

Community of Christ



# The Peacekeepers

Association for Ministry to Military Newsletter

February, 2006

## Curt's Column

My "how time flies when you're having fun." At least that is how the quotation goes. In our case the time is passing rapidly and it won't be too long until Joyce and I return to Independence. I have had some very good news from my doctor who performed brain surgery on me last April. It seems everything is in good shape and he doesn't want to see me again. It may or may not interest you, but it sure has given me a lift.

I am very disappointed in the response that we have had from the postcards we sent to most of the active duty personnel. We are concerned that we have your addresses correct and we are very interested in any promotions that any of you have received. In addition, if any of you have any experiences you would like to relate to us, we need that as well. This newsletter is for you and about you.

We, who are in Arizona for the winter, as well as those living here, will receive a blessing this year. President Veazey and his wife Cathi Cackler-Veazey, will be sharing with us in the annual winter reunion. We are looking forward to the opportunity to sit under their ministry.

I guess those of you who are in Iraq know what it is to be in a dry climate. The Valley of the Sun in which Mesa Arizona lies is in drought condition. Tomorrow the 28<sup>th</sup> of January will break a new record for no rainfall. It will be 102 days without any rain. As I hear of earthquakes in places where they are not common and volcanoes erupting again and all types of phenomena occurring, it causes me to look at the predictions as given in the Book of Mormon talking about the last days. It seems to me that we are experiencing a movement to take Christ out of all our lives. The basis for our country was the freedom of religion – not freedom *from* religion. Your efforts to keep our country as one that keeps



Christ as a cornerstone of our civilization becomes more important than ever.

I just received information a few minutes ago that Heather Osterhaus is now a Lt. Colonel. Congratulations Heather on your promotion. Keep up the good work.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

In the April issue I'll tell you all about the winter reunion we (will have) had with President Veazey.

I'd love to hear from any of you who have e-mail. You can send it to either [armr77@aol.com](mailto:armr77@aol.com) or [armr77@netero.net](mailto:armr77@netero.net). May the Lord bless and keep each one of you from harms way is my prayer.

**Greetings to all my friends in the military! From Apostle Mary Jacks Dynes**

I hope the new year of 2006 is going well for you all! I write this on January 24 which the news people share is the saddest day of the year. Being in the dead of winter and not getting much sunshine in many places adds to melancholy feelings, they say. This may be so for many of you but I would encourage you to look to the light of Jesus Christ and have that light radiate from you. From the very center of whose we are, we can radiate light. It is this time of year I count my blessings and I hope you, too, take some time to really count the blessings you have received from our generous God. I am overwhelmed when I count my blessings and know God through Jesus Christ has walked



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

right beside me even as I journey with my husband's death from suicide on November 9, 2003.

My son found a companion in marriage at thirty-seven years of age in August of 2004. He and his bride were classmates from grade school, middle school, and high school. They are naming their soon to be born son's middle name, David, because it was because of David they got reacquainted at his memorial service. The autistic son of my nephew was able to show compassion for the first time when he saw his "papa," his grandfather and David's brother, crying as we threw David's ashes at his favorite wildlife refuge spot. My list could go on and on.

I know my journey will be a long one. But as I open myself up to the light of Jesus Christ and more healing which comes with pain, I am finding new ways of being that I would not have discovered had it not been for David's death. One of these ways is in the area of being more generous. I am finding new ways of sharing generously of my abundance whether that is sharing my testimony of the living God and Christ that walks with me or sharing my resources. Sharing my two minute testimony is coming much easier whether I am in the airport, a restaurant, or in the local grocery store.



In addition, I am finding new ways of sharing my resources which I never thought possible. I don't need as much as I thought. I find the more I share of my money equally with World Church and the congregation I attend, the more I am blessed. Of course, I continue to contribute to World Accord, Outreach International, Community of Christ Seminary, Graceland, and local campaigns. I am discovering the reason for my life and all of our lives is in the sharing with each other the love, compassion, and peace that Jesus emulated so well. We were meant to be there for each other through all of life's happenings. As Mother Teresa has shared along these lines, "It isn't how much you do or even what you do, but how much love you put in the doing that counts." I am trying to live this daily as I go about my life. It is very difficult at times but I am making some headway. By God's grace, I am changing.

As 2006 unfolds, it is my wish that all of you would seriously look at being more generous in both your testimony and your resources. The world

needs this. Your community needs this. Your military community needs this. The Community of Christ needs this. As you are aware, we are deficit spending to cover our expenses at the World Church level. It is my hope and prayer that our generous God may continue to walk with you, especially those who are serving in dangerous places all over the world. May we recognize as well as appreciate what an abundance we all have.

By your generous living wherever you find yourself, may you turn sadness into joy! 2006 blessings of peace and joy on this day of light!

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## Ink-Stained Symbol of Freedom

by Ty Young, The Arizona Republic

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Taha Mohammed of Gilbert, Arizona has been a little more careful when washing the dishes lately.

He wants to preserve one of the few marks of freedom that he and his fellow Kurds have ever experienced.

Like every Iraqi voting in the recent parliamentary election – whether at home or in other parts of the world – Mohammed dipped his index finger in purple ink at the San Diego polling station.

Shortly after looking at his ink-stained finger, he realized there was more work left – namely a thank you letter to U.S. troops.

"We couldn't do this without them," he said. "They are the ones who gave us this freedom."

