

**No 96**

**February - March 2010**

Dear Christian Friends,

## **Literature distribution in 2009**

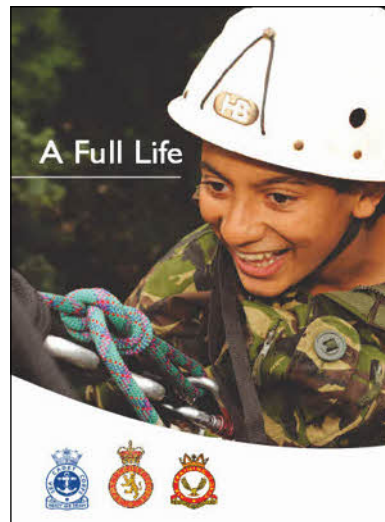
Due to the weak pound NMAFBS is having to cope with increased overseas printing costs. However 2009 saw an increase in demand for both Bibles and New Testaments and we thank God for giving us the means to meet this demand.

Requests for military and seafarers' Bibles last year were up 2,300 to 6,878 from 2008. And the demand for New Testaments, 25,600, was the highest for many years. More army units including RA, RHA, Rifles, Irish and Scots Guards requested supplies of CEV New Testaments, prior to deploying, embossed with their regimental badges on the covers. We have also provided several hundred embossed Bibles to RN and RAF units such as HMS Ark Royal and the Joint Services Chapel in Gibraltar.

9,800 copies of *Combat the Stress*, and 11,500 copies of *Gift of God* for seafarers in English and Tagalog were prominent among the 39,756 booklets also distributed last year.

## **New booklet for cadets**

*A full life* is an A6 size Scripture booklet for the three cadet corps. It replaces *Venture Adventure* (ATC - 1990), *Adventure into life*, (SCC - 1992), both long out of stock, and the Army Cadet Force booklet: *It's a great life*, which we still hold.



Throughout the UK 130,000 cadets in 3,000 cadet units participate weekly in adventurous and military themed activities designed to stretch them both physically and mentally, contribute to their wider

education, give them success in their chosen careers and imbue them with the right attitude and qualities of a good citizen.

*A full life* aims to help cadets to understand Christian core values, to get to know God and to seek his help. The individual prayers of each cadet corps are included. View the booklet by clicking onto its image on our website: [www.nmafbs.org](http://www.nmafbs.org)

We are grateful to Communications and Media at **The Marine Society & Sea Cadets** for giving their time and expertise freely in undertaking the graphics design of this booklet. Thank you also to the many cadet corps chaplains who went through the draft text with me line by line.

### **IBS-STL - Biblica (continued)**

In the last newsletter I wrote of IBS-STL's financial difficulties, and now report that IBS-STL UK has been broken up. John Ritchie Ltd, Christian Media, acquired the Carlisle based STL Distribution. Kingsway bought Authentic Music and Australian Christian bookstore chain, Koorong, acquired Authentic Books, through which we have been purchasing NIV Bibles with our own cover designs (9,500 in 2009). Koorong have also bought the Wesley Owen name, but only 14 of the 40 stores are said to have a secured future. CLC also acquired

6 Wesley Owen outlets. STL and Authentic Media operations outside UK were not affected. (See: [www.christianmarketplace.org.uk](http://www.christianmarketplace.org.uk))

It is a tragedy to see STL, which began as a faith mission in 1962, as the distribution arm of Operation Mobilisation, being broken up and we can only continue to pray that Christian literature publishing in the UK would not decline further in the coming decade. Book shop sales in general are on the decline owing to the growth of on line distribution such as Amazon and the fact that people read less. As NMAFBS meets the specialised needs of a small customer base we are not affected. In fact, as reported earlier, our core output is growing. But what does the future hold? We function with one full time and one part time staff member and trust the Lord to meet our financial needs.

### **Electronic Bible literature**

We continue to investigate new ways of disseminating God's word to uniformed personnel. Should we be in the costly electronic E-book reader business, or supplying Bible software, much of which is freely downloadable already? Bibles are available on cd, dvd, cassette, MP3, iPhone, blackberry etc. Our web site is linked to some suppliers and we would be grateful for any advice

to include others so those visiting our web site can be pointed to the best of those many suppliers.

NMAFBS is fully occupied at present providing conventional Christian literature as the demand continues to grow. Bible Society also saw a 30% increase in UK and overseas Bible sales last year. However in the longer term the demand for God's word in book form will inevitably decline. Though most books were sold in the USA last year as electronic downloads, the demand in the US military for conventional Bibles is also growing. The huge need for replacement batteries for rifle sights, GPS and a host of other electronic equipment puts batteries for E-books low down the supply chain for forces on active service.

**Please pray and send us your views, visions and words of knowledge on the future supply of God's word, that NMAFBS may continue to prosper and meet customer needs in these times of technological change. *Where there is no vision people will perish!* (Proverbs 29:18)**

### **What version?**

Knowing what Bible versions to stock is also a dilemma. There is a small demand for CEV Bibles, and the NRSV, which we buy in as

required. The greatest demand, by far, is for the NIV. The NIV 2011 edition is being written and the current NIV may disappear. With Authentic Books in new hands, the only licence to produce NIV Bibles in the UK is held by commercial publishers, Hodder Faith. This may change. Bible Society have offered to produce for us as alternatives, the ESV version with our own covers, or the Good News Bible, similar to those they supply to the Canadian Forces.

### **Chaplains reading this, please give us your views.**

With all this confusion and change it is essential to understand the varied customer requirements. SASRA's Mark Reynolds once gave one of our camouflaged covered NIV Bibles to a soldier who apologised the next time they met for giving it away, because, he explained, he could only cope with reading two pages a day of his CEV New Testament & Psalms in simple English, given to him as a recruit. He asked Mark if that was OK! We wonder why we still get criticised for not sticking with the old English of the King James!

In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,



Richard Prendergast

**The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.**

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV)

**The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.**

Psalms 34:7-8 (NIV)

## **Items for Praise and Prayer**

- **Praise** God for his continued provision of prayer and financial support despite the recession and for the increased distribution of Bibles and New Testaments in 2009. We thank him too for the 30% increase in sales reported by Bible Society through whom we obtain CEV New Testaments.
- **Pray** that the Lord would continue to guide us in determining the needs of our customer base in 2010, ascertaining what Bible versions to acquire, and enable us to continue printing Bibles, New Testaments and booklets at reasonable cost from our various suppliers.
- **Pray** that everyone who receives God's word through **NMAFBS** in 2010 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 or deployed elsewhere.
- **Pray** that the booklet *A Full Life* would achieve its purposes of helping sea, army and air cadets to understand core values, get to know God and to seek his help.
- **Praise** God for the number of Military Christian Organizations who have very recently seen an increase in income despite gloomy forecasts. **Pray** that God would pour out financial blessing on Seafarers' Missions and other MCOs who have seen a shortfall in their incomes in 2009.
- **Pray** that Christian publishing in the UK would see growth and that SGM Lifeworlds, who no longer share distribution facilities with us, would see the Lord's clear direction in 2010.

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