

CROSSFIRE



THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 24 † JUNE 2013





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

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From the editor...

Mr David Coleman

(david.coleman1@defence.gov.au)



Please send me a short story of your experiences as a Christian in the military and highlight what God has done for you!

Articles for Crossfire should be no more than 500 words long and focus on military Christian issues and experiences. Stories from operational service are especially encouraged.

Submissions should be in electronic format 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.

Cover image by: WO2 Andrew Hetherington
Personnel attend a Bible reading at the Tarin Kot cenotaph during the stations of the cross Easter service at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot on March 27.



Chairman's Report

LTCOL Jamie van Heel



Our thoughts and prayers go to the families of those service men who have lost their lives or been injured in recent operational activities in Afghanistan and East Timor. Since the last Crossfire edition in November 2012, seven service men have paid the ultimate sacrifice on operations. They include SGT Blaine Diddams, SPR James Martin, LCPL Stjepan Milosevic, PTE Robert Poate, PTE Nathanael Gallagher, LCPL Mervyn Mc Donald, and CPL Scott Smith.

I'd like to thank the outgoing Council members LCDR Dan Sutherland, PAC Murray Earl and PO Olly Kaese for their service on the MCF Council and I'd like to welcome PCHAP Geoff Webb and MAJ Geoff Robertson who have joined the Council.

Lisa Thomas, our Staff Worker, has been with us now for over 18 months. She has been a great support to the MCF Council, keeping contact with the MCF regional POCs and the general membership. Lisa is working 5 days a week however we are currently able to support her financially for only 3 days per week. I'd like to increase her pay in the 2nd half of this year. This will be possible through the generosity of our membership.

MCF hosted the National Day of Prayer for Defence on 6 Apr 13. This was a spiritually significant event for Australian Defence Organisation. The day focused on praying for the safety of deployed service men and

women, their families, and those who have recently returned from operations. Additionally, prayer was offered for ADF culture and the implementation of the Pathway to Change strategy, Chaplains, and Defence senior leaders.

The ADF Faith Under Fire Course is available now through chaplains and is a great resource for Defence personnel to understand from a historical perspective who Jesus was and to understand the concept of spiritual resilience. I encourage MCF members to become involved with their chaplains in leading this initiative and inviting their work mates to participate in the course.

The next Defence Christians dinner is scheduled for Fri 6 Sep 13 (flyer attached on p11) We are privileged to have Dr Greg Clarke, CEO of the Bible Society, who will be sharing with us on Christian confidence in a sceptical age.

The MCF Seminar titled Strength and Courage is scheduled for Sat 7 Sep 13 following the dinner (flyer attached on p14) The MCF seminar will encourage and equip Defence personnel to increase their strength and courage in the physical and spiritual battlespace. We have a great list of guest speakers including: GEN David Hurley, Commissioner Andrew Scipione, RADM Mark Campbell, Dr Greg Clarke and Mrs Elka Whalan.

Australia hosted the Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF) conference in Brisbane from 1-4 Oct 12. We had representatives from 10 SW Pacific countries.

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:6-9



AMCF SW Pacific Conference

Mr Russell Bielenberg



The AMCF Conference themed “Hands across the Pacific - A journey in faith” was held from 1-4 Oct 12 at the Brookfield Conference Centre in Brisbane. About 55 people attended from 10 nations, of which 6 were sponsored.

We were privileged to have General Srilal Weerasooriya, the newly appointed AMCF President from Sri Lanka and his wife Dilhani. General Weerasooriya was the Chief of Army in Sri Lanka and has recently returned as the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Pakistan. Both the general and his wife have wonderful testimonies of God’s use of them, watching over them and upholding them in times of great personal difficulty and danger. Through prayer alone, then with one other, the general was able to demonstrate the love of Jesus to his men, through them to their families and to the enemy, so reducing conflict and the death of many.

Dilhani’s testimony related to the loss of her two sons, one at the age of 16 who died in her arms though apparently very healthy and the other very late in pregnancy due to a medical error. She spoke of how her elder son looked up into Jesus’ face and consoled her and when she lost her second son and was herself pronounced dead. Her husband prayed at length in her hearing that the Lord would save her life and eventually she recovered. Many tear flowed as the story was told.

Chaplain Mau Monu (Australian Army) noted that some people see faith as a possession which they fear losing, as they might lose some other possession. Rather we need to recognise that God secures us through faith and embraces us. He spoke strongly on the uniqueness of Christ, being the only way to the Father.

Chaplain Al Lavaki (Australian Army) reminded us that we are to live totally dependent on God and interdependently with one another. He emphasised our need to remain connected for energy, wisdom etc.

Chaplain Misael Boude (PNGDF) urged men to take their God-given leadership role in family, society and nation.

Each nation presented a report on Christian activity in the police or defence force; in some cases chaplains are active

and largely integrated with the MCF, while in others there is no such ministry and nominalism is a problem. Having this background allowed us later to address some of the issues in Interaction.

The workshops on leadership, marriage and family, and integrity in the use of money and possessions in family and professional life were well led and received and generated much discussion.

Interaction

After less than 24 hours of Interaction, delegates were already making positive plans about how they could use what they were learning to impact their military or police, and were thinking about how they could link in to resources and training available through ACCTS and other supporting organisations. God ministered to us all; it truly was an interaction.

Some attendees also had the opportunity to testify at local churches on Sunday and were well received. There were moving scenes as we finished on Monday with our graduation ceremony as many friendships had been established or reinforced, and action plans were presented. Each country group then knelt as we laid hands on them and prayed for them as they were about to return home. Hearts were softened and eyes opened during the interaction. We thank God for what he did in the hearts of these men and women, and pray that as they return home, the Holy Spirit would continue to guide and strengthen them, leading them to build up or establish their MCF, deepen family relationships and be a witness to Christ in their work place. Praise the Lord for his goodness to the children of men! (See Ps 107).

Thank you to all who prayed and to those who gave financially to enable these activities to be the success that they were. Thankyou to the committee which included Mark Lax, Eric and Lynda Burton, Jamie Van Heel, Lisa Thomas, Russell and Helen Bielenberg and Michael Cole.

The AMCF World Conference will be conducted in Capetown South Africa in the last week of November this year. Two members from all countries with an MCF have been invited to attend. Please pray for the success of this conference.



National Day of Prayer for Defence

Mr David Coleman



The 2013 National Day of Prayer for Defence was held on Saturday 6 April with 23 groups meeting to pray across all states and territories and internationally in the MEAO, Malaysia and the Solomon Islands.

The National Day of Prayer for Defence is an annual event that commenced in 2011, for all Defence personnel and those in the community who have a heart to pray for Defence. We appreciate the commitment of many who gave their time to pray for the Australian Defence Force. The ADF needs your continued prayers to spiritually uphold the Defence Organisation to God in order to positively impact the lives of Defence personnel in these challenging times for Defence members, families, leaders and government. We also need prayer for wisdom and strength to make the right decisions to guide our nation into the future.



Feedback was received from a number of groups. Their reports were summarised in the May edition of the MCF Grapevine newsletter and were a source of much encouragement.

Next years National Day of Prayer is scheduled for Saturday 5 April 2014. If you would like to be an MCF Prayer Warrior who will pray for Defence issues on a regular basis please email PO Olly Kaese oliver.kaese@defence.gov.au.



Spiritual Resilience

GEN David Hurley



Some of you understand boot camp. We've all been through it, if you are in uniform, our equivalent is recruit or initial training. I was a Platoon Commander in Kapooka in 1979. I was posted (dragged) there out of my battalion. I was a young Platoon Commander in 1st Battalion, up in Townsville, recently married, enjoying life in the tropics.

In our spiritual life, we sometimes get dragged into things that are actually going to be good for us. The first month or two at Kapooka I didn't want to be there. As I received my first Platoon and all those young men, with long hair and big round eyes wondering what on earth was about to happen to them, things changed. Eleven weeks later when you march them out and you've seen these young kids grow in that first big stage in their life, where they started to test the boundaries and say – "oh, I can do this". The next barrier is something I can get through, whether it's physical: learning how to live with a group; learning how to live in the army; learning more about themselves; steeling themselves; and learning about their relationships with each other and their parents.

