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Community of Christ



# The Peacekeepers

Association for Ministry to Military Personnel Newsletter

February, 2010

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## TIM'S SERVICE

by Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President

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Preparation. I believe I've been involved in some sort of preparation at about every stage of my life (although, sometimes, I've only seemed to recognize the progress by looking back over my shoulder to the past). In fact, at this "tender" age, I'm still preparing to best meet the Lord's continuing call. Even so, with the experience of 50 years, I'm still not always sure whether I should say preparation guides one along life's path – or creates life's path to be guided along! Maybe it's a little of both. In any case, there seem to be many opportunities for "arrivals" along the way. Perhaps the safest thing for me to say is that, by experience, I've found how some "arrivals" seem only to happen after proper preparation has been made.

For example, by the end of this newsletter cycle (March) we'll be preparing for our arrival into the Easter season. Over the years I've found that I typically appreciate such a celebration more fully when I take the time – and steps – to draw myself into the story being told. I accomplish part of that by specifically addressing how Christ's journey to Jerusalem, the last hours with the Apostles, the time in the garden, the eternity on the cross and the triumphant resurrection – while accomplished for the collective "we" – were also endured for each individual – like "me." As I better recognize how important I feel the Lord's sacrifice is for me, personally, I'm better able to take ownership of the relationship I seek with Christ. In the same vein I also hope to better represent him to others on the earth today – those he also died and rose for.

In many ways, I am glad Easter precedes World Conference this year. I believe we need some especially prayerful preparation for this conference. First, I'll encourage all Peacekeepers to review the Counsel to the Church provided by Prophet/President Steve Veazey on January 17th: <http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2010/counsel>. In conjunction, I recommend a review of section 163 of



the Doctrine and Covenants – also with an eye to what the Spirit breathes:

<http://www.cofchrist.org/D&C163/section163.asp>.

Lastly, I'll encourage you to ask that same Spirit to guide the Conference as it seeks to represent the larger church in discerning the Lord's desires for the church in the days ahead – and certainly with respect to the legislation found at

<http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2010/default.asp>.

If you do make it to Conference please stop by the Peacekeeper booth. We'll appreciate the opportunity to fellowship with you and to confirm your membership and contact information. Please also sign up for the Banquet and Association Business Meeting (at East Alton Congregation the Wednesday evening of Conference). At this time we expect to have the blessing of Apostle Jim E. Slauter as our guest speaker for the evening. We'll try to e-mail the membership and update the website with more specific information as the event draws closer.

May God bless all Peacekeepers. In Christ – Victory!

Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President.

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## Curt's Column

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**CHICKEN!!!!!!** That's me. I left Independence on 30 December 09 to spend 30 days in my old haunt of Arizona. I knew it would be cold at home but I had no idea how cold. Here I am basking in dry 70 plus weather when I could be home fighting snow and cold.

I decided to come back to Arizona to renew some church acquaintances and perhaps make some new ones. Many would call my age an advanced age. I do not feel like I'm over 50 except when I try to hike up mountains or ride a bike several miles. This is when the advanced age comes in to play.

When someone asks me how I'm doing I tell them

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“fantastic, I woke up this morning”. I appreciate every day the Lord gives me to live and in the country I love so much. After you reach the age of eighty it’s nothing to wake up and find one of your friends has given up and passed on. It really makes you appreciate what you have and what you have been able to accomplish.

I am looking forward to conference this year and again see many of the people I have known in the past. I am not a fatalist but there is a good chance that this will be the last one that I will attend. You can draw your own conclusions on that.

I appreciate the sacrifices you are making for those of us here in the ZI. It is my hope and prayer that each one of you will be kept from harms way in 2010 and will be able to see your loved ones again in full and good health.

GOD BLESS

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## Kid Stuff

by Mary Yocum

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Okay, I know it’s the time for hearts and flowers and Easter in almost upon us, but I just have to tell you about Dominic’s take on Santa Claus. Dominic turned four on December 13 so I will write it as he tells it – mistakes and all.

“Buddy,” Dominic said to our neighbor, Buddy Downs, “you know how Santy Claws brings presents to kids on Christmas?”

“Yes,” Buddy replied, “I know.”

“Well, you know how he comes down the chimbley.”

“He comes down what?”

“He comes down the chimbley – you know, for a fireplace. And sometimes there’s a fire in the fireplace. And when there is he says ... (excuse the interruption, but this next part is accompanied by jumping up and down and patting his hands on his arms, legs, and body) ... ‘Ho, ho. Ho, ho, ho.’”

“As he put out the fire on his suit?”

“Yeah. And you know why he never lets the kids see him deliver the presents?”

“I’m almost afraid to ask – why?”

“‘Cause he’s naked. The fire burned up his suit.”

I don’t think there’s anything more entertaining than the imagination of a child. I love it when he tells me a story – or sometimes a dream he had. Grown ups have imaginations too – we just don’t use them so much anymore. I remember when I worked at the reception

desk and a member of the staff would come in for a meeting. “I’m not here,” they might say. They meant, of course, that they didn’t have time to take phone calls or check their e-mail or voice mail messages. Even though I understood this I usually replied, “Got it – you’re just a fig Newton of my e-mag-ination.”

Now, you may be thinking, “She was kind of sarcastic, wasn’t she?” Well – yes, I was. I was also often irreverent, and I guarantee you I didn’t treat the President or Bishop any differently than I did the homeless people who often showed up hoping for a little help, or just a place to take a shower.

“People is people,” my Dad used to say. He never treated one person better or worse than another, and he wouldn’t let us fall into that trap either.

