The Flourishing Culture Podcast Series
“How to Move Culture from Toxic to Flourishing”
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Craig Warner

Male: Welcome to the Flourishing Culture Podcast, brought to you by the Best Christian Workplaces Institute, helping Christian organizations set the standard as the best, most effective places to work in the world.

This is the podcast where you’ll learn how to build a flourishing workplace culture that can take your organization to the next level. In the next few minutes, you’ll hear practical insights to create employee engagement that drives the effectiveness and impact of your organization, your church, or your company. Now here’s your host, BCWI president, Al Lopus.

Al Lopus: Hello, and thanks for joining us today. One of the most remarkable cultural transformations we’ve seen comes from one of the oldest, most revered Christian ministries. Starting in 1908 as an association of Christian businessmen placing Bibles in hotel rooms The Gideons International has expanded dramatically, placing more than two billion Bibles and Scripture portions in more than 95 languages around the globe. Think of that! Two billion Bibles!

Over the past six years, the executive director of The Gideons International has moved their workplace culture from toxic to one that’s very healthy. Today we’re going to learn about a few of the steps they took to accomplish this remarkable feat. We welcome Craig Warner, the executive director of The Gideons International. Hi, Craig.

Craig Warner: Well, good day, Al. How are you?

Al: I’m doing great! Good day to you!

Craig: Well, it’s great to be with you!

Al: Craig, your journey to become the executive director of The Gideons International has caused you and your wife to move to a new continent. Tell us about that as well as a little bit about what it means to you as a leader.
Craig: Thank you, Al. You know, my journey into full-time Christian ministry started back in 1984 when I was at a Keswick Convention in Melbourne, Australia, and I felt the Lord call me into full-time Christian ministry. I knew in my spirit that in fact I was not cut out to be a pastor. I think if I had been a pastor in a church I probably would’ve killed somebody already.

God put me into ministry in a full-time capacity working for The Gideons International. That, as you said, has taken me across the world together with my wife, Debbie, and our four children. Now we’ve been located in Nashville, Tennessee, for about 17 years.

I keep reminding the people here in Nashville, they think they’re from the South, but I just quietly and politely tell them that if you’re not from south of the equator, you aren’t southern. That throws them for a little bit of a loop, Al, but we have good fun with that. We’ve been here in Nashville, Tennessee, since November of 1999. I took over my role as executive director in July of 2010.

You know, we are widely known for Bibles in hotels and motels, but that probably accounts for about 6 percent of the work we do in 200 countries, territories, or possessions. We distribute mostly New Testaments (the New Testament portion of the Holy Scriptures) to middle school students, high school students, and university students. We encourage our membership base to be about the business of personally witnessing their love of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking for the Holy Spirit to lead them into a conversation where they can usher somebody else into a personal relationship with Jesus.

Al: Craig, I remember we got to know each other a few years before you actually became the executive director. In fact, at that point, you were preparing to move into your current role. What were some of the things you were noticing about the staff culture at The Gideons International, and why were they so important?

Craig: Well, I remember back in 2004, I was down at what we used to know as CMA (the Christian Management Association). It was the annual conference down there in Dallas at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center there. I saw this guy on stage with a bowtie giving away these awards for a Best Christian Workplace Institute. I just knew The Gideons as a well-respected Christian ministry with a single objective of reaching the lost for Christ was not reflective of those organizations that were receiving the awards you were giving out at that CMA conference.

I just knew in my spirit that one day we could be one of those organizations. My experience on the staff at The Gideons at the time was we were at the top of the bell curve representing three major factors that had... We had age, we had desires, and we had success. Those three always communicated the inevitability of failure, decline, and decay, and we needed to reinvent ourselves.

We needed to begin with the culture in the workplace, which was not healthy. We had people who loved what they did, but they did it under sufferance. They did it out of a sense of commitment rather than being a place where your work was your worship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Al: I remember that exactly. What did the BCWI Employee Engagement Survey do to help you identify what the next steps might be?
Craig: As we said in the beginning, I took over as executive director in July of 2010. That November we did our first BCWI survey. Frankly, you might remember those results were not pretty. I think a 3.2 might have been our score on that first survey. What we saw was the fact that even though on paper we seemed successful, what the survey told us was the people were not happy.

