If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us from here. (Exodus 33:15)

Moses so valued God’s presence that he wouldn’t move forward without it as the Israelites traveled from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. Do we value God’s presence as Moses did? Do we move forward in our own strength and plans rather than relying on God’s presence? What does it mean to experience God’s presence today?

I have been thinking through these questions as I have been praying about the next phase of my professional and personal life. I’m an attorney in a large law firm where I have practiced for over 35 years. Many of my contemporaries have retired to a life of leisure. While I enjoy fun, my greater desire is to be where God wants me and to do what God would want me to do. In short, my prayer is to move forward in God’s presence.

As described in Exodus, God revealed his presence to Moses and the Israelites in dramatic and visible ways like in a burning bush that did not burn up, in a pillar of cloud that led them by day and a pillar of fire that led them by night, and on Mount Sinai covered in smoke accompanied by thunder, lightning, and earthquakes.

Sometimes I wish that God’s presence was so dramatic and visible for me today. But the reality is that God’s presence for us today is even better. For the Israelites, his presence was distant and impersonal. Indeed, if anyone other than Moses came too close to God’s presence they were put to death. And while Moses had the privileged position of coming into God’s presence on Mount Sinai and in the Tent of Meeting, his encounters with God were at defined times and in defined places.

It may be hard to believe that for you and me today—and all who have received Christ as their Lord and Savior—we are actually in a more privileged position than Moses and the Israelites. Colossians 1:26-27 reveals “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people.” What is this mystery? It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

While God is everywhere, God’s presence in the Old Testament—sometimes called “manifest presence”—was made known more fully in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Today, we are God’s Temple where his presence is displayed in power: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Cor. 3:16). “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

For us, God’s presence is not distant. It is in us—and it is in us all of the time. Our hope of glory is Christ and the Holy Spirit dwelling directly in us! Like Moses, we should value God’s presence and not move forward without it.

Dave Hazelton is the author of The Simplified Guide: Paul’s Letters to the Churches. While his day job is as a senior partner at Latham & Watkins LLP, one of the nation’s largest law firms, his passion is teaching Sunday school and leading Bible studies in his home, church, and workplace. He can be reached at david.hazelton@lw.com.
REFLECTIONS

Steering the Ship
By Becca Brophy

Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder... Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. (James 3: 4-5)

As Christians, we are called to speak in ways that honor the Lord. As Christians in the workplace, we can encounter some unique challenges in this area.

I work with a small team of analysts, and daily cooperation with a neighboring office is vital to the success of my team’s work. When I first began my job, I noticed an air of mistrust and negativity between my office and the other. Apparently, this culture of negativity had long existed and had become the status quo.

Consistent with this culture, my team habitually used negative speech regarding members of the other office. This speech colored our view of them and overshadowed our interactions. Those interactions fueled negativity that impeded our ability to cooperate. Our ship was being steered by the wrong rudder.

I felt discouraged and powerless in my ability to help bring Christ to the situation. As the newest person on my team, I was insecure about drawing attention to myself. I was being steered by the wrong rudder.

Following this successful exchange, my courage grew, and I seized more opportunities to speak positively and constructively. Others on my team began to follow suit.

Eventually, I noticed that a marked cultural shift was taking place—my team’s improved speech was causing us to actually view the others in a better light.

The fruits of this shift were immediate: Instead of being quick to blame the others, we became better listeners. We got better at anticipating their needs and more proactive in meeting them. Right speech facilitated teamwork, both within my unit and with the other office. Trust grew between all of us as a result. Today, we enjoy a strong and productive relationship with them.

The scripture from James shows us how quickly wrong speech can steer our hearts and minds farther from Christ and from each other. Wonderfully, the flipside of this is also true—practicing right speech fosters unity and goodness and inevitably draws us closer to the Lord. By speaking in a way that was more pleasing to God, my team helped replace a culture of suspicion with one of trust, and we are all now more effective employees.

Becca Brophy is a federal budget analyst in Washington, DC. She and her husband, Billy, have been married for five years and have three children, ages four, two, and newborn. Becca can be reached at brophy.becca@gmail.com.

