
Community of Christ

The Peacekeepers



Association for Ministry to Military Personnel Newsletter

June, 2009

TIM'S SERVICE

by Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President

As many of you may recall, a "Lessons from the Iraq War" conference was held on Graceland University's Independence Campus in April. The conference was co-sponsored by the Community of Christ Seminary, the Center for the Study of the Korean War and the Peace and Justice Team of the Community of Christ. I would have liked to attend this conference in person but life's schedule simply would not permit the trip. Even so, I felt it important to lift up the conference in prayer and to address the attendees in a letter. I am not sure whether this was brought to the attention of the conference but here is what I wrote:

Dear members of the *Lessons From The Iraq War Seminar*,

On behalf of the Community of Christ Ministry to Military Personnel, and its association (The Peacekeepers), I offer greetings and best wishes to all seminar attendees. I believe I may speak for all Peacekeepers when I say we offer our prayerful support to the seminar discussions.

The pursuits of peace and justice are, undeniably, among the most complex matters facing our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Nonetheless, history seems to bear out how our most successful future is best built upon lessons learned well now, and then continuously lived out individually and collectively. We may surmise how the virtues of peace and justice must be learned, taught and lived starting one person at a time if greater levels are to be realized, and then sustained.



Today, Community of Christ dedicates a major portion of its focus to the pursuits of peace and justice. In the fullest measure of that walk, this faith community reaches out and provides continuous blessings to all



people including its members who answer a calling to serve on the path of the disciple while in the uniformed services. Where peace and justice are still not universally pursued today, followers of Christ must still stand in some uncomfortable and sacrificial gaps. Military members, who also struggle for peace and justice, thank the church for its loving embrace.

The viewpoints offered in this seminar may be quite varied, depending upon whether they are derived from a secular or a sacred approach, or presented from a position of the powerful or the powerless. As we continue on this path together, may more of God's creation be offered, be restored to and be more empowered to preserve peace and justice. My personal prayer is that the peace of our Lord Jesus, the Christ, will be with you as you share, and that the Spirit of the living God will rest upon us and guide all our understandings as we move forward.

My brothers and sisters thank you for serving!

In Christ ó Victory! May God bless all Peacekeepers.

Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President.

Announcements / FYI:

PCS or TDY to Ft. Leavenworth? Come to the Leavenworth Community of Christ for worship. We are located at 1100 Halderman, across the street north of Leavenworth High School. For more information, contact Debbie Campbell, 913-651-6474 or 013-306-1143.

The Community of Christ Association for Ministry to Military Personnel is dedicated to bringing ministry to Community of Christ members serving on active duty world-wide.

Called to Stand in the Breach

by Danny A. Belrose, D. Min.

ōPacifism.ō The word's root meaning is ōto make peace.ō I am a retired minister and I think of myself as a peacemaker, but I am not sure I qualify as a pacifist. I take no pride in this confession. In fact, I say it with considerable discomfort because I preach and promote its principles and I admire those who make its claim. I abhor violence and war, yet to be coldly honest I am *unsure* how deep my commitment to nonviolence runs. The jury is out. I have never been put to the test in any extreme sense. Candidly, when push comes to shove, somewhere along the line ō at the edge of patience or in defense of loved ones ō I *suspect* my response would be to push back and to push back hard! On the other hand, a career in the armed forces never made my preference list though I deeply respect those who respond to its stewardship.

Sometimes we are prone to rush to judgment. We quickly categorize, placing things into neat columns, painting them black or white ō a vain and naïve effort to simplify issues. Are hawks and doves pure breeds? I wonder. I suspect that when threatened or attacked (personally or corporately) retribution's faint glow lingers in every pacifist's heart, and those who snap on a saber and shoulder an M-16 on the parade square pray they will never have to use them.