They were very fearful in the workplace. There was no trust. They were busy about the responsibility for completing tasks rather than driving toward successful outcomes. I have a background as a CPA before I went into full-time ministry, so one of my mantras is, “Do you know what? I appreciate that you have an opinion, but what are the facts?” What BCWI did for us is it gave us the facts. It gave us the truth, as tough as that was to swallow.

Al: I do remember peering in on video conference in that conference room you were in, and there weren’t a lot of smiling faces in that debriefing, as I recall. I have to ask you, Craig, as a leader, how did this new knowledge about your culture make you feel?

Craig: I had wished it would have been better, but it actually gave me a lot of confidence. I don’t know whether that’s a good thing or whether I’m just a little peculiar, Al, but I had confidence that now we knew the truth and we could begin to rebuild. We had somewhere to start. Our future was ahead of us.

Even though the results were not pretty and they were not good for the staff at a Christian workplace, it was both pain and excitement. You know, we have an old joke in Australia. This is probably not politically correct, but it’s like when your mother-in-law drives your brand new Mercedes off a cliff. You have both pain and excitement all in the one experience. I don’t know whether you can put that on the podcast or not, but...

Al: It’s a mixture of pain and excitement. Yeah, okay.

Craig: Yeah, it’s pain and excitement! We had something to work with, and our future was ahead of us.

Al: Yeah, that’s right.

Craig: Yeah! It was good. It was good to know the truth.

Al: Yeah. You did have the facts in front of you, and you began working on it. That’s for sure! Yeah. Well, thanks for sharing and talking about that and the pain associated with seeing your mother-in-law go over the cliff there.

Craig: Yeah, that’s probably not a good thing to say, but that’s okay. Mine still lives in Australia, and I love her very much.

Al: I love the analogy. Given the realities of your culture at the time, let’s talk about strategy. What were three or four of the key elements or steps of your strategy that helped create a healthy, even on your way to a flourishing, culture? What did you want to achieve through each of these steps?
Craig: We relied on a number of resources, Al, some tools, both books and online resources, that were designed to help our people to think and to talk about change. One of the things we did do was we used John Kotter’s book *Leading Change* where he has eight steps. John Kotter, I think, it was like 12 or 15 years worth of research into organizations and had successfully gone through a changed management process. He identified eight consistent components those people had.

Now this is what I would call a "spiritual neutral" book. In other words, it has no sort of spiritual content, but it’s not *anti*-Christian either. Kotter came out with establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and a strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering the employees for broad-based action, and generating those short-term wins to give people confidence that change was really happening.

We then more consolidated those changes and produced more change. Then we went about anchoring the new approaches in the culture. One of the things you want to do as you go through changing a culture is to make sure people can’t back out. You know, given half a chance they will want to go back to what’s familiar even though they didn’t like it. We tried to institute some things where once the change was made, they couldn’t go back to where they were.

Well, we had you come quite a few times. We used some of the Patrick Lencioni materials, a number of resources and instruments in doing that. Our strategy was to design, create, and establish some key change mechanisms. Out of the first survey we did, our people communicated very clearly to us that we didn’t reward high performance very well. In fact, we had very much a seniority or longevity mindset. We didn’t hang on to good people.

One of the things we fixed immediately is we did a compensation survey. We redesigned our whole compensation structure. I think, Al, we went from probably one of the worst scores out of all of the BCWI surveys you keep and you publish (we were probably one of the worst scores on performance management and compensation) to I think we’re one of the higher-rating organizations over all people who do the report.

We found some very short-term wins in some of that, and then we began working on a compelling work environment. We put together a group of people from all levels of the organization who developed some core values for the staff. We pray about them every day. Then we worked on an updated employee handbook. We encouraged personal growth.

Al: Let me ask you, Craig, about the core values. You mentioned those. I think there are four core values you’ve developed.

