Have you ever felt like you had to confront something in your life you knew was not of God?

I have been struggling with my weight problem for over twenty years. (“Weight problem” – In my case, a nice, safe name for gluttony)

We probably all do it - make excuses for our shortcomings - and call them something other than what they really are. In Romans 12:1-2 we read: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind…”

This has been on my mind for years. Getting in shape was always among my daily prayer intentions, but it took a combination of events in my life to help me commit.

I talked to men in CIC and friends at work who had lost weight. They had changed their focus from food to something more important. I always made a point of asking them, “How did you lose that weight? What was more important?”

There are several reasons I finally made the decision myself. One day I looked in the mirror and thought, “Who is that fat guy?” Another time, while swimming with the grandkids, I suddenly felt I was not being a very good example to them. These are the moments that stuck with me.

Meanwhile, the weight continued taking its toll on my body, arthritic knees and diabetes.

My wife Sheila always encouraged me. But it took a man at my weekly bible study to really break through to me. He had joined a weight loss clinic and encouraged me to just check it out. I committed to a program that helped me change my eating and of course, I also kept up the daily praying. It has now been seven months and fifty pounds of weight lost, with another ten to go.

Reflecting back on the scripture from Romans, I have come to understand that I really did have to transform my mind in order to transform my body. It is a daily sacrifice.

In “My Utmost for His Highest,” Oswald Chambers writes, “The work of salvation means that in your real life things are dramatically changed. You no longer look at things in the same way. Your desires are new and the old things have lost their power to attract you. One of the tests for determining if the work of salvation in your life is genuine is - has God changed the things that really matter to you?”

I share this to encourage all of us to confront those things in our lives that are keeping us from being the best Christian witness to others, especially our coworkers. Are we addicted to tobacco, alcohol, food, laziness, sex, or procrastination?

I was addicted to food. I know that putting my story out there is another form of accountability for me and hopefully an encouragement for you. I invite you to confront your sins head-on. Free up your mind and body so you can work for the Father’s perfect will. Let’s pray for one another. I already do for you!

Frank Adamo has been a member of CIC since 1987 and belongs to the Central Mesa Men’s Chapter. He has been married to his wife, Sheila, for forty-one years. They have three grown sons and twelve grandchildren. Frank is a senior contracts manager in the Law and Contracts department at Honeywell. He can be reached at fadamo12@cox.net.
“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)

I recently attended a retreat in which one of the talks focused on the subject of hope. The speaker made a point to draw a distinction between Christian hope and secular hope. Christian hope, she explained, is rooted in the Lord and in his resurrection, while secular hope is rooted in a particular desirable outcome.

Reflecting on the difference between the two, I realized how often I wish for things to be different throughout my day at work. I frequently find myself thinking, “I wish our culture was more uplifting,” or “I wish this tenant’s demeanor was more pleasant.” These thought patterns are so common that I hardly even notice them. Since the retreat, however, I have been more keenly aware of the unproductiveness of such “wishful thinking.”

One line in the talk particularly resonated with me: “Hope fuels the Kingdom of God.” In other words, hope calls forth action. For me, the first place that required action was in my heart. I needed to find a way to cultivate hope within me in order to bring that same hope into the world around me.

Rather than wishing for my workplace culture to be different, I should be more purposeful in steering conversations toward uplifting topics. Instead of merely desiring a different attitude from a tenant, I should be more compassionate in my interactions with him or her.

The company I work for is currently managing a large renovation project in one of the city’s downtown buildings. This work impacts some tenants more than others, depending on their location in the building. One of the tenants sent me numerous emails detailing how disruptive this renovation project had been for her and her coworkers. I decided a meeting was the appropriate way to respond to her concerns.

As I drove to the building, I was amazed at how confident I was that the Lord would be present in our conversation. I was certain I would be able to hear her complaints with understanding and to provide solutions to ease her frustrations.

