

Jesus

The Ultimate Sacrifice – that a man would lay down his life for others



JESUS, sacrificed His life – did He do it for you?

Read John 3:16 in the Bible to find the answer

Jesus

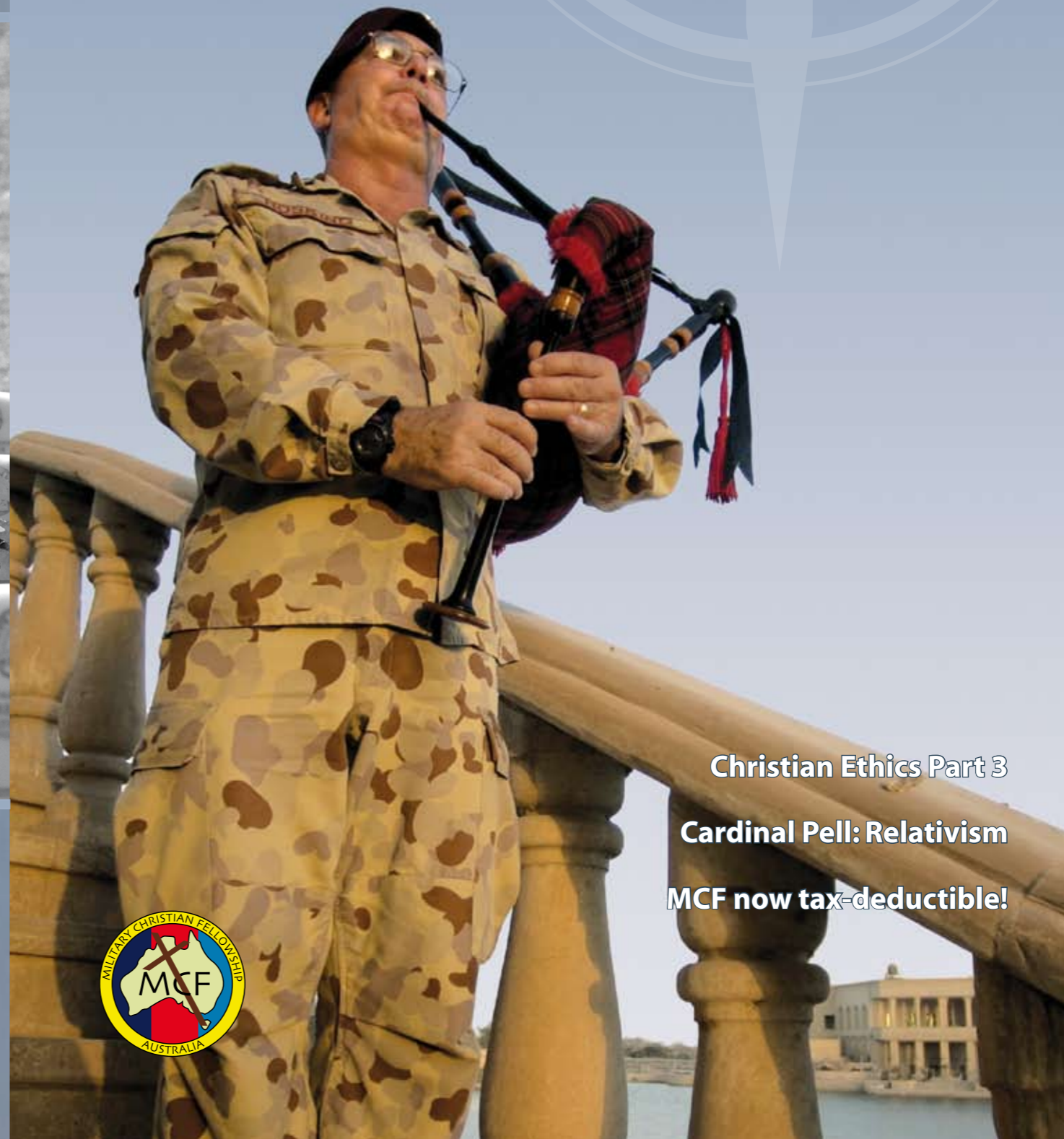
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CROSS FIRE

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The magazine of the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

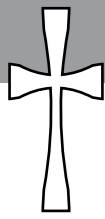


Christian Ethics Part 3

Cardinal Pell: Relativism

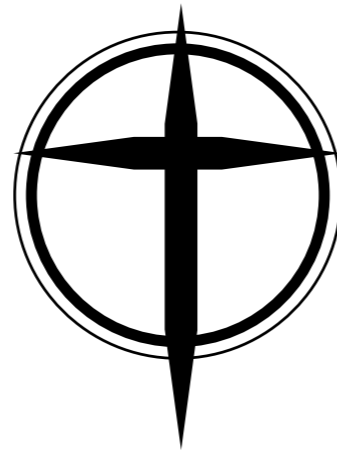
MCF now tax-deductible!





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From the Editor, David Rose

Send us a short story of your experiences as a Christian in the military. Highlight what God has done for you!

Articles for Cross Fire should be no more than 500 words long, focus on military Christian issues and experiences, avoid denominational commentary, and will be subject to approval from the National Council before publication. Photos are encouraged and should be of maximum resolution to ensure production standard. All submissions should be in electronic format. Stories from operational service are especially encouraged.

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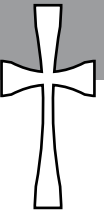
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Chairman's Report



By Mick Mumford, Chairman

MCF has started the year with a rush, as usual, as we worked out who is who around the traps after the Christmas posting changeover. If you are not connected with an MCF group yet in your new location, then contact the Office and Jon, our Staff Worker, will quickly get you in contact with local Christians. The Bible tells us that iron sharpens iron. In other words, Christians keep each other sharp. We keep each other honest, encourage each other, and support each other. Whenever I start the year at a new unit I always say up front to the whole unit that I am a Christian man of faith. I do this for two reasons. Firstly, I don't want anyone to be embarrassed if they say something in front of me they might regret if they don't know I am a Christian. And secondly, and more importantly, it keeps me honest. How can I boldly proclaim my faith to everyone and then not show commitment to that faith in everything I do? No-one respects a hypocrite. Are any of you just a Christian on inside? Have a look around your workplace. Do they know you are Christian? If not, why not? Go on, be a Christian in the ADF on the outside!

March hard for the Lord!

Mick Mumford
Chairman

PS. Keep an eye out soon for our new website. It will enable online membership management, online payment of donations, MCF items and event fees, as well as providing more frequent updates about MCF goings on, resources and information. The Lord is dragging us into the 21st century! ☩

Who pays for MCF Australia?

MCF is funded by free-will and tax-deductible donations from its members and members of the public. Donations can be sent to the MCF office: MCF-A Department of Defence Campbell Park Offices, CP4-3-046 Canberra, ACT, 2600 Australia ADF members can make allotments to MCF (allottee number 122), or funds can be transferred directly from your bank account to the MCF account with DEFCREDIT (BSB 803205, Member 66126).

Your contribution will help support the work of MCF within the Australian Defence Force.

MCF now a tax-deductible charity!

We are very pleased to announce that on 15 December 06 the Australian Tax Office (ATO) classified us as a "Deductible Gift Recipient" charity, backdated to 17 November 05, under Subdivision 30-B, Item 5.1.2, of the Income Assessment Act 1997 (public institution for the comfort, recreation, or welfare of members of the armed forces). In non-ATO speak that means that donations to MCF after 17 November 05 are now tax deductible. How will that help MCF? Technically of course it doesn't. Those people who give to MCF will definitely benefit as the ATO allows a tax deduction at year's end but MCF doesn't benefit unless people choose to give more now than an element of it will be returned by the taxman.