Craig: That is correct.

Al: Again, one of the things that’s unique about The Gideons I’ve found is you actually, first of all, have chapel every morning at 7:30, but you then integrated those core values into prayer every day. How does that work?
Craig: Well, that’s correct. We distributed a little “core value” card to every employee. We have big banners in the stairwells that communicate those core values. Since early on in The Gideons International, we have had a daily devotional time. We start at 7:30. It’s mandatory attendance. It’s paid time. It’s 30 minutes.

One of the great benefits of that (and other ministry leaders may get a little jealous of this) is we are actually categorized by the IRS as a non-steeple church. We don’t even have to fill out annual reports because we are treated as a church even though we’re not a denomination. Since the turn of the previous century, we’ve been having that daily devotion time. Now about 108 years we’ve been doing that as an organization.

Every day we pray for one of those core values, whether it’s innovation and creative thinking, whether it’s open communication, whether it’s mutual respect, or whether it’s trust for the individual. Every day one of those core values is being prayed for by our staff.

Al: That was one of the first steps in that process you started, wasn’t it?

Craig: It was! It certainly was. Yes.

Al: Great! You were mentioning the third step you moved into to make the changes.

Craig: I was going to add a parenthetical comment for you, Al. Just one of my mantras here is (I think you would agree) I tend to be a lifetime learner. I’m just never satisfied with the status quo. We encourage personal growth by individuals professionally, personally, and spiritually. Yes, they’re all active members in a local church, but we try to create the opportunity for them to grow personally (all of our employees from all levels of the organization).

One of my leaders came to me and said, “Craig, we seem to be spending a lot of money on the development of our people. What happens if we spend all this money and they leave?” I just looked at him with a smile on my face and said, “Well, what happens if we don’t invest in them and they stay?”

Al: That’s right.

Craig: You might remember that conversation.

Al: Yeah! I do.

Craig: Do you know what? I get great satisfaction out of people who grow and develop. I just had one of our five-year employees, a young lady by the name of Jaye. Jaye just left our employment two weeks ago. She came to us fresh out of college, first job she ever had. We hired her on down at the reception area, and she grew and developed.

Well, she just resigned and went to another organization in the last month or so (a couple of weeks ago) as an office manager. We had the satisfaction of knowing that in the five years we had Jaye on our staff,
God allowed us the opportunity to invest in her. Now she is taking a significant leadership position in a corporation in our local community and is going to be very faithful for Christ in the corporate world.

We’re excited that God allows us that stewardship responsibility for our people. That’s what the BCWI is really all about. It’s increasing your opportunity to be good stewards of the people God has given you. I still haven’t gotten to the third step yet, so let me get there. The third step we did was to continue to define our reality for people, do the comp study. We redefined our hiring process, began to communicate expectations, not just for our leaders but for people all throughout the organization.

Al: That hiring process… We’ve had Chad Carter on a previous podcast, and he has described it quite a bit. That really has improved the level of talent you’ve had in the organization, hasn’t it?

Craig: Oh, Al, it has been phenomenal. The people God has brought to us (to The Gideons International), I can… I probably have four of my key reports, key leaders, who have been recruited in the five years we’ve been doing BCWI. God has just been amazing with the way he has brought highly qualified, confident, and committed people who bring great chemistry and character to what we do. I think I just quoted the five C’s of predictive hiring.

For anybody listening to this, do yourself a favor. On the BCWI website, go ahead and order The Five Attributes: Essentials of Hiring for Christian Organizations.

Al: Yeah, The Five Attributes.

Craig: When you’re in Christian ministry and you have limited resources, you cannot afford a bad hire. We take our time. We have a series of probably five interviews, and we ask different questions. They’re all behavior-based. God is just honoring that process.

Al: Absolutely! In addition to the hiring process, tell us a favorite story of how your strategy took hold and began to reshape and improve the culture at The Gideons International.

Craig: One of the things I did early, for some reason, was to start a little file I have in my drawer here called “success stories.” After six years, I just put in cards I receive and notes, letters, and emails that go by. I just throw them in my little folder there called “success stories.” Actually in preparing for this podcast, I went back and looked at a few of those notes and letters and emails.

