



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

June, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

The Dog Days of Life

by: Art Klaum

I am sure many of you are aware of the expression "the dog days of summer". For those who aren't, you can appreciate the feeling or sense of fatigue when it is hot and humid and the summer seems to just drag on endlessly. Here in the desert Southwest, we really know what this means as our "summers" generally start somewhere in late April and carry through into October. In other parts of the country, people like the fact that they have "real" seasons. When it comes to weather, ours are quite different than what many northern areas experience.

Our careers have seasons too. At times we may experience "spring" or an excitement in the blossoming of new jobs or projects. As we settle into our roles there are often periods where things don't go as smoothly as we had hoped. Risks and issues in our projects that we had anticipated and planned for become realized or escalate, costing us considerable time and energy. As things get "hotter," our energy level may be taxed as we find ourselves going from meeting to meeting, project to project, and driving from one goal to the next.

As Christians in commerce, we are not immune to challenges in the workplace. We should have a different perspective though, recognizing that the work we do has a higher purpose in fulfilling our call to restore the marketplace to what God intended it to be. We, as his sons and daughters, are expected to work. Recall from Genesis 2: 15 that *The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.*

How we do what we do differentiates us from many in the workplace who may be blinded by worldly ambitions.

"Our purpose is to transform where we work, offices, schools, factories and hospitals into places where the love and power of Christ is present and we produce goods and services with excellence." (www.christiansincommerce.org)

In James 1: 2-4, we are called to *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

A week or so ago, I was feeling especially burdened and quite honestly, worn out. Between projects and meetings at work, a long "to do" list at home, and various commitments of my time outside of home and work, I found myself rushing from one activity to the next.

I give thanks to God for a renewed spirit in my prayer time following the March Challenge Weekend and Easter celebration. I was able to press through the busyness, giving glory to God that I have a meaningful job and purpose, for blessing me and my family with a comfortable home that I am able to be a steward of, and for inviting me into his work through CIC in working to build his kingdom. He has called me into his service in all these areas. All I have needed to do is be available – and persevere.

Art Klaum (Process Improvement Leader with Avnet, Inc.), formerly of the Mesa Chapter, is a member of the CIC Board and currently involved with the CIC Campus Club @ ASU. He and his wife Geraldine have been married for over 31 years and have 4 grown children. He can be reached at aklaum@cox.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

Women's Weekends
WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill
April 16-17, 2016
WCIC-Fresno
April 29-May 1, 2016

Christians in Commerce News

Uganda Couples' Weekend of Recollection

WCIC-Palm Desert Day of Renewal

2015 Annual Conference, pg. 4

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

Please send your stories to:

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Our Schedule is Not Our Own

by: Charlie Fraga

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. (James 4:13-16)

It all began as an annoying interruption.

We had recently relocated our offices to a storefront building on a busy North Portland street corner, having secured a fresh five-year lease in a space that had been designed according to our precise specs. We were enjoying our new digs and going about our work as a marketing consulting business with confidence and modest growth. As a veteran team of six Christian men, we truly enjoyed our collaborative work, serving clients with whom we had worked for many years. We were a "well-oiled machine", full of hope and expectation for an even brighter future.

All was going splendidly in our new office space until something very unexpected happened within a couple of months: Russel paid a visit to our nice, spiffy offices.

Now, when Russel entered a building there was a lot of banging, clanging and other disturbing noises. He was in a wheelchair, bent over and "driving" mostly with his legs and feet. Hanging from the back of the chair were multiple plastic and cloth sacks for sorting used cans and bottles, most of which still had some of the residual beer or soft drink liquids in them. His presence reeked of the smell of beer.

My first reaction, I am sad to say, was, "Get this guy out of here! He is messing up our new offices! We're trying to run a professional business here!" Thankfully, one of my coworkers saw the situation differently and approached Russel. Russel could speak only with great difficulty and drooled while doing so. Several of us gathered around and did our best to engage in

a conversation, waiting patiently for him to blurt out each word and asking him to repeat himself several times. He was hoping that we had some bottles or cans to add to his collection as he was making his way to the recycling machines at a supermarket nearby. We had a few empty cans and contributed them to his cause. He told us he used the money from the can recycling refunds to buy food and help feed his cats. He was living on disability after a serious auto accident years before had left him permanently disabled.

Over the years we all got to know Russel quite well. We learned where he lived, what kind of birthday cake he liked, how many cats he needed to feed... basically, his life story. Russel became our friend. Many times we prayed with him for various things. God visited us in him.

Russel died a year ago at the age of 70. I miss him. I miss the belabored conversation, the stench of beer, even the need to clean the entryway after his departures.