Our conversation went just as I thought it would! We both parted from our discussion with a greater appreciation of the other’s situation. Hoping in the Lord makes situations tolerable and their outcomes easier to bear. It keeps our challenges in perspective and allows us to trust in the Lord regardless of the circumstances.

I can choose to be hopeful that all necessary permits will be delivered on time, but if they are not, I can continue to be hopeful we will meet our deadlines. If we don’t, I can continue to put my hope in the Lord, knowing he is in the details.

As we freely make the decision to place our hope in the Lord, we will be empowered to act in courage and in confidence. These actions will prosper our lives, both with each other and with the Lord, as we continue to build his kingdom in the marketplace.

The Lord is present in us and that is the reason for our hope!

Catherine Pingel currently serves as secretary for the South Bend/Elkhart Women’s Chapter and is the newest member of the Women’s Chapters Advisory Board. She is the oldest of seven children and works as a commercial property manager in the South Bend, IN area. Catherine can be reached at ctpingel@gmail.com.

Lord, grant us your grace to nurture hope so that in confidence we may be a light to those in our lives.

Think of a time you let your circumstances dictate your disposition. How can you attribute your thoughts or actions to a sense of hopelessness? How can you cultivate more hope in your life?
**Personal Sacrifice**

By Rick Null

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12)

Several times in my spiritual growth, I have felt cast out into the barren land to become one with God and his will just as Moses was after killing the Egyptian. I lost everything in the dotcom and telecom bust and wound up going from VP of Telecom Operations to designing kitchens at a Home Depot. I took a retail job in order to show my family I could submit and do what was needed to provide for them in a humble and authentic way. In the past, I was always the bigwig, climbing the corporate ladder and gleaming with self-worth in income and accolades. I had asked God to humble me and now he was delivering!

Everything had seemed to be going well before it all went south. However, I knew I was not utilizing the talents God had entrusted to me to the fullest. People had spoken to me about it, including some Christian brothers and customers whom I had grown to know and love. Then I was fired after six and a half years. One of the brothers met me outside the store and asked if I had been let go. I told him yes. He replied, “Praise God,” and embraced me.

The Lord graciously provided temporary employment after I was laid off. The Workforce Investment Act enabled me to get some additional IT certifications to get back into the work I knew. The Lord had impressed upon me that I needed to do this. After eleven and a half months, I received a job answering phones for an IT service desk. I used to own call centers and here I was now working for one.

Four years later, I am standing here as a humble servant, having come from Home Depot to Homeland Security. I now make sure to bring Christ’s presence into my workplace on a daily basis, still ever growing in my own relationship with him.

**PRAY:**

Lord, please show us your will, regardless of the struggles we are going through, knowing you are the ultimate Lord of our lives today and into our future.

**REFLECT:**

Think about a situation in which you were presented with large obstacles and how God brought you through them.

**DISCUSS:**

What obstacles have you faced in your life recently? Discuss how the Lord has brought you through them. Discuss specific examples of how he led you.

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**Making a Difference in the Workplace**

By Rick Null

They will, however, become subject to him, so that they may learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands. (2 Chronicles 12:8)

While working as a government contractor, I was singled out and given the “special” team members that nobody else wanted to deal with. They were “iffy” hires and we had to keep our numbers up, completing phone calls within a certain timeframe while being held to certain metrics by the government.

After a few months of being on the contract, I was given a new team member whom I had gone through IT school with. I had over thirty years of experience in the IT industry while she had just come from the food service industry with no IT experience. However, in the past I had been a food broker with my dad, so I could relate somewhat to her background.

With this common ground, I was able to foster a mentorship. She continued to grow and develop, and eventually, after starting out as our least skilled analyst, this team member was named analyst of the quarter! Last year, she was promoted to team lead, and is now mentoring others.

I once asked management why I had been assigned these people. They said it was due to my personality and patience. For me, this was thanks to my faith walk. While a few individuals were weeded out, most had become productive contributors to our team.

