
Community of Christ



The Peacekeepers

Association for Ministry to Military Newsletter

October, 2005

Curt's Column



Summer is rapidly drawing to a close. It seems that the older we get the faster it goes by. In keeping with summer leaving us so soon, we have decided to get the October issue of "The Peacekeepers" out early. That's a change for us as usually we are pushing the end of the month. The reason that we are pushing the envelope has to do with hurricane Katrina. We have several articles about what is taking place with the Community of Christ in the area and want to share them with you.

We have received word that our former prophet and president's mother died recently. We extend to him and his family our sympathy and our love. Brother Grant was solidly behind our efforts and helped us get off the ground in the very formative days of the Peacekeepers.

We also lost a very good friend and supporter recently. Del Cory passed away recently. Mim, his wife, called me to share the news. I wanted to get some information about his life in this issue but because of time requirements that will have to wait until the next issue. Del and Mim always helped us a great deal with the Peacekeepers booth at conference and he will be missed.

All of the news now is about the damage that hurricane Katrina has done in the south. Not only do we see on TV the destructive force of the high winds but we also see the destructive force of evil. Firefighters, police, army and others who are trying to help are fired upon by unsavory elements to keep them from doing their job. Looting is prevalent everywhere and the police are hard pressed to keep law in the area. The media seems to play on this type of thing so we see the sordid side of life.

When we see pictures on TV it is always the black population that is shown, but equally hard hit is some of the areas where the white population are suffering as well. It just doesn't seem fair that the media is biased in its presentations. This is not the only area that the media is biased. When it is reported about your actions in Iraq, we only get to see the results of explosions and other forms of destruction.

Missing in all reports are the good acts that are taking place by individuals and groups. We have received some e-mails showing GI's helping children and getting the thumbs up sign. We get letters telling us that the general population there is happy the military is in their country and suggest that we stay. So our hats are off to each one of you who represent us here at home. We know that you are doing your job as you are trained and also, given the opportunity, you go the extra mile.

As you can see by our newsletter this time our people in the south are doing what you are doing only in a different area. The compassionate side our people show and the endeavor indicates the love of Christ in their lives. May we all in the future be witnesses of Him who showed us the way to treat our fellowmen and carry His banner wherever we are. GOD BLESS —Curt

Hurricane Katrina:

Message from the First Presidency

By Stephen M. Veazey, Kenneth N. Robinson, and David D. Schaal

We are acutely aware of the anguish, loss, and despair being experienced by the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We want to assure our church members and friends throughout the world, especially in the devastated Gulf Coast area, that the World Church is committed to using all resources and contacts within its influence to provide emergency assistance and to support long-term rebuilding efforts.

We are extremely proud of our congregations that have moved quickly in creative and sacrificial ways to shelter and care for neighbors in distress in their local communities



The Community of Christ Association for Ministry to Military Personnel is dedicated to bringing ministry to military members on active duty throughout the world.

and from the cities most adversely impacted by the storm. We are equally proud of our World Church field ministers and headquarters personnel who have responded with compassion and skill to begin to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those still reeling from the destruction and chaos resulting from the storm. All responders are truly demonstrating what it means to be Community of Christ through word and deed. They are providing shining examples of the values and mission of the church.

—The First Presidency

La Quinta Safe Port in Storm

By Challen Stephens

Excerpt from *The Huntsville Times*

Pam Nevle said her husband doesn't care to leave the hotel room except to walk their two puppies. Inside, he's fixed on CNN. ...

[*The Huntsville Times* report on Thursday, September 8 relates how the hotel La Quinta opened its doors to refugees.]

On Tuesday, the Nevles got the first word about their home in Chalmette in Louisiana. It's not just under water. Located near a refinery, it's under oil.

Along with scores of others forced out of their homes by the hurricane, the Nevles have taken refuge at the La Quinta.... And none can be certain how long they will be staying.

As of Wednesday afternoon (September 7), the hotel held 150 evacuees in 68 rooms, said hotel employee Kellie Epley. Some were evicted from other hotels when they could not pay. Other hotels turned away pets after a day or two.

At La Quinta, the hotel works out rent payments that wait on supplements from the Red Cross and federal agencies.

Donations of food and clothes have flooded in, passed on to the Red Cross and other agencies as needed.

Shelena Gervais of the West Bank said she worries about returning to disease and unclean wa-

ter, that she doesn't want to put her two young children at risk in New Orleans.

"We might be staying put," she said. "I don't want to bring my kids back to that. There's no community left."

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Church Becomes Evacuees' Home

By Lydia Grimes

Excerpts from *The Brewton Standard*

The Community of Christ Church on Smith Lane has been a home-away-from-home for about 15 evacuees since Hurricane Katrina forced them to evacuate early last week. [Story of from September 7].

While the church facility is Brewton's official Red Cross shelter, church members have gone far beyond the call of shelter duty, doing all they can to make the evacuees in their midst feel at home.

Families who are staying at the church have the luxury of having their own "rooms," as the Sunday school rooms have been turned into bedrooms for the time being.

The members of The Community of Christ Church are trying to make their visitor's stay as comfortable as possible, and in addition to seeing to their physical needs,

have also included them in the church activities. They also have gotten help to get the displaced children back into a school setting so their lives can continue as normal as possible. Those who need the help of doctors are taken care of and the members of the church are more than happy to see to their needs.