Thank you, Lord, for changing my heart and frame of mind and for interrupting my business day plans.

"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions. We may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks, as the priest passed by the man who had fallen among thieves, perhaps reading the Bible... it is part of the discipline of humility that we must not spare our hand where it can perform a service and we do not assume that our schedule is our own to manage, but allow it to be arranged by God." (*Life Together* [1954], Dietrich Bonhoeffer, tr. Daniel W. Bloesch & James H. Burtness, Fortress Press, 2004, p. 99)

Charlie Fraga is President of Direct Development, Inc., and works out of their Portland, OR office. He and his wife, Carmen, have been leaders in the People of Praise for over 35 years. They have four children and nine grandchildren. He can be reached at cfraga@directdevelopment.com.

Pray: Lord Jesus, teach me by experience to value your surprises and interruptions more than I value my own plans for the day. Free me from assuming that my schedule is mine to manage.

Reflect: How has the Lord been trying to interrupt me? Am I truly open to having the Lord interrupt my busy life in new ways?

Discuss: Share an experience when you cooperated with an interruption from the Lord. Share an experience where you failed. Pray with one another to be open to God's surprises and interruptions.

Men's June Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Geoff Hunziker

I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord. (Psalm 116:17)

I would imagine all of us prefer our workplace when things are going well. It may seem easier to feel thankful during these times, though we may not always communicate our gratefulness to the Lord.

We also know that often we have grown closest to God and also grown the most as Christians during challenging and adverse times. This includes challenges at work. Though certainly not easy, there seems to be a certain peace that can be achieved when we take the time to be thankful for challenges.

In his book *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, John-Pierre De Caussade states, "The truly faithful soul accepts all things as a manifestation of God's grace, ignores itself and thinks only of what God is doing."

I recently completed a drug development program, which took two years and eight months. This project was filled with unimaginable challenges, budget issues, and FDA delays. Though I have been in the industry for 26 years, I was humbled.

My prayer sessions during this time were consumed primarily by work related topics. Could I abandon everything to God? It didn't feel like it. But I could take the step to express more thankfulness for everything in my life, including the challenges.

Gradually, my conversations with God started to change. I began approaching prayer with more thankfulness, and began noticing a greater sense of peace throughout each day. It was subtle but a definite change. Let us strive to be thankful at all times!

Geoff Hunziker lives in Monterey, California and has been married for 25 years to his wife, Tammy. They have four daughters. Geoff is a member of the Monterey Chapter and President of PARI Respiratory USA, a pharmaceutical and medical device company. He can be reached at Geoff.Hunziker@pari.com.

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Jon Maples

Righteous Father, though the world also does not know you, I know you... I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them. (John 17:25-26)

How best can we make God's name known? Here are four basic steps in preparation to evangelize:

- 1) Be Joyful: Know that God loves us unconditionally and eternally.
- 2) Be Humble: Recognize that all people, things and circumstances are used by God for our good.
- 3) Be Charitable: Practice forgiveness, acceptance and kindness, making all we do "for God and to God".
- 4) Be Wise: Be a beacon of God's light and love to all through your thoughts, words and deeds.

At a recent event at our church, the speaker described how he uses the "Anyway Poem" by Mother Theresa as a prayerful reflection (Do good anyway, be forgiving anyway, etc.). When several of our employees encountered personal and professional challenges around the same time, I made each of them a copy of the poem and sat down with them individually to read and discuss it.

One of these employees came up to me later to say, "Those words were exactly what I needed today. Thank you for sharing them and taking the time to talk about it."

I have learned from similar sharing experiences in the past, be it through the CIC Prayer, The Serenity Prayer, or an adaption of Rich Preuss' "Healy Spirit" Powerpoint, (presented at the 2014 CIC Annual Conference) that such simple acts can bring the light of God's love to the workplace. (2014 Annual Conference videos on the CIC website.)

Jon is a member of the CIC chapter in Monterey, where he lives with his wife Irene. He can be reached at jmaples@umich.edu.

Pray: Lord, let me have a thankful heart for all you allow in my life.

Reflect: Do I approach all challenges in my life with a thankful heart?

Discuss: Discuss together how you can better take on an approach of thankfulness for all things, including challenges in your life. How do you expect this will change your perspective and relationship with the Lord?

Pray: Father, may I be a witness to your joy, humility, charity and wisdom in all circumstances, to all things and for all people.

Reflect: What can I do to be more joyful? Humble? Charitable? Wise?

Discuss: What simple things can you do today to make known to the world that God's love is available to all? Share any recent experiences you've had with reaching out in joy, humility, charity or wisdom to those around you.

Men's June Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Dennis Allion

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

Being accountable means that we are willing to be responsible to another person for our behavior. It implies a level of submission to another's opinions and viewpoints.

