



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

December, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

"Tan Tuddy"

By: Stieg Strand

For the entire 21 years of our marriage, my wife and I have been involved in youth and children's ministry. Since 2003, we've made more than a dozen mission trips to Jamaica. It is there we discovered a marvelous phrase that has so many uses in their language and, in our view, in our Christian lives.

The phrase is "Tan tuddy", pronounced "Tan toodie". The Jamaicans use it in their native tongue called "Patwa", or sometimes "Patois". We're not that familiar with it and it is spoken very rapidly. I can only understand about five percent. But this one saying stands out for me and is used frequently. We love the spirit of the phrase. Its literal translation is "Stand sturdy".

Teachers and administrators, as well as the occasional pastor, commonly use it in educational settings, where it is used to give firm instruction and carries a broader, more serious meaning. Other definitions include, "Pay attention", "Don't slouch", "Stand tall", or even, "Please don't waste my time or yours as I can tell you're not paying attention."

We have a dear friend in Jamaica who uses this phrase in a very constructive way with his students. Reverend Delroy Campbell is a Baptist pastor who has been doing public school devotionals for twenty years. He has a wonderful smile and stands for the truth and grace of the Gospel every week in 30 minutes of what they call Religious Programming, which is mandatory in Jamaica. You can see the children's faces light up as they drink in the positive message of a God who deeply loves them, died for their sins and has a plan for them. And so he instructs them, "Tan tuddy, do not give up but do your best to glorify your Creator."

Our call is to be Christ in the workplace. This means we should "Tan tuddy". Can't you hear the Lord saying, "Tan tuddy, be aware and prayerful in your surroundings, take notice of what I'm doing around you... Tan tuddy, don't waste time being unproductive; it isn't my plan for you or for those around you... Tan tuddy, be ready to 'stand sturdy' when faced with difficulties or challenges."

Now, before you feel discouraged about the task at hand, know that we serve a God who is paying attention to us; he is truly "Tanning tuddy": *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.* (Genesis 28:15)

In even the busiest and most distracting of situations Jesus was a wonderful example of "Tanning tuddy". Many times he had throngs of people around him, but he still noticed things that other people missed, like children, prostitutes, beggars, and even the tax collectors. He paid attention to the details around him; he looked for people on the margins of our society.

So, let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Tan tuddy!

Stieg Strand is a member of the Minneapolis-Downtown Chapter. He has been selling and teaching about real estate for about 20 years. He and his wife Marilyn have three grown children and love bringing mission teams to the beautiful island of Jamaica. Stieg can be reached at stiegstrand@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

Orange County
January 15-17, 2016
Palm Desert
March 11-13, 2016
Greater Phoenix
April 1-3, 2016

Women's Weekends

WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill
April 16-17, 2016
WCIC-Phoenix
April 22-24, 2016
WCIC-Fresno
April 29-May 1, 2016

Christians in Commerce News

Workplace Stories Needed, pg. 4

2015 Annual Conference Photos

Please send your stories to:
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Falls Church, VA 22042

Life Pleasing to God

week 1

The 4th "T" – Trust

By: Kirby J. Falkenberg

... *God loves a cheerful giver.*
(2 Corinthians 9:7)

A man asked an itinerant preacher traveling to homes and through towns whether he tithed to the Lord. The preacher said no, he had a wife and three children and couldn't afford it. The man asked the preacher to start tithing, assuring him that if he ever fell short, he would make up the difference. At the end of the year, the man went to settle up, but the preacher responded that he'd never turned up short. Whenever he had been in need, people had thrown extra chickens, potatoes and other items into his wagon so that he was always taken care of. The man said, "Preacher, I don't know why you trusted me but didn't trust the Lord."

As Christians, we are encouraged to give at least 10% of our time, talent and treasure to the work of the Lord. The fourth "T" in that equation is trust.

Everything we own is a gift from God and he sets us up as managers of those gifts. My wife Claudia and I started tithing two years after we got married and have done so now for over 45 years. We support our church, ministries, organizations, family and friends. We are having a blast doing it and it has become a great joy, not a burden.

In the movie [Pretty Woman](#), Richard Gere is asked how much he plans to spend on high-end clothes for Julia Roberts. His answer is, "An obscene amount." What would it look like if we were "obscene" in our generosity in the marketplace? Would our businesses and others flourish? Would we experience greater joy? In CIC it is our policy to share all our teachings and practices free of charge, knowing full well we can trust the Lord to provide for us.

