Two of the greatest influences of our age—culture and commerce—converge in the marketplace. Today, these two influences are placing increasing demands on Christians who go to work.

Our businesses and workplaces are ground zero for us in facing the dual demands of culture and commerce; yet it is the least likely place to impact as Christians. In spite of spending 60% of our lives at work, the marketplace is where we, as baptized Christians, are most likely to leave our faith at the door, resulting in minimal influence over business decisions and working relationships. This is a gap God did not intend.

We know life lived fully in Jesus Christ has power. As the world around us becomes more materialistic, individualistic, and hedonistic, the more the lives of dedicated Christians should become distinctive and attractive at work. For more than 30 years, Christians in Commerce has existed to equip and encourage dedicated Christians to be Christ in their workplaces, closing the marketplace gap.

God has been present and represented in all major aspects of human history. Today’s marketplace is no exception. Christianity can influence this great intersection of culture and commerce when:

- Colleges and universities turn out students who are well-trained to approach their workplaces as effective business leaders and stewards of his creation.
- Young professionals and workers of all ages stand strong in their faith and work together to do his will in their daily business activities.
- Christians reflect the power and attractiveness of the gospel that draws fellow workers into serving the common good while also drawing them toward a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Christians in Commerce encourages and equips Christians to be God’s presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence.

As we look to the future, we are committed to providing business students and young professionals with practical content, spiritual insights, and first-hand accounts to encourage them to live their faith in the workplace.

As an organization, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians in Commerce’s goal is to provide a means for Christians to join with others to fulfill God’s desire for the marketplace. The gap will begin to close as his people:

- Recognize their call to be stewards of God’s creation.
- Realize our employment as working for our Creator and serving God.
- Respect the dignity of all workers and assist them in using their gifts and talents well.
- Relate together as faithful Christian contributors to culture and commerce.

Let us continue to support one another in seeing work as a way to accomplish something good in the world and to bring others into the fullness of God’s plan for them.

When we answered the call to follow Jesus, he exhorted us all in his very own words, saying “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Yes, to the very end of the age! Does the scripture tell us to work together and impact our local area through CIC?

We have authority from the Father, the charge to act from Jesus, and empowerment from the Holy Spirit to do so. Yes, it does tell us to impact our local area, and the tool he gave us to work with is CIC! These were items I recently discussed with many brothers and sisters at a Town Hall meeting. We focused on our understanding of the mission for CIC brothers and sisters. It was informative for me, and I look forward to many more visits!

This article was created with the involvement of several past and current members of the CIC Board of Directors, along with input from the founders of Christians in Commerce.

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The Narrow Road with Christ

By Gary Brown

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

When I opened my insurance brokerage about nine years ago, we had great success doing business on the Internet. However, the way consumers shop and do business has significantly changed and evolved over the years.

Today, engaging consumers online requires engaging in website and search engine optimization, analytics, marketing, content writing, video, and social media—all of which require additional money and time. Larger insurance firms are expected to be the bigger beneficiaries by virtue of their financial resources and staffing.

I watched a webinar that portrayed small insurance agencies, like mine, as endangered species and viewed our future as similar to what happened in the travel industry about ten years ago. Many small travel agencies have gone out of business because consumers now purchase direct or online. The comparison to my business was disconcerting.

2015 was a difficult year. Besides making changes in my business model, our family was challenged on several other fronts. I had also been diligently writing a Christian book, entitled The 7 Prayers, and Satan was quite active in his attempts to discourage me.

Through prayer, I was given Matthew 7:13-14. The message was clear: get on and stay on the narrow path with Christ. I knew this was God helping realign me with his plan instead of worrying about the future.

Once I recognized where my thoughts and attitude had drifted, I made efforts to get back on track, primarily by doubling down in my prayer life and engaging in other faith-building efforts.

Our world has never been more hectic, busy, and distracting than it is right now, offering many opportunities to stray from Christ. It probably is only going to get more difficult. Detouring from Christ's path can happen to anyone, and it can happen without us even recognizing that we have drifted away. It could be a single event that occurs in our life, or it could happen slowly over time.

Lord, help me identify when I stray from your narrow path. Help me to remain diligent in pursuing you daily.

What are the penalties for drifting away from Christ's path? How do we get back on track if we have drifted away?

What consistent and regular activities do I engage in, or could I engage in, to ensure I do not stray?

If we are going to live a life pleasing to God, we must be diligent in recognizing how and when we wander from the path of Christ. Certain sins and negative behaviors are easier to identify. But how often do we engage in sins or behaviors that are not so easily identifiable, such as self-righteousness, boasting, self-centeredness, laziness, indifference, judging, coveting, and being materially focused?

