

Cross-Current

WORKBOOK

Modules 1 | 2 | 3



GRADUATE
IMPACT

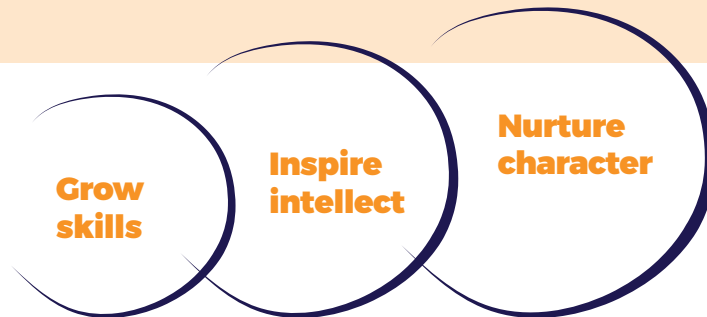
What is Cross-Current?

Cross-Current is a mentoring program for young Christian professionals embarking on their working life. The aim of the program is to enable graduates to view their workplace as a key context for whole-life Christian witness and equip them to become more effective 'ambassadors for Christ' at work and in society as a whole.

The aims of the program are to:

- 1 **Nurture Christ-like character** that authenticates individual witness in the workplace;
- 2 **Inspire intellectual engagement** with ethical dilemmas within different professions to create robust contemporary apologetics; and
- 3 **Develop skills** for deep personal bible study and intelligent application within an individual's work context.

Aims



The Cross-Current program comprises six modules, which are designed to be delivered over the course of six weekend meetings, spread over two or three years. The program is structured this way because:

1. It allows an opportunity to see real change in participants' lives over the course of the program;
2. It helps to build deeper and stronger relationships; and
3. It is a manageable commitment for participants without distracting them from other life priorities.

Unlike a one-off conference, Cross-Current aims for continuity and change. Continuity in relationships within the group will provide support and accountability, so that group members can set an agenda for real change in their lives as they learn to integrate their faith and working lives ever more closely.

The Cross-Current program has been developed and is administrated by Graduate Impact, which is a branch of IFES¹, working specifically to provide transitional support for recent graduates and young professionals as they move from university to work. A leader's guide has been developed to go alongside this workbook. Email admin@graduateimpact.org if you are interested in leading a Cross-Current group.

Cross-Current Distinctives

The Cross-Current program has four distinctives. Our overall aim is to nurture young Christian professionals to be:

- Authentic** - living signposts to Jesus;
- Contextual** - being a Christian at work;
- Consistent** - living in a way which is consistent with what we believe; and
- Theological** - biblically rooted in the character of God.

1. Authentic: Signposts to Jesus

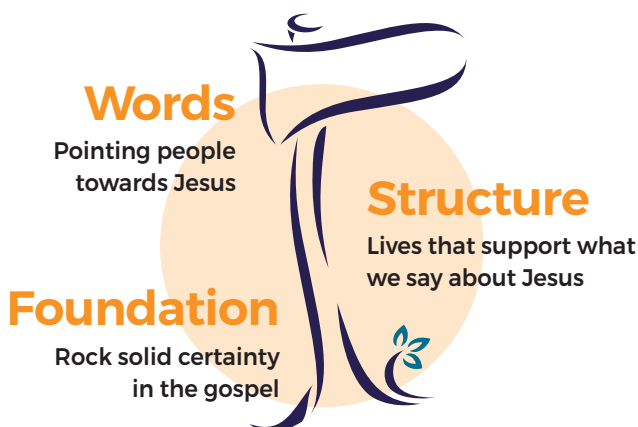
IFES Graduate Impact seeks to help young Christian professionals become more effective 'ambassadors for Christ' in their workplaces (a phrase Paul uses to describe himself in 2 Corinthians 5:20). Ambassadors are official envoys who represent their country in the place they've been posted to. In order to do their job well, they need to represent their own country well but also be aware of the culture they live in, not causing offence unnecessarily. The same principle can be applied to Christians in the workplace: we are called to be an authentic witness to Christ: to work to the best of our ability and to sensitively engage with the people and culture we live in.

At work, most of the people we spend our day with know very little about Jesus and his good news. To be effective ambassadors, we need to know how to gently and consistently show the difference Jesus makes to our lives. This will lead to opportunities to explain our faith.

