



THE ENCOURAGER



Let us never forget

MINISTERING TO ALL FIRST RESPONDERS

“Let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:25

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My name is Dan Sanders and I'm honored to have this chance to tell my testimony. I'm a firefighter/EMT for Middlesboro Fire Department in Middlesboro, KY. I've been in the fire service and EMS for over ten years. I'm also a husband to my wife Stephanie of almost fifteen years, father to two sweet little girls: Brooklyn and Hailey, but most importantly I'm a Christian. Unfortunately I did not always feel that way; I was raised in church and my father was a minister. I always knew God was present in my life, but through my teenage years, until after my children were born, I hadn't put God first in my life. I tried to live a good life, be a good husband, work hard, provide for my family, and help people when I could. I've heard all my life that Hell is going to be full of good people; you have to be saved to go to Heaven. My wife was also raised in a strong Christian home, and like me she drifted away from Christ being first in her life. As we were starting our careers and building our life, we just put other things first. We'd go to church on Sunday morning then the rest of the week we'd try to live right on our own.

My dad passed away thirteen years ago, which was devastating to me at the time, but God still had mercy on me and helped me through that time even though I wasn't where I needed to be spiritually. Our pastor, and the entire church for that matter, has always been there to support and encourage my family no matter if they'd seen me at church during the past service or three months ago. They always showed my family and I the love of Christ. Stephanie's and my families continued to encourage us to pursue a more personal relationship with Christ.

After the birth of our first daughter, I began thinking about how she needed to be in church more—which was how I was brought up. One Sunday morning, our pastor gave an altar call after his message. As I watched others go and pray, a woman, who along with her husband serve as youth pastors, came to me and said, "I feel you need to go pray, do you?"

I was surprised and even embarrassed; I didn't know what to say. I just sat there holding back tears not saying a word until she walked away. I kept thinking, *Why did she*

MEET A MEMBER



Dan Sanders
Firefighter/EMT
Middlesboro Fire Department
Middlesboro, KY

think I needed to pray? I'd been coming to church *some*, I'm doing alright, right? Wrong! I left church that morning with all of that on my mind. All day I had a feeling in my gut. The best way to describe it is as the feeling I get on a fire or EMS run—that sense of urgency. I felt compelled to go back for service that night. My grandmother was visiting; she's always been one I've looked to for guidance and a Christian example, so she went with me. That night I prayed, not just to be forgiven of my sins, but to make Christ first in my life. I prayed for a true personal relationship with Him.

God has shown me I spent my life trying to split my devotion between Him and the world. The warnings from Matthew 6:24 became real and personal, "No man can serve two masters". My grandmother later told me that she'd prayed before coming for her visit that I would receive a touch from God while

she was here. Talk about answered prayer!

God moved in my wife as well and strengthened our already strong marriage. He's blessed me with an awesome church who, as I mentioned earlier, never gave up on me and my family. My pastor encouraged me to really study God's Word and He has guided me in my study.

One verse that is special to me is Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer". If you keep your heart and mind on the things of God, it makes receiving direction from Him easier. Furthermore, it makes it harder for sin to take hold in your life.

God also blessed me with a Christian captain and other brothers in Christ at work that understand being a Christian on this job. They've been encouraging to me and we're able to talk about spiritual victories and battles. That's why it was great to find FCFI and the rest of the members.

Through the prayers of many and a church continually showing me the love of Christ and never giving up on me, but most of all the grace of God—His giving me what I don't deserve, —and God's mercy—saving me from what I do deserve. I live for the true living God. I pray I can be an effective witness and a blessing to stay in the will of God.

Fellowship of Christian Firefighters
INTERNATIONAL

I started studying God's Word when God showed me I'd spent too many years trying to compromise with my relationship with Christ. I hadn't realized this until He showed me where I had gone wrong getting wrapped up in worldly things, not spending time with Him. One of the first Scriptures God gave me was Psalms Chapter 19, to keep my mind on God and the Godly things. Please read Psalms 19:7-14 KJV.

