

# WHITEBOARD

November 2013

## THE SUPERNATURAL

**IT'S NOVEMBER** and time for another edition of Whiteboard. This month we have another bumper issue with contributions that will encourage, motivate and challenge you. This month in church, our topic is 'The Supernatural'. Get along to church to hear some messages from our pastors on this interesting topic.

Pastor Steve's Journey gets things started on page 2, where he discusses the connection between the spiritual and the natural. We also get to hear this month from James Ramsay, who shares his wisdom on Colossians and the pre-eminence of Christ.

There's an extended read about the courage of Victoria Cross recipient Mark Donaldson, who Jim Wallace spoke about at the October Men's Breakfast. And speaking of that, this month's issue also comes with a free breakfast wrap - turn to page 3 to find out more!

We have items in the Trading Post and a great story of Aussie ingenuity on the back page. Also, don't forget about the Men's Network Group and to save the date for Love Christmas, Love Canberra.

Next month is the last issue for 2013, so make sure to get in touch if there's anything you want to share with the guys before the year is out!

But for now, take some time to enjoy this month's Whiteboard.

### WE NEED YOU

Whiteboard exists for the men of C3 Monash. It's not just a newsletter - it's a platform for us to share what's been going on in our lives, encourage others in our experiences and generally get to know each other better. If you have a story, scripture or something else you'd like to see published, let us know. We'll also include 'for sale' and 'wanted' items if you have them. Contact John Gallagher for any contributions you may have. And, of course, we welcome your suggestions and feedback.

Send your questions or contributions to: [johng@c3monash.org.au](mailto:johng@c3monash.org.au)

### WHAT'S ON IN NOVEMBER

#### MEN'S NETWORK GROUP

8:00 am Saturday, 2 November

**Where:** McDonald's Tuggeranong

Come along and catch up with John G over breakfast and a coffee.

*'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures for ever.'* (Psalm 106:1)

#### SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, 15 December

Love Christmas, Love Canberra

Now is the time to save the date and start thinking about who you will invite to our church's awesome Christmas celebration.

Remember to pray for this event and the people who will be blessed by it.

*'The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.'* (James 5:16)



# THE JOURNEY

*The decisions we make in the natural have spiritual consequences, writes Pastor Steve White.*

The discipleship process is one that continues from the moment a man is born again until he dies and moves from mortality to immortality.

I have heard James Ramsey, one of the pastors at C3 Church Monash, often make a statement that goes something like this: 'What God starts in power, He completes in process.' What I like about this concept is the acknowledgement that God can do anything in His divine power. But we actually have to walk out the truth of that on a day-to-day basis.

The supernatural, spiritual Christian walk is surprisingly natural in outworking. 1Cor 15:46 reminds us that, '...the spiritual is not first, but the natural...'

We are not intended to think of something that is *physical* or *non-physical* when we read the terms *natural* and *spiritual*. We are to think of what drives the body when a body is called a natural body.

The natural instincts and desires that relate to the animal part of our flesh is what Paul intended us to understand when we read the phrase "natural body".

So when we are born again we move from the natural to the spiritual. Our instincts and desires are now shaped by the Spirit. But we have to constantly overcome natural desires so that the spiritual can kick in.

For example, I decide to forgive when I feel wronged by someone. That simple, yet emotionally charged, act in the natural positions me to engage God without the distraction or burden of resentment or desire to extract revenge. I benefit spiritually, (my connection to God is not tainted) from a seemingly natural choice.

And so it is in much of our Christian walk. The decisions we make in the natural have spiritual consequences.

My encouragement then, is to make the Godly choices in the natural so that you will enjoy the benefits of spiritual living, and the freedom that brings, here on earth.

With you on the journey

Steve

*“What God starts in power, He completes in process.”*

# BREAKFAST WRAP

The Men's Breakfast with Jim Wallace was held on Saturday the 5th of October. It was a morning of encouragement and motivation. Here are some of the key messages from Jim's talk for you to ponder.

The theme of Jim's message was 'Welcome to the War.'

You don't have to look for spiritual war, it will find you.

Success on the battlefield is determined by who holds the advantage, the high ground, and by preventing your enemy from turning up.

Courage is the decision you make during the heat of the battle not by the actions you take after the decision you make.

Fight for the right to be known as a big 'C' Christian, not be in the silent majority that become small 'c' Christians when under fight because of indifference.

Prepare yourself for war by knowing your fighting skills and the weapons you use, know the scripture and prayer, reflection time and strengthening your personal relationship with God.

Men go to war for all sorts of beliefs: for their country, freedom, to protect their families. But when on the battlefield, they fight not for country or political freedom, but for their mates. The Australian Army is feared for its fighting ability, which comes from mateship. The bond between mates in war is so strong it will defeat the enemy. This reputation is built on mateship, fighting for each other, and never ever leaving a mate behind. We as Christians need to adopt that same level of intense mateship; it is a very strong fighting weapon.

When in a spiritual war take the initiative by:  
Knowing your enemy.

Preventing them from turning up to the battle.

