Stewards of The Christophers

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"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid."
(Matthew 5:14)

Becoming a Christopher involves answering the call to serve as a beacon of light to a world in need. But how can you accomplish that? Well, the word "Christopher" literally means "Christ-bearer." The philosophy behind the organization, therfore, is that each of us has the power and responsibility to be a Christopher, to carry Christ's light and truth into the world at large. That light comes from the Holy Spirit, who works through us in all our frailty to accomplish amazing things.

Founded in 1945 by Father James Keller, M.M., The Christophers are grounded in the simple but powerful idea that we can create an ongoing chain reaction of goodness from one person to another through the daily interactions in our lives and careers. To be a Christopher is to recognize that God calls each of us to a unique purpose in life, and it is up to us to seek out that purpose, wherever it may lead. Of special interest to Father Keller were professional fields in which the few could influence the many: government, education, entertainment/media and public service, for instance. In today's more interconnected world, our capacity to influence others has grown even more, increasing our responsibility to live out Gospel-based values, values that we often share with people of other faiths.

The function of The Christophers as a not-for-profit Catholic organization is to carry on Father Keller's work by providing the spark by which candles around our nation and throughout the world can be lit so the beautiful chain reaction of light that has touched countless lives can continue. As our motto states, "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness," and this simple philosophy transforms lives and wins hearts every day..

Built on Hope

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock." (Matthew 7:24)

In 1952, with more requests for him to speak around the country than he could possibly fulfill, Father Keller produced the documentary *You Can Change the World*, in

order to reach the many people interested in hearing his Gospel-based message. Joining him in this beautiful film were a number of Hollywood legends who came together to address the importance of that moment in history and call people to pursue vocations that made lasting contributions to the common good.

Bing Crosby sang a song. Bob Hope, Jack Benny and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson hammed it up, and William Holden, Loretta Young, Ann Blyth, Paul Douglas, and Irene Dunne lent gravity to the conversation with their regal movie star presence and intelligent discourse. It was a time when our nation was pulling together with renewed confidence in our founding principles, and The Christophers played a vital role in reminding us all how much we could accomplish by maintaining a hopeful outlook on life.

In *You Can Change the World*, Father Keller recounts the story of a young African American man who got a job at a gas station while working his way through college. Some prejudice developed in the community, and a group of people even stopped buying gasoline at that station. It was a small town, and the owner of the station felt he had to let the man go in order to stay in business.

Narrating the story, Father Keller says, "Word got around and this housewife heard about it and she felt she should do something. She had caught this Christopher idea that she should reach out to the world, and here was a specific opportunity. So in a very nice way she walked down to the station and asked if there was anything she could do. And this man [the owner of the station] was so surprised, he said, 'You're the first one that's offered to do anything. Everybody's complaining. Nobody's doing anything.'

"She said, 'How many customers would you lose if you kept him?' He said, 'I don't know, about 20, maybe.' She said, 'If I go out and get you 20 new customers, will you keep him?' He said, 'I certainly will.' Well, she went out and got him 25 new customers."

Father Keller concludes, "One of the big magazines picked up the story and carried it to at least fifteen million readers. I dare say that maybe a million people have done things through her example. She wanted to reach the world. Well, she did reach the world."

And by bringing such well-respected people together to celebrate this humble

housewife who was inspired by his message, Father Keller won the support of many others who participated in tipping the balance in favor of racial equality in our nation. This is the kind of chain reaction of light The Christophers have been setting in motion for decades, and our mission continues to this day.

A Living Tradition

"*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" (Psalm 119:105)

Foremost among Father Keller's tools for reaching people was the written word; he personally wrote the first Christopher News Notes. Today, we publish News Notes 10 times a year, and they are beloved by many and vital to those on the front lines of some of life's toughest ministries. These write-ups tackle life's most complex problems in down-to-earth ways by going straight to the reader's heart with stories that show how "all things work together for good for those who love God." (Romans 8:28)

Our *Three Minutes a Day* books are published every year and provide daily readings that have the ability to change our entire outlook on life. Culled from a broad spectrum of sources, *Three Minutes a Day* stories highlight amazing interactions between people that remind us all how much good truly exists in the human heart. And our prayer cards feature deep meditations on spiritual topics that provide some much-needed clarity on how to live a good and fruitful life.

Our annual Christopher Awards (created in 1949) recognize the best the world has to offer in books, films and television programs, and are coveted by the most elite creators in their fields. Writers, directors, producers, authors and illustrators whose work "affirms the highest values of the human spirit" look forward to our awards ceremony every year.