As it turns out, he didn't have to look far to find some. After chatting with Todd Eller, a co-worker at Pan Jit Technology semiconductor in Tempe, he learned that two of Eller's cousins were returning from military service in Iraq. When the two arrive at their Texas homes, they will get more than hugs from family and friends.

They will receive a letter from Mohammed, who moved from northern Iraq and away from Saddam Hussein's rule in 1996.

"I think they need to hear it from real people and not just from the government," Eller said. "It's not just the government that wanted them to go to war. It was the people of Iraq, too."



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## The Cross I Carry by Fred Hamilton

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I carry a cross that few can see  
It's the cross my God made for me,  
It's the same size He made for His Son  
The same size He made for everyone.

It's rough hewn with gnarls and knots  
And not comfortable in any spot.  
I've thrown it down in disgust  
Because of the weight and the trail of the dust  
Which seems to bother those I most trust.

I go for council that it might be reformed  
To a shape that is easier borne  
And in that council He let me know  
Without the cross I cannot go.

I carry it for Him or I carry it for another  
Happiness on one hand, sorrow on the other.  
Many harden their hearts and stiffen their necks  
Against the very thing they know is correct.

If you reach out to help another  
You'll find your cross is not a bother.  
He showed me the prints in His nail-pierced  
hands  
And asked that I for Him make a stand.



I picked up my cross and to my surprise  
It was the very same weight, shape and size  
The knots and gnarls, the roughness still there  
But I was no longer the worse for wear.

Yes, my cross I know is still the same  
But it's the Joy in Jesus that changed the game.  
Oh how happy I made that choice  
My load has been lightened by the Master's voice.

I reached down to help someone  
To my surprise he looked like God's Son.  
Physically weakened, not by the load  
But by the steepness and roughness of the road.

The weight of my cross was completely gone  
As I helped carry the load of that needy one.  
My joy is great, my heart does leap  
To know we'll meet at Jesus' feet.

My Master, my Savior, my God you see  
Yes, the one who made the cross for me  
Is the very same Carpenter of Galilee.

*Inspired by: Elbert A. Smith & Beatrice Witherspoon*

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## The Lord Guides in a Gracious Way by Theresa C. Martin

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When I was reborn – when I committed my body and spirit unreservedly to God in the beautiful covenant relationship of baptism – my soul soared.

Two of my three young children were also baptized on that memorable day in the church which had nurtured and taught us for almost three years.

“Just as I Am,” the congregation sang as we entered the water – and it sounded like a choir of angels.

For days after, I could not wipe the happy smile off my face. I was a new person, and the joy permeated my home and my job.

Then, just like I had never had this beautiful experience, I exploded in anger at something one of the children did. I was devastated. I must not have changed after all. I still had a bad temper. My imperfections bothered me.

Shortly afterward, my Boy Scout son came home from a campout, bringing a sack with a small wild animal (I think it was a raccoon), which he was hoping to keep for a pet. We lived in an apartment in the city! After a talk we agreed to drive back to the same area, release it, and hope it would find its mother.

It was a beautiful drive north of St. Joseph along the Missouri bluffs. On one side was the river – on the other was the most magnificent array of trees in full autumn color. At the right place, we drove into the bluffs to let our little animal friend out of the car.

In an effort to take a reminder of that afternoon back home with us, the children and I stopped to gather leaves. We looked for the most beautifully colored, perfectly shaped leaves, and we gathered all shapes and varieties. But not one perfect leaf did we find. Each leaf, whether picked from a tree or off the ground, had some blemish.



At first I was disappointed, but later as we drove away from the spot and saw once again the beauty of the trees massed in a landscape I was elated. I felt that God was saying to me, “My people are like those leaves. Not one of you is without blemish. By yourself you can contribute little to the world around you. But, like the leaves, you can do much together.”

When I am discouraged by my own inadequacies and failures and by the blemishes which sometimes appear in fellow Saints, I hope I will remember the trees. I know now that Zion will be. God can use each one of us in building his kingdom as long as we remain attached to, and accept nourishment from, the tree of life.



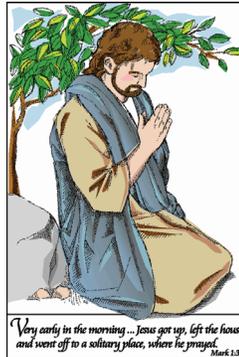
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## Pause to Pray by Frances Hurst Booth

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When I was a child, large billboards with advertisements blighted our highways. One of them came to mind with today's theme – the Coca-Cola slogan of “the pause that refreshes.”

Another memory followed – the words from an old hymn: “Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?” It is my good fortune to awaken early each morning, my mind fully alert and my body ready and eager for the opportunities and challenges of a new day.



After affirming aloud that “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” I quiet my thoughts and ask God to bring to my mind what is necessary to attend to that day and focus on ways to carry out his purposes in and through me. It often surprises me what my agenda includes.

I am one who has enjoyed attending silent retreats, basking in peaceful natural surroundings away from the bombardment of the senses by the increasing demands of our fast-paced society. Such occasions provide me with a resurgence of spiritual energy and insight, uninterrupted time to be alone with my Lord in prayer among the towering ponderosa pines at our Whispering Pines church campgrounds. Truly, it is a pause that refreshes.

Jesus sought quiet times away from the press of the crowd and events, difficult though that was, to regain a feeling of serenity, support, and strength from communion with God. Those benefits are as available to us now as they were then.

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