



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

January, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

Our Role

by: Terry Cassell

Happy New Year! Let's start our year together by looking at God's call for each of us in Christians in Commerce.

What is our role in Christians in Commerce? There are many ministries in the world that do good things for people. They serve the poor, run bible studies, provide bibles and evangelize in non-believing countries, furnish goods and medical services to the needy, visit prisons, tend to the sick, serve the homeless, etc. These ministries are all good and necessary to help those in need and God is at work in all of them.

But Christians in Commerce is not those ministries. We have been called to serve in a different venue. CIC is very unique in that we support and encourage men and women to transform their workplaces by being Christ.

We do this in many different ways. Through our Challenge Weekends, chapter meetings and other outreaches of CIC, we are changing the mindsets of greed, selfishness, deceit, corruption, unfairness and immorality by exhibiting faithful Christian character.

Our coworkers should see our ethical behavior, admire our integrity, respect our honesty, and therefore be intrigued by our relationship with God. God works through us into their lives! He challenges their behavior, expresses his love for them and calls them into his life because of brothers and sisters like us.

How are we helping to bring the life of Christ and his Kingdom into our workplaces and the marketplace?

Those of us who are retired may think we don't have a role to play in CIC's mission, but that is not true. We all have a role to play. Any way we make ourselves useful to others is a service to the Lord. Helping to expand the mission of CIC, encouraging others to be Christ in

the workplace, and serving the local chapter are all important parts in fulfilling our mission.

Our call is about more than being personally transformed through our weekends and chapter activities. It's about being Christ and transforming the workplaces where most spend 50 or more hours a week.

Because the Holy Spirit lives in us and empowers us, we deal with people in the marketplace from a different perspective. Jesus promises us that if we are faithful in a little, God will give us responsibility for much. We are faithful to our call when we bring the life of Christ and his kingdom to the marketplace.

The apostle Paul writes, *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.* (1 Corinthians 12:27) Each of us has special gifts and abilities, which God expects us to use in this ministry, just as much as in our jobs and other areas of our lives.

Ministry isn't limited to "spiritual" occupations. It applies to all areas of life wherein we serve the needs of others beyond our immediate family and ourselves.

As members of Christians in Commerce, let each of us begin the year by asking the Lord to show us the role he's calling us to in service of our vision and mission. Remember, when we are faithful in small ways we are blessed in big ways. Know that he will not only show us our role, but also provide the grace to fulfill it.

Have a blessed New Year!

Terry Cassell is the President of Christians in Commerce. He can be reached at cassell@cicintl.org.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

- Orange County**
January 16-18, 2015
- Greater Phoenix Area**
January 23-24, 2015
- Salinas Valley**
January 30-February 1, 2015
- High Point**
February 20-22, 2015
- South Bend/Elkhart**
March 6-8, 2015
- Monterey**
May 15-17, 2015
- Twin Cities Area/Duluth**
May 29-31, 2015

Women's Weekends

- WCIC-Phoenix**
January 23-24, 2015
- WCIC-Santa Cruz/ WCIC-Monterey**
February 28-March 1, 2015
- WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill**
May 1-3, 2015

Christians in Commerce News

CIC Co-Founder Expands on Our Mission

Please send your stories to:
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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Where is the Marketplace?

by: John Harrison

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

My wife and I were preparing to go to the National Conference in San Jose, CA, when we stopped at a tire store to make sure our tires were properly inflated. The manager checked the tires and suggested we get new ones. My wife thought this was a good idea so I asked for a quote on tires of the same quality. It sounded reasonable, so I agreed to come back the next day.

After dropping my wife off for a lunch the next day, I had extra time and went to get another quote from a big-box store known for excellent prices. Their quote for the same quality tires was actually several hundred dollars more. Looking back, I realize God was up to something. He had prepared a good work in advance for me at the other store.

As I waited at the first store for my tires, I saw a man come in looking distraught and out of sorts. He was wearing walking shorts, his knee was bleeding and one hand was shaking. I thought, "I'm not sure I want to talk to him."

Guess where he sat in this large, nearly empty waiting room? Right next to me! I sensed the Lord say, *He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 11:15)*

"Okay Lord, I'll give away the faith you have given me," I answered. I initiated a conversation.