Are you financially blessed? Has your abundance lessened your dependence on God or caused you to be self-righteous? If concerned about the future, are you spending time worrying and being fearful?

None of us are immune from the potential potholes that lay ahead. Staying on the narrow path requires a consistent and persistent daily diligence.

Reflective stories/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.

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!
**WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Personal Sacrifice**

**By Steve Becker**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters. (Colossians 3:23)*

While working at a large advertising agency, I was involved in a project that helped participants draft a personal mission statement. Various activities explored our abilities, values, affinities, and experiences to help us describe the type of work we were best suited for. Looking back, every role and industry I would work in reflected, in different ways, the personal mission statement I wrote at that time. Even though I've worked for many companies, I've only had one employer: God. As this month’s cover article states, we should all recognize first and foremost, no matter where we are working, that we are employed by our Creator and serve him first. My mission statement reflected my personal abilities and how I would work for him.

The reality of God the Father as my employer radically affected the way I viewed my work, my supervisors, and my co-workers. This perspective also had a large impact on the type of communications and advertising I created for clients. He was the one who ultimately would give me my most important job review. I wanted to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23).

Jesus Christ has gone to great lengths to set us free to serve our employer. As Paul writes to Titus, “[Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:14).

Working for the Lord stands in direct contrast to the world’s self-serving approach of working to live or living to work. Our call is not to serve ourselves but to serve him for the good of all people and the world.

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**WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Making a Difference in the Workplace**

**By Steve Becker**

*Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. (Titus 3:14)*

Mark was sharing that early in his career, a supervisor said something that radically changed the way he approached work. It started when she asked him what he had done over the weekend.

Mark recounted that he had risen early on Saturday and spent the whole day doing yard work and landscaping. After five o’clock his wife had urged him to stop, put a steak on the grill, and enjoy a beer. He said, “I sat back and basked in the satisfaction of all the good work I had done that day. It was the best part of my day.” She replied, “You need to bring that gardener to work.”

Horticulture and agriculture are both tied to the idea of culture-making, taking what nature has to offer and making something of it. A Christian perspective is that we’re called to take the raw material that God provides and draw potential out of it, rearranging it for human flourishing as God defines it.

Culture matters. I’ve worked for several companies, and the culture at each was different. The products and services provided reflected our culture—good or bad. As mentioned on the cover, our ministry puts us at the very crossroads of commerce and culture. All culture-making is a form of gardening. We have joined together in this ministry to be better gardeners in our workplace. We choose to turn away from our fallen nature and its love of self and power and, by his grace, to serve our Father, our true employer. This means building the culture of the kingdom of God around us.

Paul urges all Christians to learn to devote themselves to doing what is good. This type of culture-building is part of that good. It is an urgent need in our society and our marketplace. Devoting ourselves to this work, as Paul says, will make our lives productive for him.

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**PRAY:**

Jesus, you have rescued me to join you in bringing forth your kingdom in my workplace. Open my eyes to see how I can be more faithful, diligent, and steadfast in serving our Father.

**REFLECT:**

How would you characterize your work, your abilities, and the triumphs and challenges you’ve faced? How would you describe the work that suits you and your mission in the Lord?

**DISCUSS:**

Contrast working for the Lord with two more common approaches: working to live and living to work. How do these two approaches impact us personally and limit our ability to work for the Lord? What would need to change to “work at it with all your heart”?

**PRAY:**

Help me understand better where my workplace’s culture reflects you, Lord, and where it reflects the world. Show me how to devote myself to doing good there.

**REFLECT:**

Think about the gardening example as it relates to culture. What parallels and insights does the Lord give to apply to your workplace and situation?

**DISCUSS:**

How are the corporate values of your workplace reflected in its culture? Are they consistent in both what is said and what is done? How can you be a greater influence?
Holding Each Other Accountable

By Steve Becker

Your people shall all be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. (Isaiah 60:21)

When I look back over my career, it’s amazing to me that I was able to do what I did. Over time, three things came together miraculously: ability, affinity, and opportunity. My story is a good illustration of one person respecting my dignity as a person and assisting me in using my gifts and talents.

My story almost didn’t happen. While I had always enjoyed writing and communications, my life had gotten off track. By the time I became a convinced Christian, I was married with two children and without a college degree, advanced or undergraduate, that employers required.

Then, when I was thirty-four, I was given a foot in the door at the largest advertising agency in Minneapolis. The real gift God gave me was a supervisor on one of my accounts, Dave. He was old school and had come up the ranks. He saw in me things I didn’t see in myself. He was always giving me challenging work, forcing my raw abilities to develop, and giving me on-the-job training.

Dave had a favorite line I loved when asking me to do the difficult: “All things are possible for him who doesn’t have to do them.” Eventually, the account grew tenfold and became the agency’s largest. When he moved on, I took over his position.

