



Joanna Meyer:

You are listening to the Faith and Work Podcast where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor, and society through our daily work.

Hi, and welcome to the Faith and Work Podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, Denver Institute's Director of Public Engagement and the founder of Women, Work, & Calling. Today, I'm flying solo. We're going to talk a little bit about what it looks like to have a religious presence in corporate life in America. For so long, the secular office has been viewed as a place that's neutral, where there's a separating out of religion.

Maybe that's partly a carryover from the idea of church said the separation of church and state. Partly as a way to keep the peace and avoid difficult conversations in workplace settings. Growing numbers of corporations are inviting employees to express their religious identity at work through faith centric employee research groups, or they're affectionately known as ERGs.

There's a recent article in the New York Times that showed the effort to create a sense of belonging in the worst place that has grown since George Floyd's murder in 2020. Employees are now encouraged to bring their authentic or whole selves to work, which is increased support for identity race-based groups around gender, race, ethnicity. You may have heard those referred to as DEI. Increasingly, faith is part of this effort.

I'm excited to be able to talk to Craig Carter today who has been influential in the ERG movement nationally and globally in his leadership at ERG. We'll also be talking about the REDI Report, which is a national and global survey for religious equity, diversity and inclusion, and the findings of their recent report. It's a fascinating conversation. If you've ever wondered the role that faith can play in the workplace, you do not want to miss this episode.

To help us make sense of this shift, we're joined by Craig Carter, one of the early leaders in the rise of Christian ERGs through his role at Intel. A little bit more about Craig, he worked in financial systems and analytics at Intel for 25 years where he played an instrumental role in establishing faith-based employee resource groups within



the corporation. He's been a tireless advocate for the belief that all companies should encourage authenticity at work, which includes faith.

During his time leading Intel's faith-based ERGs, the effort grew to include 4,000 employees in 13 countries, which is just amazing. He also was part of launching an interfaith ERG, which brought together employees from seven different faith traditions. During his time of leadership, the company was awarded the number one ranking for global religious inclusion in the workplace from the United Nations, which is just amazing.

At the end of 2022, Craig transitioned out of his role at Intel, but still remains active in the faith-based ERG conversation and some global evangelization projects. Welcome Craig.

Craig Carter:

It's wonderful to be here, Joanna.

Joanna Meyer:

It's so fun to get to learn with you today. Before we start talking about all things ERG, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Craig Carter:

Sure. I live in Phoenix, Arizona. Came down here for graduate school after living in Seattle. Graduated from Thunderbird International School of Management. It's basically highly on international management. I thought I'd be living in Singapore or in Asia for the rest of my career. God had me get a job at Intel, which is large site here in Phoenix, and I've been there for the last 25 years.

Married with two boys, we're almost empty nesters one's 20 and one is 17. My wife's from Brazil, actually. I've lived down in Brazil for about a year and I speak fluent Portuguese, which doesn't help me a lot in Phoenix, but it's a lot of fun.



Joanna Meyer:

That's really cool. You did get your international exposure, but through marriage.

Craig Carter:

I definitely did, and my wife said she does not want to move to Singapore or other places. She's already in a different country, so that settled that one.

Joanna Meyer:

In your years leading in Intel, you've been exposed to ERGs and all their shapes and sizes, but our listeners may not be as familiar with them. How would you describe both the purpose and the function of employee resource groups?

Craig Carter:

Thank you for asking me that question. There's either people that know a lot about this or they've never heard of this before. An ERG is common terminology, other companies might use different terms. It's an employee resource group. Think of it as a club at a large corporation or a smaller company. Every large company with maybe one or two exceptions has a women's group or an LGBTQ group or here in the US maybe it's a Black group or a Latino group.

About 25% of the large companies out there have faith-based groups. Faith is defined as obviously Christianity or maybe Islam or Baha'i Faith, but also even according to the US government that includes atheism. It is classified as a faith system. If anyone ever tells you that, "Well, that's really not a faith system, well the US government defines it as a faith system, so let's just keep it there. My atheist friends also would believe and agree with that statement.