Many of them went there with dad's message ringing in their ears – "You're never going to be good enough. You won't make it". And then at the end of that parade, you go up to the soldier's mess canteen, and the parents come up and say to you, "I don't know what you've done mate, that's a miracle. It's hard to explain what you have done. You've put a bit of discipline in their life talked to them daily and encouraged them. "Yes, we've got a big challenge tomorrow, but you are going to grow in to that. We did five kilometres the other day, we are going to do nine this time. It's going to be hard, but you're mates are going to be there. You didn't think you could do five, now you can do nine." At boot camp you see that growth.

This is what our spiritual life is like, starting small and growing as we face opportunities and trials in our lives. In many of the trials we face in life we can think or say: "this will be too big for me". We shouldn't over play the situation that we are in at the present time. As a platoon commander at Kapooka I never thought that I would be able to command the Australian

Defence Force as the CDF. We are at war. We take casualties, we expect that, that is our business.

We are with people who will do anything they can to get us to say "No, we've had enough". And we train specifically to do that. If I was in America, I would say, "My job is to fight and win our nation's wars. That's what we're paid to do". And in a spiritual sense, that is what we are asked to do. That's what we're told to do in the Bible. That is the duty we are responsible for. We are here to fight the Lord's wars in this world. What does this mean to us – individually and as an organisation?

Pathway to Change is the platform that we are using to lead our cultural reform program in the ADF. Whatever your views about that, it has provided an opportunity for us to have a good look at ourselves in the mirror to see what we don't like and to see what we need to correct.

I will not take a backward step about defending the ADF, its people, what it represents, and the fine work it does, but we can't turn a blind eye to some of the issues that we do have with the organisation.

Our issues don't define us but we need to address them. Pathway to Change is part of our program to address that.

Pathway to Change does not specifically mention spiritual aspects as it has been written from a conservative perspective about how we have to deal with the organisation. That doesn't mean that inside of what we do there is not a role for examining what the spiritual growth, programs, and the development of our young people should involve.

There will be work done on the basis of values, building our values and what those behaviours are. If we look at the culture of an organisation, the outside observable element is really what defines us in the public eye. At the core, our core beliefs are there. Our core values are, in a sense, the mythology of ADF. The Anzac legend onwards is one of those key elements that keep us together. On the other side of that are our values. We have that sense of who we are and our history, but we have our values that define our behaviours. That's where we really need to build from. Building on some things we are doing at ADFA, but in a much broader sense, that is going to take a vertical program through the ADF. It's from me, down. These programs are going to integrate the organisation vertically in understanding its values rather than just ab initio training.

We will continue to build things like the ADF Faith Under Fire Course. We need to take that program forward and broaden it into the ADF. The organisation needs it. We are in a challenging time, but we should see it in the context of what we do. In the context of what we are trying to achieve in this organisation, both in operations and here at home as a complete organisation.



2012 MCF Spiritual Boot Camp Seminar

LTCOL Jamie van Heel



The 2012 MCF Spiritual Boot Camp Seminar aimed to encourage and equip participants to increase their spiritual discipline and resilience in the physical and spiritual battle space. The military has come to understand that strict discipline is essential to changing habits. A boot camp is the bridge between what you were and what you are becoming.

It is not without biblical precedent; Jesus had his wilderness experience for 40 days in the desert and David, a man after God's own heart, also spent much time in the wilderness. Their experiences focussed their spiritual discipline and resilience and equipped them for ministry.

Biblical perspectives and practical ways of exercising and strengthening spiritual discipline and resilience were shared by the keynote speakers to assist participants to become the people that God created them to be to make a difference for the Kingdom of God.

We were privileged to have with us:

The Chief of the Defence force and patron of the MCF, GEN Hurley;

Deputy Special Operations Commander, BRIG Dan Fortune;

Principal Air Chaplain and MCF's Chaplain's Representative, PAC Murray Earl;

Chaplain to the Waratahs, Mr Gary Speckman; and

Senior Pastor from the Canberra Christian Life Centre, Mr Sean Stanton.

"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Romans 12:1-2



Operationalising Spiritual Guidance

BRIG Dan Fortune



Why should we get involved

Up front I sense that we, Defence Christians and followers of Christ, must be prepared to engage through our fellowship and participate in the battle in a robust manner. We must ensure we are mobilized, *operationalised* and conducting our force preparation and battle procedure in order to assist our senior leaders.

Our Christian truth as provided to us in *John 14:6* "I am the way the truth and the life" is being faithful to Christ; this provides clarity and inspired immutable truth. We need to **own the values battle space** so we can address and support the range of key cultural pathways and change initiatives that are central to the Defence response.

MCF can be a voice of outreach and invitation to unify and guide the message of faith. Importantly, this contribution must be balanced with the secular world. It should speak to tolerance and a dialogue with other views. This engagement and interaction is critical to be a respected and valued voice in what is a contested narrative, and we cannot allow our nourishment of our personal faith to be regarded as zealotry or be exclusive and parochial.

Nor does this tolerance represent a compromise or a watering down of our Christ inspired truth, we must seek to emphasise the power and the resonance of this message.

What is Spiritual Resilience?

Resilience by definition is the capacity or power to return to the original form, position etc after being bent, compressed or stretched. Boot camp, as we in the military understand is an experience of inculcation of core values and principles and in society it has gained credence as a term for transformational behaviour.

Accordingly, as military Christians I assert that in our fellowship we could do more to question and challenge ourselves as to what we can do to 'own' the necessary changes; to lean into the struggle required to vanquish this evil to defeat the devil in the spiritual battle space. We are empowered as Christians and our faith is a source of strength and comfort.

It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.

Horace Greeley¹

Our challenge relates to how as MCF enablers we can apply practical measures of our faith, in other words to 'operationalise spiritual guidance' - to buttress or reinforce the Defence values and ethos insulate and buttress the good - to sever the fault lines or inoculate us from this negative. We know and can be sure from our study of God's word that evil is not going away and sadly sin and the devil are part of the word we must live in.

It's a contested fight – a non-permissive environment – 'a targeting operation into a denied enemy sanctuary'.

We must engage our collective faith and utilise God's power, obey his teachings, enjoy the gift of his Son's sacrifice and the salvation of forgiveness. To do this, I seek to focus on the enduring message of love and hope that our faith provides.

Where do we engage

We engage in the High Value Target areas. Below are outlined three areas for focused effort.

Ab initio

On entry into the ADF we must cherish and exemplify the hard earned and widely respected values that are gifted to us by our predecessors our national character and the ANZAC tradition - founded on Christian pillars of belief. It is this Ab-initio experience, the 'boot camp' experience in a real and practical sense that offers us such a unique and formative opportunity.

We need to be discerning about our choices, who we seek to exemplify and how we define our role models – we know this environment is essential. "As iron sharpens iron so a friend sharpens a friend." *Proverbs 27:17*

These apply to serving persons who are the face of our Army and the critical audience of my message and I draw this view from my personal time as a 'boy' recruit at Kapooka (17 years old) and the role models I was fortunate to be provided fair tough but I felt safe.

1. new standard in American journalism by its combination of energy in news gathering with good taste, high moral standards



We need high standards, hard nosed professionals and **strong moral leadership, not pillow fluffing post modern 'likership'**.

Reinforced by my time as CO RMC Duntroon and a very clear opinion as to the influence and enduring legacy of the influence that can be achieved – either positive or negative by the instructional staff.

To guide and shape their interactions and conduct with the new recruits as we would welcome and nurture new members of our faith to share the 'good news and gifts of our fellowship and journey with Christ.

I see great value in focusing on self discipline and the capacity to resist temptation – through the liberation that words of the Apostles provide

"to escape from the destructive lust we are taught to do our best to add goodness to our faith; to goodness add knowledge; to knowledge add self control; to self control add endurance; to endurance add godliness; to godliness add Christian affection and to affection add love." 2 Peter 1:4-7

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." James 1:12

Operations

When I was preparing this article, I sought to discuss how our Christian faith and the perspective this brings could be applied to mitigate some of the less understood but still significant cultural and leadership challenges and the more systemic weaknesses we face as an Army regarding the conduct of our soldiers.