Effective witness always combines:

1. **Words of hope:** sharing the hope we have in Jesus with those around us.
2. **Christ-like lives:** lives which support what we claim to be true about Jesus, and which cause non-believers to glorify God.
3. **Confidence in Christ:** the gospel is a secure foundation and our certainty of salvation, because of all that the Lord has done for us.

Cross-Current aims to help young professionals grow in their ability to live as signposts to Jesus by being authentic witnesses and living lives of integrity.



Cross-Current Distinctives

2. Contextual: Being a Christian at work

The transition into working life is often described as a *Developmental Crisis*², much like the move from primary to secondary education, or from secondary education to university. It is a time of turmoil: new faces, new places, new expectations and a new questioning of whatever people thought was true beforehand.

“Your workplace is your unique mission field.”

Often when graduates start work, they move city, move church and lose their immediate Christian support group. At work they may find themselves surrounded by people with beliefs that are different to their own. Graduates want to fit in and do their job well, but it can be hard to reconcile this new world-of-work with their trust in Jesus. To make it worse, many graduates don't know any other Christians in their workplace and so may feel completely alone.

This context, with all its pressures and uncertainties is the place where God has put young Christian professionals to make a difference, to be *salt and light*. No church minister can easily go into our workplaces, and most of our colleagues will not step into a church. But when we go to work we have the amazing privilege of being Jesus' representative - his ambassador - in that specific context at that specific time!

In Cross-Current we work from theology to practical application in each participant's own work context. In this way the Cross-Current group becomes a praying support group for each of its members wherever they work.

3. Consistent: The Worldview Tree

The idea of a “Worldview Tree” comes from the work of Ted Turnau in his book *Popologetics*³. The basic idea is that the way we behave and the things we say are influenced both by our worldview (the unshakeable beliefs about life and the universe) and by the culture in which we have grown up and in which we now live and work.

“What we say and do should be directly linked to what we claim to believe as Christians.”

Integrity is when the *fruit* of our lives - what we say and do - is consistent with the *root* of our lives - what we claim to believe. If you planted an apple seed in the ground and came back twenty years later, you would expect to find a beautiful apple tree in exactly that same spot. But if you found a banana tree there instead, you would know something had gone wrong!

It's the same for our lives. What we say and do should be directly linked to what we claim to believe as Christians. So if we claim that lying is wrong because of what the Bible teaches us on telling the truth, then we should never lie, whether at home or at work.

The problem, however, is that when we go to work, we often end up behaving and talking in the same way as those we work with. We conform to the culture in our workplace and assume that being counter-cultural will get us into trouble. The pressures we face, the work culture we are in and the reality of our own sinful nature may lead us to lie in negotiations; cheat on job applications; pay bribes to ‘facilitate’ administration; and chase the big bucks at any cost, even though we believe that these behaviours are wrong. We do it because the people we work with do exactly these things and Christians think they have to ‘stay in the game’.

But when we have an opportunity to tell our colleagues about our hope in Jesus, nobody will take us seriously because our lives have nothing distinct about them to support our claims that Jesus is Lord, or that the gospel is true and relevant.

Cross-Current aims to help the emerging generation of young Christian adults learn to live in a way which is more consistent with their beliefs, no matter where they work or what they do, so that when they are asked why they live this way they can clearly speak about the impact of God's good news on their lives. To achieve this, our program includes sessions on:

1. The character of God, and how this fits into our Christian worldview. The character of God is unshakeable, constant and true in every culture and in every circumstance.
2. Reflecting on what Christian character looks like in different cultures and circumstances. Ultimately, it is our character that will determine how we live and speak when we are surrounded by people marching to a different drumbeat.
3. Examining our individual workplace cultures to understand where these may be in contradiction to what we believe is right as Christians.
4. Developing biblical wisdom to help us practically in the way we live and speak amongst our colleagues.

4. Theological: Biblically rooted in the character of God

Cross-Current begins with God. We want to know our God better and to see his character as part of our worldview: he is good, generous, just, loving and so much more. If we created a series of rules on good Christian living, they might work in one context but not another. But if we focus on the character of God, we learn from his character about how to live in different circumstances. Our prayer is that his Holy Spirit would open the eyes of our hearts and minds to know him better. As we get to know him better, he will begin to transform our values, vision and virtues to be more like his.

