Shortly after moving our young family to Tampa, I realized I had just exchanged one big law practice for another. Each big law firm has its own issues. This one was making it very challenging to be present to our large, growing family. As a result, my wife and I agreed I should start my own solo practice.

Thus began a year without a paycheck. We went through our savings, maxed out our credit cards, and absorbed the charity of friends. But it still wasn’t enough. One Tuesday afternoon in 1995, we calculated what was needed to survive another month: $8,000.00. We needed it by Friday or we would default on our mortgage. If that happened, for me, it would mean that it was time to give up the solo practice and find a “real job,” the very job I had left to go into solo practice in the first place.

Before throwing in the towel, I prayed, right there at my desk. I reminded the Lord that I took this risk in a good-faith effort to follow his will for our lives. It was possible that we had confused our own desires for his perfect will. I told the Lord, unless I had $8,000.00 in my bank account by Friday, it was going to be game over. Amen.

As soon as I had concluded my prayer, the phone rang. My side of the conversation went like this: “Yes, I do collections work… One-third, plus expenses… What’s the sum at issue?” “Twenty-four thousand dollars,” said the caller.

I faxed over a retainer agreement and a copy of the claim paperwork came back to me, along with a signed version. I called the debtor company, and, after waiting on hold, was told that $24,000.00 would be hand-delivered the next day. It was, and precisely $8,000.00 was in my bank account by Friday.

From there, my practice grew into a ten-person firm, and I never missed another paycheck – until I stopped practicing law in order to start another business, which I am still running today.

My new business experienced its own challenges. Thanks to the Great Recession, we had lost about 40% of our revenue by 2009. Things were tight. We reached the point where bills were due with nothing in the till. If we didn’t have $30,000.00 in the bank by Friday, we would miss our rent and be unable to make payroll.

My instinct was to pray, as before, in the privacy of my own office. But my “better angels” prevailed and I called an “all-hands” meeting. I explained the situation to the staff and asked everyone to bow their heads as I led a heartfelt prayer to our Father. Amen.

As soon as I concluded my prayer, my cell phone rang. The caller was the CFO of a large prospective client. After many months, they had decided they wanted to engage us at the rate of $15,000.00 per month. They had just one question. Was there a discount if they paid for the entire year up front? And so it came to pass that we received $171,000.00 the next morning, and were able to pay our rent, make payroll, and survive the Great Recession.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (Matthew 5:15)

While you may think this is a testimony to the power of prayer, the real crux of the story for me was that public declaration of my faith to my employees. Not all of them share my faith. It’s easy to pray at work when you work alone! But there is power in the lamp placed on a stand and the risk we take in putting it there.

Jim Ganther is an attorney, entrepreneur and a founding member of the Tampa Men’s Chapter. He and his wife, Melissa, have seven children. His hobbies include car insurance, curfews and tuition. Contact Jim at jganther@mosaic-compliance.com.

Not all leaders in scripture are recognized the way David, Paul or Moses is. One of these is Epaphroditus. He was a “nobody” who remained obscure while playing a vital role in helping Paul. No statues or memorials were erected for him, nor were any books written about him.

Nevertheless, Epaphroditus was a true leader. He once ran from Philippi to Rome to join Paul in prison and minister to him. Paul called him a “risk taker”, “people lover”, “tireless worker” and “servant leader.” Yes, a servant leader who led by example and served as a spokesman for the church in his very own way. Epaphroditus became one of Paul’s coworkers in Christ.

Are you a leader? YES, you are! We all have a vital role to play in CIC.

Come to the Annual Conference this October 20-21 in Palm Springs, CA to discover how God is calling you to utilize and develop your gifts and talents for leadership in CIC and the workplace. This year’s conference will center on the theme of being a coworker in Christ through leadership. Exciting!
REFLECTIONS

That’s My Boy!
That’s My Girl!

By Darren Handy

When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. (Psalm 104:30)

Why am I? Who am I? And what is my purpose? For me, this passage all points to identity. These three questions are each answered within Psalm 104:30.

Why am I? I am because God sent forth his Spirit. Who am I? I am his creation - his beloved son. What is my purpose? My purpose is to renew the face of the earth and to be a conduit for the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.

One of our CIC founders, John Mooney, often stressed the importance of knowing who and whose we are. Two often-cited “Mooneyisms” are, “If you know who you are, you know how to act,” and, “Do you know what God the Father says about Darren? That’s my boy!”

I appreciate John’s continued reminders. They build my confidence in God’s love for me no matter the circumstances. They fuel a transformation in who I am, a power in my purpose for others, and enable me to see all things renewed in Christ Jesus. I continue using these “Mooneyisms” in my coaching practice, in mentoring, and as Coordinator of Stewardship at my church.