I've seen it up close in my service - in reflecting on how will Army's 7-8 year block of (RTF – MTF) operational service in Afghanistan – where I spent 12 months last year in a command appointment in ISAF SOF and before that served for over 6 months in 2008 as CO of the SOT – define our cultural foundation going forward beyond this wartime experience.

We know from our history (ANZAC tradition permeates 10 years later) that the wartime culture has a defining – or redefining influence on the future of our organisation and therefore this must be closely examined – warts and all.

Accordingly, how do we as Christians seek to be a positive engaged voice in this pathway to future growth, in particular as we confront the view that it is increasingly being reported as a culture defined as one which reflects 'preciousness, boredom and entitlement'?

In my experience, both as a soldier in SAS and then in Command appointments, in particular on operations, it is the capacity to do the thankless mundane; essential tasks to ensure tactical excellence. There are simply no short cuts to operational success.

In my experience, this clearly requires a focus on diligence, perseverance or deferred satisfaction.

Resilience and building the capacity to endure struggles and suffering are central to my experience in command on operations and the responsibilities and obligations this brings – in particular when putting men in harms way and sadly not seeing them return alive.

Leaders must demonstrate resolve to stay in the fight, to reset and re-launch into the fray. As Paul says in his letter to the Romans; *"Rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering brings perseverance; perseverance character; character hope and the Holy Spirit will not disappoint this hope."* Romans 5:3-4

Without diligence and the capacity to endure- including the impact of combat and the loss of life that this entails we cannot generate resolve and endure the struggle.

The ANZAC enduring legacy leads me to think of the values of inculcating humility, not arrogance or vanity. The character that allows us to share and sacrifice on behalf of others and to be respectful of others. It does not mean one must cower or retreat from our principles and nor does it involve the surrender of one's rights. Meek men and women of the Bible showed firm resolve, courage, conviction and strength. So must we and not allow bullying or harassment. And whilst this is a theme that reaches across the three areas it is our conduct on operations, and our interactions with other nations and peoples where this is in sharp focus and directs impacts on the risks and dangers of combat.

Post operations

This last focal area is one I spend much time on in my day job in SOHQ and I would be confident in asserting that in Army there is simply no higher organisational priority, beyond support to current operations.

The capacity to support and rehabilitate is critical to our value base and illustrates much about our culture and of the three I think it is both the most challenging. I think it is also the one we are doing best in, which reflects the leadership compassion and personal commitment of all in the Defence force, wider government and the community at large.

In my observations as how individuals respond to the physical and mental post operational challenges can be attributed to their spiritual resilience – a statement of the obvious perhaps, however one we as military Christians should continue to illustrate, and elevate in the narrative around the increasing discussion and priority afforded 'whole of person wellness' and post operational rehabilitation.

As military members we operationalise spiritual guidance to build resilience through the messages of compassion and forgiveness we can draw from Christ's teaching and example. The gift of grace and peace are a huge source of comfort to me personally as I have struggled and wrestled with reintegration and adjustment and been confronted and even haunted at times by the memories, smells and images of combat death, extreme emotions of adrenaline rushes and blood chilling fear.

ctd. overleaf



These extremes can be addictive and the long term exposure will impact on mental perspectives and outlook on what is 'normal'. If not managed, it can be destructive. I have seen and continue to see many experienced veterans within the Special Forces community similarly struggle with their service experiences.

Christ gifts us his grace, to me a personal guarantee that I can cast my fears and worries on him and I sense this letting go and the release and renewal is a very powerful message – consistent and complementary with the science and psychology of the medical professional approach.

*"Take my yoke upon you, Let me teach you because I am humble and gentle at heart and you will find rest for your souls."
Matthew 11.29*

So in our fellowship, in our advice to commanders and importantly in our leadership and service with our comrades we would do well to echo and affirm these messages of peace and comfort through spiritual inspiration and reflection as the antidote to the stress, fear and scars of war service and allow a healing and healthy outlook as opposed to a legacy of despair and mental illness.

Raise, Train, Sustain

PAC Murray Earl



Raise, train, sustain; that is what we do in the ADF. We always raise, train, sustain, no matter what stage in the military cycle we happen to be. Corporals raise, train, sustain; two stars, raise, train, sustain; we are all learners.

As Christians we are all learners and we are all in the Christian "boot camp", learning the basics again and again as to how to live at different levels and stages of our lives. I have been a Christian for over fifty years and the greatest weakness of Christians I have noticed over those years, is the seeming lack of the renewal of the mind. The phrase; "renewal of the mind" comes from the Bible as St Paul directs the troops in Romans 12:1-2:

"Therefore I urge brothers (and sisters), in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will." (New International Version)

"Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (New living translation).

Be transformed, **by the renewing of your mind**..... This renewal is the renovation of our minds – all house and garden people understand this, so if you want an image to work with, try renovation, renewal or re-invigoration.

The Christian Faith and the Christian life is the outcome of the act of God by the Holy Spirit, through Christ. Becoming a Christian, is when we say "yes", to God's "yes" on our behalf in Christ.

This act of God transforms our minds from being centred on what we want to do with our lives, to being centred on what God wants for us and we know God only wants the very best for those who love him. Why does the mind need renewal? The mind needs renewal because the mind controls the body.

The Christian life is a reasonable faith - the methodology of being Christian is the method of science. Something or someone is there, and our job is to discover what or whom is there, as it is revealed to us. Most science emerges out of the Christian view that God is predictable, that laws of science are constant and what is there making itself or themselves known if we investigate, observe and listen.

The Christian view is that God speaks and reveals who he is through our encountering God in part through creation physically, and totally through Christ personally. To know Christ changes things. To know Christ is to have our minds changed and renewed in a way that has all to do with our knowing Christ.

Remember, there are three wills of God. The Sovereign will of God – this always happens and we catch up with it, usually looking back. Phrases like; "looking back, it makes sense now..." or "You meant it for evil, but God..." are often heard. Secondly, the revealed will of God as it come to us in the Bible. Eg. the ten commandments, "do not steal, do not bear false witness" etc are all part of God's revelation or revealed will. It is God speaking to us through others and the written word.



Thirdly, there is the path of the renewed mind, whereby knowing the first two (God's sovereign will and God's will revealed in the Bible), we ourselves apply wisdom to the complexities of the hundreds of aspects of daily life as we apply God's will personally.

This is where it becomes difficult, for in the day-to-day debate in our "self-talk", in our decision making, in our relationships, in our lives in the military, it is easy to be conformed to this world, which St Paul warns against. This world is very seductive, (especially in the West, where an indulgent life is possible) - being a Christian in Bakina Faso or Botswana, is perhaps easier. If you want to know just how subtle this "conforming" is, just read or watch C.S. Lewis' *"The Screwtape Letters"*.

Being transformed means more than just not being conformed to this world externally, for example, Christians may not do this or that, or even do this or that, even though that is a factor in Christian living; being transformed means changing the way we think. Knowing Christ changes our mental state as we look and think on all things differently causing us to view the world differently.

This renewing includes education but is not limited to education, however, we all need to study; (many think that education will redeem people, yet some of the most evil people in the world were well educated). So education is but one part. In Romans 12, St Paul takes it further by saying we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Our minds have a mindset, a position, a posture, a bearing, an attitude, a bent. Our minds are not just repositories of data but are created by whom or what controls our minds, in terms of whom we worship and what we worship and then what we do with that input. Are our minds renewed or not?

Who or what controls our mind; facebook or faces, finance or faith? Are our minds renewed? There are only two options; you (or others) control your mind, or the Holy Spirit controls your mind.

If we know Christ we have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit works in two ways to renew our minds. From inside our minds the Holy Spirit works to break our hard hearts to acknowledge what needs renewal or change, which initially is primarily humility. The Holy Spirit also works from the outside in, by bringing to us (in many different ways, but primarily through Scripture), the absolute truth of the gospel. Both aspects mean the renewal of our minds. From inside and outside, we are to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength, but primarily our mind.

I ask you therefore, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies and your mind as an act of worship. This is a paraphrase of God's will for us all. Our lives are acts of worship, not just when they are singing songs or hymns. Therefore don't be controlled by this world, but be aware who controls your life, your attitudes, goals, ideals, opinions, desires, ideas and making the change, to think, read, argue, watch, work and write, about

that which renews, restores, revives and reconciles. Any one who claims to be Christian is required to fulfill this task and calling.

