



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

July, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

Think the Best of Others

by: Randy Raciti

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz once said in an interview, that when he visits a Starbucks location, the first thing he does is to look at everything that is going right in the store. What a powerful message he must be communicating to his employees as they experience being needed, wanted, and appreciated for the work they are doing!

My personal tendency is the opposite. I have found that, when assessing a work situation, the first thing I look for is what is going wrong. When thinking about the people in our organization, the first thoughts that come to my mind are how they are coming up short rather than how they are succeeding. In fact, I had a colleague point out to me one time, "You know, Randy, you've probably fired everyone in this organization at least once in your mind, and some twice."

We have a values statement in our organization, something we call the Healy Spirit. The Healy Spirit has values organized under four major themes: *Do the Right Thing, Love Wins, Be Better and Make it a Great Day*. Under these themes are contained 12 values like, *Put others first, Have a servant's heart, Be humble, and Have faith*. All 12 supporting values combine to guide our thoughts, words, and actions. They are at the core of our organization; things we strive to live and breathe on a daily basis.

The one value under *Love Wins* that I particularly struggle with is *Think the best of others*. A couple years back, I was having a particularly hard time with one

of our employees. There was nothing the employee was doing wrong. We simply had a difference in business philosophies.

Rather than valuing our differences and working with the other person to make our organization stronger, I decided to share my differences behind closed doors. I had a number of one-on-one conversations with other leaders in the organization that did NOT include this individual. In these meetings, I consistently portrayed this individual in an unfavorable way. Finally, one of my colleagues had the courage to point out to me in a kind way that it was not the employee who had the problem, but me. I prayed and reflected upon what had been said and realized my coworker was right.

I took the employee out for lunch, confessed my wrongdoing, and asked for forgiveness. Over time I have grown to appreciate this person and the wisdom of their philosophy, and our organization has become stronger as a result.

The lessons learned from this situation are etched in my mind. Whenever I'm having a conversation with another person in our office and somebody is represented in a negative light, I'm quicker to ask myself, "Is this conversation going down the right road?"

The Lord is always thinking the best of me. Over time, slow though it may be, I become more the person he created me to be. He gives us the power to do the same by thinking the best of each other.

Randy Raciti is a member of the South Bend-Elkhart Chapter in Indiana. He is a financial advisor and co-owner of the Healy Group. He and his wife Tami reside in Granger and have seven children. Randy can be reached at randyraciti@healyfinancial.net.

Upcoming Events

Annual Conference
October 16-17, 2015

Men's Weekends
Greater Phoenix Area
August 28-30, 2015
Northern VA
September 11-12, 2015
South Bend/Elkhart
September 11-13, 2015
Salinas
November 13-15, 2015
Orange County
January 15-17, 2016

Women's Weekends
WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill
April 16-17, 2016

Christians in Commerce News

Monterey Challenge Weekend

WCIC-Phoenix Challenge Weekend

2015 Annual Conference, pg. 4

"Hope for the Workplace" Book Review, pg.6

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

The Simple Life

by: Cyril "Bud" Rose

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:26-28)

I had thought about these words and how they related to my life before, but it was only when I was baptized in the Spirit at age 32 that I truly began to understand their impact. Only then did scripture become clear and meaningful to me.

As I invited the Holy Spirit into my life, the Lord blessed me with a very simple faith. I gained a heightened awareness of my speech, thoughts, priorities, and my purpose in life. I began to see the importance of spiritual reading, scripture, time alone with the Lord, and pastoral guidance.

As these pieces began to fall into place, my life took on greater direction and meaning. I believed, I was hungry, and I wanted more of the Lord. Generally speaking, my life has been somewhat simple ever since.

As I mentor young men, so many things in their lives seem bigger: Their earnings are bigger, houses are bigger, debts are bigger, tuitions are bigger, security risks are bigger, work weeks are bigger, and responsibilities are bigger. Everything is bigger and as a result, more complex, complicated and demanding.

