

CROSSFIRE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 29 † Nov 2017



Forgiven | AMCF Conference | Spiritual Warfare



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From the editor...

Mr David Coleman

(david.coleman1@defence.gov.au)



Please send me a short story of your experiences as a Christian in the military and highlight what God has done for you!

Articles for Crossfire should be no more than 500 words long and focus on military Christian issues and experiences. Stories from operational service are especially encouraged.

Submissions should be in electronic format 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.

Cover image by: LSIS Nina Fogliani

Remembrance Day Melbourne 2017

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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, CP3-1-160, Dept of Defence, Canberra ACT 2600.

Credit card on-line:

<http://mcf-a.org.au/donate/>

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



Chairman's Report

LTCOL Jamie van Heel



Firstly, I would like to thank BRIG Dan Fortune for his service as MCF Patron over the past three years and welcome COL Mick Mumford as the new MCF Patron. Mick has been a former MCF Chairman and will bring leadership, wisdom and enthusiasm as the new MCF Patron. I'd also like to welcome CHAP Collin Acton who recently joined the MCF Council and thank CHAP Kevin Russell for his service as Chaplains' rep to the Council from 2014-2017.

MCF is hosting the National Day of Prayer for Defence on 24 Mar 18. This is a spiritually significant event for Australian Defence Organisation. The day is focusing on praying for the safety of deployed service men and women, their families, and those who have recently returned from operations. Prayer is also being offered for ADF culture, the implementation of the Pathways to Change strategy, deployed personnel, Chaplains, and Defence senior leaders. Thank you to those who are facilitating prayer in your region specifically for the Defence issues. In April this year there were 27 groups who met across Australia and abroad to pray for Defence. Can you meet with others in your region this year to uphold the ADF in your prayers? If so, please advise the MCF Office mcf.office@defence.gov.au.

On Fri evening 20 May 17 we profiled ADF Chaplaincy and Christian Military Ministries to Bible College students and interested personnel at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC). It was a great evening where a number of interested Bible College students had a VIP session on what a career in chaplaincy in the ADF could look like for them. I'd like to thank CAPT Jacob Choi for initiating and being the Sydney point of contact for the evening. If you are interested in organising an MCF regional event please inform the MCF Office and we will provide support to your planned activity.

The MCF 'Forgiven' seminar was held at (SMBC) on Sat 21 May 17. All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The enemy wants Christians to dwell on their sin and

make them feel trapped and unfit for Christian service. God's plan through Jesus Christ is for us to turn to him and be forgiven so we can live victorious lives through Christ. The seminar speakers included BRIG Dan Fortune, (Patron of MCF), Mr Berni Dymet (ex Army officer and CEO of Christianity works), Mr Mathew Kratiuk (former motorcycle gang member) and FLTLT Scott Minchin. The speakers shared how their lives have been transformed through being forgiven by God's grace and how God can use you in his service. The majority of the articles in this edition of Crossfire are from the MCF 'Forgiven' Seminar.

MCF hosted the Forum of Christian Military Ministries on 14-15 Sep 17 in Canberra. There were 9 Christian Military Ministries represented. Each of the organisations provided an update on their activities and prayer points on the Thursday. On the Thurs evening each of the organisations was presented with a Bible Society Gallipoli Bible. On the Friday we discussed how we could better implement the covenant signed between the ministries at the dinner in 2016.

At the Defence Christians Dinner on 15 Sep 17 it was great to hear Mr Andrew Hastie, MP former Special Forces Officer share on his experiences, challenges and opportunities as a Christian in the ADF and as a parliamentarian. CPL Andrew Summers was also interviewed about his struggles with PTSD and how his decision to follow Jesus has assisted in his recovery. The next dinner will be in the Aug-Sep 2018 period in Canberra next year. You are welcome to attend.

MCF Australia is hosting the AMCF SW Pacific conference in Brisbane from 26-28 Oct 18. The theme for the conference is 'Thriving in Christ in a challenging world' and is replacing the annual MCF Seminar for 2018. You are welcome to attend and provide prayer and financial support for the conference. We are trying to raise \$25k to support delegates from SW Pacific countries that are not able to afford to attend themselves. The aim is to have functioning MCF's in all countries of the SW Pacific.

MCF have been the recipients of three years funding to grow the ministry. As part of this growth to show that MCF is worth investing in, we are trying to grow our membership and finances by 10% per year. We have been advertising MCF in the service newspapers and Australian Christian radio. We have updated also updated our website to make it more contemporary and user friendly. As part of our strategic plan we are aiming to have 100 of our membership who commit to praying for, promoting and resourcing MCF. If you would like to be an MCF Centurion with the other 45 MCF members who have already committed, please visit our website www.mcf-a.org.au and hit the donate button. I pray that you have a rewarding and Christ centred 2018.



MCF Forgiven Seminar

BRIG Dan Fortune



Psalm 103:11-12 (NIV)

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

This was a key thing for me to reflect on when on deployment. Being set free from the sins that I'm guilty of, and I'm ashamed of, that I'm damaged by. We need to trust everything to God's judgement – he will judge. We don't have to judge each other and we don't have to judge ourselves.

In the ADF context I think forgiveness is very important. Veterans' mental health is a key area of discussion. I'm not the most qualified to speak on this issue but I've had my own journey of being damaged, being ashamed, being unable to let go of some difficult experiences where you've taken a life. Things where you've later reflected on and thought maybe that wasn't the right decision. And worst of all when you know mistakes were made. If only you'd done a little bit better. In command, mistakes can be made and it costs a young soldier their life. I wear the losses under my command. But how did I move forward? How do we get out of that dark place? We go to God. We find his grace and forgiveness and only there can we move on. There's transformational power in the Scriptures. Forgiveness is really important for veterans.

It will also be important in how we as a community think about how we look after our veterans. The ADF is still a bit self conscious about the spiritual dimensions of health.

These themes and this seminar are an important advocacy opportunity and I certainly believe that individuals who have had that journey should speak up about it and I welcome that conversation.

Luke 15:32 (NIV)

But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

A great story illustrating forgiveness is the parable of the prodigal son (see Luke 15:11-32) – where we see undeserved forgiveness and love. A son welcomed back in irrespective of their sin and conduct.

Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Forgiveness doesn't condone sin. Our forgiveness doesn't wash away wrong doing and its consequences, but it allows us to be set free and to enjoy God's undeserved gift of mercy and salvation. That is certainly what I reflect on about forgiveness.

I too am no more than a redeemed sinner, someone looking for that same forgiveness that we've been granted. What a great list of speakers we had at the seminar – all of us in need of and having received forgiveness. I hope you enjoy reading the articles based on their talks.

In MCF let's keep promoting the Christian spiritual dimension of mental wellness in the multi-faith environment of the ADF. We need to show the gift, the grace and the salvation that it provides to veterans who need to be forgiven for things they may be ashamed of and damaged by, that they might move on and live their lives under that grace.



Forgiving the Unforgivable

Berni Dymet



Berni is an ex officer in the Australian Army, came to Christ in his 30's and is now CEO and Bible teacher of the Australian-based, global media ministry Christianityworks. Christianityworks is a movement that seeks to share the good news of Jesus with millions of people around the world (by radio and other means).

Matt 6:12 and 14-15 (NRSV)

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

...

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Consider the person who has hurt you the most - have you forgiven them? Do you still feel that they owe you something? If you have this thing in your heart where you say I think I've forgiven them but they still owe me, or they should say sorry at least ... then actually you haven't forgiven them. You haven't expunged the debt from your heart. This isn't easy. The bigger that debt is, the harder it is to forgive.

Matthew 18:21-22 (NRSV)

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

If you do something to me once, okay, I'll forgive you. Second and third time it's starting to wear pretty thin. If you do it seven times then I have seriously had enough of you.

So how many times should I forgive? Seven times is a lot? No, seventy seven times. Forgiving over and over, that can be really hard. God is asking a lot of us in this forgiveness department.

Ephesians 4:32 (NRSV)

³² and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Time and time again the Bible is really clear that we should forgive each other. But my question is how? How does that actually work when someone has slapped you in the face so hard, stabbed you in the back, left you bleeding on the floor – how do you actually forgive someone?

I was in a very dark place when I became a Christian. Fortunately when I was in a hotel room someone had left a Gideon's Bible. I am so thankful for that. Now a friend of mine had hurt me deeply and I struggled over the years after becoming a Christian with how do I forgive this person? We all have our own personal pains and sorrows and have to face up to how we deal with this forgiveness thing we are called to in the Bible. I've asked myself what would I do if I found the person who hurt me lying in the gutter one night; what would I do? Would I kick them while they are down, would I walk away or would I pick them up care for them, give them somewhere to live? Soldier up! – Christ is not calling us to something easy.

Whilst I went through a dark pit experience in a sense I wouldn't swap it for anything because it was in that dark pit that I met Jesus. It was there my Saviour came and found me. I wouldn't swap that for anything. I was a pretty tough, hardnosed fellow back then and I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have been any good in God's hands if I hadn't been hit over the head with a lump of 4x2. Whilst God used my experience for good I wouldn't wish my experiences upon even my worst enemy.



So how do you forgive the unforgivable in your life?

Off the back of the question of how many times you should forgive Jesus tells this parable.

Matt 18:23-35 (NRSV)

²³ *"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."*

Jesus says some very inconvenient and difficult things. We'd like to gloss over some of the things Jesus said. We want the soft, cuddly Saviour Jesus. Yes God is our refuge, yes God is our strength, yes God loves us amazingly but here is God's perspective on forgiveness. The servant owed ten thousand talents. A talent is 15 years wages for a labourer. It's not \$100, it's not \$2000. So we are talking about 150,000 year's wages! This is more than he could ever pay in a lifetime. In this parable that's your and my debt to God. We all have fallen short of the glory of God and the wages of sin is death. Full stop, end of story. And yet God forgave us; at a terrible price. Forgiving sinners always costs a lot.

In comparison a denari was one days wages for a labourer. So here we have 150,000 years worth versus 100 days worth. When someone hurts us compared to what we have done to God it's nothing. It doesn't feel like not much to us. It still may not feel like not much. But according to God, what I owe him is much more.

Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?