I bet you’re thinking, “It’s a good thing she isn’t in the military – or where I am – she’d never make it.” And you would be right. In fact I have been told that I was downright insubordinate. Of course I had to reply that I wasn’t in the military – I don’t think he was impressed though. I suppose that’s one of the reasons adults seldom use their imaginations – because it can sometimes get you into trouble. What fun we miss out on!

I’m so thankful that God loves an active imagination. He wants us to breathe the air, look at the clouds, laugh at the sight of a platypus (what other reason could there be for them?), see angels just out of sight and hear a heavenly choir when he sends it. My meditations are filled with imagination. I believe that’s how I open myself to God’s messages. My imagination takes me to the clouds, the ocean, or a mountaintop, and God takes me to heaven. Isn’t it great?

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## Greetings from Afghanistan, by Scott Gaitley

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I have arrived at Bagram AB where I will remain for the next 120 plus days.

The living conditions are not as pleasant as they were in Iraq, and with the troop surge going on the base is at 136% capacity, and I am sleeping on a cot in my office to give you an idea of the severity. They assigned me to a room that already had four people in it, so it may be later this weekend before I sleep on a mattress.



Also unlike at Joint Base Balad, Iraq we did not consistently carry our weapons, and here everyone carries one, even the civilians due to the number of incidents involving the local population on base.

Definitely similar to Iraq, we have the routine incoming mortar and rockets which was not common back in 2006 when I was here last.

So needless to say it will be quite interesting here.

The history program is behind, and obviously I will be extremely busy during this deployment.

Those who received long email letters from me while in Iraq explaining the situation there, may not get the same from me this time, but I will do what I can. Know many of you enjoyed these notes explaining what was transpiring from a different perspective versus the news media.

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## Military Newsletter Article, by Jim Slauter

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President Obama's December 1, 2009, address to the Nation regarding important strategic decisions relating to the war in Afghanistan again reminded me again of the significant role that is played by our men and women in uniform to defend and promote the basic human right of freedom that we often take for granted. I was especially drawn to his emphasis on the importance of our values as the moral source of our authority to promote the human right of freedom around the world:

*“Finally, we must draw on the strength of our values – for the challenges that we face may have changed, but the things that we believe in must not.... And we must make it clear to every man, woman and child around the world who lives under the dark cloud of tyranny that America will speak out on behalf of their human rights, and tend to the light of freedom, and justice, and opportunity, and respect for the dignity of all peoples. That is who we are. That is the moral source of America's authority.”*

He went on to assess the responsibility that each one of us have to insure that these values are lived out at home and abroad in hopes of a better future for all of God's creation:

*“What we have fought for – and what we continue to fight for – is a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if other peoples' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and access opportunity.*

*In the end, our security and leadership does not come solely from the strength of our arms. It derives from our people – from the workers and businesses who will rebuild our economy; from the entrepreneurs and researchers who will pioneer new industries; from the teachers that will educate our children, and the service of those who work in our communities at home; from the diplomats and Peace Corps volunteers who spread hope abroad; and from the men and*

*women in uniform who are part of an unbroken line of sacrifice that has made government of the people, by the people and for the people a reality on this Earth.”*

President Obama's comments remind us of our responsibility to respond to the challenge of living out our values and promoting the basic values of human worth that are so connected to our understandings of the Gospel message of the peaceable kingdom and our mission of sharing the peace of Jesus Christ. We know from our personal and corporate experience that this does not happen without an intentional and disciplined approach to life that incorporates a set of values that are aligned with who we believe God calls us to be and to become. If we do not accept responsibility for living out these values in our personal lives, our families, our congregations, and our communities, they simply become empty words. Trust and integrity quickly erode. Values become reality when our behaviors change to reflect them. You who serve and have served in our Armed Forces know the importance of values that uphold the freedom and worth of all persons and have made them part of your dedicated service to our nation. For that we are greatly blessed and thankful!

As a faith community we have received Inspired Counsel that speaks clearly regarding our responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ to intentionally and through disciplined lives uphold the values of God's peaceable Kingdom:

*3 a. You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.*

*b. Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ's vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace.*

*c. There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called.*

*4 a. God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering.*



*Such conditions are not God's will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.*  
—*Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 163*

Our world is filled with unnecessary suffering because the basic values of human life have been sacrificed to the Gods of power, prejudice, racism, consumerism, and greed. Many of you have witnessed these evils in our world first hand along with the poverty, disease, displacement, and marginalization that they have inflicted on the lives of people around the world. As disciples of Jesus Christ and as the Community of Christ, we must stand together with God in those places where we have been called to bear our witness of God's Kingdom of peace and justice in our world. As many of you know from experience, this is not an easy task and requires a courageous faith. We are called to exercise our courageous faith by witnessing God's ongoing presence with us and discerning the power of the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and empower us in our mission.

God's kingdom of justice and peace is for all of God's creation and we are called to participate in its presence in our world as disciples of Jesus. I pray that God's generous grace and peace will be with our men and women who serve our nation, their families, and the people they serve around the world. I pray that the

church that we love will continue to grow in its understandings of the peaceable kingdom and that our witness of the peace of Jesus Christ will bring hope where there is despair, healing where there is brokenness, and peace where there is war.

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## Appreciation, by Julie O'Neal

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Thanks so much for continuing this newsletter. It has been a great help to me around the world, and now back stateside.

I wanted to let folks know that I am the XO of the Navy Officer Training Command in Newport, RI. Turns out we had a kid from Graceland come through here a few months ago and I didn't find out about it until after he had graduated. Sure would have liked to have been able to offer him the option of communion or taking him to church if he had wanted to go (once he had earned liberty, of course:)).

If our military folks learn of any kids heading off to officer candidate school, Reserve Officer Indoc, LDO/CWO, or Officer Development School, I am available to them until Feb 2011.

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<http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/>

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