

# CROSSFIRE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 18 EASTER 2009



Evangelism | MCF Turns 50 | New Website | Bushfires



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#### National Staff Worker

Mrs Helen Rose

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## Who pays for MCF Australia?

MCF is funded by free-will and tax-deductible donations from its members and members of the public. Donations can be sent to the MCF office: **MCF-A Department of Defence Campbell Park Offices, CP3-1-130 Canberra, ACT, 2600 Australia.**

ADF members can make allotments to MCF (allottee number 122), or funds can be transferred directly from your bank account to the MCF account with DEFCREDIT

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



### From the Editor,

CMDR David Rose, CSM RAN  
([david.rose4@defence.gov.au](mailto:david.rose4@defence.gov.au))

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

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



# Chairman's Report



Welcome to the first Crossfire of 2009, celebrating MCF's 50 years of service to the ADF and the final in our series themed on our core ministry objectives. The previous two editions focussed on supporting Chaplains and supporting fellow Christians in the ADF. This edition covers evangelism. For some reason, there can be a reticence amongst military Christians to share the gospel within the ADF. Some Christians wrongly believe that ADF policy prevents them from talking about their faith to non-Christians who want to hear about why we believe the things we do. In fact this is far from the truth. Not only does ADF policy specifically allow every Christian to practice their faith within the ADF (and given Jesus' charge in Matthew 28: 19 - 20, evangelism would have to be considered part of Christian practice), the government actually employs fulltime Christian spiritual advisors – our Chaplains! Indeed when I speak to non-Christian senior officers and ask them their opinion of Christians speaking about their faith to others, often they say they have never seen that happen and are surprised that we don't do it more!

It is my prayer that this edition will inspire you to undertake an evangelism course if you are not confident enough already, or perhaps ask your local MCF group to do some training during meetings. There are some great training packages showcased in this edition. Wouldn't it be our greatest failure, in this time of increased operational risk and activity, if our non-Christian colleagues don't hear about the remarkable gift of Jesus' sacrifice before it is too late for them to make the right choice.

March hard for the Lord!

**Mick Mumford**  
Chairman

## Farewells

PCHA Eric Burton, MCF Chaplains Representative  
Jon Belmonte, MCF Staff Worker

## Promotions

LEUT Anne Mena to LCDR  
LT Geoff Crossie to CAPT  
LT Katie Chapman to CAPT

## Ordinations

SQNLDR Stuart Lawson (MCF Area Rep) of RAAF Base East Sale ordained deacon 21 Feb 2009.

## Marriages, Engagements and Birthdays

Stephen Sounness married Christian Knyvett on 8th November 2008 in Canberra. They met through an MCF meeting.

Peter and Trish McKay's daughter Elysha has recently become engaged to Jonathon Cole.

SQNLDR John Hermann celebrates a special birthday on 30 March 2009.

Congratulations to you all.

## Baptisms and Dedications

Jonte Ross van Heel son of LTCOL James van Heel and Johanna van Heel (bottom left) was dedicated on 18 Oct 2008 at Duntroon Chapel.

Alexander Henry George Colton (Sacha, below right with grandfather) son of CAPT Greg Colton and Katie Colton was baptized on 15 Feb 2009 at Duntroon Chapel.



# The Light of the World

by Janet Mumford



"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14 – 16.

As we begin a new year, God keeps bringing me back to this verse. It seems a very fitting verse given that the theme of this Crossfire edition is Evangelism. For many of us (including me) evangelism is one of those scary words that conjures up pictures of people going door to door trying to "sell" Christianity, or confronting people in the street and questioning their beliefs. Most of us run from this and thus shut down the minute evangelism is mentioned!



A few years ago I had a "light bulb" moment. A speaker at a conference I was at shared that God calls us to "be" evangelists rather than to "do" evangelism. This made me think...I had always cringed at the "doing" of evangelism but what did it mean to "be"? For me that means that people can look at my life, the way I treat my husband, my children, other people, the way I speak, the way I drive on the roads (okay so I have a lot of work to do on that one!!) etc, and that through the person that I am they can see a little bit of God. To me that is "being" an evangelist.

"Being" means displaying the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control) in our lives. "Being" is not hiding away but looking out for others, offering encouragement instead of discouragement, loving the unlovely, in short, living as Jesus lived. While we will never attain perfection in this (we are all sinners and works in progress) as we work on our fruit, as we work on "being", we will naturally shine God's light.

As we "be" the light, we are "being" evangelists. As Christian women involved with the military (whether we are in it or married to someone in it) we have plenty of opportunities to be light. Military wives face so many struggles. Many are on their own with little children; some have probably just moved into your area and would love to have a friend. You



can make a difference if you will "be" a light to them. A cup of coffee, some words of encouragement, some help with local information, all can be such a blessing.

Let me encourage you as a Christian woman to be involved with our military and to let your light shine to those around you for, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Bless you,

Janet Mumford  
solidrockmin@optusnet.com.au





# Chaplains Corner

by CHAP Colin Acton

Dear Friends, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

We have all been touched by tragedy. Who can forget those terrible images of a massive fire-front engulfing the Victorian bush? Who can forget the news of death and untold destruction of native habitat and entire towns? Small communities that had been full of life just wiped off the map. As the news of the fire began to flow my 18 year old son told me that he was finding it difficult to feel anything. How could he, this was one of those experiences that lie at the extreme edge of human experience. In the days that followed however, as we saw survivors tell of their ordeal and the photographs of those who did not make it, the awfulness of what had happened struck home. There are images etched into my memory of many smiling faces; families and individuals enjoying life. One image is especially poignant, a proud dad sits with his two lovely daughters and beautiful wife, all gone – the fire has swept them away.

That could have been my family, it could have been anyone's family. How fragile is our grip on life, even a beautiful and contented life in the Victorian country side. As we continue to pick up the pieces and as Australians continue to generously donate 10's of millions of dollars, its worth while taking stock of what is important in life. There is some talk about buildings and possessions but by far those men and women who have escaped through the flames speak of life and relationships as being truly precious.