A lady once came to see me while I was working at the YMCA and shared with me that she was recently divorced, alone with a few children, and had received nothing in the settlement but the clothes on their backs. She was depressed and down on her luck and didn't know what to do. Someone had recommended to her that she come speak to me as I may be able to advise

her and get her some help.

When we met, I told her she needed to get connected, start having fun and get involved in the Y community by exercising and enrolling her kids in some classes. Then, everyone should start feeling better. I explained how our pricing worked and that I could get her a scholarship covering 90% of the cost. The 10% remainder would be her responsibility.

She shared that she couldn't even afford the 10%. I told her I would find someone to sponsor her, and she and her children got involved. Several months later, she again came to see me. She now had enough money to rent an apartment but could not get approval due to her lack of credit history. She asked whether there was anything I could do.

I wrote a letter on her behalf and, having faith in her commitment, unbeknownst to her, I personally guaranteed two months' rent, knowing she would make good on it. She got the apartment and moved in.

A short time later, she came to me a third time asking for help. She had two vehicles that were in need of repair. However, she didn't have the money to fix either. I contacted my good friend Willy and shared her story. He picked up both cars and was able to get her into a working vehicle right away.

Much of the time, people who are down on their luck are simply in need of social capital – someone to vouch for them. Being charitable and going beyond – even far beyond – what we have to do can turn someone's entire life around.

God calls us to be generous with our resources (time, talents and treasures). If we haven't already been in the habit of being generous, it can seem daunting. This is where trust comes in. Share with one another your own stories as an encouragement. Generosity defeats selfishness and sets us free to be Christ to others, making a real impact on the world around us. Being a philanthropist is a state of heart, not a state of wealth.

Kirby Falkenberg is married to Claudia and splits his time between South Bend, Indiana and Sarasota, Florida. He is a retired YMCA director and serves on the board of CIC International. He can be reached at kjfalkenberg@gmail.com.

Pray: Father, thank you for all you have provided for us. Show me how I can better serve your people and the world.

Reflect: If all my possessions belong to God and I am his manager, how good a job would he say I am doing?

Discuss: Are we or could we be joyful, "obscene" givers of our time, talents, treasures and trust in the marketplace? Our homes? Our communities? CIC? Give some ideas or examples.

Men's December Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Dan Farrar

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. (Proverbs 25:21)

This proverb can come across our path when we least expect it. In the homeowner association industry, we usually don't get phone calls unless there is a problem and many times the issue is another neighbor's actions.

A call came in from a frustrated homeowner who was upset that her neighbor's dog was barking all day. Because she worked out of her home, this was keeping her from doing her job. She wanted the association to write the neighbor demanding he immediately get his dog to stop barking or face disciplinary action.

She had not spoken to her neighbor, feeling that it was the management company's job to do so.

Thinking on Matthew 5:9 (*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*), I suggested she consider her neighbor's position. Perhaps he had no idea how much his dog was barking. How might he feel receiving a letter from the association, wondering why his neighbor hadn't come to speak with him herself? At best, he would be embarrassed and at worst, offended. In either case, it would build a tremendous barrier between them.

Instead, I suggested that she bake some cookies, introduce herself to her neighbor and get to know him. By understanding his situation, she could then explain her home office setup and discuss some possible options about the dog.

My homeowner didn't like that idea compared to her original plan, but I encouraged her to try. If it didn't work, I would be happy to write the letter she originally requested. She begrudgingly agreed and said she would call me back if it didn't succeed. I never did hear back from her.

The spirit of love and encouragement provides us with daily opportunities to "bake some cookies" and build relationships with our coworkers, customers and neighbors. Let's be open to his call.

Pray: Lord, please open my heart and my eyes to those who are in need of love and encouragement.

Reflect: When have I had opportunities to mend fences between my coworkers, customers, or family? Have I ignored these calls regularly?

Discuss: Give examples of opportunities you've had to be a peacemaker at work or in the marketplace. How did it go? What were others' reactions? What more, if anything, could you have done? How can you be more proactive in this area?