Mercy is when you don't get the punishment you deserve. Mercy can only be mercy if it's undeserved. If it's deserved it's a right. The person who's hurt you has no right to your forgiveness. But God says see how I have forgiven you how could you not forgive them, how could you not show mercy? If you don't then my Heavenly Father is going to respond like this lord in the parable. It's hard stuff but I think we have a hint here of how to forgive.

This slave should have been grateful. He should have been grateful for being forgiven such a great debt. It's in his lack of gratefulness that he does this horrible thing to his fellow slave. How grateful are you and I? How immersed are you and I in the forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ?

One day a terrible punishment awaits those who aren't forgiven. We delude ourselves if we think we are forgiven and yet haven't forgiven other people. Yes grace is amazing. But the point is we need to live that out.

How do you forgive? I only know one way. Go to the cross:

Luke 23:33-34 (NRSV)

³³ *When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." ...*

While Jesus is suffering the most excruciating pain and anguish, he forgives the soldiers who nailed him there.. Compare to us - we think we should forgive other people when they repent and they come and ask us, when the pain stops, when it's convenient – then we forgive other people. Jesus forgave while he was suffering.

While we are suffering, while we are hurting it's right in the middle of that that we are called to forgive.

Unless you are immersed in the love of God in Christ we're not going to be able to forgive other people. But when we experience this love, how can we not forgive those around us?

There are a lot of people in the Defence Forces who are suffering – emotionally and physically. When they see us forgive other people, that speaks of an uncommon love. We live in a fairly unforgiving culture, we don't forgive easily. But when we forgive other people that is such a witness of the love of God in our lives. Love always defeats sin. Love set you and me free on the cross; the way to forgive is to draw closer to that love.

Romans 5:6-9 (NRSV)

⁶ *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.*

Jesus died for us while we were still his enemies. He didn't wait until we sorted ourselves out – he knew we never would.

Love takes the initiative. Love doesn't sit there and say you don't deserve my forgiveness. Love says you don't deserve it but I'm going to love you, bless you and pray for you anyway.





I don't have that in myself the ability to forgive the unforgivable. We can't do this on our own. But when we glory in the cross, when we have intimate fellowship with God, when the Holy Spirit touches our lives through the word of God, it changes us. That love changes us. This is the first step to forgiving someone: spending time at the cross, drawing close to Jesus, confessing the sin of unforgiveness and Jesus changes us.

What's the second step toward forgiving other people?

Matt 5:43-46 (NRSV)

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

I read really early on the bit about praying for your enemies and I've been doing that for the past 22 years and it's through this that God has changed my heart. I constantly pray for the person who hurt me most to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and I believe that God is going to answer that prayer. Praying for my enemies set me free. Doing what Jesus says works. It is very hard to harbour ill-will towards someone you are regularly praying for.

Thirdly replace your evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21 (NRSV)

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance

is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Start doing love to your enemies. If there is someone in your life right now who is causing you grief and pain, who is robbing you of joy – go and ask God to show you one practical thing that you can do to love this person and watch God honour that. Watch God fulfil his promises in your life, when we start doing love even when don't feel like it.

Do you think Jesus felt like it when he was hanging on the cross? Just in that moment? He was the Son of God and the Son of Man. He had flesh like you and me. Even when we don't feel like it, God starts to change our hearts. God is a good God. God wants you and me to be free of unforgiveness in our lives.

We are forgiven ten thousand talents worth. More than we can ever repay. How? – because Jesus paid the ten thousand talents worth – through his death.

How can we not show mercy, how can we not show grace, how can we not show forgiveness? Go to the cross, pray for your enemies, do love to them in a practical way.

Watch God fill you with a sense of the forgiveness that you already have. Watch God shine his glory out of your broken life into this dark hurting world to bring sinners like me to faith in him.

To check out the great work of Berni and the rest of the Christianityworks team go to <https://christianityworks.com/>



Fear and Failure or Grace and Greatness

Mr Mat Kratiuk



As a boy I began to rebel extremely. I was expelled from two schools and started flirting with drugs and alcohol. For twenty years I would continue to get deeper into the underworld; all fuelled by my ego. To set the scene, I had everything; dream cars, women, power, I had a seventy thousand dollar shoe collection, I wore a hundred thousand dollars worth of gold around my neck. I could have whatever I wanted when I wanted it. The more that I had, the more I wanted. It was never ever enough and I was never satisfied. I was in and out of gaol over the years. I always had a gun on me 24/7. When I joined one of the most notorious clubs in the country, in the world for that matter, it just furthered my ego. I was completely out of control.

Then out of the blue my father died; I hadn't spoken to him for years. I'd pushed him completely out of my life and it brought on real guilt. I'd become this angry, remorseless, sociopathic man and then suddenly guilt set in for the first time in a long time. That guilt would unravel me.

I started to self-destruct to the point that I was trying to kill myself with drugs. My own club were scratching their heads about what to do with me, I was so out of control. One day I walked into my own club and I didn't make it out – I woke up in intensive care.

I woke up with nothing and no-one, a broken man. I'd gone from having power, and resources all around the world, to having nothing but what was on me. I was broken mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually in every single way.

For the first time in my life I asked the most fundamental and profound question of all - Who am I? ...Who am I now? Who am I when the title is gone, when the power is gone, when my house and car are gone?

There I was a broken man with nothing and no one left, and so the search began. At the time I was certain my days were numbered. I actually escaped from Intensive Care, broken bones and all; left everything behind, got on a plane and fled to Sydney.

I was heartbroken and physically broken and I was smoking ice every day to not have to deal with my reality. My bones were literally crumbling and wouldn't be fixed until a couple of years later. I was existing hour to hour, doing crime to support my drug habit and that was it. Alone in a flat in Western Sydney, I had decided "this is it". I had this gun that I was using for crime and thought I'm out of here. So I wrote my Mum and brother a letter. I put the gun to my head and clocked it back. Just a millimetre of pressure and I was gone. I held it fast to my head in anticipation. As I closed my eyes in that moment I saw my Mum and my little brother's face. I hadn't seen them in so long. I'd pushed them completely out.

I put the gun down and I realised for the first time in my life I needed help. So I punched 'rehab' into google and the Dooralong Transformation Centre came up, a centre run by the Salvation Army. Three months later I got in there.

The most profound moment of my life (other than giving my heart to Jesus) took place 6 weeks into this program. I was an extremely violent, extremely angry, extremely broken man who'd lived his whole life like that and at this point in the program I was on the phone to my ex-partner and it was a very toxic relationship, horrible stuff – yelling at each other about hating each other and this 5'3" lady that I'd never met before walks out of the chapel (I was the furthest thing from a Christian at that point). She walks up cool as a cucumber and says "Excuse me, Mathew is it, you need to come into the chapel it's about to start." In a much less polite way I told her to "rack off I'm on the phone". She didn't even flinch. She says "Righto" and walks back into the chapel.

I'd finished the phone call and sat down at the table. I was still fuming over the conversation, swearing away. And this guy hesitantly comes up to me to let me know, "Hey Matty, You know who that was?" No who was it?! "Mate, that's the boss's wife."



No way, what have I done? I've done this before, I know how this works. When you stuff up the world persecutes you. As we speak, this lady is no doubt calling security and I'm going to end up off the program.

I was not prepared to go back to that world, I'd just made it in. There was nowhere for me to go, I'd pushed everyone away. I'd decided, unbeknownst to this lady, that when I got off the bus I'd go and hang myself on the nearest tree. What she did next changed my life - she walked out of the chapel again, came up to me and said "Matty Can you stand up please?"

I stood up next to this small lady and thought righto here we go I know what's coming next.

And then she said "Mate, can I give you a hug?"

What?!

"Can I give you a hug?"

What for? What do you want to hug me for?

"Because I love you mate."

I took a step back.

"Can I give you a hug?"

Uhh I guess so.

I didn't know what to do. She said, "Come here mate, come here." She put her arms around me and said, "it's going to be alright" and then she put her hands on my head and she started to pray for me. No one had ever prayed for me before. Something happened to me and I exploded - twenty years of tears came out that day. As I cried I realised I hadn't even cried at my father's funeral.

That's what fear looks like.

Now I want us to see what grace looks like.

My fiancé Kimmy is my best friend. We didn't talk for 13 years and in 2018 we're getting married. She's another amazing example of my restoration story. That God would bring my best friend back, who would also become a Christian. Whilst we were both gone we would both come back as Christians.

The point of talking about Kimmy is to explain something clearly. I love her, I love her very much, in fact I'm in love with her. I'm in love with her because she's compassionate, she's understanding, she's forgiving, she's non-judgemental; all these amazing qualities, qualities like Jesus.

I would not be in love with her if she lacked forgiveness or if she was judgemental. Why would I be in love with that?

Why would that be any different with God? Why would I love a God whom I was afraid of? I wouldn't. Maybe I'd worship him and look up to him - but love him? I wouldn't be in love with him. I couldn't. I'm passionate about this because I get the privilege of travelling all over the world sharing the gospel and I witness in so many churches, Christians who haven't figured out that they don't love God yet but that they are still afraid of him. Receiving God's grace is a choice you need to make, but you need to be in love with Jesus.

Self-condemnation: "I've stuffed up again", "God's angry at me" - that is not of God. I do not subscribe to any fearful pressure to becoming a Christian or to follow the rules. What I do subscribe to is that falling in love with Jesus will change us and bring about change.

The devil knows that your fear will hold you back from your calling, from your purpose, from your true relationship with Jesus. That's why he is in your ear telling you you're not good enough, you stuffed up again, he's angry at you.

Your sin has already been paid for and to suggest that it hasn't is to suggest that what Jesus did on the cross was not good enough. As faithful Christians, for us to not accept the grace of God is to say that what Jesus did on the cross is not good enough. This is a life changing truth.

Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love.

1 John 4:18 NLT

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying of the hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind [self-control].

2 Timothy 1:6-7 NKJV

You will never step into the greatness for your life until you receive God's grace completely.

*For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who **receive** abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will **reign** in life through the one, Jesus Christ.*

- Romans 5:17 NKJ

I receive his grace on a daily basis. Someone might say to me "so what you're saying Mat is you can go out and sin and you've got a sin free card?" - no you're not getting it. You're making it about what I *do* and not about who I *am*. When you fall in love with Jesus it ceases to be about what you do and the boxes you tick and it becomes about who you are and who you are naturally comes out in what you do.