Ability, affinity, and opportunity are three aspects of discerning God’s will for each of us. My experience showed me the role others play in this process.

I may think I have certain abilities, but do others confirm it? (Unlike the person who thought he could sing, but no one could stand to listen to.)

Secondly, what is the Spirit urging me to do? Will others confirm that my motives seem pure?

Finally, what am I given the opportunity to do, and am I able to do it? All three need to come together, and they can happen in any order as my experiences show.

God has planted shoots all around us in our chapters and our workplaces. What role can we play to help them nurture and grow in their ability to more fully participate as the “work of [his] hands”?

PRAY:
I lift up each fellow member of my Chapter and Challenge Group. Let us grow in love for one another and in our willingness to discern together the work you have for each of us.

REFLECT:
How has God called you? What opportunities has he given you? What more do you think he may be asking of you at this stage?

DISCUSS:
What are you trying to discern right now for your life in our shared call to Christians in Commerce? What insight or encouragement do you have to offer one another?

2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE VIDEOS

Now Online on Christians in Commerce’s YouTube Channel!

Our 2015 Annual Christians in Commerce Conference, “Living Extraordinary Lives in Ordinary Ways,” was filled with insights, first-hand witnesses of the life of Christ, and testimonies. Our General Session and Workshop Session talks are now live on our YouTube Video Channel.
**WEEK 2 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Personal Sacrifice**

By Sharon Rose

“If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this, he went away sad.

(Matthew 19:21-22)

In our home is a picture of the face of Christ that I love. In my search to discover this particular face of Christ within the context of its larger setting, I visited a store that carries prints of the works of master artists. The clerk was immediately able to show me the larger place, because by this time of the year, almost everything has been rented.”

The following day in the classroom, at our designated prayer time, she asked the Lord for a cottage at the lake. That very evening, a parent of one of my students called. She introduced herself and said, “I understand that your child would like a place at the lake for your summer vacation. If you are interested, we have a family home on Lake Michigan that we are open to renting during the month of July!”

How tenderly the Lord must look at the face of each child as they bring to him a desire of their heart.

**PRAY:**

Lord, I ask you for a pure heart that earnestly desires to please you first.

**REFLECT:**

Ask the Lord to show you anything that may be inhibiting your immediate response to his call to, “Follow me.”

**DISCUSS:**

Share a time when you had to make a choice for the Lord. What were the results of that choice?

**WEEK 3 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS**

**Redeeming Our Father’s Creation**

By Sharon Rose

“Let the little children come to me.” (Luke 18:16)

In my second grade classroom at a parochial school, there were about 35 precious jewels. Their eyes sparkled, their bodies exuded energy, their minds were open, and their spirits were joyous. I thought, “How can I harness all this for you, Lord?” Then I remembered a “Noah and the Ark” song which was lively, exuberant, and might distill some of their energy into a peace that could effect some careful listening and learning. After morning recess, they learned the song and loved it! It became a daily routine after recess, followed by a short time for any prayer requests the children had. We then prayed for our needs and began to briefly share any prayer requests that had been answered. Both the children’s faith and mine grew as we saw the Lord clearly answer our prayers for one another.

This particular year, my daughter happened to be a student in my classroom. One afternoon in late springtime, we were at home, and she shared how much she wanted our family to have a vacation together at the lake that summer. My response was, “You’d better start asking the Lord for a place, because by this time of the year, almost everything has been rented.”

When have you, by the power of God’s Spirit, opened the door for someone to draw closer to the Lord?

**PRAY:**

Lord, please help us to act as John the Baptist, preparing the way for you to work in the lives and hearts of your people. Help us to remember how much you care about us and all of the desires of our heart.

**REFLECT:**

How might the Lord be calling you, in your workplace, to prepare the way for him?
WEEK 4 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By Sharon Rose

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

Sitting at our small, glass-topped kitchen table, I suddenly noticed anew a much loved picture on the wall reflected in the glass. A gift from our children, this painting is of the lighthouse that leads the way into the harbor where our family has enjoyed many years of sailing, watching fireworks, star-gazing, flying kites and frisbees on the beach, and playing in the sand and the waves together. Long ago, late at night, as I was approaching our sailboat, the Lord said to me, “This is your haven.” Gratitude to the Lord for his gift welled up in me.

The Lord has now given me a new gift: the haven that I am discovering in the love and encouragement of my sisters in WCIC who share life with me. In our brief time together as the South Bend Chapter of CIC women, we’ve encouraged and prayed for sisters going through difficult times in their workplaces and celebrated with a sister by attending an open house for a brand-new school that cares for the educational needs of the poor. We’ve supported fellow workers and also a sister in Christ as dear ones have died and had fun together as we gathered for brunch at one of our homes and celebrated Christ together at a Christmas party. Most importantly, we’ve grown to count on one another in times of need.