During the next hour, I learned that the man, whose name was Tom, was 65, without a job and had recently moved to my area, having rented a room in a lady's home. He was in town looking for an insurance company when he had a blowout.

Tom said he was lucky his tire blew right next to the tire store. I gently reminded him that he was not lucky but blessed and told him the difference.

He shared with me that just six weeks earlier, he had stopped drinking and using cocaine, and with his flushed

face and shaking hands, he certainly looked like it. He was a mess.

Tom used the word "lucky" again and I assured him God was moving in his life. With that, he turned to me square on and asked if I was a Christian. I responded, "Yes" and he spent the next ten minutes telling me how much he hated religion. When he was a child, he belonged to one church and then another. He shared about being a part-time actor and how his religion was the lifestyle of Hollywood.

It finally dawned on me that this man was a "good work" God had prepared for me and I had better generate boldness and get on with it. So, I reached over, grabbed his hand and asked him to repeat a prayer after me out loud. He did, Romans 10:9-10, right there in the waiting room, right there in the marketplace. *(If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.)*

Afterward, Tom looked at me and said, "I feel different." I said, "You look different." A big smile spread over his face.

At this point the store manager called me up to pay for my tires. He asked if I had been praying with Tom. I said, "I not only prayed with him, but I led him to Christ." He too was a believer and thrilled to hear the good news.

The store manager had given Tom a good deal of two tires for one. Tom still did not have enough money to buy auto insurance, so I reached in my pocket and gave him what he needed.

Tom said, "This has been a blessed day!"

John Harrison lives in Palm Springs, CA, with his wife, Florence. They have five children and six grandchildren living in the United States, Canada, and England. John is president of the Palm Springs Chapter, and is also active in the Palm Desert and Beaumont/Banning chapters. He can be reached at john.d.harrison.42@gmail.com.

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me to recognize those you desire I speak to with boldness and love in my work and the marketplace.

Reflect: How have I missed opportunities to plant seeds of God's love and encouragement? Where have I seen his grace and been used?

Discuss: We want to be used by God in the marketplace as disciples and evangelists for the Gospel whom he can depend on. What do I need to do to be that effective instrument in his hands?

Men's January Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Aloysius Mugisa

It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. (Matthew 24:46)

It is my desire that Jesus returns and finds me doing my duty, laboring faithfully for him as a responsible, loving husband, father, worker and committed evangelist.

Under my immediate care, I have a wife, four teenage daughters and a sickly mother. I struggle to ensure they have food, clothing, education, medical care, love, etc. What drives me is a desire to please my Master, Jesus. He has always provided me with what I need to give. I must be a good steward.

Those I care for extend beyond my family. There are those I labor with at work and in ministry. Fortunately, the just Lord does not ask more of me than he has given me. I may not have the money or material things to dish out, but a friendly smile and kind response always help alleviate tension and anxiety.

Many other people also share with me their problems, often marital or relational. The best I offer is not prepackaged solutions to their challenges, but my time, a listening ear and empathy. Many times, they leave me evidently relieved by having someone to listen and appreciate their challenges.

We are called to bring God's love, mercy, peace and healing to our households, workplaces and all encounters. Let us take every care not to break hearts but to bind them. By giving relief to distressed souls and providing for those around me, I draw peace and comfort in doing my duty for my Master.

Pray: I am at your disposal, Lord. Make me the steward you want me to be. Help me, Lord, to be a faithful steward of the time, money, energy and knowledge you have entrusted to me.

Reflect: Do I treat my spouse, children, kindred, neighbors and workmates as God requires of me?

Discuss: Describe a situation where you failed, carelessly ignored, or deliberately refused to use the treasures in your custody for the benefit of others.

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Aloysius Mugisa

... live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:1-2)

Responding to anger with anger or hatred with hatred is a natural inclination that makes a bad situation worse. It devastates marriages and all other relationships. The Lord Jesus calls us to respond to insults and annoyances with humility, gentleness and meekness.

Humility, this is very difficult but in the Spirit it is possible. Humility and meekness counter anger and hatred. *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger...* (Proverbs 15:1-2)

Recently, I approached a neighbor and told him his cows were destroying my crops. He flew into a fiery rage and started shouting insults at me. I listened to him for a while and then said, "I've told you what's hurting me; have a good day." Without responding in anger, I turned and walked home, confident I had avoided creating a quarrel.