If you gave a monetary gift to MCF after 17 November 05 (as opposed to purchasing something from us like the Dinner, a Mug, Retreat fees etc), then you should have (or soon will have) received a tax deductible receipt for FY05/06. A bit late for last year's return but you can ask the ATO to review your tax if you believe it will make a difference to your tax outcome by explaining that the ruling was not made until December 2006. Also, those who have given one-off gifts so far in FY06/07 will be sent receipts as well. Those regular givers, either through pay allotments of bank transfer, will receive a consolidated receipt at the end of this financial year detailing your yearly contributions. If you have any questions, or if you didn't receive a receipt when you should have, contact the Treasurer via the MCF Office.

Thank you to those who have provided us with the financial means to do God's work in the ADF, we hope that the tax office's recent ruling will encourage you to continue to support MCF financially as the Lord leads you. And if you feel led make more of a difference then think about becoming an MCF Centurion, see the application form with this edition.

Congratulations to:

Principal Chaplain Len Eacott for the award of the Member of the Order of Australia for exceptional service and outstanding devotion to duty as Principal Chaplain - Army and Head of Corps.

Nick Filter on his graduation from WA Police Academy.
Nick is also an Army Reserve member.

Our Treasurer, Kier Bailey who has graduated from ADFA and is now at RMC.

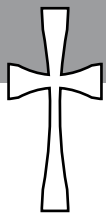
Promotions:

Tim Napper Royal Military College - Australia on promotion to Lieutenant.

Farewell to:

SQNLDR Peter Chance who retires from the RAAF to commence ministry on the Sunshine Coast, QLD supporting country pastors and their families.

Also to Air Commodore Mark Lax, who retired from the RAAF
8 December 2006.



Ethics and Community



by Dr Tom Frame,
Anglican Bishop to the ADF

In his commentary on Western political life entitled *Leviathan* (published in 1651), Thomas Hobbes was concerned principally with the right of the individual to determine the course of his or her own life free from interference. Because individual interests occasionally converge or collide, men and women must surrender some of their discretion to a supreme authority – the great Leviathan of the ‘state’ – which can ensure that competing interests or conflicting ambitions are harmonized or, at least, reconciled. In Hobbes’ worldview, there is no attempt to identify what is good or bad nor to encourage virtue and discourage vice. What we call good or virtuous, according to Hobbes, is little more than preference or prejudice. Rationality is understood as a conscious promoting of what promotes one’s interests and deliberate avoidance of what doesn’t. Many Australians unreservedly and uncritically accept the Hobbesian account. Individualism – the belief that the individual alone and unaided is entitled to determine what is good or bad and to separate truth or falsehood – is a prevailing attitude.

The vision posited by Hobbes was intended to displace the Biblical account of humanity’s origins and destiny derived from the opening narrative of the Book of Genesis: ‘In the beginning, God created ... and it was good’. The universe unfolds according to a plan in which humanity finds meaning conveyed through two

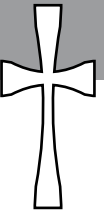
linked propositions. The first affirms the sanctity of the human individual as individual. Every person is created in the ‘image of God’. But the second proposition asserts the incompleteness of the individual as individual: ‘It is not good to be alone’. Hence, the need for relationships and for stable structures within which these formative and definitive relationships can be sustained. The individual is, therefore, to be understood in relation to others and, hence, to derive identity from them: ‘I am my father’s son ... I am my mother’s daughter’. These relationships expand from the nuclear to the extended family, and then to the clan, the tribe and ultimately the nation. And they are enclosed by a covenant: a statement of privileges and obligations that embodies a sense of identity and dignity. Covenants are maintained by the identity of those bound by them. They primarily express the kind of persons the covenanted people are to be.

As Britain’s former Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, has pointed out in *The Politics of Hope*, the crucial distinction between the story offered in Hobbes’ *Leviathan* and in Genesis is the central figure. For Hobbes it is ‘I’ over and against everyone else; in the Bible it is the ‘we’ of which I am apart: marriage, the family, the nation understood as an extended family, and ultimately humanity itself. In this account, our affiliations, associations and attachments are not irrelevant, but essential, to the structure of obligations we form. We owe duties to others because they are part of who we are. The driving force is not self-interest but a series of covenantal obligations that include the duties and responsibilities that flow from identification and belonging. Therefore, what constitutes society is not a contract but a covenant. The parties to a contract can disengage when it is no longer to their benefit to continue. A covenant is more binding because it is not predicated on interest, but instead on loyalty, fidelity and holding together. For many, the only covenantal community they know is the family and even it is under incredible stress. It is not surprising, then, that so many aspects of Australian life have become the focus of ethical debate and political controversy.

Although Christians are not promised ethical certainty they should at least be able to avoid moral confusion because they are covenanted people. Christians are not called to a life of alienation from society or isolation from other believers. They are called into a moral community consisting of people who are socially interdependent, share a common set of beliefs, commitments and aspirations, and make decisions governing their present and future. As members of a moral community they profess a solidarity grounded in a sense of common history and a strong awareness of belonging based on shared destiny. Communities are crucial for the formation of covenants and the maintenance of moral values. The Churches remain the most resilient moral communities (beyond families) in Australia and their importance is steadily increasing in a world of ethical confusion.

In his celebrated work *After Virtue* (published in 1981), the British philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre’s argued that universal ethical agreement is the dream of a lost common culture. For MacIntyre, moral questions can only be answered in a satisfactory way from within moral communities. He says: ‘what matters ... is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us’. But how do these moral communities, particularly those founded on religious principles, interact with the rest of society and the State? One would have to reply: actively and with integrity. Thus, the Christians living in Asia Minor were described in the first letter attributed to Saint Peter as ‘those who reside as aliens’ (1 Peter 1, New American Standard trans): they live in this world but their citizenship is elsewhere. What marks them out as distinct also separates them from their neighbours. Elsewhere in the New Testament, Christians are referred to as ambassadors of a foreign power who are warned to remain unstained by ‘the world’ and its deceptions. The world was understood to those things that lay outside the kingdom of God.

Christians are ethical people because they belong to a community committed to resolving moral questions and



Continued from Page #2

practicing ethical behaviour as a reflection of the Church's commitment to Jesus without whom Christian actions and attitudes would make no sense. Their ethical sense is shaped by Jesus' reaching and given expression in their dealings with other disciples. And as people whose beliefs, behaviour and belonging are inextricably linked, they will act beyond the Christian community in a manner that proclaims the eternal community proclaimed by Jesus: the Kingdom of God. Belonging to Church is a crucial element in shaping Christian ethical behaviour. It is never an optional extra or a matter for personal discretion.

* Dr Tom Frame was formerly the Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force. He is now Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre and Associate Professor and Head of the School of Theology at Charles Sturt University. ⊕

The MCF Small Group Code of Conduct

As a member of an MCF small group I will:

1. Respect the denominational differences of all Christians within the ADF. I will not argue denominational doctrine or question denominational beliefs.
2. Allow all members of the group an opportunity to speak regardless of spiritual maturity.
3. Respect rank during MCF meetings unless invited not to.
4. Invite local Chaplains, and members of other Christian groups, to be part of MCF meetings.
5. In group studies respect differences in bible translation and interpretation. Studies of the bible are not to involve books or passages of the Bible that denominations contest.

