



**BUILDING
THE NEXT
FIVE
GENERATIONS
OF AUSTRALIAN
MEN**



May 2010

Men's Rites of Passage August 2010

men's rites of passage

no sign will be given except the sign of jonaah

luke 11:29

reclaiming the spiritual initiation of men through experiential journeying into the true self, creating a tradition for future generations.



This years MROP will be run from 17-21 August 2010 at Camp Somerset. Men from around Australia and New Zealand have been preparing themselves for these annual rites. MROP is a five day/four night deeply prayerful and soulful experience that builds on the classic patterns of male initiation through simple and moving rituals and teaching. Each day includes group prayer, major teaching on central masculine spirituality themes, quiet time for reflection and sharing in the context of a home group.

MROP is...

- A personal discovery about masculine spirituality and the Holy mystery.
- A time to savour the healing and awesome power of nature.
- A process to address issues of loss, grief and relationships with father and other men.
- An opportunity to examine life's priorities and ask courageous questions about your next step.
- An invitation to listen to the quiet voice of God.
- A chance to return to life with renewed commitment to your gifts.

MROP is **NOT**...

- A traditional lecture based retreat.
- An informational workshop about men's spirituality.
- A sensitive training or deprivation experience.
- A threatening process that requires participants to engage in anything strange or unsafe.
- A test of physical stamina.

What men are saying about MROP.

"Thank you for caring enough to be part of such a life-changing experience. I have come away – not battered or bruised or exhausted, but truly settled in my whole being – physically, emotionally and within my heart"

" Thank you sincerely for the work you are doing with men. As I participated I felt connected and enlivened by my connection to like brothers – brothers in the truest sense of the word. I discovered things about myself that I had been missing or perhaps just misplaced"

For those planning to attend it is important that you download and complete an application form from the main MTM website and send it into MTM at the Taringa office.

MROP 2010 and MTM is moving in September 2010



Dear Friends and Supporters,

MTM Australia continues to counsel, spiritually direct and mentor men and their families.

MTM Counselling and Spiritual Direction

Counselling and Spiritual Direction continues to grow with an increasing emphasis on mentoring and directing church pastors and leaders. It seems to be very hard for these folk to find a safe non - judgmental place to tell their story and receive the love and support they deserve. I believe the work we do in spiritual formation and development is proving to be invaluable to ministry leadership.

MALES Groups Growing

In Brisbane alone, over 100 men meet weekly in MALES groups with groups now at Brookfield, Ipswich and Corinda. MALES groups are also operating in most States.

The Brookfield groups average 60 men per night. There is a real buzz at these group meetings. Men are sharing and caring for each other and bringing other men into the groups. Clearly these groups are meeting a need in the community.

The MALES groups are designed to gently guide men on a journey of self discovery. The first year prepares men for the annual Men's Rites of Passage, while years two and three help men develop the disciplines required for personal growth and transformation. This years MROP leadership team is forming with our leadership camp in June. This is always a great time away to do the serious work of personal and team formation for the rites in August. There are still spaces available for this year's rites.

Returning MROP Initiates Invited to attend this years Rites

This year we are planning an event for returning MROP initiates. They are all invited to arrive on the afternoon of the day in the wilderness experience Friday the 20th August and spend reflective time with the MROP Weaver followed by witnessing the rites ceremony on Friday night and partaking in the Celebration Feast. It is hoped over the years to come that this reunion will be a time of great encouragement and personal reflection. For those interested in attending this reunion, please contact Tony Couper at MTM.

MTM is Moving in September

MTM is seeing increasing numbers of men and their families seeking help. Our premises are too small for current and future demands. The present lease expires in September 2010 and the board having reviewed many options, has agreed that the best alternative is to move to more cost effective premises.

What will this all mean? Shortly the board of MTM will be connecting with all its supporters and those we have helped along the way to inform them of a brand new light industrial unit that has been offered to MTM at an excellent price by a developer who is very supportive of our work. This will give MTM an additional 137sq meters of space and will significantly reduce our monthly rental outgoings. In short we are going to need lots of your help. This will include raising money for a deposit and increasing our operating funds. More details to follow. Please be in prayer for this.

