for most and not satisfying for many who can. (See the excerpt on the previous page).

My experience suggests retirement can be viewed from a time perspective that many of my clients can relate to: Go-Go Years, Slow-Go years and No-Go years.

During the “Go-Go” years you have the health and energy to actively pursue your goals. Next comes the “Slow-Go” years best defined as “been there…done that” slowing down and a staying closer to home. Finally, the “No-Go” years are spent dealing with declining health and a loss of energy.

Throughout the book, Haanen states a “common” perspective and then counters with an “uncommon” counter perspective. Two examples follow:

- **Common**: A Christian perspective on retirement to never retire but just keep working.
- **Uncommon**: Restore a more integrated approach towards work, rest and service that matures over a lifetime.
- **Common**: The road to deep freedom in retirement is found in self-actualization.
- **Uncommon**: The road to deep freedom in retirement is found in self-surrender.

For me, two parts of the book stood out. One was the section on taking a sabbatical discussed in Chapter 3 entitled “Calling.” Calling is based on the reality of the two greatest commandments expressed in Mark 12:30-31.

Retirement should be a season of wisdom, blessing, and service. In transitioning to retirement he suggests the idea of a sabbatical (perhaps three months or longer) to pray about what God is calling you to do.

He will provide the means…our job is to discern how to serve. For me this could mean stepping back from my many responsibilities and spending time in prayer. Haanen shares several stories of men and women who have successfully used a sabbatical to clarify what is next for them.

I also found his discussion in Chapter 8—“Mentoring”—very helpful. Haanen states, “Mentoring in retirement sounds like a wonderful idea. ‘Invest in the next generation. Share your life experience. Feel a renewed sense of purpose.’ But in reality, far too often, mentoring feels awkward for both mentor and mentee. Today many are swapping a traditional idea of mentoring for the practice of *intergenerational friendship* which can be defined as the mutual enrichment of the younger and older.”

As we prepare to launch WorkLight.org this fall, intergenerational friendships can play a significant role for many of us in supporting small groups and younger members.

I would recommend this book for men and women who are approaching retirement or are retired. Further, I believe this book would be helpful for the sons and daughters of pre-retired and retired family members to understand the new opportunities and challenges facing their parents and grandparents.

*Editor’s Note*: Tim Rowland is a partner in Rowland and Carmichael, a wealth management firm. As a longtime member of Christians in Commerce and former board member we asked him to read Jeff Haanen’s new book and share his thoughts.
This could be it. It would take me right up to Holy Thursday. I packed up for the 8-hour drive north.

Mike and his wife had been reading _Jesus Calling_ daily and loved it. They bought additional copies, gave them to their employees, and their neighbors. Mike was growing spiritually by leaps and bounds. Best of all, we had great daily and evening spiritual talks.

While there he decided to drop an angry effort to sue the “wonder clinic” and forgave them. Each day he phoned those he’d met while in the hospital, encouraging the discouraged and praying for the sick. Mike was now paying forward the blessings he was receiving from God. It was my best Lent ever.

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.” (Mt. 10: 32)

When is it appropriate to share our faith and testimony with others?

After experiencing a new relationship with Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, I was eager to share my experience with others. One of the first persons I shared with was Pete, a colleague who I had worked closely with earlier in our respective careers for a large international oil company.

A few weeks later I was at a company reception and met the executive who headed up our operating division. I was wearing a dove on my lapel which he noticed, and in his gruff New York accent, asked “What’s the bird?” Feeling a bit intimidated, I said, “It’s a dove.” I then went on hesitantly to explain that to some people it means peace and to others it stands for the Holy Spirit. He shot back, “What’s it mean to you?” I said the Holy Spirit, and he said, “Oh,” and walked off. I thought, “Well, I didn’t handle that very well.” I was upset with myself for muffing an opportunity to talk about the Lord with one of our senior people.