Our awards outreach has also grown to include a poster contest for high school students and a video contest for college students. Both help to ignite a spark in young people to become confident communicators for the greater good. Additionally, graduates of our Christopher Leadership Course have left our classroom with a sense of newfound self-assurance, ready and determined to put their renewed faith in themselves into positive, productive action.

Our video, radio and podcast productions follow in the tradition begun by Father

Keller with his long-running and highly popular Christopher Closeup television show. Today, our radio programming—carried nationally on Sirius-XM's The Catholic Channel, the Relevant Radio network, and numerous other stations—continues to feature both famous and not-so-famous people in conversations that explore the values which guide them to utilize their talents to make the world a better place.

For instance, in one particular Christopher Closeup interview, actor Jim Caviezel revealed what led him and his wife, Kerri, to adopt two children with disabilities. It all started when a friend who wasn't pro-life challenged Caviezel to prove the worth of people with disabilities. This led Jim and Kerri to venture to China, where they met a five-year-old boy named Bo who had been abandoned on a train as a baby and grew up in an orphanage.

The Caviezels were faced with the painful reality that, at the orphanage, children were told "that they had no mommy, that they were born out of the dirt." Bo had a brain tumor and Jim and Kerri adopted him and supported him through his brain surgery when they didn't even know if he would survive. After bringing Bo home and welcoming him into their family, they later adopted a five-year-old girl who also had a brain tumor.

Caviezel revealed that his actions did not convince his friend to become pro-life, but said, "We took the harder road… That is what faith is to me; it's action. It's the Samaritan. It's not the one who says he is; it's the one who does…. I'm saying this because I want to encourage other people. Yes, you do feel fear, you do feel scared, but you have no idea the blessings that you have coming to you if you just take a chance on faith.

Consider how many people were strengthened to value each and every human life thanks to the story Jim Caviezel shared with us. These are the kinds of stories The Christophers continually highlight as we build on the tradition begun by Father Keller and cultivated by all the wonderful people who live out our mission on a daily basis. As an organization, The Christophers thrive on the inspiration we take from this living tradition, and we are excited to witness the growth of a new generation committed to making a difference by utilizing their talents for the greater good of the world at large.

Call to Stewardship

"*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together,*

running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Luke 6:38

The Christophers have been blessed throughout our existence to have generous donors who make all we do possible, and we would like to extend an enthusiastic thank you to the stewards of The Christophers for your enduring support. Your light shines brightly to this day.

As an ecumenical organization, The Christophers' mission has always appealed to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. In the same year he produced *You Can Change the World*, Father Keller produced Faith, Hope and Hogan, a short film about golf legend Ben Hogan's comeback after a near-fatal car accident.

At one point, Hogan and Father Keller were joined by Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. Bing sang The Christophers' newly penned Light One Candle song, and Hope read the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi. Afterwards, Hope quipped, "This is the most religion I've had since I saw Going My Way."

It wasn't until a few years before his passing in 2003 that Hope actually converted to the Catholic faith. One can only speculate on the influence his lifelong friendship with Father Keller and support of The Christophers' mission had on his conversion. Regardless, Hope's change of heart and faith is a testament to The Christophers' ecumenical outreach that have rallied so many non-Catholics to our cause.

The Christophers' mission has always been to unite Americans around common principles, and our nation is in need of this unity now more than ever. New media platforms provide unparalleled opportunities to reach out to the world, and The Christophers are poised to expand our mission in new and exciting ways.

But we need your help. Please consider remembering us in your pledges and bequests with whatever generosity you can possibly afford. We rely on the contributions our most generous donors make on a monthly and yearly basis, and hope you will continue to give all you can in this regard. Please also consider our long-term giving plans, such as gifts of securities and retirement plan contributions. We would also be most grateful for a remembrance of us in your will as well.

It is our greatest hope and prayer to carry on Father Keller's timeless legacy of bringing light into the world, a light which will continue to shine brightly for many years and generations to come.

• Compassion • Love • Forgiveness • Leadership • Charity • Faith • Patience • Hope • Self-Discovery •

Lord, protect all Christophers - Christ-bearers - around the world
that they might serve You in all they do.
Guide them to lead abundant lives,
receiving the fruits You bestow upon them
in joy and gladness.
We ask that You always remember
their generosity towards those in need and grant
us the strength to join with them in
bringing hope into the world so that their light
shines brightly for all eternity.

DONATE!

Help Us Spread

The Christopher Message

• Compassion • Love • Forgiveness • Leadership • Charity • Faith • Patience • Hope • Self-Discovery •