As I reflect on the career I've chosen as a firefighter, I know that all first responders find themselves in contact with many different people in a wide range of situations. Though there are all kinds of calls ranging from those commonly labeled "routine" to ones where our lives are in danger, we must keep our objectives and duties in mind while we keep watch for dangers and obstacles. As Christians, we have days with and without trials and problems, so we must also be alert that we don't lose sight of our objectives and duties and get off task by Satan's distractions, temptations, or pitfalls that he might try to use against us. We have to keep our training up and our skills sharp (our personal relationship with Christ) because we have to finish our objectives, which are being a witness and making it to Heaven. Just as our training and our skills help us and teach us the right way to do things on the scene so does God through His Word and prayer. "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (Psalms 19:7 NIV).

Thank you for this chance to share my testimony with you. I am always happy to meet others in the service of the Lord, and the fire service, feel free to contact me at dansanders947@yahoo.com. God bless and keep you. 138 Whipporwill Lane, Pineville, KY 40977: 606-269-1077



MISSIONARY MUSINGS

by GAY REYNOLDS



*ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER OFFICERS
(past officers, too)*

We need your current contact information—E-mail, phone, address—you know anyway we can contact you. We need this info if your chapter is active or inactive. PAAALEEESE get the info to us now! Thanks, I knew you would get right on it! Many of you are still on the web page and your information is not up to date. This reflects on God's ministry so again, please do contact us. FCFIHQ@aol.com.

That gets rid of the business we needed to do.

Guess what? This is the time of year when we get to, and should, reflect on the goodness of our Lord. Isn't it a great comfort to know the He is the same today as He was and as He will be? The world may, and does change, but He is always the same. We can always count on the Lord and our Savior to be there for us—ALWAYS!

As the time approaches for Thanksgiving, what are you thankful for? Do we realize what a blessed nation we live in? What a gift we have to worship our Lord freely? The freedoms we take for granted—are they really free? What have we done to protect those freedoms? Are we willing to give them up, in the name of "diversity?" You know—"Can't we all get along?"

I have read a book entitled, "When A Nation Forgets God," by Erwin W. Lutzer. I would highly recommend it to all of you. In fact, if I was teaching, it would be assigned reading. Yes, I think we need to read it to be made aware of what is happening in our country NOW! This isn't fiction, it isn't hype, it is factual and well laid out. I guarantee that it will slap you in the face! My Brothers and Sisters, it is time to take back our country for Christ's sake! The basic doctrines—the very premise—on which this country was founded are being eroded as we watch. We need to do a size-up and then put the plan into action! Read the book!

OK, I am off my soapbox, but I truly hope you will read this book and compare to what is happening NOW in the USA.

And, if Thanksgiving is upon us, can the Day of Christ be far behind? Oh yea, Christmas and family and the celebration of the Lord's birth! Does it get any better? Here in Colorado, fall is upon us with a little winter thrown in. I know that as the weather "cools," the times of celebration aren't far behind. I really look forward to Christmas and the true meaning of the season. Don't you? Just thinking about the birth, life, and the greatest gift ever given—it is just awesome! The family traditions, the "togetherness," the time of sharing the past and dreams for the future with loved ones—truly a joy beyond understanding.

Sue and I would like to wish all of you the best in the coming year and to thank you for allowing us to serve you. We are blessed to be part of His ministry to the fire service and all first responders. Share His Love in the coming months.

Blessings, Gay and Sue



The Brotherhood and The Church

Mick Moffitt, Chief Operations Officer, Emergency Training Center,
www.trainingdivision.com

It's often been difficult for me to explain the unconditional bond I have with my fellow firefighters. In fact, life at the station is actually like a second family to me. We eat together at the table just like we do at home. You know just about everything there is to know about the guys you are on shift with. I will have to say that the relationships I see at the firehouse are sometimes more genuine than those I see at church.

I believe that "The Brotherhood" in the fire service can be seen as a comparison to the relationship Christ has with His church. Firefighters are a special breed of individuals. I have often tried to explain "The Brotherhood" to those on the outside. I believe it is a *lifestyle* of serving, sacrifice, and commitment. Let me try to give you an example:

One evening at the station, we were sitting at the table preparing dinner. It had been a long day in the middle of August. Everyone was tired from the amount of calls we had that afternoon. All we really wanted was to eat dinner in peace. Well, earlier that morning one shift mate really got under my skin. I mean we had it out. We came to a point where if we did not separate for awhile, there could possibly be serious confrontation. Anyway, dinner had begun and I was still not in any mood to talk to this individual. Just as I took the first bite of food the bell goes off. Here we go again!

