



From the President's Desk -

Corona Virus / Covid-19

Our Prime Minister, Mr. Scott Morrison in one of his speeches, made this riveting statement: "WE ARE AT WAR." The mere mention of the word 'war' can send a shiver down one's spine; that is, if one hasn't got an anchor for their soul. People of God, let me encourage you to stay positive in these uncertain times. No one but our all-knowing God has the real answer to the massive problems the world is facing right now. Please stay away from all false news and conspiracy theories; they are nothing but satanic messages sent out to catch you off guard and bring you into a state of depression. Remember according to **John 10:10** Jesus speaking: *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

Fear negates faith and without faith it is impossible to please God. Do you remember the old Hymn "Count Your Many Blessings", drawn from the second verse of **Psalms 103**? *"And forget not all his benefits."* These testing times should bring out the very best in us who believe the Word of God. This isn't the time to be downhearted, getting upset with our own personal situation. The simple fact is, if we allow ourselves to become self-centred then who is reigning on the throne of our heart?

Many will find themselves in quarantine, locked in their homes for different periods of time. The big question is, what do we do with that time? The correct Biblical answer is to redeem it, as found in **Ephesians 5:15-17**. *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* We have here in Scripture the Apostle Paul's instructions to the church to be prudent or careful concerning time. Once it is spent it can't be regained, it is lost forever. "Because the days are evil" or afflicting and abounding in troubles with insurmountable problems leading to persecutions, we have an unprecedented opportunity to redeem time, to literally gain as much as possible, buying it back or at least not losing it due to a lack of personal self-discipline.

This is not the time to waste watching second rate TV shows and poorly presented bad news items of world events, rather it is an ideal time for pushing into God, building that internal fortress against the evils of our days "to understand what the will of the Lord is." Spiritually positioning ourselves in the secret place of the Most High, until we know with surety that we are abiding under the shadow of the Almighty God. **Psalms 91**. The stronger and more knowledgeable we become, the happier will we be in our service unto God.

Fellow Members of the FGBMFI, each of us have been baptised with the Holy Spirit therefore according to scriptures we have received great power from above. Sadly, it could be said that through lack of use, we have in part lost our ability to operate in the spiritual gifts. Now is a God-given time for us all to seek God for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit, that signs and wonders would indeed follow our ministries.

With public meetings now being closed and our happy gatherings coming to an end for the time being, we are going to have to find different ways of doing things. Let me give you some examples: a person who has been getting support from our meetings is now cut off with no means of spiritual support. A businessman has been forced to let his employees go and close down the business that he has put

his heart and soul into for the past six years. The rent is due and the family needs feeding, where do they turn in their hour of need?

We have an old saying in the construction industry. "If things aren't working out properly one way, find another way to get around the problem." That's just what we will have to do; find another way of reaching people who are locked in with no spiritual support with the love of God. Press into God, do it now and let Him direct your steps, for "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way." Obtain a membership list and start praying for each one, lifting them up before the Lord. It is then that God will quicken a name to you and give you a word of knowledge, opening up situations that can be averted by one timely phone call. Who then gets the biggest thrill, just knowing you are in partnership with God? That my friend, is known as redeeming the time.

Keep smiling God Loves You.

Len.

Coffee & Conversation with James **By Ron Oastler**

... another true story from the experiences of a long-time member and friend, as retold by Ron Oastler.

We were well ensconced in coffee and conversation at the marina when a large Tour Group entered the café. Boarding had been delayed due to some very choppy conditions on the Port, blowing in from the east. The folk were filling in time observing the rocking of the cruisers and yachts in the harbour, while enjoying coffee and gateau.

'The delay will probably be less than an hour,' was James stated forecast - observing further: 'Nice to see that the atmosphere is not negative but convivial and there is quite some social interaction taking place.'

No sooner had he made the latter observation than our attention was captured by a raised voice. 'What did you say was your name?' We overheard the question being asked of a young man (not only in a loud voice but also in a rather surprised tone), as some of them took seats at a nearby table.

A little embarrassed, the young man replied: 'David Hill ... why do you ask?'. The enquirer explained that he had a work associate who looked like the young man - and he was surprised to hear that he had the same surname. We could not help hearing the revelation that followed - the work associate and the young man were in fact father and son.

Well, I was not at all surprised to hear James' muted comment that followed. 'How wonderful ... and I wonder what other aspects there are to this plot. The overall narrative reminds me...', James continued without drawing a breath: '... of a lesson that I learned about the sovereignty of God in dealing with fathers and sons - and mothers and daughters too, of course. I saw it happen several times over the years.'

'I recall a number of experiences involving fathers and sons, one being a particular "mid-week" public meeting we had arranged in a suburban auditorium in Sydney's Lower North Shore. The timing and location aspects set it apart for starters. We were blessed to have a popular overseas speaker available for this meeting and he was supported by some top-level musicians who were just right for that night.'