No one makes us angry. Anger is our emotional response to something. If we keep in charge of our emotions, we can choose a safe response. My choice to respond with patience and gentleness has helped me handle unruly students where I teach. A humble response puts out fire, but an angry response fuels it.

Humility and meekness are not cowardice or weakness but come with the power of God. The Lord Jesus invites us to participate in this power when we respond to his call to *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)*

Jesus drew the power to bear his passion from his gentleness and humility. Anger and hatred are negative emotions that take a lot of physical and psychological energy, but gentleness and humility bring us to rest as Jesus promised.

Pray: Lord Jesus, meek and humble of heart, change my heart and mind to be like yours.

Reflect: How often have I worsened a bad situation by responding with anger and hatred to annoyances and disappointments?

Discuss: Starting today, how can I consciously choose to take on the virtues of humility, meekness and gentleness in order to please the Lord and live a more peaceful life? Give some examples from your own experiences.

Men's January Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Aloysius Mugisa

... I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4: 1-2)

This scripture gives me the zeal to continue even when the going gets tough. Proclaiming the gospel is one of the indispensable components of living for Christ. That is why, almost every weekend, CIC in Uganda does an evangelistic mission.

Praise God, we have fellow brothers and sisters convinced of and committed to the mission and vision of Christians in Commerce. These missions are physically draining, but spiritually and mentally fulfilling. We feel so excited after accomplishing an exhausting mission. We congratulate one another for painstakingly sharing in the mission of Christ.

On one occasion, we were returning from a mission when our car got stuck in the mud. As five of us pushed the car, the tires spun and slung mud on us. We were so dirty that our shoes became heavy, carrying a lot of mud. We looked at one another's feet and laughed.

Instantly Isaiah 52:7 came to my mind. I said, "How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of messengers announcing peace, good news and salvation to Zion saying, 'Your God is King'." This scripture applied directly to our situation. We were going uphill and I believed our dirty feet were beautiful before God.

Introducing himself to the CIC family in Uganda, Kirby Falkenberg added the initials "KB" after his name. He said, "KB stands for Kingdom Builder." This was inspiring for me and I said to myself, "I must become a KB myself."

1 Corinthians 9:16 came alive to me: For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Aloysius Mugisa is President of the Uganda Chapter and works as a secondary school teacher. He and his wife, Oliva, have four teenage daughters. He can be reached at mugisaalloysius11@gmail.com.

Pray: Lord, it is your desire for us to walk as you walked and encourage others. Help us to model your teaching from Romans 2:4 to forbear, be long-suffering in love and care for others.

Reflect: Am I too quick to speak or judge and too slow to listen and understand the circumstances of those who are struggling with ungodly behavior?

Discuss: Do you struggle with lovingly enduring the challenges of life with others? What are some past experiences of holding other Christians accountable that resulted in the restoration of good behavior?

The CIC Office Staff Welcomes Mary Ridenour



The CIC Staff is excited to introduce Mary Ridenour, who has recently replaced Therese Rosenthal as Administrative Assistant for the CIC Office. Therese will remain on staff as editor for the newsletter and Workday Reflections. Mary grew up in the Twin Cities area and moved to Northern Virginia in March, 2014 after marrying her husband Joe. She can be reached at Ridenour@cicintl.org. Welcome, Mary!

Women's January Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Becca Ash

An expert in the law tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:35-39)

While this scripture verse is one I frequent, it came across my spiritual path just when I needed it recently. I was feeling overwhelmed with a financial situation my husband and I were not seeing eye-to-eye on. It went unresolved while we both considered one another's thoughts and feelings on the matter.

This place of being at odds with someone I deeply love is where I was at when I came across this scripture, which I know well as the Greatest Commandment Jesus gave us. He presented it as the priority and summary of all the other Commandments held by Jewish law. I consider it the Lord's bottom line when it comes to my relationship with him, myself and others.

