

MMI NEWS

SPRING
2022

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



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UP FRONT

Major General Roddy Porter MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE - TEAM LEADER



There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2 ESV)

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2022. We serve an awesome God, whose purposes are eternal and cannot be deflected or derailed. As the staff team and trustees reviewed 2021 and looked forward to this year and beyond at our January Retreat, we were struck again by the goodness of our Lord and excited afresh about what He has in store for those who follow Him. The more we reflected on His Word, the more we affirmed the words of worship in 1 Samuel 2:2 that guided our time together. God is awesome.

We began our Retreat with a time of prayer and contemplation about broken dreams and hopes; those things that had proved impossible as a result of the pandemic and its travel restrictions. We fixed our brokenness (represented by fragments of paper crockery) to a representation of the Cross (see the photograph here) and offered this to the Lord in worship. And then we recounted what He had done and enabled us

to do. If the sum of 'broken dreams' equates to what He has enabled recently, described throughout the Newsletter, then what might the realisation of hopes and dreams look like in the months ahead? Surely God is good, His ways unsearchable.



We hope you are encouraged by our constant, unchanging God? We have been deeply encouraged considering His ways and His Word together on Retreat. And so, we move forward into 2022 with fresh hope and vision, ready to do His will and go where He sends us. I hope that you, in turn, will be encouraged by this report of the goodness of God! Every blessing for the year ahead. There is no rock like our God.

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AMCF INTERACTION EUROPE 2021

New AMCF Training Interaction.

MMI CE/TL GENERAL RODDY PORTER.

What a joy it was to be able to attend a live MMI/AMCF event again after nearly two years of, admittedly blessed, activity on Zoom! We were in Crikvenica, Croatia, in October 2021 for an important trial run of a training module for potential leaders in the AMCF family.

Grozdan and Slavica Stoevski and Roddy Porter represented MMI; Phil Exner and Bernhard Kaltenbach, ACCTS (USA), ably supported by AJ and Dana Reiss and Lt Col Choi and Mrs Park represented MSO (S Korea). We were delighted that the AMCF VP Europe (E&S) Rev. Mike Terry was there to help lead the Interaction. We were also privileged to have Pastor Mimi from Serbia, with us. He has a burden to start a Military Christian Fellowship in Serbia! Dražen did a great job with the supporting logistics, for which we were extremely grateful. We were

expecting good things from the Lord and we were by no means disappointed.

Crikvenica has been the location for the Adria Interaction for a number of years and it is a peaceful, sunny coastal town 30 minutes south of Rijeka, 2½ hour's drive from Zagreb. The Christian Life Centre is a place where business with God can be done, as it has well-equipped facilities, comfortable rooms, good food and friendly staff, and it is 20 metres from the beach! Following a night in Zagreb and an opportunity to worship with Dražen's home church on the Sunday morning, we deployed that afternoon in dreadful weather to the coast, ready for whatever the Lord would show us

We rejoiced that the journey to Crikvenica was the only period of bad weather we experienced. Thereafter, the days were warm and sunny, with opportunities to have

fellowship and pray whilst enjoying a fine autumn by the sea. The AMCF Interaction has not been held for about thirteen years, and was previously a two-week programme in the USA, run by ACCTS. In a series of Pray and Plan (P&P) meetings we felt it right, indeed overdue, to re-establish a week-long programme to help train new or potential leaders of MCFs, with sufficient mentors to enable one-on-one support. We wanted the programme to be useable by any AMCF Region or VP that had a vision for leadership training. The PSOs can always help with instructors or mentors but we were clear that the vision and impetus needs to come from the MCFs themselves in the future. It is instructive that many on the current AMCF Presidential Bench are graduates from that USA-based Interaction and we were conscious of the gap in the AMCF programme to support emerging leaders. We wanted to test the programme the P&P team had developed, and the nominated 'staff' from the PSOs were agreed that we were as much students as staff!

COVID-19, work schedules and quite a bit of illness significantly reduced the numbers of students, but we prayerfully felt that the Lord wanted us to proceed, irrespective of numbers. We were joined by the delightful and newly married Johannes and Naomi Johannsen from Sweden, Bulent from Turkey, Fernando Friere from Portugal and Chris Johnson, ACCTS member and Cal Dunlap's stepson, now working as a contractor in Germany.

The programme, consisting of teaching on leadership development, exploring God's calling, spiritual

warfare, military Christian ethics, leading Inductive Bible Studies and conversational prayer meetings, is available on request from ACCTS or MMI. The teaching, discussions and seminars were interspersed with excellent Bible teaching from staff and students alike, prayer walks, one-on-one mentoring and uplifting worship. Most powerful were the times of personal testimony and Johannes and Naomi, in particular, spoke movingly about how the Lord had brought them together as a married couple.



The main point to note was that every participant was greatly blessed by the Lord. We all experienced refreshing through studying the Word and in worship; we sensed the Lord's presence by His Spirit; and we were drawn together in closer fellowship and desire to see the Lord working significantly in our armed forces. Our prayer times were particularly powerful, with heartfelt intercession for the lost, for our nations, our children and our individual calling. We may have been incubating a training programme but we all received from God and, I firmly believe, we were all changed a bit more into Christ's likeness.

What an outcome!



Demonstrating the love of God in unity

Adria Interaction and Croatia MCF is 10!

REGIONAL TEAM LEADER EUROPE REV. GROZDAN STOEVSKI

The Adria Interaction in mid-October 2021 was marked by the 10th anniversary celebration of the Croatia MCF. The event followed immediately after the AMCF Interaction, which also took place at the same Christian Retreat "Life Centre" in Crikvenica, on the beautiful Adriatic coast of Croatia.

There were over 50 participants present as most of the AMCF Interaction leaders and delegates stayed for both events and in addition, there were special guests from Italy, Turkey, Sweden, Serbia and Portugal, along with all the Croatian MCF members and their wives and Bruce Kittelson representing Olive Branch (USA).