'It was a wonderful meeting. We had a time of uplifting praise and worship, led well by the music team. One of the musicians shared his testimony of coming to faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Saviour; it was

very personal, highly relevant and entirely credible – the very essence of an effective testimony. This was a wonderful precursor to the main speaker.'

'Our speaker presented a powerful message from the Scriptures, based on his testimony, focusing upon God's call and claim on our lives, ... and the response we need to make by accepting Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Opportunity was given for folk to respond personally, there and then. A number did so, and we were able to counsel with each and every one. As it happened, I had the opportunity to speak with a young man in his high-teens, Peter. He was a fine young man, well presented, highly intelligent and an incisive thinker, who knew exactly what he was doing in committing his life to Christ. I was really drawn to this young man; it was as though I knew him. He prayed with confidence and received counsel willingly, bringing joy to my heart.'

'As I concluded my time with Peter, I asked him what his family name was. "Bell" he replied.'

'I said to him "That is interesting Peter, I have a work associate by the name of Graeme Bell, who is a Systems Engineering manager, and you look so much like him." It did not take long to confirm that they were indeed Father and son – or son and father if you wish. Now, while I had not shared faith directly with Peter's father on a one-to-one basis, he was one of the many staffers who fell within my sphere of influence. So, I rejoiced in God's sovereign work.'

'A second incident that our Lord used to encourage me,' James continued, 'occurred at the conclusion of the Sunday morning service at a church that I was visiting. At the informal "coffee time" I met with a young man in his late twenties. He asked me how I came to be visiting and I told him a friend – mentioning his name - had suggested this was a great church. "How do you know him?" he asked. To which I replied: "We worked together for quite some time."

" Oh, then you may know my father, he was a sales manager there." he quickly interjected. "His name?" I asked. "Robert Chappell – I am his son Richard." Now, Robert Chappell was one of my subordinate team managers to whom I had witnessed, though without seeing him come to faith. However, Richard assured me that his father was close to making that life changing decision. Thank you, Lord!

James really shifted gear as he described his final example. 'Perhaps one of the most encouraging instances for me, involved another subordinate manager, with whom I had some difficulties that required real grace and faith on my part. What stood out in this experience was a move that was the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit – not once but twice.'

'The first move' James explained 'was at a major public outreach meeting of the Fellowship with some five hundred or so attendees. We had top musicians, wonderful worship, powerful testimonies and a high-profile international speaker. It was an up-lifting night. The word from God was riveting. The call to "be reconciled to God" was unmistakable. The way of Salvation was absolutely clear. No wonder that many responded to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. All of this was praiseworthy in itself.'

'One of those who came forward to receive Christ, with whom I had the privilege of praying, was a young man by the name of Anthony, whose mother was accompanying him at the function. When we had counselled and prayed together, I enquired as to his family name. Upon hearing the name, I further enquired as to his father. "Yes," James said to me "you guessed it; his father was the very man with whom I was having a hard time. God was sovereignly at work in this situation and in the life of this family.'

" Ah, but it did not end there," he continued "there was a second move, a couple of years later. I was asked to speak at a Church Men's Breakfast on

"You guessed it again" was James statement "here was another son of the very man with whom I was having such difficulty. So I asked him about his father ... and to my absolute joy he said that he and his mother and brother had been encouraging his Dad, who had started to attend church with them - and he had recently committed his life to Christ.'

"So, my friend," God sometimes moves sovereignly through sons and daughter – as well as wives! – to bring a man to faith. We should be encouraging lads and lasses, and young men and women, to come to faith and to share that faith with their fathers."

A wonderful way for us to fulfil the command to 'win and disciple folk to Christ', I declared to James.

Decorated Army Chaplain Serves Alongside Battalion



"Get ready!" Sixty-four rigged soldiers on a C130 aircraft recheck their equipment – straps, harnesses and buckles. One soldier's heart starts to pound. Thump thump thump. Two more commands are yelled over the roaring engines of the plane. Everyone stands.

"Hook up!"

The soldier reaches, hooking his static line. What if the chute doesn't open? Thump thump, thump thump.

"Sound off for equipment check!"

The relay starts. His shoulder is grabbed.

"OK!" he yells.

His hand lands on the shoulder in front of him. With the last OK, the ramp lowers. The screaming wind whips by at 130 mph. Thump thump. Thump thump.

"Stand by!"

Twenty seconds left. Thump thump. First guy's in the doorway. Thump thump. Thump thump. Now they must trust the jumpmaster -- the one who checked all the parachutes back on the

April 2020 Newsletter

ground. The plane approaches the drop zone. Thump thump. Thump thump. Thump thump.

