



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

May, 2015

## Christ in the Workplace

### God, Reveal Yourself!

by: Joe Blanco

My grandmother had a saying about the truth revealing itself in adversity. She was referring to the truth about our character! When the challenges of this world test us, do we bend to its ways or do we stand up to those challenges with a Christian attitude?

I don't know of any business in our area that was not affected by the economic downturn. In the dry cleaning industry, our customers need to maintain a certain level of household income in order to sustain us.

As our customer base lost or sold their homes, the household income levels in our area dropped. I wondered if our business could survive! In my prayers, I asked God to reveal his plan for us. As always, God answered by providing a situation through which I could see his purpose.

One day, one of our key pieces of equipment broke. Our production came to an abrupt halt. We contacted several repair companies and they all referred us to "Keith".

I was hesitant to call him because although he had a reputation of being the best, I was warned that his fees were high and his language and character left much to be desired. Because I was desperate, I called him anyway. Sure enough, we were not disappointed! His language and fits of anger were as forewarned.

My employees and customers could hear his curses emanating from the rear of the shop. When I called this to his attention, he disregarded me and stepped outside for a cigarette. (Silently, I prayed that the cigarette would calm him and his profanity.)

As a man of God, I am called to protect and defend those in my charge, so I stood by Keith's side until he had finished the job. I paid him and told myself I would NEVER use this guy again! But God had other plans!

One day I found Keith at our back door. He had come to check on his previous work. As he smoked and talked, I prayed. I asked God to reveal himself to Keith. My heart ached for him. I desired that he know God. But, I also knew there were many layers that needed to be chipped away. I felt the "go-ahead" from the Spirit.

I started asking Keith about his kids, his wife, and his pets. I learned that he was proud of his three boys, adored his wife, and had rescued all of his dogs. There was hope!

From then on, whenever Keith came to work on our equipment, I would pray before he started. Each time, it wound up being either an easy fix or no fix was needed at all. Keith saw all this.

One day, his back was hurting severely and I prayed over him. He asked if I would also pray for his smoking, his weight, and his foul language. In front of my employees and customers, I asked God to come into his heart and bless him with the gift of self-control.

Keith has lost weight, quit smoking, is attending church and his language is no longer profane! He attends CIC when possible and, along with his wife, helps us prepare and serve meals for the homeless. On one occasion he took another CIC brother and me to pray with a friend in need.

I had asked God to reveal himself and he provided a situation to help me see that he was already present in Catalina Cleaners. Keith and I now share a strong personal friendship (though he still won't give me a discount!).

*Joe Blanco is a member of the Mesa Chapter in Arizona. He and his wife, Angelique, reside in Chandler, Arizona, where Joe is the owner of Catalina Cleaners. He can be reached at [catalinacleaners@msn.com](mailto:catalinacleaners@msn.com).*

### Upcoming Events

#### Men's Weekends

##### Greater Phoenix Area

May 1-3, 2015

##### High Point

May 15-17, 2015

##### Monterey

May 15-17, 2015

##### Twin Cities Area

May 29-31, 2015

##### Salinas

November 13-15, 2015

#### Women's Weekends

##### WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill

May 2-3, 2015

##### WCIC-Phoenix

May 1-3, 2015

##### WCIC-Fresno

May 29-31, 2015

### Christians in Commerce News

#### Women's Santa Cruz & Monterey Chapters' CWE

#### WCIC-Fresno Service Council Retreat

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

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# Life Pleasing to God

week 1

## Who's Serving Whom?

by: Jack McCall

*Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (Isaiah 46:4)*

This scripture brought a smile to my face as I thought about my age and my gray hair. Then my attention shifted to the words *I will sustain you and I will rescue you*.

Old age is different for each of us. Most of us would agree, though, that it is a season somewhere after 65 or 70. At 68, I am physically fit, have all my teeth, do not take any medications, can remember my address and phone number, see without glasses, and remember age ten as though it were yesterday.

It's been a rough ride. I'd love to give myself all the credit for surviving the bullying I endured as a child, the rejection I felt as a teen and my fear of inadequacy as a young adult. Poor self-esteem was Satan's favorite tool for keeping me imprisoned and separated from God. Not only did I think my life not worthwhile, I had little hope of ever amounting to much in the workplace.