Trust is an important aspect of accountability. We assume a personal obligation related to the trust that others place in us. While Jesus loves us unconditionally, (an amazing gift) his trust is something I believe we should strive to "earn" continuously.

We gain trust through our actions. If we commit to doing something, we need to follow through in order to gain another's trust. Jesus asks that we be like him in the marketplace, to live in Christ and as Christ in all that we do and say. We earn his trust by keeping our commitment to this calling through our words and actions toward others.

I personally have let him down and given him reason not to trust me on more than one occasion. One particular instance stands out in my mind – one that I am not proud of.

While attending a company holiday party, I had a couple of glasses of wine. This weakened my inhibitions and I failed to be Christ in the workplace. I got upset with my boss over a trivial matter and told her off in the midst of an otherwise pleasant social atmosphere. I left feeling ashamed of my behavior.

The next work day, I called our company hotline to report my misbehavior and essentially turned myself in. I wanted to hold myself accountable.

My boss and her superior had intended to deal with the matter internally, so they were a bit amazed that I had chosen to report the matter. I told my boss that we were both children of God and that she had not deserved my treatment of her. I had misbehaved and felt I needed to suffer the consequences of my actions.

It took three months, but finally the human resources department completed their investigation and I received a letter of caution. At last I was able to move forward in good conscience, knowing I had held myself accountable.

Dennis Allion is a member of the Monterey Chapter, where he serves as the Stewardship Director. He and his wife Theresa reside in Del Rey Oaks, CA. Dennis can be reached at dennisallion@sbcglobal.net.

Pray: Lord, you call upon us to be your presence in the marketplace. Help me to live and behave as you would.

Reflect: When have I not behaved as Jesus would? Have I been held accountable for those actions, words or thoughts? Do I humble myself and admit to others when I have sinned?

Discuss: To whom do you hold yourselves accountable? What does it mean to be accountable to our Lord Jesus Christ?

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 June Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Gail Cardwell

You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it. (John 14:14)

I worked adjacent to a cathedral where the poor would gather to solicit alms. A man named Jeff approached me one day for money and I obliged. He had worked shining shoes near the cathedral but legal constraints had made it impossible for him to continue.

We soon became close friends and prayed together often. Jeff was on public assistance; however, it was inadequate to cover the high cost of rent in the area. He moved regularly in order to avoid homelessness. He would call me to wish me a blessed day on the weekends and to pray with me for safe travels. He was a man of great faith and always looked out for me.

Over the course of a year, I was preparing to leave my job and hadn't yet secured subsequent employment. I had been helping Jeff for several years and wanted to provide him with adequate notice of my job departure. I was concerned that my inability to support him going forward could result in his homelessness and might impact our friendship. I felt responsible for his livelihood and delayed my job departure for months.

Finally, I broke the news to Jeff that I could no longer support him on a consistent basis. To my surprise, he hugged me and assured me, "The Lord will bless me." As we prayed together, we confidently placed both our futures in God's hands.

Bolstered by faith, I gave my notice. During the conversation with my boss, I shared Jeff's story with him and my concern for his finances. He told me the organization would arrange for Jeff to shine shoes inside our offices, where he could earn double my weekly contributions!

I praise God for his abundant generosity and for answering the prayers of those who ask in his name.

Pray: Father, help us to seek your kingdom above all and to trust in your divine providence.

Reflect: Do we believe the Lord will provide for us in all aspects of our lives? What stands in our way?

Discuss: Discuss a time when placing your trust in the Lord resulted in deliverance and renewed your faith.

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Gail Cardwell

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. (Psalm 25:9)

Five years ago, I returned to a former job to head regulatory affairs and client outreach for a financial services organization. Recessionary-induced cuts had devastated the department. I pledged to stay until the Group was rebuilt. While each employee was hired with great thought, I gave particular care in selecting my deputy, foreseeing this person as my successor. I reviewed over 100 resumes and interviewed approximately 20 people. Given the plethora of regulations facing financial institutions and the corresponding workload, it was challenging to be humble and patient during this stressful time.

Throughout the hiring process, I sought the Lord's guidance as I reviewed candidates. Many people looked good on paper as far as their professional qualifications, but something was missing.

Eight months into the hiring process, I interviewed a very bright man with exemplary qualifications. Although the interview lasted an hour, I knew he was the right person moments after we began discussing the position. After bringing the matter to prayer, I offered the job of department deputy to this man, who accepted the position.

Months later, my deputy asked me why, in the recession's aftermath, I had chosen him over the many other candidates. I explained that he was the only individual who had exhibited a deep sense of humility. I went on to acknowledge that not only did I greatly admire the characteristic of humility, but I also viewed it as a competitive advantage in the marketplace, especially with regard to jobs in the customer service sector.

