The Bridge of Humility
By Gary Brown

For the past three years, I have served in the prayer ministry at my church. People from all walks of life come seeking help for their depression, loneliness, insecurities, marriage troubles, relationship struggles, addictions and a host of other things. We encounter many of these same problems in our interactions with coworkers, customers, and clients. I’ve learned a lot from my experience on the prayer team that helps me in the place I spend most of my waking hours: the workplace.

Many people come seeking help for the same problems month after month, year after year. It could be easy to fall into a place of judgment and think that these individuals need to be shaken out of their destructive patterns of behavior. It could be easy to lecture them about the need to have more faith and trust in God.

However, we are taught in our ministry to give minimal counsel and advice. Our core mission is to listen to those in need while offering compassion and prayer. One of the basic tenets of the prayer room is to withhold judgement and love unconditionally.

I’ve met a lot of wonderful Christians who seemingly have life and this whole faith journey all figured out. Many are bold and courageous in their faith. I have heard their testimonies and know many of these individuals have overcome their own significant life struggles. They emerged from these painful battles spiritually stronger, with a new understanding of God and their faith journey.

Very few people are truly able to see clearly, spiritually speaking, while in the midst of great pain and suffering. It is often only after enduring these struggles and coming out the other end that we are able to understand God and his plan with a new and clearer perspective. As the distance increases between today and the painful experiences of the past, the less apt we are to remember how much suffering those experiences caused. Our ability to remember diminishes over time.

A friend of mine once had a knee replacement. The recovery was so painful that she expressed regret in her decision and promised to never go through a similar procedure ever again. After some time, the pain was gone. She felt like a new person and was doing things she hadn’t been able to do for a long time. Months later, she proclaimed the surgery a success and declared she would do it all over again if needed.

While in the midst of her greatest pain, my friend had been unable to see the road of recovery ahead. It was only after going through the pain and coming out on the other end that she was able to understand the journey.

As we encounter others who are in the midst of their own painful life struggles, we must ensure that we do not forget how difficult this life journey can be. If we forget, we lose our capacity to empathize and demonstrate compassion. Humility is a bridge that connects our own pains and experiences of the past to the present. Humility helps ensure that you and I have the capacity to relate and offer compassion to those who are in the middle of their own difficult struggles and spiritual battles. Pray for humility.

Gary Brown is a ten-year member of the Mesa Men’s Chapter in Arizona. He is an insurance broker and realtor. He and his wife, Tracy, have been married twenty-eight years and have two adult children. Gary recently authored “Walking the Narrow Path with Christ.” He can be reached by email at gary@choicearizona.com for more information.

I am reminded of my physical health when I huff and puff after cycling up a hill or on a bike at the local gym. I may look like I’m in good shape, but it comes to a head when I push myself physically. We need to take care of our physical wellbeing. Every one of us needs an occasional visit to the doctor for a checkup.

How are our spiritual lives looking? Are we taking care of ourselves on the inside? Are we operating by the fruit of the Holy Spirit? I know when I’m not operating by the fruit of the Spirit, I can get impatient in many ways.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Each of the fruits from this scripture is a characteristic of the Holy Spirit’s active presence in our daily lives. When we operate in the fruit of the Holy Spirit, we are living life as we are called to do so.

Do you need a spiritual checkup?

cassell@cicintl.org
(703) 205-5600
Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters…

(Colossians 3:23)

Woody Allen used to say, “Showing up is eighty percent of life.” As a Christian, I’m called to “show up” for Christ, standing for him in whatever sphere I find myself. Sometimes it can be thrilling, but most of the time it just requires steady faithfulness to the simple tasks and relationships that are put right in front of me. I’ve learned that the feeling of wanting to be somewhere the Lord has called me will most often follow the action, not precede it.