That was my life until I turned 40 years of age. I wasn't exactly old and gray, but I was as scared as I was at age ten. Then I came face-to-face with the person of Jesus Christ and the realization that he had carried me through one dark moment after another all of my life. He was the one who had sustained and rescued me. I encountered Jesus and the Holy Spirit "up close and personal" on a Challenge Weekend.

There was a honeymoon period with Jesus after that weekend, but the demands of everyday life slowly crept back into the mix. Life didn't get easier at home or at work and yet Jesus seemed to empower me with a peace and joy I had never experienced before. I was no longer the little runt on the beach getting sand kicked in his face. I was stronger, taller and smarter; at least I felt like I was.

I thought there must be something to this intimacy with Jesus, which included a daily appointment with him; a very real friendship with God. There

were days when the world seemed to be caving in on me, but I walked away unharmed. Jesus had not only rescued me, but also sustained me by always carrying the heavy end of the stick.

Then came the loss of our first grandchild. This hardship was followed by long, drawn-out negotiations to sell a business. How could all of this be happening to me? After all, I was very busy serving God. Surely he must appreciate my efforts. I remember asking Jesus, "Is this how your servant is rewarded for serving you?" It wasn't a very nice thing to say to him, but I was scared; really scared.

Unbeknownst to me, Jesus had again rescued me; sustained me. Had I not sold the business, the subsequent downturn in the economy would have crushed me financially. Then, when my wife, Joanne, became ill, the weight of life's demands shifted. God had removed my employer responsibilities so I could give Joanne the attention and care he wanted her to have. I wanted desperately to retract my thoughtless comment to the Lord.

Joanne's death in 2014 was followed by my mother's passing on Christmas day of that year, and then my brother's death this past February. It was during this period that I experienced God's presence the most, and when I felt the most isolated and empty, God introduced me to a new companion named Louise.

He knew that I would need someone in my life; someone to pray with, to laugh and cry with, to encourage me and love me; someone who would say "Yes" to marriage in October of 2015. Jesus had once again sustained me; rescued me.

So, who's serving whom? No matter how old I get or what happens to me, I will never serve Jesus more than he has served me.

*Jack McCall is a Commercial Insurance Broker and has been involved with the San Jose Chapter of CIC for 28 years. Jack is a widower, but engaged to be married to Louise on October 3, 2015. He has a daughter named Jackie, a son-in-law, Nino, and four grandchildren. Jack loves doing anything that glorifies the Lord! He can be reached at [jack-mccall@leavitt.com](mailto:jack-mccall@leavitt.com).*

**Pray:** Lord, open my eyes to see how you have been serving me, and more importantly, how I can serve you.

**Reflect:** Whom do I serve? What do my fears and thoughts reveal about my ability to trust God? How have recent circumstances, especially in the workplace, shown how I have grown (or not grown) in my trust?

**Discuss:** How has God served you through difficult times? What have you learned? What opportunities is God giving you to help your coworkers grow in the knowledge of his service?

# Men's May Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Sacrifice

by: John E. Daly

... we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5:3-5)

It was during the prayer time at one of our recent chapter meetings that I actually found myself thanking God for the sufferings in my life. I had never prayed that way before and was surprised I even said it. I had come to a point of brokenness over unresolved issues that were causing pain and suffering that I could not control. Yet, here I was telling God how grateful I was to be going through it.

In the world, we usually do everything we can to avoid suffering and brokenness. However, God can be so glorified in our sufferings if we allow him into them. I know many men in CIC carrying crosses involving health issues, broken family relationships and economic burdens that seem impossible to bear. It is their perseverance with character and hope that makes the light of Christ shine so brightly through their brokenness.

I have come to realize the truth in the original Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr, which states, in part: "... Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace, taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it..."

The hardships in our lives are to be united with those of Christ so we can walk with him and go through them together. In doing so, we become closer to Jesus and allow his glory to be seen by others.

**Pray:** O Lord, I know you are with me in all my sufferings. Help me to embrace the crosses in my life as we carry them together.