Joanna Meyer:

It's been really wild for friends that have been in corporations that have ERGs, they say, "You're going to have large numbers of diversity." You're going to have groups that really are anti-religious groups right next to the Christian group. It's been fascinating to see. On a day-to-day basis, what does an ERG actually do?

Craig Carter:

Great point. I'll talk about the Christian ERG because I was blessed to be part of that and then got to lead that for a number of years. It depends on the site and who's involved with it. With the Christian Employee Resource Group, they'll often be prayer groups that meet on specific topics, but when I say prayer groups, that could be everything from a Catholic group praying the rosary, to an intercessory prayer group, or a prayer for healing or praying right now for what's going on in the Middle East.

In other countries, it might be as exciting as in Costa Rica, the Christian group would throw a daddy-daughter dance at Intel Corporation. Can you imagine? Hosted by the Christian group. I mean it's like wow. In Mexico, Guadalajara, they adopted an orphanage for over a decade. They provide tons of things for a local orphanage. Then, there's also guest speakers are brought in. I'm speaking about the Amazon Employee Resource Group.

They brought in Os Guinness to speak about purpose and God's calling. They invited Exxon and General Electric and to join. Bring in special speakers and things like that too.

Joanna Meyer:

That's really wild. I was surprised in learning about ERGs that there actually are some comprehensive surveys that are going on. One of which recently came out, it's been a four-year project, is The REDI Index Report stands for Religious Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Here are some stats that our listeners might not be aware of, but general observation of the Fortune 500 reveals that 219 of those 500 companies mention, refer to or illustrate religion on their main diversity landing page, which has been a growth of 40% since 2022.



There's a growing interest in creating a space for faith to be existing at the office. It's pretty amazing. Intel has been one of the companies that's led in that. Other corporations that are noted for their support for religious diversity include Google, Intuit, Target, Ford, Tyson Foods, AIG, Dell, PayPal, Salesforce. I mean, a number of leading companies whose products we use every day really have made a statement by supporting the religious lives of their employees. It's pretty amazing.

Craig Carter:

Absolutely. What a lot of people don't realize, and again, apologies in advance, one of my jobs as a corporate finance controller putting in a huge database, and so I love data and analytics is that 85% of the US population says that faith is important to them, 85%. That includes 5% that we classify themselves as atheists and then 80% that are religious, about 70% of that would be Christian.

That's higher than the number of, I mean it's a percentage, the number of ladies in the US or veterans or all these other groups. Faith is the number one thing that people often will care about. For companies embracing faith at work, it helps not only their bottom line, but it also helps the employees just really feel more attached to the company. We've been able to see that over and over again.

Joanna Meyer:

Here's a question I have. Is it legal for companies to allow religious groups in the workplace? Tell me a little bit more about that.

Craig Carter:

Absolutely. Boy, you guys can contact me and I can connect you with a bunch of lawyers, that's all they do. At some of these large companies like co-consolidated they actually do different events like t-Factor that help people realize it's absolutely legal here in the US. We actually listened to two different litigation attorneys. This is the head of the litigation department for the EEOC.



That's the part of the federal government sues companies when they are discriminatory. These two ladies, one was under Trump, one was under Biden, so obviously different administrations, they said the exact same thing. The companies that are smartest actively embrace faith in the workplace actively, not passively. They want employees and encourage employees to bring their full faith to work. It's legal, that's for sure.

Joanna Meyer:

That's so encouraging to hear and I think it's a challenge because often as Christians we think of some of the emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Depending on where you may fall on the political spectrum, people have varying degrees of comfort or discomfort with that idea. It's fascinating to think that part of this conversation around diversity, inclusion and belonging also carves a place out for religious expression in the workplace, which continues to fascinate me.