6. Apply wisdom in the demonstration of Spiritual gifting where there is potential to cause offence to members present.
7. Respect the authority of the small group leader, regardless of rank and uniform.



Retirement of Chief Commissioner Robert (Bob) Stephens BEM; Red Shield Defence Services



By Jon Belmonte, Staff Worker

Chief Commissioner (CCOM) Bob Stephens of the Red Shield Defence Services was honourably retired on the 21st of January 2007. Bob has served for the last 11 years within the Red Shield Defence Services.

In 1993, Bob Stephens elected discharge from the Royal Australian Air Force after twenty odd years of service. Most notably Bob was awarded the British Empire Medal for Bravery (BEM) – Military Division on the 21 December 1971 for his Gallantry during an incident whilst

on operational service in South Vietnam as a member of No 9 Squadron (helicopters).

In 1993, Bob commenced Late Vocation training at The Salvation Army's School for Officer Training in Sydney.

In 1994, He was Warranted as an 'Envoy' of the Salvation Army, and appointed as a Representative (REP) of the RSDS and posted to the 4th Field Regiment (Artillery) in Townsville.

In January 1995, Bob was posted to 1st Aviation Regiment and 7 Signals Regiment at Oakey.

In January 1996, Bob was promoted to the rank of Senior Representative (SREP) of the RSDS and also promoted to the Salvation Army rank of Auxiliary Captain. Bob was posted to Darwin where he supported both 2nd Cavalry and 1st Armoured Regiments.

In January 1998, Bob was appointed to the Corps of Staff Cadets at the Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon in the ACT. During Bob's posting at RMC he was promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner

(ACOM) of the RSDS. Bob was later promoted to the rank of Commissioner (COM) RSDS for the ACT and Victorian regions.

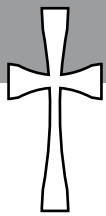
In January 2002, he was appointed as the Chief Commissioner (CCOM) of the Red Shield Defence Services, Army HQ Canberra.

On the 14th of March 2004, Bob was promoted to the Salvation Army rank of Captain.

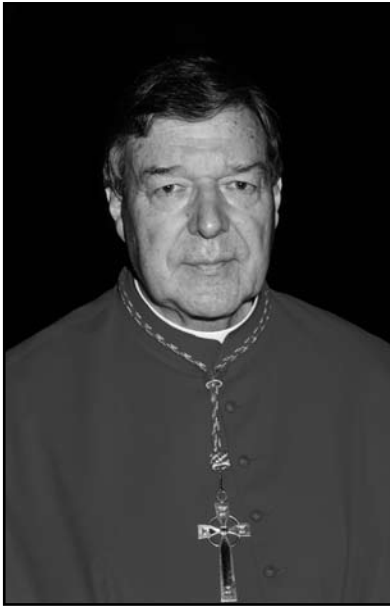
The Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, AO, AFC in his retirement letter expressed that Bob "has a deep committed passion for all service members of the ADF" and "I remember first meeting Bob, back in the 1970's whilst we were both serving with No 5 Squadron".

Bob and Mel Stephens have been keen supporters of the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia, and I would like this opportunity on behalf of all MCF members to wish Bob all the very best, in what I believe will be semi-retirement.

Bob Stephens was elected to the council of MCF as a members' representative at our 2006 AGM. ⊕



The Dictatorship of Relativism



By Cardinal Pell

Shortly before he entered the conclave in which he was elected Pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger preached a homily which warned against "a dictatorship of relativism".

Relativism is powerful in Western life, evidenced especially in the triumph of subjective values and subjective conscience over moral truth and the wisdom of great religious and ethical traditions.

In the past, wise men and women have usually seen that either relativism is the real truth about the Universe, in which case relativism is wrong since there is a real truth, or relativism is not the real truth, in which case we should all stop thinking about it. The danger today is that people do not even think this far to see the inconsistencies. Hence Pope Benedict's warning.

One reason for optimism is that people may express their scepticism about truth and morality in lecture rooms or in print, but afterwards, they will go on to take care of their children, drive home on the left side of the road, and, presumably, avoid acts of murder and cannibalism throughout their evening. People, unless insane, do not live as relativists. They care about truth and follow clear cut rules.

Catholics call the universal acceptance of basic moral norms 'natural law' – the term simply means that whereas some laws apply only to Australians, moral laws apply to everyone who shares human nature. Catholics believe that ordinary folk know and respect this morality.

We also believe ordinary folk care about truth. Jesus said "I am the Truth", and for truth He, and countless good men and women, lived and died. Nobody lives and dies for relativism: people do not sacrifice themselves for a theory which states that such a gesture is merely relative.

Religious Principles

A society like Australia has been living off Christian principles for nearly two centuries. This has tempted some to take for granted values like human rights, social justice, a fair go, and kindness towards the battlers.

But values like this do not occur spontaneously. Very few societies in history have been founded on all of them. Human values have to be nurtured, explained, defended, and above all given a context and foundation. The twentieth century, the most cruel in history, has given us abundant evidence for this proposition. An interesting analysis of this evidence has been provided by the moral philosopher Jonathan Glover in his book *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*. Glover considers what held back some people from co-operating in atrocities. He argues that "it is striking how many protests against and acts of resistance to atrocity have also come from principled religious commitment". He worries that decline in religion will mean the decline of goodness; that we will become hostages to tribalism, inherited prejudice and the winds of fashion. (p. 405)

An unprincipled and intolerant secularism?

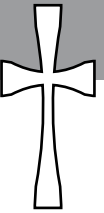
Many people never think seriously about religion at all, hence secularism wins by stealth and

default. But we should ponder the effects of an increase in the secular-relativist bite into Christianity: previous moral norms we all accepted (on lying and promise breaking, assault and abuse, cheating and robbing, even freedom and equality) would be vulnerable to revision; conscience would become personal preference – a polite term for 'doing it my way'; and clear thinking and past wisdom would be repudiated and ridiculed.

Could this really happen in Australia? It might seem hard to believe we would ever reject the most fundamental moral values; but it was hard only 50 years ago to believe we would abort 100,000 + babies a year, contemplate men marrying men, killing the sick, experimenting on human embryos.

The secular ambition for the spiritual life today is to tolerate undemanding forms of spirituality, perhaps a return to pantheism or nature worship where there is no need to be concerned with truth and falsehood, and to ditch the notions of redemption and life after death. Relativism is meant to serve as the operational principle that delivers tolerance, mutual respect, and a basis for civic peace, in contrast to the way religion causes war and dissension. But secularism and relativism can be dictatorial, intolerant of principled opposition, a cause of conflict.

In 2001, when the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney suggested that Christians should do more to evangelize Australian society, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an editorial condemning this idea as arrogant, dangerous and a recipe for bloodshed. Observing that "in Australia, one's religion is largely a private matter", the editorial concluded-with only a small hint of menace-that "it should remain that way". This editorial captured the secularist attitude to traditional religion very well: it is acceptable, perhaps even a good thing, to have some religion around for the sake of "diversity", but it can only be tolerated on the condition that it is a purely private matter. The privatization of belief



Chaplain's Corner

Continued from Page #4

is usually justified by referring to public policy as "neutral". But privatization does not favour neutrality: barring God from the public square is not neutral. Believers have equal rights in a democracy!