We are tempted to consider our own personal security and possessions as fundamental to life and happiness. What we see in the aftermath of the fires is a growing awareness and reminder that human beings are precious and that relationships are fundamental. As Christians in Defence it is all too easy to get caught up in the business of the organisation and the push for recognition and even promotion. There are a myriad of subtle ways



to get caught up in this quest to impress. It always comes at an enormous cost to families and friends. It also takes a heavy toll on our witness in the workplace, as well as in our churches and our family and friendship networks.

In this issue of Crossfire, we are considering how we might be more effective in our ministry of proclaiming the good news of reconciliation and peace between God and all people. We remember that this good news comes through relationships, relationships that are grounded in the truth that all human life is a precious gift from God. Pray always and as an ambassador for Jesus, look for practical opportunities to live out your love for God. Have time for people, listen to them, look for practical ways to help. Be available. If we truly live out of this radical motivation of love, how awesome is our ministry going to be? May God bless you in His service.

## Farewell to PCHA Eric Burton

PCHA Eric Burton was fondly farwelled at the MCF 2008 Annual General Meeting. Eric has now retired from the permanent Navy. While in uniform he faithfully served MCF as the Chaplain's Representative bringing with him his many years of experience in reaching people for Christ. He has supported MCF for a number of decades and will continue to serve military Christians as the Vice President Pacific for the International Association of MCFs. All the best Eric in your continuing pursuits to serve the Lord.



Biography: Principal Chaplain Eric Burton CSC, RAN. Th.Dip; Grad Dip Ed (Re); Grad.Dip Min.

Principal Chaplain Eric Burton was born in Malta in 1951 the son of a Royal Navy sailor.

He joined the RAN as an electrical sailor in 1968 after emigrating from England and served for 6 years, which included time on Her Majesty's Australian Ships MELBOURNE and STALWART, and time at the Navy Transmitting Station Belconnen.

After a religious conversion in the RAN he left to begin training for the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church in 1974 completing his studies in 1977. He served as a parish minister in the parishes of Wagga Wagga, Temora, Bribbaree and Bodalla/Narooma, all in NSW.

Rejoining the RAN in 1988 as a Chaplain he served for five years at HMAS CERBERUS followed by stints on HMAS WESTRALIA as Fleet Chaplain and HMAS COONAWARRA. Advanced to Senior Chaplain in 1998 he served as Fleet Bases Senior Chaplain and Maritime Command Chaplain.

In February 2003 the then Senior Chaplain Burton was appointed as the Director General Chaplains – Navy and collated as Archdeacon to the Navy in March 2003.

Principal Chaplain Eric Burton is married to Lynda and they have four children and one grandson. He enjoys table tennis and reading.



# MCF's New Website

Under our Strategic Plan, MCF decided to get better at communicating and making our resources widely available. Part of this plan was the redevelopment of the MCF website, which went live at the end of January 2009 at [www.mcf-a.org.au](http://www.mcf-a.org.au) (as at the end of February we ticked over the 1000 visits mark, not bad for a first month!). On the website you can learn all about MCF, download MCF resources to help your own Christian walk (such as a pdf copy of this magazine), find helps to assist you run an MCF group in your area, keep updated with the latest news from MCF,

be inspired, and get in touch with the MCF office, Council, or an MCF Representative/ Small Group in your area. If you have any news or contributions that are in line with the MCF mission, just go online and email the webmaster.

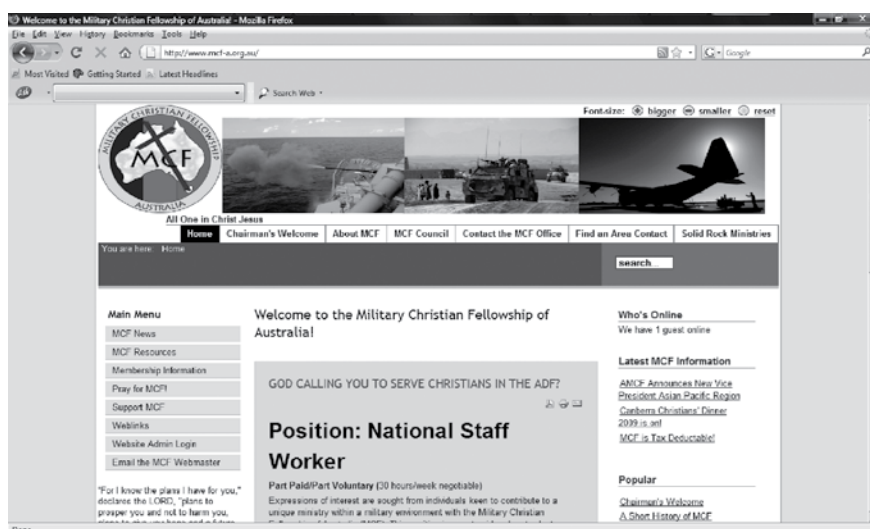
MCF also thanks our previous "webservant", LCDR Peter Ellis, who for many years single-handedly kept the previous website up and running. Bless you Peter!

And remember, the website had changed so update your previous link to [www.mcf-a.org.au](http://www.mcf-a.org.au)!!

## The MCF Small Group Code of Conduct

As a member of an MCF small group I will:

1. Respect the denominational differences of all Christians within the ADF. I will not argue denominational doctrine or question denominational beliefs.
2. Allow all members of the group an opportunity to speak regardless of spiritual maturity.
3. Respect rank during MCF meetings unless invited not to.
4. Invite local Chaplains, and members of other Christian groups, to be part of MCF meetings.
5. In group studies respect differences in bible translation and interpretation. Studies of the bible are not to involve books or passages of the Bible that denominations contest.
6. Apply wisdom in the demonstration of Spiritual gifting where there is potential to cause offence to members present.
7. Respect the authority of the small group leader, regardless of rank and uniform.



