

Community of Christ



# The Peacekeepers

Association for Ministry to Military Newsletter

April, 2006

## Curt's Column



This article is being written early in March 2006. Arizona Winter Reunion has just finished and while it is fresh on my mind I want to capture some thoughts.

Our guest ministers were Steve and Cathi Cackler Veazey. First off it is always great to have the president and prophet of the church available to minister to you. Each time you hear him speak you expect to hear the best possible message. On Tuesday he delivered the worship sermon and it was outstanding. I so wanted to send it to my brother in Medford, Oregon. However, the recording system of the church failed to record any of the message, I was devastated. I first thought that I had given the staff a bad batch of tapes but recording on the tape with my equipment I found that the tape was OK. Nevertheless, I felt really bad about the incident and we lost a fantastic message.

I found time to talk to Brother Veazey several times in line and I was especially impressed with the fact that he listened so carefully to everything that I had to say. Not that everything I had to say was so important, but rather he listened so intently. He made me feel that what I had to impart was important to him. This has to take practice and evidence of sincerity. Be assured the Lord knew what He was doing when He called Steve Veazey to lead the church.

One of his main points had to do with reconciliation. As I have had a chance to ponder in my own mind about his remarks I find that this aspect of our lives is more than just you and me. This has to do with congregations, groups of people and nations. As I write this there is a possibility in Iraq that there could be civil war because each side believes what they are doing is called of God. As I see it if they could reconcile their differences there would be no need for those of you who are in Iraq to be there.

Each one of us is important to God in our own right. He related those who are outcast in our congregations to those in the olden days with leprosy. Those who had leprosy were required to avoid all society and further state that they were unclean. We do this in modern day society as well. While many of those who have made a mistake in their life do not have to declare their problem, they are still shunned by the rest of us. Jesus came to heal the sinner and bring that person to God. Many in our society believe that once a person has committed a crime or evil deed they cannot be cured and must be put on a list for all of us to see and stay away from.

If we would take the time to go to those people and show them that Jesus did not like the act but loves them and wants them to change, I wonder how many lives would be turned around. We have examples of men who have been put in prison and while there have been visited by ministers and upon their release completely became a changed person. Look about you and make certain that you are not making a person a leper. It is my hope that from this day forward I can do as Christ did and see the good in all people and help them see as well God's love for them.

May the Lord bless you and keep you from harm's way is my prayer.



## Fort Riley Contact

Say – have any of you wished for a contact near Fort Riley? If so you should contact Don Bice at 785-456-1776, or [dbice@wamego.net](mailto:dbice@wamego.net).



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

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## Graceland University Horizons Publishes "Tribute to Graceland Alumni Veterans"

By Tim Kunzweiler

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I am pleased to be receiving copies of the Graceland University Horizons Magazine these days, though I am not an Alumnus of Graceland (was not yet a member of the Community of Christ in my college era and was simply unaware of the school back then). Actually, Sheila and I do have a personal link to Graceland now: our son, Alex, has just been accepted to there as a freshman for the fall 2006 term! I was very delighted recently when I noted that the front cover of the Winter 2005 issue (Vol 21, No 3.) depicted a parade — with the Star Spangled Banner at the fore — being escorted by members of the U.S. military. Upon a closer examination of the issue I was made even happier when I saw that it incorporated an extensive article entitled “Tribute to Graceland Alumni Veterans,” honoring Graceland alumni who served in the military.

The article provides the personal accounts — some quite harrowing — of a number of Graceland veterans, whose periods of service ranged from WWII up through our present day’s Global War on Terror. As I write here, the link to the issue with this article reflects is <http://www.graceland.edu/pdf/alumni/HORDec2005.pdf>. Graceland Director of Media Relations and Horizons Editor, Randy Meline, opened the article with a commentary that indicates he has a sincere appreciation for Graceland’s military veterans. Both the introduction and the article’s stories are well worth your read. After reading the issue myself I e-mailed Randy to thank him for what I described as a “very moving and much appreciated recognition of an aspect of ‘Alumni service.’”