On Personal Note

Thank you one and all for the love and support we received over the past months since the death of our son Luke. I cannot imagine what we would have done without you guys. Grief is a part of our daily existence with some days better than others. This, with the thought of moving, raising money and the like I must confess is all a bit overwhelming. But the call is to help men and their families. If Luke was here today he would be reminding me of the thousands of men that have already been helped, but especially the thousands of men still to be helped.

Thanks for reading this newsletter and peace to you and your family.

Rob Jones
CEO
MTM Australia

If you do not wish to continue receiving our Newsletter please email us at admin@mtmaustralia.org.au and simply state unsubscribe— or ring us on 07-3876 8710-Thank you.

Reflections from Past MROP Initiates

For me MROP was a the climax of a journey of learning to let go of trying to avoid, get rid of and fix my pain. After my nervous break down and depression I was a mess. There was a whole lot of junk and head stuff that had caused it, but I was left with the fear and resentment of the residual pain that was really troubling me. Through the weekly MALES men's group I had started to learn this process of letting go but MROP really sealed it for me. I was still in pain every day but there was this underlying peace and relief at finally letting go and leaving it all just the way it was. This sense and concept stays with me to this day and helps in normal life (of course I have to remind myself not to fix it every day). MROP was a great spring cleaning of all that subconscious crap/grief for me too. The rituals cut straight to my core in a way I never expected and got me out of my head and into my heart a lot more. Going through the whole MROP experience with such a large group of other broken men was also great. I would recommend MROP to anyone who is struggling and wants to move to a new spiritual level.

Leo



" I am a young man of 68 wanting to serve GOD in "HIS way. Prior to participating in the MROP in 2009 I had spent a year under a considerable amount of pressure and had been retrenched after 13 years of service.

To some extent this may have been "self inflicted " as I had asked GOD to deal with me in any way HE wanted in order to increase my faith. Not sure I would be game to pray that prayer again as it seems to have been answered giving me more pressure than I have experienced before in my life.

The MROP showed me just how much we Men who want to serve "GOD" need to get rid of the things that hold us back. We all have "Baggage " and the MROP is the right safe place to shed all unwanted Baggage.

I saw many amazing transformations in those few days and for any men who are fed up with a mediocre Christian walk I highly recommend the MROP. Do not let age , either old or young hold you back from what GOD wants to do through you. Grahame

"The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (NAS, Mark 12:28-31).

Can men really live up to this commandment? I'm sure 'as men' we believe that we love our neighbor but that is not the issue!

Do we love ourselves? I know I didn't, that was until I had come home, revisited my life, my priorities and my relationships which was all brought on by my attendance at MROP. What MROP does is provide a space, friends, mentors and a safe environment for men to stand before GOD and learn to love themselves as GOD loves them, 'warts and all!'

One year on and I can truly say MROP provided the knowledge and experience I needed to 'transform' myself to be the man GOD intended me to be. At work, at home and with friends and family I am able to 'love my neighbor as myself' because for the first time in a very long time I know I can truly love myself.

The 'Rite of Passage' is exactly as it states "A Rite." This 'Rite' should be considered very, very carefully and all who are given the opportunity to experience the "Rite" should welcome the opportunity and 'take' what is rite fully theirs. I am so blessed and thankful that I was able to go in 2009.

Scott



More MROP Reflections



It is very hard to put into words the effects, the deep moving and personal experience of MROP. Having attended MTM on Monday nights at Brookfield certainly helped in preparation but, being a veteran of previous "men's camps" I have to admit I was little guarded about things. I arrived at Somerset as a man of 50, tired of dancing the dance, juggling the balls and fairly disappointed with that "Old time religion" Tired of life and always trying to fix everything. Then there was the father wound, mother wound and a large range of issues going on in my head. Throughout all of my life I had felt like the awkward teenage boy, having felt like I had never grown up. I could stand in a room full of men and still feel inadequate. If I had to say "Did I have an agenda for MROP?" The answer would have been "Yes It was time to put the boy to bed." At the beginning of the Camp I distinctly remember Rob said "Go with the process" and I decided to do that. You have to do that. I found the whole week truly life changing and distinctly recall part of the Grief ritual and

Final Rites as pivotal. There were times of tears, times of laughter, reflection and silence and there are many parts of MROP that are too personal and deep to adequately put into words. The Bible says "Whom the son sets free is free indeed" If you want to experience freedom attend MROP. Your life will never be the same.

