



Signs of the Spirit

Canadian Forces Protestant Chapel Guild

September 2009

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of the Protestant Chapel Guild newsletter, "*Signs of the Spirit*"! This newsletter is intended to be a forum for sharing, celebrating, supporting, and encouraging one another. It is also hoped that the newsletter will be a vehicle for spreading God's word and sharing information about our Guild to the military communities we live in and our broader communities as well. You are encouraged to distribute this newsletter by email and hard copy as widely as you are able.

Good News from our Guilds

Send us your Guild's good news, big or small and you will encourage others. Perhaps you have already implemented some of the ideas discussed at April's Conference. Other Guilds would love to hear about this.

Go Greenwood!

The Greenwood Guild has completed its first 'Quilt of Valour'. In fact, theirs is the first such quilt to be completed in Nova Scotia. Guild members pieced the quilt together, after which it was machine quilted by Brenda Hulan. Greenwood's accomplishment rated a front page story in the Aurora. Quilts of Valour provides quilts for wounded Canadian Forces personnel. (You may remember that this is not the first time one of our Guilds has made a Quilt of Valour. Cold Lake also made a Quilt in 2007) Pictured in the Aurora article are: Mary-Lou Graham (Guild Member), Johanna Benning (Quilts of Valour Coordinator), Liz Heinrich (Guild President) and Wing Commander Colonel Derek Joy. Go Greenwood!



(Cold Lake, 2008)

From Our Chaplain Advisor – Padre Bonnie Mason

“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do...” Hebrews 10:25

In a small functional little book called *God Is in The Small Stuff* it says; “Being part of the church means a lot more than just attending a service on Sunday morning, tossing a few coins in the basket, and shaking the pastor's hand on the way out. Being a part of the church involves an interactive relationship between people, with Christ as their common bond. With that definition you can't 'walk out of the church' on Sunday morning. You are part of the body all week long.”



It is a pleasure to finally introduce myself to you via Newsletter as your new National Guild Chaplain Advisor. I joined the CF Chaplain Branch in August 2001 and was immediately posted to CFB Halifax. This was a fantastic place to learn the role of the Chaplain. It afforded me some extraordinary opportunities and experiences which included a six month deployment with the Navy to the Persian Gulf on Op Apollo. In 2006 I was posted to the Chaplain School and Centre at Base Borden as an Instructor/Course Director to the different courses that are offered to our chaplains. After serving two years in Borden I was posted last July and am presently the Wing Chaplain at 17 Wing Winnipeg. I am originally from Pictou County, Nova Scotia where my family (siblings and nieces and nephews) continue to reside.

Although officially appointed the beginning of May as advisor to the Guild this is my first opportunity to properly address you. Padre John Organ has spoken with me at length about how privileged he was to serve the Guild and I am honoured that I was asked to be his successor. Women's groups have been the strength and foundation of churches throughout the centuries. Many congregations would not exist today if it were not for the sheer fortitude and faith of women who had the foresight and vision to identify a need and assemble themselves to not only address the important issues but to establish a plan to respond. The Protestant military chapels are unique worshipping communities which makes the Guild in turn distinctive from any other denominational women's group. The Guild, in its multi-faith make-up and inimitable role within the military milieu can and has done exceptional work with our military families and Protestant Chapel communities. The Guild is a constant reminder to everyone that the church is an interactive relationship between people with Christ and that as believers we are a part of the body not only all week long but in everything we aspire to achieve. I am confident we have only just begun to see what the Guild is capable of achieving when women of faith meet together. I want to thank you for this opportunity to serve you as the National Guild Chaplain Advisor. Please be assured that you are always in my prayers.

*Padre Bonnie Mason
National Guild Chaplain Advisor*

Annual General Meeting 2009 – Significant Outcomes – Karen Kettle, Past President

It has come to my attention that there were several outcomes from our 2009 AGM that I did not communicate to all local Guilds. I guess I was so quick to pass on the baton to Valerie that I neglected this follow up piece!

1. Lifetime Membership Dues – a motion was raised from the floor that given the current financial requirements of our organization, lifetime members should continue to pay yearly

dues of \$10. The motion was seconded and put to a vote. One member was opposed and the motion passed with a majority in favour.

2. Wider Mission Project – following discussion it was decided by the membership in attendance that all local Guilds would continue to work with their MFRCs and this project will be re-evaluated in one year's time.
3. Constitutional Amendment – the amendment to the constitution regarding the status of the National Executive members was adopted as it had been circulated prior to the AGM. It was also determined that as a best practice, whenever possible, there will be a minimum of one active military or spouse of active military on the National Executive at all times.

