
Community of Christ



The Peacekeepers

Association for Ministry to Military Newsletter

June, 2005

Curt's Column



What a couple of weeks this has been. We arrived back in Missouri from Arizona on 21 May 2005. Lehman, our son, met us at the house and helped us unload the pickup. If he hadn't been here I think Joyce and I would still be trying to get it unloaded. That gave us a little over a week to get ready for conference beginning on 2 June.

Tim & Sheila Kunzweiler came to stay with us during conference. Tim is our vice-president and has an article appearing in this issue. In as much as I started back to work as a security officer for the Independence Center we didn't have much time to spend together but what time we did have was outstanding.

Because my hours did not allow me to attend any of the sessions during the day and since I'm getting to be an old man and tired after 8 hours of walking we did not attend any of the evening sessions at the Auditorium. We did, however, get President Steve Veazey's ordination to the office of President Prophet of the Community of Christ. If he were in the service we would call it being sworn in.

The minute that Dish network began the service both Joyce and I could feel the Spirit of the Lord's presence in the service. It was like being present with the full auditorium. The only thing different was that we could probably see better than many who were physically present. To us there was and is no doubt that Steve Veazey was chosen by the Lord to be our leader at this time.

The next evening President Veazey spoke to the attendees. What a powerful message and so appropriate for the time in which we live. He laid it on the line about what we have to do and what God expects from us. In my mind and in my estimation we have ourselves a LEADER.

Joyce and I were privileged to know President Veazey when he was a Seventy and assigned to the East Central States Region. While our paths only crossed occasionally we did have the opportunity to hear of his accomplishments while he was in our area. Even then we had the opportunity to see his devotion to the work to which he was called. Feel quite certain that because of the limited meetings he will not remember me especially as he met so many people throughout that particular part of the country and because of his wide experience throughout the world.

Wherever you are, be assured that the church is in excellent hands and it will be moving forward.

On Sunday after the service at the auditorium the local congregations were privileged to have guest speakers from all over the world. We at East Alton were privileged to have Otis Hardy as our speaker. His story is outstanding and he also didn't pull any punches. If you ever have the opportunity to hear him speak be sure and do it.

May the Lord be with you and keep you from harms way is our prayer.

A POSITIVE FORCE

Can a military readiness training event relate in any way to my walk with Christ? That thought hadn't really entered my mind until I recently had the privilege to assist the Air Force Materiel Command in planning for, preparing for, and then executing its "Warfighter support" mission in a Joint exercise called POSITIVE FORCE 2005. The exercise took place in two phases, Part A from 10 – 14 March and Part B from 18 – 24 March. Alas, I can't go into too many scenario details – since the classified nature of things would force me to (as they say)

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is dedicated to bringing ministry to military members on active duty throughout the world.**

"twist your head off and put it in a safe" at the end of our discussion! Nonetheless, in my exercise supporting role in a USAF Major Command, I discovered that the exercise arena can have – as strange as it may sound – interesting parallels to the "purposeful Christian life."



Why does the military conduct exercises? You may have heard the expression "we train like we intend to fight." No one hopes to avoid fighting more than the military professional. Still, because of the world we live in, defending freedoms and protecting lives requires a ready military presence – at least for today's part of the equation. The military must be trained for any contingency and so it works continuously to develop (and hone) the necessary understandings and skills. As military members, we need to be able to grasp the objectives – what we should achieve – and then we may best determine an appropriate *plan of action*, to ensure success. We work, sometimes alone, but often as a team – especially where mutual support can enhance the desired outcome. "Practice makes perfect is another often repeated phrase. Besides review and study, there is even "dress rehearsal" in our process. It's very appropriate to "try out" our capabilities before they may be needed for "the real test." An exercise can assist in the effort. Finally, we implement our plan.

Let me note here that the Air Force addresses the exercise process in 5 phases. Those phases are: ¹ "Planning, ² Preparation, ³ Execution, ⁴ Post-Execution Analysis, and ⁵ Post-Execution Reporting." I'll just reference the first three here (since, upon reflection, it might be best to leave life's "post-execution" matters in the Lord's hands!).