A report of a structure fire with unknown occupants trapped inside. I quickly put on my gear and headed for the engine. Out the door we go. When we arrive, I see a two story house with flames coming from the back side. The captain yells, "Moffitt take your partner and look for victims trapped inside." Well, guess who my partner was that day? You guessed it! The same guy I'd it out with earlier. We hurried to the door and made a right hand search. As we progressed towards the back of the house, I noticed the ceiling began to give way. My partner was a step ahead of me and before I could take a breath, the ceiling joists came down separating us.

Now, what I am about to tell you is the best way I know how to describe "The Brotherhood." Let's keep in mind that I have a beautiful wife and two children waiting at home for me to return. In that split second, I had a choice to make. I could either let all of the differences we had that morning settle in and let him find a way out himself; or for the next few seconds, I can put all differences behind us and risk my life to save his. That my friend is "The Brotherhood". My choice that day was to save my brother in need!

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE LOCAL CHURCH?

When a brother is in the fire, we don't look at our differences or the situation. We don't begin to say things like: "Wow, I never thought he could cheat on his wife", or "I can't believe he got caught looking at pornography." We don't allow gossip to consume the situation. In fact, just like in a rescue scenario there is no time to hesitate. **No**, we take our next breath and snatch him from the flames. We show him compassion as if it were happening to us. *We risk it all to pull him from the fire!* —Jude 23-24

Today's Challenge: Take some time to ask God if there is anyone that you have offended or need to forgive. Give them a call and make it right. Don't let bitterness or anger set in towards them. Remember, we are all brothers in Christ.

Run to win

... snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Doxology

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (Jude 1:23-24).

Coming in January 2011:
Mick's Testimony and Part One
Character in the Fire Service.

Greetings From
The North Jersey Chapter!

Chaplain Russ Stammer,
FCFI Regional Director and Board Member.



We had a successful outreach at the New Jersey State Firemen's Convention. Our booth was busy and well staffed. I'd like to thank Thom McCoy, Gerald Sheard, Rich Brain, Al Whitaker, Scott Pruiksma, Mike Curran, Barbara Willemsen, Katie & Jonathan Stammer, Jake & Shelly Thigpen and David Hutsebaut for all of their help with the setup, take down and staffing the booth.

On the Sunday of firemen's weekend we held our annual service with First Baptist of Wildwood. During the service we held a special remembrance time for FCF member Orville Carpenter. It was a pleasure to have his wife Barbara and her sister at the service. We are now planning ahead for the New Jersey Christian Ministry Convention where we will have a new more professional looking presentation. Please pray that this will bring in some churches to financially support the FCF.

If you are ever in New Jersey please give us a call! Our meetings are usually held the last Friday of each month, but do check ahead as our dates may change based on other outreach opportunities. We are now on Facebook as "Fellowship of Christian Firefighters North Jersey". Please sign up as a fan and join us online.

Encourager On Line

Please E-mail Sue at encouragerpdf@aol.com
If you'd like to receive the Encourager by E-mail.
It is in color and arrives sooner!

HOLLY LAMBERT TAKES ANSWERING THE CALL TO ALASKA



FCFI Indiana member, Holly Lambert, accompanied Aglow Ministries on their first mission trip in the US. They visited many areas in Alaska including Northway, Kluti-Kaah

(Copper Center), Tazlina, Gulkana, Chitina, and Mentasta (Alaska Ablaze). The mission manager, Fran Hallgren, received *Answering the Call New Testaments* from FCFI along with *31 Days of Prayer, 31 Days of Praise*, plus some beautiful children's Psalm 91 books. But "that was not all that was included. There was the *Psalm 91* for the military and some great Christian patriotic fire pins. We were very thankful to receive so many wonderful books," writes Holly. Holly shared that they "took off from Delta Junction for Northway Village, the first of six villages and I thought we had the NT Bibles but we did not. We did have 31 Days of Prayer and gave all we had away."