They are challenged with opportunities, all of which demand their atten-

tion; but is it a trap?

Recently I was sharing with a brother and he wondered aloud what kind of merry-go-round he was on. He has been very successful and both he and his wife have large incomes. They have a beautiful home, a couple of cars, lots of nice things, and go on beautiful vacations. One month, his business took a downturn and he realized how much he relied on that large income. But, what was it costing him? Long hours at work, family time, Jesus time, worry, and a sense of bondage. He loved the Lord, but was struggling to maintain a daily prayer time. He knows that prayer is essential to maintaining the peace of Christ in his life.

The bigger life doesn't usually result in the simple life. In fact, it can keep us from fulfilling our created purpose mentioned in Genesis to rule over the earth and subdue it. Who or what is "ruling" over us?

A recent blessing in this brother's life has been his Challenge Group, who agreed to be accountable and check in with one another after completing their daily prayer times. My understanding is that it is working great! Might there be a message here for all of us?

Bud Rose is a co-founder of Christians in Commerce and a member of the South Bend-Elkhart Chapter. He resides in Edwardsburg, Michigan with his wife Sharon, to whom he has been married for 53 years. Together they have 6 children and 30 grandchildren to pray for and delight in! Bud has managed a K-mart, Shopper's Fair, and four of his own retail stores. He has done pastoral work for 29 years and mission work for 12 years. He can be reached at cfrose39@gmail.com.

Pray: Father, when I meet you face-to-face, may you recognize me as being one with you and your plan. May all my actions, thoughts, and words give you glory.

Reflect: What are the driving forces in my life? How am I fitting into God's plan? Does the peace of Christ reign in my life? Does God's glory shine forth?

Discuss: What distractions hold you back from God's plan? Is the earth a better place for your efforts? Do you pray daily? How does your work reflect God's glory?

Men's July Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Perry Benson

Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. (Psalm 24:9)

Many years ago, I had just finished a five-day trip for work and was in the cabin preparing for my final flight home. The flight was delayed, so I decided to read my Bible. After a few minutes, the young German next to me asked, "Is that a Bible?" Thus began an engaging conversation between two Christian brothers. It carried us through a long delay and subsequent two-hour flight. We landed and I learned that Bernd's connecting flight was not until that evening, some six hours later. After a quick phone call to my wife, I invited him to join us for the afternoon.

We got a lovely thank-you note after he returned home, but didn't expect to see him again.

Then, a few years later, he wrote asking if he could bring his new wife for a visit! We all learned a lot during our time together. Kristina learned that not all Americans were like the ones she had seen on TV. They (Protestants) came with us (Catholics) to church. We learned that their language could be much more expressive than what you hear in war movies. It was a big deal for my wife (who is French) to get to know some good people from the other side of the border. Her family had seen the war first-hand: her father as a POW, and her mother barely surviving when a German flame tank burned down their house. Gradually, Kristina also started to overcome her fear of cats (we had two). In other words, all of us were stretched a bit!

That learning and healing has continued for twenty years, with visits during good times and not-so-good times. One seed - a small act of hospitality - has yielded an abundant harvest of blessings: barriers broken down, difficulties shared, loads lightened, and new worlds opened up. Open the gates and the King of glory *shall* enter!

Pray: Father, open my eyes to see the opportunities you continually place before me. May my confidence in you be manifested as a visible openness to others. May serving them be my priority.

Reflect: Consider past connections that could be reawakened, offering the opportunity to express interest, concern or friendship.

Discuss: Share the blessings you have experienced from an unexpected friendship, or one that developed in an unexpected direction.

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Perry Benson

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. (Hosea 14:4)

More than 700 pilots packed the meeting room, eager for an update on contract negotiations with the airline. The update went smoothly, but now the atmosphere was angry. The leaders were asking for comments. Another company's pilots, who had dropped out of the union during a strike ten years earlier, were asking to rejoin. Enough of them had crossed the picket line to break the strike, ending the careers of their colleagues in the process. Now, they wanted back in, but could they be trusted? Many responded with an angry, "No!"