Are there any things that employees would need to be considering as they think about starting an ERG or approaching leadership for how does this actually happen if you're in a company that doesn't have one?

Craig Carter:

That's excellent. Actually, there was a group out of Texas that actually put together a whole PowerPoint deck and a whole booklet on how to start an ERG, what are the best ways to do this. Your listeners could basically give them the link to that, that's really wonderful. Just some high level summaries is get a group of people together that share your belief, so fellow Christians, followers of Jesus and say, "Hey, we'd like to do this." Guess what, just start a meeting.

The first thing is to start meeting, whether it be a prayer group, starting a book of the Bible, watching videos. Start to meet and then reach out to HR, don't be scared. I mean, reach out to HR. For years I would be like, "HR, great." No, reach out to them. HR's task in a corporation is to protect the company, but also to help the employees perform their best for the profitability of that organization.



So reach out to HR and say, "Hey, we'd like to formally create a club or ERG, whatever you call it in your corporation that's faith-based and it's Christian." As we do this for Christians, this is key for Muslims or atheists or Baha'i or you name it, Sikhs, this door should be open for them also." One, you're going to see the eyes of the HR person get really big and shocked. It's like, "Wait, you're a Christian and you think Muslims should have?"

Yes, because we care as Christians about people. We might not agree, but we absolutely care, deeply love everyone on this planet. As you open the door for the Christian group, absolutely if there's a Muslim group that wants to get formed or an atheist group, open the door for them. I've seen that is the best way. Again, you're coming in because you care for your fellow employees.

Joanna Meyer:

That is so fascinating. One thing I want to hold onto that thought about the interfaith conversation because there's more to be explored there, but one thing I've also heard is the importance of thoughtfully, carefully finding executive or higher level sponsorship. That may mean finding out the top level Christian you can find in your organization and just beginning to build a relationship with them. Have you seen that to be an important step for a lot of people?

Craig Carter:

It is, it's an important step, but it's not a critical step. If you would ask me this question, question 10 years ago, I'd say absolutely critical. You've got the most senior Christian in your company to be your sponsor. You don't need that.

Joanna Meyer:

Wow.



Craig Carter:

The way that diversity and inclusion is gone, companies do not want to be considered not inclusive and not diverse by highlighting to them. The facts are that over 80% of Americans care about this. There's hundreds of large companies that are already doing this. Some companies like American Express and well not American Express, American Airlines has been doing it since the late '90s until the mid-'90s.

Deloitte's had one I just heard for over 40 years based in England. The US group is only about 10 years old. These are huge companies. No company wants to be the last one to be diverse. I mean, think 1960s, do we really want to be the last company? No, you want to be one of the first ones. Again, approach them, but you don't need an executive to senior, senior executive sponsors.

Joanna Meyer:

I wanted to just go back for a second to the REDI Index Report and just highlight what are some of the qualities that they list. They have 10 attributes that companies get evaluated on. They're simple things as religion is featured on the company's main diversity page, the company will sponsor ERGs. Religion's clearly addressed in diversity training.

They're attentive to how religion affects stakeholders. They'll do employee matching donations to religious charities through their employees. They're considerate of the religious needs of employees. So it's really fascinating. I mean, it's very robust and well-rounded what they're looking for in companies that support religion.

Craig Carter:

Correct.



Joanna Meyer:

I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit more about what it looks like to be in an interfaith context, because after starting a Christian ERG, you moved beyond that and you helped create this interfaith group. What did that involve?

Craig Carter:

That's another great question, and it was not my choice to be frank. It was in 2019, I had just taken on the leadership of the global Christian group. We were just starting to pray at that point to expand beyond the three countries where the Christian group had been for 25 years. Quick note on that, it's at 18 countries as of now. It just create foresights in China, Vietnam, Egypt.