Brad

"Friendship. Rest. Rituals. Ceremonies. False self. Separation. Grief. Pain. Fear. Support. Safe. Courage. Silence. Meditation. Solitude. Birds. Animals. Initiation. Tears. Feelings, lots of feelings. Dreams. God. True self. Together. Broken heart. Wholehearted. New perspective. Organization. New energy. New vibe.

There is no problem of being insecure, or to have fears.

Everybody has.

Carl Jung said "Those who look to the outside, dreams and those who looks to the inside, awakes".

MROP is the best place to wake up and start to feel the feelings that have always been there, but somehow never really felt.

Relax, trust and enjoy the journey.

A new day is awaiting for you.

God bless you.

Amen."



Felipe



Commencing in a private home in late 2008 in the outer east of Melbourne it was recently decided to move our MALES meeting this year to St. Martins Community Church Collingwood in the God Squad Clubhouse thanks to the generosity and support of Concern Australia. This has galvanized and expanded the group on one hand and has also given us a focus for the City of Melbourne.

We would like these gatherings to become a place where men can connect with one another in a way that assists them to make a little more sense of their lives and their place in the world. A contemplative focus can help men step back from their usually fast paced, task orientated lives and reflect upon some of the issues that drive and motivate them.

Having participated in the 2008 Men's Rite of Passage at Camp Somerset I am convinced of the need for men to connect in ways that can deepen their spiritual journey. I believe that all men need to have focused and productive lives. It is vitally necessary though for our activity to come out of a place of quiet reflection that is supported by a group of men who will stand with each other in the good times as well as the not so good.

We are excited about this year and are eager to meet as many men as possible who are perhaps not sure where to turn or who to connect with in their life journey.

Alan

MROP Initiate Reflects on Positive Male Spiritual Role

As a police detective for over seventeen years, I have had opportunities to deal with many people in many circumstances. An interview of a streetwise suspect confirmed what I believe the world needs from men – positive male spiritual role models.

My partner was interviewing a hard, calloused man regarding an armed robbery. Occasionally, I interjected an innocuous question just to develop a relationship and breakthrough his hard exterior. Surprisingly, this tough knot of a man began to open up, but never looked at either of us. We created a conversation as men. Not detective and suspect. I learned of his chequered past, his father leaving, his learning to hustle on the streets and his criminal behaviour. His story was sad and I secretly hoped there was some good in his life so I asked if he ever had any joy in his life. He told me he did - once - when as a boy he lived with his cousins and uncle. They enjoyed hiking, fishing, and talking. It struck me that I do that with my sons and other boys as a Cub Scout leader. For the first time he turned toward me. This hardened man then sat up, looked me straight in the eyes, and told me to never stop doing that with those boys.

This experience solidified my belief in the need for positive male spiritual role models. My experiences as a police detective verify what the academic studies have discovered regarding crime: a small number of people cause many of our problems. Those small numbers are primarily males in their late teens to early thirties. When I look at the particular cases of these men, I am assured of my belief, for they did not have a positive male spiritual role model. In fact, often, these men are supported in court by a plethora of females; a mother, an aunt, sisters, girlfriends but rarely a male and seldom a positive spiritual male. In some cases, they had a male role model albeit a negative male role model, if there was a man at all.

What is telling of this is the importance of positive spiritual men. I have instructed in graduate school and police academies for several years and make this point with men by asking one question. Ask most men the worst thing they can hear from their father, or male role model and they will agree: "I am disappointed with you." It cuts them to the quick. We, as men, need to hear we are appointed, that we have arrived, and that we are a man's man. That harkens to the importance of initiation. This, by the way, is played out daily from boys being hazed as new members of a sports team to admittance into a street gang. Men's behaviour is often a journey of seeking male approval. In that journey males must learn wisdom and to learn that wisdom a positive male role model must be present. Males must learn to transform the pain of life. And know this; the pain of life is sublime. Pain comes in many forms and fashions and the acting out of that pain is the crime I deal with as a detective. If we, as a society, ever want to truly fight the "war on crime" we must deal with the real issue; the lack of positive male spiritual role models.

