

MMMI NEWS

AUTUMN
2020

Helping military Christians follow Jesus Christ in armed forces around the world



MMI NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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www.mmi.org.uk



UP FRONT

Major General Roddy Porter MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE - TEAM LEADER



Jehovah Elohim Yeshua – Lord God of my salvation. I was contemplating this wonderful name for God recently and was struck again that the salvation Jesus has won for us is for all eternity. This is too extraordinary to grasp adequately but we have sufficient revelation to be able to rejoice greatly! I was also struck anew by the comparison between eternity and this period of lockdown. Surely what we are enduring now is as nothing compared to what Paul calls, “The glory to be revealed to us,” (Romans 8:18). What hope and joy that gives us!

I also rejoice that MMI has been able to continue serving our brothers and sisters in the military around the world during lockdown; in many ways we have seen the Lord do more amongst our Military Christian Fellowships than ever before. What an amazing God we serve – we have seen friendships deepen, closer links made, new prayer initiatives launched, new MCFs emerging, new contacts in countries where we previously had none. And as one of our staff members said the other day, our regular fellowship on Zoom has really brought the MMI staff team closer together.

Sadly, we have had to say farewell to Homfray Vines as our Chairman of Trustees.

What a soldier for the Lord Homfray has been, filling almost every position in MMI over the years. We thank God for him and Sue, we pray they will enjoy a well-deserved rest and we look forward to renewed fellowship with them. Homfray reflects on his service with MMI in this edition. We also rejoice that Mark Chester has now stepped up to take the Chair (please look at his message on our Facebook page) and Pam Davis has agreed to work with him as Vice Chair. We are blessed indeed.

MMI's ministry continues, our mission remains ever more valid and important, especially in the light of growing global persecution and constraints on freedom of speech. More than ever we need your prayers and, if I may say so, your giving as well. We will survive this financial year but, if we are to undertake mission trips again, we will most certainly need significant additional resources to do so.

May I thank all our staff and co-workers for their wonderful efforts in cyberspace during lockdown. And may I thank all our supporters for their constant and steadfast prayer for us, and for their generous giving that makes this mission possible.

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One year after Table Mountain Top Interaction (TMTI) - in the midst of COVID-19

BY ERIK GEISENSETTER (2ND LT GERMAN ARMY) & MICHAEL MISJA (2ND LT GERMAN ARMY)

In the midst of the current global situation around COVID-19 emerges the opportunity to reflect on and to appreciate past experiences which, for this year, had to be postponed. On the other hand, there is the challenge to evaluate the new situation for oneself and to see how one can deal with it individually.

We want to use this opportunity to report on how TMTI 2019 has equipped us and how we are currently coping with the situation by utilizing some of the ideas and skills we took as benefits from TMTI 2019. "We" means

three young officers and prospective officers who are currently studying at Bundeswehr University Munich and will later be deployed to different military subdivisions.

Our way to TMTI 2019 was very much guided by God's hand, as He cleared all obstacles out of the way and placed people by our side time and time again who supported our participation. In Germany, we were blessed with great support, particularly from the German MCF Corneliusvereinigung (CoV). As a result of this we applied for a membership in

LEFT: TMTI Teaching 1 by Col Hermann Meyer MMI.

RIGHT: 2nd Lt Erik Geisensetter TMTI 1.

the CoV which now is of great importance to us.

The goal of TMTI is to equip and prepare emerging young Christian leaders like ourselves for future ministry and exemplary service where God is placing them, as well as for them to take these skills and values not only into their respective defence forces but also into the society of their countries of origin.

Throughout TMTI each day was started with a morning devotion and prayer. In the evenings we gathered to reflect on the day and received short spiritual encouragements as well as worshipping Christ. TMTI's Phase 1 was defined by getting to know all of the delegates as well as learning about South Africa and lots of sightseeing. Phase 2, as the main spiritual part of TMTI, was characterised by learning how active military service and being a disciple of Christ can be effectively combined.

This main focus of TMTI was given distinction by lectures and teachings that highlighted the interface between active discipleship and responsibilities of a military leader. We benefited greatly from the individual topics, which we adapted for our weekly military group bible study on the university's campus. "Psalm 91" as a Psalm especially for soldiers, is clearly assuring the Lord's protection from "...sickness that attacks in the darkness and plague that destroys at noon ..." (V. 6) for those "...who love Him, trust Him, call out to Him ..." (V. 1.2.14.15). For these ones the Lord is promising to be "...a fort, a shield, a tower ..." and so be cared for (Vs 2.4.9.11). This assurance does not lose its intensity when it is not



directly, physically proclaimed upon a person. Especially in times of contact-restrictions and isolation this is even more important and valid when given via phone, Zoom, WhatsApp or Facetime.

"The Armour of God" is sketched by Paul in his letter to the Christian congregation in Ephesus (Eph. 6, 10 ff) as indispensable spiritual armour against spiritual threats and dangers. Therefore, what is a better use of Paul's letter than to transfer it into our situation as future military leaders, facing dangers, threats and

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

(Psalm 91 v2, NIV)



opposition? This scripture equips us to stand firm against spiritual threats and withstand opposition by the enemy, by trusting God and instructing us how to use the spiritual tools He has provided for us.

Various words from the Scripture about the general situation and attitude of military people (e.g. Luke 3:10-14, Matthew. 8:5-13, Acts 10) showed us very clearly that soldiers have always been a part of God's plans and that we can trust in Him, the highest leadership and authority in all possible situations, since He is at our side at all times. We also learned how God has used soldiers in history and heard testimonies of how the Lord is still using them in our days, within MCFs as well as individual military Christians. This knowledge equipped and motivated us further in telling our fellow soldiers in Germany about our faith and also when we are reflecting on our self-perception as Christian soldiers within our small group.

Furthermore, we discussed topics with practical application such as small

group leadership, the effect of different forms of prayer and the combination of prayer and planning in preparation for tasks. These topics offered very practical implementation in both private and military aspects. The participants of TMTI 2019 gladly shared with us or gave examples of how biblical persons dealt with difficult situations to illustrate how all of this can work in real life.

TMTI had a big impact on our own inductive Bible study group which we had formed only a few months prior to going to South Africa. It helped us to not only deepen our interpersonal bonds and get to know each other better, it also helped us in getting a better understanding of what it means to be a prospective Christian military leader as well as encouraging us in our military service.