PRAY:
Lord, please make me aware of my patterns of speech that need to be corrected. Please allow my heart to be transformed through the holiness of my speech that I may lead a life more pleasing to you.

REFLECT:
Are there areas of my speech that steer the working relationships around me in the wrong direction?

DISCUSS:
How can I redirect my speech to better honor the Lord in the workplace?

JULIE FOUDY – GENERAL SESSION AT 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Olympic Gold medalist in US Women’s Soccer, Julie Foudy, kicked off the 2017 Annual Conference. Interviewed by CIC Board Member, Luke Cahill, Julie discussed Leadership Is 

WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Personal Sacrifice

By Jeremy Stanbary

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. (Matthew 6:33-34)

These words of Jesus are easy to gloss over until your entire life is turned upside down.

Last spring my professional nonprofit theater was forced to shut down due to the illegal activities of our landlords. This was a devastating experience. I had poured the previous 13 years of my life into building up this unique Christian-values theater company and then everything came to a sudden end. We were financially devastated, leaving us unable to continue operating or reopen elsewhere. I literally found myself jobless and penniless and had no idea what to do. My wife was nine months pregnant with our fourth child when our theater closed and I lost my income.

We had no savings to fall back on and no personal credit cards, nor was I able to file for unemployment benefits. Plus, my personal identity and faith had been crushed since I viewed my work as a cultural ministry and was “doing it for God.” So how could God let this happen? Did he even exist?

I felt like a failure in every respect and that led to despair. I fell into a really dark place for a while. But this forced me to seek God and surrender to him. In return, God showed us his love and taught us to trust like never before.

We somehow survived nearly 10 months without an income. Prayer and trust led to one miraculous and unsolicited gift after another. God won’t abandon you, no matter how difficult the challenges you face with work or finances. Just seek him first—in all the pain and glory of his cross—and everything else will be given to you.

Jeremy Stanbary is an international performer whose original dramas have been performed for tens of thousands and seen on the global EWTN television network. Jeremy is now a personal trainer and founder of Crux Point Fitness. He resides with his wife, Sarah, and their four children in St. Paul, MN. Jeremy can be reached at jeremy@cruxpointfitness.com.

PRAY:
Father, help me to seek you and your righteousness above all else, entrusting my life into your providential care. Jesus, I trust in you!

REFLECT:
Am I “working to live” or “living to work”? Am I seeking God’s Kingdom and righteousness above all else both at work and outside of work?

DISCUSS:
What’s a specific area of our lives where we can trust more fully in God and his plan for us, worrying less about tomorrow and what it will bring?

WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By Russell Shurts

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)

Some days feel like an uphill battle: deadlines are looming, people aren’t delivering their best work, the customer is unhappy, your boss just wants it fixed—even the company culture brings you down.

Working in the software industry can be exciting, with new things to learn and create every day. Yet, it can be one of the most faith adverse places to work. There can be a tendency to lump the people doing the programming with the machines executing the programs. But, it doesn’t have to be that way.

There are steps we can take to humanize the workplace. To start, we can act with empathy to everyone we encounter—our coworkers, customers, users, and bosses. Empathy inspires a recognition that we are all children of God, and that through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have a conduit to affect one another through prayer and action.

For me this means praying for my boss, coworkers, customers, and company. I can ask the Holy Spirit to guide me and to guide them, so that we work to recognize the human dignity in one another and in our work.

It also means reaching out and learning people’s stories. Where did they come from? What challenges do they face? You can then build on that information to form more meaningful work relationships and a better work environment for everyone.

Russell Shurts works out of his home as a DevOps consultant for a private consulting firm in Minnesota. He’s been married for four years and has two young children. He first became aware of CIC through the Working for Our Father series.

PRAY:
Heavenly Father, help me to recognize and respond to the dignity in every person I come in contact with at work.

REFLECT:
Are you praying for your boss, your peers, your company, or your customers?