You just go, "Wow. God, when you pray things work." I forgot to mention that prayer is the foundation of everything. The interfaith or cross faith group kicked off in the fall of 2019 when I was literally sitting at my desk doing emails. I heard this whisper from God, and He is like, "Craig, start this interfaith group or cross faith group." I, like any good, Christian said no, which that's not a good choice to say no to God.

He was on my case on a Wednesday then a Thursday and a Friday, and I said no all those days. Then, it was on a Saturday doing chores in the backyard when God literally in the gruff parent mad at a child tone I could ever imagine, said, "Craig, I've given you a clear and direct order, your choice." Truly all those verses in the Bible that talk about the fear of the Lord, I was terrified. I've never felt that much terror.

I immediately set up lunch with one of the faith leaders, absolutely a diverging viewpoint atheist leader on Monday because I was a bit prideful still, and I was like, "Well, what if this isn't going to work?" I just asked him, "Tell me your faith journey." He launched into his faith journey and it was challenging as you can imagine, and where he ended up today. Then he asked me at the end, "Well, Craig, tell me your faith journey."

I got to share about my faith journey. Then it's like, "Okay, that worked." Then it was onto the Pakistani Muslims, then the Iranian Muslims, then the Baha'i faith. Then the Hindus obviously from India, exactly the same thing.



It's the most wonderful question, "Tell me your faith journey." Then they ask you about yours and the relationship and the bonding from that is immense.

That kicked off in 2019 and in 2020 the United Nations award happened and then the REDI Index number one in the world that year. Then number two in the world the next year, this year's back to number one, but it was the cross faith group and God knew what he was doing. That's what got me connected to the Christian leaders then at General Electric and Amazon and Bosch and Ford and Nissan. God knew what he was doing.

Joanna Meyer:

It was amazing. As you and I were getting to know each other to decide if you'd be the right fit for this conversation on the podcast, you pointed to a board that was behind you and he said, "These are the names of people who are leading faith movements in the largest corporations in the world," and that you are in relationship with each other.

You're working together, and it was just so moving. I'm getting goosebumps just talking about it to think about all the places that Christ is going and the opportunities that exist for Christians to live vibrantly in the workplace. Thank you for pioneering this conversation.

Craig Carter:

Oh, it's wonderful. You think about especially large multinationals, let's take ExxonMobil oil. Well, that's everywhere and think of some of the countries where they have sites or where they pump oil. These are very closed nations for Christianity, there are Christians there. China, I mean all these companies have locations in China usually. They're Christians there, and it's just amazing how God's connecting his children.

Joanna Meyer:

What did it cost you? I would say either cost you or how did it stretch you personally to be sitting in those interfaith conversations because that's very different than just being among Christians, creating a safe environment for yourself.



Craig Carter:

That's why I push back so hard because I've heard interfaith prayers or cross faith prayers, and frankly they discussed me and they discussed Muslims and Hindus and atheists. They discussed everyone, when you're praying to everything, you satisfy no one, which I learned. That's a key thing is you do not ask people to compromise. If you're a Muslim, you pray as that you would in you're mosque.

As a Christian, I'm going to pray in the name of Jesus about things and you want the Jew to pray. The Bible verse that God used to really hit me, I was memorizing at that point, Galatians chapter five, and that's where the fruits of the spirit is, and I thought it was for the fruits of the spirit. Well, it wasn't for the fruits of the spirit. It really was a verse in it was Galatians 5:6, and this is Paul talking to basically men that were saying, Hey, you aren't going to be a real Christian unless you get circumcised.

Paul was getting really mad at them and he made this statement, the only thing that matters is your faith expressed through love, and that's when God really hit me is seeing Craig, the only thing that matters is your faith and love people. Love people have absolutely different worldviews and then God brought to mind my 28 years of marriage, do my wife and I agree on everything? The answer to that is of course, no.

We absolutely love each other, the goal is to love and then God's job and he will come through with everything else. I can tell you story after story of being asked to pray by our atheist leader as she's outside of Moscow with her mother dying of cancer, to pray for my mom. She's the atheist leader, and I pray for her mom. I start weeping, she starts weeping.