The fact is *we live in a violent world* and there are points at which diplomacy and turning the other cheek are to no avail. Tribalism, religious fundamentalism, and extremism of every stripe continue to pound at our door ō and in a world turned upside down by conflict (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently, Pakistan) veterans and active military are asking, ōHow is *our role* perceived? What about we who stand in the breach ō are we too not peacemakers?ō

Such queries deserve an unbiased response. Peacemaking is neither simplistic nor a unilateral effort. The task of peace requires the skills, gifts, and efforts of people from all walks of life particularly in these portentous times. Peace is every hopeful person's prayerful petition. It is offered by those in and out of uniform. Indeed, such hope may burn more fervently in those willing to serve and sacrifice on our behalf because ultimately they are willing to ōstand in the breach.ō

What does it mean to stand in the breach? The Good Shepherd lies down across the opening to the sheepfold, placing himself at risk between wolves and flock. He

dare not sleep soundly. He must be at the ready, willing at any moment to defend against that which threatens to destroy. Men and women of the military courageously *stand in the breach*. They stand not only between external threats and enemies but may find themselves teetering precariously between the tensions of duty and personal ethics and morality. The tensions of moral choice are true for all of us, of course, but they are undoubtedly more acute for our sisters and brothers who stand in the breach in time of war.

In many ways, we all stand in the breach ō struggling to dance in the dichotomy between what we sincerely believe and what we passionately feel. No doubt, the Jesus who drives moneychangers out of the temple will continue to compete with the Jesus who turns the other cheek as long as Christians draw breath. But differing viewpoints should not divide us. They should open avenues of new understanding, permitting each an appreciation of the other's role in pursuing peace and justice.

We must remember that we constantly find ourselves in the breach between *life as it is* (with all its hurts and startling joys) and life as it *could* and *should* be. In uniform or out of uniform, we are called to span the gulf between *what is* and *what can be* ō where all have the opportunity to live the right arrangement of relationships.

I hear the call of peace, God, and respond as best I can.

But it also calls in ways I do not hear, on paths I do not walk, and I must honor those who do.

It shouts to everyone. Peacemakers in three-piece Armanis.

Peacemakers in firetrucks, driving black-and-whites, teaching math and dishing out hash at the local diner.

Peacemakers in medical greens and clerical collars,

Peacemakers in military dress, chosen or conscripted, faithful men and women hearing your call.

Yes, peacemakers at the cost of peace, standing in the breach — ready, willing, able, twenty-four/seven.

And hawk, dove, lion, lamb, and child sleep sounder tonight.



Curt's Column

by Curt Heaviland, Vice President

It doesn't seem possible that another spring has arrived. To me, that is. My days are the same except Sunday and that is the day I go the Lord's house to meet Him.

The great thing around here in Independence is that the trees are again putting on their clothes in the form of leaves. How the opponents of a supreme being creating the earth and all that is here can find a leg to stand on is beyond me. I think if man had something to do with the creation the trees would keep their leaves during the winter for warmth.

How does the earth come alive with creatures and vegetation every year right on time? It didn't just happen. The world and the environment in which we live just happened, come on now - the universe is too orderly to have something "just happen." My argument is, that if it "just happened," God planned it that way.

While some of you have to look at springtime in a different set of circumstances we can all bask in the goodness of God. Many of the people I meet fuss about the cold, the heat, the rain or lack thereof, but my outlook is that it is a good day no matter what because the Lord gave it to us. He gives it to us and it is up to us what we are going to make out of it. Granted, some of you have it much harder than I do, but it's up to you to make it the best that you can. Enough soapbox for now and let me wish you the very best and may the Lord keep you from harm's way.



early July couldn't be met. So we took the last week of April. You see Dad's birthday is July 3, 1914 - Don's birthday is May 1, 1952. We usually tried to spend Dad's birthday with him, as do my brother John and his wife Rosa. We got a call a few days before we left Independence, Missouri, that Dad had pneumonia. "Okay," I thought, "so he's almost 95 and has pneumonia - he's had it before and come through all right." By the time we arrived in Wyoming Dad was refusing all medication, food and water. He wanted to go home to be with my wife. Sis and I gulped down our pain and hoped he meant his first wife - our mother. He couldn't stand living alone so about a year and a half after Mom died he married the neighbor lady, Lena Gray. Of course, this was the same Lena he used to tell us stories about - and they were not very flattering. Mother died in 1984 and Lena in 2008 - he was alone once again and (I believe) feared living to 105 as his mother had.

