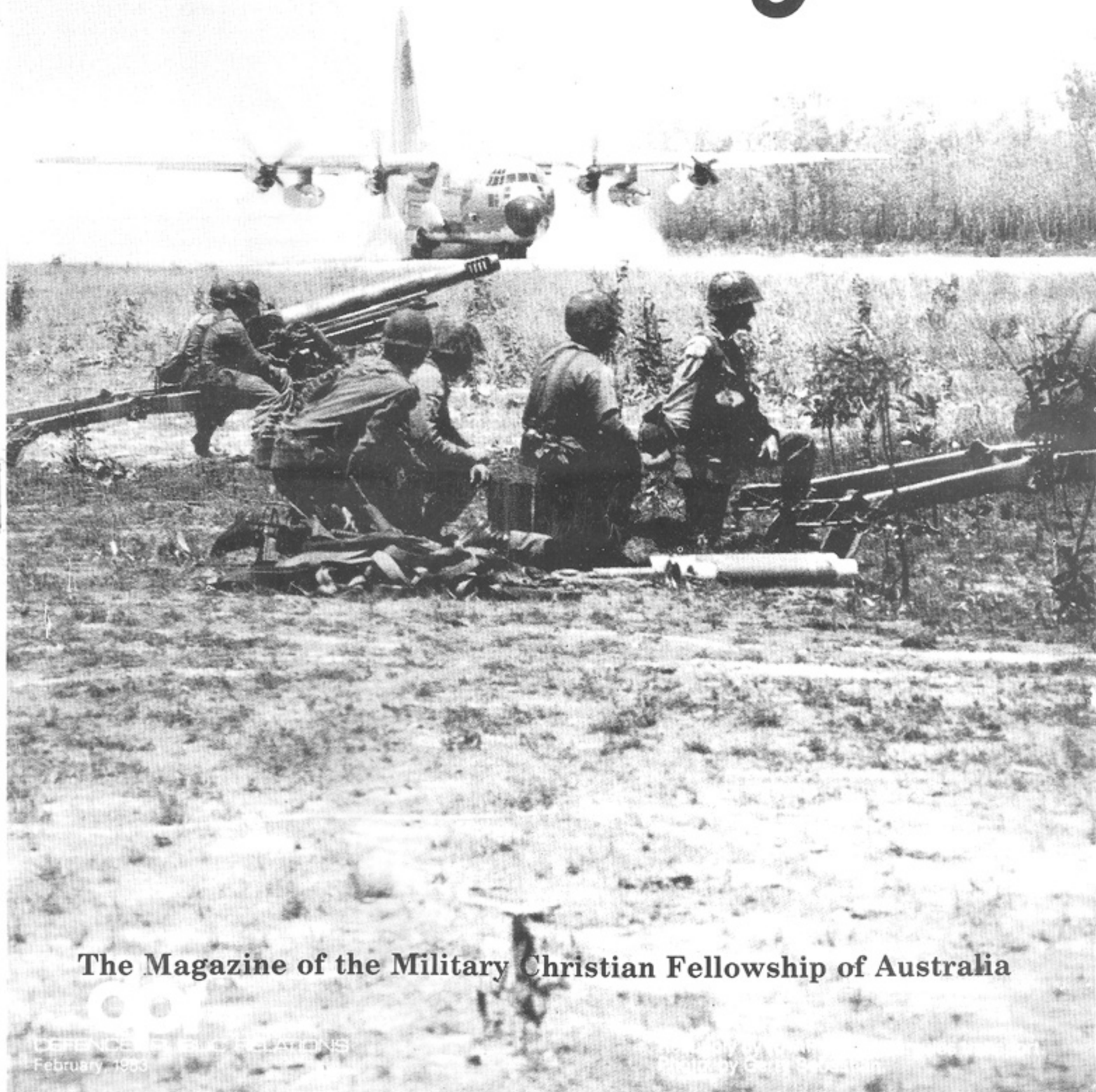


*The Australian*

Volume 6  
February 1985

# *Practical Christianity*



The Magazine of the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

CONFERENCE OF RELATIONS  
February 1985

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia



## Editorial

"This magazine is the first issue published on behalf of the newly formed Military Christian Fellowship of Australia. It is truly encouraging that Christ is working in a new and powerful way in the Australian services.