"After going to the Alaska villages we returned to Delta Junction. We met with a professional firefighter Mike Pascal who was going to a fire training session at Fort Greeley. He took quite a few *Answering the Call* to distribute to the local firefighters and to give to the chaplain, Ted Hamilton. I met with the fire chief of Delta Junction, Vern Heintz, and gave him *Answering the Call Bibles* (NT) and some books. Chief Heintz showed me around Station 5 in Delta Junction and then agreed for me to lead a prayer of blessing for the Delta Junction Fire Dept. The remaining military Psalm 91 books were given to Major Mike Frank to take the Ft. Greeley Post Chapel for distribution at Greeley and Ft. Wainwright."

Robbie Robertson attended the **Mike Walters Maryland Chapter** meeting August 8, 2010, held at the Bowling Green Fire Co. Robbie was blessed by this active chapter who had about 20 members there on a summer afternoon for their program. Pres. Gerard McGann welcomed the members, Pam Kyle read a poem, Chaplain Pete Walbert gave an invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Chaplain Pete Walbert read Psalm 23 in honor of departed members and friends. Reverend Gerald gave a message. His wife, Rebecca, ministered to all in music. Following the program they held their business meeting.

Pierce M. Damewood Chapter, MD

held their Sept. 18 Prayer breakfast at Branchville, Co. 11 during County Convention. The guest speaker was Tamar Hudson. On October 2, the meeting was at Allentown Road. This faithful chapter is one of the first to charter with FCF International.

FCF in Lexington: We're about to have some transitions. I'll be retiring from the LFD January 3rd, but not on the Lord. As Chaplain of the department, I had to be careful how I promoted FCF since I'm Chaplain of all members. I've strongly shared my faith in my counseling and one-on-one ministry but in the bigger picture, I had to be careful. I hoped another firefighter would lead the FCF. As a retiree, there will be no restrictions on how I share my faith with firefighters. I can be that one who steps up. I'm excited about the prospect. We had a board meeting October to discuss the future of the **Lexington Bluegrass Chapter of FCF**. Would appreciate your prayers. Lt. Stewart Dawson, Chaplain, Lexington Division of Fire and EMS, dawsond@lfd.lfucg.com.



LET US NEVER
FORGET
Eddie Godoy, NY

"On Friday, September 10, 2010," Eddie Godoy wrote, "I had the honor of attending the *Hero's Portrait Dedication Ceremony* E54/L4 held in a

courtyard across from the Quarters of Engine 54/Ladder 4 and Battalion 9 on West 48th Street and East of 8th Ave that is the home to the Memorial for the fifteen men lost on 9/11. This memorial is in the heart of the theatre district.

Bagpipers opened the ceremony, a vocalist led attendees in the *National Anthem*, followed by a brief sermon about the meaning of this day, 9/11. The Captain of Engine 54 read a speech regarding what this day means to the families, friends, and fellow firefighters. A moment of silence followed before firefighters presented a memorial wreath to honor those fifteen heroes who perished from Engine 54, Ladder 4 and Battalion 9. The commanding officer called the members to attention and one of the honor guard members read off the fifteen names followed by one toll of the ceremonial bell after each reading. As you can imagine, it was as difficult for that firefighter to read that list of names as it was for those family members to hear them. Many pedestrians and tourists stopped and stood outside the circle formed by victims' families, friends, and firefighters. After the last name was read and the last bell sounded, family members laid a single red rose on top of the memorial. The vocalist invited everyone to join him in singing, "God Bless America". When we started singing everyone, even people and tourists walking by, stopped and joined in. There wasn't one dry eye in the crowd. As firefighters lined up to leave, a thunderous round of applause of appreciation and support to those firefighters filled the air for over ten minutes. Each family was given a portrait of their loved one and E54/L4 received the group shot to hang at the station.

It should be noted that Engine 54's motto is "Never Missed a Performance" and Ladder 4's is the "Pride of Midtown". I think they both have lived up to their mottos.

Nine years after *The Attack on America*, the grim statistics of 9/11 keep growing. Besides the 2,752 that died in the WTC, the 125 at the Pentagon, plus the number of people on the four airline flights, an additional 836 Ground Zero rescue workers and volunteers have died since the attacks, including 345 from cancer."