I don’t have just one; I have a plethora of success stories, not success about Craig Warner, but how God has used the instrument of BCWI to improve the life of our employees, our staff here at The Gideons International. Some of those successes are about folk in the building simply complimenting one another, acknowledging the openness in communication, the transparency of our decision-making process.

We’ve had people who have been on staff for maybe 10 years who have felt the freedom to go back to school and to complete a degree. One young lady, Heather, is now managing a group of five or six employees in our development division, and she came to us fresh out of college. Her parents were not well-adjusted adults, and she was raised by her grandparents. She has gotten married, gone back to
school, and completed a degree at night school. It’s just awesome to see the growth in individuals, both spiritually and professionally, and just the relationships that are growing.

I had to slip by here Sunday after church. We actually have Millennials in the building. There were three young folk out of our communications division plus a former employee who had resigned about 12 months ago who were decorating their boss’ office for Christmas. They had brought in a big potbelly stove, and they were dressing this office up. They were doing this after lunch Sunday on their day off because they just appreciate their boss. That would have never happened 6 to 10 years ago.

**Al:** I remember one of my first trips there and walking through the office at 4:30 after quitting time. It was completely silent and dead. That’s an indication things have changed.

**Craig:** You could have walked through here at two o’clock in the afternoon, and it would have been silent and dead.

**Al:** May have been too. Yeah, right. Those are powerful illustrations, Craig, and really a reflection of how things have changed. We’re interested how has this affected you, encouraged you, even impacted you as a leader?

**Craig:** Frankly, it’s been very painful because you’ve had to face the criticism. You’ve had to face the blame. Even though some of it has not been your doing, you do hold the position and you are, as executive director, in the spotlight. It has been very difficult, and I grossly underestimated the amount of effort it takes to change a culture.

Culture change, and particularly BCWI, is not for the fainthearted, but the rewards are incredible as you see the growth, the development, and the excitement in people and the engagement of relationships and their enthusiasm for the work and their excitement to be recognizing what God does in the workplace.

For me, it’s probably taken a few years off my life. You know, if it doesn’t go well, you’re to blame. If it goes really well, you have to deflect the excitement and the congratulations to somebody else. I never realized how lonely it was in an executive director’s position because most people don’t tell you the truth. They tell you what they think you want to know. They’re afraid. They don’t want to tell the boss because they may get in trouble.

You see from time to time the Lord gives you glimpses of the courage that people are developing and the opportunity… In fact, today I took Kate and Hannah (they’re 26 years old and 25 years old)... They work in the communications area. Here I am 55. I’m the executive director of The Gideons. These two young ladies from our communications area and I went out to lunch together to Waffle House and had scrambled eggs. We just sat and talked about...

I found out today Hannah is actually freelancing in her spare time doing calendars and planning for a network marketing organization, and she is selling something on the side. I see her grow and develop. For me personally, it’s hard work, but it’s so rewarding as you see God at work in the lives of others.
Al: Thanks for being transparent about that, Craig. Yeah, I think that’s an interesting transition from painful to hard work to rewarding. I think there’s a life lesson there. Part of the leadership transformation you’ve experienced personally and The Gideons has experienced is because of the 360 Reviews you have participated in and your team has. Every leader now has received direct and honest feedback from those they work with most closely.

For you, it was your first exposure (and I think it was also for the rest of the team) to 360 Reviews. How did 360 Reviews help? If you don’t mind, share with our audience how you felt about your own 360 experience.

Craig: That was another interesting exercise in transparency and authenticity. You know, a 360 Review is, of course, those you report to, those you appease, those who report to you, and then other people in the organization. It’s now part of my annual review. I report to an executive board, and those three get to feed into the 360 Review, as well as other key leaders.

For me, the 360 Review does a number of things. You have a great series of different areas upon which that focuses on both in professional competency but also in behavioral aspects. People feed in to that. One of the things it does help to do is identify both your blind spots but also the areas of opportunity. A blind spot is where you rate yourself a lot higher on a particular question or character issue than other people do. You’re actually blind to the truth.

