

American Nuclear Society Christian Nuclear Fellowship 40th Anniversary Meeting

"Celebrating God's Faithfulness"

By Carl Mazzola

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Today, November 9, 2016, in Las Vegas, NV, we are gathered together to celebrate God's faithfulness to the Christian Nuclear Fellowship (CNF) over these past 40 years. God's faithfulness has been present since He created the Universe, and it was specifically apparent in the Madison Room at the convention hotel – the old Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, DC, at the ANS 1976 Winter Meeting. That hotel has since been demolished, and the Marriot Wardman Park Hotel was built where the old hotel used to be.

On a mid-November evening in 1976, a total of thirty men and women showed up at that historic meeting – a meeting for nuclear engineers and scientists who had placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who wanted to discuss how they might more effectively blend together their faith and their professional lives. The group discussed the possibility of forming some kind of Christian fellowship group for ANS members.

Yes, indeed, our Lord has been faithful in not only establishing the CNF forty years ago, but also in sustaining it for such a long period of time. Sustainability is a hallmark of God's approval, as we all know that things come and go and last for much shorter periods of time if God's power and blessing do not undergird it.

God has always informed us of His promise of faithfulness in His Word. Let me read just a few verses from Scripture (NIV) that give a small glimpse of God's promise of His faithfulness to His people:

- In **Psalm 26:3**, God inspired David to write: *"For I have **always** been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness."* (David lived through a very difficult 12-year period, relying entirely on God's faithfulness).
- Through David, God tells us in **Psalm 117:2**: *"For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures **forever**."* (There is no time limit to the faithfulness of our transcendent and infinite God).
- The prophet Jeremiah in **Lamentations 3:23** reveals that God's faithfulness is always present: *"They are new **every morning**; great is your faithfulness."* (God's faithfulness in our lives is renewed daily).
- The prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 25:1** tells us that God's faithfulness is perfect and He planned it before He created the Universe. *"LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in **perfect** faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago."* (God's faithfulness is as perfect as He is and was always part of His plan for His creation).

Scripture also consistently reveals that God is sovereign, in full control of history, and faithful. Not only did God create the Universe, but He has always been involved with His creation in a

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very intimate way. In the full measure of time, this faithfulness is operating and the birth of the CNF, an opportunity for Christians to meet and share in a secular setting, only came about because of God's sovereign actions.

I would now like to present a brief summary of how God's sovereign hand was working in the life of Vic Uotinen that led to its establishment 40 years ago.

Several months before the founder of CNF, Vic Uotinen, left Battelle Northwest to move to Lynchburg, VA in 1974, a colleague gave him a recently-published book by Larry Peabody entitled, "**Secular Work is Full Time Service**". The premise and contents of that book literally revolutionized this young engineer's understanding of a Christian's involvement in so-called "secular occupations." Vic soon came to realize that God calls the vast majority of his children to work at secular occupations 40 or more hours every week, and that therefore working in the nuclear science and engineering profession was indeed a **calling from God**. That calling was just as sacred as the calling of someone else to pastor a church or to become a missionary in a foreign land. After months of meditation and prayer, as God continued to reveal His plans, the Lord would soon show Vic how to apply that new insight in his professional life.

Soon after moving to Lynchburg, VA in 1974, a Christian friend at church was moved to show Vic an article in a Christian magazine written by a nuclear engineer, named Joe McCrosson, who worked at the Savannah River Plant. This article further reinforced the message of the Larry Peabody book. Shortly after that, Vic attended the Annual ANS meeting in Toronto in the summer of 1976 and providentially ran across that very same engineer, Joe McCrosson. Over lunch, Vic shared some of the things he had learned from the book on the sacredness of secular work and both men acknowledged that there must be quite a number of Christian men and women attending the ANS meeting who would be thrilled to get to know other Christian colleagues. They then discussed how great it would be if there was some type of forum for Christians at an ANS conference to meet and get to know one another, and to have a time of meaningful fellowship. Both Vic and Joe agreed to pray about this and to let the Lord lead them.