Conclusion

St. Benedict was born at Nursia, Italy in 480A.D. He withdrew from the world and founded a monastery at Monte Cassino. His rule became the basis of the Benedictine Order, whose monasteries across Europe preserved faith and learning through what is sometimes called the 'Dark Ages'.

It is significant that our Pope took the name Benedict as he began to lead the Church in a Europe with a declining population, a crisis of faith, and a culture of relativism which lacks clarity and self confidence.

The Pope is aware that a vibrant Christianity can once again transform our industrial societies with its love and faith, its principles and communities of service.

Australia is still a young society. With our energy and optimism we should not be fertile ground for the dictatorship of relativism, but a people filled with moral and spiritual potential. This is one reason why Pope Benedict nominated Sydney to host the World Youth Day in 2008. ⊕

MCF Date Claimers 2007

- AMCF Pacific Regional Conference 20-23 September
- Canberra Christians Dinner 7 September
- MCF AGM (November TBC)

Need to claim a date?
Email the office.



No Gifts Possible from the Dead

By PCHA Eric Burton

During the late 1800's Queen Victoria presented boxes of chocolates to all the men who had served at Natal volunteers in England's conflict with the Boers. Shortly after the Queen's death there was a complaint by the soldiers that no more boxes of chocolates were forthcoming. The suppliers responded that it would not be possible to supply any more boxes as the autograph of Queen Victoria on the boxes was required. The Queen was dead and there was no way in which boxes of chocolates could be issued in her name. No gifts possible from the dead.

It could be that the Christian Faith could be faith in the words and works of a wonderful prophet, a great teacher and a fine leader called Jesus who 'lived'.

What is striking about the Christian Faith however is that we worship a Jesus who 'lives' and stands ready to continue to provide us with his gifts - strength, forgiveness and power in our daily lives and the promise of an eternal future that is secure in His name. Gifts just not possible to receive from a dead Jesus.

Crowds are drawn to the pyramids of Egypt partly because of the mummified remain of ancient Egyptian kings. Westminster Abbey in London is renowned because it contains the tombs of many kings and poets and Bishops. Arlington cemetery is famous for it is the resting place of many outstanding Americans. These tombs and burial sites are all famous for what they contain - the Garden tomb in Jerusalem is famous because it is empty.

For those readers who have accepted the living Jesus and His be encouraged at this Easter time 2007 by a Lord who loves you and stands ready to bless you through this year.

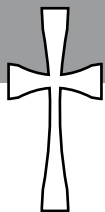
For those readers who are more skeptical about the claims of Christianity and find the resurrection story highly unlikely perhaps this is a good time to find some space this Easter time and read some accounts of the resurrection of Jesus - for ours is an historical faith:

Read John's gospel chapter 20 and 21 and note the detail in these accounts.

Consider these words from the writer to the Hebrews:

" Jesus then is the High Priest that meets our needs. He is Holy; he has no fault or sin in Him; he has been set apart from sinners and raised above the heavens. Hebrews 7:26 (GNB)

If these things are true then the only response is to acknowledge our need for forgiveness, turn from our ways to His ways (repentance) and live a life of completer surrender to God and His ways. Some cost you may say - but remember the living lord has many gifts for us far beyond a simple box of chocolates. ⊕



From the ALBATROSS MCF Area Rep

By Naomi Spencer

Recently I attended Hillsong Conference at Olympic Park. With 27,000 others from all around the world and many Christian denominations I heard many encouraging messages.

One I wanted to raise with you, the reader, is, 'What is in your hand?' What gifts and talents do you have? What are you doing with them? Are there gifts you are hiding or afraid of developing? What is your attitude to life? Do you hide or shine?

God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of being slaves in Egypt. Guess what? Moses did not want to do it.

The Bible is full of stories of people who did not want to do things. Once however Moses accepted God's sovereignty and purposes, he went on to become a great man who God used powerfully to change the history of the world.

Never underestimate how small steps can make a difference. What is in your hand? How can you use what you have for others' benefit?

I will finish with an amusing story. I do not know the source. It has come from a Defence colleague who is marvellous at sending these delightful thoughts on.

Mouse Story

How does this message speak to you?

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. "What food might this contain?", the mouse wondered. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning. "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said,

"Mr Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers."



The mouse turned to the cow and said "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house – like the sound

of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught.

The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever.

Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbours came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well. She died. So many people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember – when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

EACH OF US IS A VITAL THREAD IN ANOTHER PERSON'S TAPESTRY; OUR LIVES ARE WOVEN TOGETHER FOR A REASON.

MCF meets every Tuesday during school term at lunchtime at the Professional Offices Conference Room at HMAS ALBATROSS for fellowship, sharing and prayer.

All welcome. Enquiries to Kath at ext 1535 or Naomi Spencer, MCF Area Representative at naomi@shoal.net.au





Bible Battlefield Commanders – Part 2

By Mick Mumford, Chairman

Ever read the Old Testament and wanted to be there during some of the great military victories of God's people? Ever wanted to see God's power wash over armies and battles? Well, here is the second part of a quick guide to some of the Lord's greatest battlefield commanders. It is suggested you use it for group bible study.

Sampson – Flawed Champion

NASA was never going to employ Sampson! Not the sharpest instrument of God's will, he nevertheless shows us that God can use us for powerful ends despite our flaws.

- Read Judges 14: 1-4. Sampson wanted a Philistine woman as his wife, contrary to Israelite law and custom. How was God going to use this to His ends?
- Read Judges 15:1-15. Sampson might have been lacking many qualities but certainly not courage. In what state was the nation of Israel? Why did they need a man like Sampson to lead them, despite his faults?
- Read Chapter 16:23+. What was God's purpose in Sampson? How did this lead to eventually lead to Israel's deliverance from the Philistines?
- Sampson was headstrong, jealous, quick to anger, foolish, vain, and greedy. Why did God choose to use him? What does that teach us about our faults?

Saul – Anointed Hero or Faithless King?

In 1 Samuel we read of Saul's anointing by Samuel and appointment as King. He has many victories whilst he struggles with following the Lord's directions. The end is good for Israel but things start to go wrong for Saul...

- Read 1 Sam 13: 1-15. Saul was to wait for Samuel but he acted in fear and trusted to his own timetable not God's. What did he do wrong? How often do we have the patience to wait for God's plan? What were the consequences of his faithlessness?

- Read 1 Sam 14:15-23. Saul starts to seek God's will as to when to attack but in the end makes the decision to attack himself. Whilst they were victorious who is given the credit for the victory? How often do we start with good intentions to follow God's will but end up living off our own judgment and insight?
- Read 1 Sam 15: 1-11. Now Saul really starts to follow his own plan, not God's. Why did God order genocide against the Amalekites (see Ex 17:8-14)? How does Saul disobey God? What was God's response? Bearing in mind Saul's history how patient is God with us?

David – God's Greatest General

Famine to feast, rags to riches, small to huge, shepherd to King, God has never had a more faithful General than David.

- Read 1 Sam 17:25-37. Why is David so sure he can fight Goliath and win? Is it just his faith alone or also experiences that God has given him? Does God expect us to show great leaps of faith or does he prepare our hearts too?
- Read 1 Sam 17:38-40. How does David prepare himself for battle? Does he go unprepared? If David so trusts the Lord why doesn't he go unarmed?
- Read 1 Sam 17:45-47. David gives God credit for the victory even before it won. Not just confident in his own victory over Goliath what other improbable event does David promise? What would the Philistines have thought of these comments from a shepherd-boy? Jesus tells us that our lack of faith stops us from moving mountains (Matt17:20), but how faithful are we?

