



eNews Dec 2023/Jan 2024

Bumper end of year edition

Thoughts as we near the end of 2023



The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NIV)

As we head into another Advent and look towards celebrating the birth of Christ, darkness across the world, seems at times to be stronger than ever. However, Christ the Light of the world penetrated this darkness and no matter how hard the darkness of sin and discord strive to darken this world, it cannot. It is easier at times to just give up, however if we take a leaf out of Jesus' Leadership Manual, He knew that being born into this world would result in Him being crucified for all of us.

The wood carving above is one I purchased in Wurzburg Germany, when I first saw it the master wood carver had just begun and the fullness of the image was indistinct yet you could see where the Master Carver was going and the message of the cross in the cradle. The finished carving, once painted demonstrates this really clearly.

Without the cradle, there would be no cross without the cross there would be no resurrection and without the resurrection, no eternal life. This Christmas despite the noise and static of secular society, take time to reflect on the true reason for the Season, it is the expectant joy of eternal life that sustains us through times of trial.

May you have a blessed, holy and safe Christmas, whether staying home or moving due to the posting cycle.

Godspeed,

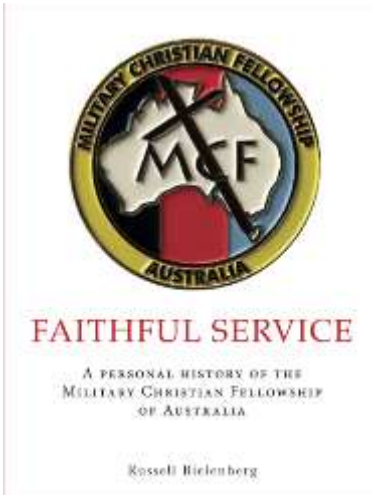
Steve, MCF-A Chair

(If you would like a free Advent devotion for December, click on the link – you'll find it half way down page under Small Group Study Material: [Small Group Resources - Military Christian Fellowship of Australia \(mcf-a.org.au\)](https://mcf-a.org.au))

Faithful Service

A personal history of MCF-A by Russell Bielenberg

After many years of talking about, researching and writing, Russell's' long awaited book is finally here in time for you to read over the Christmas break! Limited copies so get in quick.



From the author: I joined the OCU within three years of its commencement, so it is likely that only I am left to recount the early years ... I have tried to deal fairly with the difficult issues which I felt needed to be covered so that lessons might be learnt and similar situations avoided. I found great encouragement as I looked back over the past 62 years seeing what God has done through the OCU/MCF and I pray that the reader too will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. The title is meant to reflect the desire of MCF members to be faithful followers of Christ while providing faithful service to the nation.

Foreword by current MCF-A Patron, MAJGEN Sue Graham.

The book is available NOW from the author for \$45 (+ \$15 postage if not collected from the author)

Details on how to order and pay is via the MCF-A website (events page): [A personal history of MCF-A, book purchase available - Military Christian Fellowship of Australia](#)

There will be a physical launch of the book in the New Year, date, time and place TBC, so keep an eye on the February eNews for more details. In the meantime, why not read the book or give one as a Christmas present!

2024 Welcome Events

Keep an eye out at your next ADF welcome event for your local MCF-A Rep and Chaplains. Don't forget to say hi and make sure you know when your local group meets.

If you'd like to host a table at your local event the MCF Office is here to support you and can post you some give-aways.



Puckapunyal Welcome Event

Sth Aust MCF Dinner review by David Buckland

MCF Dinner Sat 25 Nov 23 at Naval, Military and Air Force Club, Hutt St Adelaide



This event so happened to coincide with the Adelaide 500 V8 Supercars, which was about two streets away – however, everybody managed to get to park their cars. We were met enthusiastically at the door by Geoff Robertson and his wife. Deb where our first duty was to order our meal and drinks before any conversation took place. The 'Airforce Room' tables were tastefully decorated, and everything was laid out superbly using six tables. It turned out that the guest speaker Pastor Brendan Kirby PhD a former DSTG Scientist, regular attender of MCF at DSTG and now full-time pastor of Hope Church Adelaide. Brendan had

mistakenly doubled booked and was in Perth at another function, but because of the time difference, he kept his word and was going to be live via Zoom at 8pm.

Everyone was in deep conversation catching up until Geoff brought everyone to order where Chaplain Skipper said Grace. Geoff then asked some members to introduce themselves to the gathering giving an outline of what witnessing they do or achieved, and some gave general information on what was happening in their lives and/or upcoming events. MCF-A Council Member's Rep, Steven Cutts was thanked for his service to Council and long service to MCF-A over many, many years as he stepped down as MCF-A Member Rep on Council.