I encourage you to check out <http://www.graceland.edu/Horizons/vet.cfm>, which holds “a compilation of information about Graceland University alumni who responded to Horizons’ queries concerning their service in the U.S. military.” There you might find some veteran classmates you know personally! If they’re not members of the Association please tell them we’d love their support and testimonies. Also, if you happen to know of other military veterans who are Graceland graduates please let them know about the University’s veteran-related page and the Horizons article.



Of note, the editorial board of the Graceland Horizons Magazine has also graciously placed a link to the Community of Christ Military Ministries Web page <http://www.cofchrist.org/military/> on their website (lookin' good Chaplain Jobe!). You can see the link at <http://www.graceland.edu/horizons/>. From the Military Ministries page you can link directly to the Peacekeepers Home page <http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/> too! Spread the word about all three sites! The Peacekeepers thank Randy Meline, the Horizons staff, and Graceland University for honoring the school’s military veterans and for publishing their stories. And may God bless all Peacekeepers.

Tim "K9" Kunzweiler

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## Called to Be Peacemakers by Jim Slauter, Council of Twelve Apostles

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“Share...share peace...share the peace of Jesus Christ! That’s /! No new programs, no new goals, no new themes, no new logos...just being faithful. Being faithful to God, being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and being faithful to the central mission of the Restoration....

The phrase “the peace of Jesus Christ” contains all of the promises, hopes, and blessings of the gospel as revealed by Christ and as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, his promised presence with us. In all of the places in our lives where we are afraid, anxious, discouraged, guilt-ridden, or alienated, Jesus Christ speaks “peace” and opens the way to peace, not just for individuals, but for the whole of creation...

From the book of Ephesians, chapter 2, we read, *“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one, and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility”* (Ephesians 2:13-14 NIV).

Jesus Christ is our peace! Christ is the One through whom true peace is found—not through human philosophy, not through escape from the world, not through possessions, not through achievements, not through building walls (physical or emotional), not through anything of our own creation.”



— Stephen M. Veazey,  
World Conference Sermon, June 2005

These words of challenge from our church prophet-president, Stephen M. Veazey, have become important for the Community of Christ around the world. They are not new words or ideas, for they are basic to our understanding of the gospel message of God’s shalom and the message of the peaceable kingdom that Jesus introduced. However, these words have been implanted in our minds and hearts in response to our desire to discover anew the church’s identity, message, and

mission in a world that cries out for some understanding of God's peace for all of creation.

With the changes in church leadership following the June 2005 World Conference, I became part of the team sharing support for the military ministries of the church. I have appreciated the opportunity to work with Steve McCrosson and Scott Jobe and learn



more about this important ministry focus. I am thankful for this opportunity and want to express my support and sincere appreciation for the service you are giving to your country in the pursuit of peace in many places around the world. I do not pretend to know all the difficulties you face in your roles and responsibilities, but in my travels and ministry in other cultures, I have been given a glimpse of the racial, socioeconomic, cultural, and religious diversity that exists in our world and the challenges this brings to sharing ministries of peace.

As I write today, I am sitting in small hotel in Lubumbashi, Congo DR waiting for our local church leaders to come and travel with me to some small villages in this part of Africa where we have congregations. I know that in each of these places we will be greeted by a group of people on the road singing praises to God and welcoming us to their community and congregation. The scene has been repeated several times...we will be spotted coming, they will begin their singing and dancing on the road, I will get out of the jeep and walk with them along the road as we pass many people in the village. Some will join us; others will only wave and continue what they are doing. The music and dancing will continue as we enter the doors of the small adobe church building that has been built by their sacrificial offerings and personal labor. The service of vibrant worship will begin and we will join together as sisters and brothers as we share the peace of Jesus Christ that unites us in our diversity. The barriers of culture, race, tribalism, and socioeconomic differences will disappear as we worship together as sisters and brothers in Christ in the Community of Christ.

