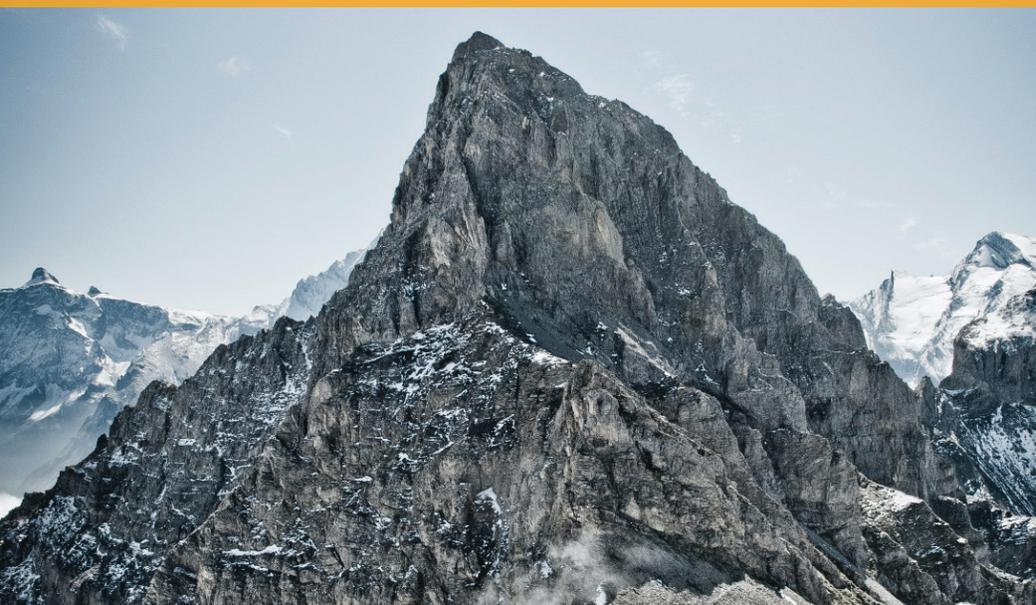


God Moves Mountains

By Maria Kane



But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. (1 Samuel 12:24)

In 2016, I moved to Uganda and began work with Imprint Hope, a ministry that empowers and encourages families that have children living with disabilities. I always imagined that if I ever needed to return to the United States, I could. On March 23, 2020, I learned I was wrong. I awoke to news that the President of Uganda had sealed the country's borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I called the States to inform my family. They could sense the fear

in my voice and they prayed with me. Despite their prayers, I hung up feeling hopeless and helpless.

The ensuing days were the hardest, most faith-tested days of my life. The Ugandan president implemented a strict lockdown. All vehicles were banned from the roads. This meant we could not buy food or drive to the hospital in case of an emergency. I felt trapped and desperate.

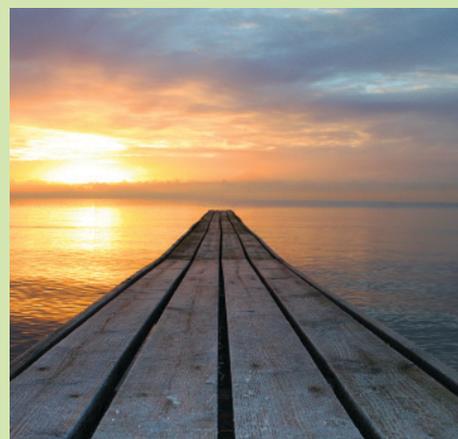
The State Department had arranged for a flight to come and pick up American expatriates who wanted to return to the United States. Before I had a chance to discern leaving, the flight was fully booked. But our God is a mountain-mover. By his grace, the

Continued on page 5

INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Living in the Present Moment

The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. (Psalm 118:24)



When we think about it, the present moment is the only one available for us to live. For now, it is the only "real time" where we live our life in Christ and with others.

Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is an expectation, today is the one that demands our attention.