**Reflect:** Am I avoiding the crosses in my life and causing more suffering for others and myself? How can I better accept them and allow Jesus in?

**Discuss:** Share a cross that you have been carrying in your life. Have you been doing it alone or with Jesus?

## week 3

### Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: John E. Daly

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

As an attorney for over 35 years, I have worked on hundreds of cases for a wide variety of clients. Here is a true story of a couple with great faith and how God taught me through them to trust in him to know what is best for a case.

My first meeting with my client and his wife was in the hospital. He had been in a very serious motorcycle accident. He informed me that he had prayed about his case, then proceeded to tell me how much he expected to receive and how it would be spent. I listened patiently for a long time. I was taken aback by his confidence. Not wanting to say too much, I simply told him the process might take a couple of years and that we would see how the case developed. At that point, I was quietly thinking that his morphine was doing the talking and that it would be a miracle for the case to turn out as he expected!

It turned out to be the most difficult and stressful case of my career. There were half a dozen lawyers involved and it eventually ended up in Federal Court.

I met with the client and his wife and we prayed about a strategy that might get the case out of court more quickly. As we prayed, they informed me that the Lord had told them to "watch and wait." This was not the legal strategy I would have chosen, but my respect for them and their great faith made me believe them.

When I showed up at the pretrial conference, I was informed by one of the other lawyers that a new adjuster from the insurance company had been assigned to the case. "Another setback and delay," I thought. How wrong I was! During my first meeting with him, he said he had reviewed the entire case and that it should have been settled a year ago. We proceeded directly to settlement negotiations without the other lawyers and resolved the case. Had I not listened to my client's "watch and wait" word, the legal strategy that had made sense to me months earlier would not have helped and possibly even hurt the case.

My faith in the Lord was strengthened by my client's great faith. The case turned out very much like he had told me it would in his hospital bed two years earlier. I experienced a legal miracle, for we live by faith and not by sight.

**Pray:** Lord, increase my faith in you more and more each day.

**Reflect:** How strong is my faith? Do I make important decisions with prayer and discernment?

**Discuss:** Have you ever acted in faith on an important decision? Share what the Lord taught you.

# Men's May Reflections

(continued)

week 4

## Holding Each Other Accountable

by: John E. Daly

*Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise. Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:20-21)*

The CIC Challenge Group has been and remains one of the most important formational instruments God has used in my life. There have been numerous occasions when I have sought advice and heard not what I wanted to hear, but what the Lord wanted me to hear through the advice of brothers in the group.

As human beings we have an incredible capacity to rationalize almost any behavior when we hold it in our own hearts and fail to bring it into the light. The power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives is often held back because we simply do not seek the light of truth. In our pride, we allow our own thoughts to be given a higher value and priority and fail to seek the Lord's ways.

By being transparent before my brothers in the Challenge Group, God has worked through them and shown me wisdom beyond my own thoughts. This has helped me make wise decisions on job changes, raising a family and being a good steward of the blessings he has given me.

As I grow older, I have come to appreciate all that formation in a new way. I now see how important it is to share what I have been given with others; to reach out to younger brothers in Christ and share what the Lord has taught me about his ways. So often it is not a great revelation that the Lord wants me to relate, but merely how his love has helped me through a difficult time in my life. This same issue may be what a new brother is now experiencing for the first time in his life. I need only to share with him the truth of what God has taught me.

This kind of sharing becomes an opportunity to mentor the way others have mentored me in the past. God is using all of us to build his kingdom in the marketplace and to share our lives in Christ!

*John E. Daly is a member of the Minneapolis-South Chapter. He has been married to his wife Peg for 35 years. They have two grown sons and a granddaughter. John has been a member of CIC for 30 years and is President of his own law firm in Minnesota. He can be reached at [jedalylaw@gmail.com](mailto:jedalylaw@gmail.com).*

## 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 "Extraordinary Lives! Being Lived in Ordinary Ways". More information to follow. Mark your calendars!

**Pray:** Lord, through your Holy Spirit, grant me wisdom to share your ways with others.

**Reflect:** Can I be open to sharing those things in my heart that are hidden from others and bringing them into the light of day?