Males must learn to experience joy, for in true joy they discover their true selves. Males must learn not to corrupt their innate power as men, for there is a power greater than them – God. All men, from jail to Yale, need a positive male spiritual role model to guide them in their journey to discover this wisdom.

The world is about the journey from boyhood to manhood. Unfortunately, the world witnesses men's negative behaviour in their journey in myriad ways. As a detective I witness the criminal behaviour of men in their journey. For some men the journey is "I kill; therefore I am." For all men the journey must be; "I love; therefore I am." But the news is not all bad. The positive male spiritual role models are present, yet we need more of them. They are not hard to find; often these role models are the average Joes; school teachers, coaches, an uncle and, hopefully, a father.

To transform this pattern a conversation needs to spread, as it did with that embattled man and me, with a call to action echoing how important these men are to our world.

Tom



Rob Jones Reflects on MROP Grief Work and the Death of his Son Luke

In January this year, my son Luke (22) was tragically killed in an industrial accident. As I write this article I am very much in the midst of grief. Some days I am quite fine but others I am in an emotional turmoil and not very productive. But that's ok! Having attended MROP in 2004, I now know that I need to stay with the pain until it has taught me what it needs to teach me. This is **not** the way I had previously been taught to deal with grief and pain- let me explain:-

Some time ago, I watched a father play with his two young children on the oval near my home. They were practising hurdling and clearly dad was excited. His son did a



Rob and his son Luke

marvellous job on the first two hurdles but fell at the third and badly grazed his knees. His father immediately came to his aid. "It's not that bad. Stop crying. Pull yourself together. Come on- you're not going to cry like a baby?" His son's face said it all. All he wanted from his father was his masculine embrace and assurance, but what he received was a lesson in pain and grief that most of us were also taught. He was learning that it is not safe to show or express one's feelings and pain - especially with other men. He was being taught to suppress and push down his feelings and emotions and put on a brave face. What's more he was being taught to disassociate from his pain and not invest in a vocabulary to articulate it. Now please hear me. I do not believe for a moment that his father did not love him. His father merely communicated what he was taught and how he deals with his pain and grief. This is how most men today are taught to cope with pain and grief.

It was very interesting to watch what the father did later on when his daughter also fell over and hurt herself. The father ran to her aid, picked her up and asked her where it hurt. "Let daddy kiss it better".

Society says it's acceptable for a girl to show feelings and express her pain, but men are somehow required to just get over it!

Richard Rohr says, "A young man who cannot cry is a savage and an old man who cannot laugh is a fool". Richard's words provide a healthy spiritual framework for men's grief work. Grief work is essential for the ongoing growth and transformation of our men.

I have been a pastor and counsellor of men long enough to know that much of men's work is grief and shadow work. Much of men's anger is really unprocessed pain and grief. What is unresolved and suppressed is transmitted and usually onto the ones we love the most. They can't fix it, change it and they hate it. What worked before, no longer does the job. In fact the more they try to solve the problem, the more the grieving process falters. Eventually after much struggling and collateral damage, men just shut down and go numb. Men go into their caves and sit by themselves, lost for words.

Only when men reach the end of their own resources are they free to move towards the next step in grief work- the weeping mode. This is a place where the sheer magnitude of what has happened starts to come home. The sadness- the loss. The thought of not seeing a son again this side of heaven. Our feelings and emotions run amuck. Depression, rage, thoughts of suicide, the futility of life.

This is a normal part of the grief process and is greatly facilitated in a safe non judgmental/sacred/ liminal space where men can be encouraged to stay with the pain. For many men, after a lifetime of solving problems, to just sit with it all and not fix it, is very counter intuitive. Most want the pain fixed **now**. Wise counsel is always to sit with it until it has taught you what it wanted to teach you. Healthy grief work, in most cases will usher men in to a deeper walk with themselves, God and others. They develop a vocabulary for their feelings, pain and emotions and learn not to transmit them. Grief work has done its work when men don't have to blame anyone anymore- even themselves.