It is because of my faith walk and my belief in treating all as children of God that this task was entrusted to me. While others would complain about their team, I would pray for the Holy Spirit to give me the wisdom and discernment on how to coach, develop, and motivate these individuals. He is the one I serve, not my worldly masters.

**PRAY:**

Lord, give me patience, wisdom and discernment to support my coworkers.

**REFLECT:**

What difficult individuals has God put in your path? How do you believe God wants to use you in these situations?

**DISCUSS:**

How have you been able to lift people up and help them through their struggles? What success have you seen? What more are you being called to do?
Holding Each Other Accountable

By Rick Null

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

Recently, the Greater Phoenix Area chapters renewed their commitment to increasing and strengthening our chapter life, carrying out our mission to build community, and developing strong Christian leadership.

After struggling for several years to bring the Phoenix chapters closer together, the Holy Spirit renewed the commitment and vision of several men and blessed us with effective leadership to facilitate change. I myself was convicted to become more of a man of action after attending the Annual Conference.

We now have almost a dozen men dedicated to meeting bi-monthly to pray for direction from the Holy Spirit. We are developing specific activities and initiatives that can be used in all our chapters to increase Christ’s presence, bring the brothers closer together, and share what CIC has done for us individually.

This also gives us an opportunity as leaders to break bread, increase our fellowship, and pray for the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom and discernment as we take on this initiative. We have had to think about where we each need to grow personally in order to allow his increase in us. We want his light to shine for all to see and to be accountable in deeds, not just in words.

After a few short months, the fruits have already begun to show in subtle ways, including attendance at our meetings and other chapter functions. Praise the Lord!

PRAY:

Lord, instill in me the willingness to push other things in life aside in order to grow in the Spirit and better serve my brothers and sisters in Christ.

REFLECT:

What things have I put before or allowed to get in the way of growing my relationships with my brothers in Christ?

DISCUSS:

What small things can I do in my everyday life to help strengthen the fellowship within my chapter and the people I associate with as a member of Christians in Commerce?

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

2017 Annual Conference

OCTOBER 20-21, 2017

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Golf Resort
Cathedral City, CA (Palm Springs area)

More information to follow. Mark your calendars!

Watch our 2016 Annual Conference Highlights video
https://vimeo.com/196304693
**WEEK 2 • WOMEN'S REFLECTIONS**

**Personal Sacrifice**

By Nanci Panos

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4: 18-19)

At one point I was overseeing four medical offices. It was brought to my attention that one of my employees in another office needed time off, and may even need to resign as she was distraught over her pregnancy. She was single and the baby’s father was not in the picture. She wanted this child with all of her heart, but had been told that the baby had very serious organ problems and would not develop. The recommendation was that she abort.

I was very saddened by this news. I called the employee to acknowledge her reason for leaving, wished her well, and told her I would say a prayer for her. She was grateful.

After I hung up the phone, I had a very strong sense I ought to call her back. I fought it. After all, we didn’t really know each other. I was also afraid she would find it inappropriate of me to reach out and that she might report me for overstepping my bounds.

Still, the idea would not go away. So I called her back. When she answered I said, “I know you really want this baby. Would you be open to coming to my home and being prayed with by me and another Christian roommate?” To my surprise, she said yes with no hesitation.

My roommate and I ended up praying with her on three different occasions in our home. We never discussed the abortion issue. We simply prayed for healing. Every time we prayed, she received more encouraging news that the baby’s organs were showing improvement. It was very exciting!

Eventually, this young woman did resign from the company, but only so she could stay home and love her newborn, a beautiful baby boy, who was born completely healthy.

**PRAY:**

Father, help me to see and react lovingly to opportunities you give to me.

**REFLECT:**

How often have you had the thought to do something for someone, and chose not to? Think about why not. Was it fear of rejection? Remember, if God gives us a thought, he gives us the grace to act on it.