If all the Christians on the earth fell in love with Jesus! Think about how a handful of men spread that message to the known world. Imagine what a third of the planet could do. They fell in love Jesus, they accepted that they were misfits, that they were tax collectors, that they were murderers, they accepted that they'd stuffed up, but they fell in love with him that much, they understood the grace of God that much that it didn't matter. Think of Paul who called himself the greatest sinner, even sitting in prison waiting to die, all he could think about was telling people about Jesus.

You can do your daily walk out of fear or you can do it out of gratitude. There's no in-between. To not receive his grace does not bring him glory, because of the price he paid. You will make mistakes, but when you fall in love with him down the track you will look back at what has changed since I got that! Look what God has done.



One of my favourite sayings is, "Grace will take you places where hustling cannot" (for context I actually have hustler written on my throat). My life is such a blessed example of that. I don't take it for granted; why would I? Why would I want to do something wrong by someone I'm in love with? That's the point. I wouldn't, because I'm so in love with them. When they ask me to do something a lot of the time I may not want to do it but I do it because I love them so much. That is what will change your life.

My life changed after the encounter with the lady who loved me back to life, through a selfless act of love. Where the whole world would say, "tell him to rack off", she was so in love with Jesus she didn't even flinch and just said I'm going to love on this guy. That's the only thing that's going to work. Through that act of love something happened to me. I started to change.

It was around that time I'd been working with my counsellor. He was helping lead me through my anger – literally the closest people to me had tried to kill me and he was telling me, "You've got to forgive them, you need to pray for them." Eventually I did start praying for them and I got released from my anger. Amazingly those involved are all actually my friends today. These are people who I have been intimately able to pray for and minister to. Something had started to shift.

One day I thought that I'd pop my head in for this Bible study that was on. I sat right at the back and the leader had said something along the lines of, "If you receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour all your sins past, present and future are forgiven based on Jesus and nothing else." I stood up and was like, "whoa! Wait a sec, so you're saying if I receive Jesus as my Lord and Saviour I can leave rehab and go have a bit of fun and it doesn't matter what I do? Everything I have ever done or will do that it's all forgiven?" He paused and said, "Yep."

I was excited about this and I was stopping people on my way back to my cabin letting them know what I'd just found out – thinking I'm going get up to all sorts of things. I got back and sat on my bed and I started thinking about all the stuff that I'd done. Wow! And I thought to myself the God who created the things that I love – my mum and my brother - that same God that created me has forgiven me for all of that stuff.

I realised for my whole life I'd done my daily walk out of a place of fear. That was the day I really started to understand the grace of God and the next day I woke up as a 33 year old man and for the first time in my life, I did my daily walk out of a place of gratitude, head lifted up.

Thank you Lord that I'm a work in progress. Thank you Lord that I'm forgiven.

The freedom in that is life changing – nothing compares.

Grace is where it's at. It's to change your life. It's in the gospel and it's in me.

ADF Chaplaincy and other Defence Ministries Information Evening

The night before the MCF Forgiven Seminar we held an event highlighting the opportunities and needs of ministry in Defence. The night had so much good content and brought insight into the lives and roles of some of those serving in ministry in the military. In particular, we heard of the privileges and challenges that chaplains have as they serve the specific needs of their parent service: Navy, Army or Air Force.

Represented was a mix of the services and differing levels of experience, as well as reservist and full-time chaplains. It was great to see how chaplains, other Defence members and those involved in other Defence ministries all work in concert to serve God in kingdom business, akin to the mission focus to Defend Australia. Chaplaincy, when done with a servant attitude, can be costly, but is also incredibly valuable as they get to reach out in a way that is quite different to a church context even if some of the same things may be in both. It was also interesting to hear of some of the differences between the service chaplaincies and a bit of the friendly rivalry and banter that is found there.

Personnel who are further interested in becoming a future chaplain can contact Defence Force Recruiting (DFR), who supported the evening, and enquire about service options for chaplaincy. A big thanks also goes out to Sydney Missionary Bible College (SMBC) who also hosted the event, and welcomed DFR earlier in the day to promote chaplaincy to SMBC students over their lunch break.



Of whom I am the worst

FLTLT Scott Minchin



I feel that I am the least qualified person to speak on faith, the least qualified person to speak on the Bible and the least qualified to speak on forgiveness. The only way I'm qualified is that I've been super forgiven.

1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

At times I have been the worst husband, the worst father, the worst military officer and the worst chaplain, but Jesus gives me forgiveness so it doesn't matter that I'm the worst. For me, important to this forgiveness is that we move on accepting the forgiveness we have been given.

I've gone to some songs to illustrate some points.

The Devil's been Talking, 2011, Need to Breathe

*Bag of bones and blood red cheeks,
Guilty from the words I speak,
Say the truth will set you free,
But it won't for me,
Oh, the devil's been talkin'.*

Who tells us we can't be set free? – the devil; the enemy. What's that truth that sets you free? Back to 1 Timothy 1:15, the true statement – you are forgiven, the truth is forgiveness, that through Christ you are forgiven and free.

This freedom through forgiveness is not freedom to go, 'okay I can do the wrong thing' – what it is freedom to do is to let go of the baggage that holds us down, knowing we are forgiven.

1 John 1:8-10 (NIV)

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

It's a constant relational process with God – we continually bring to God our failings and weakness for forgiveness and then we go out – living this forgiveness out. How are we forgiven? By grace – anyone, anytime, anywhere. It's not hidden or denied. "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a permanent attitude." Martin Luther King Jr.

In connection with the song *The Devil's been talking*, I like this quote:

"So next time Satan wants to remind you of your past you probably want to remind him of his future."

Your Grace is Enough, 2003, Matt Maher

*Great is Your faithfulness, oh God,
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart,
... And nothing can keep us apart,
... Your grace is enough,
Your grace is enough,
Your grace is enough for me.*

God's grace is enough for the least and the worst of us.

A few years ago I got my friend Stan Longinidis to talk at an MCF Seminar and I introduced Stan saying he'd had 101 fights for 88 wins, to which Stan replies, "and seven highly controversial losses" and it's probably true.

However there's no such thing as a close points decision in sin. I'm either here or I'm there; sinning or not sinning. Every time I am short tempered with my family, every time I'm impatient, every time I look lustfully at someone else, every time I do these sorts of things I can't say, "That's not too bad a sin." It's a sin. Just like Paul, I'm the worst. Failing is failing and I am the worst.

As we think of how this grace is enough I want to have a look at some examples of confronting forgiveness of the worst.



King David

David's jump to fame was sudden. It is like it is his first bout and he knocks out the undisputed heavyweight champion. No working his way up the ladder. He is suddenly in the big leagues. He's blessed and he's anointed. Yet we see him act manipulatively and Machiavellian in his pride in the Bathsheba incident. He already has multiple wives at that point so it is not like he hasn't had a fair choice. Then on top of it all he does a pretty cowardly deed, sending the husband to the front line and getting them to withdraw. Adultery, murder, intrigue and wickedness – it's all there. Yet even after all this King David was not condemned was he?

He had clearly deceived himself, and yet we can do the same thing. When one flirts with someone and they just think, 'I'm just keeping my skills up.' It is not okay; we deceive ourselves with our sin. We can't look at others and say, "I'm not as bad a sinner as that person so I'm alright." It's not alright! At the end of the day David is led to repentance and back to God's forgiveness (though there were still consequences he had to face from his sin). David is described as a man after God's heart and his genealogy leads us to the ultimate forgiver Jesus.

Paul

1 Corinthians 9:26 (NIV)

²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

I know when I talk to my footy boys it is Paul that they want to hear about – they don't want to hear about the shepherd boy, they want to hear about this tough guy, knuckle man, persecutor. He was in charge of the persecutors.

Paul is the writer of 1 Tim 1:15 that I keep referring to. He knows what it is to be the worst, yet he finds forgiveness. He knows Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners like him – the worst.

How can God forgive Paul? Because his grace is enough. How can he forgive me? Because his grace is enough.

We will now also look at some more modern examples.

Jeffrey Dahmer

Jeffrey was as bad a serial killer as anybody gets. What Hannibal Lecter was in *Silence of the lambs* Jeffrey Dahmer was worse. He had massive mental health issues and was by all accounts a bad serial killer (not that there are good serial killers).

In prison he finds prison ministry. He converts, gets baptised and starts reading the Bible. He does end up getting killed by another inmate but I think this confronts forgiveness. Just take a moment to consider this question, 'When we meet each other in heaven, do you think that Jeffrey Dahmer is going to be there?' Of whom I am the worst that's where forgiveness is found.

Charles Colson

Charles was one of the Watergate seven. He was known as Nixon's hatchet man and was jailed for obstructing justice. He also became a Christian in prison. He said that one of the reasons he became a Christian was that the Watergate conspiracy proved to him that the idea that the apostles just made everything up and conspired to deceive people was shown to be ridiculous. If seven people couldn't keep Watergate secret, then how are all these disciples going to keep their story straight especially when stones are raining down on them? That would have been the time for them to put up their hands and say it had all been lies. But it's true.

So Charles converts in prison and his Prison Fellowship International has become the largest outreach to prisoners. One interesting thing about prison outreach in terms of recidivism is that it's 2½ times more effective than the non-faith based programs in preventing recidivism. Another example of the worst: finding forgiveness, redemption and rebirth. No one, even I as the worst, is out of the reach of God's forgiveness

We come back to **1 John 1:9 (NIV)** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Heaven in the Real World, 1994, Steven Curtis Chapman

*Where is the hope,
where is the peace,
that will make this life complete,
for every man, woman, boy, and girl,
looking for heaven in the real world.*

We have hope in forgiveness, peace in the truth. I like the concept of heaven in the real world against what Malcom X said – "the big problem with the Christian faith is we only get something when we die." But that's not true. We get the truth of peace and forgiveness now; here and now in the real world.

If we let people in a secular world know the freedom of forgiveness, it can just help move them right. What do I mean by moving them right? If having no belief is to the left and believing is to the right. All of us are trying to get people to the right. We may not all be able to get people there all the way to the right, but we can help along the way.