Christians in the services now, perhaps more than ever should feel united in Christ, sharing the same vocation that He has chosen for us. As Christians however, we need to always remember the traditions and responsibilities of our chosen occupation - Jesus calls us to be the light in the world and therefore we need to be beacons for Him in the Services. We are called upon to be the 'best' superiors and subordinates that we possibly can be, regardless of our rank, posting or task.

We also have a responsibility to exert an influence for good, and each one of us needs to cast his vote boldly in the place we work on issues such as abortion, pornography, racism and so on.

This magazine will endeavour to continue to support God's work in the Australian Services. To truly reflect the presence of God in each of the Services and throughout the length and breadth of our large country this magazine needs your support for articles, photographs and news on activities.

God has given us talents and abilities that we are often afraid to use and sometimes don't know we have. I recall the fear that gripped me when it was suggested that I should become editor of this magazine. In other situations, I've often come up with many excuses... "But I've never written an article before... or no I couldn't lead bible study this week because..."

We are **all** called to use our gifts and talents to their fullness for the glory of God. So, what is the talent that you possess that is not being used at present? If you are afraid like I was and still am, start with little things first and put your trust in Jesus.

I personally and publicly thank Major Jim Wallace for his encouragement, work, time and vision as previous editor of this magazine.

## Editor

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### Contents

A Lesson from Long Tan for Today! .....	by Chaplain Peter Dillon.....	Page 3
Introducing Ian Sarah .....		Page 4
Poem .....		Page 5
Around the Traps .....		Pages 6-7
Some Thoughts on Prayer.....	by ABETC Mark Newton .....	Page 8
Seek God through Christ.....	by Sqn Ldr Graham Boothby.....	Page 9
Activity Report .....	by Dave Jones .....	Page 10
Local Representatives.....		Page 11

# A Lesson from Long Tan for Today!

Chaplain Peter Dillon



Chaplain Dillon is currently serving as Army Chaplain at Victoria Barracks, Brisbane. He is pictured here with his wife Elaine.

*'God and the Soldier all men adore, in time of conflict but no more - for when war is ended and wrong is righted, God is forgotten and the old soldier slighted.'*

These words have a timeless element about them for they accurately describe the fickleness of human nature with respect to mankind's attitude towards God and the soldier in times of war and peace.

In war, the soldier is vulnerable to the fickleness of the weather as were the men of Delta Company 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment on the afternoon of 18th August, 1966. For they were engulfed in a torrential monsoon deluge, when engaged in the conflict of what we now know as the Battle of Long Tan.

The poet and the prophet could be excused for saying that on that day the very heaven's wept at the sight of men made in the image of their maker, embroiled in mortal combat.

But the soldier does not enjoy the luxury of an armchair philosophy - to him is given the horrendous and often thankless task of sorting things out at the sharp end.

We are told that history repeats itself and so often we see in history how the high idealism of the pacifist is wrecked on the sharp rocks of life's realism.

The Good Book says 'The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked...'

We need to heed this truth of our Maker's own evaluation of us, His creatures; and be constantly alert and on guard for the wickedness which can rise up within us and within our fellows to fuel the fires of human conflict. For war and the threat of war, is never far from us.

So we need to pray for our leaders that they will be given wisdom and patience in their negotiations for peaceful settlement of disputes. Man and woman everywhere should work for peace and justice.

The profession of arms is one means of working to secure peace and justice and would to God that more people in our community would see the soldier as part of their Nation's peace-keeping resource.

From time to time we all come up against bullies - at school - at work - at sport - and in National and

International affairs of State, and if negotiations break down, then we need to be ready to resist the bully with whatever force it requires to overpower him.