The learning and growing Christian may liken a disciple's life-walk as, itself, having various "phases" – like a military exercise. Of course, life is about "execution" in every phase; but, in our developmental periods, we are still preparing for the greater challenges and opportunities that may yet lie ahead. Should we *ever* stop preparing?

If we look at a purposeful Christian life (as opposed to a random one perhaps?) we may understand how the call to effective discipleship logically involves planning and preparation.

Living as a Christian Disciple often involves setting goals and objectives (planning). While we have confidence that the Lord can reveal his plan to us at any time along the way, we should still be ready daily for service. Do we seek the Lord's mind each day? Are we looking beyond the horizon for

what we might achieve, if we challenge ourselves and listen to the continuing call?

The Christian Disciple is also much about learning and growing (preparation) – in order to achieve the known objectives – and perhaps also those that are unknown until the Lord reveals them. Life and its experiences add to our learning all along. But, if we want to achieve certain things, our learning has to be structured and focused – in many cases so that we can meet (the Lord's) desired objectives. As we are called to be His followers – the body of Christ – our hands and feet must be "prepared" for the task. Are we engaged in learning – so that we can be the most effective witnesses and ministers?

The purposeful Christian life and the call to effective discipleship is (finally) much about execution. We talk about "where the rubber meets the road" and – as the saying goes – "walking the walk." As we are called to be His followers – the body of Christ – our hands and feet must be "about" the task. And this, my friends, is as noble an exercise as we can be engaged in! Especially in the military, you may be the only "Christian" that some of the world's people may ever meet!



The reminder I personally received from my recent exercise: Wherever I am I must be a **POSITIVE FORCE**, for Christ, in the World!

—Tim Kunzweiler, Vice President

Flag Day

I am privileged to live in Independence Missouri, the home of Harry and Bess Truman, the jumping off place for the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon trails, a city with a small town flavor and city opportunities, and a city whose name brings pride to all of its residents. Missouri is the "Show Me" state, and we demand our right to be shown the truth. We view ourselves as independent and we fight for the independence of others. Following 9-11 we (like the rest of the nation) fired up all our patriotism, sang the old songs, and flew our flags with pride. How quickly we forget – our patriotism has been lagging again of late, and I'm not the only one who seems to think we need a shot in the arm.

On Saturday, June 11 I found myself at the old Independence square in the midst (much to my surprise) of a little known Flag Day celebration. Just in case you are as ignorant about Flag Day as I was:

- ◆ On 14 June 1777 our first flag was adopted.
- ◆ In 1945 the Pledge of Allegiance was adopted.
- ◆ On 23 August 1949 June 14 was set aside as National Flag Day.
- ◆ In 1985 the Pledge of Allegiance was adopted as a part of the celebration of Flag Day.
- ◆ On 11 June 2005 the Mayor of Independence Missouri declared that the city celebrate our patriotism for 21 days – from Flag Day to Independence Day on 4 July 2005.

Air Force Captain Shawn Thompson gave a very moving speech, relating a story from the brother of a slain soldier. “The red of the flag now represents the blood my brother shed, the blue the color of his bruises, and the white the purity and truth of those who fight to protect the country whose flag still flies proudly.”



Following the festivities in Independence, I went to Englewood (about ½ mile), where the Englewood Business Association sponsored its third annual celebration with Mayor Stewart, Councilman Don Reimal, along with Sandy Fluty of the Red Hat Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution – Independence Pioneers chapter, and Daughters of the Confederacy chapter 710 celebrated with booths of music, crafts, food, and a general good old time.

—Mary Yocum

Miracle In Place of Medicine

In the early years of the decade comprising the 1980’s, Gérard Bérard became the new Mission President of the Haiti church. He and his family took up residence in the small home provided as part of the mission headquarters building, situated at the top of a long upward-sloping hill in the town of Pétionville, not far from the capitol and port city of Port-au-Prince. The headquarters building sat along one side of the fair-sized property, facing a large courtyard. The packed dirt of this area was sheltered by a number of big trees, and the entire property was enclosed by a tall wrought-iron fence.