So, raise, train, sustain is the quest, to allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, by being truly "enlightened" in Christ and then to go and give (to ourselves primarily), but also to others, an ongoing intelligent and ever reforming account of the faith that is within us.

Renewal means:

our intellect, for life long learning;

our soul, requiring nourishing;

our relationships, that are always changing;

our body, always needing attention and a precious and remarkable thing;

our outlook, requiring challenges;

our habits, always need reviewing;

our health, vital and in need of care;

our boundaries, requiring attention and change;

our sabbaticals, being kept;

our vision, leading us on;

our attitude to death, ever with us and a source of hope;

our solutions, are they Christian?;

our listening, do we? Do we give people a good listening to;

our seeking after truth, the ultimate renewal.

This is all about our mind, and its renewal.

But in your hearts set apart, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason of the hope, but do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15

Whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honourable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things, fix your mind on them. Philippians 4:8

There is a song that goes; May the mind of Christ my Saviour, live in me from day to day, by his love and power controlling all I do and say.

Suggested reading, in addition to the Bible, in the renewing of the mind:

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity* and *The Screwtape Letters*.

McGrath, Alister. *Roots that Refresh*

The Sunnier Side of Doubt

Knowing Christ

Blainey, Geoffrey. *A Short History of Christianity*

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*

Stott, John. *The Cross of Christ*

Wright, N.T. *Evil and the Justice of God*



The Shield, the Sword and the Struggle

Gary Speckman



God reveals a reality bite to us in Ephesians 6 (verses 16-18) when he commands us to take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and then to engage in battle by praying in the Spirit. Our experience in this life will primarily be a battle as we encounter a sustained opposition to God's kingdom by Satan.

The shield of faith is our primary defence against the flaming arrows of doubt that attack us from every side. Our enemy is the evil one and he seeks to destroy us by undermining our faith and causing us to doubt the truth and power of God's word. In combat with Satan the important thing is not how strong our faith is, but how strong is the object of our faith. It doesn't matter how strong your faith is the ice when ice-skating...what matters is how strong the ice is. God is able to hold us up even when we are wavering with doubt.

The sword of the Spirit, our offensive weapon, is defined in this passage as the word of God. When Jesus faced intense satanic assault, he simply referred to what God had already said hundreds of years earlier. He is a perfect God and therefore his message is unchanging. Three times Satan lied to Jesus, promising things he couldn't really deliver...and three times Jesus countered the attack by quoting God's word.

After instructing us on how to fight our enemy, he commands us to stand firm against evil by praying! The struggle (and victory) is in prayer. We are told to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions...with all kinds of prayers...and to always keep on praying...and even to pray for the one calling others to prayer. Prayer is the battle.

Our prayerful presence can bring a powerful victory even in extreme circumstances. Psalm 23 reminds us that even in the valley of the shadow of death, we need not fear because we can be confident of God's presence. Through prayer we can encourage others living in fear. Deuteronomy (20:2-4) talks about the role of a priest's presence in battle. Usually a priest's role involves interceding for others and talking to God about men, but before a battle a priestly presence can encourage men to fight for victory.

Prayerful presence reveals itself in 1) "pastoral prayer" where the warrior prays with others for their expressed needs and

2) "priestly prayer" where the intercessor pleads with God for others in regard to their real needs.

There are five primary roles that a sports chaplain plays as he in engages in hundreds of service tasks.

The first (and central) role is **Presence**. Just being with people and offering all that he is and has to offer others as need arises. This can mean simply hanging around after training and being present before and after games to encourage the players. It also implies being available for them in the normal high and low experiences of life.

The second role (simply defined for us in Psalm 23) is the **Pastor** role. We are to show genuine interest, care and provide a safe place for men and women to nurture their faith. This role frequently focuses on "prayer with" as we demonstrate by our prayers that God is interested in all aspects of their lives.

Role three is the **Priest** role which is often less visible as we engage in warfare prayer for others, interceding with our heavenly Father for others and resisting the forces of darkness by bringing God's word into focus. This role is usually not practiced in the presence of the person being prayed for, it might simply be too overpowering for them. But in a sustained attack against the forces of evil it is good to have two or more "priests" praying together.

Role four is the **Prophet** role. A prophet speaks forth the truth (and the word of God) for the well-being (and sometimes warning) of the hearer. Where the priest talks to God about men, the prophet talks to men about God and his will and ways. The prophet role includes graciously sharing the good news of the gospel with others when it is appropriate. A prophet doesn't have to convince others, but he is responsible to get the message "right" and call people to a response.

The final role is the **Prince** role and calls for the child of God to demonstrate the values of the King and kingdom through his own allegiance and lifestyle. A prince is not a king. He leads through modelling as he remains loyal to his king. In the process of learning to become a king he can display of life of integrity that generates loyalty from his mates.

The five roles have been identified as the roles of a chaplain but if we think about it for any length of time in the light of biblical truth, it becomes obvious that these are roles that every Christian should consider bringing to the battlelines everyday in faithfulness to engage with the enemy and honour God. One of the best weapons in our armoury is prayer. It is usually better to talk to God about men and women before talking to men and women about God.

Therefore, having armed and prepared yourself for the battle - PRAY!

(Gary is a sports chaplain serving the Australian Rugby Union, the NSW Waratahs, and the Sydney Kings.)



Defence Christians Dinner 2013

Friday 6 September 2013

Christian confidence in a sceptical age

You are invited to the Defence Christians Dinner for 2013

Please join us if you have any association with Defence, as a military member, trainee, civilian, contractor or any interested family and friends, for a good night of food, interesting and inspirational speakers, entertainment and prizes.

Everyone is welcome – so why not organise a table?



Keynote speaker
Dr Greg Clarke

Dr Greg Clarke is the CEO of Bible Society Australia.

He appears on the DVD of the Faith Under Fire Course, adding a scholarly and philosophical background to the course.

He has been Director of the Centre for Public Christianity, and author or co-author of books such as: *Is it worth Believing*, *One flesh*, and *666 And All That*, as well as Bible studies in the Matthias Media Interactive Bible Study series.

The Bible Society provides Cam-covered bibles and deployment gospels as a ministry to members of the ADF. Greg lives in Sydney with his wife and 4 children.

Venue

Top of the Cross Function Room
Canberra Southern Cross Club
92-96 Corinna Street
PHILLIP ACT 2606

Time

6:30pm for 7 buy beverages at bar
7pm – 10pm: program

Dress

Smarter casual (eg. not jeans)

Booking details for Defence Christians Dinner

Register by Friday 23 Aug 13

Cost per person: \$55

Credit Card Online:

www.mcf-a.org.au

Cheque and Cash sales to:

Military Christian Fellowship
CP3-1-160 Campbell Park Offices
Northcott Drive
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Electronic Funds Transfer to:

Bank: Defence Bank
Account Name: Military Christian Fellowship
BSB: 803205
Account Number: 20753492
Reference: D Your name

Enquiries to:

MRS Lisa Thomas
02 6266 4950
0412 612 994
mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Remember to include:

For nametags: First and last name of each person and their guests attending

For updates: email and phone contact details

Dietary requirements and seating preferences (*optional*).





Application for Membership of MCF

Return to Military Christian Fellowship-A, Campbell Park Offices CP3-1-160,
Northcott Drive, MAJURA, Dept. of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

Surname: _____ Given Names: _____

Rank: _____ Employee ID: _____

Mailing Address (preferably a Defence address):

Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Country: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

I apply for Ordinary Membership: *(tick one)*

- I am a member/ex member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS *(circle)*
- I am the spouse of a member/ex member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS *(circle)*
- I am an accredited representative of the ADF philanthropic organisation
- I am a civilian who currently works alongside ADF personnel, or have done so for at least one year at: _____ *(Location)*
- I am a member/ex member of the Armed Forces of _____ *(name of country)* currently residing in Australia
- I am none of the above and apply for Associate Membership.