It is my testimony that the peace of Jesus Christ becomes real when you find yourself in the context of everyday life's experience in a culture much different from your own. Yesterday, in a small village, a young child became hysterical when she saw me walking near her home with some of our local church leaders. Who

was the tall, white-skinned man walking past her home? Her mother tried to calm her fears by bringing her close to us, but she became even more frightened and cried out loudly to let us know that this "ghost" was not welcome in her presence. I stood quietly and waited until she retreated to a safe distance and stopped her crying. Again, her mother tried to comfort and assure her that I would not harm her.

After several minutes I took out my digital camera and asked if I could take a picture of their family. They were quite pleased, and after taking the photo, I walked slowly toward them to show it to them. It was in this exchange that I noticed the young child relax. So I knelt down in front of the child as she stood holding her mother's hand and showed her the photo. A smile came to her face and I extended my hand; she took my hand and came closer to me. The miracle of transformation was again made real as the barriers that separated and divided us were broken down by sharing the peace of Jesus Christ. I thank God for this experience and all the ways it reminded me of our mission of sharing the peace of Jesus Christ in our lives, our congregations, our communities, and our world.

Peacemaking begins with us, with each person's willingness to open their eyes and ears to the rich diversity of our world. It is about finding ways to relate to one another in true community—community that is built on the gospel's foundation of God's peace, where all persons are worthy of God's grace. I thank God for a church that believes that its identity, message, and mission are about sharing the peace of Jesus Christ with all people.

I thank God for your lives of servant ministry and for all the ways you are sharing this message with people around the world. May your faith continue to be strengthened as you share in ministries of peace, knowing that you are part of a community of disciples dedicated to ministries of peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit.

Peace and blessings



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## Chaplain's Prayer by Mychal F. Judge

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Those who saw the documentary film made by two French brothers about the terrorists' attack on the towers of the World Trade Center will no doubt recall the scene in which the body of Chaplain Mychal F. Judge was found.

Chaplain Judge, a Franciscan friar, dedicated his life to serving firefighters who constantly faced danger and death. Father Judge was a joyous and much loved person. He was an inspiration to firefighters regardless of their individual religious beliefs.



When a rescue team discovered his body, they immediately put it on a stretcher and carried it to the nearest Catholic church. They lifted his body and placed it on the altar.

A prayer he had written and prayed often was found on his body. It read:

Lord, take me where You want me to go;  
Let me meet who You want me to meet;  
Tell me what You want me to say, and  
Keep me out of Your way.

These sincere and meaningful words have become known as Mychal's Prayer.

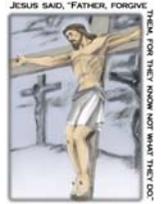
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## Find Strength in the Cross by Grace Andrews, Independence, Missouri

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Jesus approached his final days and hours, knowing well he faced a degrading, undignified, horrible death. Who among us would do that—for fellow citizens who cried out, "Crucify Him!"? for one of his own who betrayed him? For others close to his heart, insisting they never knew him? For me? For you?

Jesus was on a cross—no one could save him. He had come to sacrifice himself. The story of the cross defines Christianity. The main issue of the cross was not Jesus' physical suffering, but rather that he died *for our sins*.



We kneel at the foot of the cross today, trying to grasp the wonder and mystery of the One who died for our eternal salvation. We hear his words: "Father, forgive them—they know not what they do." Who is the "they" he refers to? What is the "what" that they do? Was it them? You? Me? He pleads for all: "Father, forgive them."

His barely audible voice whispered, "It is finished." Jesus accomplished all he set out to do before the cross. But his death is far from the end of our story. The cross provides a strong basis for the strengthening of our faith. It is the ultimate reminder that God loves us and will never leave us alone!

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**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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Our Thoughts &  
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are with... all of you!