



## The Greatest Unity

By Wes Farrow

We all know the greatest story ever told. But do you know the greatest unity ever told?

As human beings we are each unique and called to relationships with one another. Science and intellect can teach us facts and figures about collaboration and community. But what does it mean to actually be in unity with others? How could we possibly build or expand unity if we remain different from one another?

In his book, *The Gift of Being Yourself*, David G. Benner writes extensively about how knowing oneself deepens the ability to know God. But it doesn't stop there. If two people know one another, it might be called familiarity. For two people to love one another is a different story. Depending on the type of love we might call that friendship, partnership, brotherhood, sisterhood, or in one particularly blessed form of relationships—marriage.

In marriage it is not enough to know the basic facts about your spouse. Husbands and wives alike are called to love one another. How much more is that true for our Lord? If we study the word and memorize his teachings, then our minds grow strong in knowledge. But only when we give our heart to Jesus do we begin to truly love him. Suddenly our knowledge is in service of the relationship, and not the other way around. Learning is a gift from God, but love is the ultimate invitation to build unity with and in Christ.

Brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ provide a constant opportunity in our own lives to be more like Jesus toward one another. Deepening of such relationships not only produces fruit of joy and connection, but it also brings us closer to Jesus as we expand our Father's Kingdom on Earth.

*Continued on page 6*

### INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

## Uniting Christians at Work

*Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. (Psalm 85:11)*

What if we joined with our Christian coworkers to shine bright in our workplaces? What if we united cross traditions, occupations, and positions? Could we find ways to support each other so the life of Christ would spring forth to influence those around us? Isn't this field ripe for harvest?

This month we explore together how Christians of different backgrounds are coming together to support one another and work together as God's faithful contributors to culture and commerce.



Two of the greatest influences of our age—culture and commerce—converge in the marketplace. God calls us to restore all things. By coming together in faith, love, and support we grow in our effectiveness to serve him.

All must be built on a shared relationship with Jesus Christ and finding our identities in him and not the world. Out of this our mission to be Christ and foster his Kingdom in our workplaces comes to life.

**August Reflections: Pages 2-4**

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

# One Point of Connection

By Daniel Winge

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24,25)*

With the introduction of the pandemic in 2020, the world as we knew it was altered in the blink of an eye. Churches closed their doors, support groups were halted, and most employers shifted to remote working environments. This became extremely challenging for many—especially those who rely heavily on contact, relationships, and encouragement from others.

One of the most valuable experiences of my entire life arose during this difficult season. Deep connections were made with fellow children of God wrestling with various issues that were impacting our lives. God came directly into our workplace and used his followers to impact the lives of others in a positive and uplifting way.

For me, it started with a connection to a prayer group during lunch hour at our headquarters. This weekly time of reflection and bonding was critical to alleviating much of the stress and anxiety I was experiencing. I felt God’s power and the enormous love of the people in the group and benefitted from this greatly.

From there, it moved to virtual meetings when we could not get together face-to-face. Throughout the entire pandemic, we were able to stay in touch. By the grace of God and the use of new technology, we all remained steadfast in our determination to continue connecting together as believers looking to God and each other for wisdom and encouragement. As I look back at this now, I realize just how vital this was for us all.

One of the most beautiful things that struck me was the fact that there was no common (visible) bond among the group. Not of age, nor gender, nor race. Not even the level of our roles within the company. Instead, the single point of connection was simply our love for serving Christ. We are beyond blessed to work for such a company that would allow and even encourage this type of connection to take place.

The support I was able to receive during this extremely challenging time was

invaluable. My hope and prayer is that more employees at more companies will be able to experience this same level of love and support from fellow Christians in the workplace.

*Daniel Winge is regional sales director for the Northeast region for Ameriprise in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

## PRAY

*Lord, please help me give love and support to my coworkers and find ways to make connections to my fellow Christians at work.*

## REFLECT

*How can I look beyond age, gender, race, and titles to create lasting bonds with my coworkers?*

## DISCUSS

*When faced with challenges at work, how do you react? Do I retreat or find comfort by reaching out to others who are in the same situation?*

NATIONAL

CHALLENGE WEEKEND

WORKLIGHT

October 14-16, 2022 | Scottsdale, Arizona

Don't miss the first-ever  
National Challenge Weekend!