Military Christian Fellowship Statement of Belief

To ensure that members of MCF agree to the basics of Christian doctrine, applicants must, in accordance with the MCF Constitution, sign the following Statement of Belief. This Statement is based on the 381 AD Nicene Creed; the most commonly used statement of Christian faith in the history of the church:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men (meaning all) and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scripture; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic (meaning universal) and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sin. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. I believe that the Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is the authority in all matters of faith, teaching, activities and personal conduct concerning MCF.

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

MCF Centurions make a difference in the ADF

Rank/Title: _____ Full Name: _____ Employee ID (if serving ADF or APS): _____

Mailing Address): _____

Town/Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Country: _____ Email: _____

As an MCF Centurion I:

1) Commit to pray weekly using MCF's prayer calendar.

2) Commit to financial support of \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 per fortnight.

I have made a \$_____ per fortnight allotment via DEFPAY to allottee WG0052.

I have arranged an auto transfer of \$_____ per fortnight to MCF's DEFCREDIT account
(Account name: Military Christian Fellowship, BSB 803-205, Member number 66126, Account number: 20514572).

Find attached my cheque of \$_____ to cover one year's support. Please contact me in twelve month's time to renew my pledge.

3) Agree to promote MCF by displaying MCF advertising provided to me in my local area and church.

4) Do/Do not (circle one) wish my name to be listed in Cross Fire as an MCF Centurion.

5) Do/Do not (circle one) wish to receive quarterly updates about MCF including an email from the Chairman about the recent happenings in MCF, Treasurer reports so I can see my gift working, and sneak previews of Cross Fire and MCF products.

6) Do/Do not (circle one) wish to receive a Centurion Pack of signature items including a Centurion coffee mug, MCF Centurion lapel pin, a 15%-off coupon for Koorong bookstores, and book 'Principles of War'.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return to:

Military Christian Fellowship-Australia, CAMPBELL PARK OFFICES: CP3 -1-160
Northcott Drive, MAJURA, Department of Defence, CANBERRA, ACT, 2600

For further information ring MCF Staff Worker on 02 626 64950 or email mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Only MCF members can become Centurions. MCF membership and Centurion forms are available online at www.mcf-a.org.au, from the MCF Office at CP3-1-160, or in the Cross Fire magazine.

The Centurion program commenced in 2005.

We are aiming for 100 centurions to carry the Lord's work forward in MCF by 2014.



STRENGTH AND COURAGE

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia - Seminar 2013



Saturday, 7 September 2013

The MCF Strength and Courage Seminar will encourage and equip Defence personnel to increase their strength and courage in the physical and spiritual battle space. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." (NIV)

The MCF Seminar is open to anyone associated with the Defence community who would like to exercise and increase their strength and courage so that they can be the people that God has created them to be to make a difference for the Kingdom of God.

Venue:

R1 Theatre

Sir Thomas Blamey Square
Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT

Car park: Cnr Constitution Ave and
Sir Thomas Blamey Square

Details:

Registration 8.40 am for 9.00 am start
Lunch (Provided) 12.30pm
Close 3.00pm

Contact:

MCF-A National Staff Worker
MRS Lisa Thomas
CP3-1-160
Campbell Park Offices
Department of Defence
Northcott Drive
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6266 4950

Email: mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Website: www.mcf-a.org.au



General David Hurley, AC, DSC
Chief of the Defence Force (CDF)
Patron - Military Christian Fellowship of Australia



Rear Admiral Mark Campbell
Head Navy Capability



Commissioner Andrew Scipione APM
NSW Police Commissioner



Dr Greg Clarke
CEO of the Bible Society



Mrs Elka Whalan
Retired Australian
Swimming Olympian

Cost:
\$35 per person

Payment Methods Please complete your payment by **23 August 2013**

Register by Credit Card online at www.mcf-a.org.au Either as part of the online registration or as an email please provide:

Electronic Funds Transfer

Reference: S Your name
Account Name: Military Christian Fellowship of Australia
BSB: **803-205** Account Number: **20753492**

Cheque and Cash

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia
(See National Staffworker address see Contact information).

(Note: Bookings for the Defence Christians Dinner 2013 are arranged separately)

Booking Details

as an email please provide:

- * Your name (include first and last name)
- * Email and phone contacts
- * Guest name (s) (include first and last name (s))
- * Dietary requirements

to: mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Please note that photographs of the event may be taken for display on the MCF-A website, publishing in Crossfire magazine and for use in other MCF promotional material. Please speak to the photographer at the event if you do not wish to be photographed.

Training Foundations – Getting the basics right!

Pastor Sean Stanton



K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple Saint!

Life is very complicated & we sometimes introduce that to our relationship with Jesus. Religiosity always complicates life with rules, often from well-meaning people.

2 Cor 11:3 (NKJV) "I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

It does not matter where you are in life – Jesus says to you, "Follow Me!"

Mt 9:9–13 (TNIV) "As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰*While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.*

¹¹*When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*

¹²*On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

The Pharisees

Believe in the inspired word of God.
Believe in the resurrection.
Believe in miracles.
Believe in personal righteousness.
They are very quick to evaluate & judge others.
They do not follow Jesus.

Tax Collectors & Sinners

Sinners – professional sinners. People who make a living by sinning, they know it & so does everyone else.

Tax Collectors – The occupying Roman Government collected a variety of direct and indirect taxes, using a network of tax-farmers - Tax Collectors. Jews could pay up to 80% of their income in tax in 7 different taxes.

In this system, one usually became a Tax Collector by bidding against others to guarantee the highest amount of money to the Roman Government. The Jewish population for several reasons especially despised tax collectors:

They collected money for the foreign power that occupied the land, & were considered collaborators.

They were notoriously unscrupulous, growing wealthy at the expense of others, including of their own people.

They were in regular contact with Gentiles, rendering them ritually unclean.

Jesus

Whilst the disciples are muttering about godless people like Matthew, Jesus without consulting them walks up to Matthew & simply says, "Follow Me!" The disciples would have been shocked. They would have wanted to take Jesus aside & ask if he really knew Matthew & what he did. They would have felt embarrassed to be seen in public with Mathew. They would have wanted to take Mathew out the back & tell him a thing or two about what a traitor and embarrassment he was to his nation & family.

At the very least they would have wanted to get him registered in the class 101 – Ten Commandments, Things you need to know about breaking God's law! They would have wanted to point out that Mathew was not an accidental sinner but a professional sinner & that it was going to be humiliating for them to be seen in public with him!

Jesus did not tell Matthew where he was going – hell! He did not give Matthew a list of things he had done wrong, back tithes he owed, sacrifices he had missed, and services he had not attended. He did not give him a list of things he needed to learn, believe, or change. Jesus could have buried Matthew in guilt & condemnation. Jesus simply said to Matthew, "Follow Me!" This is the invitation that Jesus extends to us each & everyday!

It does not matter how bad you have failed & messed up as a follower of Jesus – Jesus says to you, "Follow Me!" Jn 21:19 (TNIV) "Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

It does not matter what others are doing – Jesus says to you, "Follow Me!" Jn 21:21–22 (TNIV) "When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"²² Jesus answered, "... what is that to you? You must follow me."

ctd. overleaf



Foundational Words

Jesus taught that the foundation for building a great life that could withstand the storms of life was to know & implement God's word in everyday life.

Mt 7:24–27 (MSG) *"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.*

"But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

Demystifying Devotions

The subject of devotions along with sharing our faith with others is something we all agree on, know we should do & feel guilty that we don't do it enough.

1. Mt 26:40–41 (TNIV) *"He returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"*
2. Mt 6:7–13 (NKJV) *"When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 'Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 'In this manner, therefore, pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'"* A 25 second prayer!

1 Ki 18:36–37 (TNIV) *"At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. '37Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'"* A 22 second prayer!

Jn 11:41–42 (TNIV) *"Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. '42I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'"* A 12 second prayer!

Lk 6:12 (TNIV) *"One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."*

3. Jn 15:7–8 (NLT) *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and*

it will be granted! '8When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.'" SMS - Prayers

Doing Devotions

2 Tim 3:16–17 (NLT) *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. '17God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."*

This does not mean read 5-10 chapters per day - getting behind & trying to catch up, etc. If you miss a day God's word will still be there tomorrow & next year.

Eph 5:25–26 (NLT) *"...just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her '26to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word."*

Find a quiet time and space to read your Bible, preferably at the same time each day.