All these topics had been delivered by TMTI-staff with a huge portion of "hands-on" exercises. Even during the current crisis dominated by fear and social distancing we are now able to meet online and further strengthen and

develop our faith-based relationship. Being part of TMTI 2019 has been a very enriching experience which is still developing its vast fruit-bearing effect. Listening to the life and faith-stories of so many different people and always keeping God's Word in focus gave us courage for our own lives and offered useful advice on how we can and should personally live our lives as soldiers and Christians in authentic union.

We are very thankful to the Lord for having blessed us with the opportunity to be part of TMTI 2019 as well as everybody who helped organise it and supported our attendance. We can fully recommend attending any upcoming TMTIs to future military leaders. On top of our amazing experience we are sure that with the participation of fellow soldiers from diverse countries, every single



participant would profit greatly from the different experiences in, and views on, a life with Jesus as its centrepiece.

TMTI 2019 was truly a once in a lifetime experience for all of us!

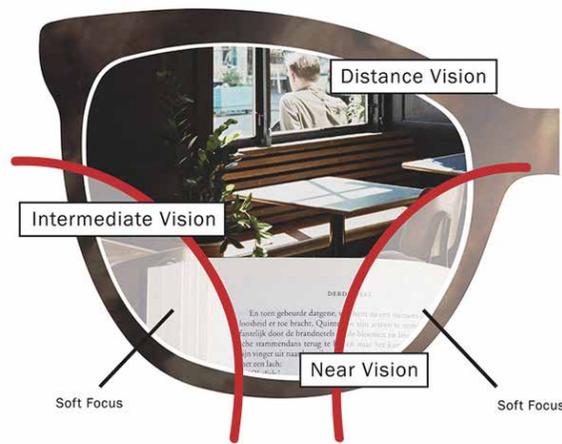
"... for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Peter's statement in Acts 4:20). ●

LEFT: TMTI Teaching 2 by SA Navy ChCpln Capt Margaret Msipane

ABOVE: 2nd Lt Michael Misja TMTI 2

BELOW: The German speaking prayer group for Southern Africa countries held their monthly meeting (online) in early September. This is the group formed of young, serving officers, cadets and soldiers who attended TMTI in 2019





BY AMCF VP EUROPE S
& C REV MIKE TERRY

European Military Christian Meeting (EMCM) 2020

Vision was the theme of this year's European Military Christian Meeting (EMCM): well, in the year of perfect vision, 20:20, what else could it be?

However, when we first began thinking and praying about it, none of us on the pray and plan team could have foreseen how this year's meeting would be held! EMCM was started in 2003 by Mark Fillingham and Torbjörn Boström, the then AMCF Vice Presidents for Europe, to gather MCF leaders for mutual encouragement, fellowship, teaching and prayer. Our time using the wonderful Church House at Lübeck, Germany, was over and we were looking forward to gathering in the larger venue of Želiv monastery in the Czech Republic in May 2020.

After the outbreak of COVID-19 the Lord led us to consider other ways to assemble and we settled on two two-hour meetings via Zoom. Previously, MMI Europe Team had held three international zoom calls involving

on average 25-30 military Christian leaders from all over Europe which served as the "springboard" for the on-line EMCM. Four teaching videos on the theme were produced by Mike Terry, Timo Vehvilainen (AMCF VPs for Europe) and Grozdan Stoevski (MMI TL for Europe), and are available on our website - www.mmi.org.uk

We discussed the material in groups during the first session and there were some amazingly encouraging responses to questions on future vision for national fellowships. Our second session was for small group prayer, to maintain that vital part of the EMCM concept - mutual support.

These meetings were significant for several reasons, not the least being that it enabled a much-prayed-for first meeting of two World Presidents - Gen Srilal Weerasooriya of AMCF met Adm Matthieu Borsboom of the Catholic Apostolat Militaire International (AMI). They shared their life-stories and their

vision for their own groups to enable the growth of Christian influence in the military forces of our world. It was a real privilege to be part of that meeting and it is clear the Lord has opened up huge opportunities, together with a willingness for future cooperation. Please pray for this work to continue to grow and prosper.

A delegate from SHAPE HQ attended: we believe the Lord may be encouraging us to explore new opportunities in such multi-national HQs in the future. Two ACCTS couples 'Zoomed in' who have volunteered to help our work in Europe, and this EMCM provided an opportunity for them to meet some of us. An Uzbek and Kazak joined us, perhaps opening up new opportunities to work across boundaries in ways we had not

previously seen! In addition, during the EMCM ZOOM sessions we discussed the formation of two new military Christian fellowships - one in Armenia (now formally registered) and one in Azerbaijan (registration in process). We even managed an almost simultaneous translation into Russian via Zoom's 'Chat' function! The Lord is good!

In the end our good God eased our disappointment in not being able to meet at Želiv by enabling 50 people from 25 nations to meet via new technology under AMCF's banner of "All one in Christ Jesus" to renew our vision for his work in the military. Above all, through this meeting the Lord has sustained and grown in us a vision of who he is - Lord of all circumstances! Blessed be the name of the Lord!

God moves among military Christians of the Former Soviet Republics

BY RTL EUROPE REV. GROZDAN STOEVSKI

The first ZOOM conference of MCF leaders of the former Soviet Republics, where Europe becomes Asia, took place on 15 August, coordinated by Elshan I (Azerbaijan), a church leader who grasped the vision for MCF during the last MMI Summer Adventure Retreat, in Bulgaria last year.

There are 7-8 participants from several "Stan" countries, including Andrei Sila, President of the Russian MCF as well as Rev Grozdan Stoevski, MMI Regional Team Leader for Europe. During the ZOOM conversation, Armen reported that he has managed to formally register an MCF as a non-government organisation, in the

autonomous Armenian region of Nagorno Kharabakh. This is the fruit of much spiritual work with Armen, who has been twice to the SAR, has attended the European Military Christians Meeting and has been regularly attending the MMI ZOOM MCF calls in the last couple of months. Armen has reported that they have now translated into Armenian and printed 5000 copies of a Christian booklet on "The Christian and military service". God has opened a door through the military Chaplains, for 1000 copies to be distributed to troops already!