So as part of our Nation's Defence Force, we need to be prepared - Body, Mind and Soul:

- To prepare our **Bodies** physically so that we might be able to endure hardships and physical privation.
- To prepare our **Minds** professionally so that we might be able to successfully deploy as a fighting force to resist aggression.
- To prepare our **Souls** spiritually so that we might stand for what is good and noble and true, and having fought to a standstill, to yet stand our ground.

This is where mateship and esprit de corps become so vital, for they are built on the spiritual qualities of moral courage, loyalty and faithfulness. The Will to stick it out and see it through - through thick and thin!

We are made in the image of God with respect to the spiritual dimension of our lives. In this sick world, our profession of arms is vital to our National life. It is also an honourable profession. It was to a Roman soldier that Jesus gave His highest commendation, and the spiritual qualities required in a soldier are presented in the Bible as examples of life to follow.

As soldiers our need of spiritual depth to our lives is vital if we are to fulfill our duties faithfully, for we are called to be men and women whose loathing for war is only surpassed by our love of freedom and justice. Caught in such a cross-fire conflict of thought and feelings, I can do **no better** and I must do **no less** than point you to the greatest cross-fire conflict of all history - by pointing you to the Cross of Christ and inviting you to reaffirm, or perhaps for the first time, affirm the truth contained in the words of an old hymn:

'On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand'

We remember with gratitude and pride those soldiers who paid the supreme sacrifice at Long Tan, and during the Battalion's two tours of duty in South Vietnam. We stand alongside their loved ones - parents, wives, children - we acknowledge their continuing great loss and we pray that God's strengthening presence will abide with them always.

And as their comrades, both past or present, we reaffirm our pledge to uphold the ideal for which they died - 'Duty First':

- Duty to our God and
- Duty to our Fellow Man

I conclude with words allegedly found on the body of a Changi Prisoner of War, who having 'been there and done that' has left us a testimonial of his journey:

I SEARCHED FOR MY GOD, BUT MY GOD I  
COULDN'T SEE;  
I SEARCHED FOR MY SOUL, BUT MY SOUL  
ELUDED ME;  
I SEARCHED FOR MY BROTHER, AND I FOUND  
ALL THREE.

# INTRODUCING IAN SARAH

Committee members of the OCF and ASCF (now combined into the MCF) have worked in the past in an honour capacity to assist their brothers and sisters in Christ belonging to the Fellowships, and the new committee of the MCF will continue in the same way. However, the scope and volume of the work has become too great to be handled on an "extra-curricular" basis. Previously there were also many potential areas for growth or areas where assistance could have been provided but the lack of capacity precluded it. Thankfully as a result of prayer for the situation, a part-time staff worker, Ian Sarah, has been appointed. Perhaps at this point we should hear part of Ian's story as it relates to this appointment.

"I spent 23 years in the Army, I had good postings, good bosses and subordinates and, with the exception of one year, I have thoroughly enjoyed my period of service. Even that one year was not so bad in retrospect and I certainly learnt from it. However, over the latter few years I had occasional thoughts that it was time for me to leave the Army. At the times when I did allow a little further consideration of the thought - job security and money immediately caused me to reject the thought.

After three consecutive postings in Canberra came one to Sydney. It was a great job in every respect apart from one and this was only that the location was not the most attractive for me. However the thought that I should resign came through over the excitement of the job. Assisted by the reaction of my family, I felt I needed to take time and really think and pray through the situation. Almost from the moment I started, I knew quite clearly that God wanted me to resign. Whenever the thought of money or security leapt before me I somehow also heard, or more felt, God saying "Can't you trust Me?!" Would you be prepared to give up all you have if I asked you to?" God certainly knows how to get straight to the hub of the matter!

Well, I decided to resign and felt a great peace, and even a sense of excitement. I had no idea what I was to do. All I knew was that the job should be part time and had to have flexibility of working hours and days. Pay was not an important criteria - that I had total peace about this really amazed me!