I've been a sports chaplain for the Queanbeyan Tigers since 2014 and I'm equally as passionate about this as I am about my full-time job. There's a real opportunity to meet people there; footy is a community. When you look around there are all sorts of people. There are men, women, there are able and disabled, there are black, white, Asian, all sorts. There is a community ultimately looking for forgiveness and values. In some ways it is the meeting place where church used to be.



With the club we have kids who come from 16-17 and they are finding themselves as young men and women; finding their values and friendships. Most of them haven't heard of this faith thing and there's a real opportunity to speak into their lives. As chaplain I can't proselytise, but I can help by showing them about forgiveness.

As an example a player got hit hard behind the play, completely and utterly unfairly. It was serious enough that he's had to have dental work. He can't play and he's got this rage, so he comes to me. He's got all these issues and he's swearing his head off about wanting to get the guy that did this to him. I talked to him about the time that I got BRIG Fortune to speak to the club – the game was coming up where we were going to play these guys again who had not played fairly. There was talk of revenge and getting cops and BRIG Fortune talked about a specific instance in Afghanistan where we'd been on the receiving end of combat and the feeling of that particular group was to go out and flatten the whole village. But you can't do that because you are turning you back on your values. In a sense you are forgiving.

I worked through this with this young guy. How he could forgive himself and address his self-worth. How he could forgive that player and move on. And he did move on and is now playing seniors footy and will probably get to play in a final because he's been forgiven. His mum and dad say thanks when they see me. Now I haven't gotten this guy to church but one day he'll get married and look to get a minister. God knows where these small moves could lead.

Player no 2 changes clubs, receiving lots of sledging and threats. I spoke to him after the game and he was broken down in tears over this. We talked about forgiveness and how he needed to forgive himself for changing clubs and needed to forgive the guys who were being horrible to him. They can't hurt him now because he's forgiven himself – he's let that go. This year he's now one of the club captains. He's moved from this place of brokenness to a place of forgiveness and can help now lead other people through it also.

I'm a first grade runner (in AFL the runner delivers messages to the players). In a lot of cases you meet that person at their lowest because they just stuffed up royally and you go to take them off the field. And you know what they say? "I wish the ground would swallow me up." Or, "I'm the worst footballer in this team, no-one will want to talk to me". They walk to the end of the bench and sit down so you know what Chaplain Minchin says "Practical Forgiveness – in the next 5 seconds what are you going to do? It's gone. Let that go. Forgive yourself." And we talk though this forgiveness piece and that's not proselytising to them which is pretty strict in sports chaplaincy.

Our job is about moving people to the right. In a secular world where people don't understand faith if we can give them a nudge towards faith, then the results can be amazing. Some like me might take a while to get nudged. Helping people understand forgiveness is moving them right.

To wrap up

Never Beyond Repair, 2013, Evermore

*You're not beyond repair,
Grace meets you anywhere,
And the mess of your heart,
Is where love's gonna start,
Cause you are, never beyond repair,
You're never beyond repair.*

If we talk Colson, Dahmer, King David, or Paul, or we talk these kids from the footy club, or the guy I drag from the field – they learn that they are never beyond repair. Nothing is too big to forgive. It does not matter if I'm the worst or the biggest failure because I'm forgiven in Christ. Nothing in my past can keep God from loving me.



Is it possible to be a faithful follower of Christ in the military and in politics?



I was a proud member of the Australian Army for thirteen years and I've been a member of the Australian parliament for two years. A question that's been put consistently to me over the past 15 years is this: Is it possible to be a faithful follower of Christ in the military and in politics?

It's often asked by well-meaning people who recognise that both soldiering and politics involves tough decisions that can leave you with sullied or dirty hands. The short answer is yes. It is possible to live a faithful life—it's part of our calling. Indeed there is no prohibition against soldiering or politics in the Bible.

Soldiers and statesmen in war face grave decisions, often choices that involve terrible consequences. We can bring salt and light in those moments: justice, a proper sense of the magnitude involved in the taking of a human life and compassion.

This is where I'm going to go tonight with this speech. First, I'll discuss Christ's interaction with soldiers in the New Testament. Second, I'll suggest Augustine's framework for thinking about war as the best way for dealing with dirty hands in war. Finally, I'll put to you that Christians can offer a model of integrity built on love, sacrifice and courage in both the military and in politics. You can be salt and light in dark places and in dark times.

Now the gospels are historical documents and, like any historical document, they are selective and not exhaustive. That is not to say they are incomplete but rather that they highlight the key points of Christ's life on earth. Not even Charles Bean, as exhaustive as he was in the official history of WWI, comes even close to capturing every moment in the First World War.

So I always find it curious that when you go through the gospels you see several mentions of Roman soldiers and their interactions with Christ. We see in Matthew 8 and Luke 7 the story of the Centurion who has the very sick servant. He comes to Christ seeking him to heal his servant. Note that he was a Roman, an enemy or a subjugator of the Jewish people. Jesus does not condemn him but rather marvels at his faith and commends him. Jesus says: "I say to you I have not found such great faith not even in Israel." Jesus remained silent on his vocation.

Likewise when Jesus encounters soldiers in Luke 3 they ask him: "what shall we do?" And he replies "Do not intimidate anyone, or accuse falsely and be content with your wages." Once again Jesus is silent on their vocation but implores them to be just and not whinge.

Soldiers need a proper view of the world. They must take into account its fallen state and the existence of evil. Soldiering is a vocation that interacts directly with that reality. Therefore, it is a noble profession that demands men and women of integrity.

There is no prohibition on soldiering—in fact, our military serves the Australian people as part of the larger governing authority which protects and upholds the Commonwealth or common good of this country. In other words, your service is a blessing to many Australians in this country.





What about the dirty work that war involves? Many have deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq or other countries over the past decade and seen the death and destruction that war brings.

Augustine of Hippo reflected on this very problem in his great work *The City of God*. Augustine had a clear-eyed understanding of human nature and our sinfulness. Even at our very best, he argued that we are sinners whose sin contaminates our highest aspirations and our most noble actions. Augustine argued that although a Christian soldier may kill enemy combatants as a matter of true military necessity, we can never assume that in doing so, that we have not sinned.

I felt that truth to my very bones—to my very core—on operations where things didn't go to plan and innocent people died. I know that Winston Churchill wrestled with this when he decided to sink the French fleet off the coast of French Algeria in 1940. France and Germany had only signed an Armistice a fortnight earlier under a French government led from Vichy. The British, particularly Churchill, were still reeling after Dunkirk and feeling betrayed by the Armistice and could not afford to see the French fleet used against them by the Germans. The British attacked, killing almost 1300 French sailors and destroyed the fleet. Churchill also wanted to show the Americans that Britain was prepared to go it alone and would make ruthless decisions in order to preserve the United Kingdom. Even so, Churchill wrote: "This was the most hateful decision, the most unnatural and painful in which I have ever been concerned." It took its toll on him even though it was ultimately a just and necessary military action.

Consider also the controversial sinking of the Argentinian light cruiser the *General Belgrano* by the Royal Navy during the Falkland's war in 1982. 323 Argentinian sailors went to the bottom of the ocean that day after being sunk by a nuclear submarine. There is controversy about the legality of that action as some argue that the ship was moving away from the exclusion zone put in by the Royal Navy. But I think there is a strong argument to be made for this action out of military necessity. Nonetheless, we encounter the concept of dirty hands yet again through the taking of life to protect life. Margaret Thatcher agonised about this herself and she said in a rather heated BBC interview a few years after the war that her main motive was to "protect the boys in our Navy".

This highlights the challenge for soldiers and statesmen in war. The use of deadly force against another human being is generally sin, yet a failure or refusal to kill can be a worse sin in both intention and effect than a decision to kill in order to save lives.

It reminds me of CS Lewis' analogy: if a man broke into your house and attacked your family it would be a greater evil to do nothing in defence of your family than to use violence against the intruder.

Augustine recognised this moral quandary and argued that the Christian should take a melancholy approach to war. They do not glorify it, nor do they ignore the realities of it. They have a realistic and sober approach to it. They seek to be just and compassionate in the discharge of their duties. So what does that look like? I think we can serve our nation both in the military and politics by being models of integrity built on love, sacrifice and courage.





I see integrity as congruence between our words and our deeds. Doing what you say you will do. Love is critical to integrity. By serving your country and by serving our Commonwealth, you love your neighbour—as Christ calls you to do. By preserving peace through preparedness, you love your neighbour. When called upon to fight to restore peace, you love your neighbour. Love is built on the principle of sacrifice, of pouring yourself out in the service of others. I think at the heart of any great nation is this idea of sacrifice—it's what makes Australia and other western democracies unique. Is it any surprise that we see so many of our war memorials engraved with the words of Christ from John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life for his friends".

Finally, we can demonstrate integrity through courage. This is a virtue I think we are in desperate need of. I'm talking about physical courage, important as that is but rather moral courage. It's my view that if you have moral courage in peace you'll get physical courage in war.

Right now I think we are in the middle of a civilizational test. I think we have a stifling climate of political correctness in this country that can only be fought with truth and by people who possess moral courage. One historian wrote, "A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within." I fear that our greatest challenge lies internal to this country.

We live in a very uncertain world and I do not think that we are being realistic about the sorts of capabilities and fighting culture that we need to maintain our Australian Defence Force. That's why I repudiate the aggressive social engineering that has been taking place in the ADF, particularly in the Army. It is part of the reason that I got out of the military and I haven't looked back. The greater fight resides within our culture. We need to be clear eyed about the facts. We need to push back against falsehoods and we need to lead with moral courage.

This is especially true in the military. Soldiers deal in hard facts. 60,000 Australians perished in WWI. Those men and women didn't come home. Historians don't dispute that. Decisions in war matter immensely. The military is no place for the latest academic fad or trendy political orthodoxy. We have lives at stake every time we send our people in the field. Commanders particularly need to be clear eyed about the threats they face and how they can defeat them.

Sometimes it is easy to go with the flow, especially in an organisation that prides itself on discipline, teamwork and coherence. You don't want to be that person who steps out of line. But we need leaders who recognise the world as it is—in its fallen state—who love their country, who are prepared to sacrifice for it, who have the moral courage to speak the truth and make tough decisions.



