



# News & Prayer

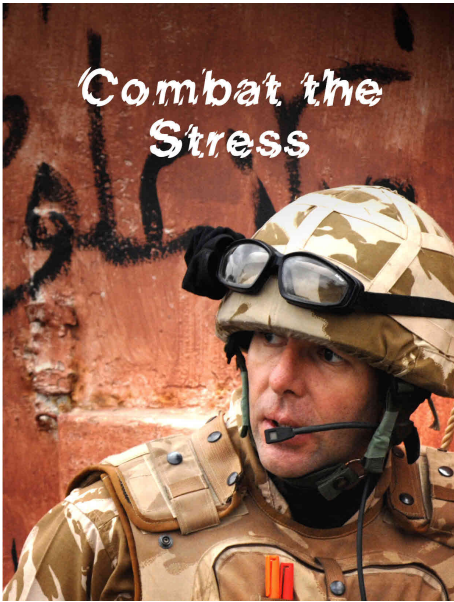
*'serving those who serve since 1779'*

**No 90**

**February - March 2009**

Dear Christian Friends,

**New Booklet - Combat the Stress**



The booklet gives direction from Scripture in overcoming the effects of stress experienced on operational deployments and points to Jesus Christ, the one who suffered the greatest trauma for all our sakes. Perhaps you know of someone who would benefit from reading the booklet.

It has been vetted by a number of service chaplains, including two with psychology backgrounds. I am particularly grateful for the encouragement, assistance and advice freely given by:

Rev Kevin Bell (Army)  
Mr Rick Bradley (ex MoD)  
Rev Roger Hardman RAF  
Rev Andrew Jones RAF  
Rev Simon Springett RN

Ten thousand copies are ready for distribution.

## **NMBS Down Under**

During a visit to Sydney before Christmas I did some research on Naval & Military Bible Society history in the NSW State (Mitchell) library and came across the following statement:

*"In 1815 most of the Bibles possessed by settlers at Sydney Cove had been supplied by the Naval & Military Bible Society" (NMBS)."*

Presumably some of Bibles were brought in by sailors, soldiers

and Royal Marines and passed on to settlers. Records show that, in 1814, Major-General Lachlan Macquarie, who had succeeded Admiral William Bligh, ex Bounty (see News & Prayer No. 89) as Governor of NSW, donated 10 guineas to the society. Lieutenant Governor, Lt Col O'Connell, Brigade Major H.C. Antill and Rev William Cowper, the NSW Chaplain, each donated 5 guineas and a further £10 was collected by RSM J. Campbell from soldiers of 73rd (Highland) Regiment serving in the Colony. The combined sum would have paid for about 130 small Bibles or over 200 New Testaments.

Macquarie, a Hebridean, has been described as the Father of Australia. His authoritarian but benevolent style of leadership was criticised in Westminster, but he was a strong believer in the power of God's word and contributed much to the colony. Though he directed many of the convicts to attend Anglican services, by 1820 only a minority of NSW citizens went to church.

He was tolerant of Dissenters and Catholics, providing land upon which the missionary, Walter Lawry, planned to erect the first Wesleyan chapel at Parramatta, advising him to spread the Gospel, particularly among the Aborigines. He would have known that NMBS, which he faithfully supported, was founded by Wesleyans. He also donated 20 guineas to the building of a Catholic Chapel, a sum which, based on retail price index\*, would equate to at least £1,300 in today's money.

Macquarie became an NMBS committee member, and he and his staff continued to donate about £20 a year to the Society for a further 8 years, thus ensuring that sailors and soldiers were supplied with Scriptures from NMBS before embarking for service in New South Wales. He left Sydney in 1822 after 12 years as Governor, and died in London two years later. If you go to Sydney, I recommend a visit to the NSW State Library. You will find it, where else, but in Macquarie Street!

## Sydney Seafarers' Missions

I met with Mission to Seafarers staff at their centre in Sydney and visited a container ship in Port Botany with Rob Flinders, Seamen's Christian Friend Society, who distributed Bible study programmes to a number of sailors. There is a good take up rate for Bible study programmes, especially among Filipinos, and over 70% of the programmes taken up are completed. NMAFBS supplies many Seafarers' Bibles that accompany these programmes.

## The Recession

How will the recession affect NMAFBS? I like the story of the Canadian church that saw their income halved overnight in the Great Depression and grew and grew after they decided to double their giving to missions.

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* 2 Corinthians 9:6 (NIV)

God still owns all the money in spite of the banks attempts to squander it. We must raise the

level of our expectation of the Lord in these difficult times.

We supplied 20,864 CEV New Testaments in 2008. Owing to the recent fall in the value of the £, the cost of restocking these has increased by 30%. But some unsolicited donations seem to have compensated. A letter requesting a donation towards the production cost, accompanies every grant of Christian literature we make. As long as God keeps NMAFBS solvent, we will always meet requests for literature, whether or not we receive donations in return from the customer. It is better that our literature is put into the hands of seafarers, military personnel or cadets than left gather dust on the shelves of our warehouse. So please do not hold back in placing orders if your coffers are low. Pray that the Lord will fill them up!

In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,



Richard Prendergast

**If you will only obey the Lord your God, by diligently observing all his commandments; the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. The Lord will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. You will lend to many nations but you will not borrow.**

Deuteronomy 28: 1 & 12 (NRSV)

## **Items for Praise and Prayer**

- **Praise** God for his continued provision of prayer and financial support despite the recession and for the 4,580 Bibles, 21,212 New Testaments and 52,761 booklets distributed in 2008.
- **Pray** that our level of expectation of the Lord's provision for the needs of the Society and those of the organisations to whom we distribute literature would be heightened in these times of recession.
- **Pray** that everyone who receives God's word through **NMAFBS** in 2009 would read it and understand that the Lord Jesus Christ loves them.
- **Pray** for the Lord's direction at **NMAFBS** Trustees meetings.
- **Pray** for the safety of all service personnel facing daily danger in Afghanistan and Iraq or deployed elsewhere. **Pray** that those facing stress & trauma would be helped by our new booklet, *Combat the Stress*.
- **Praise & Prayer** for newly appointed **SASRA** Scripture Readers Tiaan de Clerk (Bordon) and Mark Powell (London & East Anglia).
- **Pray** that Port Missioners and Chaplains from Seafarers' Missions would have increased opportunities to share the Gospel as demands for welfare provision and Chaplaincy ministry continues to grow and that there take up of SCFS Bible study programmes would continue.
- **Pray** for the work of the Padres and staff in the **Army, Air and Sea Cadet Corps**, especially that the teenagers would be open to the Gospel and able to withstand the negative effects of outside peer pressure.

### ***Naval Military & Air Force Bible Society***

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