Living in the present moment is challenging in the midst of a pandemic. This month we hear from contributors around the world.

Augustine points out that for our eternal God, all time is today. All time is eternal and he is the one providing us the grace we need for our present moment. Grace is food for our souls. Yesterday's grace is leftovers. Tomorrow's isn't cooked. Only today is ready for our nourishment.

July Reflections: Pg 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Peace and Reassessment

By Mark DeMicoli

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5-7)

Although the ongoing pandemic and its unsettling and sometimes devastating effects can heighten anxiety, we must listen to Paul’s wise words about how to face challenges. He reminds us that “The Lord is near” and to “not be anxious about anything.” We must then go before God and “in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present (our) requests” in order to find ourselves immersed in God’s peace which surpasses “all understanding.” This peace and the

level-headedness that it brings, is something the world desperately needs. Not a peace that comes because we find a way to be happy or content with what is happening around us, but a peace that can only come from the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and nourishes us.

We must channel this peace and level-headedness as an opportunity to reflect and pray. In our work lives, we can take this time to see if there is something that needs to be realigned or reset. For example, I know of a company that was chronically making losses. This group of restaurants had loyal customers and five-star reviews but the operational costs were greater than the total income. When they were forced to halt operations due to COVID-19, they had an opportunity to step back and tweak their business model. They were able to retain all their full-time employees, keep up the high levels of customer satisfaction, and were projected to make a small profit by the end of the year.

For those of us that have had to reduce work hours and have time or money to spare, this is a good time

to find opportunities to serve others in need—the isolated, the hungry, the sick, the mourning. Good deeds sown during this difficult time, deeds that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy—as Paul mentions—can bear much fruit in the future.

Mark DeMicoli, his wife, Maria, and their six children live in Qormi, Malta. Mark is the managing director of Spinola Park, a mixed-used real estate development. He can be reached at md@spinolapark.com.

PRAY

Father help me trust that you are at work during difficult times.

REFLECT

What is the Lord teaching me through this crisis?

DISCUSS

Is there something about the way I was doing things before the pandemic that could be tweaked or changed?

zoom Toolkit

The Zoom Toolkit is now available!

This WorkLight Zoom Toolkit was built with input from Christians in Commerce members across the country to assist all groups and includes best practices for using Zoom video chat tools.

To receive the Zoom Toolkit, please visit:
www.christiansincommerce.org/ZoomToolkit



REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Mentors
and Mercy

By Jacqueline Gamboa

But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God. (Nehemiah 9:31)

After my wedding, I gave up my career in nursing to move to Colombia to be with my new husband. Daily, I missed my work. However, as the coronavirus ravaged the country, I felt guilty for not using my skills and knowledge and a sadness for not being able to care for these patients and assist the coworkers I had left behind. I did not voice these feelings to God, but in his own creative way he helped meet this desire.

I was able to use my knowledge of nursing to review material with the nursing

students I was tutoring and helped formulate practice questions to prepare them for exams. I offered them encouragement and stories from my inpatient experience. The Lord showed mercy toward my whispered prayers for my baby to sleep during classes. His mercy was also in the softened hearts of students when she was awake and audible during our classes, as there was no babysitter permitted amidst the pandemic.

I struggled with isolation, far from my family who I was supposed to be traveling to visit. I was also not permitted to see my husband's family due to the quarantine. But God allowed friendships to develop from afar with these students. His mercy was demonstrated in the times my in-laws sent a meal so I had more time to prepare for these classes. I also saw the Lord in the times my husband spent hours each week in the heat shopping for our food amidst the strict protocols while I cared for our daughter at home. God had heard my heart's longing and also

allowed me to contribute in a small way through tutoring.

Jacqueline Gamboa has worked in a hospital as a nurse for several years but is now tutoring nursing students online. She was married in 2019 and lives in Cucuta, Colombia with her husband. She can be reached at jacqueline.magill@gmail.com.