The other one is areas of opportunities where you rate yourself lower than what other people see you as. To get that honest feedback is not a criticism. People do it because they love you and they want to help. Then you can use that material to manage your own behavior both as a boss and as a person, in your leadership or in your strategy or your spiritual vitality.

Again, it gives you real data for you to grow and improve. None of this is an easy fix. A lot of this takes time. I run on the theory that we are trying to implement slow, consistent growth and change because I also run on the theory that if you can change it quickly, you can change it quickly. We are being very thorough and very deliberate about the changes we implement, because I don’t want the next person who comes along behind me to change the things we may spend so much money, time, and effort on. I don’t want them to change it to something else, because this is important, and we’re growing people.

The 360 Review helped identify blind spots. Some of our leaders embraced it. Some didn’t. I go back, and what did the BCWI do for us? One of our success stories is we had a curmudgeon on staff. I think you will remember who he is. Well, eventually he just got to the point he said, “Do you know what? I don’t like this. I’m retiring early.” He left! We celebrated that, and we celebrated him because he put in some years of good service. But it actually forced people off the fence.

I think in our first survey, it communicated that only one-third of our people were actually engaged in the workplace. We had two out of every three people who were disengaged, and some people were actually working against us. What both the BCWI and the 360 Review allows you to do is to increase the engagement of your people because you no longer have opinion; you have real data from which to do some work.
What it also did for me was it gave other people permission to hold me accountable, and they still do. I have a group of people here who sometimes in a meeting now look at me and say, “Now, Craig, is this simply your personal preference or is this a principle we’re trying to uphold?” Because of the 360 Review, I’m able to monitor myself. I’m able to manage myself more effectively because very often your greatest strength can become your greatest weakness.

Because of that 360 Review, I now can see when I’m going down a particular road that’s not healthy, and it allows me to stop before we actually get there. It just gives you some great tools to be a more effective and appropriate leader.

Al: Yeah, you’ve really changed your culture where having feedback is a great basis from which to then build and make change. You’ve been gathering information from an annual engagement survey from 360 Reviews. When you look back on all you’ve invested in your culture, in order to receive practical examples or good results that show your culture is really becoming healthier and better, what do you say to that?

Craig: Yeah, well, one of the most tangible things is I have less to do.

Al: Really?

Craig: Yeah! I am a lot more relaxed. I get to enjoy the excitement of watching other people do more productive work. We’re not so concerned about completing tasks, but we’re driving toward achieving valuable outcomes. You know? I’m able to spend more time, energy, and focus on more strategic issues because it’s created an environment where when the tide rises all boats rise. This has just made this place a better place to work. It’s been really good. Our people value the work they do.

One of the things that’s resulted is we’ve eliminated the silos between different departments. We’re becoming a lot more cross-functional in our outlook. You know, people knew we cared about them and the mission of the work. We’re significantly improving our processes, and our hiring processes have improved. People are taking ownership for their work.

One of the tangible results is we’re a membership-based association. We have 275,000 men and women around the world, and I report to a board of 26. They are here regularly through the office. I now have people who have been associated with our headquarters here not as employees but as volunteers who have visited over time. They’ve come back after some time and provided some incredibly unsolicited comments as to the change. I mean, they literally feel the change in this building, and it’s been phenomenal.

Al: Yeah, I have gotten feedback. Not only do people feel the difference in the building, but it impacts the relationships with your members really as you serve them around the world.

Craig: Well, yeah, Al. It’s not just in terms of ministry. Because of the data BCWI provides us and the opportunity to use that data to change a culture, it’s just not about the workplace. You’ve met Debbie, my wife of 31 years. We have a great relationship, but she is happy for the BCWI because over the last six years, she has felt the change. Our marriage has improved.
The way I deal with my four adult children… You know, I have a 30-year-old married daughter, a 28-year-old daughter who lives in London, a 25-year-old son who has been married six years, and a 21-year-old daughter who is a senior in college. My relationship with my children has changed over the last six years.