The teaching sessions during the conference focused on the "Simplicity of God's Will", as revealed in the life of Gideon the Judge; Micah the Prophet and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Programme also provided an

opportunity for all MCFs represented to share briefly about their ministry as a good part of this session was dedicated to the Croatian MCF. The journey which Drazen and Tina Hrzenjak have travelled together for the past 10 years has been beyond amazing. God has truly blessed them not just by helping establish the work of the MCF, mainly among war veterans, but has inspired them and enabled them to produce not one, but



now three documentary films. The great success of the first film, "Storm of the Soul" (2019) has been surpassed by the second, "1991. Who is your neighbour" (2021) which tells the story of the international volunteers, from as many as 45 countries, mostly from the UK, the Netherlands and France, who self-sacrificially fought on the Croatian side in the Yugoslav wars. The third film, "Chess and War" (2021), tells the story of a chess tournament which took place on 17 November 1991, during the siege of Dubrovnik. In the weeks following the Adria Interaction the screenings of the second film have enjoyed full auditoriums, wide media coverage and the presence of Mr. Zoran Milanovic, the Croatian President himself, at the premier show in Zagreb in mid-November 21. God revealed Himself during the Adria Interaction not just during the plenary sessions but also in the time for fellowship and recreation. On the second day of the event all the participants travelled by a big motorboat to the beautiful town of Opatija, close to the border with Slovenia.

During the sea journey, which took about two and half hours one way, we witnessed the most encouraging expression of unity in Christ – Pastor Mimi (Serbian), along with Bozo (Croatian war veteran) and Rev Mike Terry (AMCF VP) sang popular worship songs and hymns together on the deck of the boat, all the way there and back. The sea breeze could not stop them as another wind was blowing – the wind of the Spirit of God bringing unity in Christ in the most amazing way. What a beautiful picture of what Adria and MMI is all about – proclaiming the Kingdom of God by demonstrating the love of God in the unity which comes through God – because everything is "...from Him, through Him and for Him in all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen!" (Rom 11:36)

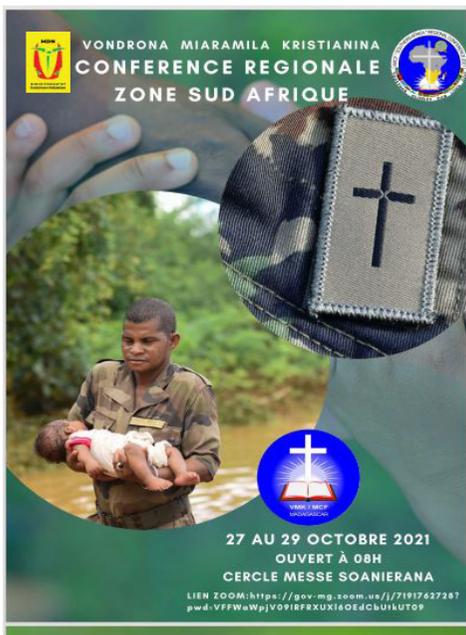
Top: The President of Croatia (Centre) with Drazen (left) and members of the Croatia MCF.

Opposite page Top: The motorboat trip
Opposite page bottom: Adria Interaction

'Together, Glorify Our Lord God.'

AMCF Africa South Regional Conference.

BY REGIONAL TEAM LEADER AFRICA S&E MAX MUPPONDI



Praise the Lord that the Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF) Africa South Regional Conference was held in Antananarivo, Madagascar from 26 to 29 October 2021, despite all the travel and other Covid restrictions.

The conference theme 'Together, Glorify Our Lord God,' was derived from Romans 15.5-7. The conference aimed to bring MCFs and chaplaincies together to glorify the Lord God through prayer and fellowship; to teach, train, equip, and strengthen participants for the work of discipleship and to provide

spiritual tools for developing fellowships through cooperation, improved communication, and mature support for struggling MCFs.

Due to Covid restrictions, international participants were unable to attend in person, but participated via Zoom. However, there were 207 physical participants from various units and services in Madagascar and more than 20 online on day 1, with the number significantly rising on days 2 and 3. The AMCF President, Gen Srilal Weerasooriya, AMCF VP Africa South, Capt (Navy Retd) Peter Louwrens, and representatives of ACCTS, MSO and MMI made presentations via Zoom. Countries participating included Madagascar (Host), Sri Lanka, USA, UK, S Korea, France, Portugal, Germany, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tome & Principe, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Namibia.

MoD Secretary General, Vice Admiral Antoine de Padoue Ranaivoseheno, gave the official opening address on behalf of the Minister of Defence. The VMC (MCF) Choir, service bands and gospel bands provided inspired worship and cultural sessions throughout the event and Rev. Camille Rafalimanana, National Director of the Madagascar Bible Reading League, inspired participants with leadership

lessons from the Bible.

The highlights of the event were the teaching on MCFs and Chaplains Working and Serving Together which was co-presented by Maj Gen Ramasitera and Rev. Gervais Tombotsoa; Discipleship teaching by Rev. Solofo Ramaholimihosa, who pointed out that making disciples who in turn make other disciples should be at the core of Christian ministry, Purity and Holiness.

Other highlights were Witnessing in a Hostile Environment by Gen Roddy Porter, who sighted the military as a hostile environment and challenged participants to be ambassadors for Jesus, living lives worthy of the Lord; the National Director of the Malagasy Bible Society, Rev Fabrice Rabenjarisolo, encouraged participants to be sources of blessing to their churches, military units, and country. Conversational prayer and discussions were held in small groups, including a women's fellowship group who chose to discuss Women as Light in the Household, based on Proverbs 31.

AMCF VP Peter Louwrens also chaired a significant discussion on Lighthouse Fellowship, which identifies mature MCFs to support immature ones as equal partners. Resulting from this discussion Madagascar was asked to support Mauritius; South Africa to support Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia; Zimbabwe to support Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, and Mozambique to help Angola and Sao Tome & Principe.