As God's people of the New Testament He does not expect us to fight other nations to claim our inheritance; but He does expect us to have the same courage, determination and faith as the Israelites. See Crossfire Edition 12 for the first part of Bible Battlefield Commanders – Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, and Gideon

'ALPHA' In the Workplace

By David Rose, Editor

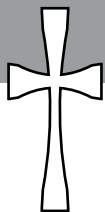
During the last part of 2006 a group of us had the privilege of being involved in running the ALPHA program in Russell Offices, Canberra. What is ALPHA you ask?

- "ALPHA is a 15 session practical introduction to the Christian faith designed primarily for non-churchgoers and new Christians.
- At each session there is a light meal or snack followed by a talk on a subject central to the Christian faith. After the talk, participants divide into pre-arranged groups of about ten to twelve people (in which they remain for the duration of the course), to discuss the talk in an environment where each person should feel free to ask or say whatever they wish.
- Each group has a leader and two or three helpers who will have normally attended a previous course. Each session last about two hours, but can be condensed into one hour with a 30 minute talk and a 30 minute group discussion.
- In the middle of the course there is a weekend (which can be condensed into a day) during which the subject of the Holy Spirit is addressed."

The ALPHA sessions cover:

- Who is Jesus?
- Why did Jesus die?
- How can I be sure of my Faith?
- Why and how should I read the bible?
- Why and how should I pray?
- Who does God Guide us?
- Why and how should we tell others?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What Does the Holy Spirit do?
- How can I be filled with the Spirit?
- How can I resist evil?
- Does God Heal Today?
- What About the church?

Under the guidance of a dedicated team, we ran the sessions during lunchtime in a Russell conference room. Some excellent discussions followed and there are exciting plans to run more ALPHA courses during 2007 and beyond. Watch this space!



Teaspoons, then Trauma – Chaplain David Snape

By Tom Lewis

Imagine having nothing much to do for your day in Iraq. Get up, go to Headquarters, no staff to run, no staff to run you, no drill to attend, just a meeting later in the day. And then a phone call – a human disaster, and suddenly your day is custard, as you are the only person whose official job it is to comfort someone who is bereaved, wounded, hurt...your day is suddenly not long enough, and tears and trauma are all yours...because you're a chaplain with the ADF.

David Snape is a chaplain with the Australian Army. He was deployed to Iraq in February 2006. Sixteen years in the Defence Forces, he is married with four older children. When David discussed his experiences in Iraq, he was undergoing his third year of being "married separated"; that is, having to live apart from his family due to his commitment to the needs of the Australian Defence Force.

Chaplain Snape's service in Iraq occurred during particularly trying times. He was there during the shooting death of Private Jake Kovco, and also during the defensive attack by members of the Australian Security Detachment on a vehicle that was trying to overtake their convoy, despite warning signs and measures taken by the gunners of the force. They opened fire on the vehicle, causing it to crash, and killed some of its occupants.

The roles David has had to undertake are many and varied. Perhaps most importantly, he is a first point of contact for people within the ADF to turn to in times of trouble and stress. This role involves him in "loitering with intent" – a chaplain-speak expression – to ascertain how people feel in general: he 'has a brew' with them, listens to their remarks, monitors their grumbling – a certain amount is necessary, with an absence a significant warning indicator – and asks members about themselves; their situations, and their families. (A good memory is essential for this latter task, as one can hardly ask whether the member has children if you've asked the same question before.) This monitoring of feedback allows the chaplain to give some essential feedback to senior force commanders as to how everyone is progressing – or not – during the deployment and its operations.



Chaplain David Snape gives a reading during a memorial service for Private Jake Kovco at the Australian Embassy in Baghdad, 21 April 2006. (Photo courtesy ADF)

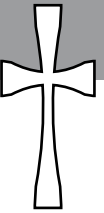
In addition to these roles David, like every other chaplain, has to maintain his position as a religious leader, in his case as an Anglican priest. This includes delivering a range of sacraments to those in need. Although much of his job in the theatre is similar to that he fulfills at home in Australia, the difference overseas is that many of his reactions to problems are task orientated, meaning he will have to do something: arrange further support; further counseling, and so on, in events such as dealing with the aftermath of an attack on our troops. This has been trying for him, but he notes that the members involved of course find it doubly hard – "and if they have existing problems it compounds them and makes them worse".

Another difference in his service within Iraq has been that he has had to travel extensively within theatre, in order to fulfill all of the demands placed on him. The travel means movements around twice a week – much more than that necessitated for an average Australian in-country - via helicopter, armoured personnel carrier or semi-armoured vehicles such as the Bushmaster. "I enjoy the traveling but it's been hard physically, mainly from wearing the Combat Body Armour", he notes. The armour is an admitted necessity for all personnel though, and demanded of such trips – he is looking forward to his return to Australia for some extensive sessions of physiotherapy.

Back at home David has his wife of 28 years, Denise, to return to, as well as their four children, aged 16 to 24. Most of his service has been spent in Queensland, but he feels "this deployment has rounded me as a chaplain", and therefore further deployment might be asked of him.

Chaplains are not armed. Did the absence of a weapon make David feel vulnerable? He doesn't feel it does – he is surrounded by armed people, and if he goes somewhere he has an escort of usually two people. His deployment has seen him come under indiscriminate indirect fire, but not become directly targeted. These experiences gave him some insight into what the Australian soldier undergoes: our soldiers in front line conditions "live constantly not in fear but at least in expectation", he thought. The Australian sense of humour often made itself apparent; something David thought uniquely Aussie, and also essential – "every outfit needs a comedian to keep the sanity". He confesses to being apprehensive during his helicopter flying: the machine is close to the ground, within range of Rocket Propelled Grenade and smallarms fire, and your life is in the hands of the four crew.

Working at times within the Australian Headquarters within Iraq also gave David some new insights. He saw people working the necessary long hours but also some working too long, for "brownie points", a game David



2006 MCF Retreat 'Treat'

Continued from Page #8

declares he would not get into. Many were in competition, of course, for promotion.

How difficult has the deployment been personally? David Snape has seen quite a deal associated with the death and destruction going on every day in Iraq. His personal method of coping has been to deliberately choose which bits of what he has experienced to remember – and which pieces to forget. There were many new experiences for him – some of these represented an opportunity to put into practice the training he had received for extreme events, and he was pleased to see that it worked. His war experience has not changed what he calls his “personal faith journey”, but he has seen some parts of “the system” which can be improved.

Given the immensity of the deaths within Iraq – around 100 casualties a day in the situation at the time – anyone could be expected to have their views on humanity at large challenged. David’s feelings were engaged most by what he saw of the average Iraqi on the street, and what he experienced of violence and terrorism – aspects of the situation he feels strongly against. It would be good to see the reconstruction effort succeed. As to warfare as a whole, he still feels it must be a last resort, although he admits to seeing the need to sometimes attack first, but only if the reasons are clear; the collateral damage can be kept to a minimum, and the situation as a whole is feasible.

What has been the most rewarding about the deployment? The one to one situation with the soldiers; the efforts and funding dedicated to the Australian mission, and the enthusiastic support given to chaplains by the two brigadiers who commanded the Australian forces during his deployment. Humans overall, he found are surprisingly resilient: even in the midst of the everyday violence and death of Iraq they pick themselves up and continue with their lives. He doesn’t think terrorism will win – fanatics don’t triumph, eventually. People want freedom.