All honour goes to God since everything comes from Him, through Him and for Him (Rom 11:36). ●



Locked Down But Not Out

MMI CE/TL GEN RODDY PORTER

We are used to our plans being amended in the light of emerging circumstances or opportunities and it is normal that MMI's programme will change as each financial year develops. Sometimes, we don't achieve as much as we hoped; sometimes we are able to do much more than we conceived. Our enduring witness remains, despite the way our plans change, that God is able to, "...do far more abundantly than all we ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20). But what was to happen now, on 23rd March 2020, when we were fully locked down as an organisation in the light of COVID-19; and what would this mean for our plans and aspirations?

It was clear from the outset that the likelihood of achieving any of our planned mission visits in 2020/21 was low; so, was 2020 to be a fallow year? We prayed this would not be so and were determined from the outset to make the most of the situation and see

God reign in our midst. I felt we had two 'drivers' at the beginning to take us through lockdown. The first, was that this should be a precious time of seeking the Lord and drawing closer to him, both as individuals and as a team. I was struck by Jesus' parable in Matthew 25 and it seemed that the attitude of the wise virgins in that story was one to copy. So, we determined that lockdown would be a time of spiritual preparation (meaning many different things to each of us) and the outcome would be that, when the Lord said, "Go," we, like those wise people in the story, were ready to do so, equipped and fully fit.

The fruit of this time in the wilderness with Christ will be shown in the months and years ahead. Lockdown has presented an unparalleled chance to spend more, and better quality, time with Him than perhaps ever in our lives, over a considerable period of time. For me, personally, it has been both a joy and a struggle. In the wilderness, as

many, especially our Lord Jesus, have discovered, there are essentially three people at work. The Lord who calls, encourages and helps; the one who is seeking to draw close to Him and sometimes running away from Him; and the one who is trying to shipwreck it all. Stripped of much distraction, it is a battle in austere conditions to overcome, to win through to a closer walk with God or to succumb to Satan's serial attacks, traps and distractions. Quo vadis?

The second driver was Paul's injunction in Hebrews 10:25 that we should not neglect meeting together but should encourage each other. We established a weekly staff meeting on Zoom, with a devotional, prayer and discussion, followed by business and fellowship; and this quickly mushroomed into a whole succession of Zoom meetings across our regions involving all our contacts and quickly introducing some new ones. The depth and breadth of fellowship that followed

took many of us by surprise. We discovered a real thirst to meet in every one of our regions. Perhaps of greatest significance was the establishment of a Zoom prayer meeting in both English and Arabic engaging Richard Meryon, his RPPG and other staff with our contacts throughout the Middle East. Richard has found a brother in the region who shares the vision and is keen to develop the network of believers and reach out to the serving soldiers. And, when everyone can join, we have brothers and sisters from Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Israel and Palestine able to share and pray together. We pray that the Lord will use these small but significant beginnings, for which so many have prayed for a long time, to do much more than we can imagine or ask.

Other significant conversations on Zoom quickly developed in Asia, Africa and Europe. It has been especially good to see people online of whom one has heard, and for whom one has prayed, for years. There is something special about sharing the Scriptures and praying for each other across multiple time zones and in a variety of languages. We have discovered that, in prayerful communion, human understanding is not nearly as important as prayer in the Spirit and from the heart; saying Amen to heartfelt prayer in other languages has been a joy. What has been very significant has been the coming together of like-language groups. Eric Mandille and Augustin Tchenkoua have encouraged a regular meeting of Francophone African MCFs, with leaders from Gabon, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Chad, Central African Republic, Benin, Guinea Conakry and Cameroon being prominent participators. Likewise, Samuel Cóias has developed

a regular gathering of Lusophone African military leaders, with friends especially from Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome participating. This growing sense of a military Christian family across the regions – witness also the several online meetings in East and Southern Africa involving Max and Hermann and the developing fellowship that Paddy is experiencing across S. Asia - has been one of the hallmarks of this strange time; we have begun to get to know each other better, to shoulder burdens and to rejoice together. One of our aspirations going forward is to deepen this emerging fellowship into really strong Christian bonds, unlimited by time and geography.

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the Lord's purpose that will stand.
Proverbs 19:21 (ESV)

In Europe, where this sense of close friendship is perhaps most developed, we have enjoyed Zoom meetings of some significant numbers, from upwards of 30 or more countries. Not only have long-standing friendships been deepened but new ones established. We have met new contacts in Serbia and Kazakhstan, where previously we had none and have rejoiced over recent news of the formal recognition by the Armenian government of that nation's MCF! The annual European Military Christian Meeting (EMCM) went virtual this year, with two one-day sessions on successive weekends providing opportunities for fellowship, Bible teaching, prayer and some small group

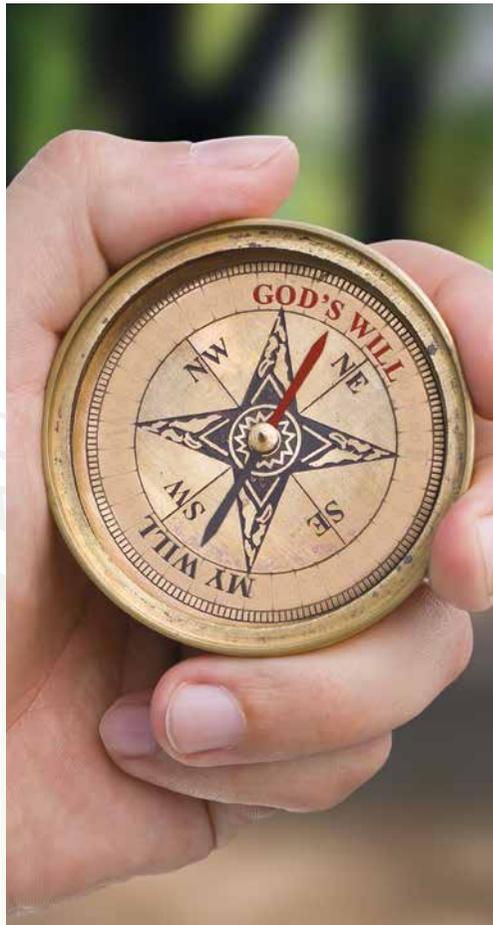
discussions. This is such a good model of what is possible both in the live and in the virtual domains that we also aspire to see such meetings, embracing many nations, extended to our other regions.