1. Complete the "S" by reading the Scripture. Don't just skim through it, but really think about what it means. Imagine what the people involved were experiencing. Write down a verse or two that really stood out to you in your journal.
2. Complete the "O" by writing down Observations about the scripture you just read. You may want to write your own summary of the passage, but more importantly, think about what God has to say to you through this part of his Word.
3. Complete the "A" by writing down how this Bible passage applies to you right now, in your daily life. For example, in the parable about the prodigal son, which character do you identify with most: the loving and merciful father, the son who squanders his life and then repents, or the resentful older brother? Do you see similar situations in your life right now? How can you respond in the way Jesus taught?
4. Complete the "P" by writing down a prayer. This is a personal message from you to God; so don't worry about getting the perfect words down. Just make it honest and heartfelt. Remember that God always listens, and already knows your needs. He just wants to hear from you.

Deut 17:18-20 (NLT) *"When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy these laws on a scroll for himself in the presence of the Levitical priests. He must always keep this copy of the law with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God by obeying all the terms of this law. This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. This will ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations in Israel."*

2 Cor 13:14 (MSG) *"The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you."*



Pacific Partnership – Reflections on Faith

FLTLT Scott Minchin

Pacific Partnership is the dedicated humanitarian and civic assistance mission conducted by the US Navy with and through partner nations, non-governmental organisations and other US and international government agencies to execute a variety of humanitarian civic action missions in the Pacific Fleet area of responsibility. Pacific Partnership is designed to strengthen alliances, improve US and partner capacity to deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and improve security cooperation among partner nations. Pacific Partnership 2012 (PP12) provided a series of Civil Assistance Programs focused on healthcare assistance and environmental sustainability from aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy to the nations of Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia.

When I am writing for Crossfire I'm always conscious that I feel humbled, speaking and writing for the MCF audience. As an older junior officer, a latecomer to faith and last of all as a reservist, I wonder whether what I will write is pertinent, and of interest to the broader MCF.

Some years ago as I was completing my Officer Training School requirements, our first aid instructor talked about his experiences on Pacific Partnership and I thought then it was an activity that I would love the opportunity to participate in. In 2012 I was selected to fill a force protection role aboard the USNS Mercy, as the XO of the Australian Contingent. As well as an opportunity to complete some valuable work with the ADF, US Navy and regional partners, I had the opportunity to experience God's presence as he consistently introduced me to friends in faith.

Arriving at Guam, to join the USNS Mercy, the hospital ship that is the central platform for PP12, I was nervous as well as anxiously looking after a group of 24 Australians. Our first contact with the US PP12 team was Chaplain Cortes, a man of faith, who shared a workspace with me for the entire mission.

Coincidence that my first point of contact was a man of faith? – perhaps not. Boarding the bus to travel to the USNS Mercy I sat next to one of the Australian contingent who I had met at Sydney Airport about 16 hours prior. I bowed my head and he asked if I was praying – I told him that I was – and he explained that he too was a Christian – the bus ride passed quickly as we discussed faith and God's presence on the PP12 mission – not just luck that out of 40 odd seats on a bus, I sat there.

I was assigned berthing on the USNS Mercy initially in overflow quarters, but then moved to share with three US Navy surgeons. I attended the first inter-denominational service on the ship and noticed that the senior surgeon, a US Navy Captain who shared my berthing, was also at chapel.

Faith formed part of every day on PP12. I remember early in the transit from Guam to Indonesia, attending a get-to-know-you session and joining with NGO members, USMC and USN personnel in singing 'How Great Thou Art' (likely badly from my perspective). I formed a friendship with USMC CPL Galloway, as well as explaining the intricacies of football codes, we would 'fist-pump' as we would pass each other on the ship, him greeting me with "Praise Him Sir – Praise his name". Even better, some folks I would work with, upon being 'surprised' at my Chapel attendance, would join me at Chapel, and issues of Crossfire were distributed amongst the crew and the team.

God would bring me into contact with people of faith on a daily basis; I was integrated with the US force protection teams and my force protection colleagues, who I became friends with, were both Christians. I worked with men of faith daily.

As well as the chance to engage in a humanitarian assistance mission, my passion and my reason for joining the ADF over a decade ago, PP12 'surprisingly' brought me into contact with fellow Christians, with people of faith and with friends and witnesses. Lucky coincidences – I think not.

The AMCF Global Interaction 2014

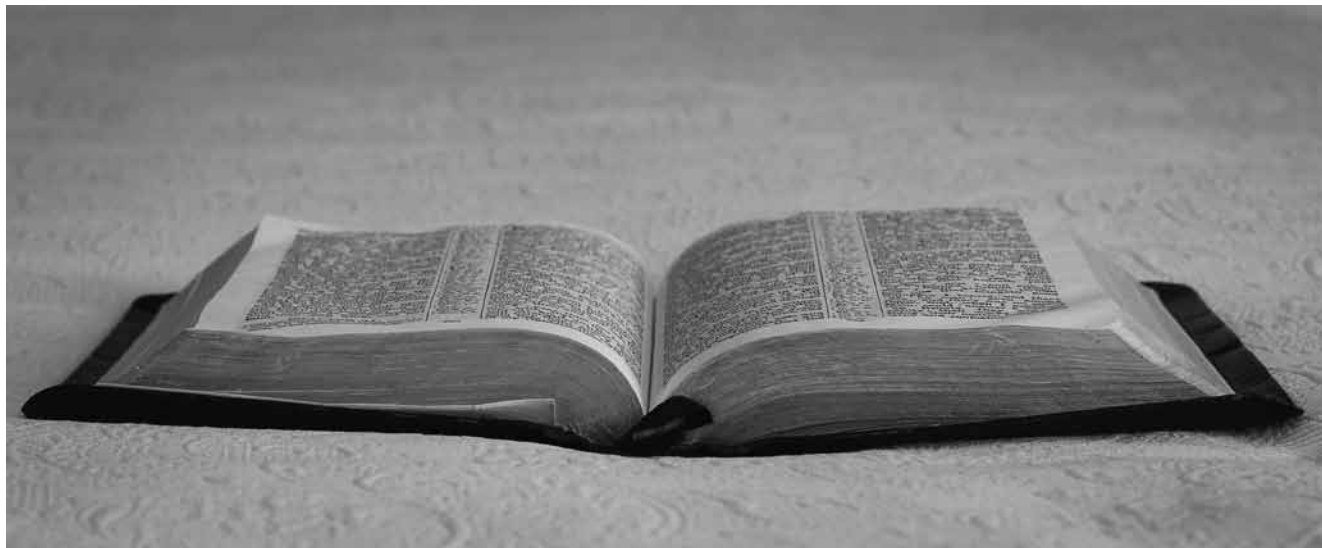
The Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF) holds a World Conference for its leaders and future leaders every ten years. The next world conference is planned for 23 to 29 November 2014 in Cape Town, South Africa; it will be known as the AMCF Global Interaction 2014 (AMCF GI 2014). The South African Military Christian Fellowships (SAMCF) is hosting the world's Military Christian Fellowships (MCF), with the prayer that there will be more than 1,000 international military Christian participants from at least 150 countries and 600 South African military Christian participants. If you are interested in attending please check the website www.amcf2014.org

If you can't attend but would like to donate funds to assist delegates from countries within our region to attend, please make your tax deductible donation to MCF account BSB 803205, account number 20514572 and label your donation with your surname AMCF GI. The AMCF GI organisers are asking MCF members from around the world to consider donating one day's pay to support attendance of those delegates less fortunate than ourselves. MCF Australia are aiming to raise \$10,000 to support regional delegates.



MCF Partners with the Bible Society

FLTLT Scott Minchin



As part of MCF's strategic aim of strengthening the Kingdom of God in the ADF, MCF has partnered with the Bible Society to provide greater access to resources to equip Christians within Defence. This partnership has included MCF participation in Bible Society events and initiatives. MCF Patron, General Hurley, CDF and MCF Chairman LTCOL Jamie van Heel, provided 'Read the Bible with; devotionals for the Bible Society's Live Light in 25 Words' Campaign, which included devotionals from Olympic Swimmer Elka Whalan, Andrew Fisher from Jesus Racing, Masterchef winner Kate Bracks, Weather Presenter Brenton Ragless, Australian Cricketer Sarah Elliott and Scruff the Dog. The MCF devotionals were well received, with GEN Hurley and LTCOL van Heel being popular devotionals, with GEN Hurley's topic of Luke (the basis for the Faith Under Fire course) being the most read Bible study, and LTCOL van Heel's Bible study on Ephesians also recording a large number of hits on the Bible Society website.