In his closing remarks the VP Peter Louwrens thanked participants for the enthusiasm they displayed during the conference, for adopting his Lighthouse Fellowship initiative, and challenged participants not to go back and relax but to be committed to the work of discipleship in their military. He further encouraged MCFs and chaplaincies to start focusing, praying for, and organising resources for their members to attend the AMCF World Conference in Brazil in 2024, noting that in the past, many chaplains have been funded by their governments to attend AMCF international conferences.

The AMCF President congratulated the region for hosting such an inspiring conference and encouraged participants to put into practice what they had been taught, and to be the salt and light in their units. Giving the closing address Maj Gen Ramasitera, President of the Malagasy MCF, expressed gratitude for the prayer and financial support received from the PSOs, and asked the AMCF not to do away with online attendance at future events. He read the Minister of Defence's speech which thanked the 'AMCF President and VP for training the military to be good leaders and reiterated that Madagascar was 'open for working with you!'

Despite being hosted amid Covid-19 challenges, the conference was a resounding success. It was a refreshing and refining time, and participants received spiritual tools to revive fellowships post pandemic. Praise the Lord!



The MMTI participants together with the main speakers on screen.

On the way to Madagascar - Experiences with God

BY LIEUTENANT MATTHIAS THIEME.

Lieutenant Matthias Thieme is a 23 yrs old active-duty army officer of the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) and member of Corneliusvereinigung (CoV). Matthias attended Madagascar Mountain Top Interaction (MMTI) 31Oct-5 Nov, which followed straight on from the Africa South Regional conference.

My experience with MMTI 2021 was one of a special kind – one that had a great impact on my person and on my faith.

The journey itself didn't just start with me boarding an aircraft in Germany: it began several months before when I was contacted by Col Hermann Meyer of MCF CoV who an MMI-Fieldworker for Africa South and East. As one of the previous international delegates to TMTI 2019 (Table Mountain Top Interaction near

Cape Town/SA), I was eager to be part of such a great experience once again.

To begin with, the planning process was straightforward. An official invitation had been sent by Capt (ret. SA Navy) Peter Louwrens (AMCF VP for AS Region) and Maj Gen Ramsitera (Chairperson of Malagasy MCF), which resulted in my being granted army special leave for myself and for two other Lieutenants of my unit by our military superior. Midway through our planning process we noticed the first hiccups on our way to MMTI 21. Right after booking the flights at a fairly reasonable price, one of my two colleagues was detailed to a military course at the time of the interaction. Several days later the remaining two of us were informed by the airline that the flight had been cancelled – without giving the

reason. Two days later another flight connection was found but at a much higher price – very close to our personally set financial limits – but we agreed. Then, merely 24 hours after booking, this airline also cancelled its flight to Madagascar. A third airline was found but with a price beyond the capacity of a junior officer. MCF CoV took over sponsorship for this financial increase and even put on a contingency amount for further problems. My colleague and I were relieved and again tickets were purchased. Then all of a sudden, my colleague had to draw back due to family reasons. Should I risk the endeavour of a flight as a single delegate from my country amongst a group of unknown internationals? After intense prayer within our German language prayer group for Africa S Nations, I decided to do so.

Then another "Job's News" hit me: Madagascar was shut down to foreigners by a general entry ban due to the Corona pandemic – and the airline cancelled the booked flight. After several days of praying, anxious waiting, hoping, Maj Gen Ramasitera and MCF VMK succeeded in effecting an exceptional permit for attendees of AMCF-activities. Days later this solution also was at risk. During this time, I strongly felt God's guidance which persuaded me to push forward, and a thought came to my mind: "God WILL lead the way". Approximately 12 days before my planned flight (without an airline to go there yet!) Madagascar lifted the entry ban for a strictly limited period of 14 days which included MMTI. Hallelujah! A couple of hours after this highly welcome news Hermann gave me

the update that Madagascar had opened up for regional flights from neighbouring Mauritius and also from Mozambique. The following days were a challenge of patience, every day I checked flight-portals but no flights showed up. Finally, a flight from Switzerland via Mauritius to Madagascar did open up and I immediately booked. But the struggle didn't end there – it just went on. For flying to or via Mauritius there were several organisational obstacles and paperwork to overcome. The most challenging was a transit regulation that made it mandatory to have international health insurance which would take financial coverage for any Covid-infection the bearer would catch in-country. Another issue was the Malagasy quarantine regulations, requiring five days of quarantine after entry. With a total planned stay of seven days this meant that I would not be able to take part in the conference at all.

As Hermann was already on a missionary trip in East Africa at that time and not able to receive the mandatory international health insurance for Mauritius in time, he also had to drop out of physically going to Madagascar. In order to make sure that he could at least attend the conference via Zoom with a stable internet connection from Germany, without being stuck somewhere in transit, he flew home. This made me the last of the German delegates.

The following day the next "IED set off" when I was told that the whole conference was about to be cancelled, due to an order of the Malagasy Ministry of Defence to abstain from physically attending and that

the interaction should only be held via Zoom.

At this point all hope seemed lost – What sense would it make to fly to Madagascar, staying in quarantine with no chance at all to attend MMTI? I tried to cancel my flight, but to no use, being only six days prior to the flights, I would not receive any money back. At this point I began to quarrel with God, what was the sense of all the struggle, just to fail at the final straight? But God had his own plans. At the same time Hermann rang me from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he encouraged me and started another prayer initiative – this time on an international level. Captain Tania Schoenemann, one of my German prayer colleagues, stated in our WhatsApp Group: “How great must the blessing be that God already has prepared to be poured upon MMTI if this generates so much trouble, blockades and hindrances?” And then: the MMTI organisation team managed to turn the conference into a hybrid one, both physical and virtual. I was once again encouraged to pull through. I managed to get all necessary paperwork done in the remaining 40 hours (even the international health insurance) and 24 hours prior to my flight I passed my final PCR test. On Friday the 29th of November my 30-hour-journey to Madagascar finally started for real!

My Time in Madagascar - Learning about God

Exhausted but happy, I and my luggage (reduced to a few kgs in my backpack) arrived in Antananarivo (“Tana”), Madagascar’s capital city.