This all culminated (in terms of size and effort required) in our Global Prayer Meeting on 6th June, in which 94 people from 38 countries participated. That meeting showed both the possibilities and the shortcomings of large online meetings but it was a joy to see so many folk on that occasion and to be able to rejoice together and pray with passion and (some) understanding; there was a real sense of celebration in the ether! So, in times of very expensive air travel and environmental concerns, let alone restrictions caused by COVID-19, the virtual domain now gives plenty of scope to pursue our mission when travel is unwise, unnecessary or impossible.

I believe that one of the hallmarks of MMI's future operations will be realising a judicious balance between physical and online meetings. Face-to-face contact is vital for many reasons and no amount of bandwidth can make up for separation in time and space for many activities. However, we can spread our resources (in their widest sense) more judiciously by learning the lessons of the possibilities that Zoom (and other platforms) presents.

And this is another lesson from lockdown. Just as the global church has discovered new congregations, more numerous than those that have attended our churches in recent decades, with virtual services and has been in a better position to assuage spiritual hunger through online materials of all kinds, so it seems to us that the Holy Spirit has been able to do much more amongst the global military

Christian community than ever was the case when we are able to purchase air tickets - better networking, deepening discipleship, more opportunities to learn about and from God. I do not think that this is an indication that MMI should not be travelling in the future; far from it. But it is clearly the case that we have a challenge to adopt the best balance between physical and online engagements to achieve the aim. To that end, we have audited our 'on hold' programme for 2020/21 and know what we would do, given the chance to travel to any of our regions, and we are continuing to invest in better IT to improve our cyber presence and products to make the best we can out of those opportunities too.



Weekly fellowship amongst the MMI staff has been particularly sweet. In the past we would gather, at most, twice a year and, for many good reasons, some of us would not meet for years. Since late March, we have been meeting on Zoom on a weekly basis and this has provided for sustained camaraderie, a more developed sense of purpose, infectious excitement about what the Lord is doing in our regions and a strong desire to walk with God. Every week we have been surprised, often delighted, with what the Lord has shown us from His Word and the insights that all team members have brought to our Bible readings and discussions. This has been very precious and, although weekly meetings are not sustainable in the long-term, we will be continuing to meet online regularly in order to grow together and hear from the Lord.

There is so much to do, so many military people to encourage and support, so much prayer required, so many resources still needed to achieve our mission. We are confident and excited that the Lord has plans for us beyond anything we can imagine thus far. We know that the closer we come to Him and each other and the more opportunities we have to support and minister, the hotter the spiritual battle will be. So, there is still an urgent requirement to build our support base, to broaden and deepen our prayer foundations and to seek the Lord for more resources, especially finances, to do the work. Nothing has stood still; we may have been locked down but certainly not locked out. The Lord is constantly on the move, it is His plans that prevail. He is seeking more workers for the harvest field in the armed forces of the world. The willing harvesters in MMI desire to be sent and we seek others to come with us in whatever the Lord wants us to do next. ●



MCF India has virtual reach across the nation

In Kolkata Pastor Blesson is working voluntarily with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church AOG (of which there are in the order of 10,000 churches across India). AOG attracts both serving and retired military officers and NCOs. There are worship services being streamed in 18 languages. Most of the officers attend English worship.

Pastor Blesson contributes a Bible study on Zoom which is mainly for

serving and retired military and their families, across India.

Pastor Blesson's work inside the camp has almost ceased due to the pandemic lockdown restrictions on movement and social distancing. However, he has been able to form a social media-based network of NCOs right across India.

He has formed a national prayer group of pastors who pray regularly for each State in India and for nations across the world.

Spotlight on NCO ministry in India

Subedar (NCO) J served in the Indian Army Engineers for 30 years until retirement in May 2017. He started the Holy Fire Revival Church near Cochin, Kerala in the Southern State of India. Subedar J believes that through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God on earth can be enlarged. He started a small prayer group while serving in the Army and now has many supporters across India, both serving and retired. His vision is to have 30,000 members in the Holy Fire Revival Church within 5 years, which is a tenth of the population of his city. Despite having to comply with lockdown restrictions, 21 people were baptised in July 2020.

Subedar J has also been gifted by the Lord with a deliverance ministry.

Sergeant M is an enthusiastic minister of God who served a full career in the Indian Air Force. After retirement he and his wife started a church in Kerala called City Revival. He has formed a network of ministers across India and abroad. His main ministry involves going out to villages in different parts of India. He travels with a team in a large vehicle and is continually on the road. Over the years of his ministry Sergeant M has been involved in several traffic accidents. On one occasion, he was almost invalided for life but by the grace of God, he was restored.

As a Sergeant Pastor, Sergeant M is currently leading the South India MCF with Subedar J. ➔

OVER: House Ministry Kerala
LEFT: India members of CNI
RIGHT: India Baptisms in Kerala July 2020



Emerging and flourishing - the East Indian Army MCF

BY PASTOR BLESSON

In March 2020 we had our first MCF East meeting in a former Corps Commander's house. Some of the Delhi MCF attended as guests. At the meeting four new retired officers and their families and 3 serving Military Nursing officers joined the group. Our leader is very active in this group in spite of his difficult health condition. Under his leadership a believers' WhatsApp group of Kolkata veterans was formed. A retired senior officer is presently tasked with organising meetings and getting new officers and NCOs into this group.

During this lockdown period, we keep connected with military MCFs across India by WhatsApp, e mail and by phone. We prepare testimonies of soldiers and share them on social media. We have Zoom Bible studies arranged every Saturday evening. The WhatsApp groups are used to encourage one another by sending Word texts, songs and messages.

Sunday worship is recorded and downloaded on You Tube.

Planning is under way to visit the North East to meet Chaplain W and the Assam Church.

MCF India reaches virtually across the nation. Thanks be to God. ●



ABOVE: New Chapel 4 Assam Regt.
BELOW: Bible reading.



Pastor Blesson interviews Pastor W, an Assam regiment Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) religious teacher.

Pastor Saab, how is your new posting to Shillong, HQ of the Assam Regiment?

Pastor W. Fine, we moved from an active service deployment in the field to a training job in the city.

How is your unit and the church?