MCF members also participated in the Bible Society's Christmas Campaign, reading Bible messages as part of the 25 days, 25 people, 25 words Christmas campaign. Bible society campaign manager Chris Melville said of the program, "Christmas is for everyone. People with Christian faith and

without Christian faith think Christmas is important. So with this campaign, we looked at the beginning of Christmas, and looking at the Bible together."

Leading up to Christmas, a video was available online as part of a digital advent calendar. On each video, words from the Bible were read and each person who participated in the program by signing up to receive the verses had a new experience of Jesus.

MCF's relationship with the Bible Society is continuing, Waratahs Chaplain Gary Speckman was a speaker at the Spiritual Bootcamp Seminar in 2012, and through the Bible Society MCF will have more speakers at the 2013 MCF Strength and Courage Seminar and Bible Society CEO Greg Clarke will be the guest speaker at the 2013 Defence Christians dinner. MCF also notes (gratefully) the Bibles, devotionals and resources provided by the Bible Society to Chaplains and Defence members, to help in the nurture of their faith, and development in a relationship with God.

To see the Live Light in 25 Words Devotionals see the Bible Society web page <http://25words.biblesociety.org.au/me/>





Ms Julianne McMaster



I walked into the gym with fear and trepidation after signing up for a six week boot camp! The trainer walked in and started introducing himself as a former military PTI, national kick box champion and someone who was going to make us pay with blood, sweat and tears. I just wanted to run for the doors. Deep down I knew that this is what I needed; someone to keep me accountable for what I eat and to improve my fitness as I reach for my goal of losing weight.

As he showed us his eating plan and the rules that went with the plan he guaranteed us success - we just had to focus and do it. This is not any different to our spiritual life. We are guaranteed success if through the Holy Spirit's enabling we stick to the plan and exercise our spiritual life regularly. We need to read our Bible daily and pray without ceasing. Why is it so hard to keep this going when this is what guarantees us success in our relationship with God?

This year at Solid Rock in Townsville we have been reading through the gospel according to Luke and have been reminded about the importance of obedience. Mary and Joseph did not understand the plan but they trusted in God and obeyed. Peter had faith in Jesus and threw his net out the other side of the boat. He followed Jesus and became a fisher of men. As we continue to read through Luke we are being reminded of the way to live a life that is focused on Christ.

We are sinners in need of a Saviour and when we allow Jesus to enter our world we begin to develop a personal relationship with him. The best way to increase our spiritual fitness is to be in God's word, praying and taking time to listen to God daily.

Solid Rock is a group of military spouses who meet together all around Australia for spiritual encouragement and friendship. In meeting together we provide accountability for each other as we walk our spiritual journey and the opportunity to pray together, read the Bible and share our experiences.

Every time I go back to boot camp I can feel myself getting fitter and my muscles growing stronger. I look forward to the end and the prize for sticking it out and just doing it. While God is not dependent on the effort we put in we will become spiritually fitter and more aware of Christ in our life. So take the time to open his word, pray and be accountable to someone for doing this regularly. Find a Solid Rock group near you if you would like to be encouraged in your walk with Christ.

solidrockmin@optusnet.com.au



Letting Go of the Past

Commissioner Ken Matthews



Recently I have been reading of the 1st century life of King Herod Antipas of Galilee.

Herod was a puppet governor of the Romans who was occasionally called king, however, zealous Jews of the day regarded Herod with contempt.

This Herod is mentioned in the Bible as the one who had the prophet John the Baptist killed in Mark chapter 6 of the New Testament. Here Herod decided to throw a party for his birthday and invite some distinguished guests. Herod knew he was unpopular and sought the favour of the powerful. Herod also had a scheming wife named Herodias and one person she particularly hated was John the Baptist.

Some years earlier, Herod had divorced his first wife in favour of Herodias which violated the Jewish Law of Moses that he was supposed to be living by. John appropriately condemned the marriage as unlawful and Herodias therefore wanted him dead. Herod was fearful though, because he knew deep down that John the Baptist was a prophet, so he put John in prison. Herodias still wanted John dead regardless and her time came at Herod's party.

Herodias's daughter danced at the party, and the evidence suggests it was probably quite erotic. Herod, mostly likely intoxicated, was extremely pleased and as a result he offered her whatever she wanted. She ran off to her mother and her mother demanded to see the severed head of John the Baptist. We then read that Herod was greatly distressed, but looking good to the "in crowd" and keeping his reputation meant more to him than killing a prophet of God. So he ordered the execution.

From that point on however, he lived in guilt and fear. So much so that when Jesus Christ came on the scene performing many miracles, Herod was convinced he was John the Baptist come back to life.

The biggest indictment on Herod came when he finally met Jesus. Jesus was on trial and Herod had Him brought in. Herod had opportunity now to repent of what he had done to John, after all, Jesus had declared that he was nothing less than God the Son. Instead, Herod only wanted Jesus to do some miracles (Luke 23). Rather than seeing Jesus as way to find forgiveness, he saw him as a court jester. When Jesus understandably said and did nothing for him, Herod joined in ridiculing him, and sent him back to the Romans. Herod lost what may have been the chance for him to finally get real and lasting forgiveness.

The irony was that this time Jesus Christ, not John, really did rise from the tomb. If Herod thought he had something to fear from John the Baptist, he had much more to fear from the one true and living God who had just conquered death and had promised he will return to this earth one day.

From the historian Josephus, you will see how from the time Herod rejected Jesus his life gradually disintegrated. A neighbouring king came in and destroyed Herod's army, then a new Roman Emperor came to the throne and, convinced that Herod was treacherous, stripped him and Herodias of their "kingdom" and exiled them in shame to faraway Spain.

So ended the story of a man much more interested in personal prestige and power than in God who could forgive all his past and take away his sins forever.

Jesus said; *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Matthew 6:19-21

It was the Apostle Peter who says of Jesus: *"He is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish,"* (meaning to miss out on Heaven) *"but everyone to come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9.

But there is a part we must play. There is no better time than the present to ask Jesus to forgive our past wrongs, however terrible. Jesus took our punishment on the cross and this means he will erase the past forevermore. The Bible promises us that *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."* 2 Corinthians 5:17. From this day forward, you can live out His will for your life, rejoicing every day in the truth that you are eternally safe.

Commissioner Ken Matthews (B. Min)

Everyman's Bandiana ALTC.

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So you're in the Army and you rap?

PTE Peter Noble



I couldn't tell you the number of times I get asked this question on an almost daily basis. Having been in the Army almost four years serving as a Storeman the 6th Aviation Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks, the question never gets old and creates many opportunities to share the gospel. I wish I could take the look of some people's faces and frame it for you.

My wife and I together make up the Christian Hip hop Crew 'Dying to be Alive' and have been rapping for about 4 years now. In essence, we bring the truths of the Gospel through the medium of Hip-Hop music to a wide variety of audiences including High schools, Juvenile Gaols, youth groups, churches, military establishments and the like.

Through Hip Hop we cover vast topics from theology to humour, to weightier matters such as God's sovereignty, salvation, his attributes and church history.

You name it - a song can be written about it!

Throughout our time we've played in many places but none have been anything like performing in front of 300+ soldiers at a time when we travel to visit Kapooka military base. Having been recruits there ourselves at one stage, with the help of Chaplain Andrew Grills and Alan Pipes from Everyman's, we have had incredible opportunities to perform for recruits and share the Gospel in this unique place.

We get a great response with one of our songs "The Anzacs" which talks about where the Army is, where it has been and the pain of families missing their loves ones on deployments. Normally we would do a small showcase of a few songs and perhaps a sermon or testimony but are flexible to do almost any occasion; be it churches, Hip Hop workshops or traditional venues for normal shows.

At places like Kapooka I like to challenge recruits or soldiers about the urgency of salvation, the sinful state of man in the light of God's judgement, which naturally opens the platform to speak or show Christ's redemptive work on the cross showing why we desperately need a Saviour.

