



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians 2:20

November, 2015

Christ in the Workplace

Loving From a Distance

By: Steve Smith

God consistently works to bring about his plans for the kingdom in our lives. Yet sometimes we feel isolated from him, as if we are living on our own. It's important to reflect on the times when we do clearly see him move, both for our sakes and in order to further the faith of fellow Christians.

Despite my many efforts to rekindle my relationship with one of my relatives, he has chosen to remain estranged from our family. I pray for him often. For years I prayed that he might come to know the Lord and become reunited with us. While that has never ceased to be my desire, I felt called to pray for what this person cared about rather than what I wanted.

I knew he desperately wanted a child and that he and his wife had been struggling with infertility. I began relentlessly praying that they might conceive. On one of our Challenge Weekends, a fellow brother received a word that my wife and I would conceive a baby. Though we were indeed trying for a second child, I prayed that the Lord would give this baby to my relative instead. Just a few weeks later, his wife called to tell me they were expecting their first child.

I knew without a doubt that the Lord had answered my prayers and loved my family member tremendously. Though he may never know that I prayed for this for him, it was a way I could love him from a distance.

More than a year after his child was born, my wife and I had still not conceived. Though I never voiced it aloud, I began to wonder if I had "given away" the promise of conception to my relative at the expense of ever having another child myself. Ultimately, we decided to trust in the plan the Lord had for us despite our fears.

This past March, exactly two years after I had asked the Lord to give my family member a baby, I once again found myself at a Challenge Weekend praying alongside my CIC brothers for the gift of conception. Directly after praying together and their laying hands on me, I walked out of the building and was surprised to see my wife. She had driven over an hour to tell me in person that we were expecting!

Once again the Lord had moved in a clear way to answer the prayers that had been lifted up at our Challenge Weekend. And, in his love and infinite grace, he answered the request for a child not once, but twice.

I hope this story gives you hope that even when you feel alone, God is with you. He hears our prayers and is always there, working in ways and timing we may not comprehend in this lifetime to bring about his kingdom and his plan for our lives.

The key then is faith: We must choose to accept God's timing and God's plan, staying patiently in communion with him, knowing that in time his purpose will be revealed.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3: 5 - 6)

Steve Smith lives with his wife, Vanessa, son Christian, and one on the way in South Bend, IN. He is a real estate broker, co-owner of Flourish Boutique and member of CIC since 2009. Steve can be reached at ssmith@cooreman.com.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends Fresno

November 13-15, 2015

Greater Phoenix

November 13-15, 2015

Salinas

November 13-15, 2015

Orange County

January 15-17, 2016

Greater Phoenix

April 1-3, 2016

Women's Weekends WCIC-Gilroy/Morgan Hill

April 16-17, 2016

WCIC-Phoenix

April 22-24, 2016

WCIC-Fresno

April 29-May 1, 2016

Christians in Commerce News

CIC Board Welcomes Dan Trevino

Orange County 10th Annual CIC Barbecue

Please send your stories to:

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Holy Spirit, Teach Me

By: Darren Handy

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. (John 14:26-27)

My journey with Christians in Commerce began fifteen years ago and I give a lot of credit for my conversion experience to the CIC Prayer, which we recite weekly. Part of my awakening has been for me to recognize God as Lord and Creator, who has set a purpose before me and within me to actively build his kingdom.

The part that remains on my heart is the line that says, "Fill me with your Holy Spirit, that he may teach me how to pray and live in Christ Jesus and as Christ Jesus." Realizing the life-giving power of prayer has impacted me greatly. I trust in the words of Jesus that the Holy Spirit will teach me everything and remind me of what Christ said - to love. My prayers transcend my own selfish flesh and petty desires. Our call is to die to ourselves while living in Christ Jesus and as Christ.

Life's challenges usually come inconveniently and are often above our natural ability. Early in my faith walk I would ask God to "magically" heal situations and those involved in my favor. Surely, God would do this because he cares for everyone involved. This attitude allowed me to live safely and comfortably in my own limited understanding. Reciting the CIC Prayer gave me a greater understanding of the role that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, plays in teaching me everything. In the past I would hope and ask God to resolve situations in my favor. Now I understand that as his Holy Spirit-filled vessels, we are called to share in the healing, forgiveness and wisdom needed in the situations before us.

I was driving home one day listening to the radio when Matthew West's song "Do Something" aired. The lyrics speak of our world being full of trouble, people living in poverty, children sold into slavery, etc. In disgust, the man in the song shakes his fist at heaven and asks God, "Why don't you do something?" God responds, "I did; I created you."