"This could have been us and our situation last year during Ivan," said Sandra Smith, one of the many workers dedicated to aiding in the comfort and needs of the evacuees. "It does my heart good to see those who are getting the help and how appreciative they are."

There are even a couple of the evacuees who have been able to secure jobs to help their families.



Morris Electric has hired them for some part-time work.

“This is what we are about,” said Howard Andrews, who’s also working with the church. “We are supposed to care for our fellow man and that is what we are doing. We will be here for them for however long it takes for them to get back on their feet, whether it be two weeks or two months or longer. It’s the least we can do.”

The Community of Christ Church is not alone. Other churches in the community have pitched in and are providing food for lunch and dinner. Breakfast is made by some men of the church who arrive around 6 a.m. and get things started.

Not only are the other churches helping to feed those in the shelter, other organizations in the community have pitched in with groceries and other items that are needed.

One job of the many people who man the shelter is to be there to listen to people who may have lost everything. They feel the need that the people have to tell their stories, and some of them are certainly hair-raising.

“Although we have several family members here, we are missing others,” Lucille Nunez said. Her family is from Chalmette in St. Bernard Parish and she is living with not knowing what happened to some members of her family as well as what she does know.

“We have heard that some of our family members were put on an overpass to await evacuation,” she said. “It was while they were there that some people tried to attack two of the girls, one of whom is pregnant. If it had not been for other family members protecting them, anything could have happened. We have heard that they are now in Houston, but there are so many others that we don’t know about yet.”

One of those staying at the YMCA has finally heard about her 81-year-old mother and knows that she is still all right, but the sister who was in the house at the time of the storm is still unaccounted for.

The one repetitive comment heard at the shelter is the gratitude the refugees have for the people of Brewton and how they have helped in this situation.

“This is one of the most rewarding things I have ever been involved in,” Smith said.

The church has extended an invitation to evacuees currently in residence at the Greater Brewton YMCA to join them for meals, as well as to evacuees who have joined friends or families here.

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News From the Field

September 7 – Huntsville, Alabama

The church in Huntsville fed over 100 people that came from several different hotels for great food and great fellowship at the local La Quinta Inn on September 7. For a small congregation of only 35 active members, we really put out a spread of food. One member even made gumbo for the Louisiana folks. They just cried at feeling a part of home up here in Huntsville. As one of our members, Nancy McClellan said, “I was really proud to call you ‘my congregation’ as I stood back and watched you minister to the emotional and spiritual needs. It was one more reminder of how blessed we are.”

Many of us have relatives in the affected area. We can’t really help personally by going down because of the gas situation so we helped with the Oblation donations last Sunday and had our Wednesday night gathering at the hotel to feed many displaced families.

—Karen Alexander, reporting

September 7 – Mobile, Alabama

Today the vans brought some 65 people from the Vancleave, Mississippi congregation and 5 people from Escatawpa to the Restoration Outreach Center in Mobile. The menu today of ham, green beans, candied yams, dump cake, and fruit cocktail was prepared and served by members of the Robertsdale, Alabama congregation. Hot showers were again made available and the air conditioned facilities were appreciated. Numerous children were in attendance which made the scene and atmosphere one of joy and emphasized the powerful feeling of hope for the days ahead. Again, the Spirit of the Master was evident as all ate and enjoyed fellowship with each other and members of the Mobile and Robertsdale congregations. They all departed and went to one of the local shopping areas to purchase much-needed necessities before their return home.



Each time the vans depart to go to a different area of the mission center they also [took] much needed supplies to be delivered to the distribution centers located in the respective congregation facilities. If nothing else, the devastation wrought by this hurricane has emphasized to all of us how precious we are to each other and that we should remember this time and never take each other for granted again.

—George Farnell, reporting

For stories from members and friends in the field go to www.cofchrist.org/disaster-relief/field-news.asp.

What Are You Aiming At?

By Len Young

I grew up in a military family. My dad was a lifer in the Air Force. During my growing up years we were stationed in many places, including a four-year tour in Japan.

My dad was a colonel, and he spent most of his life helping things get transported from one place to another. He was fond of saying “Be careful what you aim at—you may hit it.”

As the field apostle in Europe and the north-eastern part of the USA, I have the privilege of knowing many dedicated persons who serve in the armed forces of many nations, as well as many who have served in former years.

Two of my colleagues recently told me a story that gave me pause to think about what my father used to say.

At a field meeting in Europe a couple of years ago, Bishop Kees Compier (Dutch) and Ephim Brudsky (Russian) were talking about their lives when they discovered that they had been in their respective nations’ militaries during the same years. As they continued to talk, they also discovered that they were both tank commanders. Not only that, but that they had both been trained to recognize and hunt down each other’s tank model.

When they discovered this, they said, “We could have blown each other up!” What followed then was a long silence after which someone said, “It just goes to show you how careful you have to be whenever you take aim and fire.”



I have thought often about this as the war in Iraq has raged in the past few years. I wonder when the day will come when some of us will have a conversation with an ex-Iraqi serviceman similar to the one between my two colleagues.

May God bless all of you in your stewardship of your daily life.

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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