DISCUSS:
Are you acting with empathy and recognizing the dignity of the person and not viewing them as a means to get work done?
If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (Romans 12:19)

Unsolicited emails can be a big annoyance, clogging up my work inbox and serving as a distraction and an impediment to productivity. Although they are a daily nuisance, emails are rarely a significant source of frustration or angst for me. Until one day when I was dealing with a few different fires and I received the third email that week from a salesperson named Steve. He was someone I didn’t know, trying to sell me something I didn’t need, in a way I didn’t appreciate.

Unfortunately, he caught me at a vulnerable time and I replied:

You have spent a lot of time bugging me, but not enough time researching me to know what my company does or even that the name of our company has changed since you got a hold of this email. Learn more about who you are selling to would be my recommendation.

After feeling a fleeting sense of vindictive satisfaction, the Holy Spirit quickly let me know how flawed my reaction was. I hadn’t lived out my faith in that moment and had to try to make things right with this person I didn’t even know, but still a person who had feelings and was just trying to do their job. After fighting with my pride for a short time, I sent Steve this reply:

I wanted to apologize for my harsh reply a few minutes ago. It came in at a moment of frustration, but I should not have taken that out on you. I am sorry.

I never did receive a reply back from Steve, but I know it was the right thing to do.

Luke Cahill has been a member of the Minneapolis-South Men’s Chapter for about a year. He recently assisted in researching the next generation and is also one of the newest members of the CIC Board of Directors. By his own admission, his participation in CIC has already had a life-changing impact on him! Luke lives in Eagan, MN, with his wife and four young sons. He owns a market research company, REAL Insight, based in Minneapolis. Luke can be reached at lcahill@real-insight.us.

The Working for Our Father series assists Christians in aligning their careers with God’s mission.

The program uses professionally-developed, engaging videos to capture the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for our Father, as coworkers in Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

To complement the series, we have developed 20 brief audio podcasts that draw insights from members’ firsthand accounts of encountering faith in the workplace.

To preview and learn more about the series and how to obtain materials, please go to www.cicintl.org/wfof or contact the CIC Home Office, info@cicintl.org or (703) 205-5600.

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DISCUSS:
In retrospect, what events occurred in the meantime, making the Lord’s timing perfect?

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Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6: 9-10)

Several years ago, my husband and I had our taxpayer identification stolen. To receive our refund, we made multiple phone calls and visits to the IRS. Eighteen months after we had filed our return, we still had not received our money. After consulting with an accountant, we scheduled an appointment with the IRS. Prior to entering the IRS offices, I prayed that despite my frustration, I would act as a Christian to the IRS staff and treat them with dignity.

When my name was called, I entered Jorge’s dingy cubicle. Despite its depressing appearance, Jorge had decorated it with bible verses from Galatians. I thanked him for boldly posting these verses in a public office. He smiled gratefully and explained that he had undergone three surgeries to correct an intestinal problem, had been demoted from a manager to a clerk, was transferred to an office that doubled his commute, and reported to a difficult supervisor. He underscored the need to always do good and cited Galatians— that we would “reap a harvest if we do not give up.” I encouraged him to participate in CIC and left him my contact information.

Prior to leaving, we thanked the Lord for bringing us together as his family of believers. We prayed together for his health, benefits, and work environment. He prayed for my family. Moved by our meeting, we had great confidence Jorge would reap the rewards of the personal sacrificial seeds of faith he had sown in his workplace. I continue to pray for him daily. Soon after meeting with Jorge, our refund appeared in the mail.

Father, thank you for blessing us with opportunities to do good to those who belong to you.

Reflect upon a time when a frustrating experience in your workplace ended in reaping a harvest at the proper time.

Discuss a time when a distressed person of strong faith encouraged you not to give up.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:3)

I felt drawn to the college planning consulting industry and was excited about starting my own business. I prayed for discernment to determine whether this new career path was in accordance with God’s will. I also prayed for wisdom regarding the timing and how to proceed.

After attending a seminar for industry newcomers, I offered to help students at a nearby public high school with their college applications. The county required fingerprinting of all volunteers. Two weeks after I applied, the county informed me that there was an alert on my fingerprints and I could not enter the high school. Six weeks passed before the county acknowledged they had made a mistake, but by then it was Christmas break, and too much time had elapsed to assist the students.