**Discuss:** What things are on your heart right now that need discernment?

# Women's May Reflections

## week 2

### Personal Sacrifice

by: Sophia Norman

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1)*

Whether it is in our workplace, church or community, it is our true and proper worship to serve. Sometimes God calls us to serve in our very own homes.

As a single woman, I allowed selfish traits to become ingrained into my heart. My needs became an idol. I loved my salon days and my weekend getaways. Even though I knew the Lord, my needs shamefully remained top priority. Little did I know that my complacent, selfish lifestyle was about to reach an abrupt end.

In April of 2013, my mother, who has been my prayer partner, best friend, and roommate, suddenly had a stroke. Even though her diagnosis was considered mild, her memory and speech were altered, as was my life. I didn't know what to do. I had to think about someone other than myself. My head was spinning. How was I going to manage her medication, her diet, her safety? How could I take care of her when I had over 150 students counting on me to teach, love, and support them?

Several months later, my mom began to make miraculous progress and, with help from the Lord, a working system fell into place; at least until the morning I got a call from my sister. Someone had run a red light and totaled her car. She had been injured and my mom's ankle had been crushed in the passenger's seat.

Now I will be serving two people for the next several months—cooking, washing, chauffeuring, nursing, organizing, financing. The responsibilities were overwhelming at first, but in the midst of it all, God has never failed me. My circumstances have unfolded according to his purpose. I have been called to serve, and through his mercy and grace, I please the Lord.

**Pray:** Dear Lord, help me to embrace the opportunities to serve. Remind me that my life is not my own, but a living sacrifice. It is my goal to please you each and every day.

**Reflect:** How often have I mistaken God's call to serve as a tedious task or an unwelcomed obligation?

**Discuss:** Share an experience when you knew your sacrificial service was pleasing to God.

## week 3

### Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Sophia Norman

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:16)*

I have to confess, there was a time in my Christian walk when I would have been crowned Queen of the Pew Warmers. It is extremely tempting to just sit back and be another face in the crowd.

Then, out of the blue, I was asked to be part of the youth ministry team at my church. I agreed, and God greatly blessed my service. Not only did I have the opportunity to plant seeds and build relationships with teens seeking the Lord, but I also found myself engaging them in profound discussions about Scripture.

Unfortunately, my life took a shift when my mother became ill. My attendance steadily declined. I felt like a failure. I thought I had let the youth director down and, even worse, that I had let God down. Satan convinced me that I didn't have anything else to give.

Thankfully, the Lord proved Satan wrong. The youth director called me one day and said, "I'm aware of your circumstances, but I want you to know that we still need you. I was wondering if you would like to do something more behind the scenes. Would you be interested in writing a curriculum for our Wednesday night ministry? You could work from home." My eyes began to well up with tears. I accepted without any hesitation. I was happy to be part of the kingdom work once again!

The Lord used my role in such a mighty way. I received messages from the director and group leaders telling me how the teens loved the lessons and how much my support was appreciated. God showed me that I was still part of the body and that he needs EVERYONE, regardless of who they are or what their circumstances entail. We must deny ourselves in order for God to receive the glory. Paul was so right when he said, *to live is Christ* (Philippians 1:21).

**Pray:** Lord, thank you for reminding us of the importance of working together as one body.

**Reflect:** How am I contributing to building God's kingdom?

**Discuss:** Share an experience from work, church, or CIC in which individuals of different talents and skills came together to build something valuable.

# Women's May Reflections

## (Continued)

week 4

### The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Sophia Norman

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:19)*

We don't always see what God is doing in our lives. The Israelites traveled in circles for forty years before God unveiled the pathway into the Promised Land.

I, too, have been lost in the wilderness, nettled by thorns of disappointment, heartbreak, and bitterness. These emotional distractions took root from a presumed romance that reeked of unrequited love. I was devastated. My mother urged me to wait on the Lord and trust his timing, but I grew impatient. I prayed, "Lord, there is much more to me than a career. I want more! If this is not your appointed time, then what exactly am I supposed to do with my life? What is my purpose?"

