



OUR MISSION: To assist in the development of Christian leaders in the armed forces of the world and in the establishment and growth of military Christian fellowships.

THE TIES THAT BIND:

Central American Conference Builds Ties for Future Ministry



Between 20-24 September, Christian military leaders from ten countries gathered at the AMCF Central American Conference and Interaction in Panama. The Panama military Christian fellowship (MCF), Companierismo Cristiano de la Fuerza Publica de Panama, hosted the event, which had participants from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the US.

The five-day series of meetings began with a ceremony that included the commissioning of the new AMCF vice president for Central America, Col. (Ret.) Jose Rodriguez from Honduras, who was sworn in by the outgoing vice president, Col. Joaquin Maldonado and ACCTS' Latin American ministry coordinator, Bob Reifsnnyder.

During the first three days, more than 60 members of the MCFs were informed and encouraged by briefings and discussions that strengthened ties of friendship, trust, and fellowship among the MCFs in Latin America.

ACCTS' director, Phil Exner, notes, "The presentations were excellent, as were the encouraging country reports and lively discussions on leadership. Yet, unless you attend one of these conferences, you don't fully appreciate a key element that makes the effort and expense of organizing and traveling so far worth the cost. Beyond any mere

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information that is shared and the increased understanding of one another's challenges, meetings like this generate true empathy, compassion, and affection among MCF leaders, which deepens genuine brotherly and sisterly love and binds military Christians together across the whole region in the kind of Christian unity that Jesus prayed for the night before He died for us. (John 20:20-23)."

Of course, there was much practical utility in the briefings and discussions. The formal presentations as well as the informal side-bar discussions during breaks and meals dealt with issues that military believers commonly face in every country. One issue of great importance that has emerged with greater urgency recently is suicide prevention. Within the military and first responders, there has been a tragic increase in the number of suicides. The discussions with MCF national leaders from participating countries included very practical and useful dialogue and recommendations on how to address this alarming trend and to change the culture within the military so that both soldiers and commanders deal with the problem more positively and proactively as Christian military leaders.

Other challenges that came up include ministry in matters related to marriage, family, PTSD, and other pressures that military personnel and their families face.

Beyond the immediately practical topics discussed, the conversations throughout the conference and Interaction continued the process of building long-term relationships that will form the foundations of future ministry.

In recent years, many military Christians in Latin America have adopted the use of a social media app which is a good platform for participants to stay in touch by sharing prayer requests, praises, and updates. Phil reports, "In just the first few days after the conference, I received hundreds of notes of encouragement, excitement, praise, and prayer through the app.

"The participants and national leaders at the 2019 AMCF Central America regional conference left the event energized and excited to carry the lessons they learned and, more importantly, the vision they re-kindled, back to their home countries to share the Gospel through their lives, testimonies, and word. Please keep them in your prayers in the weeks and months ahead so that their unity in Christ will continue to grow and their enthusiasm will carry over into action that produces spiritual, eternal fruit for God's Kingdom."



BOUND TOGETHER IN CHRISTIAN LOVE:

East Asia Conference Report



Cornelius Group, the military Christian fellowship of Japan, only has about ten active members, yet their commitment to military ministry in East Asia is so strong that they eagerly hosted a highly successful AMCF East Asia Conference in August.

“This conference was a time of great encouragement and learning.”

“This conference was a time of great encouragement and learning,” comments ACCTS’ director Phil Exner. “There were strong contingents of participants from several East Asia countries where religious freedom is restricted, so it was particularly wonderful to see how delegates from other countries in the region reached out to support their brothers and sisters in Christ. They prayed together, discussed ministry ideas and common struggles, and shared stories of God’s help and deliverance. The fellowship and encouragement from other countries’ MCFs reminded them that they are not alone and have brothers and sisters around the world who will continue to pray for them and stay connected long after the conference ends.”

The sense of unity and fellowship was

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strong among participants, even though they came from nine nations, each with its own distinct culture, language, and traditions. Highlighting the theme of “All One in Christ Jesus,” the delegates sang worship songs in Japanese, Chinese, English, Korean, Mongolian, and other languages – making it feel a bit like Pentecost since they were songs for which everyone knew the melody. Phil observes, “The diversity of backgrounds added a deeper dimension to the concept of Christian fellowship, because it focused the conference on the things participants have in common, especially the person and work of Jesus Christ.”

Conferences like this provide three things that are much harder to attain through videoconferences. First, they provide MCF members with more opportunities to learn directly about the needs, prayers, and praises

of other MCFs within their region thanks to unstructured time between presentations, during breaks and meals, and in the evenings. Second, they publicly model the oneness all Christians are called to have with each other, for which Christ prayed for His followers. And thirdly, they are a great way to start new relationships and strengthen existing ones. By sharing problems they have in common, conference participants build empathy, stir up compassion, and deepen friendships.

Praise God with us for the Japanese MCF and its dedication to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pray for all of the MCFs in the AMCF East Asia region, especially those laboring in dangerous areas, as the delegates return to their countries and seek to live for Christ where He has planted them.



JOIN US FOR TRAVEL ADVENTURES IN EUROPE!

Waterloo to World War 2 Battlefield Tour

2-9 May 2020

If you love military history, join ACCTS' executive director, Phil Exner (Colonel, USMC, Ret.) for a week-long tour of historic battlefields and cultural sites in Belgium and France! Waterloo to World War 2 (W2WW2) is a fast-paced tour which ACCTS has hosted in the past for midshipmen, cadets, and young officers. This year, in addition to a trip for cadets from USNA and USMA, ACCTS is hosting an additional trip from 2-9 May 2020 for anyone who loves military history and is interested in applying Christian insights and wisdom to the challenges that military leaders face.



Sites visited will include a former concentration camp, a 12th century castle, the Royal Palace, the Grand Palace, trenches, tunnels, and fortifications from battlefields of Flanders and the Somme, Ste Marie du Mont, Point du Hoc, and other Normandy sites. More details on the specific stops are available at: <https://accts.org/w2ww2.html>.

The group will discuss the strategic, operational, and tactical background behind key engagements that shaped Europe's history, from the battle of Waterloo through the WW2 Normandy landings. Participants will also hear stories of individual heroism, mistakes, neglect, and actions or inaction which often drove the outcome of key phases of important battles and campaigns. Each site visit also offers spiritual object lessons related to leadership, integrity, and character.



The cost of the trip, including food, lodging, ground transportation, and airfare from Washington DC is \$2,700. Please be aware that this tour requires extensive walking and many hours in vehicles, so all participants must have adequate physical stamina. Our lodgings will be adequate but simple in order to keep costs reasonable.

If you are interested in this tour or have questions about the details, send us an email at accts@accts.org or call us at 1-800-487-8108 and we will send you more information.

November Prayer Requests

Pray for two AMCF coworkers from Australia who are ministering to military believers in Fiji and Tonga from 1-7 November. Pray that these AMCF coworkers will be an encouragement and blessing.

Pray for two ACCTS staff members who are ministering from 1-19 November to military Christian fellowship leaders and members in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. Ask that the Holy Spirit guide their trip.

From 6-9 November an ACCTS staff member will be encouraging military believers in Bulgaria. Pray that this will result in good interaction and planning for future ministry possibilities.

Every year, nations around the world send thousands of military personnel to the U.S. for military-related education. This month, please pray particularly for ACCTS staff members who minister to these international students and ask that ACCTS' ministry in this area expand into other locations.



Association for
Christian Conferences
Teaching and Service

PO Box 27239
Denver, CO 80227-0239
Phone: 1-800-487-8108
Fax: 303-986-4710
Email: accts@accts.org
Web: www.accts.org



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