As we see the image of Christ more and more clearly in one another, we are strengthened, supported, encouraged, and equipped by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow God’s kingdom! Thank you, Lord, for the gift of my sisters and the haven they provide as we live our lives in Christ together.

PRAY:

Lord, I want to be your presence in the marketplace and grow your kingdom. I ask for your heart, that I can love like you!

REFLECT:

Equipped with the Lord’s love, think about who he is asking you to invite to our next Challenge Weekend.

DISCUSS:

What can we do to improve our challenge group and make it a haven of encouragement and love for those the Lord wants to draw in and use to expand his kingdom?

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

2016 Annual Conference

COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR

OCTOBER 14–15, 2016

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Golf Resort Palm Springs Area, Cathedral City, CA

More information to follow.
Mark your calendars!

Sharon Rose was prayed with for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1971. She delights in her marriage to Bud, their 6 children and spouses, and their 30 treasured grandchildren. Sharon is a women’s leader in an ecumenical, charismatic, Christian community, is on the service council of the South Bend Chapter of WCIC, and is a member of the WCIC Board.

She can be reached at sharon.s.rose@gmail.com.
MEN’S WEEKENDS
South Bend/Elkhart
March 4-6, 2016
Monterey
March 4-6, 2016
Palm Desert
March 11-13, 2016
Greater Phoenix
April 1-3, 2016
Salinas
April 22-24, 2016
Salinas
November 18-20, 2016

WOMEN’S WEEKENDS
South Bend/Elkhart
March 4-6, 2016
Gilroy/Morgan Hill
April 16-17, 2016
Greater Phoenix
April 22-24, 2016
Fresno
April 29-May 1, 2016

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Palm Springs Area
October 14-15, 2016

GREATER PHOENIX AREA
CIC CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST
By Rick Null
The Mesa, Arizona chapter hosted their annual CIC Christmas breakfast at St. Timothy’s Catholic Church on December 16th. In attendance were 80 men, representing chapters throughout the greater Phoenix area. A group of dedicated volunteers arrived around 5:30 am and helped prepare a wonderful breakfast, comprised of breakfast burritos, fruit, and granola, as well as homemade salsa. Wayne Kandas and Bill Boivin provided inspiring music, Rob Boring guided the meeting, and Gary Brown gave an insightful talk about spreading the love of Christ that led to Spirit-filled conversations at all of the packed tables. It was a wonderful gathering, all the men departing with a renewed commitment to the glory of God, his kingdom, and CIC.

GREATER PHOENIX TOWN HALL MEETING WITH TERRY CASSELL
By Debi Wiskirchen
On December 7, 2015, CIC members from the greater Phoenix area (GPA) met with CIC President Terry Cassell at the City of the Lord facility in Tempe for his first Town Hall Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the release of the updated CIC Vision and Mission Statement, primarily as it related to Louie Grams’ inspiring exhortation about why CIC exists. We began the evening with prayer, pizza, and by listening to a recording of Louie’s talk from the 2014 national conference (available on the CIC website; everyone is encouraged to listen to it as it reiterates our mission and purpose).

The floor was then opened for comments and concerns from the forty-plus men and women present. Opening discussion centered around the 2015 CIC annual conference, held locally in October. The conference was an important and powerful reminder of our call at home and abroad. At the conference our brother, Aloysius Mugisa from Uganda, shared from the heart about all the work our ministry does and how it has transformed many lives in his homeland. How can we here in the United States apply the Vision and Mission effectively as well?

Discussion then turned to our Challenge Weekend, a foundational element for sharing our calling as an organization. Some members believe the “Stewards of Creation” talk, being the most important one, should come at the beginning instead of the end. Others felt it should remain at the end. The group agreed that this aspect of our calling is not generally understood by many members. We need to be doing a better job of communicating and explaining this very important talk. After all, it’s our mission talk. Terry assured the group that those opinions were being taken into consideration. He also shared that discussions reviewing the challenge weekend model are ongoing.

Terry also reminded us that Christians in Commerce was originally formed to fill a unique need in businesses that was lacking, that of “being Christ in the workplace.” He encouraged us that our workplace is wherever God has us at the moment. With the support and assistance of the CIC offices in northern Virginia, Terry encourages us to take action. We need to ask ourselves these questions:

• How do we live out and apply CIC’s Vision and Mission?
• Do we recognize the Vision and Mission as being unique?
• Are we willing to bring others into the fullness of God’s plan for them? What’s our plan for doing so?
• Are we unified and willing to collaborate with one another locally to fulfill the mission?

Please send your events and stories to:
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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

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me”
Galatians 2:20