Earlier in the meeting, a captain had been called forward for recognition, someone most of us had not seen for several years; years he had spent in prison for having flown a morning flight while still intoxicated from the previous night. But while in prison, he had made a complete turn-around, not only recovering from alcoholism, but working tirelessly to help other pilots suffering from the same condition. Single-handedly, he had spurred the company to make policy changes that had transformed the workplace culture. It was for this work that he was being recognized.

The contrast between the attitude of forgiveness toward the captain versus the anger toward the strike-breakers was too great to ignore. I stepped up to the mic. "If we can forgive Captain X, who did us so much harm, surely we can look at each of these strike-breakers as people who may have learned from their experience." There were boos and catcalls, but other hearts may have been touched.

It's easy enough to find opportunities at work to speak your mind, but always having to be right or have the last word only leads to division. We are called to do something different — to speak with compassion and so draw others to Christ.

Pray: Father, give me the humility and wisdom to accept that others will see the world differently than I based on their experiences. Grant me the courage to see them with compassion.

Reflect: In your workplace or among your peers, is there a group that is looked down upon or maligned? Take a minute to imagine what their experience is like.

Discuss: What could you do to open communication with someone from another group or to reduce hostility toward them?

Men's July Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Perry Benson

How good and pleasant it is when God's people dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. (Psalm 133:1-2)

What a happy misfortune that my car was in the shop! I had to ask a brother for a ride to the CIC meeting. On the way, I shared a deep frustration that after years of trying to overcome an old weakness, I was still dealing with it. His response was gentle and contained no trace of judgment.

Armed with this encouragement, I decided to stop relying on my own efforts and to start reaching out to others with whom I could be honest. What a blessing that has been! Now, whenever I'm feeling low, I can draw on the support of my brothers. Together, we celebrate the successes and learn from the slips. Even when we struggle, we persevere. And as we encourage each other, we reflect the face of Christ.

Weaknesses that rear their heads again and again are often rooted in something fundamental about our character; distortions of a gift that God intended to bear healthy fruit. By finding the positive core of that gift, focusing on it and reinforcing it (while setting aside the old, unhealthy version), we acknowledge the creativity of God's generosity and his lordship in our lives.

God's grace isn't offered so that we can tolerate recurring guilt and persist in our misery. It is an invitation to transform our lives, to fill them with the kind of joy that will show the world his love. To begin this transformation, he asks only that we stop relying on our own solitary efforts, that we be open and honest with our brothers and sisters, and that we enlist their help.

Perry Benson is a retired pilot (military and airline) who lives in Minneapolis with his wife Evelyne. With three children on opposite coasts and more family in France, it's a good thing they are used to flying! Perry is grateful for his "CIC family", both locally and across the country, and invites you to share your thoughts with him at per.eve.benson@gmail.com.

Pray: My Father, I have been proud, trying to please you through my own efforts. Now, I lay all those efforts at your feet and thank you for guiding me. I am ready to change.

Reflect: How do I respond when others confess their challenges? Do I judge? Try to fix it? Respond with compassion? In what setting could I share my own challenges?

Discuss: Do our small groups encourage honest sharing? If not, what needs to change?

Save the Date: 2015 Annual Conference



October 16 – 17, 2015

Doubletree by Hilton Hotel
Phoenix Tempe

The theme of our 2015 Christians in Commerce Annual Conference will be "Living Extraordinary Lives in Ordinary Ways". More information to follow. Mark your calendars!

Women's July Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Susan Cabrera

For we live by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Several years ago, I was starting a new executive position when, just three weeks into the job, my mother had a severe hemorrhagic stroke. My director was extremely supportive and told me to take whatever time off I needed.

My mother improved and continued living independently, but after a few years she became frail. My brother lived nearby and was loving and attentive, but he needed help. We hired a few people, but none of them worked out.