PRAY

Lord, show me your mercy as I seek to please you.

REFLECT

How can I show mercy as the Lord has shown to me?

DISCUSS

Share how you have experienced God's mercy through your work.

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Rooted
in the Lord

By Mark DeMicoli

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

In John's Gospel Jesus illustrates our dependency on him by using an example from agriculture. He says "I am the vine; and you are the branches." In the modern world we can often be detached from these agricultural examples, and not grasp their full meaning. The only vines some of us have seen are pictures of vineyards on wine bottles or

advertisements. If you have been blessed with the experience of seeing a vine in person, you will notice that it is primarily made up of branches.

Once I had the inspiration to pluck a lush green vine leaf from the vine and place it on the desk in my room. Within two days the leaf was completely shrivelled and brown. I was shocked at the rapid decay and I finally grasped what Jesus was saying of how essential it is to "remain in (him)."

During the pandemic it is important to remain rooted in Jesus Christ—by frequent prayer, reading Scripture, and consulting him like you would a business partner. In one of our businesses we share ownership with another family. When we have frequent board meetings and spend time together, our business

does better. When we meet or talk less frequently, the business still progresses as usual. However, there is a tendency to get distracted by the day-to-day problems and to not give enough emphasis to what is important.

PRAY

Jesus help me remain in you.

REFLECT

What more can I do to be more rooted in my relationship with Jesus?

DISCUSS

What parts of my work life need pruning? How can I reach out to Jesus during my time at work?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Growing a Community

By Jacqueline Gamboa

“How good and how pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

The international company where my husband, Carlos, works requested that he relocate in November. Upon arriving, Carlos began laying the groundwork as project manager for a difficult endeavor in a region outside his home town in Colombia. This district, though agriculturally rich, was struggling to accommodate and assist the thousands of Venezuelans traversing by foot across its borders seeking a new life. The small towns needed to produce more food to sustain the growing population.

The farmers worked individually, concentrated on their own products, and competed against each other at

local markets. For two-and-a-half months prior to the pandemic in Colombia, Carlos led workshops at a local university. He and his team instructed farmers regarding sustainable agriculture practices that would preserve the biodiversity of the land, conserve water, enhance the soil, and increase their income and production.

They shared the human behavioral change model and emphasized leadership and governance. Greater than that, they were beginning to create a community among neighbors who had rarely crossed paths. As safety dictated the suspension of these workshops in March, and the budget was threatened, Carlos fought for the continuation of the project which had already shown signs of success.

With hard work and long hours, the classroom content was made into online modules and conversations took place between the team and the farmers over Zoom and continued in group chats. They overcame challenges such as poor internet connection and the newness of online learning. After

the training, these farmers then would be able to go out and teach others. Those early months would not be lost to the pandemic but instead built a strong foundation for when in-person classes could resume. As the farmers provided sustenance for so many during the pandemic, Carlos and the team reminded and encouraged the farmers of their potential. Slowly, they fostered trust, peace, and dialogue amidst the people in this post-conflict and complex region.

PRAY

Father, help me to find creative ways to build unity through my work.

REFLECT

Are there people in your workplace who are divided?

DISCUSS

Brainstorm ways that you can build trust and dialogue in your workplace.

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One Day at a Time: A Redemption Story

By Beth Preuss

C.S. Lewis wrote, “The safest road to hell is the gradual one, the gentle slope, soft underfoot without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

For most people, the road to hell doesn't take them very far. A warning, an intervention, a signpost, can often redirect. But that requires a willingness to be redirected. There was a time in **Dave Mazanowski's** life when he didn't want to be redirected. He was perfectly happy living the good life on the road to hell. It was costly and the Lord had to knock him off his horse. But, as always, our God is a merciful God.

“I got involved with this guy and it started innocently enough, but he started asking me to do some things that I did but was uncomfortable with,” said Dave. “However, I did them anyway. Making contributions, paying a purchasing group, and eventually, it hit a tipping point. I unknowingly was involved in an illegal kickback scheme.”