What happens to our relationship? What doors get open from that? The Iranian Muslims saying, "Can you pray for my marriage?" Yes, I will pray for your marriage and just the doors that are open as we love the way Jesus has commanded us, and the joy of doing that is the best. Ever since I took on that group in 2019, did I get another promotion? No, I did not. In God's kingdom and the joy of living in abundance of life, I got the largest promotion of my entire 25 year career. Basically be able to serve the Christian group and then serve people that have different worldviews and to be the light of Christ to them.



Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Hi, I'm Jeff Hoffmeyer, vice president of Advancement here at Denver Institute for Faith and Work. I'd like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community. Whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25, \$50, or any amount, your generosity will support Denver Institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors and society through their daily work, including this podcast.

To say thank you as a monthly partner, you'll receive a welcome box. You'll have exclusive access to private digital content, personalized vocational coaching, and discounts for Denver Institute content and experiences. To become a monthly partner, simply visit denverinstitute.org/give or see the show notes in today's episode. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Joanna Meyer:

As you're talking, I sense a real difference in tone from some interactions I've had with folks involved with ERGs. Some folks who lead them can have a self-protective policy or posture where the attitude is the workplace is hostile towards Christians. We need to create a community that can be safe where we have a handful of us that are true believers together.

I don't sense that tone as you talk about this. Keep building on that, how did your thoughts on the posture you'd adopt in the middle of a secular company? How was that posture formed?

Craig Carter:

Great quote from Martin Luther King Jr. Again, about seven years ago, I love Martin Luther King Jr. And that's a great way to get a sermon in any workforce on Martin Luther King Day and say, "I want to read a word for word speech by Martin Luther King Jr." No HR group is ever going to say no to that. He has a great quote in there, which really comes from Jesus, "The most powerful force in the world is love and is the most enduring."

As we choose to love people, not lash out, not send the nasty email. If you're hurting me, the Christian group, we're getting less funding than the women's group or this or that. Nope, you love, you choose to love, you



choose to love, and then you change things because it's God that's using that love to change things. As a Christian, or are we a minority in this world? Absolutely. The Bible tells us that and we all can sense that.

We just lean into that because the light of Christ, the world needs it. As you love people, they can sense that as you're asking the personal questions of, "Tell me your faith journey. No really, how are you doing? How was your weekend? Don't tell me you just watch the game. No, how's your marriage going?" Things like that, it gets to the deep end of the pool relationally. Then basically all you need to do is plant the gods seed. It's like, "Can I pray for you?"

I heard this speech, that's a sermon to a Christian right on a given topic, and you can relate that to them. Well, I learned that you need to listen to your wife more and it helps marriage. Wow, tell me more and things like that. No, we got to lean into our faith.

Joanna Meyer:

I'm wondering if you could tell me some stories. I think in your years in this role, you probably have seen a lot of human experience. I'm wondering how you've seen Christians involved with an ERG serve the operational interests of a company.

Craig Carter:

Absolutely. This is Christian, but also I'll pull in the whole multi-faith or cross faith or interfaith group. Intel has a very large manufacturing side in Israel, and I'm not talking about what currently is going on, but in the past, periodically there's different conflicts there. Let's just put it that way. There was one of these conflicts going on, and then Intel was trying to figure out how in the world do we help our employees keep working with not being really distracted by this?

It was the Christian group teaming up with the Muslim group and the Baha'i group. A lot of people don't realize this, the Baha'i Faith is an important part of Northern Israel to really work with the human resources



department to put out a statement to the different groups and the entire corporation about what's going on and how to stay focused. That's working hand in hand with HR on a very specific case.

