

Creating a Climate of Ethical Behavior Athens

Which is really pretty exciting to see some of these MCFs and we are thankful to have you joining us. Thank you.

Okay. Oh, Phil Mixter is coming on, I guess. Looks like it. Nestor is coming on.

That's good. Elizabeth from the office. All right. Craig from South Africa.

Roger, do you know Craig Bailey? I don't think so.

Okay, well, he's coming on in a minute here. Maybe he'll... There he is. I see him. Okay, Craig, we have another...

One of our guests today from South Africa, Commander Cousins, Michael, yes, thank you. I think we connected on LinkedIn a few days ago. Great.

Very good. And Nestor is going to be helping us with our worship, I think, today.

Also was the vice president for the North American AMCF. So welcome, Nestor, from in Jamaica.

Okay. Thank you, sir. Glory! That's his iconic response to everything.

Okay.

All right. Let's see. Where's my, okay. Well, we have 14 right now and we got a minute to go. So we've got about our average for the year is 15.

So we're thankful for everyone joining us.

Bill, are you able to come on and say a welcome to? I think he's on maybe by phone. I'm not sure. Yeah.

all right okay All right, I think we're about ready to get started. You might just look over the the outline of what we're going to be doing today that's on your screen.

And Art Athens, I got a quote from you from One of your talks to some of the midshipmen back many years ago, Again, you've led so many different ways in OCF through the years, including as the executive director, of course.

All right, it is now 2.30. I've been trying to introduce some of the new folks as we've started.

I think Roger, though, is going to be our guest, and he's going to, in a moment, going to be giving us our opening prayer.

I'd like to introduce him first a little bit more. Roger, would you tell us just a very short couple of sentences about yourself? Sure, okay. I'm 62 years old.

father of three boys, married to Judy, and love the Lord, serve him as a pastor in the local church.

which my son is the lead pastor of, one of my sons.

And I was in the South African Navy for 14 years in the permanent force.

Not a general duties executive officer, but an engineering officer. My background is I have a degree in electronics engineering.

and my speciality is military communication systems, specifically naval communication systems and more on the tactical side than the strategic side. And yeah, that's me.

Okay, and when was the first time you got acquainted with the Military Christian Fellowship of South Africa, where you reside? So it was a good number of years back, probably at least 10 or so years back, because A very good friend, Pete Lawrence, has kind of...

He spearheaded it in the country and he roped me in when he started it up and Yeah. So I've been in regular contact with quite a number of the guys that I served together with in the South African Navy who are members. And, uh, We communicate quite regularly over Facebook. We've got a local Facebook page for the Military Christian Fellowship.

I enjoy what the guys post and enjoy interacting with them. Thanks for that intro. I'm going to ask you now if you just open us in prayer.

Sure, no problem. Let's just bow our hearts to the Lord.

Lord Jesus, the reason we're here tonight is because we have chosen to put you first in our lives. We have chosen to declare you as our commander-in-chief.

you as our King of Kings, you as our Lord of Lords, And so tonight we ask, Lord, that in everything that we say, think and do, we might bring glory and honor to you.

and that we might be encouraged, that we might be built up and equipped to be able to serve you better in making disciples of others and in ourselves being better disciples in serving you.

So we pray this together in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Maybe mute yourself. That would be helpful just in case we have any phone calls coming in to anyone or anything like that.

And I'm going to ask, though, that Sue Kasner, you go ahead and start with our period of worship.

Roger, it's good to meet you on here. And it's just part of our.

overarching fellowship that we have that we can come together in such a way as this and all be one in Christ Jesus father thank you that we have been able to come out today. Right.

great to see you i haven't seen you for years i love this it really gives us a lot to be thankful for as we acknowledge how he has brought us together in these special, special ways. I have asked if Nestor would take.

time now to lead us we will not sing with him because we might garble it up but we've asked Nestor if he would um Sing the doxology for us, and in our hearts, we can join him. Nestor? Nestor? Is Nestor there? Here we go. Yes. I looked up doxology. It says it's an expression of praise to God.

especially a short hymn. So here we go.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise him all creatures here below.

Praise Him above, angelic host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen. Thank you, Nestor. May we all say glory. Glory. Glory. Right.

well it is it's it's a heartfelt glory that we feel when we can come and we can praise and we can Understand the blessings that the Lord gives to us on a daily basis as I have thought about this today.