My mother's house was an hour from mine - a trip that involved traveling over a mountain where accidents were common. But I felt she needed my daughterly support, so I fixed up my old room and began spending many weekends with her. Some friends criticized me, which was hurtful, but I sensed I was doing the right thing.

Over time, this routine became more difficult physically and mentally. I couldn't continue as an executive while handling my self-imposed responsibility for my mother. I knew something had to give.

I confided in two colleagues outside my department. One advised me to leave my job and tend to my mother so that I wouldn't look back with regret. The other advised me to stay in my job because no one would believe I left to "take care of my mother" and I might not be able to reenter the executive workplace. Both had excellent advice and I could argue both sides.

After a period of fasting and prayer, I discerned that I should leave my job. I gave generous notice and eventually was without a job or paycheck. I began to worry that I'd made a big mistake from a logical standpoint and started doubting my decision. However, I was reassured in prayer that it had been the right thing.

Four weeks later, I received a call from a former employer. They asked if I could work full-time to temporarily fill in for their assistant director. I thanked them, but explained I couldn't due to my mother's condition. The next day, they called back asking if I could work part-time with flexible hours to accommodate my mother's needs. This God-given opportunity was the start of my consulting business, which continues to this day! My mother lived for three more years and died peacefully at home.

Pray: Heavenly Father, give me the strength and courage to listen to you and follow your guidance, regardless of how I am perceived.

Reflect: Is there an issue in my life that is causing me anxiety? Have I taken time to be still with the Lord to come to a deeper understanding of why this is occurring and what he wants me to do?

Discuss: In times of trial, do you turn to God first, listen to him, and follow his guidance?

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Susan Cabrera

Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly. (John 7:24)

I belong to a church group that offers financial assistance to the needy for things like utilities and rent. Before assisting them, we go in pairs to visit the home, offer support, and obtain necessary information.

On one occasion, we arrived at a home at the appointed time. The lady requesting assistance let us in. Her daughter came in, scowled at us, and retreated to a bedroom with two fellows. There was a man lying on the living room floor blocking the entire sofa, so we couldn't sit there. The four seats at the dining room table and the table itself were piled high with papers and the only empty seat was the lady's easy chair. We stood there awkwardly as she frowned and begrudgingly moved things so we could sit on two dining room chairs.

After reviewing her finances, it was clear she didn't qualify for our assistance, but we offered to meet with her caseworker. She declined. As always, we ended our visit by asking if she'd like us to pray with her. To my surprise, she agreed. I closed my eyes, erased all judgment, and let the Holy Spirit fill me with loving words of encouragement, strength, and support for her and her household.

When we opened our eyes, we were taken aback by the "new woman" before us. She was beaming, smiling from ear to ear. She kindly asked, "Would you like some water?" We were in shock. We had never experienced such a startling transformation. Clearly, God had touched her.

Our visit that day reminded me never to underestimate the power of prayer!

Pray: Lord, help me to always be aware of your presence in each human being. Never let me judge by appearances, but to see only with your loving eyes.

Reflect: Do I sometimes judge others based on their looks or material surroundings? If so, what does Jesus ask me to do instead?

Discuss: How often do we fail to see Jesus in others because we're distracted by their appearances and material surroundings?

Women's July Reflections

(continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Susan Cabrera

Brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

A few years ago, I was looking for community groups to sponsor teams for a trivia fundraiser I was organizing to benefit adult literacy. The faith community was an obvious resource and someone had told me about a local men's group called Christians in Commerce. I approached them and they suggested I also contact their women's counterpart, Women Christians in Commerce (WCIC).

As a working Christian woman, I was interested to know more about this women's group. I attended a meeting and was told that this particular group had been formed mostly of persons whose husbands were in Christians in Commerce and that many of them did not necessarily hold standard jobs in the working world.

Based on the group's title, this was not what I'd expected, but it made no difference to me. Our bond was our love for Christ and our call was to be his disciples in the marketplace, wherever that may be. I found the women in CIC to be supportive in so many ways through prayer, encouragement and example. We can always count on each other to be there with sincere hearts and to take time to listen to and pray for one another.