Pastor W. We have weekly Bible study on Wednesdays and worship on Sundays. There are active discipleship programmes where we train soldiers in church leadership. After retirement these trained leaders are encouraged to join their local church as ministers.

How is the construction of your new church building? Is it finished?

Pastor W. Yes, the construction is finished and the new church has been dedicated to the glory of God by our Commanding Officer.

How do you spend your time in the unit during normal working days?

Pastor W. I have normal working hours like the other soldiers. I pray and spend time studying the Word and taking notes. There is an interview every weekday morning with my CO and he asks about unit families and their spiritual health.

Is there a ladies meeting and who is leading it?

Pastor W. Yes, we have a ladies meeting in the Regiment and my wife is president. We visit each family and get to know their family problems and give counselling as necessary.

As a Sergeant Pastor, Sergeant M is currently leading the South India MCF with Subedar J.

The East India MCF is led by a retired Corps Commander.

The Central India MCF is led by a retired 3 star General.

In this instance, the Indian MCF can proudly say "All one in Christ Jesus". ●

Francophone Africa under COVID-19:

A Congolese example of MCF and Chaplaincy working together

BY RTL FRANCOPHONE AFRICA ERIC MANDILE

The map shows what we call 'Francophone Africa' within MMI, referring to the 21 French speaking countries in the red lined area.

Most of the countries were under Covid lock-down until August 15 and so Church, MCF and Chaplaincy activities stalled until that date.

Our online Pray and Plan link was maintained during that period and by the Grace of God was extended and improved through our regular online conferences.

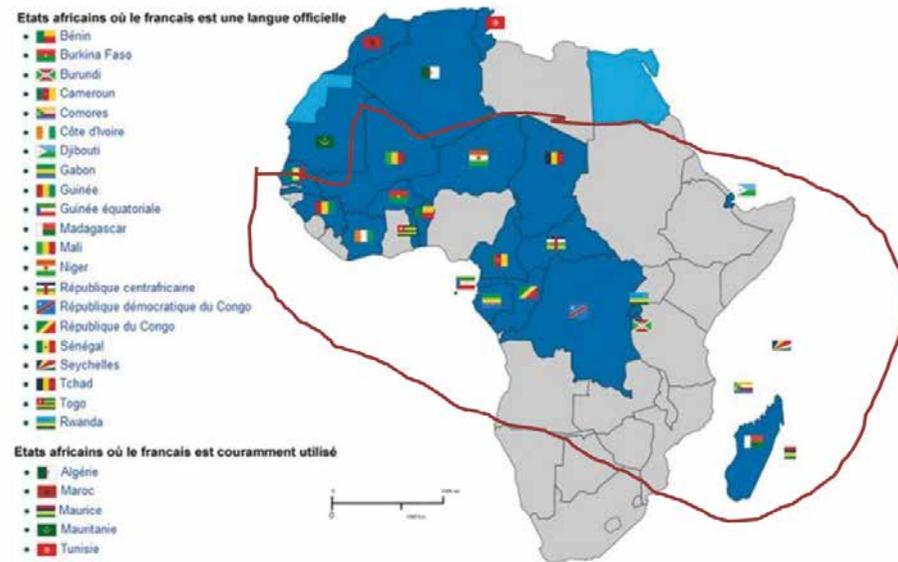
Our present focus is now on the Democratic Republic of Congo (Capital - Kinshasa).

On 17 August Pastor Bertin Mwanya, who leads the MCF "Gagner les Militaires pour Christ" (Win the Military for Christ), identified members of the armed forces and their families in the Lubumbashi area (Katanga) who needed to be visited and prayed for by

the local MCF. In the Lubumbashi area, as well as visiting and praying, they distribute Christian literature in the barracks. The visits and distribution are going on throughout September.

The MCF and Chaplaincy plan to extend these visits in the Katanga province, and then further out into the vast areas of the DRC. The main obstacle to that bold plan is the number of Chaplains or trained MCF leaders able to extend the mission field.

This is exactly where MMI makes a difference, through our connections with sister organisations like Campus Crusade Military Ministry (CCruMM), the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains (IAEC), the Association for Christian Conferences Teaching and Service (ACCTS), and Mission Support Organisation (MSO) as well as our ability to get on the ground with local African partners.



We intend to plan a national training event for chaplains and MCF leaders, both in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi.

This is a difficult endeavour because the DRC is a vast country with issues of its own and prayers are needed.

In conclusion we thank the Lord for recent developments, and for the continuous on-line exchanges we have been able to have during this Covid 19 pandemic. ●

Please pray:

- that the DRC MoD signs the Training Protocol the MMI team will present in April 2021 for training planned to take place in October 2021 in both Kinshasa and Lubumbashi
- for the Spiritual, Social, Emotional, and Material needs of the DRC MCF co-workers and their families
- for the two key leaders in this country in the Military Christian Field – Military Chaplaincy Chief Chaplain Elie and MCF Pastor Bertin



| Chief Chaplain Elie



| Pastor Bertin

Keeping Faith in Unprecedented Times in West Africa

BY FIELD WORKER WEST AFRICA EDDY AMPONSAH

Gambia: The faithfulness of God ever remains, and the Gambia MCF are resolute in commencing a chapel building project. The building will serve as a reliable place to enable the MCF to host Christian activities. For a long period, the MCF has lacked a building to enhance quality fellowship time amongst the Military Christian community. This situation may have hampered many visionary plans and will create further challenges in the future if there is no permanent place for gatherings. With this burden, the Gambia Military Christian Fellowship will welcome any support to reach their goal of having a Chapel building.

Sierra Leone: With the new leadership for the Chaplaincy, a re-organisation of the MCF is steady and ongoing. Considerable time will be needed to get on the right footing for growth and development.

Nigeria: Nigeria MCF activities, as in many nations, have come to a halt due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Prayers for the country in the fight against terrorism and extremism, especially in the Northern border of the country, is a deep-felt request. Additionally, a considerable number of the fellowship personnel are part of the deployed force to those conflict areas.



Ghana: Within the last two years the Ghanaian MCF have made tremendous progress. They have the vision and opportunity to create many more avenues for ministry activities to meet the needs of the soldiering community. Currently, breakfast meetings, extending fellowship, Bible and devotional book distribution to and with other security agencies, have been thriving. Ministry to the family unit is something considered to be needed and they are planning a follow-on programme for families.