"Go!" Silence. The hard part is over.

Capt. Jeff Struecker is a jumpmaster for the 82nd Airborne Division. If one soldier dies in this maneuver, he has failed.

His responsibilities as a chaplain carry the same weight. With the souls of 650-plus soldiers on the line, Jeff longs for each of them to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And timing is everything.

Jeff's battalion maintains a 2-hour recall status -- they must stay within 2 hours of Fort Bragg, N.C. "Within 18 hours we could be lifting off of Pope Air Force Base flying anywhere in the world," says Jeff. "But what my soldiers don't understand is they may never come back alive. I understand that all too well."

A decorated Army Ranger, Jeff served in Panama and Desert Storm and received a Bronze Star for Valour for his role in Mogadishu, Somalia, featured in the book and movie *Black Hawk Down*.

When he signs copies, Jeff describes the 1993 event as the most intense 24 hours of his life with Jesus Christ. "It could happen in 50 other places in the world -- like Kandahar, Saudi Arabia, or the Philippines," says Jeff, "and it could be tomorrow. Once my soldiers get on those airplanes, I may never have a chance to share Christ with them again." After experiencing the spiritual openness of the soldiers in Somalia, Jeff decided to become a chaplain.

"I want to see soldiers in love with Christ. I want to see Him make the difference in their lives that He made in mine."

But Jeff is also known for being tough, hence his nickname: Evil Christian. In a real combat situation, he wants his soldiers to survive. One told Jeff's pastor, "Sir, he is the meanest Christian I know." Jeff pushes soldiers to the brink of their limitations, never over. Once, at an obstacle course, specialist Bucky Harris froze 30 feet above the ground. "I can't do it," Bucky said, staring at the rope just out of reach. "If I grab it I am gonna fall."

Immediately, Jeff climbed the obstacle course. Oh no, here he comes, Bucky thought. Jeff surprised Bucky by coaxing him to sit down next to him.

"Just look out across the horizon. Let everyone go ahead," Jeff continued. Fifteen minutes later Bucky completed the course.

"There are times when I am in a tough situation," Bucky says with a Southern drawl, "and I think, What would Jeff do?"

Serving on active duty as a chaplain, the father of Aaron (8), Jacob (6), Joseph (5), Abigail (3) and Lydia (10 months), sleeps less than most. Up at exactly 4:35 a.m. to spend time in prayer and Bible study yet make it to the office by 6:00, Jeff completes his required PT (physical training) on the base.

"He is one of the most mentally and physically tough soldiers I've ever met," extols his commander, Lt. Col. Richard Clarke.

Jeff runs longer than most soldiers, then crams in situps, pushups and pullups. Just 2 days after starting to lead his battalion's PT he was asked to quit; the troops were too worn out.

In his afternoons, Jeff may visit a soldier in the hospital, plan a marriage seminar or research Sunday's sermon. But when he visits his battalion on the field, he sheds his office-quality battle-dress uniform for another with frayed edges and faded camouflage green.

With his unit out sweating and crawling in the dirt, Jeff explains that they will resent him if he shows up neatly pressed. One soldier told him he was the dirtiest chaplain he's ever seen. Jeff considered it a compliment.

With one glance at his badges, a serviceman or woman immediately knows Jeff's credentials; to most soldiers, those badges are the goal of their career. Sitting in his office at a drab metal desk, he points to the chaplain's badge with a cross on his shoulder. "When I stand before God He's not going to be impressed by this or this or this," indicating his other badges. "Right here [the cross that represents Jesus Christ] is all that is going to matter."

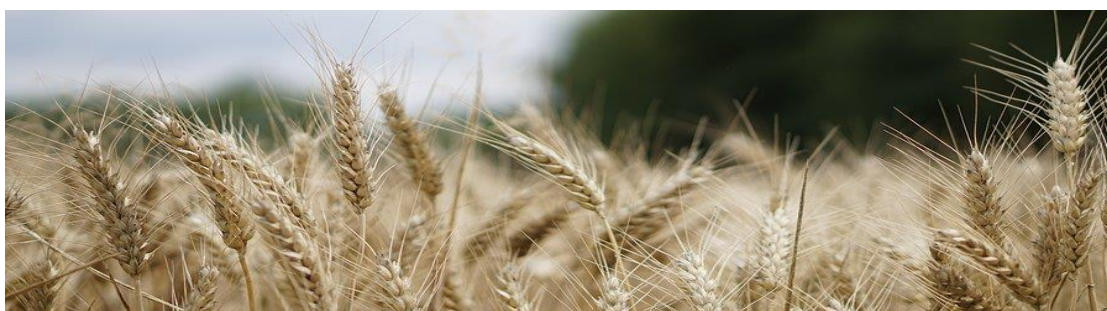
"He is not looking for notoriety or acknowledgment of what he has done or where he is," says Gen. Joe Gray, past national director of Cru's Military Ministry. "He wants to pass it on to someone else who will maybe go through the same experience." Once unwelcome, the publicity of the *Black Hawk Down* book and subsequent movie now provides Jeff opportunities to recount that experience and the message of Jesus Christ.