After a few technical IT issues, we listened and watched an enthralling presentation entitled 'Evidence For Design In The World Around Us' by Pastor Brendan where all the facts were backed up by various statements that were in the Bible (can't remember the books of the Bible) – truly amazing with some of the facts that Brendan had researched – I wish I wrote some of them down or remembered them better.

Chaplain Skipper thanked all MCF-A Reps in the room with special thanks to Kane Langmaid who is posting at the end of the year. Acknowledgement of the hard work and important role of local Reps and the help they are to their local Chaplains in connecting and supporting Christians in their local area was made with great appreciation.

When it was time to say goodbye, some of us were given a personal guided tour of the 1897 two-story building; – so amazing with all the various rooms which all have a special purpose.

AMCF World Conference: Brazil 13 - 19 Oct, 2024

Since then the concept of indigenously-organised⁽¹⁾ military Christian fellowships (MCFs) has spread from nation to nation as military Christians became excited about the impact military Christians can have in their nations. Additionally, AMCF's three supporting organisations -- [ACCTS](#), [MMI](#), and [MSO](#) -- have played a large role in the growth and development of military Christian fellowships worldwide.' [[AMCF Website \(amcf-int.org\)](#)]

2024 will be the 14th AMCF World Conference which will be hosted by UMCEB (Brazilian MCF), the South American VP, ACCTS and AMCF and will take place in the town of Aguas De Lindoia, nr Sao Pãulo in Brazil.

There is space for 2,000 participants to attend, each at a cost of US\$600 which will include transport from the airport (Sao Pãulo -Guarulhos International Airport code: GRU), all food and accommodation. That will not include the costs of flights/travel to Brazil. The conference will take place in the Majestic Hotel Conference Centre. ([Hotel Majestic](#)).

The objective of the conference is to invigorate those MCFs already in existence and to inspire participants from countries without an MCF to create one. This objective will be met by 'Empowering spiritual encouragement and leadership'. Leadership is an integral aspect of the military Christian's life and ministry, and the AMCF World Conference will nurture leadership skills in both current and future international MCF leaders.

Through targeted workshops, seminars, and keynote sessions, attendees gain valuable insights into military Christian leadership principles based on biblical teaching. This conference offers a platform for them to learn from seasoned mentors, share ideas, and exchange experiences, paving the way for the growth of military Christian fellowships worldwide.

If you plan on attending, or would like more info about attending, please contact the MCF Office - mcf.office@defence.gov.au

What's special about RAAF Roulette number 4?



FLTLT Justin Hayter is Roulette number 4! He's also a Christian man and member and supporter of FOCUS and MCF-A. You can read about Justin via this link to the Air Force newspaper - [August 31 2023 \(defence.gov.au\)](https://www.defence.gov.au/news/2023/august31/raaf-roulette-number-4)

Don't forget to say hi to Justin if the Roulettes are at an event or Air Base near you, and remember to say a prayer for him as he thrills you with his skills in the skies above.



Feeling Traumatized? – A Christian guide to good mental health

As headlines of the terror attacks on October 7th in Israel continue to flood the news, these and other reports of innocent people suffering can evoke feelings of emotional anguish that can be difficult to process. Mental health experts say while it's not unusual to feel traumatized while learning about the events unfolding in the Middle East and elsewhere, it doesn't have to stay that way. Christian counsellor Dr. Jennifer Londgren, author of *A Guide to Mental & Emotional Wellness: Biblical Wisdom, Practical Principles, Clinical Insight* told CBN News it's important to stay informed about important events happening around the world while maintaining good mental health.

Click for the guide - [Feeling Traumatized by the News? - Australian Prayer Network \(ausprayernet.org.au\)](https://ausprayernet.org.au/feeling-traumatized-by-the-news/)

Info for over these Christmas holidays

Movie for your Small Group/family outing



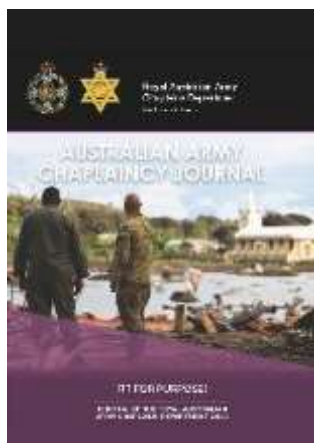
In cinemas from 30 November

A young woman carrying an unimaginable responsibility. A young man torn between love and honour. A jealous king who will stop at nothing to keep his crown. This live-action Christmas musical celebration for the entire family, weaves classic Christmas melodies into new pop songs in a music-infused retelling of the timeless story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus. A unique new entry into the collection of holiday classic movies, this epic Christmas musical is unlike any before it.