In light of this word of love and truth, I became sharply aware that the unresolved issue with my husband had festered and was overtaking my ability to love. From this awareness, I took two important steps. First, I took some time for myself to work through things in a way that would not further frustrate the matter. Second, I sought counsel from a Godly woman, who knows my love for the Lord and the bigger spiritual dilemma my lack of love presents. She helped me to realize that I was not being unloving, I was just angry. This was just the wisdom I needed in order to look at my anger, take necessary steps to address the needs causing it, and let it go. My ability to love God, myself and others was restored and so was my peace.

Pray: Lord, you have shown us the way to love as you love. Please open our hearts and minds to see anything that stands in the way of knowing your love and sharing it with others.

Reflect: Is there an area of your life that is lacking in love? What stands in the way? Anger? Complacency? Busyness? Self-centeredness?

Discuss: Share or ask the group what steps you can take to return to the Lord by working to restore love in this area.

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Becca Ash

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ... if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love. (Philippians 2:1-2)

I do a lot of what I call "unpaid work", my favorite of which is coaching youth soccer. It brings many Kingdom-building opportunities. I coach in a large, nationally-based league that is completely volunteer run at the local level. There are a few coaches that have been volunteer coaching for so long that they have become qualified on a professional basis. This is the case for our coach administrator, who is in his second year as the head coach for a girls' soccer team at the local high school, which is one of the largest in the state.

I ran into him recently at the fields as he was preparing for a kickoff meeting with the high school players and their parents. He was expecting about 50 players, plus their parents and his coaching staff. He shared some concerns and frustrations, which were clearly building as he prepared. He talked about his aim for a good, strong program, but said he couldn't count on the parents to back him up. It was the same 12 parents who showed up every time, leaving the majority of the parents absent and disconnected.

Listening to this coach from a completely detached place, I couldn't help but shift my focus from his concerns to the girls and their absent parents. I tried to help him see things from these parents' perspectives. While there may be issues with irresponsibility or poor scheduling and prioritization, my experience is that oftentimes, parents are simply unavailable, working two jobs, going through a difficult time, raising their children without a spouse, or just struggling to relate to their teenager. By listening to this coach's struggles and offering compassionate feedback, I was able to bring understanding to the situation.

Pray: Lord, thank you for the opportunity to listen to others, especially when they are troubled. Guide and prepare us to be ready for these Kingdom-building moments. Let your Holy Spirit show us the way to unite others to your way of compassion and understanding.

Reflect: Are you on the lookout for those Kingdom-building moments in your daily life?

Discuss: Share one way you can ready yourself to meet others with compassion, understanding, love and joy by being Christ.

Women's January Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Becca Ash

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.
(Proverbs 19:21)

Following the birth of my third son, I left the marketplace and went on sabbatical from CIC. After several years, I began to work towards a career change by starting a Master's degree. I was eager to get back to CIC, but couldn't make the evening meeting due to family commitments. I reached out to my fellow sisters to inquire about the possibility of a daytime meeting. I was presented with the need for a women's meeting at Arizona State University to go alongside a men's meeting that had recently begun. The location seemed decided and there was already one member available to join the effort. Unfortunately, our schedules didn't allow for a mutual day and time. My eagerness to get back to CIC would have to wait.

During this time of waiting, I stayed connected to the mission of CIC, praying the CIC prayer daily before beginning my studies and attending socials or day retreats as I could. After some time, I ran into Pat Drechsler, who started WCIC right here in Phoenix. As we exchanged hugs and sentiments, she mentioned the men's meeting at ASU had turned into a coed meeting. I was thrilled about this turn of events and planned to attend the next one.

My run-in with Pat occurred at the start of the summer while my kids were home from school and I had a break from my studies. The timing was perfect and the ASU Campus Club has been a great fit for me. It is like a mini CIC conference where the men and women have praise and worship, talks, announcements, and prayer together, but separate for the deeper sharing time. I am especially excited about the opportunity to be with other students and fellowship with younger women who are the same age I was when I first came to CIC. It reminds me of Pat, and others, who helped me grow in faith and discipleship when I entered the marketplace.

Becca Ash, formerly of the WCIC-Phoenix Chapter, is currently a member of the ASU Campus Club. She is raising her three sons in Mesa, AZ with her wonderful husband, Ryan. Becca worked in residential real estate for six years, before being promoted to full-time mom and part-time student. In preparation for a career change, she is working on a Master's degree in Pastoral Theology. She and Ryan enjoy coaching, golfing, traveling, and cooking. Becca can be reached at beccasoccermom22@gmail.com.