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CHAP (Res) Eric Burton	LCDR (Ret'd) & Mrs Steve & Jan Plumb
CAPT - Army Jacob Choi	Dr Doug Randell
REV Ken Delamore	RADM Trevor Ruting
AB Luke Eglinton	LT (Ret'd) Max Schibrowski
Mrs Rhonda Farag	CHAP Gary Stone
WO2 & Mrs Martin & Janine Fisher	CMDR Dan Sutherland
BRIG Dan Fortune	LCDR David Sutherland
CPL Jason Gardner	WO2 Darren Thomas
Ms Susan Hannigan	LCDR Bruce Vandeppeer
Mr Sam Hays	LTCOL Jamie Van Heel
SQNLDR John Herrmann	LTCOL Scott Watkins
LTCOL David Horton	LT Shannon Watson
Mr Jon Laird	
CAPT - Army Peter Liston	
CFN Cam Lovering	
Mr Warren McGuire	



National Day of Prayer for Defence

24 March 2018

The National Day of Prayer for Defence (running since 2011) encourages all who have a heart to pray for Defence to join us in uplifting the Australian Defence Force to God. Groups all across Australia will pray either on the day or generally in the week preceding.

See <http://mcf-a.org.au/events/ndop4defence-2018/> for group locations and to download the prayer booklet - this can be adapted to your local setting. It includes prayer for deployed personnel, those who have returned with physical, mental and spiritual injuries, defence leadership and culture amongst other things.

Organise a group to pray - If there isn't already a group meeting where you are why not consider becoming a National Day of Prayer for Defence Contact now. It can be as simple as adding prayer points to our regular Small group.

For more info or to host a gathering contact mcf.office@defence.gov.au or 02 6266 4950.





Application for Membership of MCF-A

To ensure that members of MCF agree to the basics of Christian doctrine, applicants must, in accordance with the MCF Constitution, sign the following Statement of Belief. This Statement is based on the 381 AD Nicene Creed; the most commonly used statement of Christian faith in the history of the church:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic (meaning universal) and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sin. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. I believe that Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is the authority in all matters of faith, teaching, activities and personal conduct concerning MCF.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ (or write 'I agree' if electronic copy)

Date: _____ Employee No: _____

Rank or Title: _____ Preferred First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Defence Site: _____ Building, Floor, Room Number: _____

Street: _____ Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: work () _____ Mobile: _____ Home () _____

Email work: _____ ☐ Preferred Email

Email home: _____ ☐ Preferred Email

I apply for **Ordinary Membership**: (tick one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Army | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: APS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Navy | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Army |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Air Force | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Navy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: APS | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Air Force |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the spouse of a member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS (circle one) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the spouse of an ex member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS (circle one) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am an accredited representative of a ADF philanthropic organisation: (which one) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a civilian who currently works alongside ADF personnel at: (Location) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a civilian who has previously worked alongside ADF personnel for at least one year at: (Location) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am currently residing in Australia and am a member/ex member of the Armed Forces of (name of country) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am none of the above and apply for Associate Membership ; therefore, I cannot vote at the AGM. | |

Return to: mcf.office@defence.gov.au or:

Dept. of Defence, Military Christian Fellowship-Australia,
Campbell Park Offices CP3-1-160,
Northcott Drive,
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Alternately membership forms can be filled out at <http://mcf-a.org.au/membership/>

MCF Centurions make a difference in the ADF

Rank/Title: _____ Name: _____ Employee ID: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Mobile/phone: _____

As an MCF Centurion I:

- 1) Commit to pray weekly using MCF's prayer calendar.
- 2) Commit to financial support of \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 per fortnight.
 - ☐ Have arranged an auto transfer of \$_____ (fortnightly / monthly / yearly / 1 off)
to MCF's Defence Bank Account
Account name: Military Christian Fellowship of Australia (First 3 letters = MIL),
BSB 803205, Account number: 20380708.
 - ☐ Give Via Online credit card: <http://mcf-a.org.au/donate/>
 - ☐ Do/Do not (circle one) please contact me in 12 month's time to renew my pledge.
- 3) Agree to promote MCF by displaying MCF advertising provided to me in my local area and church.
- 4) Do/Do not (*circle one*) wish my name to be listed in Crossfire magazine.
- 5) Do/Do not (*circle one*) wish to have my name listed on the MCF website.
- 6) Do/Do not (*circle one*) wish to receive a Centurion Pack of signature items including a Centurion mug, an MCF Centurion lapel pin, a 15%-off coupon for Koorong bookstores and a book.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to:

Department of Defence, CANBERRA
Military Christian Fellowship of Australia
CAMPBELL PARK OFFICES: CP3 -1-160
Northcott Drive
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

For further information ring MCF Administrator on 02 6266 4950 or email mcf.office@defence.gov.au.

The Centurion program commenced in 2005.

We are aiming for 100 centurions to carry the Lord's work forward in MCF in 2019.

Alternately Centurion forms can be filled out at <http://mcf-a.org.au/become-a-centurion/>

Association of Military Christian Fellowships
South West Pacific Regional Conference



Thriving in Christ

in a Challenging World



Fri 26 - Sun 28 October 2018 - Brisbane



Please consider joining us together with delegates from the Pacific region for the 2018 AMCF SW Pacific Conference.

This Conference open to all will follow a (by invitation) training event - Interaction, for Pacific military and police Christian leaders.

Ian Lambert (Anglican Bishop to the ADF) will be our Conference keynote speaker and will be sharing from the Scriptures on the conference theme.

<http://mcf-a.org.au/events/amcf-sw-pacific-conference-2018/>

AMCF

South West Pacific Regional Conference

Thriving in Christ in a
Challenging World

Brisbane Conference 26-28 Oct 2018

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to fellowship with
Christians from other Pacific nations.

The vision of AMCF is to encourage the formation and growth of military Christian fellowships (MCFs) within and among national security forces. The goal of the AMCF is for every country in the world to have a mature and effective MCF. The motto of the AMCF is "All one in Christ Jesus" and that is what we pray and seek to be.

AMCF has members today in the security forces of some 120 nations, of which over 100 now have an MCF. About half of those nations have one or more established military Christian fellowships, and many have informal gatherings of military Christians who, for several important reasons, are not formally established.

AMCF has 14 regional vice presidents. Their role is to encourage the national MCFs and coordinate regional activities. The AMCF Vice President of the SW Pacific region is Principal Chaplain Eric Burton.

Australia is again hosting the Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF) South-West Pacific Conference in Brisbane from 26 – 28 October 2018 at the Brookfield Convention Centre. Join us at the Conference, learn of the challenges facing us all and become partners in your Christian walk with your military and emergency services colleagues from other South-West Pacific nations. Contribute to this important ministry as a member of the Australian contingent at the Conference.

Preparation is still in early stages but full details and the registration forms will be made available from the MCF website when they are available. Contact the MCF office at mcf.office@defence.gov.au to find out where things are up to. Perhaps you could contribute to the attendance of Pacific nation representatives by making a tax deductible donation to the MCF via <http://mcf-a.org.au/donate-acmf/>. We are seeking to raise twenty five thousand dollars to subsidise travel costs for SW Pacific attendees who do not have funds to travel themselves. Please pray for funding to support SW Pacific delegates, for the administrative arrangements to go smoothly for delegates and that those who God wants to be there will be able to attend.



Attendees at the 2012 AMCF SW Pacific Conference



Let everything that breathes praise the LORD

Chaplain Kevin Russell



I am approaching the end of my time as a member of the Permanent Air Force and my tenure as the Director-General Chaplaincy – Air Force; I will transfer to the RAAF Specialist Reserve in the New Year.

I have appreciated the presence of Military Christian Fellowship (MCF) and like groups over the years.

My previous Crossfire articles have mainly focussed on a psalm. This time I would like to focus on the last of the psalms, Psalm 150. This psalm offers motivation for us to praise God's strength and the abundance of his greatness, praising God for his strength and the abundance of his greatness is an ever-timely motivation.

I joined the Air Force as a Chaplain towards the end of 1987. I was an assistant minister at the Anglican Church in Richmond, NSW. During my time at that church, I met a number of Defence members and families associated with RAAF Richmond. I also met a RAAF Chaplain and was introduced to the ministry of MCF. In 1987, MCF at RAAF Richmond held a very sharp half-hour mid-week service in the chapel, and conducted four evening Bible study groups in the Hawkesbury area. Most excitedly, many people came to know Jesus through this ministry.

Psalm 150

1. Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
2. Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing
greatness!
3. Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
4. Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
5. Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
6. Let everything that breathes praise
the Lord!

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150 is the climax of a great doxology, and a fitting conclusion to the whole the five books of psalms. This particular psalm, on the surface, seems to be light on content, but is packed with an impressive array of musical instruments. The musical instruments remind us that this psalm, and the other psalms, was sung. The psalms appeal to more than our intellect; they arouse our emotions and stimulate our imagination as well as appeal to our wills.

Most often when we think of the psalms, we think of crying out to God in pain, fear or grief. We think of the situations that we find ourselves in and find solace through reading and praying the psalms. Most of us have a favourite psalm that is the result of comfort we found in a time of deep personal pain.





Such psalms are psalms of lament. Laments are prayers of people who are suffering, but who are not acquiescing to their suffering. Those who suffer voice their complaints to God in the strongest terms, even asking for retribution against those who bring them harm. On a number of occasions, they even accuse God of betrayal (eg. Ps 77:7-9). I take heart from these psalms. These psalms represent people who are not grumbling against God, but are complaining directly to God. The Bible invites us to complain to God, and most of the psalms of lament turn to praise.

There is also a shift in the style of psalms throughout the collection. Towards the end, there are more psalms of praise, indicating that there is a movement from lament to joy. This can only happen because a person comes to terms emotionally, psychologically, dramatically and theologically with the sovereign reality of God. The key here is the realisation that we have a loving God who is faithful to his promises to us.

Jesus himself taught that the psalms themselves pointed to him (e.g. Luke 24:44). We can praise God anywhere in intimate fellowship because “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us” (John 1:14).

Many of us, at the point of our conversion to Jesus Christ, often reflect on the demonstration of God’s strength and greatness in his victory over sin and death, in the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

We all face difficulties in life. At times we do suffer and are full of grief. This suffering maybe the result of our own wrong-doing, or it might be because something as happened to us. We may also be grieving a changing world, which rejects or thinks differently about the things that we hold most dear.