A week later I was having lunch with Pete and an executive. He was now on the staff of this executive and when he asked Pete why I was wearing a dove lapel pin, Pete shared my entire witness and how it impacted my life.

Because of Pete’s relationship with this executive he was able to share my testimony in a way that I would never have been able to do myself. This executive later became the CEO of the company.

It is noteworthy that when Jesus sent out the 12 and the 72, he instructed them not to go from house to house, but stay in one place, build relationships and serve the people by healing their illnesses and casting out demons. Only after they had done those things were they to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand. (Luke 10: 1-24)

This guidance is appropriate for us. While God is able to act in any circumstance, we represent him best when we develop a relationship and seek to serve the needs of the person before we start sharing our own experience with the Lord. Words have more credibility when preceded by friendship, love and service. Missionaries have been following this practice for centuries.

Bill Dalgetty is a former executive of Mobil Corporation and former president of Christians in Commerce. He published Hope for the Workplace - Christ in You about the Holy Spirit empowering us to bring hope and transformation to our workplaces. He and his wife, Marilynn live in Northern Virginia. Contact Bill at dalgetty.bill@gmail.com
FOSTERING FAITH AT WORK

Bringing together believers is one of the things Christians in Commerce does best. On a still summer night over plates of kebab and babaganush, a sold-out crowd of 50 men and women—including the Northern Virginia Men’s and Women’s Chapters and fellow Christians from Bridgepoint—gathered to hear former CIC board member Gail Cardwell share the story of her faith journey at work.

At the start of her career, Gail was a regular churchgoer. She knew about Jesus but she didn’t really know him—there was no personal relationship. It never occurred to her that her work life and faith life could be integrated.

Jobs early in our career can leave a lasting impression. Gail’s boss treated his staff with dignity and respect and he openly lived his Christian faith. He and his wife invited Gail to a religious retreat, and during private prayer time she felt an overwhelming feeling of love and forgiveness. It was a new experience—as if her eyes had been opened—and she knew she wanted more of it.

Soon after Gail got married. She joined the Mortgage Bankers Association and rose through the ranks. In 2003 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Still, she felt blessed. Her coworkers took on her workload when she was too sick to work. Her husband stepped up and took over with their young boys. The experience helped her develop a strong spirit of gratitude.

During the financial crisis, Gail could not offer raises or promotions to staff and she was worried about retaining them. After praying, she realized that the only thing she could do was to express her gratitude to them. She wrote each of them an individual note affirming their value as individuals and the benefit they brought to the group. One woman was moved to tears of gratitude and vowed to keep the letter to turn to in times of trial.

Gail was recruited to a challenging but prestigious position in affordable housing. However, she did not consult with God before accepting the job. She faced a series of setbacks in reducing costs and was forced to make painful staffing cuts. When Gail delivered the bad news to a recent hire, he was obviously distressed. She reassured him that it had nothing to do with his performance. Returning from holiday break, Gail learned that he had committed suicide. It was a seminal moment that brought her to her knees.

She left soon after and joined the ranks of the unemployed. She prayed for her old job back at Mortgage Bankers. A departure cleared the way for her return and once back she turned to the Lord and invited him to be part of the process. The department had been reduced to a staff of two.

Gail experienced the joy of integrating her faith life and her work life. She quoted Louis Grams, one of the CIC founders, who said that in relating to others in the workplace, we are “called to rescue people there and in doing so, to rescue creation itself. We are compelled to transform one place—the workplace.” When we answer the call to treat colleagues with genuine love, respect, mercy, and justice we are being Christ to others in the workplace.

This year’s CIC Annual Conference will be held on October 4-5 at the Embassy Suites Bloomington, MN.

Building on last year’s success, the conference will be filled with inspiring lightning talks, Christ at Work stories, useful workshops, informative panel discussions, and fellowship with coworkers in Christ. Let’s come together and glorify the Father!
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

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“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”
Galatians 2:20