"Ladder 4's" Company sign that was affixed to the rig's aerial. The rig was destroyed in the collapse of the WTC and this sign along with the rig was dug out of the rubble weeks later.



Colorado Springs.

Times have been busy here in Colorado, and worries have been running high with our economy. For the last year, many on the fire department have been concerned about losing jobs, but as always, God came through, and not only did we not give up any positions, but there have been several promotions and rumor of a spring academy! Lots of this is because of retirements, while others have sought employment elsewhere. Many continue to meet regularly to spend time with God. My A-shift meets in the morning at Village Inn before our middle shift begins. We continue to do a verse by verse Bible study. We are currently studying the book of Psalms. We have firefighters of every rank involved in these studies, including one of our battalion chiefs. Also, the Colorado Springs Fire Dept. hosted the Fallen Firefighters Memorial on Sept. 11th. It appears all went well for those who attended.

Please pray for us as the New Year approaches that we have a greater impact on those around us. There is much opportunity for Christian firefighters. Pray that God leads us day by day, moment by moment. Kurt Dennison.

FDNY Ministry Team Outreach Annette Douglass & Thom McCoy



I went to the local firehouse in my area on 9/11 and spoke with a fireman who lost his mom and his dad recently to cancer. This young humble fireman has a family, two degrees, and served in Iraq. Suzanne, Brenda, and Stu (Seattle team) were at the firehouse last November when this young fireman's dad gave him the news. We all talked at the kitchen table. Suzanne also came to NY last November to encourage me. Please join me in prayer that many attend the FDNY Prayer Conference including FCF members. Thom and I will go full force with our visits--he is strong and doing remarkably well--He so loves his brothers and wants to reach out to them more than ever.



The Work Is Not Done Yet Thom McCoy

Thursday, as I headed to the firemen's convention, I experienced chest pain and figured it was anxiety about speaking at the Sunday service.

Friday I parked three blocks away from the tents and had difficulty walking to the convention tents. I was short of breathe. Saturday, Russ Stammer, NJ Regional Director, told me I was going to be the main speaker on Sunday. Great, my first time talking and I was to be the main speaker. Am I nervous? YES. On Sunday, I removed my glasses so I couldn't see who I was talking to so I was less nervous as I shared the ministry. I thought the pain was over and therefore my anxiety. On the drive home, I felt a little chest pain so went to bed at 7 p.m. About 7 am, we got paged out for a fire. At the firehouse I sat in the car a while because I had chest pain. The engine refused to start, so I called the doctor about the chest pain and was told to go to the hospital where I was rushed to the cath lab. I prayed before and when I was in the lab. The probe showed three arteries blocked 96%. The cardiologist said stints would do no good, and I only had hours before my triple bypass. Man was I scared. I had nobody with me, no family and no brothers from the fire service. Then, Psalm 91 came to life

for me. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1) "because he loves me" says the Lord. "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him" (Psalm 91:14-15. As I kept calling upon the Lord, I knew He was with me. I asked Him, "What do You have in store for me? Can I come back stronger and more able? How close am I to the end of my fire career? I don't want to have to give up my badge or gear". More of Psalm 91 came to mind:

- "He is my refuge and my fortress in whom I trust" (Psalm 1:2). I called on Him for security.
- "You will not fear the terror of the night" (Psalm 1:5). Wow, it hit me that the terror of the night meant death, but I was pretty secure in my feeling about being alive. I knew that there was a reason for this.
- "If you make the Most High your dwelling even the Lord, who is my refuge, then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Psalm 1:9-10). And there was my promise, this cardiac problem may seem major, but it is only a minor set back. I trust in the Lord with all of my life, even more now.
- "For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 1:11). His angels were the nurses and doctors, as well as the peace I felt most of the time.

I don't believe that my life is to be snuffed out at 47 years of age. I believe the Lord has something great yet to come to my life. I have seen where the other experiences in my life have already helped me to be able to minister to other firefighters. How many more will I now be able to reach? I may be out of service, but I am not dead yet. This is how you know that I am still around, *my sick sense of humor*.

Everyone is still shocked that only three days after bypass, I was released. Even the doctor says that most cardiac patients stay 5 - 7 days after surgery. My chest is still a little numb and sometimes breathing is a little stressed. BUT I got cleared to do ministry as long as I used public transportation.