I am heartened by the efforts of Defence Christians, who seek to maintain a presence, knowing that we work in a secular environment that is pluralistic in nature. Three significant events stand out to me: The annual Defence Christians Dinner, the National Day of Prayer activities and the MCF Seminar. These are very encouraging activities that act to remind us that Christians serve Christ, knowing deep down, that our God is sovereign.

Even though I did not necessarily feel it, I know that God has sustained me over the years.

The words of Psalm 150:6 are apt, “Let everything that breaths praise the LORD!”



Leadership: Military and Spiritual Warfare

LTGEN (Ret'd) Ajai Barnabas Masih



In most modern armed forces there are principles of leadership which have parallels to the principles of leadership enunciated and followed by Jesus 2,000 years ago. Jesus' leadership remains not only unique but unparalleled. Similarly, many 'tenets' of military leadership have withstood the test of time over many centuries and remain unaltered to this day.

In the armed forces a leader is 'blooded into battle' by 'enemy fire'; Jesus was tested and tried by Satan in the wilderness (Matt 4). In the armed forces a young leader commands a close knit team of nine or ten; Jesus started his ministry with four simple fishermen: (Matt 4:18-21), which grew to twelve who were his inner circle (Matt 10:1-2).

In the armed forces a leader may reach the highest rank after 40 years and ends up commanding many troops. Jesus' ministry reached its zenith in about three and a half years with a countless following in the first century itself. In the armed forces and the political world a leader fades away and is seldom remembered after a few years except in history books and on anniversaries. Jesus is alive today and his following has grown to about three billion and is increasing every day.

God's word is a manual for military and spiritual warfare. I now wish to look at eight principles of leadership which apply on both battlefields today.

First Principle: Leading upfront: "Follow Me"

- This can be called the mother or cardinal principle of military and spiritual battles. It was expounded by Sun Tzu and the essence is that the personality of a leader, leading upfront, makes the difference between defeat and victory.
- Jesus gave this principle at the very beginning of his three and half years of power packed ministry (Matt 4:19). Then he made a commitment of the outcome of this principle: 'I will make you fishers of men.'
- In military warfare the commander gives an assurance of doing something for those who follow him: he will not let them down. Jesus assured his followers that he would be with them through thick and thin and as the scriptures tell us he never let them down: he saw them through the severest storms during their ministry.
- Ask any battle hardened military commander if he will allow his men to follow someone else in war. I wonder how General Patton would have reacted to such a question?
- When the time came for the chosen nation to enter the promised land, YAHWEH selected Joshua as the military and spiritual leader: look at the mighty assurance that the Supreme Commander gave to his chosen warrior (Josh 1:3-9).
- In 1971 when India went to war against Pakistan, to liberate what is Bangladesh today, I was a newly promoted company commander. All officers received a personal communication from General Manekshaw, the Army Chief, who was promoted to Field Marshal after the war. It read: "All I want is for you to follow my directions and victory is yours."

Second Principle: Vision and mission

- This is a foundation principle of leadership in all armed forces, even in terrorist organisations. All sides need a vision and mission that they are fighting for.
- Jesus was a visionary: he was sent to establish a kingdom for his Father (Matt 4:17; John 4:34; John 17:4). Regardless of obstacles, condemnation, persecution and distractions he continued on the mission given by his Father (See especially John 17, this is brilliant). We are reminded that where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov 29:18).





Third Principle: Personal Directions of the Supreme Commander

- In military warfare there can never be victory without the personal directions of the Supreme Commander. Leaders like: Channakya, Indian strategic philosopher and political scholar of 4th Century BC; Alexander the Great, ancient Greek warrior and King of 4th Century BC; Sun Tzu; Field Marshal's Montgomery; Rommel; Generals Moshe Dayan, Eisenhower, Patton, Slim; Sir W Churchill and so on. Each one was known for direct personal communication of mission.
- In spiritual warfare we see YAHWEH'S personal directions to his selected servant Moses (Ex 33:11) and Jesus' personal directions to his chosen disciples (Matt4:19; Matt28:18-20).

Fourth Principle: Diligence

- Essentially it means: earnestness, determination, focused on mission, obedience and courage of conviction even to the point of being audacious for the right principle and cause.
- A great demonstration of diligence and audacity in military warfare goes back to 200 BC when Hannibal crossed the Alps on his elephants, from Carthage and invaded Italy. There are innumerable examples in the armed forces where such traits of diligence find reflection.
- In spiritual warfare the first example is right at the beginning of the Bible: please have a look at Noah's diligence, obedience and earnestness against all odds (Gen 6:22); further down the centuries we see Ezra 3:11; 5:8; 6:12, 13; Neh 6:1-9; Matt 4:19; Heb 6:11; Tit 1:9; 2:1; 2 Tim 1:1-14; 4:1-8; Prov 10:4; 13:4; 21:5. Paul's missionary zeal and battle with the Roman authorities makes super reading (Acts 26:24-29). Look at Jesus' diligence and obedience (John 6:38). Paul told the Philippians to be diligent and thoroughly committed to the Lord (Phil 2:5).



Fifth Principle: Respect for law and submission to authority

- The history of military warfare history is replete with examples where an invading and victorious force has been inhuman and unjust to the point of outright disregard for the rule of law and rules of engagement (all's fair in love and war!)
- During WWII General Patton was severely reprimanded by General Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, for violating this principle.
- The Geneva Conventions were framed in 1864 and further on three other occasions up to 1949. The Westminster Manual of Law came into effect to honour this principle of military warfare. Interestingly this manual was framed with the backdrop of the Bible (Rom 12:14 and Rom 13:7).
- In 1971 the Indian Army took 96,000 prisoners of war during the Indian –Pakistan War; they honoured this principle to the hilt.
- Jesus said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill the Law" (Matt 5:17-18) and "Give to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God" (Matt 22:21).
- Jesus' personal example of submission to authority stands out beyond compare, "Not as my will but as thou wilt" (Matt 26:39) and "Father into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

Sixth Principle: Wear down the enemy by a continuous process of attrition

- This principle was also enunciated by Sun Tzu and is one of the strategies being followed by ISIS and the international army of terrorists. We are experiencing an attempt by them to exert severe pressure on the security forces in all the target nations, to the point of disrupting, if not destroying, normal social life.
- Currently we are also witnessing China and North Korea hell bent to 'test out' the resolve of the international community.
- In spiritual warfare we find Jesus was constantly being attacked by Satan in the hope of wearing him down into submission (Matt 4:1, and right up to the cross in Matt 27:42).

Seventh Principle: Blow hot, blow cold: lukewarm in commitment (the opposite of diligence)

- There is no way any military force can succeed in battle without the total commitment and diligence of all ranks. It is not a game of just 'numbers' on the battle field: it is a question of few dedicated rather than many 'lukewarm'. In recent times take the example of the 'Entebbe Raid' by a handful of die hard Israeli commandos who executed an audacious air assault hostage rescue mission in Uganda.
- An excellent example of this principle is in YAHWEH's directions to Gideon, a man of valour. He was specially selected by the Supreme Spiritual Commander (Jud 7:1-7). In our daily spiritual battles Satan continues to fight non-stop to destroy believers who are half-hearted and 'lukewarm' in their faith (John 10:10). Paul is telling us to put on the complete 'armour of God' to defeat the devil (Eph 6:11-18) and not to be complacent (1Pet5:8).
- Jesus gave his warning for those who are weak in their commitment to 'follow him' (Luke 9:59-62). In Rev 3:15-16 a clear and stern warning has been given to the church at Laodicea.

Eighth Principle: Unconditional obedience verses disobedience and stubbornness

- These are two sides of the same coin; the former is a positive contributor to leadership while the latter is a negative and dysfunctional attribute. In the armed forces of any country, this is one principle which is followed to the hilt and for good reasons.
- In some military systems 'obedience' gets translated to mean 'subservience'. Spiritually, it means the highest commitment and love for God; yielding to *his* will and not stubbornly following our own.
- We witness in 1 Sam 13:14, King Saul's disobedience and the consequences during the battle of Gilgal against the Philistines. Obedience is one of the principles which is reinforced in the scriptures over and over again; Jesus himself spoke about obedience (John 6:38).
- With disobedience is stubbornness: doing what we seek to do and according to our own will. Military history has many examples of stubbornness being the cause of downfall of some glorious commanders (General Patton in WWII and General Petraeus while in command of the allied forces in Afghanistan more recently).
- Take a look at Jud 2:11-22 and enjoy reading a spiritual example of this principle.

Friends may God bless each one of us.



“There Must be Somethin’ else -- Some’ow”: Veterans Spirituality

Murray Davies



We're sittin' talkin' by the fence,
The sun's jist going' down,
Paintin' the sky all gold an' pink.
Said 'e, "When it's like that, I think --"
An' then 'e stops to frown.
Said 'e, "I think, when it's jist so,
Uv ... God or somethin': I dunno.
"I ain't seen much uv God," said 'e;
"Not here nor Over There;
But, partly wot I've seen an' read,
An' partly wot the padre said,
It gits me when I stare
Out West when it's like that is now.
There must be somethin' else -- some'ow.
Digger Smith, v. West, C.J. Dennis 1918

It seems very unlikely that the larrikin Australian soldier, *Digger Smith*, from C.J. Dennis' poem *West* would have thought of himself as a practical theologian. This short excerpt paints the picture of a man reflecting on his context of "God or somethin'...over there" (Western Front) based on "partly wot I've seen an' read, an' partly wot the padre said" is a very good example of the issue, veterans' spirituality.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) cites that the total of Australian veterans from all wars is approximately 301,200. It has been estimated that somewhere between 8-13% will suffer from some form of service related mental illness. The causes and symptoms of service related mental illness are complex, but experience from the United States indicates that there is a spiritual dimension to a soldier's wounds which they continue to suffer after they are discharged.

Serving Defence personnels' spiritual needs are well supported by a large and highly developed network of military chaplains and spiritual advisors. But what happens to *Digger Smith* when they leave the ADF and enter the ever-growing community of Defence veterans? Agencies such as DVA and the broader community are starting to look more deeply at psychological and cultural aspects of veterans' mental health, but what happens to their spiritual care and healing? The short answer is that in many cases they will effectively enter a *spiritual grey zone*. To date, church based spiritual care of veterans has been largely ceremonial and relegated to commemorative events such as Anzac Day. The creation of ANZAC Day as a day of remembrance was the idea of two Anglican Padres. Government and community organisations are silent on this issue and there seems to be a general lack of understanding of the nature of and approaches to healing the spiritual wounds carried by ADF veterans.