This powerful weekend will bring greater meaning and purpose to your work and life, as we gather to reflect, pray, worship, and seek more of the Holy Spirit.

More details available at: [WorkLight.org/2022NCW](http://WorkLight.org/2022NCW)

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

## One Lunch

By Ben Lorence

*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)*

As a teenager I was a drug addicted menace to society, and I had abandoned my faith in God and people. After a few years in and out of treatment centers I finally surrendered my life to Christ and a new world of possibilities opened up to me.

Fast forward five years. Although I was crushing goals at work, completing projects early, and filled with pride, it suddenly became clear to me that I was spiritually stagnant.

Then my project manager, Scott, asked me to lunch to celebrate my successes. While we were talking, he asked me a casual question: "What do you think about Jesus?"

Scott was the first person I opened up to about where I was in my faith journey.

I admitted to Scott that I wasn't a churchgoer at the time, yet he mentored and helped me to build a stronger relationship with the Lord. As I reflect back, I can say that without Scott, I wouldn't have joined a church or any Christian movement. And it all began with one lunch. That was 20 years ago, and today, Scott and I continue to be great friends.

Today, I'm very involved in leadership with Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), and active in our Christian Employee Resource Group at work, bringing together Christians to support and share with each other.

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*Ben Lorence is a principal architect—data cloud at Ameriprise Financial Inc. where he also serves as chair of the SALT Christian Employee Network. He lives in Apple Valley, Minnesota.*

bigger plans. Our Diversity and Inclusion team asked me to lead panel discussion events about all groups for all employees across the firm. This was a step out of my comfort zone, but I reminded myself if I prayed and had faith, God would provide.

The panel events couldn't have gone any better. I received glowing feedback, and many groups saw an increase in new members. My self-confidence grew and I built relationships with many great leaders across the enterprise.

God continues to open doors for me. I have led similar events for a variety of audiences across the firm since then. I always make sure to explain that everyone is welcome to join these employee resource groups. God gave everyone unique gifts for a reason, and they deserve to be recognized and uplifted, both inside and outside of the workplace.

It has been so rewarding to see peoples' faces light up with hope and joy. People feel encouraged to join after hearing

## PRAY

*Father you are the Lord of the harvest, here I am Lord, send me. I'm ready to get started, in Jesus' name.*

## REFLECT

*A coworker's invitation can show us that sharing Jesus at work can be natural. Do you know someone who might benefit from your knowledge? Pray for the courage to schedule a meeting, right now.*

## DISCUSS

*Who can you recognize for doing outstanding work? When will you invite them to lunch and ask the simple question, "What do you think about Jesus?"*

the testimonies. This is how I help live out God's command for us to recognize and love our neighbors.

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*Victoria Travis is a Senior Advisor Compensation Analyst at a Minnesota-based financial services firm.*

## PRAY

*Lord, we thank you for loving us. Awaken our hearts to pray for our neighbors and show us how to love our neighbors the way you love them. Amen.*

## REFLECT

*Has there been a time in your life when you felt truly loved and known?*

## DISCUSS

*Assess who your neighbors are, in and out of the workplace. In what ways can you reach out to them and love them, just as Jesus loves us?*

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

## Love Your Neighbor

By Victoria Travis

*"As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13: 34-35)*

As I reflect on how much has changed since I graduated and began my career in 2020, I am grateful for the skills and connections I've made since joining my company's Christian employee resource group.

I often speak with colleagues about my experiences but was disappointed to find out not many were involved with employee groups. So, I felt called to action; more people needed to know about the support the groups provide.

My original idea was to lead informational events for new employees like me, but God had

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

# Comfort and Joy

By Karo Ghani and Erin Engen

*An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” (Luke 2:9-10)*

When we think of Christmas in America, images of Christmas trees, decorating cookies, and a big family meal come to mind. But, what about other countries and cultures?