Lieutenant Tom Lewis, OAM, RAN, interviewed Chaplain Snape during their mutual deployment to western Baghdad.



By David Rose, Editor

The MCF Retreat provides members and their families with the opportunity to recharge and refresh with their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. The 2006 retreat provided us with a fantastic opportunity to learn more about God’s wonderful word and enjoy each other’s company in the peaceful, relaxing environment of Fitzroy Falls. The accommodation was great and the food yummy with plenty of opportunities for chatting and family time. Real ‘retreat treatment’.

Mick Mumford, currently the Commanding Officer of 3RAR and recently returned from commanding ‘Battlegroup Faithful’ in East Timor, shared with us concerning ‘Marching for the Lord: Thriving as a Christian in Defence’. The children were similarly blessed at they learnt about ‘Fruits of the Spirit’. God’s word is so rich,

“useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV)

At the retreat we were all given the opportunity to learn more about what God has for us in His wonderful plan.

Mick spoke to us about what God says in Joshua 1:6-9:

“Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. The you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” NIV

From this he raised three points:

- Take the lead in sharing your faith
- Know your faith
- Trust in God

Taking the Lead

Mick encouraged us to be ‘upfront’ about being Christians and when we first meet people make sure they know that we are Christians. This makes us accountable and emboldens and encourages other Christians around us. Also God is given the glory. As a Christian taking the lead is about being a servant and laying down our lives for others. Often not easy but our Lord Jesus provides us with the perfect example of servant leadership.

Know Your Faith

We must always be ready to give an account of our faith to those around us. In his talks Mick encouraged us to plan for success in giving our account and, to use a surfing analogy, plan for more waves! As Christians we are responsible for evangelism and we need to:

- Build relationships with others
- Communicate your personal life story and the difference being a Christian has made to you
- Invite people into a Christian friendly environment
- Discuss people’s lives with them
- Invite them to change their lives and be proactive!

Trust in God

In 1 Corinthians 12 we read that ‘faith’ is a gift. Where our faith is not sufficient we need to trust in God. In many instances in the Bible God chose the least impressive person to get the job done – David, Moses, Gideon. These men had to trust in God completely so the ‘job’ could get done.

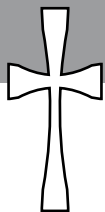
The Next Retreat

The Retreat was a great way for us to catch up with each other towards the end of another busy year. The next retreat is planned for end 2008 due to the AMCF Pacific Regional Conference being held this year. For all the effort on the 2006 retreat – thank you to:

- Mick for challenging us
- Jon Belmonte for so much of the organization
- The dedicated staff at the Fitzroy Falls Conference centre
- Erin Sipos and Bronwyn Edwards for the lovely gifts

Bless you all and hope to see you at the 2008 MCF Retreat.





MCF Prayer Calendar April-June 2007

Bless you and thank you for praying for MCF! We ask that you pray the points on this calendar once a week, on the week commencing the date listed. Each week has three points, the first relating to all those in Defence, the second relating more specifically to members of MCF, and the third relating to other Christian organisations who also minister and witness to Defence personnel. Our unity with these other organisations is very important. We are all part of Christ's body and each serve a different function to His glory. It is wonderful to be able to bless these organisations with prayer and practical support.

2 April

- Pray for our ADF this Easter that they will see, hear and understand that God loves them so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for them.
- MCF Council. For wisdom and clarity of vision as they serve the members of MCF.
- Fighting Words Ministry. As they seek to reach out to our military in Bandiana, pray for many opportunities to reach men and women for Christ. Pray for favour for this ministry on the Base.

9 April

- The Minister for Defence, Brendan Nelson. For spiritual and physical protection as he serves in this capacity. For Godly insight and understanding into the needs of our ADF.
- For leaders of MCF groups this year. For wisdom, discernment and Godly insight into the needs of their group. For the courage to reach out to others & to be a strong presence on their base.
- Everyman's Welfare Service. Healing for David Hawke and strength and wisdom for him as he leads this ministry.

16 April

- ACM "Angus" Houston, the CDF. For wisdom, strength and good counsel and safety when travelling.
- MCF members. Pray for more to get involved in some way with MCF. Pray for unity between members and that all will feel connected to at least one other member.
- Commissioner Mel Stephens from RSDS (Salvation Army). Pray for strength, courage and wisdom and a continuing vision as she leads this vital organisation.

23 April

- Those from our military who are deployed. Pray for their protection, physically, mentally and spiritually.
- Prayer Warriors. Praise God for this team! Pray for their spiritual protection and pray for more to join in this vital ministry.
- Navigators. Pray for Dave West in Bandiana as he reaches out to our military, for strong connections, for the opportunity to speak the gospel and for new doors to open.

30 April

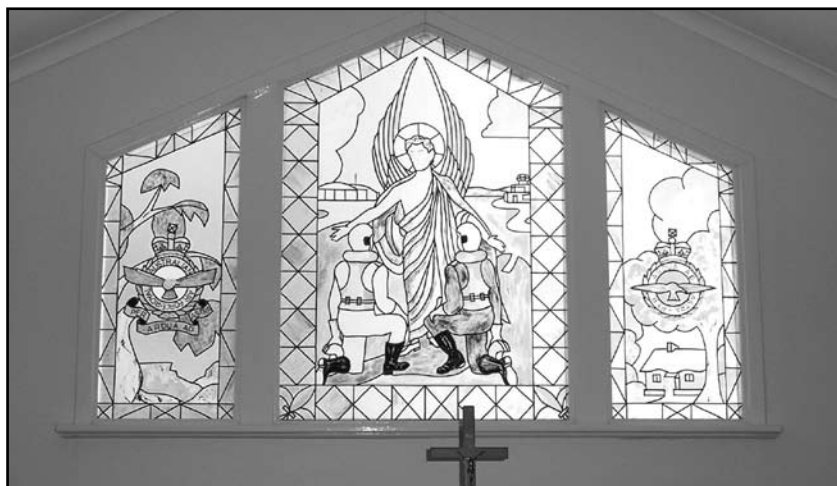
- The Chiefs of the Army, Navy & Air Force. That they receive good counsel and support and be protected as they serve our military.
- MCF staff worker Jon Belmonte. Pray for more opportunities for Jon to encourage MCF members and to reach out to other Christians in the ADF.
- Association of Christian Conferences, Training, and Service (ACCTS). For Russell and Helen Bielenberg as they minister in this region of the world.

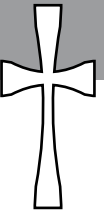
7 May

- Pray for those at our training institutions that during this time they would turn to the One who is always there for them - God. Pray for unity and a strong presence of Christians on these bases.
- Families of those MCF members who are deployed. For continued strength, protection and spiritual growth. For the body of Christ to be a practical encouragement to those in this situation.
- Association of International MCFs (AMCF). For God to provide all that is needed to run the regional conference in September 2007 (including \$75,000 to sponsor 2 delegates from each small Pacific nation), for many delegates to attend from Australia and NZ, for Christ to be glorified and many lives and countries to be impacted as a result of this conference, and that new MCFs will be formed.

14 May

- Pray for Principal Chaplains of the RAN, Army and RAAF that they would have the mind and heart of Christ as they lead our Chaplains.
- MCF members' marriages. For spouses of MCF military members that they would have a deep revelation of their important calling, that these marriages be protected, strengthened and blessed.