After a four-hour entry procedure, I was picked up by MCF VMK soldiers and taken straight to nearby barracks, where I stayed for one night. On the same evening Maj Gen Ramasitera welcomed me and met me for prayer and a meal. The next day – with a negative test result and with quarantine time ended - MMTI started for me. I was picked up for a one-hour drive to the Military Chapel Manjakandriana. On the way I was asked to give a testimony to the assembly in the church. What initially was a challenge to me – as I was only familiar with platoon-size groups (30 ORs) and had never spoken or given testimony to a large crowd of 200 fellow military Christians - turned out to be a ‘blessing experience’ for me. I was able to testify to our Lord’s grace and powerful help in my complex and stressful process of getting to Madagascar. What a mercy to perceive how I was allowed to encourage my Malagasy brethren in faith! After the service I met all the other fellow MMTI-Malagasy delegates and was able to make first contact with them. At this point it is worth mentioning the language barrier – I am only able to speak German and a passable English, so the Malagasy organization team gave me an interpreter to help. His name was Sanifa (pronounced Sallfa) and he was so important to me, and not only as a very professional translator but also as a dear brother-in-Christ, and he became a good friend of my own age. After a couple of hours’ drive, we arrived in the bush at the lovely resort of Montsoa Ermitage Lodge, where the interaction was to be held.

The interaction officially started



Lemurs visiting MMTI

with a welcome, introduction, group photos and a full day of lectures. The talks and teaching were done by VP Peter Louwrens, VMK-Maj Gen Niriniaina Ramasitera, and MMI-fieldworker, Hermann Meyer, who was MMTI’s main speaker. The introductory information on the first day was about AMCF, MMTI, PSOs and lessons from Hermann on “Being a Christian and a Soldier – is it a contradiction?”, and from Peter on “Spiritual Warrior Training”.

Each day started with morning reflections and ended with evening closing prayers; the days were long but they held valuable lessons for military Christians and their spiritual foundation and development. The classes were held either in person or via Zoom with the respective speakers being connected from Germany and South Africa. On the first evening there was another surprise for me when I was asked to take over some of the presentations myself. But this is a pillar of T/MMTI’s

concept, that delegates from previous interactions are prepared and willing to take over teaching tasks in later interactions. What a great opportunity to step up and be able to work and to contribute the abilities that one has been given by our Heavenly Father to be used for HIS great kingdom! After preparing the first of my several lectures to come, I fell exhausted into bed.

On one of the days, we went on an excursion to Nosy Soa Park. After a short hike we saw animals which are native only to Madagascar: lemurs. What friendly and cute animals – part of God’s wonderful creation. Like a group of interested listeners they visited us in our open-space pavilion and spent some time with us. During the following hike in the vast forest brush a clearing opened where we celebrated Communion and held our next classes, among which I gave my teaching about “Inductive Bible Study” and the “Role of Leading Small Groups”. This was followed by a presentation from Hermann about “Spiritual Battle and the Armour of God” and “Personal Evangelism”.

Then it was time to put the learned themes into action and we started that day with an extensive prayer walk. In groups of 4 we testified to one another about the mercy and intervention of God in our lives. I was astonished how open my brothers were in telling their personal stories of God and how HE had helped them in their lives. What a great way to learn how God can work in our daily lives.

On the last day of the one-week interaction we celebrated with a

closing service. It was time to say good-bye to the other delegates and we left each other with sadness. Back at Antanarivo I once again was overwhelmed by the hospitality of my newly gained Malagasy friends, as I had the privilege of a tour through this very impressive city by car and on foot. We visited the Christian martyr church Rasalama Maritiora Ambohimpotsy, Tana's historic market-place, a crocodile farm in the outskirts, and the homes of Sanlfa and of the General and his wife. With a final PCR test for my flight home and with my backpack full of souvenirs and my heart full of gratitude I left this wonderful island state.

Working in God's vineyard – my time after Madagascar

Madagascar and the struggle to eventually reach this diamond in the Indian Ocean, showed me a lot about trusting the Lord and accepting HIS guidance. For me, it was an extraordinary experience. It showed how the Lord wants us to become changed to the better for our future assignments as military leaders – based on a distinctly Christian ethical foundation which is strong, exemplary, and resilient against evil



On an MMTI hike.

attacks. The Holy Spirit guides and helps us to grow in faith and in spiritual maturity. Before leaving Mantasoa Lodge we started an MMTI-WhatsApp group where we can keep in touch with each other and report our experiences (successes, failures, lessons learned) and share with each other our individual prayer concerns for our nations and MCFs – giving us a broader prayer base. We are sharing on leading small groups, on Bible study, on prayer techniques and on how we can enhance our telling other brothers-in-arms about God's offer of salvation.

And I'm glad to see that we as military Christians have such beloved brothers and sisters in faith all over the world. I cannot but recommend to anyone to take part in such an outstanding experience and be part of God's global network. When you are invited to attend AMCF activities –and especially the ones which are targeted for young future military leaders – try to be part of it. Make your preparations in time, save money for it and look for your MCF, Chaplaincy and church to support you.

I have already made a note in my calendar. The upcoming MMTI is scheduled for 08–15 Oct 2022!

Reappearing Spiritual Lights in East Africa

MMI-FIELDWORKER AFRICA EAST AND AFRICA SOUTH COLONEL (RET.) HERMANN MEYER



The reformed Tanzania MCF.

The first ministry trip that MMI was able to launch to East Africa since 2019 took fieldworker Hermann Meyer to the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and Kenya.

The situation around these two, once vibrant, MCFs at the South Eastern margin of continental Africa had changed within the last 8 – 10 years. Where military Christians from these two vast countries had once run widely effective national activities and had been seen in numbers at regional African conferences and even worldwide AMCF interactions, they were no longer present at international gatherings. In MMI's perception their national footprint could hardly be seen, and many attempts of contact simply remained unanswered.

What had happened? And would there be a chance to encourage their reappearance in the Lord's military vineyard?