I love seeing God's power at work, seeing people respond to the gospel in genuine faith and repentance. It is exciting to take these precious opportunities to proclaim God's word and see his glory flow through what chaplains are doing in places like Kapooka where hundreds of new recruits pour through each week.

It is exciting to see the result of spiritual fruit produced at places like Kapooka from the hard work of Chaplains with following up soldiers through Bible studies, discipleship and helping them personally grow as Christians in their faith (which is trench warfare in itself-spiritually speaking). Sometimes we even get the platoon Corporals sitting in on a Sunday morning when we visit which is great! (They probably love the music no doubt!)

If you get a chance please do visit www.facebook.com/dyingtobealive or www.reverbNation.com/dyingtobealive for updates on what DTBA are doing from time to time or to listen to our music.

Until next time,

Soli Deo Gloria

If you would like to book Dying to be Alive to perform or speak at your church or service, please find us at:

www.reverbNation.com/dyingtobealive

Email: Dyingtobealiveaus@hotmail.com

For Digital albums search 'Dying to be Alive' on: ITUNES or hard copies visit Koorong book Stores.



Staffworker Report

Mrs Lisa Thomas



The Interdenominational fellowship that MCF provides has been the cause of angst for some members. For me, it has ensured that I have not joined in the denominational views that have been energetically discussed in political arenas and aired in the media. It has meant that I have changed denominations to attempt to be more inclusive in my views.

I want to call myself Christian now, not the denomination where I attend. MCF has changed how I am a Christian.

How has your participation in the local MCF group changed you? If you are not participating in a local MCF group because you are so involved in your local church, then consider how much the Kingdom of God can be built within the ADF by people already there. Is this an opportunity you are missing out on? Consider focussing on building the Kingdom of God within the ADF while you are still in military service.

MCF has 39 POCs or Area Reps who run, participate, or are willing to get a group started as soon as someone approaches them. There are only 16 active groups, the rest are waiting to be approached so something can get started. I say we should give our volunteers something to do since they have signed on for action. What do you say? What will you do about it?

MCF is changing with the world around it. The website has more information and resources on it. Visit our website to find which Defence installations have an MCF-A group and to download resources to use with your small group.

By visiting Defence installations I have learnt how isolated, busy, stressed, movable (as in postings), some Christians are. I have also glimpsed how much counselling and ministry is occurring. The military life is really hard on service personnel and their families. Chaplains, various Christian Military Ministries, the MCF POCs and others are doing their best to meet the spiritual needs of those in their God-given care. Our

Prayer Warriors uphold all the needs that they are informed about, whether a Faith Under Fire Course or personal needs. Email me or our prayer coordinator to have your prayer passed confidentially to our faithful pray-ers.

MCF has a Facebook page, administered by our Media and Outreach Resources Officer, Alf Jonas (from home) and myself. It seems I didn't build a decent business case to let me use it at work! 123 persons have "liked" the site. Why not join us? The Facebook page is not for discussions, only for Christian encouragement. If you email me the verse that your MCF group will be looking at, then I will try to find something in a commentary to add to your discussions to give you further food for thought and put this on the Facebook page.

MCF contributes positively to the lives of members and also many non-members through MCF groups and encouraging emails from the local regional POCs. Please encourage non-members to take up membership as Defence legitimises our ministry through use of its time and facilities. Membership numbers show Defence the value that Christians place on this ministry being available to them.

I recently came across the Guide to Religion and Belief in the Australian Defence Force; it is worth a read. It informs people what the various Christian churches have in common: "All Christian churches give prominence to the reading of the Bible and drawing instruction from that reading."

'3.4 Christianity' in [Guide_to_Religion_and_Belief_in_the_Australian_Defence_Force.pdf0.pdf](#) (p. 18).

Indeed, this is the bread and butter of MCF and our claim that the many denominations can meet together on Defence installations to discuss and grow in their walk of faith.

We are looking into merchandise such as polo shirts and cloth badges. Members will be notified via the Grapevine email and the website when we are ready to proceed with these.

Email me at mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Visit our website at www.mcf-a.org.au

Join us on Facebook at:

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

Phone me at work on 02 6266 4950



Forum of Christian Military Ministries (FCMM)

LTCOL Jamie van Heel

The 2012 Forum of Christian Military Ministries was conducted in Brisbane in October 2012 and was facilitated by Cat Crane from the Navigators. The theme of the FCMM was how we can better support each other with the implementation of the covenant.

Each of the FCMM organisations presented updates on their ministries and provided their thoughts and ideas on how we can better implement the covenant that we have with each of the ministries.

We were fortunate to have Phil Exner from the USA talk with us on how we can improve our covenant relationship with each other. Cat Crane provided some Bible verses to focus us on how the Bible says we should interrelate with one another.

The covenant between FCMM ministries is "Recognising that wherever two or three of us are together at one location Jesus Christ is among us, we covenant to:

- Love one another
- Pray for one another
- Encourage one another
- Support one another
- Meet with one another
- Communicate with one another
- Coordinate with one another
- Cooperate with one another

To the end that Jesus Christ might be exalted."

It was agreed that FOCUS Military Ministries and the Navigators would assist MCF to organise the Defence Christians Dinner. Discussion was held regarding how we could undertake some of activities together.

The next FCMM is planned to be conducted in Albury in November this year. It will be led by Everymans.

HomeGuard Australia

Anne Iuliano



Ever wonder what your mum or dad think about you being in the Defence Forces??

It's likely that your parents are very supportive and extremely proud of you... but that they occasionally worry that you're safe or doing okay. And wish that they could just give you a hug.

Well, one thing they can do for you is PRAY!

HomeGuard Australia is a new **prayer network for parents of Australian Military Personnel**. Its purpose is to connect such parents, encouraging prayer for their sons and daughters, especially those on the front lines of war. It also provides support to, and friendship between, the parents. It is a highly confidential and secure network, founded by an ordained minister and chaplain, who also has a son in the army.

So **tell your parents** to check out www.homeguardaustralia.org.au

It will help both them and you!

Congratulations!

To James Leitch and his wife Sarah on the birth of their twins Abigail (left) and Rebekah (right) on 19 August.



MCF – Centurion List

Thank you to our generous supporters, both Centurions and donors. Currently there are 52 Centurions: 36 listed below; 9 unpublished to remain anonymous; and 6 unlisted honorary Centurions. MCF also has 17 donors and is looking to have 100 Centurions by the end of 2014. If you would like to join our supporters, please fill in the Centurion form provided on page 13.

Allan	Gary	COL (RETD)
Allison	Matthew	MR
Bayliss	Jan	Ms
Blagg	James	WGCDR
Burton*	Eric	CHAP (Res)
Chapman	Katie	CAPT
Choi	Jacob	LT
Colton	Gregory	MAJ
Cosh	Robert	CPL
Eglinton	Luke	SMN
Farag	Rhonda	MRS
Fehrenbach	Christian	AB
Fisher	Martin	WO2
Hays	Sam	MR
Hoskin	Amy	Mrs
Laird	Jon	MR
Lawson	Rebecca	MS
Lawson	Stuart	Mr
Liston	Peter	CAPT
Lovering	Cameron David	CFN
Mena	Anne	LCDR
Muller	Marcaus	MAJ
Plimmer	Jack	CAPT
Roper	Tony	CMDR (Res)
Ruting*	Trevor	RADM (Res)
Smith	Joshua	FLTLT
Stoll	Talei	LS
Stone	Gary	CHAP (Res)
Sutherland	Dan	LCDR
Thomas	Darren	SGT
Urlichs	Troy	SGT
van Heel	Jamie	LTCOL
Vandepeer	Bruce	LCDR (Res)
Watkins	Scott	LTCOL
Watson	Matthew	AB
Williams	David	MAJ (Res)
Wright	Jason	CHAP

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.



Areas Reps/Contacts Listing

If your area is not listed or you are interested in starting a group, please contact the MCF Office at:

mcf.office@defence.gov.au

CP3-1-160

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Canberra ACT 2600

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NT

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NSW

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QLD

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Back cover image by: David Coleman



"Call on God, but sail away from the rocks"