I want to thank the people that gave me comfort. I was able to pray with some of the nurses. Joe Smaha and Russ Stammer were a real comfort as well as the comfort of the Lord. The only concern I had was being alone but the comfort of the Lord and the FCF was definitely there. Psalm 91 came to life to me. I could have, and should have been, dead. Why did the fire truck not start for that call on Monday morning? God was watching over me. He will reveal how this will help HIS purpose.

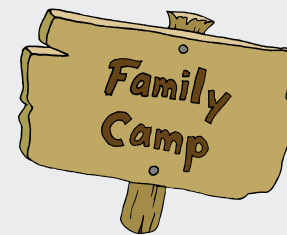
I appreciate all the visits from my brothers of the FCF, the phone calls, cards, words of encouragement and prayers really mean a lot and have helped. I'm not done but everyone I came in contact is learning about the FCF and Psalm 91. My crew has also opened up to God's hand in this whole situation about the truck not starting.

Firefighters love to be in control and want to get back into service right away. I'm learning that I need the time to heal, but I'll be back and will start to learn limitations (if and once they are found).

GUYS, get the ticker checked out. I was eating right and active but I could not do anything about my family history. There are plenty of places to get physicals for free. Let's make sure that we all go home at the end of the calls.



PLANS ARE UNDER WAY FOR
FAMILY CAMP JUNE 21-25, 2011
MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW
GUEST SPEAKER: SLADE MCLENDON
 FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JACK WHITE
 812-295-2838



JDWHITE@RTCCOM.NET (Note corrected e-mail from last issues)

A Local Projects Idea For Other Chapters To Consider To Connect Fire Departments To Local Churches.

By LT. Craig Duck, Atlanta States Regional Director



Nestled in a small rural community in northern Pennsylvania is the small Forest Lake Baptist Church that has ministered for over a hundred years to several generations of local dairy farmers. As pastors have come and gone, two things remained constant, the faithful preaching of God's Word and the support of missionaries who faithfully preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. For several years the members of this church participated in mission's trips within the US. With Mark 16:15, "And He (Jesus) said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'" rooted in their minds, members of this church went to their "Jerusalem" in order to preach the Gospel. Two local projects were quickly chosen. Some mission team members would

assist a neighboring church with repairs from a flood; others would renovate a local volunteer fire department. Under FCFI's Regional Director, Fire Chaplain Duck of the Washington, DC fire department, the second team would build relationships with the local firefighters by renovating the firehouse's main meeting room, boot room, and do some general clean-up. The prayer was to reach these firefighters for Christ by building relationships.

The team began their rebuilding project with prayer. James tells us in James 5:16 that "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Our prayer was that God would show His power in this local fire department. One of the firefighters had removed all of the fire department's older, but well kept apparatus, onto their dirt parking lot. Our team then began the process of removing the accumulated "stuff" from the main meeting room. It's easy for "things" to accumulate in rural volunteer fire departments as they have limited time to spend cleaning and renovating the firehouse. Volunteer firefighters need to juggle their time between work, family, and the firehouse while also devoting long hours to the department for training, meeting, responding to emergencies, and raising funds in order to operate. Long hours of renovating the room followed the clean-up. Thankfully everyone worked well together. With funds graciously given by Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International members and Forest Lake Baptist Church members our small team completely renovated the meeting room, built fire gear lockers, installed a slate entrance way, and cleaned the equipment room. We also provided a new refrigerator, trash cans, and cleaning supplies. With God's help and your prayers we were able to get a lot accomplished in a small amount of time.

After the unveiling of the new meeting room, our team provided a seafood luncheon and gospel concert. Many firefighters attended and relationships were started. One of our prayers was to be able to connect the fire department to a local church. God answered this prayer as Pastor Ken Young and the members of the congregation became friends. Firefighters now wave to Pastor Ken as they drive by the church, something that never occurred before. Also, the Forest Lake Baptist Church recently held a Sunday service to honor the sacrifices of firefighters on September 11th, 2001. Many members of the Forest Lake Volunteer Fire Department attended this event where the Gospel was clearly preached.