You know, Debbie and I have a more fruitful marriage because I learned some things about myself in my leadership position that could translate into my relationship with my family. These are just the good results. These are just the unexpected outcomes of having good data and taking action.

**Al:** I’m not sure there is anything better than that, Craig, but when you stand back and look at all that’s happened, far and away what would you say is the best improvement of your workplace culture?

**Craig:** I think in all humility, I’ve become a better me. I’ve become much more free in who I am in Christ. I’ve become more confident about that. I’m not worried about trying to meet other people’s expectation, but BCWI has given us a plan, and it’s given us some tools so we can walk forward confidently knowing the direction we’re going.

You know, here at the headquarters, it’s allowed us to move from a culture that was very much command, control, and compel to one that’s now more about equip, engage, and empower. It’s helped us to learn and understand that our success and our skills that got us to where we are are now opportunities to grow and develop, to be more successful in the future. It’s just the cultural improvement is basically palpable. You can feel it, and you can taste it. I actually like coming to work now.

**Al:** You don’t have a lot of people lining up at your door because of people problems, do you?

**Craig:** No! Somebody else handles them. Like I said before, I have less to do. I can sit and look out on the horizon now and look for those icebergs before they ever appear rather than worrying about whether we have gas in the engine.

**Al:** Yeah. Well, let me ask you the true impact question. How has the improved health of your culture as you just articulated it affected or strengthened the ministry, the mission, the vision, or the impact of The Gideons International?

**Craig:** I mentioned earlier we are a membership-based association. Unlike many other ministries where the ministry is performed by the employees, our role and responsibility is to support our membership base out there across the world. As a membership-based association, we have about 3,100 local groups of Gideon members across the United States, about 11,000 groups around the world.

This change in the culture has allowed our people here at the headquarters as they support our membership to be more encouraging, to empower our membership more. We used to be like the policy police. I have what we call a guidebook on my desk that has all the policies and procedures of The Gideons International (where you can place Scripture, where you can’t place Scripture, how you do that).
We used to have manuals like crazy about how you make a distribution at a school, how you conduct a church deputation service when you go and give a 10-minute report in a church. Well, now we’re just communicating to people about the expected outcome and then giving them the freedom of working out how to get that done.

We’re actually encouraging our membership base to be better believers and allowing them to be missionaries in their local community. The true impact is our membership is feeling more valued. Our membership is getting a greater sense of accomplishment in the work rather than completing the tasks. We continue to increase our worldwide distribution. This year we’re on track to reach 98 million copies of God’s Word free of charge around the world. We continue to see that accelerate.

We’re doing really well on our income. This year we’ll probably raise about $160 million US worldwide to fund those Scriptures. None of that money is used for administration. We have about an $18 million admin budget. Yes, that’s increased a little, but we’re keeping that fairly flat. The impact question is greater effectiveness at missionary work at the ________ (36:05) with the distribution of God’s Word, greater empowerment of our own workforce as they go about the business of placing Scripture.

We’re giving out those Scriptures. The cost of them is coming down too, so that’s really good. In a world where the price of things is going up, our average cost for Scripture is coming down. We’re seeing greater efficiency in terms of economies within The Gideons International.

Al: Craig, my impression is you’re going to see a real leverage of impact as the culture really permeates the organization. It’s still pretty new, but you’ve had that kind of an impact already. I think you’re going to see a lot greater impact in the future.

Craig: One of our recent hires now (well, probably about 12 months ago) was the Lord allowed us to recruit a professor from a local university who is very skilled in learning and development. We’re in the midst of creating an online university for our membership base. In talking to our elected chairman of the board this last week, we’re going to do some board conversations about accountability for volunteers. For the very first time in the history that I’ve been on staff, the board is asking us to come and actually train them in a particular skill set. I’m pretty excited about that.

Unlike many of our listeners, Al, I have no influence over the board selection. The board is elected by our membership base. When we get to our annual conference every year, I end up having to deal with who I get. With the change of the board chairman every three years, I get a new boss. They’re really beginning to engage us in some of the future planning and strategy of The Gideons International. It’s pretty exciting.