- Solid Rock Ministry. That the groups in Townsville and Holsworthy would reach many ADF wives with the unconditional and unfailing love of God.

21 May

- Pray for the "Alpha for the Forces" programme run by the Navy. Pray for God's word to go forth unhindered, to accomplish that for which it was sent and for it not to return void.
- Deployed Christians from our ADF. Pray Psalm 34:7 and Psalm 91 over them.
- Reserve Chaplains. That God would empower these men and women as they serve Him in this way. That they would feel included in the military Christian network and that their service would give God much glory.

28 May

- Give thanks for the welfare systems that we have available to the ADF. For Defence Families Australia to have God inspired ideas to help those within the ADF.
- Retired MCF members. That they will see the great value that their participation can have within MCF.
- Soldiers for Christ. That these men and women receive favour on their bases to reach out to their Catholic brothers and sisters. That they be strong ambassadors for Christ.

4 June

- For strong partnerships and anointing on the relationships between chaplains, local churches and military Christians.
- For those chaplains who are MCF members, that they would be supported and encouraged by members of the MCF.
- Navigators. For the National Director, Mike Johnson, for health, strength, and vision in leading the Navigators.


11 June

- For Chaplains within the ADF. For opportunities for them to share the gospel, for hearts and minds to be open as they do so. For Christ to speak through them as they meet with and counsel members of the ADF and their families.
- That God would raise up more MCF leaders and groups around our nation.
- Everyman's Ministry. That every financial and material need be met, for many to be drawn to the centres and for those ministering to have discernment as they show God's love to each person.

18 June

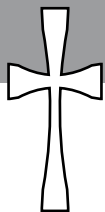
- For all our military leaders. That they be men and women with servant hearts, respectful of those they lead and mindful of the responsibility that they carry.
- Families of MCF members. For Godly friendships, a church home & opportunities to use their spiritual gifts.
- Chaplains. For spiritual protection as they serve our ADF.

25 June

- Pray that military chapels would be used to their full potential to reach out and be a blessing to our ADF community.
- Operation Fruitful Tree. For more of this vision to be implemented this year.
- Salvation Army. That the Representatives would have many opportunities to witness for Jesus. That God would guide and bless them in their support to the ADF & provide for their material needs, welfare & spiritual growth. That they would stand true to God's word & be filled with His peace. 

Not been to church in a while, but got this far and want to know more about being a Christian?

It may surprise you to know that it is not about being religious. "Religious" just means doing something regularly. You can religiously go to happy hours in the Mess for instance. Some people even think being a Christian is a "racial" thing like being of European or Asian heritage. Rather Christianity is about a personal relationship with the maker of our Universe through His son Jesus. It is about admitting we are not good enough to live in this world let alone the next and seeking God's mercy so that we can. The bible tells us that we need only knock on the door of the Lord and He will open it. How do you do this? Go and see a Chaplain. Walk up to him or her and say, "Hey Padre, I was reading the MCF magazine yesterday and was hoping you could tell me a bit about this Christian thing." Or go and see someone you know who practises their Christian faith, perhaps the person you borrowed this magazine from. If all else fails call the MCF Staff Worker! But whatever you do don't wait until it is too late. In the movie "Gladiator" Russell Crowe says, "What we do in life echoes in eternity." Christians would say "Who you know in life (Jesus) determines your eternity."



Staff Worker SITREP

By Jon Belmonte

Dear Brothers and Sisters

2007 is here, and MCF is forging ahead.

What a year 2006 was; our Chairman and Vice Chairman were both deployed at short notice. Yet throughout 2006 God continued to richly bless, sustain, support and grow MCF.

I prayerfully expect our Lord has more for us in 2007 as we continue to obey His direction.

2006 saw many inroads and beachheads formed; and 2007 will be a time of strengthening and reinforcing.

In 2007 we will:

- Need to strengthen and engage our supporting units?
- Develop further our logistical support and streamline our supply lines?
- Need to identify any of our weak points?
- Need to know and own the terrain and have troops where the battle will be fought?
- Victory is assured, but preparations need to be done,
- Hard training = Easy fighting

I was able to visit the vast majority of Victorian bases in October 2006; this logistical operation should have been called "I've been every where, Man" and would have been aptly named.

RAAF SALE has a keen Area Rep and with RAAF Sale due to expand in the next 12 months, opportunities will abound for MCF.

HMAS CERBERUS, the home of the Navy. HMAS Cerberus is the Navy recruit school and is also the home of numerous tri-service training schools. MCF has had a strong and regular group operating for along time and with continued prayer and encouragement will be working closely with an excellent group of Chaplaincy members.

RAAF WILLIAMS and RAAF POINT COOK, Meetings are held in the Chaplaincy, and a lunch time discussion group is held on Wednesdays. The facilitation of the Chaplaincy members on base is fantastic. I was able to speak with Veterans of MCF and at the same time welcome 2 new members to MCF.

VICTORIA BARRACKS Melbourne will have a MCF group operating in 2007, and we look forward to working with; and supporting the VBM Chaplaincy and MCF members in this endeavour.

Plus I must not forget to mention Watsonia, Bonegilla, Bandiana, Melbourne Defence Plaza, Puckapunyal, 1RTB, RAAF Wagga and all the MCF groups operating in these locations.

Western Australia will soon have MCF groups operating at RAAF Pearce and a few yet to be announced locations

November saw a successful MCF AGM, Our Executive remains the same and this will assist in following through with Operation Fruitful Tree. We also have 2 new members to the MCF council who will bring new vision, and new inspiration.

I am looking forward to visiting MCF groups in QLD in 2007 and following up on other bases in VIC & NSW.

2007 will be a time for us all to become a cohesive body in the promotion and expansion of His kingdom, this will be done by prayer, finances and willing labourers.

Are you able to assist?

- Are you a committed Christian?
- Can you regularly pray for MCF?
- Can you assist financially?
- Are you able to help with the harvest?

I would ask you all to; prayerfully and carefully look at becoming MCF Centurions.

We were extremely blessed in this office to see the arrival of a Centurion application from a recruit. That's right: recruits are now becoming members of MCF and some are becoming Centurions. Those who have only just started in the ADF are proud to show their colours and claim to be a military Christian.

Could some of us "Old Hands" do a little more?

Let us raise our Standard high and show the Colours, that of the great news of Jesus Christ, let us be rallied in the cause of Christ, let us demonstrate our faith by thought, word and deed throughout the ADF and our communities.

May we all trust and rely on God's complete knowledge and care for us in 2007 (Psalm 139)

Blessings

Jon Belmonte
National Staff Worker



New Website!!

www.MCF-Australia.org.au

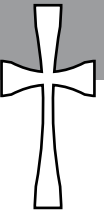
MCF-Australia is rolling out its new web site. Come and visit.

From your login you will be able to manage your details and how we contact you via email; you'll be able to buy our merchandise (mugs, lapel badges, etc), make donations online, participate in discussion groups, tell others about what's happening with your MCF meeting group, send articles and pictures, and much more.

Please bookmark your web page, www.mcf-australia.org.au

Peter Ellis, webmaster
peter.ellis@defence.gov.au





Motorcycling Staff Worker



By Jon Belmonte

Some of you may be aware that I ride Kawasaki 1600cc, fuel injected cruiser motorcycle. Yes, this is bigger than most of our first cars.