As I’ve grown older, I’ve noticed that my zeal for the Lord and serving others can wax and wane, much like the stock market. Difficult life experiences, hurts, and disappointments can pile up over the years. I may not be as eager to serve that brother or sister, or return their call, or stick my neck out to be Christ. However, when I do show up for another person, standing with them in their struggles and pain, I am richly rewarded by the grace that our Father sends.

I have seen time and time again, both with those I have served and those who have served me, that when we choose to push through our “battle fatigue” and show up, our Father always blesses it. This is very important in our workplaces and the challenges we face there. It also includes showing up for church, fellowship groups, CIC activities, and other work and family commitments that help to keep us healthy spiritually.

It is important to encourage one another in these areas. A close friend and I often kid each other about not letting our zeal falter, encouraging one another to keep showing up for our brothers and sisters, especially when contact with the person we’re serving feels like “sand paper!”

For me, showing up includes the work I’m doing with my Christian community’s teen outreach. Sometimes being around that age group can be particularly challenging after a long work week, but I’ve found that if I ask the Lord to go before me and give me a heart for his children, I’m always surprised and blessed by his grace and how I learn about Christ from these young people.

Recently, I was asked by a single friend to support her in caring for her mother who has Alzheimer’s. My friend needed someone to attend to her mother on Sunday nights while she led the music group at her church. I prayed about it and decided to set up a Signup Genius for her friends to help us. Every Sunday evening for three hours a different sister stays with my friend’s mom. For me, this was part of showing up for this sister and it also enhanced my relationship with her.

This quote from Caryll Houselander helps me to continue wanting to show up:

“Sometimes it may seem to us that there is no purpose in our lives, that going day after day to this office, or that school or factory is nothing else but waste and weariness. But it may be that God has sent us there because but for us, Christ would not be there. If our being there means that Christ is there, that alone makes it worthwhile.”

We won’t always know as Christians how our showing up to work, church, a hospital room, a funeral, a wedding, a baptism, a work ceremony, a service project, a prayer meeting, or a CIC meeting may have built up a brother or sister who was struggling that day to see the Lord. And, as I have learned, I am personally built up. The exercise of showing up keeps me healthy, too!

**PRAY:**

Father, help me to show up in all the areas of life you are calling me to. Teach me to trust you. Give me special grace for those areas I resist.

**REFLECT:**

How have I allowed life struggles and painful experiences to keep me from being available to my brothers and sisters? How does my willingness to show up for the Lord benefit my growth in him?

**DISCUSS:**

Are we showing up for daily prayer? How does prayer shape our attitudes toward serving others? When do we find it difficult to show up, and how can we support each other in these areas?

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**WORKING FOR OUR FATHER WORKSHOP FEE ANNOUNCED**

The Christians in Commerce Board of Directors decided that a nominal licensing fee of $25.00 will be charged to the chapter for each Working for Our Father (WFOF) workshop attendee. This is much like our policy for Challenge Weekends.

This WFOF licensing fee covers the following:

- Participant’s Manual
- Facilitator’s Guide
- Training Video (Available by this summer)
- Thumb drive: assets for conducting a workshop

- Hope for the Workplace - Christ in You by Bill Dalgetty
- Ongoing support from CIC Home Office

If you have any questions, please contact Jon Cassady at the CIC Home Office at 703-205-5600 or cassady@cicintl.org.
**Personal Sacrifice**

By Aloysius Mugisa

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. (Luke 10:34)

A month ago I was riding a motorbike uphill. Ahead of me was a man riding a bicycle downhill with a car battery fastened to the back of it. Shortly after the man had gone past me, a bus came behind and wildly blasted the horn. The man panicked, and his bicycle slid and fell on the edge of road. It was a heavy fall and the friction against the road tore open his flesh on the forehead, left arm and thigh.

The man lay bleeding and howling in pain, entangled in the broken frame of the bicycle. The car battery had broken and was pouring acid into his raw, open wounds. I rushed up to him and disentangled him from the broken bicycle. He was bleeding a great deal and it was risky for me to come into contact with his blood in this region of HIV. But, this was an out-of-the-way place, and I was the only person around him. I tried to figure out how I could help.