I was involved in a situation recently where I had to deliver some difficult information. Anna wanted a particular person to be her sponsor for a sacrament she was to receive in our church. It would require that the sponsor have a Letter of Good Standing from the church. A review of the matter concluded that this letter could not be obtained. It was clear the situation would be difficult and unpleasant.

I was asked to make the phone call informing the family. Prior to calling, I familiarized myself with the situation and spent time in prayer, seeking wisdom, compassion, truth, and, most importantly, reconciliation and unity.

As might be expected, Anna’s reaction was not a positive one and she was very disappointed. Allowing her to finish speaking, I asked her if I could respond to her concerns. I was able to address them calmly and point-by-point in a way that helped her to understand the church’s position.

I suggested some alternate people as sponsors and emphasized the great joy of the occasion. I could still hear some disappointment in her voice, so I asked if she would allow me to pray with her for understanding on the part of the person who was unable to be the sponsor, clarity on her part as to who she should ask, and for joy in her family celebration. She agreed. I prayed, asking our Father to send forth his Spirit to his beloved daughter to grant her clarity. Afterward, she thanked me for the sincerity of the prayer and for the advice I had offered.

A few days later, we received a follow-up call from Anna saying she had asked one of the alternates. He was honored and excited to be her sponsor. Anna apologized for her initial reactions. She wanted to pass on her gratitude to me because God had answered my prayer for her.

I give thanks to our Father for John’s “Mooneyisms.” I know who I am and I know how I am to act. I am his boy!

Father God, send your Spirit to each of us that we may know who we are in you and how you call us to renew the face of earth in Jesus’ name. Amen.

NEW PODCASTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

As a complement to our Working for Our Father video series, 20 new audio tracks called Snapshot Podcasts have been created. 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:

- Snapshot Podcasts Series 1: Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work
- Snapshot Podcasts Series 2: Triumphing over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
- Snapshot Podcasts Series 3: Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
- Snapshot Podcasts Series 4: Operating in the Fruit of the Spirit

For more information visit our CIC website at cicintl.org/snapshot.
**WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Personal Sacrifice**

**By Marcus Curl**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

We didn’t plan on having six children when we married nineteen years ago. My wife is a planner and I am a fairly practical person as well. At the time we thought that two, maybe three children would work best for our lifestyle.

While we didn’t know it at the time, our decision to keep our family small was a barrier we had established between God and ourselves. God had plans for our family and we weren’t listening. In our case, we were prioritizing our ambitions (career and otherwise) above God’s personal call for us.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that God calls all of us to have large families. Each of our relationships with our Father is personal. In our case, God was calling us to make a sacrifice in one particular aspect of our lives, albeit one that is fairly substantial, in order to call us closer to him.

With each new child, God has rewarded us for being open to his plans. While our living space was cramped at one point, career opportunities were presented along the way, allowing us to upgrade our home. While starting the process of saving for six college educations seemed like an impossible task, God has given us guidance in ways of financial sacrifice. And there are many other similar examples of God’s intercession.

But, the reward wasn’t a bigger home or financial peace – these are just the tools God has given us to fulfill his will. Instead, the reward is knowing that if I can listen to God’s calling in the most significant aspects of my life, I know there is nothing I cannot do with him leading my journey!

**PRAY:**

Lord, I pray for you to help me to identify and remove the obstacles in my life that are keeping me from being closer to you and participating in your will.

**REFLECT:**

Are there areas of my life where I have created barriers and falsely justified them?

**DISCUSS:**

In what ways is God calling us to make sacrifices in order to be closer to him, or to serve him?

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**WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Making a Difference in the Workplace**

**By Marcus Curl**

*You are the light of the world…let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14, 16)*

One of the companies I previously worked at was owned by a tightly controlled private equity firm. This particular firm has a lengthy list of standard policies and procedures that are intended to closely manage costs and create efficiencies in account management. When this firm would purchase a new organization (usually one that was not profitable), these standard procedures were almost guaranteed to turn the company profitable, but often at the expense of employee and customer satisfaction.

There were situations where customers fell behind. In these cases, my account management team would be responsible for working out payment arrangements to bring our customers current. In certain complex situations, I would be asked to negotiate directly with the customer.

After I had just finished speaking with one of these customers, our account manager approached me and asked if I was a Christian. He apologized in advance of the question, hoping I would take no offense. I told him, “Of course I take no offense,” and confirmed I was a Christian. I asked why he wanted to know.

He told me that working for this company sometimes made him feel like he couldn’t live a fully Christian life - that the demands placed upon him by the firm’s policies were at odds with how he believed he should treat others, including customers. However, his experiences with me were different, he said. I always seemed to have a way to work within company guidelines while operating in a Christian manner.