July 8, 2015 was both the worst and best day of Dave's life. “I had a Damascus road experience and my Ananias was coming to take the scales off my eyes,” said Dave.

His Ananias was an FBI special agent who showed up unannounced at his door. “She was clearly appointed by God to restore my sight,” said Dave. “I refer to her now as my ‘agent of redemption.’” Fifteen minutes into the conversation, the scales clearly fell from his eyes as he was informed he was involved in the largest Medicare Medicaid fraud in the state of Indiana and the

target in the grand jury investigation. It was a quick and devastating fall.

Even in that first encounter, however, the Lord was merciful. Dave recalled asking, “Why did you come to me? Why didn't you just raid the house?” The agent responded, “Someone said to me that we could trust you, that you will tell the truth, that we should take a chance on you.” Then she said, “And I don't take chances.”

Dave cooperated fully. “I did everything you see in the movies, did the tape, got the wires, it's a surreal experience.” A year later he was charged with Medicare, Medicaid fraud.

Scripture comes alive when God is all that is left and for Dave, the book of James was key. “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4: 7-8)

Dave's road to redemption took four years. It was a slow process and the uncertainty and the pain that was associated with it were, at times, unbearable. “The deep regret and the remorse were part of the process. Sitting before the Lord, there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't wish to wake up and have it not be true. I spent just countless hours in prayer, I beat myself up; it was horrific.” Dave realized that “the Lord never condemned me. Finally, he said, ‘Hey, can we quit talking about this?’ He was patient and at some point, I responded, ‘Got it.’ And we have never talked about it since.”

Over the course of the next four years, our merciful God and his prodigal son grew in a friendship that has changed the course of Dave's life and his understanding of God's love and fidelity and equipped him to be a wonderful witness to others.

Beth Preuss is the communications specialist for CIC. Dave Mazanowski is a CIC board member and owner of Mainscape, a commercial landscaping company.

*Continued from page 1
God Moves Mountains*

US sent a second flight a week later and I was able to purchase a ticket.

The next mountain moved was my reaching a government official who granted me a driving permit that allowed me to go to the airport, despite the president's ban on vehicles. When at last we left for the airport, we were being stopped every few miles by armed police officers who doubted the authenticity of our permit. During one stop, they threatened to impound the car and arrest us. This mountain was not too big for God.

Just then, I got a text from a friend who woke up in the middle of the night and felt that she and her husband should be interceding for us. She got the sense from the Lord that no matter what happened, the Lord had gotten me this far and he would get me safely to the airport. I thought about sharing that word with the police officers. In the past, I had often bantered with them to keep things light, but the mood now was too serious.

With 10 more checkpoints to bypass, I texted others asking them to pray. As people began to intercede, the police miraculously began to wave us on ahead with no problem. Then, within moments of prayer warriors storming the heavens, the sky opened up and it began to rain so hard that our visibility was obstructed. The police officers ran for cover and consequently, they deserted the roads. We cruised the last 50 miles to the airport without being pulled over. As we arrived, the rain stopped and the sun began shining. God makes a way where there is no way! He is a miracle worker and a mountain mover.

Maria Kane is the Management Leader at Imprint Hope Center in Jinja, Uganda. She can be reached at mnoelkane@gmail.com.

Looking for Open Windows

By Beth Preuss



For **Jeremy Stanbary**, sheer reliance on the Holy Spirit over the past decade has left him looking for open windows in strange places and challenging times. God never ceases to surprise.

“It has been a monumental journey,” sighs Stanbary, artistic director of Open Window Theatre in Inver



Grove Heights, MN. “After five years in Minneapolis and going through an arduous litigation battle, we scrambled to complete construction and open our first production at the start of 2020, only to get slammed by the pandemic.” Their first season cut short and spring production canceled, again brought Jeremy to his knees.