Hope for the Workplace – Christ in You by Bill Dalgetty

Bill Dalgetty, former Christians in Commerce President and Chairman of the Board, draws from his extensive experience in business and ministry to examine the challenges faced by Christians seeking to live out their faith in today's workplace. Readers will discover practical tips for:

- Dealing with a difficult boss or colleague
- Maintaining integrity and ethics in business decisions
- Balancing family and career
- Seeking excellence in one's work
- Caring for co-workers

To purchase the book, visit the Zacchaeus Publications website at www.zacchaeuspublications.com.

** Bill has generously offered to donate all profits from the sales of this book to the ongoing ministry of Christians in Commerce.*

Pray: Thank you for the mission and fellowship of CIC, Lord. Help us to see how you are working in our meetings, workplaces and the broader fellowship. Align us with your plan and purpose so that we can pray, act, and be filled with your Holy Spirit.

Reflect: How is your Challenge Group a good fit for you? When has your group followed God's leading to do something different or new?

Discuss: Share your reflection, as well as how you came to CIC or your particular Challenge Group.

Christians in Commerce

NEWS

Christians in Commerce Prayer

CIC Co-Founder Expands on Our Mission

By: Steve Becker



CIC co-founder Louis Grams and his wife Nancy were able to attend this year's Annual Conference. A highlight of Louis' visit was a heartfelt sharing he gave at the Leaders Workshop on Thursday afternoon. He encouraged everyone to pursue CIC's unique call to rescue and restore creation in the workplace.

"For this very reason," Louie shared, "in 1983, John Mooney, Bud Rose and I came together to found Christians in Commerce. We were responding to a prophetic word that challenged us to form a company of people who would integrate the life of Christ into their workplaces, and to do it in ways that would transform the marketplace."

He went on to share that this is what "Stewards of Creation", the seventh talk on the Challenge Weekend, is about. This talk is meant to be a concentrated explanation of the mission of Christians in Commerce as the Lord first gave it to the founders.

All of the talks on the weekend are in preparation for this one talk. Other talks help introduce attendees to Jesus, baptize them in the Holy Spirit, and encourage them to pray and live good and holy lives.

"While all this and more is essential," Louie emphasized, "the goal for each of us in Christians in Commerce is to expand the Kingdom of God by being Christ in the marketplace."

"Much of our mission centers around the way we relate and work with each other," he continued. "But it's critical to recognize that our mission includes all of the material world itself."

"The way we use, care for, protect, restore, heal and transform the material world is an important part of our vocation.

"Let us help men and women to become influencers of marketplace policies and practices. Let us do this so that, increasingly, the world of business, commerce, service and education will be oriented toward bettering the world we live in, bettering the lives of all who live in this world, and coming more and more to reflect the fullness of life as God created it.

"Our mission has to do with rescuing God's creation for his honor and glory. He invites each of us to join together in making it happen... and making it happen in each of our workplaces.

"Jesus is looking for men and women of action. Being Christ in the marketplace means acting as Christ, doing what he wants to do there."

"This is why Christians in Commerce exists," Louie concluded. "Let us expand his Kingdom of love, rescue his creation and restore it together."

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

"We encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ by releasing the power of the Holy Spirit that is in them. We challenge them to be Christ to the people and circumstances in their workplaces by bringing his truth, love, healing, justice and excellence to the marketplace."

This is the CIC mission. Are we living it out?

Vision

Expanding the Kingdom by being Christ in the workplace.

Mission

We encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ by releasing the power of the Holy Spirit that is in them. We challenge them to be Christ to the people and circumstances in their workplaces by bringing his truth, love, healing, justice and excellence to the marketplace.

Values

As Christians in Commerce, we are an ecumenical organization united with the body of Christ to:

- Know, love and serve God and others
- Embrace the beliefs of the Nicene Creed
- Release the power of the Holy Spirit in worship and work
- Share the time, talents and resources God has entrusted to us
- Enrich member participation in prayer, scripture, family and church life



Christ
ALIVE!

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

www.christiansincommerce.org



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