A Reminder – Membership Dues are Due This Month

Please remember that Guild membership dues are due this month. The amount to be submitted for each regular member and life member is \$10.00 for the year and associate memberships are \$3.00. Dues should be submitted, with the completed Membership Dues form, to the treasurer, Christine Maltais 236 Parkin Circle, Ottawa, ON K1T 4G4. You will find the necessary form in the manual or on the website (chapelguild.com). Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Prayer Focus

"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers." 1 Thessalonians 1:2



Later in this same chapter Paul reminds all Christians to pray continually. I'm sure we would all agree, with Paul, that praying for one another is extremely important, but it can be difficult to pray for people when we don't really know what their needs are.

In order to encourage and facilitate mutual prayer support, each issue of our Guild Newsletter will have a prayer focus on one or two Guilds. In this way Guilds will have the opportunity to share, with other Guilds across the country, their particular blessings and their particular challenges. At our Guild meetings, then, we will be able to pray in an informed manner for the Guild(s) featured that month.

This month we would encourage you to pray for our Guilds across the country as they begin their activities for the year. Pray for wisdom, courage and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray also for our National Executive as they prepare for their October meeting, where among other business, the 2010 conference will be planned. Pray for guidance, insight and openness to God's leading.

You are encouraged to submit your Guild's information to be included in future Prayer Focus articles.

"I encourage you today to fan the flame inside of you. Fan it until it burns brightly. Never give up on the greatness for which you were created, never try to hide your uniqueness, and never feel you cannot do what you believe you were made to do. Realize your hunger for adventure is God-given; wanting to try something new is a wonderful desire; and embracing life and aiming high is what you were made for. You are an eagle!"

From "Never Give Up" by Joyce Meyer

Conference Echoes

Are you still fanning the flame? In the June *Signs of the Spirit* we included the ideas you suggested during this year's conference, regarding how to PRAY FREQUENTLY, the first of our 7 faith practices.

This month we'll look at the second: STUDY SCRIPTURE DILIGENTLY. Here's what you wrote, starting with the most frequent suggestions. Try some of these ideas and get studying! These are great ways to fan the flame.



Actually read the Bible. Hold or attend a Bible study. Use the lectionary. Use 'Our Daily Bread' or a Bible study guide. Teach Sunday School. Read a passage of Scripture each day, then reflect and meditate on it. Get help if you don't understand. Study with spouse, family, friends or alone. Attend adult Sunday School. Read the Bible picture book. Read Bible stories to children. Always keep a Bible close at hand. Memorize Scripture. Read the Bible out loud - to yourself. When you can't sleep, reach for the Bible. Try an on-line devotional or Bible Study.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Psalm 119:105

www.gbod.org/worship/lectionary/default.asp
www.intothyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=53493
www.backtothebible.org/bible-reading-guides.html
www.biblegateway.com/resources/readingplans/
www.biblegateway.com/resources/readingplans/
www.bible.com

Devotional Corner



Back to School! Do you remember the excitement? Brand new, clean notebooks with no mistakes or messy writing in them yet! New, freshly sharpened pencils and pencil crayons! A new desk, with no accumulated mess! A new year full of opportunities!

I spoke, not that long ago, with our youngest daughter, about the excitement of the first day of school and she gently chided me for my failure to recognize its obvious downside, especially for children of military families. "I don't know anyone." "What if I'm not dressed like everyone else?" "What if I can't find my classroom?" "Why did we have to move again?" (Incidentally, that same daughter has generally found a friend by lunch time on the first day.) She was right to chide. I had forgotten the apprehension that comes when starting something new.

Even if you and your children are past school days, September always brings us new beginnings. I often think we would do well to celebrate New Year, during Labour Day weekend. On January 1st we simply change a number, but after Labour Day we actually start new things. Schools, clubs and chapel or Guild activities all commence or recommence in September, after summer's slower pace, holidays and relaxation.

Perhaps you have accepted a new position on your Guild's executive. Perhaps you have agreed to teach Sunday School – for the first time. Perhaps you have joined a new Bible study or prayer group. Are you excited about your new beginning? Apprehensive? Or a little of both?

Remember this: You do not make these new beginnings alone! God has promised to be with you. In Joshua 1:9 we read: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."



Furthermore, new beginnings are soon transformed into the more familiar. Joshua told the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant to step out into the Jordan River. The moment their feet touched the water, it moved away so the people could walk through on dry ground. It was the first step that took the most courage and faith. After that it quickly became easier.

Begin this new season of activities with confidence and courage. Go forward in God's strength.

"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."

Joshua 3:5

Submitted by Valerie Lublink



Conference 2010

Mark your calendars!! Conference 2010 will be held at Galilee Centre, Arnprior, Ontario starting the evening of Wednesday, April 21, 2010 and concluding the morning of Sunday, April 25, 2010.

Your National Executive is hard at work planning for this conference and look forward to sharing the plans with you in a few months time! The evaluations from Conference 2009 were very positive and the executive will be incorporating some of your ideas and building on our past successes.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see every Guild represented in 2010? You are encouraged to start planning now to make this a reality!