# Defence Christians' Dinner

by David Rose

Each year a Defence Christians Dinner is held, co-sponsored by MCF and other Defence Christian ministries. It is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to get together and share their experiences of being a Christian in Defence.

Last year's dinner was no exception with a great bond of fellowship and mutual support seen amongst all the Defence ministry groups. In September 2008 over 150 people attended the dinner in Canberra. It was a pleasure to see Mr Michael Pezzullo, Deputy Secretary (White Paper) along with our MCF Patron LTGEN D Hurley, VCDF and some of our returned service men and women from overseas attend the night.

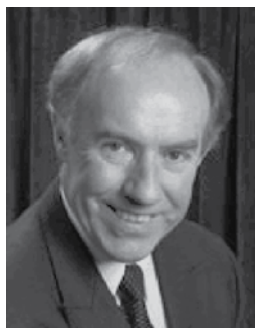
The 2008 keynote speaker was Professor Dr Ross Babbage Member of the 2008 Defence White Paper Ministerial Advisory Panel. Lecturer Australian Defence College, Chairman of The Kokoda Foundation, author and Managing Director of Strategy International (ACT) Pty Ltd.

You are all encouraged to come along to this year's dinner planned for Friday 4th Sep 2009. You can look forward to a great night of fellowship and insight into what God is doing through our Chaplains and various other ministries.

## Who is invited?

All people connected with Defence (military, trainee, civilian or contractor), their family and friends are invited to a night of good food, interesting and inspirational speakers, entertainment, and prizes.

More information on the dinner will be posted on the MCF website as it becomes available.



# Never Give In

By CAPT Bede Tongs, MM

He was Hungry, he was Thirsty,  
Sweat Sodden shirt on his back  
Muddy Shorts – Steel 'Battle Bowler' Hat.  
The Fair Dinkum Aussie Soldier – On the Kokoda Track.  
His Best Friend  
His .303 Service Rifle, always with him.  
Safety Catch Off – Ready to Fire – just Squeeze the  
Trigger Back,  
Ammunition in Clips, in his Basic Pouch,  
More Ammunition in Bandoliers in his Haversack.  
Plus Four HE36 Hand Grenades,  
Primed and set to go – 'Just Extract the Safety Pin  
And throw amongst the Foe' –  
With a Four Second Fuse – it had only one way to go!

He's on a Mission and will see it through.  
Australia, Will be kept Free – For You, Me and Him.

The Sergeant said we keep going until we find a  
Strategic spot.  
As they Advance they need many Breather Spells,  
Against Trees they Prop, or just Drop.  
Climbing up and up and up to suitable High Ground  
And Attack any Trigger Happy Japanese around.

Day is drawing close to dark - with Wax Matches and Skill  
Soon have a Fire going with Happy glow.  
Dixies with water to boil for Tea on the go.  
The Meal Ration is light – There is no more  
Bully Beef and Army Biscuits -  
A Supply Drop to-morrow – but no one is Sure...  
They will believe it when they see.

The Rations Tumbling down to the Kunai Patch by the  
Stream.

His Alertness is Amazing – "It's Survival", he says with a  
Grin.

He's Hungry, He's Thirsty – could do with some Sleep.

Two things he is Not Short of – His Faith and His Spirit:  
He will Never Give In.