Coming from the finance perspective, I always like to talk about the four Rs. The four Rs that benefit a corporation to have a faith-based employee resource group. The first R is it's higher recruiting. That is huge for companies. There are some employees I know that absolutely will not take a job if they feel like they can't bring their faith to work. Okay, just maybe 10%, 20%, 30% of the potential workforce now you won't get applying for your jobs, that's a problem. You want better recruiting.

You want better retention. If an employee's making a hundred thousand dollars a year and they leave, the rule of thumb is that costs \$100,000 to \$200,000 to hire an equivalent person. Ouch, that's right off the bottom line. That's right out of your profitability as a corporation. You want higher retention. There are employees story on that. There's an employee over in Israel, actually we thought he was a Christian employee, but it turned out he was Druze.

Druze is a very small group, maybe a million worldwide in northern Israel, Lebanon, Syria, highly persecuted 3,000-year-old religion and getting to know him more. Then that next year, he got two job offers, more money, more pay, multinationals, great jobs. He turned them both down because they don't have any faith-based groups. I was like, "We will never have a Druze group that's really small."

He's like, "Don't care, Muslim group, Christian group, atheist group. I know I'm accepted 100% for who I am and my religious beliefs. I want to work at Intel. I'll never leave." It's amazing. We have an employee in Costa Rica. He's gotten job offers for two times the pay, two times the pay. Nope. All my friends are at the Christian group at Intel. I don't want to leave and on and on. Again, that's retention, that's the second R.

Then the third one, again, coming from finance, it's called profitability or I'll call it another R, returns. It's your returns. You want teams that are deeply engaged with each other and there is no better way, period, that the Harvard Business Review statement is when the senior most leader on that given team will personally share who they really are, not if people agree or not, no one cares.



They'll be authentic at work and there's no better way to do that than sharing their personal faith with others. There's plant managers that we have huge sites that they lead on his intro slide, Jim's his name, he would share about, "I like this, I like this. He has a cross up there and say, and I'm a Christian. My faith is absolutely important to me. I bring it to work every single day of my life. If you have a faith system or worldview, I expect you to do the same."

I mean, it's that blunt. Then he moves on to the next topic. That's a factory manager, and so it absolutely helps companies.

Joanna Meyer:

So cool. Have you ever had moments where you're like, "That was a misstep?" I'm wondering if you could tell us one, a word of caution of like, "Hey, here's something you need to be aware of. If you're thinking about bringing your faith to work."

Craig Carter:

A word of caution. Thankfully, I didn't go this way because I think, but some people can, is prior to praying for someone, always ask for permission, always ask for permission. The amazing thing is I've never heard anyone that includes my Hindu engineer, friends, Baha'i corporate lawyers ever say no to that. When you in sincerity want to bless them with praying for their job, their marriage, their child that just died, that's a real story, no one's going to say no, but always ask for permission.

Again, it comes down to authenticity. All of us have this fakeometer, we can see fake, but if they smell the real thing that you sincerely care about them as a person, the relationship goes deep very quickly. I met with an attorney 30, 40 years of experience. Two minutes into the conversation after I shared a brief intro, it's like, "Can you please tell me your faith background, whether that be atheist, Baha'i, Sikh, or Christian? Don't care. I would love to hear about your faith journey."



Our one hour conversation went two and a half hours. I mean, instantly you go into the deep end of the pool into the conversation, was able to pray with her. There are things going on and just a wonderful conversation. Asking people about their faith and actively bringing that into the conversation blesses people in amazing ways.

Joanna Meyer:

What stands out to me is there's a gracious curiosity there. It's not trying to push something on anyone. It's that sense of open authenticity and realizing that someone may have a different perspective and yet you can create a place to listen and engage, and that creates collegial respect.

Craig Carter:

Very much. I mean, think about a marriage or even or anything like that, "Honey, I'm going to make you do that." That never goes well, ever. None of us want to be pushed or prodded to do something or believe something. That's why that Bible verse in Galatians 5:6 just really hits me. It's all about love our faith through love. Again, if I may, you just can't be the nicest person though.