That "you" rang throughout my entire being. The "you" is all of us. We are created as agents of restoration. In the midst of all that we face in this world we are called to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us.

As a Life Coach and Coordinator of Men's Evangelization and Discipleship, I have blessed opportunities to encourage other men and women, asking the Holy Spirit to teach them. I am working with one individual who had doubts about God's presence in his life, as well as difficulty in making decisions and being joyous. Over the past six months, he has made some major positive steps. He started by committing to a prayer life that began by asking the Holy Spirit to teach him. Recently, his wife stated that, as a married couple, they have begun to laugh and spend quality time together once again. She then said, "We are going to ask the Holy Spirit to teach us what to do with our teenagers!"

As we pray during our CIC meetings, remember to ask the Father to fill you and the Holy Spirit to teach you everything.

Darren Handy has been a member of CIC in the Greater Phoenix Area for 15 years. He lives in Chandler, AZ and is Coordinator of Men's Evangelization and Discipleship at Saint Timothy Catholic Church and Founder of Zoe Mobility, a Life Coaching company emphasizing discipleship. Darren can be reached at Darren.handy75@gmail.com.

Pray: Fill me with your Holy Spirit.

Teach me to pray and live in Christ as Christ. Teach me a love that is selfless, humble, and wise. Teach me a stewardship that serves, is generous and brings honor to your name.

Reflect: Do I ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not selfishly, but for conversion of heart and to do his glorious will?

Discuss: Will you seek to be used in new ways to bring healing, truth and love to the people and circumstances around you? Where can you start?

Men's November Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Steve Crocker

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us... (Hebrews 12:1)

I rode a thoroughbred racehorse once in my life. I was south of the border. There was an open field, and we ran, not at a gallop, but a full-on sprint. I was flush against his back and mane for what seemed like an eternity. I still remember my amazement at the horse's will to run, to go all out. It was a ride I never forgot.

We are creatures of heart - with muscle and blood of our own. We run the race set before us, knowing it has already been won, not because of where we hope to place, but because Jesus ran it first. He's shown us the way. We can give ourselves completely, going flat out, hearts pounding, breathless, experiencing the joy, and touching the sky as if it were the ground beneath us. We can feel our way onto the track with the single goal of being with him - all the time.

I know a few CIC brothers who challenge each other to stay in the race, to run together. The truth is, the race belongs only to the runners, not to anyone else; certainly not to bystanders who may believe themselves to be in charge. It is with heart that we run the race each day, whether we drive a plumbing truck or sit behind a desk.

If you are not in the race, you have no way of understanding the hunger or longing or the pull of the heart when its master whispers to it. "Run," he gently speaks, "Run like the wind. Run your heart out."

Pray: Lord, you know me and my heart. You speak love and encouragement to me, filling me with your Holy Spirit. How can I not run with every ounce of strength you've given me?

Reflect: Where does the desire to run the race come from? Is it from the heart or from the head?

Discuss: What makes you want to run the race? What prevents you from running? How can we help each other be better prepared and ready to run the race in our current situations?

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

By: Steve Crocker

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

If you believe CIC is, at heart, just an organization, you are wrong. It's far simpler than that.

Christians in Commerce is an expression of the living Christ. We are a small but vibrant part of his body bringing a heavenly identity to the marketplace. We are one eternal family with one divine Father, and the only way this happens is by our staying connected together to our source.

We point to the center: Here he is - the Beloved, the King in all his majesty, the root of our being. We reveal our living connection to God while surviving in a fallen world. In Christ, we are joined together. I know this because each day I run from pillar to post, chore to chore, chopping wood, carrying water, meeting deadlines, all the while seeking to breathe in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit. I know others feel the same. Life demands our attention in a hurry.

So, we connect to what matters spiritually and don't need to defend the box. We walk, run, stumble, and stand, staying true to who we are by being alive in Christ. Alive to the source! With his grace we let go of the past, steer clear of the identities that have separated us from God, and become part of a greater whole, offering love and encouragement to the world - one cupful at a time.

Were we to have a quip in CIC, would it not be, "Love, anyone? Costs you everything, but it's yours for free." And our motto would surely be, "Stay connected!"

Pray: Lord, grant us to see how we have already been made one, with you and with one another.

Reflect: Think about your own connection to Christ, and the first time you experienced it. How has it grown? What has been critical for you?

Discuss: What are the ways we as brothers stay connected to our divine source and one another? How does that personally help us fulfill our vision of being Christ in the workplace? What more could we do?

Men's November Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

By: Steve Crocker

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:6)

We have a chalkboard in our kitchen. On it is written, "See to the Center. Love from the Core."