After that interaction, he requested my help as a mentor and I accepted. We openly discussed how to live and work as Christians. While I no longer work for that company, I still maintain a mentoring relationship with that employee.

**PRAY:**

Lord, help me to be one of your disciples in the workplace, that by my actions and deeds others will know that I follow you.

**REFLECT:**

Are there times when I have separated my Christian values from my work life?

**DISCUSS:**

What actions can we take at work that will be a Christian example for others?
Holding Each Other Accountable  

By Marcus Curl

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' (Isaiah 6:8)

It was in late 2012 that I encountered a difficult challenge. My new job was putting a strain on my family and spiritual life as I felt I wasn’t able to work in a way that would make Christ proud of me.

I had participated in several prayer groups but what I needed was practical advice from others, like myself, trying to work as a Christian in the business world. I operated from my home office and often felt isolated and unable to fulfill God’s plans for me during the majority of my waking hours.

I received the name of the local CIC Chapter President, Bob Neubauer, from a family friend who flew next to him on a flight. My friend was aware of my struggle and had previously promised to help me. It was only a few short days between his promise and meeting Bob on that plane.

Upon receiving Bob’s contact information, I was a bit skeptical. First of all, it was too soon for me to process. God doesn’t answer prayers that fast! If so, how come I never received that Optimus Prime Transformer for Christmas 1984… I prayed for that a long time!

It took me a couple of months to attend my first CIC chapter meeting. But Bob was persistent – he didn’t know it yet, but he was already holding me accountable. I had asked for God’s help and I had received it. It was time to step up.

Thanks to Bob’s recruitment, I am now a proud member of CIC and it has changed my life. Because Bob cared, not only have I benefited, so has my family, as well as those I work with.

PRAY:

Lord, give me the courage to reach out to others in the workplace who need to hear your loving message.

REFLECT:

Am I afraid to speak to others about CIC for fear of being rejected?

DISCUSS:

What are practical ways in which we can share CIC with others?

WORKING FOR OUR FATHER: WORKSHOPS BEING CONDUCTED

Many of our men’s and women’s chapters have now reviewed our Working for Our Father workshop. The workshop is designed to assist baptized Christians in integrating their work life into their Christian faith. In addition, chapters have facilitated either four one-hour sessions or a four hour separate gathering.

Written and produced to impact all age groups, particularly the next generation, this series utilizes professionally developed, engaging videos that have captured the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for their Father by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Working for Our Father shows how Christians can align their careers with God’s mission. It can be jointly presented to men and women.

There are four presentations:

- 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

For more information, visit cicintl.org/wfof.
Personal Sacrifice  

By Laurie Primavera

And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he said. (Luke 10:39)

Our CIC group often shares that most of us are Marthas, not Marys. We are doers, caretakers, fixers and consolers. We find it challenging to just sit when there is so much to be done.

Several years ago, I was not in the practice of sitting with God in silence. I was simply too busy with what I considered important work.

Then suddenly, I found myself in a situation that was intolerable. I was staying with my father, who was rapidly declining in health, while also dealing remotely with a difficult work situation.

Through pain and many sleepless nights, I rediscovered the Jesus Calling devotional. I found solace just listening for God’s voice. There were no quick answers to my situation; rather, I knew to wait on the Lord.

While it was a hard time, it was the beginning of my dedication to sitting with God daily in silence. God answered my prayer to return home to a new job assignment I had requested. However, the greatest gift was learning to sit in silence and wait upon him daily. Three years later, I continue to start my days with silence and prayer. I still struggle with life worries and fall prey to my humanness. Surrendering to God’s will and desire gives me peace. Even Christ took time to go into the desert to pray and spend time alone with the Father.

God calls us to a life of constant communion with him. Sometimes the greatest personal sacrifice is just to sit in silence, waiting on him. It is also the greatest gift.

PRAY:

Lord, I commit to spending time with you daily. I will rise above my circumstances in order to find you in the midst of a cluttered world.

REFLECT:

What gets in the way of spending time in silence with God? What are the temptations that cause me to stray from this time?

DISCUSS:

How do you feel when there are no quick answers to your prayers? How do you react?

Redeeming Our Father’s Creation  

By Laurie Primavera

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

I work in a hospice setting as a lead nurse, surrounded by a wonderful team of nurses, chaplains, social workers, hospice aides and volunteers.

However, even in this sacred environment, we struggle as Christians to live a life pleasing to God. One such incident occurred when one of our chaplains and a hospice aide became embroiled in a tense and difficult dispute.

The chaplain had overheard a patient and their family using racial insults against the hospice aide behind her back. The chaplain cared for this aide as a father. Wishing to protect her, he told her what he had overheard, and asked her to withdraw from this patient and the family.

However, the aide became angry with him for his “father-like” interference and complained to Human Resources.