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By: Dan Farrar

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12: 9-10)

My company believes in building community and enhancing lifestyles for the homeowner associations we serve, but this can be challenging when we get calls from homeowners with problems. At times, it's difficult for my team members not to take these issues personally. They want to do a good job, but when they feel personally attacked, stress levels rise, resulting in irritability and a lack of cooperation, to the extent that some even call in sick.

During one of our morning meetings, a team member came in angry and frustrated after a particularly troubling call from a homeowner. Sensing an opportunity to be Christ-like, I shared a tip that had worked for me. Instead of getting angry and adversarial with the complaining homeowners, I suggested that we try to love the people we come into contact with each day.

We often don't listen well enough, are too quick to remind people of the rules and regulations, and not empathetic to their situations. Alternatively, if we try and love these homeowners and understand their concerns, our hearts are changed and we are able to find common ground and solutions that would not otherwise be feasible. I encouraged our team to try this and to let me know how it went.

The following week at our morning meeting, I heard more favorable reports – things were improving. Calls were more helpful, frustration levels reduced, and complaints not as heated. I urged my team to continue to work on this.

Since then, our office team has become more cooperative than ever. Those visiting our office now find it a warm and welcoming atmosphere and people say they have a good feeling when they stop by. We have even started receiving referrals.

Leading with love has truly made a difference for us as well as those we serve.

Pray: Lord, lead us to love those who might not be the easiest to love. Help us to understand that loving our neighbors opens our hearts to loving you.

Reflect: When have I failed to love those in the marketplace? How did it make me feel?

Discuss: How can we be more loving towards those who are not the easiest to love? What does it really mean to "honor one another above yourselves"?

Men's December Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

By: Dan Farrar

If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. (Matthew 18:15)

Each week during our chapter meeting, we break out into small groups and discuss the topic at hand. The subject for one particular day dealt with forgiving others, even those with whom we are deeply at odds.

As we shared, one brother expressed his discomfort and great difficulty with his business partner. As in many situations, money and trust were an issue. Things had gone awry, leaving this brother in dire straits. Bitter and resentful, he had continued to work with this business partner, but never forgave or trusted him from that point.

Our small group urged our brother to forgive his partner. He said he would think about it. The weeks went by, but still it was too hard for him. Finally, our group told him that this was preventing him from growing into the man that God wanted him to be. We could tell he was in a real quandary.

The next week, when he came in he was all smiles from ear to ear. He told our group he had met with his business partner and forgiven him. He said a huge weight had been lifted from his chest and what's more, he and his business partner were able to reconcile and begin to heal the divide that had grown so great.

What a blessing each of our Challenge Groups can be in advancing our mission "to encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit"!

Dan Farrar has been a member of the Palm Desert Chapter for more than six years and also helped to form the Fallbrook Chapter. He is married to Maryellen and they have one daughter getting ready to go off to college. Dan is a General Manager for a Homeowner Association in the Palm Desert area and can be reached at danielkfarrar@aol.com.

Workplace Stories Needed

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We especially are 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 even know where to start, 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 would be 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 Therese Rosenthal at info@cicintl.org or 703-205-5600.

Pray: Lord, please remove my roadblocks so I can forgive those who have wronged me. Open my heart to support and encourage my brothers.

Reflect: How active am I in my Challenge Group? Can I do more to help others? Am I resistant to sharing my challenges? How open am I to receiving input?

Discuss: How can we more effectively work together in our groups? Are there things holding us back? What actions can we take for better follow up with each other?

Women's December Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Gail Cardwell

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

In my previous job, I was responsible for an annual convention attended by 2,800 people. Preparations began eight months in advance, requiring substantial contributions across the organization. In 2015, the convention greatly exceeded the expected attendance, as well as the budgeted net income. I wanted to honor everyone's hard work by presenting an unexpected "Spot Award" for outstanding performance. Because so many had contributed, it was difficult to isolate one group or individual. I prayed for guidance in selecting the worthy recipient.

Shortly thereafter, I had to ship a bulky package and enlisted the help of Mary, who works in our mail room. She smiled widely and congratulated me on the convention. Something about that smile touched my heart. For many years, Mary had humbly served others. While my group organized two large annual conferences, her office services group provided support for seventeen! Not only did they ship all the materials for those conferences, but they also set up and tore down the displays on site and registered attendees during what should have been their "downtime". I realized Mary was sacrificing the equivalent of three months of family time annually. How often I had taken for granted the prompt and safe arrival of all those convention materials!