“Every Cross-Current module is linked to the nature of God as he reveals himself in the Bible.”

Every Cross-Current module is linked to the nature of God as he reveals himself in the Bible, and every module grows from this foundation:

The Creator God who enjoys working and gives work to his beloved humans to let them find meaning, dignity and responsibility within his Creation.

The Personal God whose love within the Trinity precedes creation and flavours everything that he makes. He made us in his image and likeness and put in our hearts a desire to love and be loved.

The Righteous God who expresses his love by always doing that which is morally best for another - both within the Trinity and in his relationship with us. By his grace, the Father codes his righteousness into our hearts as the Spirit causes us to be transformed evermore into the likeness of Jesus.

The Generous God who not only creates but actually owns all things - the earth and everything in it. He is a loving Father who gives good things to his children and invites them to join in his joy of blessing others through sacrificial generosity.

The Servant God who gives us an example of servant leadership and sacrificial love. As he invites us into this work in this world, he wants us to follow his example.

The Awesome Father who calls us to build his kingdom on earth with him. How can we be part of his work on this earth?

3

Your Cross-Current journey

Six modules

Over the course of six Cross-Current meetings we will look at one specific character virtue from the Bible, reflecting on how we see this in the character of our God, and asking what difference it makes to the way that we live and work seven days a week.



The aim of Cross-Current is to nurture Christian character in our lives so that we can be a witness to Christ, specifically in our workplaces. The material is covered in six modules, each exploring a different element of Christ-like character. As you start off on this journey of trust, support, accountability and change, we pray that this will give you, by the Lord's grace, strong foundations for your entire working life.

1. Serving: redeeming work

Work is God's plan and pleasure long before it becomes something we do. He makes us in his image and likeness to be creative, to take responsibility in the world, and to provide for others. How do we bring this perspective on work into our Monday-Friday routine?

"Whatever you do work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord not for human masters...It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Colossians 3:23-24

2. Love: redeeming work relationships

The aim of salvation is for us to be reconciled to God, living in an ever-growing relationship with him. The God who made us made us for relationships, made us for love - to love him and to love each other - even our colleagues, bosses and rivals at work. How can we learn to do this effectively and without compromising our work?

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength...love your neighbour as you love yourself." Mark 12:30-31

3. Integrity: redeeming trust

Righteousness is part of God's character and being righteous involves choosing what is morally best for any other person or community at any time. As Jesus' followers this is not an optional extra, but it can be difficult to live out in our workplace when the culture is stacked against us.

"For God made him who was without sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21

4. Generosity: redeeming money

Everything we have is from God, for God and can bring glory to him and blessings to others. That includes money. How can we learn to see money and possessions the way Jesus saw them?

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." Psalm 24:1

5. Humility: redeeming ambition

Christians can be shy of ambition. Is that how it should be? How can we seek excellence in everything we do and dream the biggest dreams, whilst at the same time view our identity and achievements in the light of our Eternal God's majesty, beauty and power?

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6-7

6. Beneficial purpose: living and working for Jesus

In this module we bring together all that we have learnt so far to define a clearer mission for our lives. If we have 90,000 hours of work ahead of us, how does Jesus want us to use the skills he has given us to the maximum benefit of his creation?

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." Hebrews 12:1-2

Getting the most out of Cross-Current

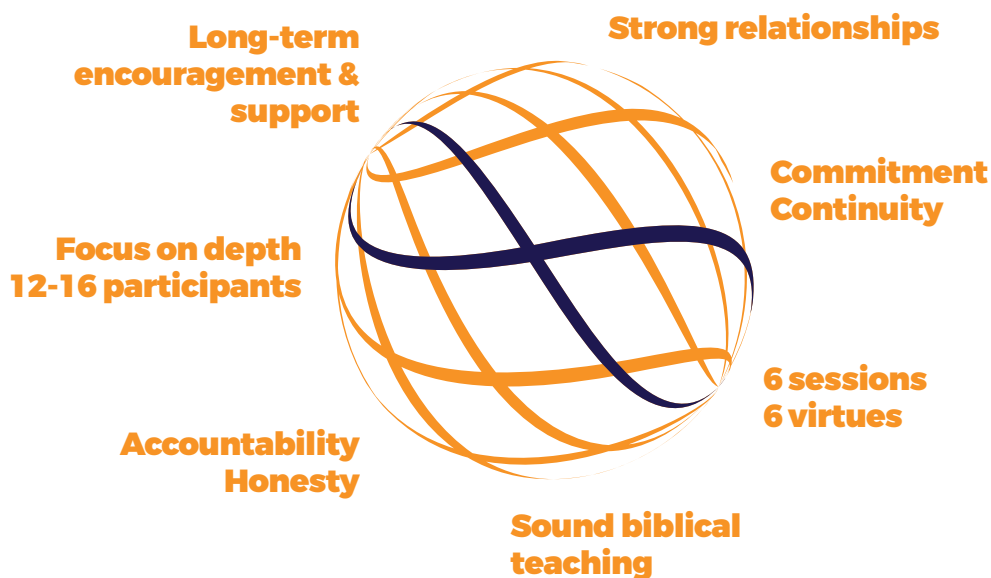
As well as attending the six residential meetings, there are several other important aspects of the program that will help you to get the most out of Cross-Current:

Mentoring. Central to the success of this program are intentional, deep relationships, accountability and a commitment to change across the group as a whole. At the first Cross-Current meeting you will be organised into peer mentoring triplets. The aim of these triplets is to help you process the information you are learning, and to keep you accountable for the change you want to see in your life as a consequence of it. You will spend time in these triplets during the weekend meetings, as well as keeping in touch regularly in between meetings.

Journalling. We recommend that you keep a journal of your Cross-Current journey. Space is included in this workbook for this purpose. Make sure to record your 'Agenda for change' and 'Aha!' moments at the end of each meeting, and be willing to be kept accountable for these by your mentoring triplet.

Communication. Cross-Current is a two-to-three year journey, not a series of six one-off meetings. This applies to you as an individual and also to the role that you will play within your wider Cross-Current group. Please commit to supporting one another through regular communication, words of encouragement, prayer - and, very importantly, by building memories of shared experiences and having fun!

The wider Graduate Impact network. When you join a Cross-Current group you also join an international community of young Christian professionals, all of whom share your vision to be salt and light in the workplace. Please visit our website to access more resources and find out about events near you. We will also send you regular mailings to support and encourage you in your work, and you can join the wider Graduate Impact community on Instagram and Facebook.





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My biblical worldview

Answer the questions in each section to summarise what you have learned about work in Eden, after Eden and in Christ.

Eden worldview



What key points have I learnt about work in God's original plan?

Post-Eden worldview



How does sin affect my working life?

In the World + in Christ



As someone 'in Christ', how should I view my work today?

God's ultimate reality



3

Theology of relationships - Part 2

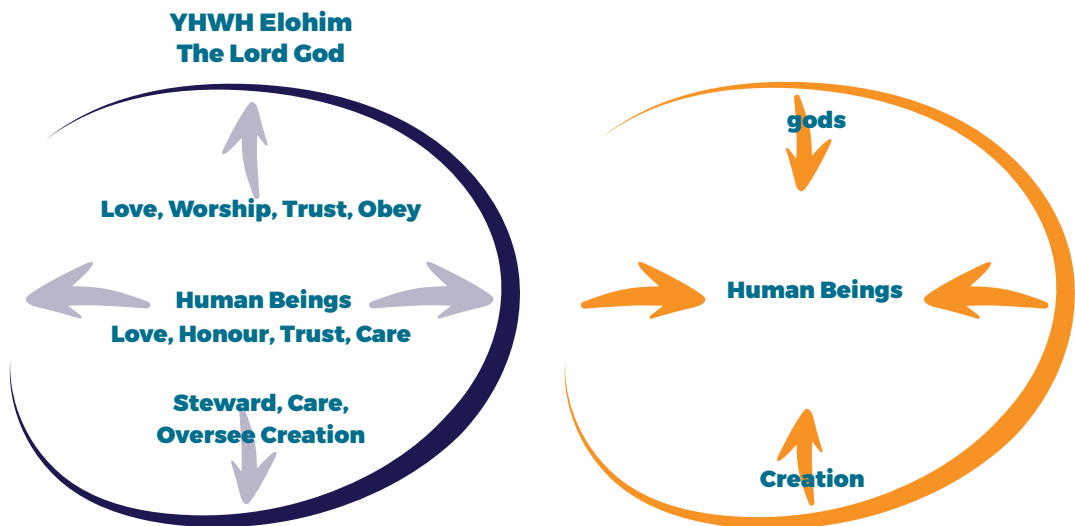


Read Genesis 3:1-6 and describe the 'anatomy' of sin.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Read Genesis 3:7-24. List the ways you can see the immediate impact of sin.