Sure enough - on the day we were to return home Daddy died. One granddaughter made a memory board with pictures of him with his children and grandchildren. She wrote at the top something he must have said a million times: "What time is it Grandpa?" "Half past kissing time, time to kiss again." The nursing home found a picture of him playing with children - you can't see the children, but he has his thumbs at his ears with the fingers spread wide and a huge grin on his face - perfect!

Of course, Dominic always goes with us on vacation, so he was there too. He didn't quite understand why we were staying there "forever." He knew the man in the bed had been sick and he wasn't sick anymore - he went home.

As a "really little boy" Dominic started calling me Frandma Mary - so from time to time I would correct him.

"Dominic," I said with my husband, sister and her husband listening. "It's not fff, fff, Frandma Mary - it's guh, guh, Grandma Harry." Yes, I misspoke and everyone started laughing. Little kids love to be in on the joke so Dominic's high giggle was almost ear-shattering. I think my name has been permanently changed.

"Who's that talking to Superman? It's Grandma Harry. Who's that opening the door? It's Grandma Harry."

While I can't recommend losing a family member as a fun experience - I highly recommend having a toddler with you to cheer you up. Dominic has a flair for the ridiculous - and he kept all of us in stitches when what we really wanted to do was weep.

Kid Stuff

by Mary Yocum



We decided years ago to visit my family in Wyoming on alternate years - one year for parents/grandparents, the next for fun trips. This was our year to head for "God's country." My father grew up in the shadow of the Missouri Buttes on a ranch his father and grandfather homesteaded somewhere around 1916 or so until around 1940. We enjoyed visiting the Devil's Tower, where his family had enjoyed picnics, seeing where Dad and his brother and friends played at dances and taverns to earn money for college, where they had boarded so they could go to high school, and where my great-grandfather ran his freight business as he also preached the restoration to friends and relatives. Quite a heritage!

This year something slightly different happened. For "some reason" Don's usual request for late June -

Memorial Day Observance (U.S.A.) by Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President

The last Monday of May has become the national holiday in which the U.S.A. honors its dead from all American Wars. Memorial Day 2009 is now history. Peacekeepers ministers internationally but we can all benefit from a consideration of this remembrance associated with one of our member countries.

History is an important part of our world's knowledge. In part, history learned lets us know from whence we came. Also (and as has been often said) history should be learned so we might avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. Sadly, the blood of every nation's military members speaks (at least metaphorically) to many as a representation of the price of lessons yet unlearned. For those of us blessed to be alive today, I offer some information, found via links from www.usa.gov/Topics/Memorial_Day.shtml.

Our first link is from the Department of Veterans Affairs www1.va.gov/opa/speceven/memday/history.asp and it cites some of the history associated with Memorial Day in the U.S.A. Of note to me is how the observance started and has changed over the years.

Our second link is from the White House Commission on Remembrance: <http://www.remember.gov/>. On Memorial Day the United States now also holds a National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 PM. Citizens are asked to join other Americans in a minute of silence at 3:00 PM, local time. If driving, turn on vehicle headlights. The White House Commission on Remembrance is an independent government agency, established by Congress, whose missions include:

- Promoting the spirit of unity and remembrance through observance of The National Moment of Remembrance at 3 PM local time on Memorial Day
- Ensuring the nation remembers the sacrifices of America's fallen from the Revolutionary War to the present;
- Recognizing those who have served and those who continue to serve our great nation and reminding all Americans of our common heritage

Further, at the time of this writing, this link: www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-Prayer-for-Peace-Memorial-Day/ is to the 2009 Presidential Proclamation of Prayer for Peace. You may also find the REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT (U.S.A.) ON MEMORIAL DAY of interest:

www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-Memorial-Day/. I would that all countries where the Community of Christ lives had the freedom

whereby their leaders would offer prayer on behalf of all.

On behalf of the Peacekeepers, I offer our thanks to all who serve toward peace today. Memorial Day should never be forgotten but I am sure all of us might long for another observance, akin to a celebration of International Peace in which we acknowledge how many lives have been blessed because

our world has finally learned and lived out the peacemaking lessons of history. Let us uphold our world's leaders, in prayer, for so great a cause.



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 sustaining members receive either edition with a paid membership, **\$10.00, due in April.** Archive newsletters also available on our Web site: <http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/>

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