These words have been there for over a year now, urging us to see with eyes that look past what is outward; to look to the heart, especially of those nearest to us; to focus on the best in one other. Simple stuff.

Fellow CIC member Greg Aitkens recently related in a CIC Workday Reflection email how the Lord taught him to see others the same way God looks at us - with loving eyes and a listening heart. He believes in us. He believes we can do better because he knows we are better. He knows the gifts and souls he has entrusted to us.

Just see to the center. This is what the simple message on my chalkboard has taught me. "Just see them as I see them," Christ says to us. We can do this through him.

All our many gifts originate from a rich and diverse Holy Spirit. And yet, most of us require constant encouragement in order to believe our gifts are worthy. As the popular saying goes, "Comparison is the thief of joy." Henry Van Dyke wrote, "The woods would be very silent, if no birds sang except those that sang best."

Without jealousy or fear, all our gifts should be free to express themselves. It is when we see to the center, gazing at the heart, that our gifts can be recognized in one another. Our encouragements come in many ways - in the laying on of hands, in our own intimate walk with God, or just showing up for a small Challenge Group meeting on a Friday morning, where we honor the gifts belonging to each other, no matter how hidden or humble.

Steve Crocker is a member of the Santa Cruz Chapter. He is married to Carolyn and they have two adult sons. He is a project manager and designer whose real estate development company focuses on the natural food industry. Steve can be reached at steve@cdmre.com.

Workplace Stories Needed

This year we want to put a special emphasis on expanding the contributions to our Workday Reflection emails. We especially are 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 even know where to start, 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 would be 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 Therese Rosenthal at info@cicintl.org or 703-205-5600.

Pray: Lord, grant me the capacity to hear the songs of the hearts of others. Teach me to listen closely.

Reflect: What happens to me when I try to see to the center and love from the core? What experiences have I had that showed me the value of looking beyond the exterior?

Discuss: What are the gifts we recognize within ourselves? Have others authenticated them? How have we been able to put them to use? Which gifts do we value the most in others that we lack?

Women's November Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

By: Lilia Croghan

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. (Psalm 119:28)

I never thought that I would experience the joy of holding my youngest sister Patty's hand as she gave birth to her first born, Jimmy - and then, 29 years later, to be holding that same hand as Jimmy fought for his life.

Jimmy died in February of this year. For two weeks, my family had been on a roller coaster of emotions. We felt hope that Jimmy was going to beat the cancer, but after each visit from the doctor all hope came crashing down.

Patty is the youngest of eight siblings and the waiting room was always full of family and friends praying at all hours of the day and night. As her older sister, I felt I had to be strong for her, and she relied on me for support. I prayed with Patty, assuring her that God was going to help her through this. But in those rare moments when I was alone, in my weakness, I would cry out to God to help me. I hurt every time I saw the brokenness of my sister.

It has now been eight months since Jimmy passed away. I know not a day goes by that Patty doesn't cry. But, I also know not a day goes by that she is not spending time with God in prayer. She tells me this is the only time she feels at peace. While I still try to be strong for her, it is her reliance on God and dedication to prayer that serve as the best of examples to me.

Pray: Dear Lord, as I get older and look back at the sand, more and more I see only one set of footprints: Yours. Thank you for carrying me.

Reflect: How often do I "look back at the sand" and see two sets of footprints, with my own racing up ahead?

Discuss: Share an experience in which you allowed God to carry you, and one in which you tried to lead the way ahead of him. What happened?

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

By: Lilia Croghan

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)

I have been working one day a week at a Catholic bookstore for almost ten years. When I open the store, I always pray, "Lord, use me." But, in all honesty, I'm always hoping that God will give me a "free pass"; a day off.

A while back I was enjoying a non-eventful day. That all changed when a woman walked into the store looking very anxious. She walked over to me and asked, "Is your name Lili? Because a friend of mine said that you would pray with me and not judge me." She asked if we could go somewhere private.

I walked her to the back of the store, where she proceeded to tell me her story between sobs. She wanted prayers for a situation that I knew was not holy. It was akin to someone telling me they were going to rob a bank and then asking me to pray for a successful getaway. While I wasn't judging what was in her heart, I didn't know how to pray for her. I asked the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom.

After the woman had calmed down, I took her hands and I addressed her by name. "I am going to pray with you in a way that maybe you have never experienced," I told her. I had never prayed over anyone in tongues before, and I felt apprehensive. With her hands still in mine, I prayed as she closed her eyes.