Hermann wanted to find out, so he

embarked on a two-week ministry trip to go to various places in Tanzania where MCFs had formerly existed and had vanished or where garrisons were based giving the hope to encounter military Christians, and opportunities for efficient front line ministry. In the run-up to this trip, Hermann received little hope from Christian contacts outside the military, who thought that he would not even be allowed to enter the barracks. Constant prayer and continuous prayer support of fellow military Christians outside East Africa accompanied all preparations and suddenly the workings of the Holy Spirit was felt.

According to a former founding member, the perceived draw-back of Tanzania's MCF was a result of a politically ordered ban on any religious activity within the Tanzania People Defence Forces (TPDF) since 2012. This prohibition of MCF-work inside TPDF almost led to the total disbanding of TZN MCF. The government was concerned that by

maintaining religious-pastoral care to all religious groups inside the forces, the threat of Moslem radicalism which has already reached civil society would also become a problem in the forces and would have negative consequences on TPDF's inner constitution and effectiveness. Only a small group of former MCF-members were approachable.

MMI's visit with a strong interest in restoring the relationship gave a new motivation to the loose group of military Christians. This contact was not just revived and reestablished, but during a one day meeting with approximately forty military Christians under the guidance of the Lord – it resulted in a re-forming of TZN MCF with an ad-hoc-election and with the formal anointing of a new MCF-board at the end of that day. The newly elected board's chairperson proclaimed:

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ..." 2. Cor. 4:8 "... knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also ..." 4:14 "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." 4:16.

Another powerful intervention of the Holy Spirit occurred a few days later when Hermann drove more than 500 kms South to a remote army camp. His attempt to gain access to a barracks to share the word of God with TPDF soldiers and to testify to faith was judged to be futile as there had been no response to MMI's formal "Request to Visit". After intense prayer and asking the Lord for strong guidance on this challenge,

Hermann received a thought: "Since you are denied entry, send out an invitation yourself."

It was decided that the local pastor of the ELCT parish next to the army camp, should be phoned immediately and requested to forward an impromptu invitation to the base commander of the camp, to allow his soldiers to come to the church the next day to hear what God has to say to military people.

Amazingly, a group of approx. twenty young men and women, all soldiers from the nearby army camp and clad in civilian attire appeared the next day, led by their officer, a radiant young Christian soldier.

As it turned out, this man had been one of the recipients of the camouflage Bibles which had been sent a year before by Hermann to various TPDF locations, trusting in God HIS word would not return empty. This young officer not only spoke fluent English but also volunteered to translate Hermann's preaching into Swahili. And then, the Holy Spirit worked with great power: with every example from the Gospel and explanations of the relevance for military life, the officer changed from a military superior who was translating, into an evangelist to his troop. (*Read a*



detail report of this on MMI-website (www.mmi.org.uk/resources). What a strong sign of encouragement to do Christian ministry in the military! The Lord facilitated a third occasion for military ministry when Hermann arrived at a huge garrison in central Tanzania where he had been invited by the local ACT-Bishop to preach at an early Sunday morning Communion Service to 350 parishoners, of whom many were members of the district capital's military and police, and then to conduct workshops on biblical topics of importance for military life.

After 10 days of ministry in Tanzania the next destination was Kenya. There is a similar political situation of increasing threats, including acts of terrorism against the state and public life, since Kenya engaged in the AMISOM-peace keeping mission in Somalia (see report on ministry with in AMISOM-troops in MMI-Newsletter Autumn 2021 - (www.mmi.org.uk/newsletters ...). as well as a decline in the international perception of MCF-K's work. Hermann was told during an extensive meeting with MCF-K's top leaders in Kenya that this had led the MCF to focus on encouraging and strengthening the country's MCF members. Although Kenya's MCF, now under the leadership of the Protestant Chaplaincy, withdrew from public view for security reasons, they worked on spiritual growth and development. An Evangelist Training Centre inside the chaplaincy was installed: it offers to educate MCF-members and to train them following a defined curriculum on discipleship, witnessing, preaching, and pastoral care, so they can be a bridge from individual military Christians to their local unit

chaplains. The evangelist training is conducted by chaplains and has a constant flow of participants.

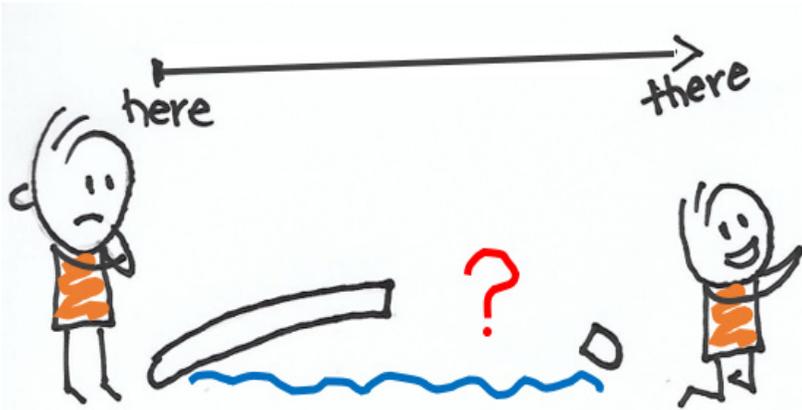
MCF-K's vision is a growth of the church in the military, where every Christian soldier is able to read and to understand the Bible like a military manual for his or her life. Fellowship, Prayer and Bible Reading are their three pillars for spiritual work. The importance of reading the Bible in your native language was repeatedly raised both in Tanzania and Kenya and emphasizes the need for camouflage Bibles in Swahili. MCF-K's mission is to bring people within the Kenya Defence Force to Christ Jesus. What a clearly pronounced missionary approach with a truly lighthouse example to other MCFs.

Two important spiritual lights in East Africa are shining again.



Above: Ian Westerman, far left, (recent chair of the Africa S&E RPPG and now resident in Nairobi) joined Hermann (centre) in meeting the Kenyan chaplaincy & MCF leaders.