Liberia: The key leaders of the Liberia MCF are on deployment, leaving a few members who keep the fellowship ticking on in a steady fashion. They have requested prayers and encouragement for the deployed soldiers and their immediate families.

For the remainder of the year, the nations within the region will be thinking of more creative ways to do Christian Fellowship. Communication and prayer with national MCFs still remain active and regular.



*The bishop: "I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr Jones."
The curate: "Oh no, my Lord, I assure you! Parts of it are excellent!"*

Middle East Update

RTL MIDDLE EAST RICHARD MERYON

That quip about the Curate's Egg is appropriate for the past few months across our Middle East region. Some bits good (most, to be fair) and some bits not so good. Without doubt it seems that the COVID-19 era has allowed the new ways of communicating to be adopted beneficially for the Kingdom – we've seen that in our church, as many of you will have, and for sure we've seen this for MMI's work across the Middle East. The Aldershot office, our RPPG and most of our friends from Tunisia to Iraq have met in a variety of Zoom fora, and we have all grown in love and understanding of each other.

Initially we met weekly, but now fortnightly seems to be the right pace, and later in the year maybe monthly;

surely rarity adds value too. The 'not so good' is that, sadly, those in Damascus are not allowed to use Zoom in Syria, and our policeman in the West Bank, K, finds it difficult to join us at that time of day; also, two people do not seem to appreciate the value of these calls. However, I believe when we establish a new working protocol beyond Covid 19, our relationships will be all the stronger through these times of fellowship and prayer.

I have always wanted to have 48 hours in each country every year, to build the rapport between ourselves, as this face to face contact is surely the optimum way to build what MMI seeks to achieve – the discipling of serving soldiers, principally by retired armed forces personnel. ●



"Going into all the world" 20 years of serving the Lord with MMI

BY HOMFRAY VINES

Homfray walking to
worship with Maj John Sei
& the SPLA Jun 13

I have had the joy of working with MMI for 20 years and the great privilege of experiencing worshipping the Lord with military people from every nation, language and tongue. The military community hold a special place in our Lord's Kingdom, we in MMI are charged with encouraging the military of many nations to serve the Lord with gladness and bring Glory to His holy name.

For the first five years I served in Europe, where we had a great team that taught and shared the Gospel with officer cadets at camps set up by the Lithuanian and Romanian military academies, ran Euro Seminars in Bulgaria and Lithuania, set up ski retreats in Austria, sailing retreats in

Holland and established the European Military Christian Meeting at Church House, Lübbecke along with running the AMCF European Conference in Warsaw in 2002 and taking 32 nations to the AMCF World Conference in Seoul in 1984.

One of the great joys of these years was that we were welcomed by Military Christians from Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions and were able to work harmoniously with the chaplains from all three.

Tragically in 2005 our leader General Ian Durie was killed in a road traffic accident in Romania. Following his loss, I was available to step into his large shoes and lead the ministry through some major changes before Col Jos

McCabe took over as Chief Executive and Team Leader in 2007. This was a two-year period, laying the foundations for the next 10 years of ministry carried out in a spirit of prayer started by an amazing 24/7 week of prayer and fasting.

During this period Simon Farmer took me on a three-week trip to East Africa. This trip placed in me a desire to work in that region in the future, study reconciliation in Rwanda after the genocide and establish the first link between the Salisbury Diocese Deanery and the Sudan Diocese. At the end of the trip I was able to spend a week in Yambio Diocese, South Sudan and discuss with them the establishment of a link to Wimborne Deanery, of which I had previously been Lay Chair.

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness come before him with joyful songs".

Psalms 100 v1-2

In 2007, supported by MMI, I took a year's break to study for an MA in Cross Cultural Mission at All Nations Christian College. This not only provided me with an opportunity to find out what I should have been doing in the previous 7 years, but also to grieve the loss of my first wife Ruth, who had recently died. My MA Dissertation studied how the small organisation, African Enterprise, brought spiritual and mental healing to those suffering from all the trauma of the genocide.

In September 2008 I started my five and a half years as Team Leader for East and Southern Africa at the Pan African Conference in Nairobi. This was an outstanding Conference that was well set up and run under the AMCF Regional VP, General Njuki Mwaniki. In 2009 Gen Mwaniki handed the region over to the Ugandan Brig David Wakaalo. Within the next two years, the team that had run the conference and with whom I was looking forward to working, all retired from leading the Kenyan MCF and all AMCF work.

I was very grateful for the support of the Kenyan and Ugandan MCFs in my many visits to the region. It would have been impossible to make the visits to

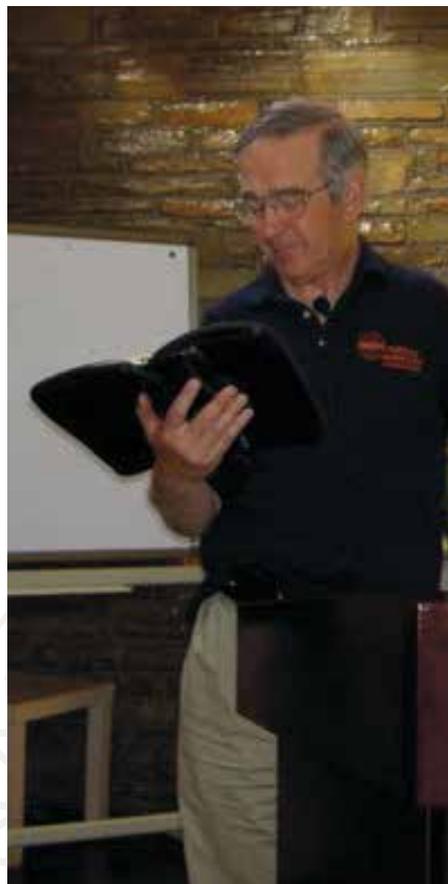
Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Sudan and Ethiopia without them sending someone to accompany me. At the end of March 2014, I was able to hand over to Max Mupondi at a deeply challenging five-day East Africa Prayer Convention, where we prayed and fasted all day only eating a meal in the evening!