**Bede Tongs MM**

**3 Inf Bn Kokoda Track and Beyond 1942**

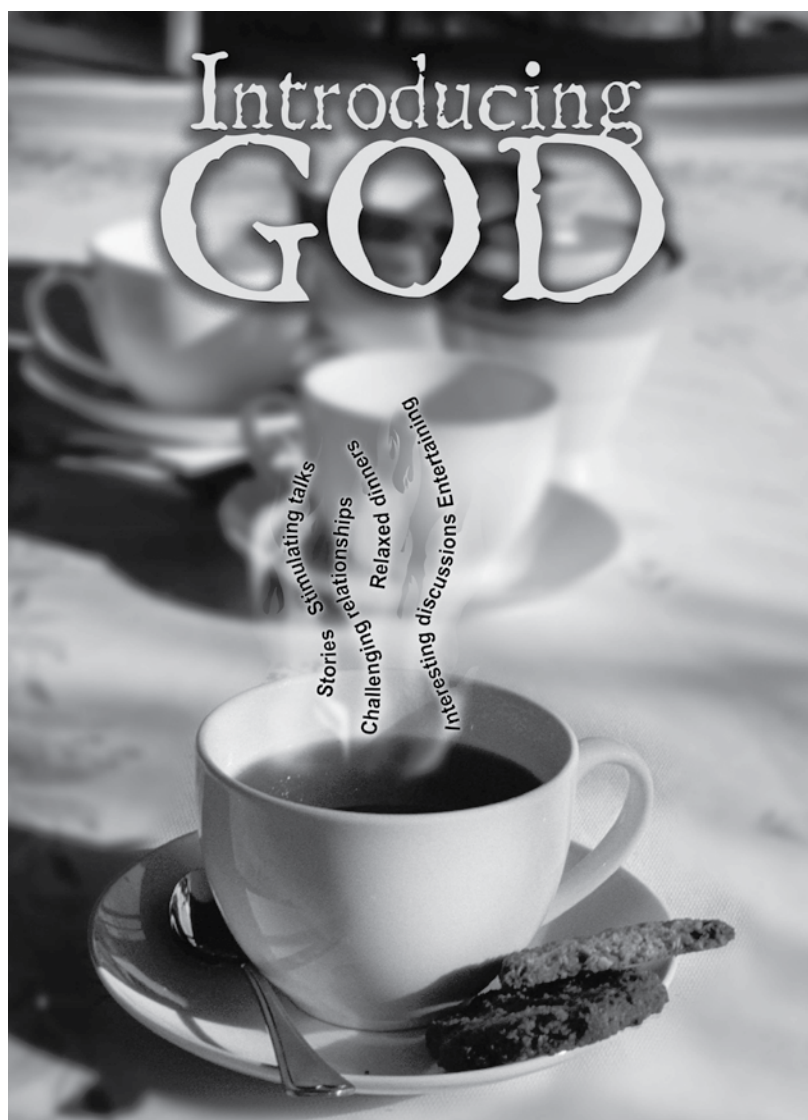
**28 May 2008**



# Evangelism

by Nathan Runham, MCF Evangelism Coordinator

The great preacher Charles H. Spurgeon once said something along these lines, "If you have no concern for the salvation of others, then you are not saved yourself, be sure of that." Spurgeon was stating a truth that inherently, a true Christian will bear fruit in accordance with an inward desire to see men and women drawn into the kingdom. The scriptures are clear; a person who has been regenerated by God is incapable of being indifferent to the spiritual fate of others. This being so, why do many of us find it hard to evangelise? Because we hold to false and misleading ideas that affect how we pursue evangelism.



Firstly, we as Christians are powerless to convert the unbeliever's heart. We need to grasp the fact that the work of salvation belongs to the LORD and not us (Jonah 2:9). If we are powerless to convert the sinner's heart, you might ask why then do we evangelise? We evangelise because we are the vessels (or method) that God has ordained to carry His message of grace to the world. If God so delighted, He could save His sheep without this method meaning that He doesn't need our help. But God has chosen to use us and it is an extreme privilege that we are the chosen vessels in His plan of redemption. When we fail to credit salvation as belonging to the LORD, we get discouraged easily when people don't respond to the gospel. Why? Because if we had any power in conversion then the rejection of the gospel maybe due to something we did or didn't do. Some people will respond positively and others negatively- that's a fact, but we don't need to be discouraged when the gospel is rejected, they are not rejecting us. Ultimately we are not responsible when people reject the gospel, and conversely we deserve no credit when a soul is regenerated. If salvation belongs to the LORD and no one else, we should then be faithful and confident and that God is able.

Secondly, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1: 16). The gospel that we have been commanded to preach is used by God to regenerate the unrepentant heart. This sustains the first point but also brings to light another. To be faithful in our calling we must get the gospel right and preach it in its entirety. We do not need to dumb down the gospel, or leave any aspect out because we think it might offend the





unbelievers or turn them away. The gospel is not the gospel when we leave out the not-so palatable parts or when we add our own ideas to it. The apostle Paul was at pains to explain this to the church in Galatia when the requirement of circumcision was added to the gospel of grace. For example, some modern day evangelism tends to soften down or even leave out the reality of sin, hell and judgement, even though they are crucial and scriptural aspects of the gospel. Without the bad news of sin, hell and judgement, the good news makes no sense at all. I also find it disturbing that sometimes we as humans have the arrogance to alter the content of the gospel, naively thinking that through this we will make more converts. Yes more converts may be made, but will they be converts to God's gospel or ours?

Thirdly, there are many Christians who don't know the gospel well enough to communicate it. If we don't know it well enough, how are we ever going to be confident to share it? How are we going to get it right? Christians need to read and study the Word of God each day. In fact because we don't know the gospel well enough, we have had to design programs to teach it to us and for us (I am not suggesting evangelism programs are wrong by any means, just pointing out that we need to be able to witness without them). Running well-intentioned evangelism courses are no substitute for knowing the Word of God so let's commit to become disciplined in this area. Shouldn't we be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, in season and out of season?

God alone is the founder and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2), and God alone deserves all the glory. We can faithfully witness in hopeful expectation out of love knowing that salvation belongs to the LORD. The gospel will not return void unless we void it of the content. Let us preach and teach the whole council of God leaving nothing out and adding nothing to it. And finally brothers and sisters, may we refuse to be discouraged for we don't know where the wind will blow (John 3:8) that is not for us to know. Our task is to faithfully go.

There are a number of different evangelism programs available. In the future I plan to advertise more of them on the new MCF website. Programs that are available generally consist of two types. The first type delivers the gospel to unbelievers; the second equips believers in presenting the gospel (which of course is ideal if you need help in this area). The following are a few programs that I am familiar with and encourage you to use.

**Name:** XEE (Evangelism Explosion)

**Origin:** Australia

**Type:** Equips believers to share the gospel

**Other Details:** XEE is the new Evangelism Explosion (EE) for the X generation. Based on the successful program developed by D. James Kennedy, believers are trained how to share their faith and give their testimony in a 'mateship' style situation.

For a demonstration you can see the web version at the link below.

**Website:** <http://www.xeelife.com>

**Name:** Introducing God

**Origin:** Australia

**Type:** Delivers the gospel to unbelievers in a group setting

**Cost:** \$149.95 for the starters pack

**Other Details:** "A new way of introducing the true and living God to a post-Christian society" Introducing God is a relational course that introduces our friends to God in a relaxed culturally appropriate way. Introducing God is flexible and can be run for seven or eight weeks, with or without a weekend away. The course is delivered using dvd's and work books in a small or large group setting over meals or a coffee. I find the content of this course refreshingly faithful to the scriptures.

**Website:** <http://www.introducinggod.org/>

**Name:** The Way of the Master

**Origin:** United States

**Type:** Equips believers to share the gospel

**Cost:** \$268 for all 3 award winning TV series. (This is my personal favourite and it is more than worth the cost!)

**Other Details:** "The Way of the Master gives light to an almost forgotten biblical key that has power to unlock the door of the human heart. This is the proven and effective way of making the gospel make sense to the unsaved. It is so rooted in the Scriptures, once you see it, you will forever wonder how you could have missed it. It is the biblical principle of bypassing the intellect (the place of argument) and speaking directly to conscience (the place of the knowledge of right and wrong)—the way Jesus did." You can purchase the dvd's and be trained in the comfort of your own home. It is faithful to the scriptures as it brings to life the biblical concepts used by those such as Luther, Wesley and Spurgeon. You can download audio sermons and other tools to equip from their website.