Opposite: Tanzania. The group of soldiers who responded to Hermann's invite.



Funding MMI's Mission

MMI CE/TL GENERAL RODDY PORTER.

31st March 2022 is the end of our current financial year (FY) and as we look back on a year of disrupted activity but of plentiful prayer, fellowship, and meeting activity online, may I say an enormous 'thank you' to our wonderful regular supporters, both individuals and churches, many of whom have supported us sacrificially for years; and others who partner with us periodically or have made 'one off' donations to fund our work. We are so grateful for your prayer, encouragement, and your financial support, which have enabled us to keep the mission on track. You will read about most of the mission trips we have been able to undertake in the pages of this Newsletter and I think you will agree that we have had some exciting journeys with the Lord. We have learned the lesson of the 'Zoom Years' and plan to engage online appropriately; we will continue to pray, fellowship and work together in cyberspace around the globe. The internet is ideal for

many activities, and we will make the most of opportunities to use it wisely, especially when it cuts out unnecessary air travel, which will also contribute to reduced carbon emissions.

Most of our work however, such as discipling, encouragement, training and earning trust, can only be achieved face-to-face. Our plans for 2022/23 are maturing and we have some exciting opportunities for ministry in our regions. For example:

Africa – Mantasoa Mountaintop Interaction in Madagascar in October; a mission trip to South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini; the East Africa Prayer Convention in June; follow-up activity in South Sudan and Tanzania; visits requested by Ghana, Liberia, Gambia, and Sierra Leone; training for Chaplains in the DRC in July; ministry in São Tomé, Angola, and Cape Verde.

Europe – the European Military Christian Meeting '22 in the Czech

Republic in May; Summer Adventure Retreat, possibly in Serbia in August; Adria Interaction in Croatia in October; and smaller mission trips to Russia, SHAPE in Belgium, the Baltic States, Scandinavia and Slovenia.

Middle East – Mission visits to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Irbil, and Israel/West Bank.

S.Asia – Ministry visit to Indian MCFs and the Indian MCF gathering; support for Nepal and Bhutan.

Hidden behind these headlines is a wealth of detail and a really challenging fundraising effort. To to accomplish everything that our hearts and prayers are set on, we need to raise significantly more funds that we have done in recent years.

It will cost an estimated £207,000 to run MMI and fund our mission trips in 2022/23, all of which have been through the prayerful filter of Regional Pray and Plan Groups that support and advise our Team Leaders.

In 2021/22, through our supporters, churches, and grant-making trusts, we expect to have raised around £150,000 (only 40% of which is from regular giving). With the monies brought forward from last year, to meet the coming challenge, we will need to find that again, plus an additional £36,000 to undertake our missionary activity.

This is an ambitious programme, but it reflects our team's heart desire to see the Lord's work accelerate after COVID lockdowns. God has wonderfully provided for our needs over the many years of our existence, and we are confident in His provision.

MMI 2022 BUDGET



Would you join with us in prayerfully seeking the Lord for this income? We hope to raise as much as we can in unrestricted funds so that we can be as flexible as possible in funding our activities.



Tragedy and Hope in Lebanon

Pastor A.H is a friend of MMI with whom we have shared fellowship and prayer online during Lockdown. He participated in our Global Day of Prayer on 3rd July 2021 and regularly joins our fortnightly Middle East Zoom meetings. He supports a growing community of military Believers in his church in Beirut. We invited him to share with us the difficulties of life in Lebanon today.

Since the end of Lebanon's 15-year Civil War, the country has endured a mounting series of progressively worsening crises. The current political elites rose from the ashes of the Civil War and now control almost every facet of life in the country, presiding over a network of patronage in which all but a few owe their job, livelihood, and future to one or another of the dominant factions in government. The door was opened to a level of corruption, government

mismangement, and fiscal irresponsibility almost unprecedented in the region or in the world.

In October 2019, the Lebanese people revolted against an unjust tax of Internet communications, catching the political establishment completely off guard in an expression of previously unimagined solidarity. Daily peaceful demonstrations demanded an end to corruption and mismanagement, fresh elections, and a new election law that granted the people real democratic representation and established political accountability at all levels. By the end of November 2019, however, gangs sent to confront demonstrations by Hezbollah and Amal overwhelmed police and Lebanese Army units who had been deployed to guarantee that demonstrations remained peaceful, broke through police lines, and savagely attacked demonstrators. The former

warlords regained control of the streets and set about punishing the people, using every means at their disposal to maintain an air of credibility while ensuring that the protests and demonstrations would end in utter failure.

In March 2020, the government defaulted on a massive sovereign debt payment that had been accumulated over more than 30 years of misrule. In this time, it is estimated that political leaders took, or squandered billions of US Dollars through unnecessary contracts awarded to political cronies who were unqualified and unable to meet project goals. Any benefit that could have been gained through a series of laws designed to thwart corruption and abuses in the use of public funds were dashed when the Lebanese Parliament granted themselves immunity from prosecution.

Then followed more than seven months of countrywide lockdowns because of the COVID pandemic, including nationwide curfews and travel restrictions, where people needed governmental permission to



leave their homes. The international airport was closed, and the borders were sealed ostensibly to control the spread of COVID (however, many believe it was a show that the government could arbitrarily mandate controls on the population any time it wished and for any reason). Sporadic demonstrations broke out in Tripoli, Sidon, Zahle and in the historic Martyr's Square in Beirut, but were quickly and harshly crushed by gangs belonging to Hezbollah, Amal, and their political cronies.

Progress was slowly and painfully made to ease restrictions, but any hope of long-term gains was brutally and abruptly ended by the tragic explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. More than 2,750 tons of the highly explosive fertilizer ammonium nitrate mysteriously caught fire in a dockside warehouse and exploded without warning. The chemicals had been impounded and illegally stored in a warehouse for more than six years. Records show that Port officials were repeatedly notified about the issue and the dire threat it posed to public safety, but nothing was done. A large quantity of the original amount stored had already been stolen and, presumably, smuggled into nearby countries allied to Hezbollah to produce bombs and military ordnance. Yet, the amount remaining was enough to kill more than 200 people instantly. Some 7,000 Beirut residents suffered injuries which required hospitalization, completely swamping seven major hospitals for weeks at a time. More than 300,000 Beirut residents were left homeless – many of them still marginally housed as of December 2021.