In Southern Africa much of my time was taken up with supporting AMCF VP Capt Peter Louwrens followed by the late Brig Thabo Mohapi, in their work and visits in the region. However, from the beginning, Peter's desire to hold the next AMCF World Conference in South Africa began to take centre stage. During my visit to Pretoria in July 2009, we made the first visit to the SADF Chaplain General in many years and he was supportive of the idea. From then it gained momentum through many Pray and Plans, the setting up of the Warrior Training programme and much prayer, fund raising and administrative work to become the very valuable AMCF Global Interaction 2014 held in Cape Town.

After an 18-month break, I was invited to become an MMI Trustee. It has been a great privilege to lead the organisation over the last 21/2 years as the Chair. The existing Chair, Gen Roddy Porter was called by God to lead the staff as the Chief Executive and Team Leader. He has been blessed by an amazing staff team and

together led by God; they have moved to an excellent position to accrue much fruit during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The on-line virtual prayer meeting on Sat 6 June 2020, was another incredible opportunity to worship the Lord with gladness and join together in prayer with people from 38 nations. A fitting end to my time as a trustee of MMI. As I rejoin the ranks of our wonderful supporters, I can be thankful to God that MMI is in good hands. Throughout my service I have been so grateful for the vital prayer support of my wife Sue, the AFCU Emsworth Prayer Support Team and so many of you. Thank you! ●



"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness come before him with joyful songs".

Psalm 100 v1-2

Remembering Brigadier General Spiro Kalemi Albania

Founder of the MCF of Albania, Brigadier General Spiro Kalemi died in early May from complications of several health conditions.

We praise God for Brig Gen Kalemi's amazing life and faith in God. Despite living and serving in the military in a Communist, atheist nation, Brig Gen Kalemi embraced faith in Jesus when he attended a Christian crusade with his daughter Emanuela. He initially attended the event only to protect her, as he wasn't sure what the event was or who the people were. But God touched his heart while there and Brig Gen Kalemi accepted Christ as his Saviour. They began attending church, and he told his daughter, "We need to do something like this with the military conscripts, because if they learn about Jesus they can share Him with their families and friends when they return home." Emanuela recalls that in those days they couldn't do any ministry without obtaining government permission first, so her father would go to the Defence Minister's office and sit in front of it, praying and waiting for a meeting with him. He often stayed there until midnight, waiting and praying for an opportunity. Finally, he got an audience with the Minister and said to him, "I'm here to pray for you." After trust had been built between the two of them, Brig Gen Kalemi told the Minister about his vision of going to military bases to hand out Bibles and tell conscripts about Jesus Christ. With the MOD's approval, Brig Gen Kalemi and Captain Emanuela Kalemi, with help from their church, began doing just that.

In 1993 the Defence Minister received an invitation to attend a chaplains' conference in Hungary and he appointed Brig Gen Kalemi to attend, since he was the only one in Albania doing anything similar to a chaplain's work. Emanuela attended as his translator. While there, they met a Norwegian chaplain, who said, "So you began doing this military ministry with no idea other people around the world were also doing it! That's wonderful. You need to get in contact with ACCTS -- they're doing the same thing as you are." Not long after that, an ACCTS staff member visited the Kalemi family and encouraged them in their ongoing ministry.

Brig Gen Kalemi's faith in God stayed strong throughout his life, despite suffering many health difficulties and other sorrows. He was a wise, tender-hearted, and visionary leader. Even in his final days he was praying faithfully for other people.

Praise God for Brig Gen Kalemi and others like him who follow God's calling to share Christ with the armed forces of our world!

Emanuela Kalemi Haien, one of his daughters, is an ACCTS staff member.



LEFT: early days - with Emanuela on the left
RIGHT: later days with his grandson



MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS:

VISION

To see what God might do if every military Christian had someone to stand with.

MISSION

Helping Christians follow Jesus Christ in Armed forces around the world.

Despite COVID-19, the MMI team continues to:

- Meet via video conference to pray, study the Word, encourage each other and plan ahead
- Maintain contact with our brothers and sisters in our regions to encourage and pray with them
- Seek the Lord for what he has for us in the months ahead
- Cherish our close friendships with our sister organisations ACCTS and MSO
- Explore how we can better use social media to reach even more military Christians with God's Word for them
- Consider how we will get back on mission when the Lord says, "Go!"

We are in no way downhearted but are rejoicing in the Lord's love and grace and are excited that he has called us to prepare and pray in these days for what He has called us to do downstream.

This is not wasted time – it is prayer and preparation time and the Lord is at work.

21st OCTOBER 2020
Trustees Meeting (UK)

1-4 OCTOBER 2020 (TBC)
The Croatia MCF Adria Interaction "Marriage in times of crisis"

22 - 25 OCTOBER 2020
The Spanish MCF EXPRESATE Conference
Final decision will be made one week before the event takes place

24th OCTOBER 2020
AMCF WORDWIDE DAY OF PRAYER

5th NOVEMBER 2020
DEFENSE COUNCIL NETWORK (DCN) DAY OF PRAYER FOR UK ARMED FORCES

ONLINE

8th OCTOBER 2020
EC Meeting
ZOOM

9th-10th OCTOBER 2020
AFCU (UK) Autumn event 'Just Listen'
ONLINE

Romanian MCF annual conference
ONLINE

13th NOVEMBER 2020
EC Meeting
ZOOM

21st NOVEMBER 2020
MMI Supporters Autumn Prayer Meeting
ZOOM

NOVEMBER

The Greek MCF conscript training for young people joining the Armed Forces as conscripts
WEBINAR

11-14 JANUARY 2121
MMI TEAM RETREAT

BY SUE MILLARD – TL PRAYER & COMMS

Prayer Can't Be Locked Down!

Through reading the articles in this edition, you will have already picked-up on the 'silver lining' to the cloud of the Covid 19 lock-down for MMI – the development of online regional prayer and fellowship groups throughout all four of our regions.

We were very excited by our International Prayer Day (via Zoom) in June, when we were joined by 95 people from 38 Countries, representing many denominations, partners in the gospel, and serving and retired military all joining together to pray for ministry to the military in our four regions of Africa, Europe, Middle East and South Asia. We were delighted to be joined by one of our patrons, Canon Andrew White, by AMCF President General

Srilal Weerasooriya, and by our sister organisations, ACCTS in the USA and MSO in South Korea.