I remembered the scripture of the man who was beaten by bandits and left for dead on his way to Jericho. I strongly felt I had to be this man's neighbor. Bleeding as he was, I put him on my motorbike and brought him to a clinic where he received First Aid and connected with his family.

My coat and trousers were bloodstained, but all I could think about was what would have happened if I had not travelled that way.

**PRAY:**

Father, I want to be a neighbor to everyone I come across. Give me the grace to recognize the needy and the resources to meet their needs. Bring to mind those who are in need in my workplace.

**REFLECT:**

Ask the Lord to help you examine your attitude towards the needy and assess your efforts and willingness to help them.

**DISCUSS:**

Talk about the areas in your life where you are selfish or indifferent to the plight of others. Who does the Lord bring to mind? What efforts can you make to be more empathetic and helpful?

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**Making a Difference in the Workplace**

By Aloysius Mugisa

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

I have been a teacher for many years and taught in many secondary schools. In all the schools I have worked, I experienced strained relationships between some teaching and non-teaching staff members. Some could not even look each other in the eye.

Once a teacher, whom I’ll call “Cinderella,” was very cross with another teacher, whom I’ll call “Dorcas.” Dorcas was the director of studies. The two of them had a very bitter exchange in the staff room. Cinderella accused Dorcas of maliciously overloading her and gossiping to the head teachers that she was dodging lessons.

“Even if you get me dismissed from this school, you won’t take my salary!” Cinderella bitterly exclaimed. Other teachers had gathered around and witnessed the bitter exchange. It was an ugly scene. Cinderella was so emotional, she wept as they quarreled. For her part, Dorcas insisted that Cinderella had been neglecting her duties.

At lunch break, I sat with Cinderella and we talked about her situation. I gave her a listening ear and she expressed her very sad emotions. I discovered that she had been unable to teach for three days due to challenges at home. I told her I would speak with Dorcas.

That afternoon I talked to Dorcas to see how we could help Cinderella. Her problem was the arrangement of the schedule. Dorcas sent me to ask Cinderella what days would be convenient for her. The following day, she rescheduled Cinderella’s lessons to take place on those days. The matter was resolved, and the two women made peace.

**PRAY:**

Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace; make me an ambassador of peace in my home and in my workplace.

**REFLECT:**

Ask the Lord to show you how you can establish and preserve peace in your workplace and your home.

**DISCUSS:**

Where do you feel called right now to make peace or to replace turmoil with kindness, understanding, and mutual support?
Holding Each Other Accountable

By Aloysius Mugisa

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Luke 10:2)

What a blessing Christians in Commerce is to Uganda! Through CIC, Ugandans reap both spiritual and material blessings. Materially, hundreds and hundreds of Ugandans now drink fresh, clean water through the well donation program. Spiritually, marriage and family renewal is one of the areas where CIC’s impact is felt the most. In January, we did a one-week marriage and family renewal conference for sixteen parishes. We sent invitations to every parish, visiting the pastors and using our radio program to publicize the conference.

The CIC service council held many meetings to plan the conference. We allocated duties to individuals and groups. What synergy, what cohesion we experienced. Blessed be the Lord!

We created working committees for hospitality, catering, finance, registration, transportation, kitchen, security, and all the things it takes to run a conference. By the first evening, 210 couples had arrived. Every committee and every individual worked hard to ensure the success of the event. Food and firewood ran out midway through the conference. Our kitchen and purchasing teams acted swiftly to bring more supplies. The program was very tiring, but incredibly fulfilling.

Many couples gave very encouraging testimonies of their marriage and family renewal. Since then many couples have come praising God for CIC ministry, which transformed their lives and marriages. At the conference, thirteen couples were also married in the church. Praise God!

Aloysius Mugisa is the president of the Uganda Men’s Chapter. He works as a secondary school teacher. His wife, Oliva, is a primary school teacher. They have four teenage daughters, two of whom are adopted. Aloysius can be reached at mugisaalloysius11@gmail.com.