List the ways in which we see relationships affected by sin:



Case study 1: Microfinance misadventure

You are a small business owner running a logistics and transportation operation. You are looking for alternative activities that might help your business grow, and you discover a new agricultural technology that will help to produce more organic food. You are excited about this, but after doing a business plan you realise you'll need quite a significant investment before you can provide these kinds of services.

You decide to go ahead and you apply for a small loan at a microfinance organisation that offers loans at very good rates. You are offered a loan, but it's linked to a hard currency to secure the negative fluctuation of the domestic currency.

Over time, the hard currency starts to fluctuate significantly, in a negative way. As you are a valued customer and this is your third loan with them, you decide to ask the loan consultant and the owner of the small company to revise the contract, as you are paying almost 30% more than in the beginning. The company refuses to do this. Furthermore, they refuse to close the deal and give you a new loan according to current currencies.

In the process, you also discover that their formula of calculating monthly payments is different from the one used by other microfinance companies. You discover that you actually paid 50% more than you thought you were paying. Somehow you hadn't paid attention to this information when you signed the agreement, although it was there in the small print of the contract.

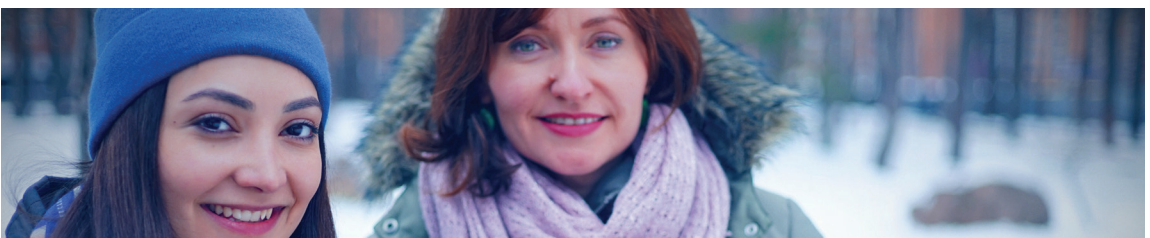
You are now quite frustrated with the microloans company. You know each other well and have always had friendly business relationships, but now you feel betrayed as your business is actually damaged by this loan instead of being supported by it (which this company claims is its vision). You know you could obtain a loan from other banks or microfinance companies at a higher rate, but in the end you would be paying less than you are paying now.

Questions

What irregularities do you observe in this microfinance company's actions?

How could you proceed?

What would righteousness look like in this context, both for the client and for the microloans company?





6

Personal reflection on money

Read each of the statements below and put an 'x' on the slider scale to indicate your current attitude/behaviour.

1. When you think about your earning level do you:

Praise God ----- Wish you had more

2. When you cannot sleep at night is it because of:

Money worries ----- My relationship with God

3. With regard to your giving how would you rate your current level?

I give enough ----- I could give more

Giving comes first ----- Giving comes last

I give regularly ----- I give randomly

4. What prevents you from giving more than you do?

Cost of living ----- Salary too low

I cannot budget ----- I lack time

5. When you see Christian friends with a wealthier lifestyle than you, do you feel:

Envious and frustrated ----- Joyful for them

6. Relative to non-Christians in your income category, are your spending habits:

More or less the same ----- Completely different

7. What is your view of debt (not including a mortgage to buy a home)?

Inevitable ----- Avoidable

8. What would scare you most about losing your job?

Loss of income ----- Loss of friendship

9. I am more motivated to give by:

Duty ----- Worship



10

Redefining ambition, success, and failure

Mark 4:13-20

Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

In Mark 4:13-20 Jesus describes four ways that people respond to the good news of his kingdom. Three of these are failures; what is it that sets the fourth apart as a success?

Jesus identifies four things that can prevent believers from being fruitful. Think about areas of 'fruitfulness' in your working life and describe how any of these four factors may inhibit you.

Shallow faith leaving us vulnerable to trouble and persecution	
The worries of life	
The deceitfulness of wealth	
The desires (or ambitions) we have for other things	