

Military Christian Values Series

In this series we discover that the Australian Defence Force Values are as timeless as the Bible and a guide for Christian living. Adherence to the Defence Values is something expected of all members of the ADF and Department of Defence. Professionalism, Integrity, Courage, Loyalty, Teamwork, and Innovation are core characteristics of the culture of the ADF. It should come as no surprise to anyone that these values are also inherently Christian values. This series is based upon articles written by senior ADF officers and clergy and originally appeared in Crossfire, MCF's magazine. They explain why these six biblical values are not only important to our military life but essential to our Christian walk. MCF groups are encouraged to use the six essays as topics for study and discussion during meetings and study groups.



Let us ask ourselves the following:

- Do we show God's glory through adherence to these values? If so, how best do we do so?
- Are there any aspects to these values that are contrary to our beliefs? How do we deal with that?
- What do we do when Christian co-workers and friends are not showcasing these values?
- What are the core values of Christian life not encompassed by the Defence Values? What can we do to reinforce these within our workplace?

Innovation, by GPCAPT Gary Pianegonda

Innovation is the act of starting something for the first time; introducing something new. Military history is resplendent with examples of innovation. From crossbows to cannons, from periscopes to parachutes, innovations in equipment and tactics have won many battles. There should be no surprise that the attribute of innovation is highly prized in the Australian Defence Force. But should innovation be valued among Christians? How, if at all, has God indicated that innovation is something we should pursue? Has God shown signs of innovation? Well, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. OK, that's not a bad start. Consider also the ingenuity of God's great, paradoxical plan, by which all humankind can gain undeserved eternal life, through the death of the one man who deserves not to die. Consider that we are all too stubborn and stupid to appreciate God's goodness, so God gave us free will to experience badness and to make informed, heartfelt and enduring choices. Consider that Jesus could

have given explicit answers to all of his inquisitors, and that nowadays we might be tempted to dismiss the ancient context and detail of those responses. Instead, Jesus innovatively used parables, encouraging people of all generations to examine their hearts for the relevance of God's wisdom in their personal circumstances. Yep. There's no doubt about it: God is a pretty smart cookie! (Please pray that God will forgive my insubordinate tendencies.)

Clearly, God embraces innovation, which is enough reason for us to follow his example. So how might we serve God with innovation in our daily lives? To start with, we do not need to try very hard. The Holy Spirit is always with us to inspire and encourage us if we are open to his suggestions. All we need to do is love God with all of our hearts and with all of our souls and with all of our minds, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. With such passion and focus, the Holy Spirit will guide us in new and remarkable ways. While our human cleverness and abilities are limited, for God all things are possible. But let me not be too grand or esoteric in discussing innovative Christian service. Let me give you some small, practical examples that have helped me. While I want to share my beliefs with others in the workplace, I do not want to be offensive or aggressive. So I display in my office (among the other clutter) some Military Christian Fellowship paraphernalia. A mug with an MCF logo, or a Deployment Pack, or the latest edition of Cross Fire, can serve as subtle invitations for anyone who is moved by the Spirit to ask me about them.

Many of us have computers on our desks, so you might choose to use the computer calendar to prompt your devotionals. I have a recurring daily appointment with God, and my computer reminds me each morning that I should start the day in prayer. At lunch time, the calendar prompts me again with my monthly memory verse: John 3:16 on the first of each month, Hebrews 4:12 on the second day, and so on. At one stage, I even set my digital watch to chime on the hour, reminding me to pause momentarily and reflect on God's blessings. Unfortunately, my colleagues thought the hourly gong was more hell-like than heavenly. I am also conscious we live in an age when many people are apathetic about religion, so we must be innovative and interesting when sharing the Word. To practise what I preach, I created a Bible-based crossword puzzle to accompany this article. If there is space in this or a later edition of Cross Fire, the editor might print it for your amusement. (Of course, you will need to look up some answers, thus revealing my underhanded but innovative attempt to foster some Bible study!). From this article you might correctly conclude that I believe being a Christian and sharing our beliefs should be exciting. I think the creator of all things wise and wonderful is keen to encourage our own little attempts at innovative Christian service. However, such innovation is more than simple fun: it is a duty. At a personal level, and at the global level, we are involved in spiritual warfare against Satan. There are many souls around us, desperately needing our help to guide them to the one true saviour. We need to use all of our wits in this spiritual battle. We need to display innovation and all of the other attributes which are so highly regarded in the Australian Defence Force. Armed with these values,

and with our face set firmly in the direction of God, we can strive to be a force for good, a force to be reckoned with, and a force to win.

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