**Website:** <http://www.wayofthemaster.com/> and <http://www.wayofthemaster.com.au>



# Being Deployed is not easy

## Observation of a serviceman in the Middle East and family

When you deploy leaving your family behind is never easy. Here are some thoughtful 'journal' reflections on some of the issues that arise when a serviceman deploys.

by Anon

It was a sunny day when the aircraft pulled away with tears flying from those left behind except a toddler saying, "Daddy in the air". Morning tea helped to change the mood.

How good it was to hear that the serviceman's church was to cook one meal each week for the family. Later neighbours helped when the mother was sick by cooking, having children to sleep over and caring.

Relatives played a part in helping the busy family but were not able to do everything. Child care for toddlers is very expensive and with the mother not working means there is no rebate from the government. It is important for a mother to have some child free time.

Fathers' Day at school brought more tears as other children could have their Father to breakfast on the National Event. Teachers too played their part informing the family of the children's distress.

What does a service person do in the Middle East? The family doesn't know exactly because of security. Fortunately there is internet for communication, free post from Australia of articles up to 2 Kgs.



We heard that Dad was sent equipment to sing hymns so that the children could go to sleep listening to Daddy's voice. This provided a little humour in a difficult situation; much to Mother's amusement, toddler showed defiance/pleasure in saying, "I love daddy and want to listen to him!!!" However, another child feels too sad to listen.

From the serviceman's point of view, some days passed slowly but the business of deployment helped the end to come. Apparently there is a method of counting down the days among the troops and proportions of time of deployment left are ever present. There has been much mention of dust, high temperatures, generators, and plenty of hard work. Tim Tams melt and go hard again when sent but are acceptable. Food parcels are shared.

Those at home have remained forever hopeful that their loved one will return safely and pray for those injured and their families.

How encouraging it was to hear the new Governor General, MS Quentin Bryce, say that she feels a great pride at farewell and welcome home parades for the military and their families and we know how proud the last Governor General, Maj General Michael Jeffrey remains.





# Staff Worker Report

by Helen Rose

## What happens in the MCF Office?

A number of changes have taken place since our last spring edition of Crossfire, 2008. At present I'm sitting in the Staff Worker position until Council can fill the 30 hour week position. It's been a pleasure to return and serve you in this role after four years at home with the birth of our fourth child. For those of you who don't know me, I'm married to Commander David Rose (our Editor) and we've just celebrated our 20th Wedding Anniversary. David has been in the Navy 27 years and been involved with MCF in various roles for some time. I'm still trying to get used to all the acronyms Defence people all use even after all these years! We have four children. Our eldest are twin sons soon to turn 17 and start independently driving. I am so glad that I can pray for our sons as they make this further step into manhood. Our three year old has just commenced 3 year old playschool at Duntroon following in her brothers' footsteps. What a great facility our Lord provides for our children! Her sister has just started High School. I am also involved with Solid Rock Ministries (SRM) as one of the leaders at Duntroon this year.

It was so nice to do a handover with Jon in January before he headed to Sydney with Leah for their training in the Salvation Army. Five years ago Jon telephoned the MCF Office and said to me "when would I like some help and what with". A very willing worker for the Lord and such a blessing to MCF and those Jon's path crosses. Jon gave my mum a ride on his huge motorbike at HMAS Harman's Christmas Party in December. He has blessed many people with motorbike rides. With Jon in this position it has grown over that time. He visited many bases to represent Christ and

MCF. It is the Council's intention that this will continue to happen.

We had a new Council elected in November and in February (as Jon reported in our last Crossfire), major changes occurred to our web-site, in fact a new site was created, [www.mcf-a.org.au](http://www.mcf-a.org.au). Please take a look.

The Deployment Pack ministry continues to go forth. Today I was sending packs to SA. We've had good news of someone wanting to know Christ through our invitation in our Deployment Pack.

As usual we've had a lot of members relocate over the Christmas period. Crossfire again lists the Area Contacts around Australia for your information. Please send in any change of addresses. If you do not get a monthly email from the MCF office called Grapevine and you'd like it, please send in your email address to us.

In my new job as Staff Worker I am employed to keep the office running and to assist people on their Christian journey in Defence. The more I work with Christians I see we have to be team players. "Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it." Proverbs 2: 20-22 NIV. Try and gather together with good people as the Bible instructs us. Jesus was always interacting with people, the saved and unsaved. We know we are part of the body of Christ. We so need to interact with other Christians. As Christians we are the Body of Christ in Defence, let's continue to stand up, unite together and be that powerful witness for Christ. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!... For there the Lord bestows his blessing..."

Psalm 133: 1, 3b NIV If we can assist you with literature to give to others such as copies of Crossfire or deployments packs please contact the office at [Helen.Rose@defence.gov.au](mailto:Helen.Rose@defence.gov.au).

## Our Hope

In recent months we've seen so many tragedies. Particularly, the fires in Victoria where such devastation, destruction and loss of life occurred. Floods in Queensland and New South Wales, and the shark attacks in Sydney Harbour. The Navy Clearance Diver was doing a routine job, one that so many people before had done and lost his hand and leg to a Shark. Such sad things have happen in a short time in our country to so many people. When I have heard of the accounts of the ferocity of the fires at Marysville and Kinglake in Victoria it sounds like an experience of hell to me. Only God knows why these terrible things occur but tragedy does cause us to run to Him. What does God say to us about life?

"Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in this name. He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky." Deuteronomy 10: 20-22 NIV. No matter what is happening in our turbulent world we need to hold fast to God. To know that He alone is "my refuge and my fortress, my god, in whom I trust". Psalm 91: 2 NIV.

continued page 12 >>



>> continued from page 9

One of the accounts on the fires I read in the newspaper was of a 43 year old tradesman watering the roof of a pub which sheltered many women and children in a cool room. In the face of the fire he risked his own life to defend women and children. The pub did not burn down nor his house. I heard another account of four policeman who rushed into a town ahead of the fire and warned people to get out. It was reported they saved 200 lives because of their heroic acts. This reminds me of our call as Christians to tell people about Christ, to warn people of eternal damnation. To tell them about our

loving God, who laid down his life for us on the Cross so that we might be saved from the fires of hell and live with Him eternally in heaven. Are we prepared to rush ahead and let others know about Christ? Could we see that man on the roof defending those women and children, as maybe praying for our Colleagues children that are heading off the rails, or marriages that are on the verge of breakdown. I think those around us would like the security of knowing Christ. Do people know that they can choose to have a personal relationship with our awesome loving God? Thank you God.

What an excellent time in our country's history to tell people about Christ. The political sphere is constantly talking about the world recession. People need Christ's good news in their lives today. We need to hold onto that good news and also give it out to others. How blessed we are as Christians that we never have to face things alone; that God is there with us. It doesn't matter what happens in our world: He is there. No-one can take Him from us; Bushfires, floods, shark attacks or whatever we are facing. Leading up to Easter is a perfect time to tell people about Christ.

God bless you all.

# MCF's 50th Anniversary

On the 27th of February 2009 MCF turned 50 years of age! The direct descendent of the Australian Officers' Christian Union, which was formed in Sydney on 27 February 1959, MCF has been serving the men and women of the Australian Defence Force for five decades and is still going strong!

The Australian Officers' Christian Union was based on the British Officers' Christian Union model. The prime movers in the establishment of the Officers' Christian Union Australia were Chaplain General Alan Begbie, Chaplain Douglas Abbot and LTCOL Duffy. The object of the Officers' Christian Union was the extension of the cause of Christ in and

through the fighting Services of the nation. The specific aims as regards members were to stimulate definite prayer, encourage Bible study and research, and emphasise to officers their responsibility in the Services and their obligation to advance the cause of Jesus Christ at home and abroad.

Five decades later MCF, now a part of the international Association of Military Christian Fellowships, has a membership of nearly 1000 and has small groups present on many ADF bases throughout Australia.

For a full history of MCF see the MCF website [www.mcf-a.org.au](http://www.mcf-a.org.au)



## VCDF Congratulates MCF for 50 Years of Service

by LTGEN David Hurley

In 1959 the Australian Officer Christian Union was born out of the need for Christian lay ministry within the Australian military, as an adjunct to the work of the Chaplaincy. Some five decades later MCF continues this work, having embraced all ranks in the 1980s, and is a vital cog in the spiritual landscape of the ADF. Each year hundreds of military Christians around the ADF meet for support under the MCF banner and over a thousand benefit each edition from Crossfire magazine. With members in every base in Australia, and every mission overseas, MCF is making a very real and significant contribution to the lives of many people. To all members of MCF, both past and present, congratulations on 50 years of quiet and unheralded work for both our Nation and our Lord, and it is my prayer that we, the Christians of the ADF, will enjoy MCF's ministry for many, many more years to come. God bless,

David Hurley  
Patron

LTGEN Hurley is the Vice Chief of the Defence Force and has been the MCF Patron since January 2008.





# Working In The Autumn of Our Lives

by Jonathan Laird

As the seasons transition and 2009 picks up speed in earnest, it maybe a good time to reflect on God's purposes for our lives? The onset of autumn may cause leaves to change colour and die. Similarly, that which was good and in the Lord yesterday, may not be His perfect will for today?

The ancient Israelites were directed by God to collect manna on a daily basis. With the exception of the Sabbath, the manna collected would only be of use over the next 24 hour period, after which it putrefied. Whilst this does not represent an entirely accurate template for prayer today, I believe that there are parallels that we can draw upon.

God's mercies "are new every morning". He desires us to draw near to Him everyday in fellowship and I personally find that an early start is hard to beat. It's great to offer Him the 'first fruits' of the day before the clamour of our busy lives starts to make their strident demands.

It may be that He will or won't communicate to us in an overt sense, I don't think that matters so much, what matters more to Him is that we give Him quality time. If we truly love somebody, we want to spend time with them. Our relationship with God is the same. If we really want to hear His "still, small voice", then we need to be still and "small" (humble) before Him. If we want to be able to sense the nuances of God's communication with us then we have to spend regular, quality time getting to know Him. The primary and most reliable way we get to know God is by studying His word. We need to grow in our love for Christ "the Word of God" and seek after the truths contained within with a real hunger. If we will be faithful to pursue God in this, then He promises us that He will meet us.

Hungering after God's Word and developing a habit of studying can be a difficult thing, but if we will pursue Him, then we will grow and become stronger and more confident in Him.

I think that it was Wesley who said that he would have no difficulty in finding people who would lay down their lives for God, but finding people that would diligently spend significant time in reading and studying God's Word was a much harder matter!

In 1 John 4:18 God promises that "perfect love casts out all fear". When we are made perfect in love through knowing Him who is perfect love, then our enemies such as anxiety, depression and confusion will be overcome by the greater One who lives inside of us. Do you believe it?

Psychologists have proven that we gravitate to the things that we practice the most. If we will choose to spend regular, quality time with the Master in the Word and prayer, then we will find that our love for both will grow.

If we are presently in a seasonal change in our own lives, then may God grant that the only things that die and fall away from us (as autumn leaves) are the things that hold us back from pursuing Him.

