

Geoff Freind, a beloved Australian minister of the Gospel died in a South African hospital, 21 September, from severe injuries sustained from a savage attack in Malawi. Geoff Freind was a Major in the Salvation Army, based in Perth, Australia. Geoff had served with the Salvation Army for 34 years.

From Australia with Love

Geoff and his wife, Lyn, had planted a school in Sierra Leone, in West Africa. Geoff Freind was the author of *Enjoy the Journey, Thank You for the Journey* and *A Great Journey*. From the book sales from these three books, he donated \$60,000 to the Salvation Army Chikankata Mission, which operates a school and hospital in Zambia. His fourth book of stories of encouragement and hope, sent to him from people around the world, is currently at the printers.

Attacked without Warning

Geoff Freind, 59 years old, had embarked on a 5-week Mission, to train Christian pastors in several countries. It was while he was walking down the street from his hotel in Malawi to some nearby shops, that he was attacked and savagely beaten, sustaining fatal injuries.

A Friend to the Friendless

The Divisional Commander of the Salvation Army in Perth, Major Neil Venables, said that Geoff had lived out the Salvation Army's mission and served as a strong advocate for the disadvantaged in the community. *"He wanted everyone to know life in its fullest in the best that it could be."*

Enthusiastic Evangelist

Commander Neil Venables said that Major Freind represented the essence of the Salvation Army. Geoff's brother-in-law, Peter Walker, said of Geoff: *"He was the most enthusiastic person, and he believed he could do anything and God could do anything. People told him he could not write a book, so he wrote a book. He wrote a great book, then he wrote more. Geoff was passionate about sharing the Gospel, he strongly believed it was what God wanted from him and he risked his life doing it."*

Love in Action

Our Lord Jesus Christ declared: ***"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."***

John 15:13

Restoring Those in Ruins

Geoff can be numbered amongst those spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah: *"Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."*
Isaiah 58:12

Faithful and Fervent

Along with the Apostle Paul, he can declare: ***"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the Faith."*** 2 Timothy 4:7

In His Steps

There are dangers in serving the Lord in Missions. Each of the original twelve Apostles suffered severe persecution, and almost all died violent deaths at the hands of their persecutors. Jesus Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21).

Count the Cost and Carry Your Cross

Our Lord warned us to count the cost: ***"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'.***

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Matthew 16:24

There Are Those Who Hate Christ

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:18-19

Serving Where the Needs are Greatest

Geoff Freind knew this and yet he ministered in difficult and dangerous areas, including in pubs in Australia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. He could have stayed in his comfort zone, where it was safe and predictable, yet he chose to step out of his comfort zone and to minister where the needs were the greatest and where the dangers were correspondingly greater too.

Be Thoughtful and Careful

Those considering a career in Missions need to learn from history and from the lives and examples of those who have gone before, honestly facing up to the risks involved and making such preparations and precautions as are possible. We need to do everything we can, and then we can trust God to do what we cannot. However, we need to understand that in any war there are casualties. We need to be ready to live for Christ, and if needs be, to die for Christ.

What Are You Willing to Sacrifice for Christ?

In over 34 years of ministering in Restricted Access Areas, seeking to serve suffering Christians and reach Unreached People Groups with the Gospel, I have often had to warn our Missionary volunteers that they should not take anything into the field that they are not willing to lose, including their own life. ***"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*** Matthew 16:25

Rescue the Perishing

We live in a fallen world and hostility against the Church is increasing. There is a price to be paid for being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. In some countries the dangers are more tangible and the risks more extreme. We cannot have victory without a battle. Sacrifice and risk are essential. We can never win if we keep avoiding battles and battlefields. To rescue the perishing and to care for the dying requires risk and sacrifice. Missionaries need mental

toughness, emotional strength, spiritual discernment and the resilience to persevere, despite the many discouragements, dangers, diseases and deceptions looming in the field. ***"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!"***

Luke 12:4-5

Congo for Christ

On a recent Mission to East Africa, I met a Missionary who told me of his experience as a hostage of the Simba terrorists in Stanleyville, Congo, for four traumatic months, in 1964. He was only 11-years old at that time, when his Missionary Father, Hector McMillan, was murdered in front of him - 24 November 1964. Yet Steve McMillan returned as a Missionary to the same community in the Congo. Now, more than 50 years later, he is still serving there as a Missionary! ***"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."*** Luke 14:27

Living in the Light of Eternity

Steve said to me that within minutes of his Father being murdered, his mother said to them: *"Y our Father has given his life for the greatest cause in all eternity: the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. You can cry if you want to, but I am not going to cry. Your Father loved and served the Lord. He knew the risks. He would not want to be anywhere else."*

God's Servant is God's Responsibility

On more than 100 Missions behind enemy lines into communist and Muslim dictatorships, and war zones, I have often reflected on the truth that the safest place in the world is in the centre of God's Will. The Will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you. ***"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"***

Psalms 27:1

In the Service of Christ

On 14 December 1994, Frontline Fellowship Missionary, Anthony Paul Duncan, died in the service of Christ. He had survived battles with the enemy as a soldier, he had survived shootouts with poachers when he was a game ranger. Anthony had survived being trampled into the mud by a rhino. He had survived being charged by lion and survived coming off his motorbike at 160km per hour. In December 1994, he was part of a Frontline Mission team that succeed in smuggling a tonne of Bibles and medicines into UNITA controlled Free Angola, despite a UN embargo on any aid reaching the Christian Resistance in Angola. On the way back the team had been ambushed, imprisoned, and after we secured their release, Anthony died in a head-on collision on the journey home. Anthony loved the Lord. He was ready to go to be with the Lord. In fact, he was eager to give his life for the Lord. ***"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."***

Philippians 1:21

In the Valley of the Shadow of Death

There have been many occasions when I thought this will be my last day on earth. There have

been times when we have come under artillery and mortar fire, aerial bombardments and ambushes. I have experienced arrests and imprisonments as well as mock executions, both hooded and put up against a wall and told: *"Now you will die!"* on several occasions. Our times and our seasons are in God's Hand.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
2 Timothy 1:7

Death for a Christian is Not Fatal

Losing a loved one is tragic for those left behind. However, we do need to be reminded that for the Christian, death is not fatal, nor is it final. You cannot kill a Christian by sending him to his Lord in Heaven. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Those who die believing in Him shall live for all eternity. ***"Jesus said... 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die...'"***
John 11:25-26

Pray for the Family

We need to pray earnestly for Geoff's wife, Lyn, and their four children: Ashley, Steven, Nathan and Samuel. For them, this is a tragic loss. However, for Geoff, he has received the crown of martyrdom and is more alive than we are. So often we speak about here, on earth, being the land of the living, and those that have died as in the land of the dead. Actually, it is more accurate to recognise our life here on earth as being the land of the dying and Heaven being real life, Eternal life. Abundant life. ***"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have Faith."***

Thessalonians 3:1-2

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See also:

[**How to be Effective in Missions Without Becoming a Victim**](#)

[**What Can We do to Help Persecuted Christians Survive This Tsunami of Violence**](#)

[Do You Want to Change Your World?](#)

[Heaven](#)

[Eternal Judgement](#)