That same afternoon, I presented Mary's group with a significant financial award. She instantly burst into tears and threw her arms around me. She shared how much she needed the money, as multiple bills were outstanding.

I was grateful to the Lord for answering my prayer and giving me the opportunity to recognize Mary's often unappreciated but dutiful devotion to building his kingdom within our organization.

Pray: Father, help us to seek out the meek in our workplaces, that we may honor them and, in doing so, bring you glory.

Reflect: Are there people I overlook in my workplace? How can I honor their sacrifices?

Discuss: What factors in today's workplaces contribute to neglecting humble service? How can we, as CIC members, effect change in this culture?

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

By: Gail Cardwell

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self...; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4: 22-24)

I recently stepped down from a senior position I held in the financial services industry for over 20 years. For much of my career, I experienced a sense of tremendous achievement whenever I reached a professional milestone. Going to work each day became a comfortable routine and I didn't know any other way of life.

For the last two years of my employment however, I felt unfulfilled in these successes. The desire to serve the Lord in a more meaningful way pulled at my heart, but I was so accustomed to living my life "my way," I was confused as to how to take the next step.

Offentimes, I wrestled spiritually to stay on "my path", resisting God's calling. CIC played a critical role as I sought discernment for spiritual direction. My CIC mentor graciously provided me with spiritual exercises to help me seek God's will and guidance.

Over the ensuing months, I was blessed with clarity to leave my job and apply my prior membership outreach skills toward helping to grow the Women's CIC Northern Virginia Chapter. Although offered several positions shortly after my departure, I was confident in this new path and declined them. My CIC sisters were instrumental in filling in the gaps throughout my transition, as I shed my old skin and put on a new self!

Pray: Father, help us to redeem your creation, to be like you in true righteousness and holiness.

Reflect: In what ways, if any, do I still cling to my former way of life?

Discuss: How has CIC played a role in setting your spirit free to serve Christ?

Women's December Reflections

(continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By: Gail Cardwell

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Peter 3:15)

Recently, I heard the testimony of a sister in Christ. She shared stories of her childhood, having grown up as a victim of an abusive parent. This constant discouragement provoked her to seek approval in life through professional successes. By any earthy measure, she had achieved great success. She married a wealthy man and had beautiful children, and landed a position as one of the top professionals in her field.

Sadly, her marriage ended in divorce and abandonment. Then, her contract for employment was not renewed. The dual impact of divorce and unemployment resulted in financial duress. One day, a man came to cut off her service. She asked graciously for more time. The man was moved by her appeal and relented.

These worldly disappointments heightened her realization that she could find hope only in Christ.

While our childhoods were very different, I related to my sister's earthly ambitions. In the past, I too had placed my hope in temporal treasures, but God wants to use our professional expertise to bring others to him. As the sister continued to speak, she remarked upon how she employs her God-given, succinct communications skills to share with others the reason for the hope she now has. She speaks to and counsels Christian sisters in how to efficiently and effectively communicate with others so that they too may advance the Kingdom of God.

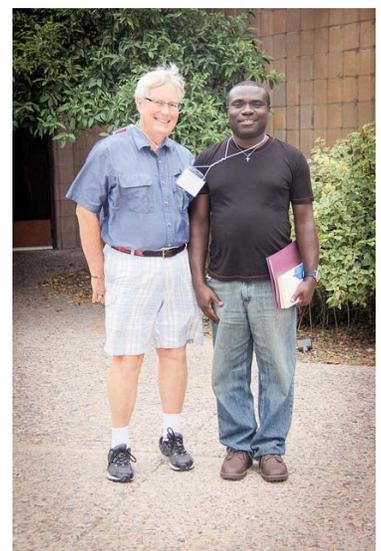
Gail Cardwell is President of the WCIC-Northern Virginia Chapter. She has been married to her husband, David, for 26 years. They have two sons. Gail worked in the financial services industry for over 20 years. She may be reached at gailcardwell@cox.net.

Pray: Father, instill in us a desire to bring hope to others through our testimonies as witnesses to Christ.

Reflect: Am I prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks me the reason for my hope?

Discuss: How have our professional experiences (or other life experiences) been used to serve God?

Christians in Commerce Annual Conference



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



Christ
ALIVE!

Galatians 2:20
“...I no longer live, but
Christ lives in me.”

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