After we had finished, she asked if we had a holy card that she could take to help her continue praying. I gave her a card with the Prayer of Protection. She seemed calm as we hugged and said our goodbyes.

This was one day God didn't give me a free pass. Instead, he gave me his wisdom.

Pray: Father, help me to know that in all circumstance you are there; that I never have to fear failure when I am doing your will.

Reflect: Does my pride keep me from doing the will of God because I am afraid of appearing foolish?

Discuss: Discuss a time when you put your pride aside and walked in total faith and trust that God was in charge and not you.

Women's November Reflections

(continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

By: Lilia Croghan

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

I went to my first CIC Annual Conference in 2006. I was not then a member of CIC, but my husband Mike was. The conference was taking place in Phoenix, Arizona. I had never been to Arizona and it sounded like a fun vacation to me. I brought a book and some beading that I was working on. I went with Mike to the praise and worship sessions and to the General Talks, but made a quick exit back to my room when everyone went to their workshops or their Emmaus Walks. I had the schedule, so I knew when it was safe to mosey on back to the main gathering room. I was happy to see Mike having a good time, but as for me, I felt like a "sandwich at a banquet": out of place.

After the Lord's Day celebration, Mike and a group of his friends gathered outside to talk and say their goodbyes. I was sitting alone at a nearby table. If someone had said to me at that point, "See you next year!" I probably would have thought, "No, you won't!"

As I continued to sit and wait for Mike, a woman with a beautiful smile approached my table and said, "Hello darling, my name is Claudia (Falkenberg). Why don't you come join my friend and me?" I shyly accepted the invitation.

The three of us talked and laughed and Claudia and I exchanged contact information. We hugged and said that we would keep in touch. I already couldn't wait until the next CIC conference to see my new friend again.

A year later, I went on my first Challenge Weekend in Gilroy. With the love and support of my Santa Cruz sisters, we started our own chapter. In 2008 we held our first Challenge Weekend. My life changed dramatically, all thanks to my friend with the beautiful smile who invited a shy lady to join her.

Lilia Croghan is Past President of the WCIC-Santa Cruz Chapter. She and her husband Mike have been married for 43 years. They have 2 daughters, 4 sons, and 11 grandchildren with a 12th on the way. Lilia can be reached at lccroghan@hotmail.com.

Pray: Thank you, Lord, for all the times you have blessed us with friends who helped us grow in ways that would not have been possible by ourselves.

Reflect: Think about a low point in your life when God blessed you with a much-needed friend.

Discuss: Discuss a time when you felt lonely and insecure and someone reached out to you. How did that experience change you?

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Christians in Commerce Prayer

CIC Board Welcomes Dan Trevino

The CIC Board of Directors is excited to welcome Dan Trevino!

Dan and his wife Karen live in Chandler, Arizona and have been married for 34 years. Together they have three adult children and one granddaughter.

Dan has been a member of the Mesa Chapter for 19 years, where he has served in various leadership capacities, including Service Council Secretary and Treasurer and Challenge Weekend Administrator. He is co-founder of MicroBlend Paint, a paint technology company, and is also a former board president and current board member of Paz de Cristo Community Outreach Center, serving the poor and homeless.

If you would like to get to know Dan better, you can reach him at dktreviso@cox.net.

Welcome aboard, Dan!



Orange County 10th Annual CIC Barbecue

By: Art Villalovos

The Orange County Chapters held their 10th Annual CIC Barbecue on August 26th. It was a truly special time and joyful celebration.

There were three chapters involved and a total of 64 attendees. Along with the Orange County Chapter and the newly-formed Mission Viejo Chapter, we were especially proud to welcome the WCIC-Orange County Chapter, spearheaded by Jennifer Frankenberg.

Our Annual CIC Barbecue, started by Paul Finorio (now in Palm Desert), has always been a blessed social event. This year was no exception, and we enjoyed lots of good food and plenty of time for sharing.

Just a week prior we had been deeply saddened by the loss of a great brother in Christ, Tom Drennen, a long-time member who lived a fruitful 91 years. His valuable contributions and historical biblical insights were greatly anticipated by our Challenge Group every week.

During the barbecue, fellow CIC member and violinist virtuoso Louis Portillo performed a special tribute to Tom that he had composed especially for the event. Louis also shared briefly about Tom's life and performed the hymn Before The Throne of God. After the tribute there were tears of joy; the Holy Spirit was truly present. Tom's wonderful wife Patricia and two daughters were able to attend and experience the performance.

God is good!

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



Christ
ALIVE!

Galatians 2:20
“...I no longer live, but
Christ lives in me.”

www.christiansincommerce.org



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