Luke 11:29-30 says the only sign He would give us was "the sign of the prophet Jonah". That sooner or later, life will lead us into a dark place, into the belly of the whale, to something we can't fix, that we can't control and we can't even understand. And when we have received what He is trying to show us, we will be spat out for the next part of the journey.

My son's death has shown me afresh, just how much society can split itself off from grief. We think if we disconnect from the pain, we won't get brought down by it and if we really must grieve, then do it in private. Don't let anyone know. If asked "How are you going?" just say "Fine!" As a counsellor this is a recipe for disaster. To make a statement about this, my wife and I invited our community of faith to share

Grieving in Community

in our grief by inviting them to participate in a grief ritual and dedication ceremony. On the day of Luke's death, he was going to help me fix our long driveway. So to honour Luke and help us all to grieve, we decided to dedicate our driveway to Luke (Luke's Way). Our community was invited to come for the dedication and plant trees and shrubs. We did not know what the response would be.

Well, 50 wonderful men and women turned up in their gardening gear, equipped with tools and plants for the afternoon activities. We all gathered -sitting on bales of mulch in a circle. What a wonderful picture. People wanted to be involved/ given permission to be with us in our pain. The afternoon involved the unveiling of a sign dedicating the driveway to Luke, and then each person took on a part of the driveway and cleared planted and mulched. While they gardened they reflected on their own grief/pain. Towards the end of the afternoon folks gathered again in the circle to celebrate and share with a most wonderful afternoon tea which had been supplied by the community.

This community gathering emphasised to us:

- The importance to grieve both in private and in community (we all share in the same pain).
- To allow and give permission for community to be involved with you.
- Physically doing something (especially for the men) together, provides an outlet for grief.
- Having something tangible (Luke's Way) provides a daily reminder of the communities love and support- we are not alone .
- This example models communal grief work which is sadly missing in society today.

I am very thankful to the teaching that I have received over the years from Richard Rohr and the team at the Centre for Action and Contemplation (CAC). It has enabled me to develop a Male Spirituality that now provides the framework for much of what we do at MTM. The "Jewel in the crown" of MTM's work is our annual Men's Rites of Passage which was developed by the CAC.

I miss my son terribly and the pain is at times unbearable. Nothing will bring him back. So this side of Heaven, I hold onto the One who is faithful and all-knowing and I keep connected to my loving faith community. Today is dark but one day the sun will shine again.

Rob Jones
Weaver MROP 2010



a JOURNEY INTO MANHOOD



5 TO 7 NOVEMBER 2010 AT THE WOODFIELD CENTRE, DYSART TASMANIA.

the SPEAKERS

Philip Harback

Philip in answer to God's call, started teaching and sharing his life in a relaxed atmosphere, within small groups. Philip has a passion to help men in their churches, workplace and communities on their journey of discovery. Out of this desire to see change statewide, Directions Tas was born, where men help other men search for significance.



Robert Falzon

Robert is the co-founder of menALIVE and has spent most of his life a successful entrepreneur and recently sold his business to dedicate himself in a fuller way to ministering to men. Robert has a challenging message for today's men and their faith walk.



Rob Jones

Rob is the Founder and CEO of MTM Australia and comes from a corporate / ministry background. Rob's real passion is to see men and their families be all they were created to be. MTM is based in Brisbane and operates a community centre and a training school for men. Rob recently completed his Masters in counselling- specialising in men.



WE ARE MOVING

Shortly the board of MTM will be connecting with all its supporters and those we have helped along the way to inform them of a brand new light industrial unit that has been offered to MTM at an excellent price by a developer who is very supportive of our work. This will give MTM an additional 137sq meters of space and will significantly reduce our monthly rental outgoings. In short we are going to need lots of your help. This will include raising money for a deposit and increasing our operating funds. More details to follow. Please be in prayer for this.



MTM Australia

Suite 5A, 1 Swann Road, Taringa, Qld 4068
P.O Box 85, Indooroopilly Qld 4068
Phone: 07 3876 8710
Fax: 07 3876 8712
Email: admin@mtmaustralia.org.au
Web: www.mtmaustralia.org.au

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