The following summer, a friend who headed counseling at the same high school suggested I reconsider volunteering. After praying for discernment that morning, I entered the counseling office and was assigned to “Rachel.” On the drive home, I noticed that the license plate on the car in front of me read, “HIS WILL.”

Over time, I would learn that Rachel’s family had limited resources. I would come to know her as a delightful young Christian woman, remarkable for her gratitude and exemplary volunteer work with children and low-income people. Were it not for the county’s mistake, I never would have met Rachel or shared in the joy of helping to shape her future.

Father, grant us the patience to wait for your timing in our lives, as we discern our actions in helping to redeem your creation.

Have you ever pursued a specific path in your work life, only to find it was not the right time?

In retrospect, what events occurred in the meantime, making the Lord’s timing perfect?
The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters
By Gail Cardwell

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:16)

“Forrest” approached me on the sidewalk near my office and asked me for money. He was aggressive, yet respectful, so I responded positively. He often sat at the foot of the church steps next to my office building. I would visit him at lunch and we became friends. He was homeless sporadically and he loved Jesus Christ.

Over the ensuing years, my family contributed substantially to his income. Our friendship grew strong, as we shared our faith. Months in advance of leaving my job, I forewarned Forrest that we would be unable to contribute as generously to him. He decided to work as a shoe shine man outdoors to supplant this income, only to be rebuffed by city officials. Discouraged, he moved out of his apartment and lived in his storage unit. He worked odd jobs and had some scuffles with the law. It deeply saddened me. I prayed for his sustenance, work ethic, and a good Christian woman. We remained great friends.

Before leaving that job, I bumped into a work colleague named Terry who headed Office Facilities. I knew she was a devout Christian. She sensed my concern and I recounted Forrest’s story. I asked if Forrest could set up a shoe shine station inside our offices. She enthusiastically met with our property manager, arguing that Forrest would be providing a valued amenity. To our surprise, they agreed.

As I exited my job, Terry entered. From God, each part did their work to build up the whole body. I don’t know where Forrest would be without Terry’s love for God’s children. I do know that the fruits of our relationships as sisters yielded a bountiful harvest. Forrest is still working hard at my former offices. He lives in a comfortable apartment, is engaged to a good Christian woman, and praises the Lord daily.

SNAPSHOT PODCASTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

SNAPSHOT PODCASTS

To complement our Working for Our Father video series, we have created 20 new audio tracks called Snapshot Podcasts. They start with a snapshot of a true experience of being Christ in the workplace and then draw additional insights into working for our Father. Snapshot Podcasts share the experiences of other coworkers and provide insights designed to help you apply them to your own situation. Listen to them during your commute, or whenever convenient. They are short and easy to listen to.

We hope that you enjoy our current series:
- Series 1: Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work
- Series 2: Triumphing over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
- Series 3: Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
- Series 4: Operating in the Fruit of the Spirit

For more information, go to www.cicintl.org/snapshot.
SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORT INCREASES

Alex Soholt is leading efforts to maximize the social media presence of Christians in Commerce to reach a new generation and a wider audience. To connect with those who increasingly engage with social media, CIC is expanding our outreach on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Within just three weeks of launching this effort, our interactions increased seven-fold.

Through these platforms, we provide a glimpse into the wealth of resources CIC offers and the engaging stories of you being Christ in the workplace. By sharing our content through photos, videos, links, podcasts, and even live streams, we can inspire others to learn more about CIC and even join our mission.

You can have an immense impact on expanding CIC’s reach. If you haven’t already, we would love for you to follow us on these platforms. To do this, go to the CIC website and in the top right section of the homepage, you will see icons for the various sites. Click on those icons and you will be taken to the CIC sites where you can “Like or “Follow” our page.

Other posts may be for inspiration such as this example, which includes applicable scripture to our workdays.

Our social media effort is not limited to the next generation, but serves to expand our outreach and advance the mission of CIC to others, whatever their age. It will always be important to share CIC’s mission through word of mouth. But we encourage you to use social media to help spread the word even further.

Posts may include promotion for CIC resources such as the one featured above for a Workday Reflection.

As you “like and share” this content with your friends on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn you help to increase exponentially those connecting with CIC’s ministry. As your friends like and share information, their friends see those messages too with the potential to impact hundreds and thousands of followers.