“We really felt strongly that we saw God’s fingerprints, God’s hand, in this process of bringing the theater back,” said Jeremy. “And, we believe God did not bring us back to this point to fail right away.” In the midst of financial stress and pandemic isolation, he again turned in faith to God’s love and provision and looked for open windows.

“I was deeply impacted by the unjust killing of George Floyd. That hit so very close to home,” he said. “I just felt the need in my spirit to do something.”

As local organizations sought to provide needed food, water, personal hygiene items to destroyed neighborhoods, Jeremy decided to drive the Open Window Theatre’s six-foot by twelve-foot trailer to an intersection in Minneapolis. In the midst of what felt like a war zone, he put it to use distributing donated items.

“I wasn’t even sure how I was going to get down there,” said Jeremy. “A lot of roads were closed because of the riots. I connected with the right people and went to work.”

It was a long, arduous, and sweltering hot day. Volunteers filled the trailer multiple times floor to ceiling, front to back, with all kinds of essentials and food. “I was really encouraged by just seeing the masses of humanity; people helping people.” One day turned into another and another as man and trailer worked to meet human needs.

Jeremy recognizes the opportunities to serve with Open Window’s trailer as deeply reflective of his vocation in theater. The starting point, he believes, is the artist’s ability to create empathy for other people’s stories.

“The kind of art that we do at Open Window Theatre is intended to help provide a vision for positive change, not just expressing anger or complaining about the problems that many of us are aware of in society,” Jeremy said. “We seek to put a mirror up to society and deal with issues in a redemptive way. Such art can be really powerful.”

He continued, “Ours is an open window meant to cast a vision for positive change and how we can bring

continued next page



about reconciliation and foster faith and hope in society.” Jeremy looks to the work of the Holy Spirit on all fronts. “Regardless, God sees all, right?” said Jeremy.

Re-opening will require some seating changes and a new focus on remote viewing, but Jeremy is excited to see how the Lord uses their vision for his work. Planned before the pandemic and injustice of the spring,

the upcoming season speaks to relevant issues, including a production about the young life of John Paul II in Nazi-occupied Poland, and a new adaptation of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* featuring a diverse cast.

At Open Window Theatre, he said, “We don’t shy away from the difficult issues and the problems we face, but we want to grapple with those in a redemptive way that shows the possibility

for positive change. I think that’s incredibly important right now, and so we’re going to keep doing what we do.”

In the meantime, the trailer is available and the driver looks for other open windows.

For more information about Open Window Theatre, visit the website at openwindowtheatre.org.

NEWS

WORKLIGHT WEBSITE LAUNCH

We launched the first phase of the new website at the end of June and WorkLight.org is now live! This first phase includes publishing information about WorkLight, who we are, and provides resources like: *The Flame* and Spark workday reflections.

The goal of WorkLight.org is to not only serve current members, but also to reach and engage new and younger audiences. WorkLight and WorkLight.org will support Christians in their workplace by:

- Helping Christians unite across traditions, occupations, and positions.
- Providing practical, on-demand resources that are adaptable and free of charge.

- Helping men and women form groups to accompany one another as coworkers in Christ.

The website will be rolled out in phases and will be fully launched at the end of August. The site



will feature a dynamic video library highlighting WorkLight story videos, testimonials, and first-hand accounts of Christ at

work. Also available will be free resources, including new blog articles, Nine-to-Five podcasts, video series like Working for Our Father and sections for both events and programs. As we get closer to launching these specific pages, more information and resources will be shared with Chapters and groups.

We also plan to have Christ at Work devotionals—a selection of Spark workday reflections from past emails and newsletters. At the heart of our mission is collecting and sharing personal stories of the Gospel being lived in the workplace.

Join us on this journey and follow us on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn). We’ll be posting updates and encouragement as we work towards launching WorkLight and WorkLight.org.

2020

JULY

*"I have been crucified
with Christ and I no
longer live, but Christ
lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

THE FLAME

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

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