In China it is popular to give apples because the word for apples, pínggu, sounds like the word for peace, píng'an. And believe it or not, KFC is a well-liked Christmas dinner in Japan. A common tradition in Mexico is to serve Three Kings Cake, and in Chile, an iced coffee called Cola de Mono (Monkey's Tail) is enjoyed.

To bridge and educate on these cultural differences, our Christian network, SALT, set out to explore how to bring these traditions into a corporate setting and highlight them at our annual Christmas networking events. We started by

collaborating with other networks such as HOLA!, our Hispanic and Latino network, and EastWest Exchange (EWEx), our Asian-American network. Then we picked different regions of the world each year to feature the countries and their cultural celebrations with food, music, and more.

Our colleagues embraced this idea, and it was heartwarming to see them lift up the message of the incarnation to a greater audience. Volunteers in the employee choir researched the cultural and country origins of popular Christmas songs to sing, and our cafeteria food service workers researched traditional Christmas dish recipes from around the world to serve during the events. And to top it off, an employee donated their international Nativity scene collection for table centerpieces.

We all learned that despite differences, there are many similarities that we share about Christmas. We found a common thread of family, food, and worship as important elements to celebrate Christmas no matter where you go. In the end, we all are celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. How beautiful it is to come together as one body from many cultures and backgrounds to celebrate the hope of all mankind.

*Karo Ghani lives in Maple Grove, Minnesota, with her husband of 26 years and they have two sons and one daughter-in-law. She is a senior business systems analyst for Ameriprise Financial.*

*Erin Engen lives in Apple Valley, Minnesota, with her husband and three children. Prior to working at Ameriprise Financial as a department coordinator, she taught Japanese to American high schoolers and lived in Japan teaching English at a middle school.*

## PRAY

*Thank you Lord for bringing us together to celebrate your coming. We pray that we will continue to unite throughout the year.*

## REFLECT

*Think about how you can partner with other believers to further initiatives of peace and joy.*

## DISCUSS

*Why is it important for Christians to support each other within our corporate communities and throughout the world? How can we better work to understand how our faith is celebrated across different cultures and communities?*

## Three Keys to Transformative Small Groups

For Small Groups to be effective, members need to work together to be **missional, formational, and relational**. All three are needed.

Learn more at [bit.ly/WLgroups](https://bit.ly/WLgroups)

# The Question

By Marty Anderson



“Why do you think you’re going to heaven?” At the time, I had no idea what an impact that question would have on my life.

It was the fall of 1998, and I was recently divorced. I sat across the table at Peter’s Grill enjoying lunch with my work leader, Jake. I knew Jake was active in his faith because he had invited me to join him and some coworkers at a Bible study a few times, but I had never attended.

“Because I’m a pretty good person” was my response.

“Pretty good people go to hell every day,” he explained.

At the time, I didn’t know how great an impact this short exchange would have

on me. But it was the beginning of my journey to seek and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in the spring of 1999, I started attending events hosted by a new employee network at Ameriprise called SALT.

There were events with well-known speakers who talked about what it was like to live out their faith in the workplace. The group played host to a Passover Seder with a leader from Seed of Abraham Messianic Jewish congregation where I learned about the Hebraic roots of Jesus and his crucifixion. Exposure to such diverse people changed me from a consumer Christian to someone who was engaged and wanted to bring Jesus into as many people’s lives as possible.

Over time, I became a leader in SALT. There was a period of time when the entire leadership team had left Ameriprise and I was the only leader left so I felt called to stay small and intimate. We had regular devotional discussions over lunch for a year. Then I held a meeting with a group of about 10 active Christian coworkers and the SALT network was reborn! Today SALT is strong with a dedicated leadership team, and I was blessed to be their senior guide for the last 10 years of my career.

I’m sharing my story to encourage you to seek out something similar at your workplace. Maybe you are sensing God’s call to invite people to meet over lunch and talk about faith. Or, you have a good core group of people who love Jesus, and you feel led to put on events that might draw more people into your group. I encourage you to pray that God uses you in mighty ways to be salt and light to those around you.