With hundreds of requests, from churches and from Congress, Jeff takes advantage of this fleeting platform whenever possible. The urgency of Christ's message motivates him.

"I can share Christ with my soldiers '24/7' and not get through all 650 before half of them leave," says Jeff, "and another 300 show up." This is where Military Ministry's influence is vital.

"I don't have the budget or the personnel, and [other than] the Holy Spirit at work, it is an impossibility to adequately minister to this battalion," laments the brown-haired, blue-eyed Ranger.

EVENTS – See webpage for details



INTERNATIONAL Our Mission

FGBMFI is one of the largest Christian business organizations in the world. Founded in 1953, we are in 142 nations - meeting in over 7,000 chapters. Our members and leaders include every race, culture, social status and language.

By God's grace, we connect people with opportunities to reach out and help others find a better life and work together to build better communities.

We do this by:

Calling people back to God...

There is a better life by following Jesus Christ.

Promoting integrity and good character...

Being a reflection of God to our world.

Participating in God's good work...

Releasing gifts, talents and resources to help others.

Working together to build better cities & nations...

Impacting our leaders and our culture.

Taking the message of God's love to every family...

A true grass roots effort that is changing the world.

"The mandate from God is that we break the chains of despair in the world. Our mandate is to destroy the isolation of loneliness, and link the world to God!"

Demos Shakarian, Founder



"It is our destiny to lift up God in every business center, every marketplace, every government center and university... every nation, city, town and crossroads of the world. People of faith, shining with God's glory, bringing the uplifting message of God's power... reaching out, helping, encouraging and lifting. Today, through our efforts, we believe that over 2 million people come to God each year."



International President Mario Garcia



"In the middle of their firing missions and shooting howitzers," Jeff beams, "I just pulled a couple of them aside and said, 'Let's have a field chapel service.'" Throughout those weeks at least 13 men accepted Christ.

Soldiers also seek Jeff for counselling -- often for their marriages. Dana Greenly found himself frequently yelling at his family and generally unhappy since his father's death. He came to Jeff's office hoping baptism would make a difference. As the 2 men sat face to face behind a closed door, Jeff pulled out a gospel tract.

"You know what?" Jeff asked. "You can go down in the water with sin in your life, and when you come back out, all you are is a sinner that just got wet." Dana agreed: "You're right; you're absolutely right." "What you need to do," Jeff continued, "is get your heart right first."

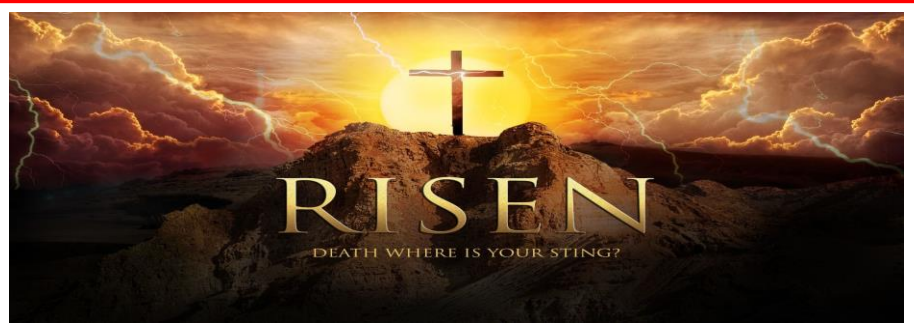
He explained about receiving Christ by faith through prayer, but with an intense voice, Jeff warned Dana not to make the mistake of saying that prayer and not meaning it.

"I can make that commitment," Dana replied, "but I'm not going to be like you." "I am not the standard by which you need to measure yourself," Jeff said. That day, Dana trusted Christ.

With every life that Jesus changes, Jeff gets fired up to keep going. But with the responsibilities of a large family and being husband to Dawn as his priority, the souls of his soldiers a close second, and constant speaking requests, Jeff struggles to find balance. "I have not had a day yet where I felt like I got it right," he says.

Throughout his career of leadership in the Army, and currently as a jumpmaster, his job is to prepare soldiers for combat -- to prevent death. As a chaplain, he explains the purpose of life -- to love Jesus Christ: "Every morning when I roll out of bed I think there's another soldier that I can see come to Christ." Soon enough, Jeff knows each soldier will face the silence. They will all have to jump.

HE GAVE IT ALL



Lest We Forget