The only work which seemed to fit with these conditions and my abilities and situation was a self employed home maintenance and handyman job - so that I did. I had also transferred to the Army Reserve and I was already involved in various Church and social work activities. This arrangement worked well, allowing me to spend about half my time on paid work and half on voluntary work.

However, I made some mistakes. There was an abundance of home maintenance work which just came my way without any advertising or job seeking on my part and I accepted it. Before long, I realised I was going to have to work full time at it just to clear away all the jobs I had taken on. There were temptations from many sources to go into this business full time, to take on

employees etc. and go into it in a big way. Praise God that I recognised the hand of Satan in the lure to my old weakness for money and material security for the future.

My first year was a very full one as I worked to get through all my commitments and the time I had planned to give to my family did not eventuate - if anything it shrank further. The second year I became more involved in the various volunteer activities and had practically no time left for the business, although a large increase in my Army Reserve work provided the necessary dollars. Once again however, my family largely missed out.

I discovered that, having sought God's Will and followed it, I then proceeded to go ahead in my own strength doing all sorts of good works with no need or even time to consult God and see what it was that He wanted me to do. Then followed a time and a series of incidents in which I kept slipping back and relying on my strength/wisdom/knowledge/etc but through which God continued patiently to teach me. When He finally got through my thick shell and I was ready to follow Him in EVERY matter, I received a call offering me the Staff Worker position.

The rest is history. Through the prayers of many, and the way every element worked out so well, it seemed right that this was the job for me.

In the few short weeks since starting in the job, the Lord has confirmed many things for me and revealed a whole lot more. All I can say is as the Psalmist says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain" (Ps 139:6). I feel very humbled and honoured, and have a great excitement and expectation at the wonderful things our Lord has in store for His people in the Armed Services in Australia. Please keep me in your prayers so that I will be faithful to know and carry out God's Will for His work among you all, as well as to all our brothers and sisters serving with us who do not yet know the joy, love and power our Lord so freely gives."

There are many things which can be done to help strengthen our Christian walk in our Service environment and to help us reach out with all confidence and strength to our fellow serviceman. But in all the things the Lord has shown me in the last few years and especially in the last months, the most prominent is the value of the individual Christian and the need for him to be nurtured in a small fellowship group. I believe the priorities God is showing me have the facilitation of local fellowship groups right near the top of the list. Therefore, as soon as some of the essential organisational and administrative aspects are sorted out, I plan to throw myself into encouraging local groups. In the meantime please be patient and bear with me, and Mark, our new secretary, until we get the basic administrative matters arising from amalgamation sorted out - then we can concentrate on the more positive aspects of the Lord's work among us."

## POEMS

### *"A Christian Poem"*

WITH FEAR IN SHADOWED WORLD I MOVED AGAIN  
ALONG THE DARKENED CORRIDORS OF THOUGHT  
THE COLOURS OF MY MIND REFLECTING PAIN  
HARSH MEMORIES OF BATTLES I HAD FOUGHT  
AND AS I PAUSED TO REST I GAZED AWHILE  
ON LAUGHTER PAST ENGRAVED ON STONE  
COLD ECHOES MOCKED THE ASHES OF MY SMILE  
REMINING ME THAT I WAS ALONE  
SURROUNDED BY DARK DEMONS OF THE NIGHT  
I MADE MYSELF A SHIELD OF UNBELIEF  
PREFERRING JUST TO HIDE AND NOT TO FIGHT  
YET DESPERATELY YEARNING FOR RELIEF  
WITH BURNING EYES I VAINLY STROVE TO FIND  
A GOLDEN TALISMAN OF DREAMS TO BE  
WHEN INTO THE FAR CORNERS OF MY MIND  
THEY SOFTLY CAME WITH HANDS STRETCHED OUT TO ME  
AT FIRST I TRIED TO RUN I COULD NOT BEAR  
THE AWESOME SWEETNESS OF THEIR PERFECT LOVE  
THEIR FAITH JUST TURNED THE KNIFE IN MY DESPAIR  
AS THEY PROCLAIMED THE TRUTH OF HIM ABOVE  
BUT THOUGH I FOUGHT AND STRUGGLED THERE THEY STAYED  
STEADFAST BESIDE ME DURING THAT DREADFUL NIGHT  
IN WONDERLOST I LISTENED AS THEY PRAYED  
AND WATCHED WHILST ALL MY ENEMIES TOOK FLIGHT  
FOR SWIFTLY FROM AROUND US DARKNESS FLED  
AS HIS OWN WORD THEY WIELDED LIKE A SWORD  
THEN TREMBLING TO HIS PRESENCE I WAS LED  
AMIDST THEIR JOYOUS SHOUTS OF "PRAISE THE LORD"  
AND THOUGH I DARED NOT RAISE MY EYES TO SEE  
THE BEAUTY AND THE MYSTERY OF IT IS  
WITH HIS OWN HANDS HE GENTLY LIFTED ME  
AND TURNING TO THE WORLD PROCLAIMED ME HIS.