Put fear into your enemy so they don't step on the battlefield.

Take the high ground to gain the dominate position.

An ambush takes away the initiative, retreat, regroup and get right back into the battle on your terms.

Men admire courage. Courage is displayed in the decision you make, not the action that follows

Prepare for the battle, hone your skills, know the word, study the bible, spend time in daily devotion, spend time with the Lord. Jim is up at 4am every morning for his personal time with the Lord.

When the attack comes it will be personal so get some good mates around to help fight and to pray over you. One thing is for certain, you don't have to go looking for the war; it will find you.

Jim also talked about Mark Donaldson, the first Australian Special Forces Soldier to win the Victoria Cross in Afghanistan. Turn the page to read his story of courage, which was published in *The Weekend Australian* earlier this year. It was Mark's decision and bravery to turn back and help, and not what followed, that was rewarded with the highest military honour this country can give.



## 2009: MARK DONALDSON, VICTORIA CROSS WINNER



*By John Cantwell*

WHEN Governor-General Quentin Bryce pinned the Victoria Cross for Australia on the chest of 29-year-old Trooper Mark Donaldson in January 2009, it was the first time in 40 years that our highest award for valour in combat had been bestowed.

Since then, Corporals Ben Roberts-Smith and Daniel Keighran have also received VCs. But for Donaldson, a member of the Special Air Service Regiment, it was hard to know what to feel about being the first in a generation to be honoured in such a way, for an action in Afghanistan the previous year.

"There certainly was a lot of public attention, more than I expected," he says now of the months that followed the award. And since then: "A lot of important people have said nice things to me, which is great, but what really means a lot to me is when ordinary people stop me

in the street to say, 'Thanks mate, well done'. One of the effects of the award that I'm very happy about is that I get a chance to speak to many young people, and encourage them to strive to excel at whatever they do. To be able to motivate and inspire Australian kids is pretty special."

Donaldson, now a Corporal, knows what it is like to be a vulnerable kid. After his father, Greg, a Vietnam veteran, died of a heart attack when Donaldson was in his mid-teens, Legacy helped his mother Bernadette care for him and his brother Brent; then she disappeared three years later, presumed murdered.

Donaldson joined the army in 2002, where he won prizes for his shooting skills and fitness, qualifying for the elite SAS in 2004. "I still love my job," he says. But he won't talk about the events that earned him the VC without insisting on reference to the fact that four

other Australians were awarded for gallantry in the same action.

He vividly recalls the afternoon of September 2, 2008, being in a convoy of five Humvee all-terrain vehicles bumping westwards across stony desert in Uruzgan province. The patrol was a mix of between 30 and 35 Australian and American special forces and Afghan personnel, including interpreters. Men were jammed in the seats and the rear cargo compartment of each vehicle. As the convoy slowed to negotiate a dry stream bed, Taliban machinegun fire burst from a tree line to its left, raking the vehicles and inflicting the first of many casualties. Rocket-propelled grenades exploded among the vehicles. The flat crump of impacting mortar rounds joined the racket.

The Australians spilled from the Humvees, returning fire. Donaldson grabbed a heavy rocket launcher and sprinted through incoming

bullets to a position closer to the enemy. He began firing high-explosive rounds, moving frequently, adding the fire of his own rifle and a smaller rocket launcher slung across his back. The insurgents concentrated their fire on Donaldson, allowing other men to pull the wounded into cover and begin first aid.

One of the Americans called for air support and under its cover the convoy got moving again with some of the men on foot, ducking bullets. After a kilometre of lurching travel a new machinegun salvo erupted from ridges to the right. More soldiers were hit, one American died. An Australian was shot in the chest while trying to call in attack helicopters.

The convoy paused again to deal with the newly wounded. Donaldson and another man dashed to an exposed flank, drawing heavy fire from the insurgents until the convoy could grind forward. Then, as they approached a constricted spot where the ridge met the trees, the shooting intensified. The Afghans in the lead vehicle stopped, blocking the other Humvees. The enemy fire reached a new crescendo, now from three sides. Men started going down all along the convoy; shot, peppered with RPG fragments or blasted off their feet. Donaldson sprinted from position to position, chased by bullets, shooting at Taliban fighters who at times got to within 50m. Two other Australians, already wounded, ran forward to get the lead Humvee moving and the convoy rolling again.

An RPG exploded above one of the moving vehicles, shrapnel ripping into the face of an Afghan interpreter and blowing him off the vehicle. Donaldson spotted him lying some 80m behind the moving convoy and knew he couldn't leave him behind. He didn't hesitate. He started running towards the man.

Within seconds, Donaldson was seen by the Taliban gunners. Intense fire scoured the ground around him. Later, he would find bullet holes in his equipment. Donaldson dragged the man back to the vehicles through a fusillade of bullets, administered first aid and loaded him into one of the Humvees, crowded with wounded and bleeding men. Then he turned back to face the enemy.