I believe God wants to use our lives to minister and encourage others. Lead with love! Live out loud! Be vulnerable without fear!

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*Marty Anderson lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, with his wife Cecilia. He recently attended his first Challenge Weekend and has joined a regular WorkLight Small Group.*

## Provide through Planned Giving

By partnering with the National Christian Foundation, WorkLight is able to accept planned and complex gifts from donors. Business owners, property owners and families have multiple options to fan the flame for future generations through their generous giving.

Learn more at [WorkLight.org/Legacy](http://WorkLight.org/Legacy)



## Come and See

By Nancy Huddleston

The invitation to “come and see” is just the beginning of attending a Challenge Weekend. An understanding of the Lord’s handiwork starts to awaken during presentations. Fruit from the Holy Spirit emerges and ripens during Small Group discussions. By the end of the weekend, your spiritual life is recharged and transformed.

That was true for Joe Blanco, one of the organizers of a February Challenge Weekend in Payson, Arizona, and a long-time member. “My best friend, a doctor, died of COVID and he was a front-line medical worker. I was feeling sorry for myself and feeling the impact of the isolation of the pandemic, so I started calling others and asking how they were doing,” he explained.

“I found lots of them were suffering from anxiety and depression. And I felt as men we needed to get together and get a hold of this,” Joe recalled. He started calling “some phenomenal men of God,” and talking about putting a weekend together.”

The bottom line for Joe: “We thought it would be a good opportunity to reunite and love one another.”

The idea began to grow exponentially when Joe called more Challenge Weekend veterans and learned others were having the same discussions. As a result, everyone joined together, decided to make the weekend format longer and an overnight event. “We

wanted to allow more time to open up, for introspection, plus to get to know each other better,” he said.

Once the plans were in place, Joe invited everyone he talked to in his daily life. “We needed the camaraderie and the Holy Spirit,” he said. “And I realized early on that it wasn’t about what I would benefit from on this particular weekend, but what I had to contribute and give to others.”

When asked about his role in putting the weekend together, Joe says “it wasn’t about being a ‘leader’ of the weekend, it was about involvement.” Citing the book, *Not A Fan*, he said he believes that people cannot stand on the sidelines, that they’ve got to get in the game. “Praying for someone is good. Fasting for someone is good. Donating to someone or something is good but being in the game is a totally different aspect of faith. It’s about taking an active part,” he said.

Joe’s inspiration comes from a fear he realized 21 years ago – “that I would show up to the gates of Heaven and when I was about to be delivered the crown and told ‘well done my good and faithful servant,’ I would be asked ‘who did you bring with you’ and I would turn back, but no one would be there. That gave me the impetus to try harder, to invite more people, because I truly believe we all should be participants in the Great Commission where we get to do God’s work.”

*Nancy Huddleston is a member of WorkLight’s editorial team. She and her husband Mike live in Burnsville, Minnesota, and she can be reached at [hud59@q.com](mailto:hud59@q.com).*

## The Greatest Unity

*Continued from page 1*

Consider the upcoming National Challenge Weekend from October 14-16 in Scottsdale, Arizona. If we were to gather exclusively as longtime members of Christians in Commerce, it would be amazing. We would sing together, pray together, and come home with a renewed sense of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. The sense of unity would be deep and strong.

But what if this upcoming National Challenge Weekend is full of new attendees? Think of the opportunities for new relationships with a whole new generation of igniters waiting to be sent forth to their workplaces with the power of the Holy Spirit. That same sense of unity would also be deep and strong, but now it begins to expand far and wide.

Building unity in Christ is a key element of expanding God’s Kingdom. Whether it’s praying with your spouse, operating in the fruit of the Spirit with a colleague, or inviting a complete stranger to lunch. If you pursue all such activities with Christ, then unity and the Kingdom will follow in kind.

Jesus is the greatest story and provided us with the greatest unity ever told. Let us come together and get to work.