Al: That is! I want to thank you, Craig, for being with us today. We certainly enjoyed what we’ve learned, and we’ve learned a lot. Clearly as you started, coming from Australia to the US to be part of The Gideons ministry in Nashville, the challenge was, as you took the job, you were facing a toxic culture, one that did not embrace change.
Your strategy clearly was to change that culture, and the results have been just phenomenal as you’re really beginning to experience positive change. Before we go, Craig. I’d love it if you would give us one final thought. Perhaps you’d like to share a passage of Scripture with us.

Craig: Yeah, I would, Al. I really appreciate that. You know, Al, I was elected by the board, and there was a long lead-time before I actually took over before my predecessor retired. It was coming up on the Fourth of July, and I was contemplating citizenship. Being an Australian, I’m here on a green card. Should the executive director of The Gideons be an American citizen? I was resisting that because I had too much respect for the oath of allegiance to just say it in a citizenship ceremony just to get a passport. It’s too important for that.

I was struggling with the Scriptures, and the Lord brought me to Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 20 through 22, when it says here do it, “…on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together in a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

I thought, “That is just a wonderful word picture of what the headquarters of an international ministry should be like.” Build on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. You know, this place needs to be built on the foundation of Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. What a great foundation for the office of an international ministry. That’s verse 20.

Verse 21 talks about the people being joined together into a holy temple in the Lord. You know, our building here in Nashville is a beacon of light of the truth of the gospel around the world as we represent a ministry that has as a single objective to be reaching others for Christ. Then verse 22 talks about the individual employee. “In whom you also are being built together by a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.”

In the workplace, the Holy Spirit is to be dwelling in the heart, soul, and mind of every employee. Build on the foundation of Christ a holy temple to the Lord and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What a great word picture for the headquarters of an international ministry. You say, “Well, you’re talking about citizenship. How did you get there?”

Well, Ephesians 2:19 says, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” God really gave me a verse of Scripture. I love every word of Scripture. All Scripture is inspired of God, but that particular portion of Scripture in Ephesians 2 beginning at verse 19 for me and verses 20 through 22 for our headquarters has sustained and maintained us as we drive this culture forward.

Al: Well, The Gideons are certainly no foreigner when it comes to being a certified Best Christian Workplace, so congratulations, Craig, and the great work you’ve done. Thanks for sharing your wisdom, insights, and stories with us, and even inspiration. Thank you for extending your ministry to the leaders who have been listening and benefiting with all you’ve shared with us today.

Craig: Al, we are so grateful for you and all of your staff out there, the work you do, the extracurricular encouragement you give us. You’re always available when we have some of those squirrely questions.
I think we’re just about to get our results here after Christmas on our next survey, so we’re anxious to look at those. I can only encourage and endorse most highly the Best Christian Workplaces Institute survey. It’s a very real tool to help a leader change a culture in an organization.

**Al:** It’s been a great pleasure for us to serve you and The Gideons International, Craig. Thanks. To our listeners, I want to thank you for listening to the Flourishing Culture Podcast. Join us again next week for another one-on-one interview with a respected Christian leader. Until then, let’s work together so Christian organizations everywhere keep setting the standard as the best, most effective places to work in the world. This is Al Lopus reminding you that your leadership is a gift, a gift to live out today and every day. I’ll see you soon on the Flourishing Culture Podcast.

**Male:** For a free transcript of today’s podcast, visit blog.bcwinstitute.org. Your feedback is very important. Leave a comment on our blog post or reach out on social media (@BCWInstitute). Also please click over to iTunes and simply rate the Flourishing Culture Podcast. Your help lets us reach more people with the same content you’ve enjoyed today. While you’re there, be sure to click “Subscribe” to get a fresh episode delivered to you each Monday morning.

The Flourishing Culture Podcast with Al Lopus is a presentation of BCWI, the Best Christian Workplaces Institute, dedicated to helping Christian organizations set the standard as the best, most effective places to work in the world.