Not everyone could pray verbally, but many shared thoughts, prayers, and revelations through the chat function, which worked brilliantly and was a great encouragement to all. The Holy Spirit was with us in our Zoom prayer gathering. Praise the Lord!

During the course of the prayer meeting we received a very special message from the leader and members of the Liberian MCF who were on peace keeping duties in Mali. They could not join the zoom call but at the time of the prayer meeting they gathered together in their peacekeepers tent and prayed the prayer items with us.

Encouragement for the Regions

The International Prayer day gave an added encouragement to regions

which did not have region-wide prayer groups setup and very quickly, in all the regions, there were opportunities to join together as Military Christians for online prayer and fellowship. For some of those in the Middle East, this weekly online meeting was the first time they had ever seen or been in contact with each other.

This time of fellowship has been a great encouragement to all involved. Now, as people are returning to work and so are not as available, each region has to work out the frequency and timings of these gatherings to maximise the benefit for all.

These informal regional prayer and fellowship gatherings have been in addition to the existing Regional Prayer & Plan Groups (RPPGs) which had already begun to include people in-region who could access online meetings. The RPPGs have also been able to develop through this time, praying and planning online for future activity with the Regional Team Leaders.

This has been a special time of growing closer together, both within the MMI team and across the regions. Our prayer is that we do not lose what we have gained but understand how to develop our MMI prayer life online, in addition to physically gathering together.

Our next MMI Supporters Prayer Event is Saturday 21 November and will be via zoom. Details will be emailed and on our website nearer the time. Do try to join us on that day.

If you would like to receive information on how to support MMI through prayer, please email prayer@mmi.org.uk or look at our website www.mmi.org.uk



What you said about the day...

Thank you for this day of prayer.

It is such a joy to meet so many brothers and sisters for whom we have been praying, many of whom we have never met. Alleluia! Alleluia!!

Though it was my first meeting with you all thru the means the God enabled us but it was such a joy to see all of us from nations coming together in prayers.

I never had prayed like this - it is physically perceptible how this prayer is embracing all the Christian militaries.

Really blessed by this time of prayer.

It was indeed an uplifting experience and such a joy to see faces and hear prayers in other languages.

It was such a thrill to be part of the meetings.

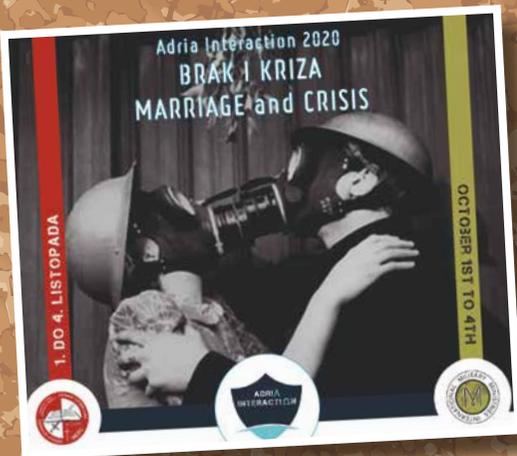
A brilliant day.

What a wonderful display of the great truth that we are indeed all one in Christ Jesus!

1-4 OCTOBER 2020

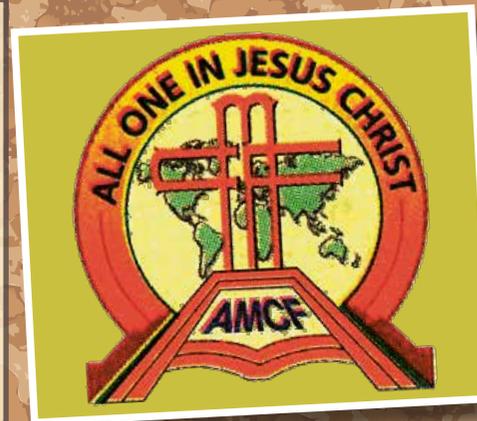
The Croatian MCF hopes to run its annual Adria Interaction

MMI will be represented by Grozdan and Slavica Stoevski to teach on "Marriage in times of crisis" as the reduced audience number will be mostly couples of veterans and Croat MCF members.



The Association of Military Christian Fellowships Day of Prayer

The Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF) Day of Prayer is 24 October. Prayer notes will be available through the MMI PrayerLink or on request from prayer@mmi.org.uk



Bible studies for serving and retired military in India

Pastor Blesson has been able to contribute Bible studies aimed for serving and retired military and their families across India, through the Pentecostal AOG Church's zoom initiative.

LEGAL APPEAL

The Italian MCF have set in motion a legal appeal against the MOD refusal to allow them to officially establish an MCF of Italy. Please stand with them in prayer over this issue.



German MCF delivers bibles to units

Herman Meyer, CoV member and MMI fieldworker for Africa SE, on the road in Germany delivering gifts of bibles from the German MCF Corneliusvereinigung (CoV) to German units.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE, COG GOA
Welcomes you to
f LIVE
GOSPEL MESSAGE
Join Us
18 SATURDAY 8PM
JULY (IST)

PR. BLESSON VARGHESE, KOLKATA
Will be sharing the Word of God. **JOIN US**

Preparing a generation for Christ
DAILY FB LIVE @ 8PM
PR. MANU K CHACKO | 8208907893 | 8975880558



MCF Armenia

Welcome to Armenia's newly formed MCF in Nagorno Kharabakh, an autonomous region of Armenia.

Happy Anniversary!

40 years ago, on 19 July the young Lt Richard Meryon (now MMI RTL Middle East) married Rosalind. Congratulations to you both!!



Greek MCF Initiative

Inspired by Netivah's Arrow course for Christian conscripts in Israel, the Greek MCF has started a conscript training webinar for young, Christian Greeks about to join the Armed Forces. The first one took place in September and the next will be in November.

BACKPACK

This month's thoughts and prayers to take with you and share...

Words of help from Jeremiah...

On 11th August 2020, MMI staff were privileged to hear a word from **Jeremiah 29:1-14**, brought to us by Pastor Blesson in India. His message brought comfort and a renewed sense of direction for MMI for this autumn and winter, as we remain constrained by COVID-19 to fulfil our Mission virtually.

Pastor Blesson summarised his talk this way:

God is sovereign – submit to him

Be productive where you are – redeem this time

Trust God's timing and listen to him

Above all, seek God wholeheartedly

This is what we seek to do in the months ahead.