It's made me stop and ask myself, how many times a day do I really stop and pay attention to the blessings that have been cast down upon us and upon me. I think that that's something to ponder and to come back to again and again to just understand the blessings, understand all of the things that we have to be thankful for.

as we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

am blessed also to have bob collins who has said that he would share with us And he is going to share about adoration and confession with us. Bob, can you come on? Yes, thank you, Sue. This was in form of a prayer, is my understanding, that I would pray.

But also, as I thought about it, some of you are familiar with praying scriptures.

And that's one way of really getting to the word and putting the scripture in a sense, making it your own.

What I'm doing now is I'm putting two songs to prayer.

I've done this in our church and it's a very meaningful time. The first song, you'll recognize both of them of course, but the first one is really more personal. Actually, it's including everyone. The second one is more individual. And you understand why.

First one is adoration. The second one is really confession. Who we are in Christ and what he's done for us.

Let's begin. This is a prayer. Praise to you, Lord.

You are the Almighty and the King of creation. May our words and souls praise you.

For you are our health and our salvation. Come all, we are here.

Come now to your temple drawn near to join together in glad adoration.

Praise to you, Lord. Above all things, you are wonderfully reigning.

sheltering us under your wings and so gently sustaining.

Have we not seen all that is needful has been sent by your gracious ordainer? Praise you, Lord.

who purposes our work and defends us. Surely your goodness and mercy shall daily attend us we ponder anew what you the almighty can do when you and your love befriend us Praise to you, Lord. Oh, let all that is in us adore you. All that has life and breath come now with praises before you.

Let the amen sound from your people again, gladly and forever. We adore you.

And then this. And can it be that I should gain an interest in my Savior's blood? Died he for me who caused him pain, for me who him to death pursued.

Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Tis mercy all, and the immortal dies.

who can explore his strange design. In vain the firstborn Seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine.

Tis mercy all, let earth adore, let angel minds inquire no more.

He left his Father's throne above, So free, so infinite his grace, Emptied himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race.

tis mercy all and immense and free for oh my god it found out me long my presence spiritually Fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke the dungeon flamed with light.

My chains fell off. My heart was free. My woes went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread. Jesus and all in him is mine. Alive in him, my living head.

and clothed in righteousness divine, bold I approached the eternal throne and claimed the crown through Christ my own. Amazing love, how can it be? that thou, my God, shouldst die for me. Amen.

Amen. Amen. We want to thank the Lord for Saving the life of our ACTS intern, ethics training intern, Ivan.

And Ivan has joined us from Uganda. He has difficulty sometimes communicating through his technology from there.

But we welcome him back and we praise God so much for for.

Amen. Amen. Thank you so much.

for sharing in that very personalized way. That's really what we need.

Amen. Thank you, Sue, for leading us in our devotions today.

The next item now is going to be our devotional by Colonel Art Athens.

I have a couple pictures just to reminisce of his life of going from the Naval Academy all the way then as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps up through a lieutenant colonel.

You can see him in these two pictures. These pictures sort of span our audience that we're trying to help and assist those who are young MCF leaders and with the ethical issues that they have in their careers. So it's our pleasure.

to have Art with us today to lead us in our devotional.

Art, would you just say a word just about your becoming a believer and your first encounter with OCF? Just very briefly. Cal, let me put that within the devotional. It'll come up.

I want to just say what an honor and privilege it is as I look at faces and names of people friends, colleagues, mentors, some who I've not seen in a long time, but I appreciate you being here.

And it's a great encouragement to me that you're participating today. I also want to say a special thanks to Cal.

Eugene Peterson put together the message which is this paraphrase of the Bible and he wrote a book called the A long obedience in the same direction. And when I think about that phrase, I think about Cal Dunlap.

He has been so faithful over all of these years and continues to inspire and instruct and love people from around the world.

And I just consider it a great honor that I'm part of what's going on today. But a long obedience in the same direction.

That's what Cal Dunlap is all about.

So what I'd like to try to do this afternoon, at least on Eastern Standard Time in the United States, is to tackle the responsibility that leaders, particularly Christian leaders, have to set a climate of ethical conduct and integrity.

I think sometimes we emphasize an awful lot the individual role that we need to be ethical leaders, which is certainly the starting place.

and it's necessary, but I'm not sure it's sufficient when we're in a leadership type of role.