The fight covered four gruelling kilometres. Running alongside the vehicles, Donaldson administered medical care to other wounded soldiers while continuing to engage the insurgents, often drawing fire on himself. The attack only abated when, with darkness falling, the battered convoy finally reached the Americans' forward operating base. Of the 13 Australians in the battle, more than half were shot or torn by shrapnel. One American soldier was killed, others were wounded, as were several Afghans.

But, as his VC citation noted, the toll would have been greater if not for Donaldson's actions. He still recalls feeling uncomfortable with the public attention on the day of his investiture. He recalls in his upcoming book, *The Crossroad*, that receiving the VC was like having an "emotional weight" pinned to him, although not a burden.

He remembers the honour as "a physical thing" that coursed through him. After he sat back down next to his wife Emma, she gave him a kiss and they beamed at each other. Donaldson says he simply did the job he was trained to do. He remained on duty in 2009, although heavily engaged in media appearances, speaking engagements and ceremonial events such as Anzac Day, and despite frequent absences maintained the rigorous cycle of SASR training to maintain his skills.

He accepts he is a national icon but retains a well-grounded sense of self. "When I go home to my family, I'm just a husband and a father," he says. "I'm still the person I have always been." He has returned to Afghanistan several times.

This article was first published in *The Weekend Australian* on 21 September 2013.

# A FINAL THOUGHT

## Colossians: Christ - the beginning and the end.

The Apostle Paul addresses, first and foremost, that Christ is the beginning of everything created, although Jesus Himself is not a created being, but God Himself in human form.

Col 1:16-18 - For through Him (Jesus) God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see, such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.

This balances well with John 1:1-3 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Jesus is always first, the head over all creation, all authorities and all powers. Among other things, He also was the first to rise from the dead, as a demonstration of His pre-eminence in ALL things.

The dictionary defines pre-eminence as such: the fact of surpassing all others; superiority.

Quite simply our faith and our

trust could not have a better recipient than the one who is superior to anyone or anything that has ever existed at any time in creation. For it was only by Christ Himself that person or thing has existed at all!

What a confidence we have. And that's only the beginning. The Bible tells us not only of the superiority of Christ, BUT the fact He actually lives in us, directing our lives IF we would allow him.

Colossians 1:25 - 27 - God has given me the responsibility of serving His church by proclaiming His entire message to you. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing His glory.

The choice to allow Jesus to drive or be a passenger is totally up to us but our decision determines our position.

Rom 8:14 - For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

If we allow ourselves to be led, we are His sons and daughters and are able live in the blessings of this position. Who could ask for more!

So to wrap up. When we choose Christ, He chooses to make His

home in us. When we allow Him to determine our lives, He determines we are God's children. When we seek unity with Christ, this union will complete us.

Col 2:8-10 - Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

A new life requires a new focus and, where once we were dragged into the cares and concerns of this temporal life, we now have a heavenly, eternal destiny. Our new life is a heavenly one and our decisions should reflect the values of God's Kingdom, not the world. It's an easy thing to say but an almost impossible thing to do, unless we are living in close proximity to our saviour.

How does it begin? With prayer:

'Lord Jesus, I surrender to your will and I chose today to turn away from my sins. Please forgive me and clean my life by the power of Your Spirit and Your precious blood. Come live in me, not just as my Saviour but as my Lord and guide me from now for all eternity. Amen.'

*Pastor James Ramsay*



## SERVANT HERO

David Marriot has sent us this great story and some pics as proof!

I thought I might share this with you:

David Lee came over to see us last night. I wanted to show him where I was going to put the concrete in our backyard. We both looked straight up at this tree in the backyard and we thought, 'hmmm, this tree is just about to come crashing down onto the garage! The tree must have been split down the middle from the large gusts of wind we've recently had.

No worries, though. Dave directed me to get our Mitsubishi ASX into the backyard so he could tie a rope to it and the tree. I said to Dave, 'this could either work or be a funniest home video moment!' That didn't stop him. He carefully cut a few grooves into the tree, near where it was split – this would help to direct where the tree was going to fall. Then I gently reversed the ASX until the tree gave way... It fell right between the garage and the house (and not on the car).

Dave has an uncanny gift of being at the right place at the right time!

*David Marriot*

## TRADING POST



### FOR SALE

1999 Ford Falcon AU

This car is in great condition. It has been regularly serviced and has fresh tires. We recently spent \$1800 on the car to repair the air-conditioning system. 298,000kms.

The asking price for anyone from C3 Monash is \$1000.

For more information, check the Gumtree listing via the link below or contact Chris Justice on 0432 253 725.

<http://www.gumtree.com.au/s-ad/fadden/cars-vans-utes/ford-falcon-1999-au-model-/1028831178>

### FREE TO A GOOD HOME!

GIANT OCR compact road bike. If anyone is interested or would like more information can call Neil Goodacre on 0417 472 462.

**C3 Church Monash:** 184 Clive Steele Ave, Monash, ACT - Ph: 6298 5900

**RealMen:** John Gallagher - Ph: 0409 125 021, [johng@c3monash.org.au](mailto:johng@c3monash.org.au)

**Connect:** Graham & Pat Cumming - Ph: 6154 0482