One of my family members recently had a serious health crisis and almost passed on to the Lord. I knew I could count on my sisters to pray to our Heavenly Father that my loved one and our entire family be supported and surrounded by his love. As time has passed, my family member has turned a corner and is becoming stronger and stronger with each passing day.

My WCIC sisters express so much love, have so many talents, and reflect the Lord in so many ways. I'm thankful that I "stumbled upon" WCIC and that it is now a special part of my life.

Susan Cabrera is a member of the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter. She has her master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Stanford and is an executive management consultant by profession. Susan is on various community boards and serves as president of the District Council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Santa Cruz County. She enjoys giving lectures and seminars and is the author of two poetry books. Susan can be reached at scpmc@aol.com.

Hope for the Workplace Book Review

A recent book review for Bill Dalgetty's book, *Hope for the Workplace – Christ in You* has been featured on the Acton Institute PowerBlog by Peter Johnson:

<http://blog.acton.org/archives/76975-review-hope-workplace-christ.html>. Please read and share the link with your friends. You can also subscribe to Bill's blog at <http://www.christinlifeandwork.com/>. *

To purchase Bill's book, please go to <http://www.hopefortheworkplace.com/>. *

* Please note the name changes for both of these websites.

Pray: Jesus, help us to strengthen our bonds as Christians so that we may strengthen our desire and ability to love one another and spread your teachings to every-one we meet.

Reflect: Do I allow myself to love and be loved in the generous spirit of the Lord? Do I manifest the Lord's kindness and goodness in all circumstances?

Discuss: How can participating in Christian groups and activities help us to be better followers of Christ?

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Christians in Commerce Prayer

Monterey Challenge Weekend

by: Nelson Gomes

The Monterey Chapter Challenge Weekend that took place May 15th-17th was a great success! There were 23 men in attendance, 5 of whom were there for the first time. Among the guests were two men from the Salinas Chapter, as well as three brothers who came all the way from Idaho who are interested in starting a chapter in their area.

The men shared that they especially enjoyed being prayed over and receiving the Holy Spirit. They also commented on the dynamic group discussions and the openness of the other participants. The speakers were likewise highly regarded and praised for their talents and "inspiring talks".

The Holy Spirit was truly present from start to finish!

WCIC-Phoenix Challenge Weekend

by: Diane Hannan



Over the weekend of May 1-3, 18 women (8 team members, 9 newcomers, and 1 past attendee) traveled from Phoenix to enjoy the cooler temperatures of Pine, Arizona for a weekend at the Breath of Life Retreat Center. From the moment our cars entered the circular driveway, life slowed down to "Pine Time."

Hosts Candy and Jim Bridges provided an unrivaled brand of hospitality, pampering guests with delicious home-cooked meals in their spacious two-story home adorned with images and

scripture passages glorifying God. The spiritual ambiance extended into the garden where, beneath the shade of a variety of trees, women sat on benches, in rocking chairs or suspended swings to read or chat in small groups. The back yard, equipped with food and water troughs, encouraged the local wildlife, including elk and deer, to wander onto the property.

The women arrived over the course of the afternoon. Some chose to hike, some took advantage of the onsite massage therapist, and others shared conversations on the deck by the warmth of the outdoor fireplace.

The beauty of a Challenge Weekend is the familiar nature of each talk as dictated by the standard topics and customary scripture passages. However, each time I participate in a weekend, I am in awe of what God has done with the hearts and minds of the speakers! We were so blessed by the chance to rediscover God's plan for our lives and get to know him through the personal witness of a different speaker.

I know my life was changed on this weekend. I am already anticipating my next opportunity to return to Breath of Life and experience the beauty and wisdom of God. I was equally invigorated to return to Phoenix with a renewed passion for the mission of Christians in Commerce – "to encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ by releasing the power of the Holy Spirit" that dwells within each of us!

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

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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