Preparing to ride on our highways and streets requires preparation; physical, mental and spiritual preparation.

Physically am I OK and able to ride? Mentally prepared and alert? I am also reminded and do my own Spiritual safety check.

As I inspect and check my bike, I systematically do checks of oil, coolant and tyre pressures, and then I check all my lights and electricals. This is my inventory; we should do our own spiritual inventory. Does our prayer life need a top up? Are wearing thin with our contact of God?

Once this is done I then start on my own preparation, I put my riding gear on which consists of:

- Kevlar Jeans
- Leather Jacket
- Boots
- Gloves
- Helmet

In low light, bad conditions and night time, I wear a fluorescent green jacket.

This ultra bright jacket at one stage earned me the nickname of NEON. But I want be seen and I want to be noticed.

And before I move off., I ask for a blessing and safety.

Armour of God -

Kevlar Jeans: *Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth,* 6:14

Leather Jacket: *and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* 6:14

Boots: *having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace;* 6:15

My Gloves: *taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.* 6:16

Helmet: *And take the helmet of salvation,* 6:17

Prayer: *and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me... 6:17-19*

Are you ready to seen and ready to be noticed?

Before you leave each morning and head out, do you ask for a blessing and safety?

Lord, let your hand be on the throttle of my life

Keep my eyes focused in front of me

When I need to turn

Point me in the right direction

Show me the signs along the way

And give me the wisdom to take the

right road

When I need to change gears

Remind me to use the clutch

When I need to stop

Put on the brakes

When I ride through the darkness

Be my headlight

Encourage me to take time daily

To fill my tank with your Spirit

Forgive me when I ride off course

As I forgive others that may

unintentionally cut me off

Forever ride by my side as my

personal road captain

Give me boldness to share, to

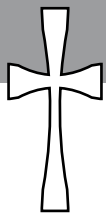
witness, to care.

May God bless each and every one of you

Jon Belmonte

National Staff Worker





Solid Rock Ministries...

Encouraging military wives to live Christian lives



By Janet Mumford

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." Matthew 7:24-27

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.." Isaiah 43:2 - 3.

One of the first things that strikes me when I look at these passages is the word "when". According to God's word we will experience "storms" (or trials) in life. There will be times when God will walk us through difficult situations rather than just removing the difficulty or taking us out of the situation. Many times God will call us to endure knowing

that through the enduring our character is refined and we grow in our dependence on Him. We should not be surprised when the storms come...God's word tells us they will. As Christians however we have some wonderful assurances in these passages. In the Isaiah passage, God promises to be with us as we go through trials. In the passage from Matthew God instructs us as to how we are to live our lives so that the storms that come upon us do not lead to our demise. "Hear His sayings, and do them"! This means we need to know what He says. We need to read our bibles and then apply what we read. As we have our lives solidly grounded on Jesus (our Rock), we will not crumple when the storms in life come.

Do you have a hunger for God's word? Do you listen and then put it into practice? Even though it sounds straightforward and we desire to be wise women, implementing God's instruction into our everyday lives can be a struggle. As a very mobile group of women we don't always have the advantage of strong, long term Christian friends with whom we can remain accountable, who can encourage us and keep us focused, who can mentor us, or with whom we can just enjoy some Christian fellowship. It can be easy for us to slip away from God and from the reading of His word.

Ladies, God has seen our plight and heard the cries of our heart and has birthed a new ministry just for us! "Solid Rock Ministries" (SRM) is endorsed by MCF and works in partnership with MCF to reach out to the wives of our military. Solid Rock Ministries will eventually offer groups all around Australia but has begun at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville and Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney. The groups offer you the opportunity to connect with other Christian women who understand your life as a military wife. SRM will help you to study God's word and put it into practice. SRM will help you to keep your life solidly grounded on Jesus. Eventually, when SRM is networked around the country you will have the opportunity to contact the group in your new posting locality before you get there, ensuring you receive a warm welcome from a sister in Christ as you arrive! Won't that be awesome?

SRM groups are non-denominational and welcome women from all denominations to meet with them. The groups will also be reaching out to as many military wives as they can with the unfailing love of Jesus.

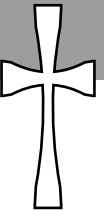
Can I encourage you to pray for Solid Rock Ministries, and to get involved if you are in the Townsville or Holsworthy areas? SRM is not meant to replace the importance of being involved in your local church but it is there to help you in your walk with God, in your transition from location to location and in enduring the storms (deployments being a good example!)

Would you like to know more or make contact with either of the groups? Please contact me at solidrockmin@optusnet.com.au and I will give you further information.

Can I encourage you to read God's word and put into practice what you read?

Bless you,
Janet Mumford





Would you like to meet military
Christians from the South West Pacific
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Christians today in a warm, relaxed setting?
Then here is your opportunity; attend the



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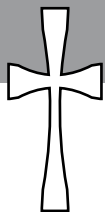
The theme of the conference is:

**“Inspiring Leadership:
Service with Integrity”**

(Proverbs 11:3)

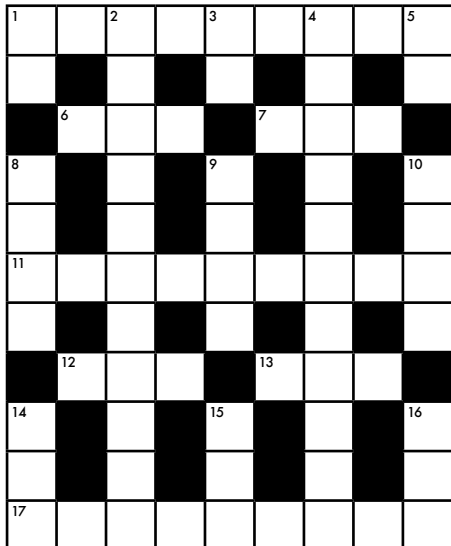
Dates: 20–23 September 2007

If the brochure provided with this magazine
has been used, please go to the MCF website
conferences.mcf-australia.org.au
or contact the MCF office at
office@mcf-australia.org.au



MCF word

Crossword 3



Solution to crossword in Edition 13



Across

1. Jesus healed the man lowered from the roof because the man was ... (Mark 2:4) [use Australian spelling]
6. The first woman (Genesis 3:20)
7. The breath of God can produce this (Job 37:10)
11. A description of both Rebekah and Rachel (Genesis 26:7 and Genesis 29:17)
12. It deserves and results in death (Romans 6:23)
13. God can hurl down his hail in an ... blast (Psalm 147:17)
17. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as the ... who went ahead to prepare the way (Matthew 11:10)

Down

1. Abbreviation for the Old Testament book of Psalms
2. These are reported in the last book of the Bible
3. An archaic expression (such as in the King James version of the Bible) for "Look! See! Behold!" (Matthew 3:16 and Matthew 28:20)
4. King Solomon, in front of the ark, was doing this with sheep and oxen (1 Kings 8:5)
5. Abbreviation for the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy
8. Wishing to avoid crucifixion, Jesus began his prayer with: "... , Father" (Mark 14:36)
9. The 5th book of the New Testament (about the apostles and the early church)
10. "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a ..." (Proverbs 16:18)
14. One of Noah's three sons (Genesis 6:10)
15. What Adam and Eve did to the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6)
16. Sinful desires do this against your soul (1 Peter 2:11)0

In the next edition of Cross Fire:

- Support to Chaplains
- Evangelism
- Supporting Christians in Defence