After the Toronto meeting, Vic sent a letter to the ANS requesting a room for some Christian ANS members to meet at the 1976 winter meeting in Washington, DC to discuss the relationship between their faith and their work in the nuclear industry. To his total surprise, which exposed his then limited faith, the ANS sent a letter back to him approving the request and assigned the Madison Room for the meeting. Interestingly, Vic still has that historic letter in his files.

So, almost 40 years ago to the day, the CNF met on November 16, 1976 in the Madison Room at the convention hotel in Washington DC. That was the founding meeting of what then became the Christian Nuclear Fellowship (CNF). Today we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the CNF and thank the Lord Jesus for sustaining CNF for all of these years.

Looking back, we can see that God's sovereign hand was operating in many ways; first in Vic's colleague giving him that book shortly before he left Richland, second in his Lynchburg friend's sharing a magazine article with him, third in his unplanned encounter with another brother in

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Christ, Joe McCrosson, and lastly in the ANS leadership giving CNF a room to meet in at its founding meeting. There are no coincidences in a Universe run by a sovereign God. We are just limited in understanding how He interacts with events for His pleasure.

One of the attributes of a God-inspired organization is the consistency that CNF has enjoyed through many different leaderships at ANS. A remarkable 40 uninterrupted years with 80 consecutive meetings would not have happened without God's faithful hand on the ministry.

At this point, I would like to share my own personal involvement with CNF. I received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord on August 30, 1971 in Doylestown, PA and immediately wanted to surround myself with other Christians in all aspects of my life. It was important to be transformed by the renewing of my mind (Romans 12:2) and the Holy Spirit was moving me to a different circle of friends. The moment I received Christ as my Lord, the Holy Spirit enabled me with 3 gifts: (1) teaching; (2) exhortation; and, (3) administration. In 1977, God gave me the boldness to begin teaching a Bible study at the Boston, MA offices of Stone & Webster, and for 8 years, there was great fellowship and learning of God's Word in a secular environment. Remarkably, the Stone & Webster management approved this as long as I didn't advertise it on the bulletin boards. This certainly whet my appetite for applying these special gifts at other secular events.

I joined the ANS as a member in 1981 and attended my first ANS meeting in 1982, also in Washington, DC and gave a technical paper. I did not get involved in ANS governance until 1985 and through deeper involvement within ANS, I noticed that there was a meeting of the "CNF" and attended my first CNF meeting in 1985. The fellowship with other believers from all walks of life was a refreshing oasis. I shared the experience with my pastor who was absolutely amazed that such an organization was not only in existence, but thriving. My involvement with CNF was casual in the early years, but at the 1995 meeting in Philadelphia, PA, I was given the opportunity to share my personal testimony and soon after that became a member of the CNF Steering Committee. In 1999, Vic interviewed me and published one of the many Christian profiles of CNF members that are still circulating through ANS. In 2001-2003, Vic and I worked together on the Special Committee on Ethics to develop the present ANS Policy on Ethics and in 2011, both of us gave papers at a special session on Ethics that of course had an underlying theme of abiding in Christ. Moreover, this is the 4th time that I have been given the privilege of speaking at a CNF Prayer Breakfast. As you can see, God involved me at greater and greater levels as I obediently followed His calling.

So what has my involvement with the CNF and the many friendships that I have made through the years meant to me? I cannot begin to list each specific blessing, as there have been too many to count. However, over the 30+ years of involvement with CNF there have been many opportunities for its members to share deep personal needs, to pray for one another when life challenges and personal losses occur, to share the many victories in the power of the Holy Spirit, to provide inspired solutions to professional and personal issues; all of these within the purview of the CNF. Over these years I have established dozens of professional and personal relationships with other Christians I have met through CNF, which in themselves, have led to other opportunities to glorify the Lord Jesus together at other forums. When I take a step back,

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I am humbly awed as I reflect on what God has done through this ministry and how He has used it to further His Kingdom in so many ways.

In closing, I speak for each of the founding members and the present steering committee members to encourage each of you, and especially the younger members of CNF, to continue this legacy for perhaps another 40 years and continue to network with other ANS Christian colleagues through the CNF. I am certain that God's hand is on it and through His faithfulness, it will continue so He can continue to be glorified through the work of CNF.

(Vic is planning to give all attendees at this special CNF meeting a copy of the recently re-packaged and re-published edition of the book that started it all as a personal gift.)