As time progressed, my deputy and I began to share our love of Christ and prayed that we would build his kingdom together as examples of humble service to him. The Lord has blessed us with the highest recorded client retention rate in the organization – a testimony to his guidance and teachings along the path to building his kingdom in our workplace.

Pray: Father, help me to walk humbly with you as we build your kingdom in the workplace.

Reflect: Do I exhibit humility in the workplace, even during stressful times and even when I don't receive credit for my efforts?

Discuss: What obstacles do you face in humbling yourselves before others at work? Share how humility and prayer have helped to build Christ's kingdom in your work-places and lives.

Women's June Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Gail Cardwell

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news...
(Isaiah 52:7)*

For two years, I contemplated leaving my job, having lost the joy of achieving professional milestones. The desire for financial security and the pressures of meeting perceived family demands had been preventing me from fully experiencing Christ's gift of abundant life. I prayed for discernment regarding my employment, but felt the need to delay a final decision.

On my Emmaus Walk with a sister at the Annual Conference, she encouraged me to postpone actively searching for a new job and instead to rely on the Lord to lead me in my journey. I was soon blessed with tremendous clarity and exited my job.

I was blessed with an invitation to attend my first Challenge Weekend with the South Bend/Elkhart Women's CIC Chapter just five days following my employment departure. I listened to Spirit-filled discussions about knowing God and his plan, the obstacles that stand in the way, how we are called to Jesus, receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, keeping our appointment with God, seeking his will, being stewards of his creation and being Christ in the workplace.

The speakers brought the good news to their CIC sisters, testifying to how the Lord had worked in their lives and provided for them in each situation. They encouraged all of us to surrender control over our lives – our worries, doubts and fears – placing them in the Lord's hands. In this way, we are free to do justice, to love with kindness and to walk humbly with God.

During that weekend's Emmaus Walk, one sister kindly spoke the truth to me in love, encouraging me to "cut the financial lifeline" in God's time. The beautiful feet of my WCIC sisters fostered a spirit of peace, love and kindness, spurring me to tackle my strongholds along the path to freedom and abundant life.

Gail Cardwell is President of the WCIC-Northern Virginia Chapter. She has worked in the financial services industry for over 25 years. She is married and has two sons. Gail can be reached at gailcardwell@cox.net.

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: Father, thank you for the gift of our CIC sisters and for the fruits of our relationships. I pray that we may accept your grace to climb mountains and to bring the good news to others.

Reflect: Do I reach out to others to bring them the good news?

Discuss: How can we use CIC as a vehicle to spread the good news and to advance the Kingdom of God together as sisters?

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Uganda Couples' Weekend of Recollection

By: Aloysius Mugisa



We held a weekend of spiritual recollection for couples the last week of April. Two months earlier we had approached the pastor of that area and suggested the idea to him. He readily accepted and said, "I know you in CIC have very good staff for our couples and we would be inviting you often if it were not for financial limitations."

So, we went to our service council and set the program. We assigned each other responsibilities and allocated the talks. Four of us went two days early to assist the local team in setting up. Everything was set when the rest of us joined them on Thursday evening. Participants started arriving that same day and by Friday morning there were 25 couples.

Among the talks were: The Vision and Mission of CIC, The Divine Purpose of Marriage and Family, Psychological Differences Between Men and Women, Culture vs. the Gospel on Marriage and Family, Domestic Violence, and Couple Communication.

Even the pastor attended the event. In a speech he said, "The church has been blessed with an asset: CIC. This is the program we need to salvage the institutions of marriage and family, without which we have no church."

Many people gave exciting testimonies. One man said, "I did not know the relationship between God and marriage and never knew that marital

harmony glorifies God. I have also learned that my happiness is so much hinged to my marital harmony. I am going to do all I can to live in peace with my wife so that I can live happily."

Blessed be God, the program was a big success!

WCIC-Palm Desert Day of Renewal

By: Caroline Konczey

April 11th was the WCIC-Palm Desert Chapter's Day of Renewal. Held at Sacred Heart Church in Palm Desert, we had over 30 women in attendance!

Mary Anne Merwin, who has been teaching God's word for over 40 years, led us in a day of reflection, fellowship and conversation with Jesus. "Walk and Talk with Jesus" was the theme of the day.

Along with two presentations from Mary Anne, we each took time alone with Jesus and then shared our thoughts and feelings in a small group setting.

We enjoyed lunch together and drew even closer as a group. Those new to WCIC were invited to join us each Tuesday evening at 7:00. Praise God for a blessed time together!



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

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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