Several of us were working to resolve the situation. When I met with the chaplain, he was hurt, defensive and very angry that the aide did not appreciate his intent to protect her. He could not understand her reaction.

We talked some more, and he shared with me that God had been working on him to humble his pride and ego. The struggle had weighed heavily upon him. We prayed together. Finally, he recognized that his pride was getting in the way of a peaceful resolution.

After many agonizing weeks, he was able to see the situation from her perspective. He offered an apology for however his action had hurt her. They reconciled their differences and continue to work well together.

PRAY:

Lord, shine your face upon me, forgive my sins, and grant me your peace that surpasses all understanding.

REFLECT:

God reminds us to bring our weaknesses to him and he will give us his peace. What weaknesses do I struggle with? How do I accept Christ’s peace when I fall short?

DISCUSS:

Share a time when your intent to help someone was rejected or misunderstood. How did you feel and how did you find peace?
The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By Laurie Primavera

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them”. (Matthew 18:20)

Two years ago, I was invited to my first CIC Challenge Weekend. I anticipated that I would attend parts of the meeting and then slink off into hiding for some peace and quiet. Instead, I was so profoundly moved by the speakers and others who attended, that I readily joined the local chapter and committed to the Thursday morning meetings. I am ever so grateful for God’s leading and for the gift of my sisters in the Fresno Women’s Chapter.

So, how has CIC changed me?

I am more grateful. We express gratitude for one another and share the blessings God sheds on us, both individually and collectively.

I am more thoughtful. We lift others up in prayer, asking God to bless and guide them.

I am not alone. We share our most important moments together; moments of great joy and of profound sorrow.

I am at peace. We confess our shortcomings and struggles to one another and seek God’s forgiveness.

I am free. We have the freedom to confide our life experiences, even when we haven’t been the best version of ourselves. Together we can grow and change.

Through CIC, God is leading each of us to fulfill his purpose. For some time, I had been praying for God’s leading as I transition into retirement. Then, a CIC sister invited me to participate in our local parish’s ministry program. God’s direction in our lives can be found through CIC sisterhood!

Laurie Primavera is a member of the Fresno Women’s Chapter. She has been married for twenty-five years and enjoys friends, family, West Highland terriers and travel. Laurie is an RN with forty years of experience working in healthcare. She will be retiring in March and focusing on volunteering at her church. You can reach Laurie at lauriepmsn@aol.com.

PRAY:

Lord, thank you for CIC. Continue to unify us in your name. Lead us each to your calling and let us flourish through your grace and love. Let us be beacons of your light in this world.

REFLECT:

What does CIC mean for me? How have I grown in my faith because of sisterhood?

DISCUSS:

Share a time when a CIC member made a positive difference in your life.
GREATER SACRAMENTO
CIC CO-ED CWE
By Caren Demetre

The Greater Sacramento co-ed pilot CWE was held April 28-29. It was co-sponsored with the Newman Catholic Center (NCC) Sacramento at California State University.

It all began when the men's chapter decided to ask the Newman Center to rent their facility for the men's projected September CWE. The director of the Newman Center asked if the weekend could be opened to their students and alumni from California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). There were concerns on our part as to how they would respond to the ecumenical aspect of CIC. Before we had a chance to voice this concern, the director asked if we could also open the weekend to the other Christian ministries at the university. And, could we make it co-ed? Further, the director wanted to hold the CWE right away rather than waiting until September. The date chosen by the Newman Center was the week before finals.

We had many bumps along the way. Due to a major obstacle, invitations were not allowed to go out until the week before the event. Through prayer, determination and hard work we managed to pull the weekend together with a total of 25 participants. We had 6 new people, 5 of them being students.

Jon Cassady from the CIC Home Office joined us, giving one of the talks. He commented on the fact that this was the first time we had accommodated both students and professionals, men and women, on one Challenge Weekend. The weekend also supported NCC's request and CIC's current focus of the new CIC Working for Our Father Series (which is offered to a mixed audience). He stated this style of CWE was unique based on the university campus and environment.

Our commuter CWE began with two talks Friday night. We continued Saturday with six talks, an Emmaus Walk and finished with a Lord's Day Celebration. The CWE talks were presented to the mixed group, and then facilitated discussion groups were gender based. The men's CIC “band” provided wonderful praise and worship music for all to enjoy and be inspired.

The NCC has asked if we could hold another CWE and also a Working for Our Father series. We will even have one of the student participants do a talk at the next CWE!

When asked about the weekend, the participants said they enjoyed the testimonies, the talks, small group sharing, being able to share and pray with others, the singing and the co-ed format. In fact, existing CIC members expressed a desire for more opportunities for the men and women to interact.

As a result of the weekend, one new women's Challenge Group has been started. All who attended were blessed by the weekend. God is good!
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:20