*Written by Toni Hendry wife of LSROESSM Hendry  
(after her conversion to Christ) HMAS Albatross*

### *"Go!"*



The Lord said "Go"  
and I said "Who me?"  
and He said "Yes, you"  
and I said "but I'm not ready yet, and there are friends  
coming, you know there's no one to take my place"  
and He said "You're stalling"  
and I said "but I don't want to!"  
and He said "I'm waiting ..."  
and I said "Listen I'm not that kind of person, I just  
don't want to get involved"  
Yet again the Lord said "Go!"  
and I said "Do I have to?"  
and He said "Do you love me?"  
and I said "I'm scared!"  
and He said "Where do you think I'll be?"  
and the Lord said "Go!"  
and I sighed and said "Here I am, send me"

*(Author unknown)*

# *Around the traps...*

PHOTOS FROM AGM,



*(L-R) Surg Lt Peter Parry (Nowra), Capt Peter McKay (now in Brisbane), Chris Stafferton (Sydney).*



*Principal Chaplain John Jones and Major General Clay Buckingham (USA) at the Annual General Meeting in Canberra, 1984*



*Lt Col Ian & Mrs Lyn Sarah - Before leaving for the International Conference in Korea (report in next APC).*



*(L-R) Mrs Clara Buckingham (USA), Mrs Sue Mitchell (Canberra), Lt Col Russell Bielenberg (Canberra), Capt Peter McKay & Mrs Trish McKay (Brisbane), Chris Stafferton (Sydney) at a BBQ lunch in Canberra.*

# PRAYER - SOME THOUGHTS

by ABETC Mark Newton

ABETC Newton has been in Navy for 6 years and is currently serving on HMAS Kuttabul.



## WHAT IS PRAYER?

Nothing more complicated than communication with God. To ask requests of Him, to thank Him, to just say "G'day".

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PRAYER?

1 Thess 5:17 states quite simply "Pray without ceasing" which in today's modern expressive language means "Pray all day" - all your waking moments. Living our lives day to day is a prayer too, as well as a witness of, the Lord.

Hebrews 13:15 states "Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips that give thanks to His name." Again the necessity of continual, never ceasing praise to God. Telling Him as you would tell your best friend that you are thankful for Him.

Christ told his disciples via a parable in Luke 18 to pray continually and not to lose heart. So, the Bible teaches us to be continually in prayer. Christ as our intercessor adds power to our prayers when we "sign off" in His name.

## HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PRAY?

It's fine to live a prayer, but we should often communicate with our Lord with our mouths (an expression of will). But how are we supposed to pray? Even the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In reply Jesus taught them the "Lord's prayer" and then by use of a parable, he promised results to prayer (Luke 11:1-13).