My river of hope rapidly turned into a dry wasteland. I fell into a deep depression. I wanted to wither away. But somehow, I found enough strength each day to keep praying. My prayer was to connect with other women and retreat to a safe haven for fellowship, accountability and encouragement.

I soon bumped into a former colleague, Lucy Vasquez. She didn't hesitate to share the mission of Women's Christians in Commerce. Her description of the ministry fulfilled everything I'd been praying for. My encounter with Lucy was God's way of letting me know that he was about to do something new in my life.

My first WCIC meeting was phenomenal. "LOVE" is the only word to describe how I felt about it! I knew this opportunity was a gift from the Lord. Immediately, Lucy put me to work by volunteering me to speak on one of the articles in the monthly newsletter. I didn't expect the Lord to make such an impact through my sharing, with so many lives touched. God created something new in me. My journey continued through the next two Challenge Weekends. God's purpose for me was finally clear. Now my river is overflowing!

*Sophia Norman has been a member of the WCIC-Fresno Chapter since 2012. She served on the panel for the "Sharing His Life with Others" group discussion at the 2014 Annual Conference. She is a full-time high school teacher and a part-time adjunct instructor in the Fresno area. Sophia can be reached at [slnorman73@gmail.com](mailto:slnorman73@gmail.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.billdalgetty.com/>.

To purchase Bill's book, please go to <http://www.zacchaeuspublications.com> and enter promo code CIC10 when checking out to receive a 10% discount.

**Pray:** Lord, thank you for paving the way and providing a light unto my path. I desire to seek your face as you do new things in me.

**Reflect:** Think about an occasion when God used you to fulfill his purpose.

**Discuss:** What "new thing" has God created in you? In what ways has the Holy Spirit brought you out of the "wilderness"?

# Christians in Commerce NEWS

## Christians in Commerce Prayer

### Women's Santa Cruz & Monterey Chapters' CWE

By: Diane McGinty



The Challenge Weekend sponsored by the WCIC-Santa Cruz and WCIC- Monterey chapters February 28 – March 1 was fantastic in every way! Twenty-six women attended and there were many first-timers. The two-day format worked beautifully.

We knew that the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter meets every Wednesday morning, and it was good to learn that the WCIC-Monterey Chapter has 6-7 women meeting faithfully from 7-8 a.m. every Tuesday.

Another special aspect of this CWE was that the future daughter-in-law of one of our members was able to attend. I told her she and her husband should come to our conference in October and encouraged her to invite friends to start a Challenge Group. She was able to think of one person right away!

One of my favorite take-aways from the recent WCIC Board meeting was the unity and relationship building that are developing among the WCIC chapters. We intend to formalize a strong prayer covering for all of the WCIC Challenge Weekends. God is so good!

### WCIC-Fresno Service Council Retreat

By: Lucy Vasquez

The first WCIC-Fresno Service Council retreat was held from January 30 – February 1. It was important to us that we begin in prayer and preparation for the coming year. The retreat had a twofold purpose: To recommit to our daily appointments with God and to deepen our relationships as sisters in Christ.

As a Service Council we are challenged to lead by exercising personal accountability while setting a Christlike example. The weekend allowed us to quiet our spirits to hear and see God while together experiencing a conversion of heart.

We traveled 145 miles to Morro Bay, located along the central coast. It was a perfect quiet setting for reflection and meditation.

We opened Saturday morning with 30 minutes of prayer. The rest of the day was spent in reflection and discussion on how our lives are given to us moment by moment by God; how we in turn respond moment by moment in the midst of ordinary events. The book Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life (Carol Ann Smith and Eugene F. Merz) was our retreat program. The structure is reflective of an Ignatian retreat, utilizing a variety of prayer experiences to encourage a conversion of heart and mind that allows the participant to follow Jesus with greater faith, love, and freedom.

I applied the book as a one-day retreat by using the first four Moments (days), condensing each into a 90 minute segment. My purpose was to use the experience as an example of how to continue the retreat at home as we went about the ordinary routines of daily life.

We began Sunday with prayer from Scripture and the devotional Jesus Calling (Sarah Young). We became reflective, and a discussion ensued that continued for well over an hour. Praise God!

*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](http://www.christiansincommerce.org)



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