*Wesley Farrow is president of WorkLight. He can be reached at [wesley@worklight.org](mailto:wesley@worklight.org). For more information on the upcoming National Challenge Weekend from Oct. 14-16, in Scottsdale, Arizona, go to [worklight.org/events/](http://worklight.org/events/).*

# NEWS

## 40 YEARS OF CHRISTIANS IN COMMERCE, WORKLIGHT

Did you know that 2022 is the 40th year of our ministry? Thanks be to God for the myriad ways, seen and unseen, that Jesus has been witnessed and the Holy Spirit has been at work through four decades of seeking Christ in the workplace.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE AS NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND, OCTOBER 14-16

Building on the tradition of an annual conference, this year we will celebrate our 40th year of ministry by hosting a first-ever National Challenge Weekend at St. Patrick Catholic Community in Scottsdale, Arizona. You are invited not only to join us, but to bring an igniter with you! If cost is an issue, please let us know by filling out this form at <https://bit.ly/NatCWEScholarship>. See below and stay tuned for more details.

## BOGO TICKETS FOR NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND

The legacy of CIC lives on through our Chapters and Small Groups. Many of you have been meeting for longer than some of us have been alive. Praise God! Now it's time to bring this movement of the Holy Spirit to the next generation of igniters. Igniters are mid-career Christians with a heart for living life in the Spirit and expanding God's Kingdom in the workplace. All tickets for the 2022 National Challenge Weekend will be Buy One Get One (BOGO, as the kids say) to encourage every one of us to bring an igniter along. Who is your igniter? If no one comes to mind, then prayer is the best place to start.

## FUNDRAISING SUPPORT

WorkLight has a small but mighty staff of two full-time people at our office in Minnesota. This year we are

seeking an operationally minded seasonal consultant to assist with the end-of-year and individual giving elements of our fundraising efforts. Do you know anyone with experience running national annual campaigns, leveraging local volunteers, and telling Christ-centered stories? Let us know at [communications@worklight.org](mailto:communications@worklight.org).

## WANTED: SMALL GROUP AND CHAPTER PICTURES

You may have noticed our new-and-improved website at [worklight.org](http://worklight.org). With our renewed focus on igniters, Challenge Weekends, and Small Groups we are on the hunt for quality images of brothers and sisters in Christ gathering together. Please send any pictures you might have to [bryan@worklight.org](mailto:bryan@worklight.org).

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE



*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:123)*

### Strength in Numbers

When I was first learning about Christians in Commerce and WorkLight, I recall hearing many stories of men and women connecting in Christ across different denominations, traditions, and cultures. One of my favorite stories came from Tim Rowland in Arizona.

Tim explained that he had witnessed multiple times where denominational differences helped men on Challenge Weekends to better understand the Holy Trinity. The recipe went something like this: The mainline

Protestants spoke of their reverence for serving God the Father. The charismatic Catholics brought their enthusiasm for the Holy Spirit. The Evangelicals shared their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

You might be wondering—Who got it right? The answer is quite simple: All of us! Tim's story illustrates how each brother's tendency to think more about one element of the Trinity than another became a rich opportunity to learn from one another's perspectives. Our charismatic Catholic brothers have us saying, "Come Holy Spirit!" Our mainline Protestant brothers have us working for our Father. Our Evangelical brothers have us walking more closely in intimate relationships with Jesus than ever before. Hallelujah!

Ecclesiastes 4:12 may seem like a simple truth. Of course, a braided cord

is stronger than a single thread. But why did God make such elements of creation to grow in strength when brought together for a common purpose? Where in our lives are we meant to find ways to weave with one another? I don't pretend to have all the answers, but there is certainly great fruit in meditating on these questions.

No two people are identical. We are each wonderfully made, and God knows even the number of hairs on our heads. Yet the world is full of illusions that we are enemies of one another. Even worse, sometimes it can seem that our differences keep us distant from God. Let us remember that together our diversity becomes strength through Jesus Christ.

With you in Christ,

Wes

# 2022

## AUGUST

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

Galatians 2:20

## THE FLAME

### WORKLIGHT PRAYER

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit  
that we may be made new  
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;  
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;  
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;  
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;  
That we may lead all to unity in you;  
Through Jesus, our 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 (DBA WorkLight) 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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