In Matthew's gospel (6:5) we are told not to be hypocrites - to beat our breast and say to the people around us "Look at me! Aren't I humble ... Lord forgive me for this and that; — doing so to obtain the praise of the crowd so as to boost our own Ego. Not that praying in public is wrong but our attitude in that prayer is important.

James 5:16 tells us to "... confess our sins to one another, and to pray for each other ... the prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much", but, what is a righteous man? Righteous according to the Collins New English Dictionary states "doing that which is right; accepted of God; as free from sin; honest ..." and righteousness as "purity of heart and conduct". So prayer from a man whose motives and heart are pure and honest can and will achieve much.

## WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF PRAYER?

Matthew 7:7 tells us to "ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you", and verse 8 "for everyone who asks receives, who seeks finds and to him who knocks, it shall be opened".

To ask implies want —

To seek implies loss —

To knock implies need —

If something is wanted we ask in confidence and humility, confident our prayers will be answered because He has promised to give it to us and in humility because we find we cannot do everything ourselves in our own strength. In seeking we look with care and apply ourselves until we find and by knocking we undertake an action, which is necessary before God can respond to our need.

Also in Matthew 16:19 is the promise that "whatever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" and "whatever we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven". So our prayers are powerful both in the physical and spiritual world (see also Mark 11:24).

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE TO GUIDE OUR PRAYERS?

There is something else to guide our prayers, and that is the spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 14:15 tells us that we can "pray with the spirit" and again in Jude:20 "To build yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit". If you have received the gift, it is important to pray with the Spirit. The Spirit gives us guidance in the words to use and also "transmits" our words to God. As we come before God in prayer and with a heart pure in motive and try to give thanks for whatever He has done, He then takes these words and presents them before God faultless, like and interpreter.

## ARE THERE OTHER FORMS OF PRAYER?

Yes, in 1 Corinthians 14:14 & 15 it talks of tongues and its use in prayer and the church. In Psalm 116:4 the psalmist "called upon the Lord" so as well as praying to the Father in secret (Matthew 6:6), we can call out aloud to Him who answers our prayers.

## AND SO?

And so let's pray and be in prayer continually, be pure in heart and believe when we petition. Our petitions to the Lord will be answered. Colossians 4:2 & 3 "Devote yourselves to prayers, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open unto us a door for the world ..."



# A LESSON – SEEK GOD THROUGH CHRIST

by Sqn Ldr Graham Boothby

*Sqn Ldr Boothby is a medical officer with the RAAF. He has served as Chief Instructor at the RAAF Institute of Aviation Medicine and is currently stationed at Laverton.*



Early in 1984 I spent nearly three months on an attachment in the United States of America. I knew the course of study would not be exceptionally difficult so I decided to take my family with me. We planned to have a three week vacation after the course.

We had heard much about Christian hospitality in the USA and were therefore looking forward to sharing with other Christians. I spoke to a few people about Christian contacts in the States before we left, and was promised names and addresses, I also wrote to several people in the USA seeking Christian contacts well in advance. Mysteriously at the time, however, we did not receive a single reply. The lists from our friends in Australia did not arrive. The letters I wrote to the USA went unanswered. We could not understand why, and were a little disappointed but not totally discouraged.

Soon after settling in the USA we attended the local base chapel. There were a lot of people there, many being on TDY, as the Americans call short term attachment. Somehow, though, the congregation lacked warmth. It was not how we imagined things would be. We were not warmly welcomed into peoples homes, so somewhat disillusioned we returned to our quarters.

My course progressed well over the next few weeks but we just could not make any headway with Christian fellowship. Things at the Chapel did not improve either over the next few Sundays. We were making many non-Christian friends but no good Christian relationships developed.

It was then that we retreated. Perhaps we had been trying too hard. For the first time we really prayed in earnest about our situation. It was the Lord's answer to this prayer that really opened our eyes. We should have known the answer already, but we needed to learn it better.

For you see, we had been seeking Christian fellowship first, and we did not find it. What we should have done, and God revealed this to us over the next few weeks, was to seek God, through Christ, first and foremost. There is nothing wrong with seeking Christian fellowship except when it hinders us from seeking God first, second best had become the enemy of the best and we were on the wrong track.