PRAY:

Father, you have commissioned me to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Give me the grace and resources, Lord, to do what you have called me do.

REFLECT:

How can you respond like Isaiah to say, “Here I am Lord, ready to do your will. Send me, Lord”?

DISCUSS:

How is God calling you now to participate in his harvest? What is God calling your chapter to do in these times? How are you making yourself available?

2017 Annual Conference
Coworkers in Christ

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
**Personal Sacrifice**  
By Sophia Norman

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always… (Matthew 28: 19-20)*

At an event focused on art and history, the speaker addressed the issue of teenage apathy towards culture and history. Most of us in the audience were nodding our heads, assuming he would target teenagers themselves as the culprits. Instead, the speaker asked us, “When our teens were growing up, how often did we talk about culture and history at the dinner table? If we know, why don’t our children know? We have a lot of nerve to look down on them when we are the ones who failed to share the information. It is not only our responsibility to possess knowledge, but more importantly, to GIVE knowledge.” The message hit me like a ton of bricks. It made me think about my responsibilities as a disciple of Christ. Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me? … Feed my sheep.” (John 21:15-17). I was convicted, knowing I had fallen short. How many times had I missed the opportunity to be his disciple in the workplace? The Lord had blessed me with a Christ-centered childhood, yet, I found myself being selfish with my knowledge. Somehow, I became so consumed with my own faith journey that I was keeping the good news all to myself. I can’t keep Christ to myself; souls are at stake. The Great Commission must come first on my daily checklist. What’s on yours?

**PRAY:**

Lord, help me not to be stingy with my knowledge and testimony. Help me to recognize and take advantage of opportunities to share.

**REFLECT:**

What are the risks of keeping our knowledge and experiences to ourselves? How do we all benefit from sharing?

**DISCUSS:**

What are some ways to encourage and remind one another to share on a regular basis?

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**Redeeming Our Father’s Creation**  
By Sophia Norman

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

For many years, I’ve struggled with emotional wellness. My experiences with secular counseling have been like a roller coaster: some good, some bad. I took about a seven-year hiatus, thinking I could sort out my own problems. Shortly after my mother died, I was betrayed by a close family member. This person invaded my home and made attempts to defame my character both in court and in my local church. It took me to such a dark place that I wasn’t sure if I could find my way out.

Fortunately, I had recently started a Christian counseling regimen. It was such a blessing to receive professional guidance from someone who constantly put God’s plan in the forefront and always challenged me to seek God in every decision I made.

Still, though I responded to my circumstances more effectively, the process continued to be extremely painful. Interestingly, the torment did not come entirely from the betrayal itself, but also the shame that I experienced because of it. And the longer I kept it bottled up inside, the deeper I slipped into depression.

**PRAY:**

Heavenly Father, help me to convert my shame into a priceless tool that will build your kingdom. Remind me that even my flaws can be used for your greater glory.

**REFLECT:**

What are some ways a tragic story could be an inspiration to others? Have you ever had the courage to share an unpleasant experience? Did the outcome surprise you?

**DISCUSS:**

Why is it critical for our Christian walk to “flip” the narrative? What are the consequences for holding on to shame? Share an area in your life that you would like to flip.

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Weeks later, I was blessed with an opportunity to attend a Christian conference. One of the presenters challenged the audience to “Flip it!” She meant for us to flip our shame and our fear into testimonials and actions that will empower others, expanding God’s kingdom. Prior to this event, though I had already begun a course in Christian counseling, I wasn’t entirely confident about my effectiveness. I discovered at this conference that my baggage was not going to be a hindrance after all, but an asset! I am looking forward to peeling back more layers of myself and reflecting on more ways I can use my attributes according to God’s purpose and spreading the good news!
**The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters**

By Sophia Norman

“... I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me...” The Lord said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders... They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.” (Numbers 11:14-17)

When my mother passed away last August, the world as I knew it shattered. I was no longer the forty-three-year-old professional who always had a plan and worked hard to maintain a stable life. After the burial, I regressed into a childlike state, feeling lost and alone. But it was time to move forward with my life. My first day back to work was comparable to my first day of kindergarten. The butterflies in my stomach triggered a vivid memory of my mother letting go of my hand and directing me to walk the rest of the way. I know it was a short walk, but the path looked like it stretched for miles.