**DISCUSS:**

How can I be more readily willing to act when opportunities arise?

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**WEEK 3 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Redeeming Our Father’s Creation**

By Nanci Panos

Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)

Years back, I worked in the Radiation Oncology department of a hospital. Many of the patients were very close to death, some receiving treatment only for their pain.

My supervisor was very difficult to work for. He was a controlling individual and made it clear that any kind of religious conversations or expressions of faith were not allowed in the office. He even threatened to dismiss me if I did not follow this directive.

I felt that I needed to do more, so I joined the pastoral care team at the hospital. This way, I could at least visit some of the patients on my lunch hour to speak to them about Jesus and pray with them while respecting my boss’ wishes.

Most of my patients welcomed the company. However, one young woman in her early twenties strongly rejected my offer. She was very angry, and even threw her cup at me to get me out of her room! Her anger frightened me. She was dying and I feared she would pass away without being reconciled with God and whomever else she needed to forgive.

I stopped by her room every day for at least a week. Each time her response was the same. I wouldn’t even have to say anything; as soon as she saw me, she cursed and yelled at me to get out.

One day I tried to be funny, standing outside her door with a fake shield on. This seemed to disarm her (so to speak!). For the first time, she smiled, and was very calm. She told me to come in, and we talked a little about Jesus. Her demeanor changed and she began to cry. I asked if I could pray with her, and she agreed. She was so peaceful after. I kissed her, and moved on to the next room. I later received word that she had passed away that evening.

**PRAY:**

Lord, help me to be creative in my support of others. Help me to reach their hearts. Lead me through your Holy Spirit.

**REFLECT:**

How can I make a difference in the workplace? How can I bring a deeper sense of unity? Perhaps if I begin each morning with prayer, I will know.

**DISCUSS:**

Has prayer made a difference in your work day? Share.
The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By Nanci Panos

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Colossians 4: 2-6)

Verse 5 of the above scripture struck me as a challenge: Be wise, and make the most of every opportunity.

One of my roles in our medical practice is Human Resources Manager. I have served in this capacity for thirty-three years. I am often privy to and entrusted with the personal problems and concerns of our employees. I have not always made the most of every opportunity, but I remind myself that it is okay to be a part of the “Start Over Club,” and make every effort to please Our Lord.

Our company is very diverse. Some are deeply loyal to their customs and faiths, while others are non-practicing, have fallen away from their churches, or have been hurt and chosen not to believe. If an employee opens up to me regarding a personal situation, I try at some point to ask where their faith plays a part in all this.

One week, I conducted interviews for a position we needed to fill. One candidate was very qualified, and exactly what I was looking for. She was bubbly, and seemed to be one of those individuals who sees the glass as half full. I went over all the practical information, and then we started sharing a bit about ourselves. She had a gap in her last two places of employment, so I inquired as to why. She explained she had needed to take care of a personal situation. I said that I hoped all was well. Her eyes welled up, and she simply nodded yes. I got up and handed her a box of tissues. She started to apologize profusely, and I put my hand on her shoulder and told her not to worry about it.

When I sat back down and we were face to face, she said, “My son had passed away. He was a teenager, and he had cancer.” It was near the anniversary of his death, so she was very tender. He had passed away hours prior to getting his wish from the Make a Wish Foundation.

I then asked her how this had affected her faith. She said that she was really struggling. I told her I was sorry for her loss and that I would pray for her to find consolation and faith. She was grateful, and we ended the interview with an embrace.

PRAY:

Lord, I want to have my conversations be full of grace. I want conversations to be meaningful, and rich. Please give me your words.

REFLECT:

So often I have regretted what I have said, or what I did not say. I know the Lord does not want me to beat myself up over my regrets. He wants me to be a part of the “Start Over Club.” He always wants to use us.

DISCUSS:

How have you turned around something you regretted?