We can't say, well, I've got it all together in this ethics area or pretty close, have it together. I don't know what's wrong with all of you who I'm leading, why you keep doing these things.

And I've just found over the years that it's important to look at both, both the individual responsibility for ethical conduct as a leader and then also the responsibility a leader has to set this climate to help encourage those that work for him or her to accomplish the mission and do it in an ethical way.

So I came to Christ at the age of 13. I grew up in a pretty dead church. My mom and dad forced me to go to church with my two sisters. And they were not believers at the time, but we were there every single Sunday.

But fortunately, at that age of 13, I was in a communicants class moving towards the opportunity to take communion. And normally in the church that I was in, it was mainly about memorizing the books of the Bible and a couple of scripture verses.

but it really had very little to do with the gospel, unfortunately. But by God's grace, my particular instructor, an insurance salesman by the name of Paul Johnson had a different idea of what that communicants class should be about. And he presented the gospel one evening and I came home and, And I reflected on what he had said, something I had never heard before.

And I confessed with my mouth that night that Jesus is Lord and believed in my heart that God raised him from the dead.

And I was pretty confident that it had taken. And then at the age of 15, One of my two sisters was killed in an automobile accident by a drunk driver.

And I felt I was truly at the crossroads of deciding, is this for real, this Christian faith? Is this a God I can trust? Or do I need to go down the path of feeling, hey, what kind of God is this that would do this? And everything must just be random.

Again, by God's grace, the path that I continued on was to follow Christ. But I had very little upbringing to know what to do at that point.

but I got a little devotional book that was nothing but scriptures. It would have a boldened scripture and then it would have other scriptures related to it that was given to me by an elderly lady in the church.

And I would read that day after day after day. And I think from there and then going to the Naval Academy and being under some great Christian instruction, And beginning my time in the Marine Corps, I began to set this individual foundation of the kind of ethical officer I wanted to be.

Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments became important to me. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

The idea of Colossians 3.23, do your work heartily for the Lord and not for men.

Looking at Galatians, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit.

looking at what it says in Micah 6.8, that what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly.

And then Proverbs 22 verse 1 that says, "A good name is what we should seek after rather than great riches." So there were all kinds of verses like that that were put into my life that served as the foundation of an ethical thought as being an individual officer. But then I entered into the Marine Corps and I had responsibility for a platoon And at that point, I don't believe that I branched out from making sure I was doing things with integrity.

I was interested in the others, but I'm not sure I helped them get to that point of having this climate of integrity.

I remember one of the few things that I harped on more than anything else was profanity.

That was a red line for me amongst the Marines that were there and obviously there was a lot of resistance to that at first, but we finally got to the point where it was pretty much rooted out of the platoon.

And then I'd become a company commander and the same thing happened. It was a lot about making sure I was doing things ethically.

certainly keeping an eye on the troops, but not providing them much guidance or having in my mind a process of creating this climate of integrity and ethical conduct. And again, looking back, I think it was mainly about profanity. And I certainly said some things about integrity.

but I'm not sure I invested in the troops the way I needed to, to help them have this climate that would assist them as they walked in their lives, whether they were Christians or not. But I had a change that occurred in my life On the 28th of January, 1986, at Cape Kennedy down in Florida, which is a space center for the United States, the Space Shuttle Challenger took off and 73 seconds into flight after being given the command, go to full throttle, the Challenger explodes and seven astronauts are killed on that 28th of January, 1986.

President Reagan was supposed to give the State of the Union that night. He did not. Instead, he talked about the accident.

And at the end, he said that these seven astronauts slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God.

Well, what would happen after that is as a Marine captain, I would be assigned to NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to be a special assistant to the administrator, the head of NASA and his key deputies.

So I was coming in just as the aftermath of the Challenger explosion was occurring.

Dr. Jim Fletcher was the administrator that was brought in by the president. Fletcher had been an administrator for NASA during the Apollo era.

and he was noted for above all his integrity.

But what I watched in observing him closely was that he was not just about his own integrity, He was about creating a climate of integrity within NASA, a very large organization, because that was the downfall. That space shuttle exploded because there were O-rings on a solid rocket booster that leaked gases that caused the explosion. And there were those who realized that that was a potential problem.

But NASA and others pushed ahead, even though there was that danger because of the low temperature that day on January 28th.