The thought of hiding under the covers that first morning back was incredibly appealing. But I happened to glance at my phone, not realizing there was an abundance of blessings waiting for me. My device was loaded with prayers and scriptures, all from my CIC sisters. Reading these messages filled me with the ammunition I needed to ignite enough confidence to walk out the door and face the world. I meditated on their words of love throughout the day.

While most of my family members faded out of my life, the support of my CIC sisters remained constant. Whether it was for a surgical procedure, a court hearing, or a simple weekend getaway, a CIC sister was there. They responded to each circumstance as if it were their own because in their hearts, it wasn’t my problem. It was our problem.

**PRAY:**

Lord, thank you for surrounding me with your love. Continue to remind me of the importance of helping each other. Your plans for us do not include suffering alone.

**REFLECT:**

When have you responded to a problem that the secular world would consider “none of our business”?

**DISCUSS:**

Share a personal experience or observation in which you witnessed the fruits of CIC’s efforts to lighten the burden for others.

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**WORKPLACE STORIES NEEDED**

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We are especially looking for personal stories related to fulfilling our mission in the workplace.

**Don’t worry if writing is not your talent!**

We will edit all submissions as needed. If you don’t know where to begin, simply tell us your story over the phone or via email, and we will take care of the rest.

We are also looking for individuals in the local chapters who are willing to be Workday Reflection stringers/ghost writers for others in their chapters, who have inspiring stories to tell.

To serve in this capacity, or to share your story, please contact the CIC offices by calling (703) 205-5600 or send an email to info@cicintl.org.
HIKE TO THE CROSS
By Jules Miller

Holy Saturday, April 15th, was an inspiring morning for the Orange County and Mission Viejo men’s chapters’ annual Hike to the Cross. Twenty men and two of their wives gathered on a cloudless sixty-degree morning to hike up the Santiago Canyon Trail to the cross at the top of the hill. Although they were the only ones hiking that morning, they did not have the trail to themselves. Numerous mountain bikers passed them without running over a single hiker! Whether this was due to the grace of God or merely the timing is uncertain. Since the trail periodically narrows to single-file width however, God’s benevolence is the more likely explanation! All on the trail were in high spirits, with the hikers and mountain bikers cheering each other onward.

This winter’s surprisingly frequent California rainfall had produced an abundant bloom of flowers covering the hillside. Don Cantacessi collected the trail flora on the journey upwards, until he had as much as he could carry. A professional landscape architect, he crafted a beautiful wreath with what he had gathered, which he laid on the cross in tribute to the sacrifice of Jesus.

Eddie Salgado, a deacon in his church, led the worship service as the hikers surrounded the cross. They filled the hilltop air with their voices, singing “Awesome God” and “He Is Lord,” reading aloud from Luke 23, and offering prayers for those who were absent. On this resurrection weekend, Pat Hobert shared words of encouragement, remembering the CIC members who had died, especially Jerry McCloskey, Tom Drennan, and Steve “Salty” Sullivan.

After working up great appetites, the hikers descended the hill and gathered for more fellowship at Cook’s Corner, Orange County’s most notorious motorcycle bar and restaurant. The heavily-tattooed bartender went out of his way to make the ladies feel welcome, thanking them for coming, and presenting each with flowers. The food was enjoyed at the outdoor tables, where the hikers mingled with the motorcyclists. The only disappointment was that the four hours together eventually ended, but with resolution to “do it again” next year!
“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Galatians 2:20

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