

A tight-knit community of believers

“[CLS] has taught me that there is nothing that I do through the profession of law that shouldn’t be permeated or integrated with my profession and with my faith.” –Brent Amato

Brent Amato calls himself a second generation Christian Legal Society member. The founders are the first. Amato would know something about how the generations fall because founder, Burt Erikson, connected him to CLS during law school in the mid-1970’s. The group gave Amato guidance and direction as a young believer.

“It is a temptation, at times, to segment your areas of life,” said Amato. “It was helpful for me to think about how a Christian would think about a particular client, how a Christian would think about a particular case, how a Christian would think about a particular issue.”

CLS hired Amato as the Chicagoland Field Representative in early 2015 to assist in developing the Loop, DuPage, and Northern Illinois CLS groups as well as work with the thriving, stagnant or non-existent CLS groups at Chicago area law schools. With a background in business and corporate law since 1976 and years spent working in local ministries such as his church, the Gospel Justice Initiative and Crossroads Resolution Group, this is the perfect vocation for someone with knowledge of the law and passion for ministry.

The day-to-day always looks different. Meetings with attorneys to strategize how to restore life back into law school CLS groups, teaching Bible studies for lawyers and business professionals and getting connected with law student leaders in CLS chapters are a few of his tasks.

He decided to leave corporate and business law because

“for the longest time I’ve been living two lives in terms of vocation,” said Amato, referring to his day job as an attorney and his involvement in ministries on the evenings and weekends. He felt a call to ministry about 5-10 years into his legal career, and the tug-of-war between law and ministry continued until he started to exit out of his previous job as general counsel.

CLS has great ramifications for the legal community, according to Amato.

“It’s like a gyroscope for lawyers in that it gives you, in addition to the Holy Spirit, the mechanism to be rightly aligned in your practice in a way that I think is very productive,” explained Amato. “Secondly, and apart from the ministry, it is a voice that is addressing the religious liberty issues of the day.”

CLS also holds special meaning to Amato. He met his wife, Sherrie, through CLS and has numerous stories of times other CLS attorneys have been able to minister to him and his family. His time in CLS has provided mentorship and fellowship throughout the years and has helped develop his belief that the Christian life and the legal practice should be intertwined.

“One of the reasons I’m committed to CLS is because they were committed to me as a law student,” said Amato. “They loved me. They mentored me. They ministered to me. It made an indelible mark upon my heart and mind, so that my ministry is just an outflow of how I was ministered to.” ■