I mean, in my mind there's a four-step process again until everything has to be a process after you've worked Intel, that long. Step one is you have to have a strong personal relationship with God on a daily basis. Every single day, you've got to be with God's word. You've got to be praying. You've got to be meditating on what He's trying to tell you, direct you, that is step one. Step two is you do need to be nice.

On Monday ask, "How was your weekend?" I've had some engineers, let's pick on engineers a little bit. It's like, "Why would I ask that? Oh, because you want a relationship. Just do it, ask how was the weekend on Monday? Can I have a cup of coffee? Step two is you've got to be nice. Step three is though you've got to plant the seed of God. I was reading this book to a Christian that's called the Bible.

This thing hit me where I'm struggling with the relationship I have, or I heard this speech sermon, but in a very non-Christian way. Talk about what you're learning or what you're struggling with. I want better



communication. I want a better marriage. Communication is a big part of that. I want to raise my children. Wow, listening to a daughter is really important.

Then the fourth step is do nothing after you sow that seed of God or a sermon or something, just wait, but keep your eyes open because almost instantly a door's going to be open and you just walk through it story after story. I mean, as I was leaving Intel as a Hindu buddy and he's on a visa here in the US, which means if you lose your job, you have 30 days to find a new job or you and your family and your child who has never seen India will be deported.

It's serious and he was stressed out. He's in the middle of a Hindu fast, the dot on the forehead and everything, "Can I pray for you?" He's like, "If you could please." We prayed together and at the end of that conversation he's like, "Can you be like a father figure to me as I leave Intel? Can we stay in contact forever the rest of my life?" As you show love doors will be opened to you. That'll just be amazing. It'll bless you and them.

Joanna Meyer:

I think that you have found this beautiful middle spot between Christianese or cheesiness or unwelcome pressure and the other end of the spectrum, which might be militancy. I remember earlier in my career working as a contractor at a government agency and one of the employees that was there was very militant about his faith in a way that was very almost scary to the other employees.

It was fascinating. Before they knew I was a Christian, I would hear their conversations about their interactions with this person because of the way they carried themselves and the harshness that they brought to the light Christian life. It hurts me to even use those words that a Christian would be that way. Yet he had that presence in the office and it was not a positive thing.

You found that beautiful middle place where there's a gracious openness. You're not hiding it, but you're not pushing too hard all the time. You're just allowing Holy Spirit [inaudible 00:31:29]



Craig Carter:

You're right. In 10, 20 years ago, I was in a different place. God does mature you over time. Again, the results speak for themselves to be frank. There's more happening and more doors that have been opened for me now than there ever were 10 or 20 years ago when I was scared of HR, I was scared to tell people I went to church or scared, be courageous. Basically, as long as you do it with love, there is no human on the planet that wants to be not loved a little more.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah, that's so true. Okay, a couple of more questions for you before we wrap up. One is, what wisdom would you have for someone that is in a senior position of leadership? Maybe there's a small business owner that loves this idea of creating a faith welcome space or someone who's a senior executive in the corporate sector that has the ability to begin engaging this.

What wisdom would you have for them if they're wanting to begin to start taking steps towards creating that kind of atmosphere at their company?

Craig Carter:

Excellent. Well, they can reach out to me or a lot of these other groups like yourself, Joanna, and others that can get them connected to others that have maybe done this before or they could do this holding someone's hand or linking arms with them. The first step is often just presented I've seen it as being faith, not Christian, it's faith. We want all of our employees to be authentic at work.

Faith is huge. I mean, I have the numbers and stats, but anyone can research it easily on research and things. I mean, religion's huge in America and globally even higher is that we want to open the doors, make sure that people are being invited to work to bring their full selves. Obviously in the US, Christianity's huge. Let's kick off a Christian group and then you can look up the stats.