In contrast to his two predecessors in that office, Gérard was a relatively young man. He had come to the church as an adult, as had they, but he did not have their experience of having been ministers of other groups. He had been involved, by his own admission, in a very different lifestyle. He and some friends were in their pursuit of such amuse-

ments one evening when they passed by a small building from which issued vigorous and joyful singing. He testifies that he was drawn to that music like an iron filing to a magnet, and sent his friends on without him. He slipped into what proved to be one of our churches, and sat in the back. He never returned to his old life and in a few short years, he became a National Minister. In time Gérard was selected to assume leadership of the church in his country. He spoke French, Creole, and continued to polish his knowledge of English until he was quite fluent in that language.

Gérard and his wife Mariel were parents of five children, the youngest of whom was about four or five years old. This little girl had been, they said, “sickly from birth.” She had always been too frail and weak even to go outside and, certainly, she hadn’t the strength to interact in any significant way with her older siblings. It was a constant heartache and worry for her parents.

One day it became apparent that her health had begun to decline more sharply, and within hours, she was a very sick child, indeed. Feeling completely helpless, Gérard and Mariel took the little girl to the local hospital, hoping against hope that something could be done to save her.



It must be understood that most hospitals in Third World countries bear little resemblance to places of healing as we know them in more advanced countries. Someone must stay with the patient and provide all his or her care. In many places, any bed linens are brought from home, and certainly an ordinary hospital gown is unknown. The family must bring in food for their loved one, and assist in feeding her or him. Although a doctor may give a prescription, the medication must be purchased from a pharmacy and brought back to the hospital to be administered.

In time that day, a doctor did come to examine the very sick little girl, although he confessed himself puzzled by her illness. “However,” he said, “perhaps this medicine will help her.” It was evident that he really wasn’t at all certain there was anything to be done. Nevertheless, he gave a prescription to Gérard and Mariel.

While the mother cradled her sick baby, Gérard took the prescription and went to the pharmacy. He had the sum total of their money in his pocket. It was five dollars. One can imagine his shock and dismay at the pharmacy to learn the prescribed medicine would cost the unimaginable sum of

twenty-five dollars – this in a country where the minimum daily wage at that time was a single dollar a day. There was simply no way the medication could be bought.

Gérard left the pharmacy bowed down with despair, knowing that this cherished small daughter would surely die within a day or two, at the most. He continued to lift his anguished prayers as he walked back towards the hospital.

It was on this return walk that he was stopped by a woman of the church. She also was in a state of some agitation, and begged Gérard for his assistance. She had a very real and very urgent need of monetary assistance—in the precise sum of five dollars. Gérard didn't hesitate for very long. He had the five dollars, far less than the cost of the medicine needed for his child, and he had no hope of obtaining the additional amount required. This woman needed what he had, and so he gave her all of it.

He walked the remainder of the distance to the hospital, faced with the task of telling his wife what he had done. Not surprisingly, Mariel agreed with him that he had no other choice. The five dollars would not save their daughter, and it was exactly what their friend and fellow believer needed so desperately. They bundled up the fragile little girl and took her home to die.

People without electrical supply often go to bed when it gets dark and arise the next day when light returns. So it was with the Bérard family. Both

Gérard and Mariel were exhausted, crushed with sorrow for their child and the events of the day. They prayed in relinquishment to God and went to bed.



It was full daylight when they awoke the next morning. Their first thought was for their sick child as they realized they had not been disturbed once in the night to care for her. In their exhaustion, they had slept through until morning. They went immediately to her bedside and found to their horror that she was not there. They searched frantically throughout the small house. They could hear the children playing, laughing and shouting outside in the courtyard, and they ran to elicit their assurance in the search.

There in the morning sunlight were their children, all five of them. The little girl who had been sickly from birth was shouting and running as joyously as her brothers and sisters. She was well, rejoicing in the health and strength she had never known before in her short life.

She continued to thrive, her healing complete. She is now perhaps a wife and mother of her own children. No doubt her parents have many times share the testimony of this miracle with her. Just as certainly, she has recounted to her own children the story of the great blessing she received in her childhood that allowed her to grow up to become their mother.

—Joan Condit

Available in an E-mail and a “snail mail” edition. Active-duty military members who join the association can receive either edition for free. Non-active-duty members receive either edition with a paid membership, **\$10.00, due in April**. The newsletter is also available on our Web site: <http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/>

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