Does the church have a scriptural basis that supports and facilitates a role in this spiritual grey zone? The Bible does not appear initially to be supportive of those with a mental illness. It could be argued that the people demonstrating 'demonic possession' in passages such as Luke 4:33-36, Matthew 17:18 and Acts 16:16-18 were suffering from some form of mental illness. Proverbs 17:22 is more positive, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" and Jeremiah 33:6, "Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security." There is also Proverbs 18:14, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"





It appears that whilst there is a need and a scriptural foundation for care of veteran's spiritual wounds, there is no significant supporting activity occurring within the broader Australian community. There is clearly a role for churches and religious organisations in the area. Just as properly trained and accredited medical and psychological practitioners are required to deliver such treatment in their space, so too will there be a requirement for the involvement of properly trained and accredited spiritual/fait h practitioners. Such practitioners typically exist within a church environment.

Ultimately agencies such as DVA are responsible for all aspects of veterans' care, although as a Government organisation they are not organised or provisioned for such spiritual activities. In many respects, this is a multi-faith challenge for churches and spiritual organisations that is not limited to a single doctrine. Individual parish or area initiatives are relevant and welcome, although major faith groups need to develop policies towards veterans' spiritual health care in much the same way that they have developed policies on issues such as poverty or refugees. While individual faith group approaches will be relevant and welcome, they too will need to be executed within a strong multi-faith environment and coordinated with secular policy from DVA and broader medical/psychological treatments.

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Thou Shalt Not Kill

Leigh Wilmington

In Exodus 10 we see the giving of the 10 Commandments to the Israelites. The 6th commandment in verse 13 simply reads, “Thou shalt not kill”, or in some translations “You shall not murder”. For Christians working in the military, taking this commandment in isolation can and does cause moral issues. Taking any command or passage from the Bible in isolation is fraught with danger so let us consider this important issue in the wider context of scripture.

Commanded Killings

Leviticus is considered by many as the Book of the Law that is found in the temple when an Israelite king decides to re-open the temple after a period of backsliding by the Jewish nation. Leviticus 20 starts to outline the various punishments for sin. There are no less than 10 punishments which require the perpetrator to put to death. But surely to do so would involve not only killing but murder? Reading a bit further in Deuteronomy 7, where Israel is commanded to drive out the nations from the promised land, in verse 2 we read “you must destroy them totally.” Again in 1 Samuel 15:3 we read, “Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.” So this is not killing or murder but genocide – and it is commanded from God!

The Clues

The first clue comes from what is commanded to be done to someone who is indeed guilty of breaking the 6th Commandment. In Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 4, Deuteronomy 19, and Joshua 20 we read about cities of refuge. When something is mentioned 4 times in the Bible then we really should take notice. To paraphrase, if you killed someone, the next of kin – the avenger of blood – is allowed to pursue and kill you. The cities of refuge were places where a killer could flee and plead his case if the killing had been unintentional. If indeed the killing was unintentional, ie. accidental, then the killer was allowed to live and the avenger of blood was not permitted to avenge, ie. preventing the avenger from shedding innocent blood (Exodus 23:7). Note that the killer was not just declared innocent and allowed to return to their normal life, but rather had to remain in the protection of the city of refuge otherwise the avenger of blood was still allowed to kill the killer outside of the city of refuge.

There are a further 4 references to not shedding innocent blood in Deuteronomy 19 and 21.

A further clue comes when Israel is facing destruction. 2 Kings 21 and 24 detail the “filling of Jerusalem” with innocent blood that “the Lord was not willing to forgive”.

So we are starting to see that God allows the Israelite community to kill in order to exercise judgement but really detests the shedding of innocent blood – “You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood” (Deuteronomy 19 and 21). The destruction of the nations in the promised land prior to Israel taking possession was commanded by a just God in righteous judgement “due to the wickedness of these nations” (Deuteronomy 9:4-5).

Innocent Blood

The Israelites were however commanded in a particular case to shed innocent blood – the blood of animal sacrifices – as it is only by the shedding of innocent blood that sins are forgiven. At the time when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, after taking the forbidden fruit, God himself killed an animal to make clothing for them, not only to cover their nakedness, but as a sign that innocent blood had to be shed for their sin. Note that they were still banished from the Garden even though their sin had been atoned for. This is one of the issues for the Jewish community today, with no temple or tabernacle to present their sacrifices, as to how they gain atonement for their sins. If only they would avail themselves of the one true shedding of innocent blood for the forgiveness of sins – for everyone across all ages – the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Severe Punishment

Looking at the list of punishments from Leviticus 20 one has to question why, for what seems relatively minor offences, the death penalty is commanded. One of the possible reasons was that at the time of the giving of the law the Israelite community was a nomadic community – moving from place to place on their way to the promised land. This means that they had no gaols or other means of detaining offenders. No fewer than 10 times in Deuteronomy God commands the Israelites that “You must purge the evil from among you.” Indeed the punishment for a stubborn and rebellious son was stoning so that “all Israel will hear of it and be afraid [to commit similar sins]”. Israel was called to be a holy nation serving the one true living God. Departure from the law was not to be tolerated.





God is also upset at the evil of man throughout the world, resorting to the flood to wipe out evil initially (Genesis 6), wiping out entire cities with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), and eradicating entire nations with Israel's occupation of the promised land (Deuteronomy 9) and the commandment to King Saul to wipe out the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15) as punishment for waylaying Israel as they came up from Egypt.

Christians in the Military

As you may have noted, all the Bible references above are from the Old Testament. What does the New Testament tell us about this subject? Jesus definitely taught about turning the other cheek and going the extra mile but the only times Jesus mentions killing is either about his own death or when he confronts the Jewish leadership about their history of killing the prophets. So we are forced to fall back to the basis of Christianity – Love. “Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

We are instructed to live at peace with all men (1 Timothy 2) however what happens when those opposed to us do not want peace. Some go so far as to advocate passivism ie. allowing an aggressor to kill and destroy as they desire. But is passivism love? Does allowing an aggressor to take your life classify as laying down your life for your friends? How does the loss of your life in such circumstances aid your friends? It is clear that it is only when you are doing something that prevents your friends from also being killed that you can be said that you are laying down your life for your friends. Jesus laid down his life for us, not that we might not die, but that we will not be tormented in hell.

So laying down one's life is not a passive thing but an active choice. To defend those that cannot defend themselves is the ultimate expression of this. It is one of the things I love about Australia – we have a Department of Defence, not a Department of War, where we are going out to try and gain more territory or resources, but a department committed to defending others – often on foreign soil. In the process of defending others it is of course preferable to take “prisoners of war” than to kill, but such an option is often unavailable.

Bottom Line

God detests the shedding of innocent blood, and with this the civilised world agrees. So my response to questions regarding “Thou shall not kill” is that this commandment should be read with the bi-line “Thou shall not shed innocent blood”.



The Battle of Beersheba and the Christian Connection: Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel

Graham McDonald



The horses were restless, pawing the ground in the relentless heat. A shimmering haze hung over the desert, taunting the waiting riders and their thirsty steeds with the promise of water. In the distance, a pall of dust obscured the fighting. But the dust cloud was crawling aimlessly, not flying forward. It was obvious that the attack had failed—just as two previous attempts on nearby Gaza had been repulsed.

Fights over this oasis on the edge of the desert had been ongoing for nearly 4000 years. Abraham's argument with Abimelech over water rights had been settled with an oath and seven ewes at this spot: the wells of Beersheba.

Now, on 31 October 1917, another history-making moment had arrived. Men from the youngest nation on earth at the time had drawn their horses up outside the Turkish-held stronghold of Beersheba. Smarting from the defeat of Gallipoli, they were keen to engage the Turks on a new battleground.

In charge of the Australian troops was Harry Chauvel. Under his command were 34,000 horsemen and cameleers from various parts of the British Empire as well as France and Italy. This is considered by many to be the largest body of mounted troops since Alexander the Great over 2000 years before.

The British attack in the morning had failed. Chauvel, the first Australian to rise to Lieutenant-General within the British forces, thought there was still a chance to take this Turkish-held outpost. He ordered the Light Horse regiments to charge.

In they went. Just 800 of them. They tore across the dusty plains so swiftly that the town's gunners kept overshooting them, unable to hold them in target. Soon they were too close for the guns' range.

Thirty one Australian horsemen were killed with 36 wounded in this remarkable victory. The Turkish army suffered heavy casualties many hundreds dead and wounded as well as 700–1000 who surrendered and were taken as prisoners of war.

The biblical significance of this battle in the place still called by the name Abraham gave it was not lost on the troops. Shortly afterwards, the ANZACs were instrumental in re-taking the city of Jerusalem. In his scrapbook, Chauvel wrote the word 'Prophetic' under a photo of Jerusalem.

The city had been under Muslim rule since the seventh century. The Emperor Hadrian in the first century, ordered Jerusalem razed to the ground. Christians and Jews were forbidden to enter on pain of death. Yet God had promised in Scripture to return his chosen people to their own land.

According to an article in the Jerusalem Post on 29 October 2007, '... the Australian victory in 1917 set in train some remarkable events—the liberation of Jerusalem, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate in Palestine and ultimately the establishment of the State of Israel.' The same article highlights a little known fact: the timing of the Light Horse charge at 4:30 pm appears to have coincided with a historic decision made in London in support of the establishment of the State of Israel. Although not officially made public until 3 days later, nevertheless it seems that, allowing for the time zone difference, this decision was made at the same hour as the attack on Beersheba on October 31.

Harry's strong faith can be traced back to France in 1685. His Huguenot ancestors were forced to flee across the English Channel under threat of death because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their unwavering belief in the Bible.





His personal faith was vibrant. On all his campaigns, he carried a copy of the Scriptures, which he read regularly. This wood-bound, engraved Bible in which he sought inspiration in difficult times is kept and treasured by his family.

What a man of God and what a wonderful legacy. What will your legacy tell us about you?