I'd have to look, but I don't know what the second largest is offhand, but let's kick off maybe the top three and maybe it's Christian, Jew, Muslim to begin with. Then if others want to do it, if they have a certain number. Again, you don't want the one-off religious faith of one person. Nope, that doesn't count. I mean, you have like 10 people or 20 people or maybe 50 if it's a large company then found these groups.

As you do it though some companies are like, "Well, we're just going to have an interfaith group." There's no such thing as an interfaith religion. The Muslims want to practice Islam. The Christians want to pray as a Christian, so you've got to allow them to practice their religious beliefs as they want to and carve out those safe spots for them. Then, I have different websites, or you do too is tons of companies have been doing this for decades.

Even at Intel 25 plus years, how many incidents from having faith-based groups? There's 4,000 Christians, a thousand of Muslims, Baha'i, other groups, so that's 5,000 for a few decades, zero cases, zero problems. These groups really, they self-police because in any group it's like 1 in 50 people are just nuts. They're militant or crazy. I mean, that's just a rule of thumb. I use 1 in 50 are crazy.

The group self-police. We've had people in the Christian group that we've had to say, "Pipe it down. The emails you're sending are not appropriate." The Muslim group's done that. The Hindu group's done that, every group, but they're self-policing because you don't want the bad egg to spoil it for all of you.

Joanna Meyer:

That's so fascinating. We will link in our show notes today to a number of resources. Ones that Craig will provide for me after our interview. We'll also link to the REDI Index so you can see some of the good work that's happening and as well as some Denver Institute resources. I would love to wrap up by giving you a chance to have the final word, Craig. I'm wondering how you would encourage or exhort our listeners to move forward in living their faith in a corporate context.



Craig Carter:

Absolutely. Two statements and a four-step process, which I'll repeat these two words really resonate with me, courageous and third, courage is action in spite of fear. Just take a little bit of action in showing your faith at work. Then third, that's very biblical, God first, others second, I'm third. That's code for servant leadership, right? You treat others better than yourself and you love them more.

As you do that, the goal is to reflect God's love at work. If they see Joanna, that's nice. If they see the love and the life and the joy of Jesus, wow, that opens doors. All we're supposed to do is reflect God's love at work. Then the four step process just repeating that is you've got to have a strong personal relationship with God on a daily basis. Step two is be nice. Ask people how they're doing. Be the nice person in the office.

Step three is you've got to plant that seed of God somewhere without saying it. Some interesting thing or even something you're struggling with, maybe it's an addiction and your faith is helping me, and this is how. That's step three. Then step four is wait and keep your eyes open and then God's going to open up some amazing doors, and then you just walk through it with that courage and realizing you're in third place.

Joanna Meyer:

Thanks for modeling this for us, Craig. Thanks for your years of leadership and demonstrating that faith has a vibrant place in business life. It's such a gift to all of us.

Craig Carter:

Joanna, an absolute joy to talk with you today. May God bless you in everything that you're doing. It starts in the workforce. It's where we've spent 55% of our waking hours, and that's where God really wants to shine. Thanks for what you're doing.



Joanna Meyer:

What a fun conversation with Craig Carter. In response to some of the things that he mentioned in today's show notes, we'll be providing a link to courageousthird.org, which is a website that is a collection point for information about ERGs. We'll also link to the REDI Report, which is the Religious Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Report, and we'll link to two courses in Denver Institute's Faith and Work Classroom.

One is on Faithful Public Engagement and the other is The Just Leader: Thriving in a Fractured World, both of which can be resources to help you think about what it looks like to have a faithful public presence. Thanks for joining us today.

If you've enjoyed this episode of the Faith and Work Podcast, please subscribe, leave a review, or share it with a friend. Your support is critical to helping other listeners discover this vital resource. The Faith and Work Podcast is produced by Denver Institute for Faith and Work, where we believe that work is a way to love God and serve our neighbors. To learn more or to make a financial contribution, visit denverinstitute.org.