As a chaplain, I look forward to returning back to Forest Lake to see how God is working in the fire department. Perhaps the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters should pray about doing other local projects in order to connect fire departments to local churches. Working together, we just might see a return of a Godly fire service.



Chicago Chapter hosts Prayer and Praise Service

Blessings abounded in Chicago. The Chicago Chapter hosted a Prayer and Praise Service, entitled Spiritual Rehab, to provide encouragement and fellowship for those away from their home church. Music and great messages were uplifting. Chicago members also helped man the booth. We were extremely busy and at times six FCFI members were sharing God's love with attendees. Hundreds of *Encouragers*, along with hundreds of *Psalm 91*, *Days of Prayer and Praise*, and *Those Who Trust In The Lord* books were handed out. Many specifically sought the FCFI booth. *Stories of Faith and Courage* was extremely well recieved and we pray many will daily be uplifted and encouraged by these new devotional books. A big thank you to AMG Publishers and many FCFI members who made this book possible.

Walley Gales, Mark Dodgson, Irv Doucet, Mike Ridgeway, George Rabiela, and Doug Carbol fro Chicago along with Gay Reynolds blessed many at I-Chiefs this year working the booth and sharing God's Word.



Tye Prange served as the regional director for FCFI for several years. His presence and input at FDIC and the leadership meetings has been a blessing. Tye has accepted the challenge to set up a formal chaplaincy program in Austin. Please pray for him. Tye writes, "Thank you all for the opportunities throughout the FCF family to grow in my personal faith. I have met some outstanding people through the leadership of FCF. Unfortunately I have not been able to spend as much time in my role as the Texas regional director. I would like to tender my resignation from that post at this time to focus on some personal things. I by no means am leaving the FCF. I believe in everything the Fellowship does and will continue to be a contributing member."

Greeting from WV.

The Kanawaha Valley Chapter had an apartment fire that was way too much for their FCF Chapter's Fire Relief to handle. Sixteen families were displaced and the Red Cross helped them.

Four Fire Departments worked the fire. Their FCF president & TMVFD chaplain contacted Tudors Biscuits and got every firefighter a sausage, biscuit, and coffee. At noon FCF bought pizza and soda for the firefighters left after mop up. Serving the real Chief, Chaplain Scott Nasby



"Certificate for Whining"

Rick Barton / barton@gunnison.com



It was the call most of us in the "lower 48" long for! "Can you go to Alaska for an assignment?" The next night I was arriving in Fairbanks; it was midnight and the sky was still light. Smoke was everywhere. The Black Spruce prevalent in Alaska had truly proven to be "gas on a stick". Some fires had already burned over 1 million acres.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

I was assigned to work in the Joint Information Center of the Alaska Fire Service. Our job was to coordinate media, concerned public, and government entities requests for information about the fires. We had queries from all over the world and visits from the Governor and United States Senator.

As my month-long assignment wound down we began to prepare certificates of appreciation for the many folks who had assisted the fire operation. One of our trainee information officers developed a striking certificate with a picture of the fires encompassing the text. I subtly hinted that I would certainly appreciate one myself.

As the day of my departure approached, the certificate was presented to me! It was signed by the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center Manager and definitely suitable for framing. Imagine my dismay when I read the inscription, "Presented to Rick Barton for Complaining Incessantly About Not Having a Certificate of Appreciation, Happy Now?" I'm pretty sure they were kidding? Well, it does hang on my wall, as a reminder that our whining and badgering may eventually bring us awards, but are they really the ones we want?

OUR LEGACY

Chief Ron Lindroth, Steamboat, CO

A recent trip to northern Idaho and western Montana provided an opportunity to relive both my personal career roots with the US Forest Service as well as the history of the devastating fires of 1910.