We recently had the privilege of seeing an advanced screening of JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM, the new film from Sony Pictures and WE LOVED IT! This film has everything you'd want in a Christmas movie. It's so much fun, you will definitely sing along, the acting is super and Mary and Joseph's story will warm your hearts as you lean in to the huge task they've been entrusted with ... bring baby Jesus safely to the world... and we think the witty three wise men might cause some fun and frivolity for all 😊 – Movies Change People

Why not arrange your Small Group (and their families) to go see this 99min film as an end of year event?

Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal - 2023



The latest (2023) edition of the Army Chaplaincy Journal titled “Fit for Purpose!” is now available **on the DRN** via: [Pages - RAACHD Journals](#)

There are various articles and book reviews from Chaplains and others.

The MCF office has limited hard copies for those who can't access the DRN.

If you would like a hard copy please email the office your name and best postal address.

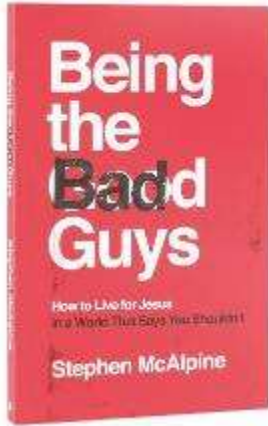
Being the ~~Good~~ Bad guys

review by David Coleman (MCF Secretary)

Is it getting harder to live out your Christian faith in the workplace?

Since this question was raised at our Exec meeting in July, I have read a short book provided by Julie, entitled *Being the ~~Good~~ Bad Guys* which provides some helpful insights into this question and the broader challenge of living the Christian life in the modern western world.

The author, Stephen McAlpine, perceptively notes that Christians have largely failed to notice the shift in cultural thinking is not from a nominally ‘Christian’ era into a pluralist society in which all belief systems compete from an equal footing. Instead, we have discovered our modern western culture is not truly pluralist at all and the Christian worldview and its morality is not viewed as an alternative amongst equals, but as undesirable and even harmful. Hence we are not imagining when we witness our culture’s increasing tolerance for almost any view so long as it is not Christian.



We are moving into a post-Christian era. Coming from a culture in which the Christian view was a largely respected position in society and therefore Christians and their institutions have historically enjoyed significant power and influence, into a position where we are the under-dog. Because of this, and the public perception we still enjoy undue influence, McAlpine warns against developing a persecution complex.

Navigating this transition is painful, but McAlpine reminds modern day Christians in the western world that we are no worse off than most Christians across cultures and through history. We are moving out of a time and culture in which Christianity has been uncharacteristically accepted, into one that is more reflective of the status quo across time and culture. It is challenging for us, in part because we are not used to it.

McAlpine warns against the expectation of any immediate national or global apocalyptic implosion as the world 'goes to hell in a handbasket' to prove us right. This is unlikely to take place. But he notes that this new breed of pluralism represents a house divided against itself and therefore will certainly fail to deliver on its promised utopia. The opportunity for faithful Christians will increasingly exist to pick up the pieces of lives shattered through faith in false ideologies and provide them with *true* hope. He forecasts some challenging times ahead, but as Christ also did, encourages us not to worry or despair. Christianity and the church will never die nor become irrelevant and there is still very much a viable and fruitful ministry for Christians.

*note – there is another review of this book in the latest Army Chaplaincy Journal



Other items

Have you posted or moved house? Are you deploying or away from home for a long time?

Posted or moving house, please update your details [HERE](#)

Deploying or on a long exercise? MCF-A would love to support and pray for you while you're away. Let us know at: mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Membership

[Membership](#) is free and ***open to every Christian***. If you've not had an association with Defence or you don't identify as Christian you can be an associate member via the same link.

Donations

MCF is supported almost entirely through freewill donations by members and supporters. Please look at Supporting MCF in prayer, with your time and through [financial support](#). (Direct debit preferred – details at right side of the webpage link)

Note that donations (over \$2) to MCF-A are tax deductible.

Prayer requests

To put forward prayer points for inclusion in the Prayer Calendar please email the MCF Prayer Coordinator Dr Daniel Solomon(3) daniel.solomon3@defence.gov.au

You can also send through **urgent prayer points** that are sent on confidentially to the MCF Prayer Warriors, or enquire about becoming an MCF Prayer Warrior, by contacting Daniel or the MCF Office.

Contacting the MCF Office

PHONE: 02 6132 7845

EMAIL: mcf.office@defence.gov.au You can also find us on Facebook and ForceNet.

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