Jonathan Laird  
HMAS Albatross



# Victorian Bushfire News

## From one of our members

Margaret has been a member of MCF for around 20 years now. She joined whilst working at Puckapunyal. Margaret served in the Navy in the 1960's and spent over 3 years in service life. This was a long time for a female back then given that the normal period of service at the time was around six months. Margaret, is thanking God for the safety of her family after the devastating fires that went through Victoria on Black Saturday. Margaret herself lives in Broadford, which is 35 km from Flowerdale, near the base of Mount Piper (commonly known as Sugarloaf) and works at Victoria Barracks. The fire was only 2km from Broadford. As she lives next door to a petrol station she packed up and went further into the township. She shares news and photos of her precious family:

By Margaret Urquhart

Two of my daughters, their husbands and children were subject to fires during Black Saturday. One daughter's house was saved. The other daughter, from Flowerdale is married with 3 young children, ages 4, 2 and 4 months, their house was completely burnt down but they are all safe. The only casualty was the family cat, and the gold fish. My son-in-law cannot believe that their chooks survived the fire, and the children's cubby house, and trampoline were not destroyed in

the fire either. I believe that I can thank God for his blessing in their survival.

Here at work, I have been very fortunate, the support from the personnel here has been most humbling. I believe they all should be very satisfied and proud of themselves for their empathy, support and assistance towards my daughter and her family, and other people affected by the fires, during times such as these.

Thank you - Margaret Urquhart



## On the Front Line

by Wayne Lyons

I recently had the privilege of going down to the fires in Victoria as a Chaplain for Chaplaincy Australia. We had about 40 chaplains on the ground. Our job was to be a stabilising presence and a listening ear for fire victims and, other working personnel. We did this in the response stage of the fires by being present at the support centre. We knocked on doors of houses that survived the fire and assisted in many other ways. For instance some of our Chaplains were chosen to be on the buses that took the surviving towns people of Marysville to view their town.

There are many stories one could tell but the one that stands out for me is the story of meeting two brothers. I have a picture of them standing next to a burnt Vietnam Veterans flag pole at Flowerdale.

These brothers who's 84 year old mother lived next door was in hospital at time of the fires and her 83 year old husband was at home when the fires came through. The Vietnam Vet who lived next door battled through the smoke and found the poor old fella near the back tap. He carried him to his vehicle and took him to the Hotel; a safe place at the time.

I was touched by this act of heroism. The old man died at the pub and it was good that he was not alone.

I prayed with these brothers about the loss of their stepfather under a gum tree that was not fully burnt by the fires. It was a touching moment, our eyes wet with tears, as I committed these tragic events into the Lords hands for His comfort.

God bless all the people involved.



# Control Anger

## Part 2

by Pastor Wayne Lyons

In the bible we are told “to be angry and sin not”. Anger is a normal emotion, yet unrestrained anger, becomes sinful and harms our lives and the lives of others when unchecked.

We do not receive any good thing from out of control anger only heart ache, some call this karma but the bible calls this the law of reaping and sowing, in other words you reap what you sow, in the book of genesis we see the first account of anger when Cain gets angry with his brother Abel, God tells Cain that sin is at the door waiting, if we open the door to unrestrained anger we are in for a lot of trouble and a miserable life, the correct translation of the words “sin is at the door” presents a picture of a crouching Lion waiting to pounce upon its victim, anger is a normal response to a stressful situations that we might find ourselves in, never the less what we now do with this anger will make it harmful to us and others or harmless, we either become bitter or better, God Himself has the emotion of anger yet His anger is always righteous and in control, His anger is always just and right, I don't think we finite human beings have this capacity without Gods help, so we really need to take a check of anger in our lives as it can destroy our families our friends, and worst still nations, wars always involve angry people you just have to watch the news any night of the week and you will see it flowing out of people, we need to protect our country but not with uncontrolled anger the anger of Cain led to the murder of his brother, Cain was self righteous and harboured an unrepentant attitude.



As our anger rises it either explodes on someone, or internalises within us (this is a seething type anger). How are we to handle this anger? Well we should' be angry but sin not' in other words we control our anger by walking away cooling down getting away from the situation, I myself talk to God about what has made me angry and as I do this I forgive those involved, I am careful of pride and apologize if necessary then this anger is not my problem any more, we can control ourselves and deal with anger before it becomes a problem for all involved. What is sin? What is uncontrolled anger? It is simply missing the mark the bull's eye. Once I bring my anger into subjection I can then work out this problem in a rational way; controlling my anger and dissipating it, this helps me to not to blow my top and vomit it all over others. How are you doing with anger?

### About the Author

Wayne Lyons is a Vietnam veteran who has a ministry with veterans and is the senior pastor at High Street Christian Centre, Queanbeyan NSW. He is district chaplain for Chaplaincy Australia, and chaplain to the National Service Association in Queanbeyan and the ACT. He is also chaplain to the RSL Queanbeyan sub-branch.



# MCF Prayer Calendar

April – June 2009



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

## 6 April

- › The Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon. For wisdom and discernment as he makes decisions. 1 Tim 2:1 -2.
- › MCF Council. Pray for hearts sensitive to God and the work that He wants to do through MCF. Pray that God's will would be done through these wonderful servants.
- › Pray for Chaplains and all Christians that they would have an opportunity to share the true message of Easter with those around them.

## 13 April

- › ACM "Angus" Houston, CDF. For wisdom, discernment, strength and good counsel as he leads our military.
- › Pray that this edition of Crossfire would encourage Christians to share their faith. Pray that God would use Crossfire for His glory.
- › Everyman's Welfare Service. Pray for Chief Commissioner Marc Wheway. Pray for favour, wisdom and discernment and ongoing vision.

## 20 April

- › Principal Chaplains and Bishops who serve our military. Pray that these men have the heart of God and the mind of Christ as they serve Him in these important positions.
- › Praise God for the new MCF website! Pray that He uses this tool to bring people to Himself and to encourage all Christians within our ADF.
- › Majors Barry and Pam Nancarrow, Commissioner for RSDS (Salvation Army). Pray for strength, courage and wisdom and a continuing vision as they lead this vital organisation.