The First National Guild Conference was held in Trenton in 1979.

We've come a long way!



Galilee Centre, Arnprior 2009

Article of Interest

I recently had a conversation with Padre Bonnie Mason, Guild Chaplain Advisor about her ministry in Afghanistan (where she is currently deployed) and encouraged her to share with us some of her impressions. I think it is important as Guild members that we have an understanding about what it is like for soldiers, sailors, and air personnel in 21st Century operations.

Karen Kettle, Past President

The Mentoring Team of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan

Submitted by Padre Bonnie Mason, Guild Chaplain Advisor

On Friday, 21 August 2009 1Lt Lutfullah, ANA (Afghanistan National Army) Legal Advisor in the First Brigade 205th Corps left Kandahar City by bus with his wife and children on route to Nuristan to attend the funeral of his mother-in-law. In a place called Shashguo, Taliban insurgents stopped the bus and lined everyone up along the side of the road to search the passengers. In a heroic act to protect his family 1Lt Lutfullah drew his weapon and killed three Taliban before being shot by a fourth insurgent further off in the distance. 1Lt Lutfullah's death is just one of hundreds of Afghans killed since the Taliban declared rule.

We are always made aware of the Canadian soldiers who are killed in Afghanistan, but rarely do we hear of the ANA and ANP (Afghanistan National Police) whose lives are lost to the Taliban insurgents. Last year hundreds of ANA and ANP were killed trying to bring order and peace to their troubled country. It is dangerous work wrought with many challenges and one of the roles that the Canadian Forces serve in Afghanistan is to mentor the ANA and the ANP

in this skirmish to save their country and to provide them with the capacity to provide for their own security needs in the future.

The OMLT (Operational Mentoring Liaison Team) is the Canadian unit that serves to directly mentor the ANA who's HQ is located in Camp Hero, a base just outside of the gates of KAF (Kandahar Air Field) but still in the larger confines of the compound.

This is where you will find the offices for the heads of the ANA departments which are set up exactly as you would see them in the Canadian HQ. Each ANA officer and NCO has their equivalent in the Canadian Military whose responsibility is to mentor them in their role to protect Afghanistan against insurgents. It is not an easy job for the Canadian members of the OMLT. There are language barriers for which interpreters, Afghanistan locals and civilian Canadians, are hired to translate between Pashtu, Dari and English. There are also the huge cultural and religious differences that must be traversed in order for understanding and the implementation of mission to be successful.

It is a very demanding job which is why it is important to have a chaplain on the ground, someone who they can share their disappointments and successes with. The personnel of the OMLT know that the Chaplain understands how difficult their responsibilities can be so it is comforting for them to know their Padre is praying for them and is always available to listen and empathize with



Padre Bonnie Mason with the ANA Religious Advisor, Quدراتullah Allah at Camp Hero in Afghanistan

some of their challenges and frustrations. It is good for them to see a smiling and caring face in what can be a long and demanding tour. The Chaplain also provides for them a space to talk about their own belief system when they are struggling to understand the Muslim faith and how it plays such a central role in the daily life of the Afghanistan people.

Such was the case during the month of Ramadan which proved to be a steep learning curve for the OMLT. In a country where temperatures easily soars to 50 degrees Celsius the practise of not drinking water during the day for Ramadan fasting purposes poses its own unique hurdles. With patience and an openness of understanding and a desire to learn the OMLT continue to journey with the ANA in establishing a working environment that is secure and productive for both parties.

In the course of the mentoring liaisons questions are asked of each other and information shared that are sometimes of the personal nature. One ANA officer asked his Canadian mentor, "Who is looking after your wife while you are here in Afghanistan?" A woman in his culture would never be permitted to be left alone for extended periods of time – she would be expected to move in with her in-laws so a man could watch over her. Another volunteered that his wife had just had their first child but he gave the baby to his brother to raise because his wife is unable to have children. It is a way of life that is completely foreign to us in the western world. It is therefore not surprising that the relationship between the mentor and mentee can at times be tense and confrontational. It goes without saying that any alliance established under such tenuous circumstances is going to have its challenges, but at the end of the day it is a very special rapport that is developed between the mentor and the mentee, a synergy that cannot be duplicated in any other relationship.

That is why 1Lt Lutfullah's death was felt so deeply among members of the OMLT. Not only was he an officer with a real sense of initiative; proactive in teaching Human Rights, Law of Armed Conflict and battling corruption and physical abuses within the brigade. He was also an exemplary officer able to give sound legal advice to the General as well as depict a tactical situation with accuracy when he was giving the duty officer brief. Above all, he was a friend to members of the OMLT who believed in Democracy and in a Lawful Afghanistan State and died trying to bring democracy to fruition.

Contact Us

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Deadline for submissions for October edition, September 20th

Your questions, comments, and concerns are always welcome and encouraged.