To date, efforts to identify those responsible for the illegal storage and subsequent explosion have been blocked by Hezbollah and Amal political activists. There has been intense international pressure to conclude an investigation, but Hezbollah has threatened to use its massive paramilitary forces to stop any serious effort to hold persons responsible for this tragedy to account for their negligence and criminal behaviour.

Between March 2020 and the end of 2021, Lebanon has endured one catastrophe after another, bringing the country to its knees, and plunging most of its people into deep poverty. Banks have frozen depositors out of foreign currency accounts, crippling an economy in which some 85% of all goods sold must be imported based on foreign exchange. Hundreds of local businesses have been forced to close. Grocery stores struggle to buy many staple items. Pharmacies and hospitals cannot find many medications used to treat common illnesses. Medications to treat more difficult diseases, cancer, renal failure, liver disease and others, are nearly impossible to find in the country of more than 6 million people.

The country's currency has now lost more than 95% of its value against the US Dollar and the minimum wage is a mere US\$ 25.10 per month. The average worker's and Army salary has fallen precipitously to less than US\$ 50.00 per month. According to the International Monetary Fund, Lebanon is experiencing the worst economic, political and social collapse the world has seen since the 1850's.

As bad as the situation sounds, Lebanon is not beyond hope or help. The Lebanese Army has worked diligently to maintain peace between factions that tend toward increasingly violent demonstrations. Army units are working with charities and NGOs to meet the needs of the country's increasingly desperate people.

Soldiers can often be seen distributing food, providing emergency medical care, delivering pharmaceuticals when available, and patrolling to ensure law and order in neighbourhoods where political and religious tensions are high.

Army units often work with and through local charities. One such charity is the Philadelphia Charity located in the thriving community of Jbeil, Lebanon. The charity is an arm of the Philadelphia Baptist Church, whose founder and CEO Pastor A.H has worked for many years meeting the needs of marginalized and disenfranchised people in the country. He is a veteran community organizer who has developed programmes for the poorest and most neglected people across Lebanon: the elderly, the unemployed, the sick, those who would benefit from early childhood education, those who have not finished formal education, and soldiers.

Philadelphia Charity has, for the past 7 years, also worked with Syrian and Iraqi refugees who fled to Lebanon from violent conflict in their home country and who needed help

assimilating into Lebanese society. As with most public charities, Philadelphia Charity relies on donations to deliver its programmes.

Under Pastor A.'s direction, the charity has launched alternative education programs for children. It has long met the needs of soldiers for food, clothing, prescription medications, and primary health care, often securing international support needed to meet severe needs.

Wherever possible, Pastor A.H has worked to develop partnerships with local entities to establish more permanent programmes that address long term challenges from a



Above: Church members at the civil defense office, with the soldiers of the Civil defense, distributing food packages for soldiers families and also wheel chairs and sticks.

Page 21, 22 and below: Effects of the Port of Beirut explosion Aug 2020.

Anyone wishing to contribute, may do so by making a designated gift through MMI.
See page 29 for ways to donate.



'It is a real joy to serve the Lord'.

A LETTERE FROM OUR CO-WOKER IN INDIA PASTOR BLESSON VARGHESE

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
It is a real joy to serve the Lord.

In November 21, I went on a month-long mission trip to South India to form and encourage MCFs.

I started the trip by travelling from Kolkata to Hyderabad to attend the MCF-I annual conference. It was a wonderful get together with around 30 delegates from different parts of India. A sergeant and his team from the Indian Air Force (IAF) did the admin for us. He is part of an active group of 40 plus NCOs from the IAF, who regularly meet together on social media. The New Life Assemblies of God (AOG) Church in Hyderabad played an active part in the success of this now annual, India-wide conference. AOG in Hyderabad has 6000 members (and around 40 serving and retired Officers attend their church regularly). Pastor Valson, the senior pastor, was the key speaker at the MCF-I conference. He is well acquainted with serving Christians as he is the son of retired NCO Sergeant Thomas, and his brother, a Major, was sadly killed in a terrorist attack in Jammu Kashmir.

After the conference I visited the new Religious Teacher in the Artillery Training Centre in Hyderabad and spent a few hours with him in prayer and encouragement. I then moved on to Bangalore to meet with 2 retired Colonels, both very active for the Lord, one in a full-time church position and one who, despite ill health, has an amazing passion for the Lord and gives significant input to MCF-I. I reached Madurai, Tamil Nādu and was able to form a new MCF chapter in this city under the leadership of Sergeant Babu.

In MCF India we need a clear vision from the Lord in 2022. Please pray for a strong and stable leadership for the MCF -I. There is a spiritual battle going on against the growth of MCFs in India and the enemy is trying to scatter us as we try to gather from all corners of the country.

Personally, the end of year 2021 was very hard for me as all my family suffered from Covid. By the grace of God my wife and 2 children completely recovered. My wife is posted from Kolkata to Bihar in early February 22. She is moving first, and we join her in March. Our new posting opens up a complete range of challenges. I am reminded that I should: Forget what is past, press forward in faith and focus on Jesus. (Philippians 3).

Please pray for my family and MCF-India.

Blesson



Left: MCF-I participants and speakers at the AOG church in Hyderabad.

Below: Bhutan meeting

Remember Bhutan

The "Gideons" is a ministry that came into existence about 10 years ago, mainly through the lighthouse work of Nepal MCF. *(It is entirely separate from 'The Gideons' who give Bibles and NTs to hotels, schools etc.)*

The "Gideons" have asked us to remember them. Although locked down in January 2022 because of the COVID pandemic, most of the fellowship are keeping well and some ministry work is still going on. D, who is one of the key leaders, was

able to travel early in the new year and preach in two remote churches. D says "We are praying to reach more people with the gospel for Christ. The two Gideon groups are growing and new members were added recently. Please pray for my wife who has a persistent cough and for the education of my children."