We were in a new and strange country - we should have sought God first. In fact, when we did stop trying to find Christian fellowship first and started to walk more closely with God through prayer and bible reading, we did start to meet beautiful Christian people in the most wonderful ways.

I believe now that God was keen for us as a family to learn this lesson. The unanswered letters, in the beginning are now no mystery. God was leading us down a path to the point where we would learn this lesson for ever.

I think this lesson is very important for all Christians, but particularly for Christian servicemen, women and their families. When you are attached or posted to a new area, seek God first, hold onto His hand and walk closely with Him. Listen to Him in prayer and then, and only then I believe, will you really find God's kingdom in its great richness. If you do that first, Christian fellowship will follow abundantly.

For us, being in a spiritual desert for a few weeks, turned out to be a rich blessing. Next time things in your Christian life are not going so well just stop and ask yourself, "Am I seeking God through Christ FIRST?" You may be surprised by the answer.

# ACTIVITY REPORT

by Dave Jones, Nowra

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## PRAYER SEMINAR – 20 OCTOBER 1984 – GARDEN ISLAND, SYDNEY

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The idea for a seminar at Garden Island was generated at Naval Air Station, Nowra by Chaplain Brian Daniels and Surgeon Lieutenant Peter Parry. The basic aim was to meet together in a central location as Military Christians of all denominations for prayer, fellowship and mutual encouragement.

We appropriately started the seminar with prayer in the Garden Island Chaplains Office and the meeting grew as people arrived. Morning tea followed and we began, as we got to know each other, to realize the diversity of the group. From "staunch Catholic" to "conservative Protestant" to "bubbling Charismatic" we were all there but uniting us all the Love of Christ and secondarily our military interests.

Our sessions were held in the delightful and historic Garden Island Chapel. The chapel was converted in 1902 from the sailing loft of the Rigging Workshop. Brother Mark Stillman from the "Society of St Gerard Majella", Bowral, addressed the gathering on the subject of prayer and shared many insights into this deep subject. One thought that struck many of us is that rarely in prayer do we get beyond areas in which we feel comfortable. In other words we avoid being made vulnerable to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. If we really want God to work in our lives we need to be open and willing to be challenged in all areas of our life.

We were then addressed by Canon Jim Glennon of St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney. Canon Jim is one of the pioneers of the healing ministry in Australia and has written two books on the subject. He spoke giving numerous illustrations from his personal experience in his own life and in ministry to others. He brought to our attention the fact that some medical authorities now believe that up to 90% of all illnesses may have psychological cause ie. emotional or spiritual traumas causing 'physical' ailments. He spoke of how many times in his experience that when the emotional hurt was dealt with, the physical ailment disappeared. The forgiveness and healing power of God in the areas of guilt, malice, revenge etc. therefore is very important with regard to physical health.



After lunch overlooking Sydney Harbour we broke into small groups practicing meditation of the scriptures and healing of the memories. Singing, laughter, prayer, and learning characterised the day and we parted having met new friends, renewed old acquaintances and having been encouraged in the things of the Lord.

# LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

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The MCF needs you as a local rep for your base, ship, suburb or area.

*if....*

- 1.** you want this magazine to continue, please contribute (both photos & articles)
- 2.** you are willing to be an area representative for the ASCF please write to the Secretary.
- 3.** you want any of these things to happen, **don't wait —**

***do them now!***

***MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
OF AUSTRALIA***

The MCF is a fellowship of men and women associated with the Defence Force who share and profess the Christian Faith.

**MCF OBJECTIVES**

- \* To awaken and strengthen personal Christian knowledge and experience in the Defence Force.
- \* To encourage Christian servicemen and women to give witness to their faith in word and deed.
- \* To encourage Christians to meet together to share their faith and support one another.
- \* To support actively the ministry of Service Chaplains.