So I would now accompany Dr. Fletcher and his deputies all over these different NASA installations to see how do you create a climate of integrity, not just for yourself, But for a large workforce, how do you restore the integrity that seemed to be missing? And I found that Dr. Fletcher had four keys, and I'm gonna mention these four keys, and then I'm gonna turn to the book of Nehemiah, because I realized after watching Fletcher that there was a lot of alignment with what happened in the book of Nehemiah as Nehemiah is a leader not just being a person



of integrity, but creating that climate. Well, in Dr. Fletcher's case, He did four things. He communicated the importance of integrity all the time. It wasn't just a once a year thing.

He communicated it all the time. Number two is he modeled integrity, which is the personal side, which is certainly necessary.

Number three is he circulated. He didn't just stay at his place in Washington DC at headquarters in his chair.

He went out to find out what was really going on in the different areas around NASA and asking people, where are you tempted to cut corners? What do you need to make the job better than you have it right now? And as the horse holder as they sometimes call the special assistants or the aides, I would take notes and When we get back to Washington, D.C., he would get debriefed on those notes and he would take action in what he needed to do. So he circulated.

And the fourth thing he did is he acted. When there was a compromise, he would take action immediately. He didn't let it fester.

And when people did it right, he would show that this is the exemplar. This is what we're supposed to be doing. So he had both sides of the action equation.

So I watched Fletcher go through these four elements, communicate often, model with his own behavior, circulate around to see what's really going on and where are the danger points. And every organization, every unit, every ship has them.

then the fourth piece is that he acted he didn't wait he saw something that was an integrity violation, he'd come down on it hard quickly and he would be just as quick to congratulate those that were doing it right.

So in the book of Nehemiah, I really found those same types of aspects back then And I like to review them at times just to remind me. But first of all, Nehemiah did communicate this message.

building the wall was necessary for something bigger than just themselves.

And in Nehemiah chapter 1, where Nehemiah is praying before he goes back to Israel, he says, Even I and my father's house have sinned. We've acted very corruptly against you.

and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. He knew this job of rebuilding the wall was more than just the physical aspect there was a spiritual side to it there was an ethical side to it there was an integrity part So then in chapter 2, in verse 17, he says to the people, you see the trouble we are in.

how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem that we may no longer suffer derision.

Well, who's really suffering the derision? It's God's name that is not being honored because of the actions that had been taken.

And now Nehemiah puts it into perspective that it's more than just building that physical wall. So he communicated to the people and gave them the idea that integrity and ethical conduct and being right with the Lord was going to be extremely important.

Number two, he modeled it. There's certainly a lot of different examples. One that's out of chapter 5, verse 14, Nehemiah is officially the governor.

And he says that in the land of Judah from the 20th year to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, the king, 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor.

The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them their daily ration of 40 shekels of silver.

So he sets an example of what integrity actually looks like. Then the next thing is this idea of circulating and you see him circulating a lot in the book of Nehemiah. One in particular is in chapter 4 when Sanballat and Tobiah are threatening against that group of his Israelites that are there and in verse 13 this is what Nehemiah writes so in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall in open places I stationed the people by their clans with their swords, their spears, and their bows. He was with them doing this.

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, don't be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord who is great and awesome and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your home. So he goes out among the people to see what's really happening.

not just staying in his house, hoping that everything's going to turn out all right ethically.

And then the last part is this action that Dr. Fletcher was so good at. Well, Nehemiah was even better.

In Nehemiah chapter 5 in verse 6, he hears about usury, which is this excessive interest that's being charged.

and he confronts it right away. He doesn't wait on that. And again, in Nehemiah 13, there's a number of different things that happen there.

that the Levites are not being given their portion in verses 10 and 11.

And then in verse 23, there's intermarriage that shouldn't be going on. So again, in various ways, Nehemiah is up front taking action.

So it paralleled what I had seen there. But there's one other thing that happened to me while I was in that same tour of duty.

And that is that I met a man by the name of Admiral Jim Stockdale. Admiral Stockdale was a 1947 graduate of the Naval Academy.

He was a fighter pilot. He led the first bombing runs into North Vietnam during the Vietnamese War.

On a second tour when he came back, he was on the USS Oriskany on the 9th of September, 1965.

And he launches off that aircraft carrier and takes some rounds from the enemy. He's required to parachute. He ejects from the aircraft.