During our conference this year, we live streamed each of our general sessions so that people around the world could watch them live on Facebook. Several individuals engaged with these streams, and within 24 hours of the first session, over 1,000 people had viewed it on Facebook.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD. “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

JEREMIAH 29:11

Please send your events and stories to:

Terry Cassell
Fax: (703) 205-0485
cassell@cicintl.org
7515 Lee Highway
Falls Church, VA 22042
“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Galatians 2:20
By all measures, our 2017 Annual Conference, *Coworkers in Christ: Being a Servant Leader*, in beautiful Palm Springs, CA, was a success. We kicked off the event with guest speaker Julie Foudy, two-time World Cup champion and Olympic gold medalist and daughter of Jim and Judy Foudy, long-time CIC members. In her session, *Leadership is Personal, not Positional*, Julie said, “Servant leadership isn’t a matter of chance, it’s a matter of choice.” Playing soccer taught her to broaden her definition of leadership, thanks to people like Mia Hamm, once “the shyest kid on the field” who rose to the occasion when her career landed her in the spotlight. When describing how faith played a role in her understanding of leadership, Julie said her parents had taught her the importance of showing kindness to everyone. A servant leader asks people, “How can I help you be successful?” instead of climbing over them trying to get ahead. “The thing that’s hardest is to live it,” she said. “That’s what I love about what (CIC is) doing. … I commend you all, because it isn’t easy. It’s a hard task, and you need people out there saying, ‘This is why it matters.’”

Board Chairman Rich Preuss moderated a panel discussion with the CIC Founding Fathers—Louis Grams, Bud Rose, and John Mooney—who described how CIC was started, and how they each came to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The importance of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which some people experienced for the first time during the Friday evening prayer meeting led by the Founding Fathers, was one of the major takeaways for many conference attendees. Louis Grams offered some powerful words on the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in growing CIC. When the Holy Spirit is at work, he said, “He makes it impossible for us not to make waves. And we need to be making a lot more waves in every single one of our chapters. We don’t need to be afraid of the Holy Spirit. … God wants to move us into the next generation and into the future. Be open to any way that can come about.” One attendee was so moved by his experience, he said, “This was my first CIC conference. I really was astounded by what the Holy Spirit is doing in CIC.”

Next, Rich Preuss presented *CIC: Today and its Future*. With the words “Embrace the Change” projected overhead, Rich explained that our mission hasn’t changed but we must be willing to change, much like a married couple changes—as individuals and as a couple—throughout the various seasons of life. We change as we grow, and we change in order to grow. “We have a

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**A SERVANT LEADER ASKS PEOPLE, “HOW CAN I HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?”**
of our hearts in order to answer that question. Discovering the things we do best and find most satisfying is part of a higher calling. It’s not about being personally fulfilled. It’s about asking, ‘How can I make things right?’ God wants us to know our purpose, Steve continued. He isn’t trying to hide it from us or make us work hard trying to figure it out. “He wants to help us be good and faithful servants,” he said. He challenged attendees, “You have been redeemed in order to be coworkers on God’s great project. How has it unfolded in your life?”

CIC President Terry Cassell delivered the keynote address. Speaking on Being a Coworker in Christ, he challenged the group to take what they had heard over the weekend and turn it into a personal action plan. Even Jesus had an action plan, Terry pointed out. “Jesus was very into leadership development in preparing his apostles to carry on his work… He says, ‘Follow me’ 80 times in the gospels. Those are words of action!” Our Father could get his work done a lot faster without us, Terry added, but he wants to use us, to work with us.

Another highlight of the conference was the music. Playing to rave reviews, CIC member Duane Valencia, keyboardist for the Shadow Rock Church band in La Quinta, CA, brought the group with him to lead the praise and worship.

Conference attendees clearly sensed a call to action. Many said it was a turning point for CIC, and an action plan for advancing the ministry. Nancy Grams, wife of Louis and former monthly contributor to our Challenge Newsletter, summed it up well when she stated, “God is still up to something in CIC! What does this mean for me now?” What indeed?