Some of the military contacts are based in remote villages and are difficult to access by bus. The Gideons would like to buy a car to enable them to reach out to members in the remote areas.

If you would like more information or would like to contribute to the purchase of a car, please contact RTL S Asia at southasia@mimi.org.uk





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.

16 March 2022
Trustees Meeting (UK)

1-2 July
MMI Summer Event UK.

5-8 May 2022
EUROPEAN MILITARY CHRISTIAN MEETING
CZECH REPUBLIC

MAY/JUNE 2022
EAST AFRICA PRAYER MEETING
UGANDA

2nd April 2022
MMI PAUSE 4 PRAYER
online

Summer 2022
COV Leadership Seminar
GERMANY

August 2022
SAR SERBIA

June 20-27 2022
SOUTH KOREA: MEO

May June
AMCF VP S ASIA regional
visit.

March 2022
JORDAN visit

March & April 2022
IAEC Training UGANDA

1-22 October 2022
MADAGASCAR: Mountain
Top Interaction (MMTI)

Spring / Summer 2022
IAEC training DRC

Want to support our work?

Prayer Support

Prayer is the foundation of everything we do in MMI and we have various ways to share and 'fuel' prayer. Here are some of them:

PrayerLink

Be a part of our e-mail PrayerLink. Urgent or immediate prayer needs and reminders to pray for planned activity are e-mailed in a short, succinct form, straight to you. To sign up, email prayer@mmi.org.uk to add your name to the MMI prayer support base.

TPB - The Prayer Brief

(previously known as Quarterly Prayer Brief)

31 prayers covering ministry activities and regional needs for four months. One short prayer for each day of the month (current TPB Feb - May 22) available with the MMI News or from prayer@mmi.org.uk.

Pause 4 Prayer

Spring and Autumn (currently online) an opportunity to pray with those ministering in our regions.

**Next Pause for Prayer morning:
Saturday 2 April 2022**

Annual International Prayer Day

Next one planned 2nd July 2022. More detailed prayer needs and answers to prayers are shared at our prayer days. Regional Team Leaders (RTLs) and MMI field workers brief on recent activities, difficulties and future plans; international guests are invited to provide in depth and contextual information on prayer needs.

Praying for a Region

If you would like to pray for a specific region (Africa, Europe, Middle East, S Asia) or a country within one of these regions, you can join a regional prayer group who meet to prayer together on-line, currently we have English, French, Portuguese and German speaking groups as well.

For more details on how to support MMI through prayer, look at our Prayer page on our website.

We need both prayer and financial support to be able to continue our ministry to the military.

Financial Support

If you would like to support the ministry financially, even just £10 a month (by standing order) would make a huge difference to what we are able to do.

You can also donate a one-off gift through the mmi.org.uk website with give.net, or by bank transfer or by sending a cheque to the office. You can also designate a gift for any of the projects, activities or regions you have read about.

WAYS TO GIVE

Set up a STANDING ORDER via your online banking – you're in control of how much you give and when.

By BANK TRANSFER

Our bank details are:

Military Ministries International

Sort Code: 20-61-82 A/c No. 40127469

GIVE ONLINE: at www.mmi.org.uk

SEND A CHEQUE: payable to Military Ministries International.

LEAVE A LEGACY: If you wish to know more about leaving a gift in your will please contact us.

Your support, no matter how small can help us, through Jesus Christ, to give every military Christian someone to stand with.



Lusophone countries
The gifts of Electronic Bibles have been received. Col Felicina in Mozambique receives delivery of Digital Bibles for distribution.



Praying
for Bulent and Pastor Mimi at the Europe Interaction.

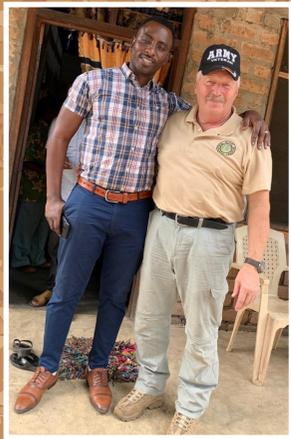
Angola
MCF President Angola presenting an electronic bible.



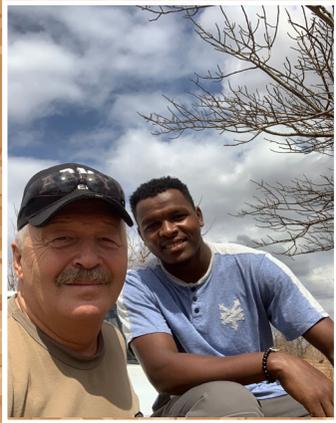
Speaking.
Drazen, MCF Croatia leader and MMI co-worker speaking to the Adria conference.



Sharing
Sue manning the MMI stand at the Service of Remembrance for the UK Armed Forces.



Tanzania
Herman meets new serving friends.



MMI Retreat
Morning prayer walk in the January sun.



BACKPACK

This season's thought to take with you
and share ...

I am The

Who IS Jesus? In John's Gospel, Jesus answers that question with 7 'I am' statements. Let's carry and think about the first four of these through the Spring:

I am the Bread of life Jn 6:35. Jesus shows that he is the true Bread; he is to the soul what bread is to the body, whoever believes in and comes to Jesus will never be (spiritually) hungry, he is the source of eternal life

I am the Light of the World Jn 8:12. The one who follows Christ will have the light of life as manifested in clear vision and mission, direction, abundant life and firm hope for the **future**".

I am the Door/gate Jn 10:7 & 9. You go in through me to find pasture in full abundance which will completely refresh, strengthen, equip you for the mission that I will send you out again into the world - this door will always remain open for you.

I am the Good Shepherd Jn 10:11. To know His sheep is to have an intimate connection with them (know their potentials, opportunities, challenges, weakness, nemesis).

