

## 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?

## Integrity, Bishop Dr Tom Frame

Of all the values identified in recent times by Defence as being crucial to the health and well-being of ADF culture, integrity is the most difficult to define but the easiest to recognize. While lecturing at the New South Wales Police College several years ago I was told it was simply 'doing the right thing when no-one would ever know'. This helpfully suggests that it has to do with actions and attitudes. But it is even broader than that. On the twenty-two occasions in which the word (or a variant) appears in the Holy Scriptures, it conveys a sense of consistency, reliability and honesty. It seems to involve personal wholeness, inner harmony and the integration of body, mind and spirit.

The followers of Jesus are called to integrate their believing, behaving and belonging. As a function of believing that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, the Christian belongs to the community Jesus founded (the Church) where he or she behaves in a manner that reflects Jesus' teaching. Belief is strengthened through fellowship. Behaviour is shaped by belief. Belonging deepens conviction. Every part of a person's being and every aspect of a person's living is, therefore, drawn into being a disciple of Christ.

Not surprisingly, 'Christian integrity' is a distinct commodity. While it involves consistency, reliability and honesty in one's public and private conduct, and in one's professional and personal dealings, it critically involves the steady permeation of Jesus' teaching throughout the totality of one's being. This is principally a work of the Holy Spirit. It is sometimes called sanctification and it entails being made holy. Christian integrity is, then, fundamentally about holiness.

All Christians are called away from worldliness and social conformity to spiritual maturity and moral striving. In effect, to the wholehearted pursuit of holiness. This is proclaimed in the opening to St Mark's Gospel where John the Baptist calls for repentance. It pervades the Sermon on the Mount recorded in St Matthew's Gospel and is evident in the 'therefore' rhetoric of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Here the apostle writes: 'I therefore, as a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called ... Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth ... Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children'. The demands grow intrinsically out of the action of God in Christ. The first epistle attributed to Saint Peter echoes the Ephesian letter: 'As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written: 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'. The royal priesthood image in the epistle intensifies this theme: 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light'. To belong to God is to be holy; to be a recipient of God's power is to be holy. The church is holy because it is God's creation and the recipient of his covenant of faithfulness.

The call to holy conduct is a call to complete unity with God. Holiness is not first of all a matter of morals: but it does include a moral aspect. Moral purity belongs to holiness because belonging to God transforms life. Holiness is not first of all something done by human beings, whether inside or outside the church. Holy people do not make the church holy. People do holy actions because they belong to God. Election by God makes the Christian holy.

The call to holiness has a direct bearing on the conduct of uniformed men and women. In addition to the ever-present peril of imbibing the standards of this world and the wisdom of our age, Christian servicemen and women face the threat of being captured by the less laudable aspects of Defence culture and being tamed, warped or mutated by agendas and activities that have little to do with Christian mission and ministry. It is possible in the midst of great change and a heightened operational tempo for Christians to be overwhelmed by what might be good for the Defence Force at the expense of what might be needful in proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God. This is all quite apart from everyday things, like drugs, alcohol and pornography, which have the potential to damage our personality and corrode our soul.

When Christians speak of integrity, they have in mind the alignment of a person's body, mind and spirit with Jesus Christ, and thoughts, words and deeds that resonate with his teaching. In addition to becoming more Christ-like, a commitment to Christian integrity ensures that the believer is always and everywhere an ambassador of Jesus Christ pointing to the coming Kingdom of God. The ADF needs people who possess this kind of integrity.

**The Author:** *Bishop Frame was the previous Anglican Bishop to the ADF. A former Naval officer, he is a writer and commentator on Christian issues and is widely published. He is currently Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre.*