From the DIDUNO and the Christian Connection series
<http://diduno.info/>

Source: Extracts from his daughters letters. And the Bible.

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To develop Disciples of Christ in the Australian Defence Organisation

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FOCUS Military Ministry

Making Christ known in the ADF.

02 6112 8053 | network@focusmilitary.org.au | www.focusmilitary.org.au

Navigators Military Ministry

Lead On.

0477 148 662 | phil.mcmaster@navigators.org.au | www.navigators.org.au

Solid Rock Ministries

Christian support groups for military wives/female partners.

0412 720 069 | solidrockdefence@gmail.com | www.solidrockministries.com.au

Red Shield Defence Services

Welfare & Morale support with a listening ear. Practical and spiritual support through God's love.

0466 655 098 | <https://salvos.org.au/rsds/>

Everyman's Welfare Services

Living and Proclaiming the Message of Christ to Defence

02 6055 2988 | admin@everymans.org.au | www.everymans.org.au

Army Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

www.army.gov.au/Army-life/Health-and-welfare/Chaplaincy-support

Air Force Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

<http://airforce.gov.au/chaplains>

Navy Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

<http://www.navy.gov.au/chaplains>



FCMM 2017

The 2017 Forum of Christian Military Ministries (FCMM) was conducted over two days in September just prior to the Defence Christian's Dinner. MCF hosted this year's event with MCF Chairman LTCOL Jamie van Heel facilitating. The Forum is an annual gathering of various military Christian ministries that meet together and share what God has been doing in their organisations, pray for each other and to produce and maintain strong ties of unity.

On the Thursday we met at the Canberra House of Prayer in Yarralumla where each of the ministry leaders shared an update on their ministry, challenges and prayer points.

That evening we went to the RMC Officers mess for dinner, and afterwards former MCF Chairman COL Mick Mumford shared his reflections on where Defence is heading and some of the challenges and opportunities presented to Christians' in Defence and ministries like ours. Each of the ministry leads was then presented with a Bible Society Gallipoli Bible as a gesture of the value MCF Places on the other ministries. On the Friday we met at Sutton Bakery and Jamie Van Heel's residence at Sutton.



A key discussion point was how the FCMM covenant signed last year can continue to be implemented through the ministries. Each of the ministry leaders commented on a greater sense of unity between the ministries and a genuine desire to support each other and work together where possible. In the end we serve one God and the success of one ministry is the success for all as we seek to share Christ and his love in the ADO.

The next FCMM is again planned to be conducted in Canberra in before the 2018 Defence Christians' Dinner. It will be hosted by Red Shield Defence Services.



Administrator's Report

Michael Nott



One of the things which we have done since the last Crossfire was the conduct of an online Survey via the website. For interest here are some facts from the survey.

56 people responded overall, with the majority being made up of responders who have been Christians for more than 20 years, are full time ADF, in particular predominantly officers. 18 said they were part of an MCF small group, 21 aim specifically to support us in prayer and 17 just get the emails. Key areas responders would like MCF to focus are; supporting Christians in Defence (44), providing prayer friendship and support (31), supporting those deployed (18) and evangelism in the ADF (17).

Strengths: Network (35), Crossfire Magazine (33), Prayer (30), Small groups (29)

Weaknesses: Social Media (12), Small Groups (6)

Some responders indicated they would like to see more leaders, small groups, resources, prayer and encouragement. MCF not being known about is an issue in some areas. Other suggestions included looking into: mentoring, active witnessing, more decentralised events, training, greater inclusivity, reaching out to members in isolated regions and better encouragement and involvement of Defence Contractors.

Whilst gaining some helpful thoughts into how to better support Christians in Defence, it comes with a challenge of how to turn these ideas into action, and we do hope to be able to make good use of it.

What else can I report on MCF? I can let you know membership has increased by 20 overall since the last Crossfire. We still have a number of bases where we'd love to have an MCF Rep in. Yet as a network of people we are more than just a series of survey results, facts and statistics; we are ultimately individuals with our own dreams, aspirations, joys, struggles and pains. The challenge can be that each of us can be a bit removed from much of this, as each is in our own corner filled with our own busy lives. Actively engaging people in MCF is a big challenge – distance making it a challenge to get to events, too many other things vying for attention, difficulties trying to speak relevantly into people's lives, amongst others.

Whilst MCF cannot be all things to all people, we do hope to serve as many as possible and that we will facilitate a meaningful connection to other Christians' in Defence, encourage and point people to true and meaningful faith in Christ, and be faithful in using what we have been given. Please help us to do this – in spite of the challenges. If you feel God calling you to a particular area that you might be able to help in do get in touch.

MCF Small Group Code of Conduct

This year we have updated the MCF small group code of conduct. We aim for this to be understandable, clear and helpful. We would love that people of diverse perspectives to come together and support each other in their Christian faith journey in locations throughout Defence.

A core aspect of MCF small groups is the study of the Bible. As there may be a diverse mix of people in these groups the following Code of Conduct should be adhered to in the interest of love, unity and good witness.

As a member of an MCF small group I will:

1. Respect the denominational differences of all Christians within the ADF and not focus on denominational doctrine or disputed 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. Foster positive relationships with local Chaplains and members of other Christian groups.
5. In group studies show gracious consideration of others when discussing books or passages of the Bible that denominations contest – such discussions should focus on the truth that unites us and not those issues that may cause division.
6. Apply wisdom in the demonstration of spiritual gifting where there is potential to cause offence to members present.
7. Respect the role of the small group leader, regardless of rank and service.



Living out thankfulness

Michael Nott

Through other articles within this edition of Crossfire, we have seen discussion on forgiveness for the worst, about responding to the amazing grace of God and falling in love with Jesus, as well as the need to forgive others as we have been forgiven. Connected with this theme, it would be good to consider further what it means and looks like to be thankful.

I sometimes struggle to be thankful. I struggle to notice all that people do and must be very precise in reminding myself to say thank you. I don't think it's that I am unthankful for everything, but I do feel like I have, at times, lacked the emotional intelligence to see that I should have expressed my thanks. Sometimes you can be oblivious to what someone else sees as significant. Also, as many of you have probably read about the five love languages, I feel like the giving and receiving of gifts is not particularly a strong area for me and so in such areas I perhaps miss something when it comes to saying thanks. I want thankfulness to simply well up to overflowing from within me. I believe that by looking at the Bible, I and hopefully some others like me, can better consider how we express thankfulness in our lives. The word of God is living and active and can speak to our struggles and has help for us all.

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

I don't think it's over stating it that thankfulness is important in the Bible. With just a basic search on thankfulness and variants of the word, I found over 100 verses. There are other ways to express the idea of thankfulness. I'm going to take us on a whirlwind tour highlighting some thoughts drawn from some relevant passages which I hope will help us engage with this further.

Humanity has a lack of thankfulness at the core.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Romans 1:21

People may still thank each other but in general we humans are poor at thanking God. When we've done something above and beyond nice to a person, don't we deep down quite often want to be thanked. It can hurt if we're not, because we deserve it don't we? Well this isn't about God feeling hard done by, but an acknowledgement that if anyone should be thanked, ultimately it is God. He's done far more for us than we can ever do for each other. And considering the amazing things people can do for others that is no small statement.

For the Israelites, thankfulness was to be built into the very essence of their society. There were sacrificial offerings of thanksgiving. One of the duties of the Levites was 'They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening' - 1 Chronicles 23:30. Praise and thanks are tied together and often leads through singing and with music.



Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. Psalm 95:2

I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. Psalm 9:1

This sort of thanksgiving didn't exclude private prayers expressing thanks, but it didn't stop there – rather it led to letting people know. So too, if I'm seriously thankful, it's going to come out, it's going to show. We need to be cultivating an attitude of thankfulness and I know that in this I need work.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1-3

God's enduring and unfailing love seems to be one of the most repeated themes for giving thanks to God. How much more can we also be thankful for this – for we have the good news of Christ?

When we look to Jesus we see he expressed thanks to God the Father.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. Luke 9:16

And we see him commend one who was thankful.

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." Luke 17:11-19.

Are we like the nine at times? I imagine they all were feeling thankful to a degree but this didn't translate to actually going and giving thanks – sometimes we need to be purposeful in making sure to give thanks.

Our thankfulness should lead us to humility unlike the Pharisee in Jesus' parable in Luke 18:11.

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.

The problem with any such thanks is that it is focused against the other showing an ungrateful and proud attitude. Ungrateful thanks – an oxymoron we do well to avoid.

Thanksgiving should be all pervading in our lives. People should look at Christians and know us by our love and thankfulness. We are to be thankful and are also to live lives that are the cause of further thanksgiving.

... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. Ephesians 5:4

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 4:15

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 2 Corinthians 9:12

In the end, one thing the Bible shows is there's not just a short list of things to be thankful for.

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 2 Thessalonians 1:3

We can be thankful for so many things even in challenging circumstances; which is not easy. When things fall apart around us how do I be thankful? I can only say, look to what is continually true and stable. Look to God. Look to the gospel. Look to hope. Look to the day when there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow.

Imagine our society, our world infused by an attitude of thankfulness through the witness of Christians. What a difference that would make. When we are thankful, we value what we have instead of what we want. When we are thankful for the grace and mercy of God in Christ we can show grace to others who like us don't deserve it.

Let us, as part of the Military Christian Fellowship, be a people of thankfulness for the work of God in our lives and the ways God will work in our midst as we are faithful to him.

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ... Hebrews 12:28

Verses quoted from the New International Version.



MCF-A Representatives

With the wide spread nature of Defence, MCF has Area Representatives who aim to connect with members and others in their local area. Some will have a small group that you can be put in touch with. Some MCF-A groups remain in touch via emails, others meet regularly.

To begin a group, please contact the MCF office at mcf.office@defence.gov.au and it will be listed on our website mcf-a.org.au

As Defence is a very 'moving' employer (as in postings), the names below often change – so please be willing to step-up and fill a vacancy. The leader of the group ensures that all members and those on their email distribution list are aware of the activities of their group and receive encouragement through their email contact.

At time of publication vacancies exist at every Defence Base, Installation, Ship, etc that is not listed below! Please be in touch.

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Rep finishing.

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*For God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

2 Tim 1:7 (NKJV)