## 27 April

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

## 4 May

- › The Chiefs of the Army, Navy & Air Force. That they receive Godly counsel, support and protection as they serve our military.
- › MCF staff worker Helen Rose. Pray that God would use her to be an encouragement to many as she serves in this role.
- › Association of Christian Conferences, Training, and Service (ACCTS). Pray for a couple to take over this work in the South Pacific.

## 11 May

- › Pray for those at our training institutions that during this time they would turn to the One who is always there for them – God. Pray for unity and a strong presence of Christians on these bases.
- › Families of those MCF members who are deployed. For continued strength, protection and spiritual growth. For the body of Christ to be a practical encouragement to those in this situation.





- › Solid Rock Ministries (SRM). Pray for those in leadership that they would work together in love and unity to reach military wives with the unfailing love of God.

## 18 May

- › Pray for the leaders of our nation, that God would direct their hearts and minds. Pray for Peter Rose as he serves as Chaplain to the men and women who lead our nation. Pray that he bring God glory in all that he does.
- › Give thanks for LTGEN David Hurley, the MCF Patron. Pray that he will be encouraged and blessed as he champions MCF to the highest levels of Defence.
- › Pray for Pete Ritchie from Fighting Words in Albury. Pray that he would be used to reach many with the good news of the gospel. Pray for open doors and for new people to join the weekly Bible study.

## 25 May

- › Pray for the "Alpha for the Forces" programme being run in various locations and for those in the planning stages. Pray for God's word to go forth unhindered, to accomplish that for which it was sent and for it not to return void.
- › Deployed Christians from our ADF. Pray that they grow in their Christian walk whilst deployed. Pray that they have opportunities for good fellowship with other Christians. Pray for strong bonds of love and unity amongst those who meet to study God's word.
- › Reserve Chaplains. That they would feel included in the military Christian network and that their service would give God much glory.

## 1 June

- › Give thanks for the welfare systems that we have available to the ADF. Pray for those involved with Special needs families in Defence. Pray for God inspired ideas to help these families.
- › Retired MCF members. That their wisdom and experience be used to encourage and support those currently serving in our ADF.
- › Pray for "Sallymen" who serve around our nation. Pray for much favour on Bases. Pray that they be used by God to bring light into dark places. Pray that they be powerful ambassadors for Him.

## 8 June

- › For strong partnerships and anointing on the relationships between Chaplains, local churches and military Christians.
- › Pray for MCF groups that meet. Pray that they would be relevant and a source of support and encouragement for those who attend.
- › Navigators. For the National Director, Mike Johnson, for strength, vision, wisdom and discernment in leading the Navigators.

## 15 June

- › For Chaplains within the ADF. For opportunities for them to share the gospel, for hearts and minds to be open as they do so. For Christ to speak through them as they meet with and counsel members of the ADF and their families.
- › Pray for the civilian members of MCF, that they would continue to support, encourage and bless those serving in our military. Pray also that they will be blessed themselves through fellowship with other Defence Christians.

- › Fighting Words ministry. Pray for Mike Hanlon as he leads. Pray that God use this ministry to reach many at ADFA.

## 22 June

- › For all our military leaders. That they be men and women with servant hearts, respectful of those they lead and mindful of the responsibility that they carry.
- › Families of MCF members. For Godly friendships, a church home & opportunities to use their spiritual gifts.
- › Chaplains. For regular times of spiritual refreshment. For times to step away and enjoy precious fellowship with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

## 29 June

- › Pray that military chapels would be used to their full potential to reach out and be a blessing to our ADF community.
- › For those MCF groups running Alpha or doing evangelism courses. Pray that those involved will be equipped to share the good news and have opportunities to do so.
- › Chaplains in training. Pray for these men and women as they study and prepare for ministry within our ADF. Pray that they will be well equipped and strengthened for the calling that God has placed upon their lives.



# Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

## The Hard Questions Series

This is part of a series of bible studies on the hard questions that military Christians face when serving in the ADF. It is designed for group study within a MCF Small Group. The entire series is available on the MCF website.

### Topic Four: Can we talk about our faith in the workplace or is it a God-free zone?

#### Introduction

Bible-bashers! The ADF hates 'em, right? Yet no-one seems to mind ANZAC Day dawn services singing "Abide with Me", or lowering their heads when the Padre prays, or even being intrigued about the history of the Holy Land when it is right under their boots. So is the ADF really God-free or it target-rich with needy people? This study looks at what the ADF says about expressing faith and compares it to what God expects of us.

#### What are our obligations as a Christian witness?

- The Great Commission. Matt 28: 18 – 19. Is this just for the disciples or does it apply to all future believers as well (see v 20).
- Is being a witness and being an evangelist the same thing?
- How can we best evangelize in the ADF (the subject of the next MCF Hard Question).

#### What are the joys of being a Christian witness?

- Being part of God's everlasting works. Luke 15: 8 – 10.
- Can anyone share their joy at being a witness that led to someone's salvation?

What is the Defence policy on religion and how is this different to God's policy?

- What does freedom to practice religion mean? Does this preclude talking to others about faith? What if talking to others about our faith is central to our religious observance?
- What would Jesus say about these policies?

How prepared and willing are we to talk about our faith if the opportunity comes?

- The hazardous nature of our work provides more opportunities to discuss eternal issues than the usual run-of-the-mill job. Do we take those opportunities when they come? Why don't we?

- Can we describe our own faith from both our mind and our heart?
- How do we deal with someone who is angry about a profession of faith? John 15:18 – 21.
- If we believe Matt 5: 11 – 12, why does ridicule hurt so much?

#### Conclusion

If we believe that God is in control of our lives then we must believe that God puts non-Christians in our lives for us to witness to, either directed or indirectly. How good a witness for Christ are you? What are you doing that is retarding your witness to your mates and co-workers in the ADF? The ADF is a God-needy environment, especially on deployment. He has put us here on purpose and expects us to make a difference.



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*Where to now?  
Need some answers?*



*Make a difference check out Psalm 37:5-7 in the Bible*