2016 MEMBER GIFT CAMPAIGN RESULTS ANNOUNCED

We are thrilled to announce that we have SURPASSED our 2016 Member Gift Campaign goal amount! Pledges received totaled over $272,000.00, which is more than a 10% increase from 2015. This of course was achieved only through the charitable support of our many chapters, members and friends.

Inserted in this month’s issue is our 2016 Member Gift Campaign Honor Roll, which recognizes the Christians in Commerce (CIC) members and friends whose generosity sustained our mission during the 2016 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 prayers. We cannot do the work we’ve been called to do without you. Blessings to you all!
2017 CIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members of the CIC Board of Directors who served during the 2016 calendar year included Terry Cassell, Steve Becker, Kirby Falkenberg, Art Klaum, Dan Kuplic, Rich Preuss and Dan Trevino.

Kirby, who served on the board for nine years, and as Chairman of the Board for four of those years, will be stepping down from this role. We would like to thank him for his service in this capacity, as well as for his efforts as our liaison to the Uganda chapters and our Women's Chapters Advisory Board. Kirby has been a faithful member of CIC since 1993. He is being replaced by Rich Preuss as the new Chairman of the Board.

We are happy to welcome two new additions to the board for 2017! Both Luke Cahill and Gail Cardwell have accepted the invitation to serve as board members for a term of one year.

To provide some background, experienced CIC board members serve a three year term of office, while members new to the board serve for a one year period of time. When that year is complete, and after prayer and discussion by both parties, a determination is reached as to whether the member should continue the term for two additional years.

The responsibilities of our board include:
• Meetings four times a year
• Monthly conference calls
• Setting the overall strategy for the growth of our ministry
• Approving and implementing new projects
• Serving as the Steering Committee for the Annual Conference

Below are short biographies for both Luke and Gail. Biographies of our existing board members can be found on our website at https://www.christiansincommerce.org/meet-christians-commerce-board-directors.

LUKE CAHILL has been active in CIC for close to a year. He was recruited by Steve Becker to lead a pro-bono research project to help CIC better understand the next generation and was inspired to stay involved. By his own admission his participation has already had a life-changing impact on him. He is the Managing Principal of a market research company, REAL Insight. His company fields custom research projects for Fortune 500 clients, including General Mills, Pepsico, and Johnson & Johnson.

Luke received his bachelor’s in business from the University of Minnesota-Morris and MBA from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. In addition to his work with CIC, he volunteers as a business mentor to seventh graders in a low income school in Minneapolis.

Luke and his wife of almost ten years, Angela, live in Eagan, MN. They have four young sons: Lachlan, Torin, Callum, and Beccan. He can be reached at lcahill@insightrealized.com.

GAIL CARDWELL is currently serving as President of the Northern Virginia (NOVA) Women's Chapter and will be the first woman to serve CIC as a board member. She has been a CIC member for seven years, having been introduced to the ministry by Terry Cassell and Therese McNichol, and has since spoken at several CIC Annual Conferences. In addition to her CIC volunteer activities, she was one of five women to launch a start-up nonprofit, Suited for Change. Gail also volunteers as a scripture teacher, ministering to seventh and eighth grade girls.

Gail has been employed in the financial services sector for over twenty years and is in the process of becoming a college planning consultant. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in International Economics from Georgetown University and a master’s degree in City Planning from Harvard University.

Gail and her husband, Dave, live in Falls Church, Virginia and have been married for twenty-seven years. They have two sons, Daniel and Christopher. She can be reached at gailcardwell@cox.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN'S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Monterey
March 17-19, 2017
Greater Phoenix Area
March 17-19, 2017
Salinas Valley
April 21-23, 2017
Salinas Valley
November 17-19, 2017

WOMEN'S CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Santa Cruz
March 11-12, 2017
Fresno
April 28-30, 2017
Gilroy-Morgan Hill
May 5-7, 2017

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference: Palm Springs Area
October 20-21, 2017

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