Timothy Egan's book, *The Big Burn*, gave my journey into the past an even greater perspective of those fires. Egan's book recounts the early days of the fledgling US Forest Service, the political battles of the time, and culminates with fascinating stories of two days of massive wildfires. In 1910, the North West was well into an historic draught. Numerous fires were fought by forest rangers, emigrant laborers, civilians, and the military all across the back country of the region. Access was by railroad, horses and mules, or foot. Communication was by currier or telegraph. On August 20 and 21, a "Paloser" wind event hit these fires and whipped into one massive fire that burned three million acres and five towns in forty-eight hours. The fires traveled in excess of fifty miles an hour, faster than I drove on paved roads through the county hundred years later. They killed seventy-eight wildland firefighters, seven civilians, and resulted in untold numbers of severe injuries by burns, blindness, and respiratory ailments. Even though the loss of life was great, many more lives and much property were saved by amazing acts of heroism such as rescue trains crossing burning

trestles to shelter in tunnels as the fire burned over, Ed Polaski holding a crew of forty-five men in an abandoned mine at gun point until he passed out from lack of oxygen, buffalo soldiers evacuating the town of Avery, fire firefighters setting back fires that ultimately saved the town, and a woman who carried her two children through the forest five days to safety — the stories are endless.

Also amazing, but in obvious contrast, was the lack of support these men received from the agencies they served. Forest rangers paid their firefighters' salary and medical care from their own savings because the federal government wouldn't appropriate funds to cover the expense. Even a request for a memorial to mark the graves of fifty fallen men took fifteen years to accomplish. As I reflect on the sacrifices those who went before us made, I'm grateful that their passion and devotion to a higher calling has made our lives better. Their loss afforded us the opportunity for guaranteed wages, a safety net of insurances should we be injured or killed, quality training and equipment, and policies that ensure the protection of the work force.

Studying history and reflecting on the past helped me acquire a deeper perspective on the sacrifices others have made. It also serves as a reminder not to take for granted our legacy, whether it is our Christian heritage, national freedom, or our work place safety. I can think of no greater disrespect of the sacrifices made giving us these gifts than to thoughtlessly disregard the lessons they teach.

GOD IS STILL ON THE MOVE AND FAITHFUL!



As we see the end of summer and the freshness of fall time before us, I'm reminded that even though the seasons change, the Lord doesn't. He is still on the throne and ever so faithful! As I step outside in the beautiful Northern Greenville county mountains, I'm also reminded of the greatness of God as seen in His fall time splendor. My house is

located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and parkway. It was in this area that the ancient Cherokee Indians once resided. Before the white missionaries came to the area, the Cherokee people knew there was a Great Spirit that controlled and gave everything; in so much that before they killed wild game for food they would give thanks to the Great Spirit for the provision. This is why they were so easily led to Christ when visited by missionaries. Paul wrote in Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and Divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

Even nature is a testimony or a type of "gospel tract" to man. Reflect on this as you enjoy the beautiful fall decor. **The Foothills Chapter** has seen the Lord continue to sustain us throughout the summer. I had the blessed privilege of bringing the devotional at our August meeting where over 20 were in attendance. The ladies of Pelham First Baptist Church once again provided a delicious breakfast. Some members of the Powdersville Fire Dept. were also in attendance, and have plans to start a chapter in their area. Please pray that the Lord will extend outside of our chapter into neighboring counties. At the publishing of this bimonthly *Encourager*, we are also on the threshold of the holiday season. Thanksgiving and Christmas really go hand in hand. We should be thankful for the gift of our Savior. Have a blessed upcoming holiday season, and use this time to tell others the Good News! Rob Hitt Foothills FCFI Chapter S.C. Regional Director



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Prayer Power

By Rev. Wayne Detzler, Chaplain
Long Hill Fire Department
Trumbull, CT

"Helicopter down!" the pager said. A medical evacuation chopper had crashed. The scene of devastation sprawled over a grassy slope near our house. When I arrived the incident commander briefed me. Injured patients had been packaged and sent to the trauma center. In the silent shell of the helicopter were bodies. It was our assignment to recover them. So, I fell facedown and crawled down the slope and into the chopper. As firefighters worked to free the bodies, I prayed for them and the families of the fallen medic personnel. Later that evening prayer persisted as we wrapped up the recovery process.

Sometimes prayer becomes the main task. Actually, the Apostle Paul knew that when he wrote: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17 ESV). The brevity of Paul points to urgency in the task. Chaplains are often called to pray in many different situations. Most of them are in response to overwhelming disasters.

It is important in the light of this that we, as chaplains and all of us as Christians, cultivate the practice of non-stop prayer. Then we can pray persistently out of the fullness of our relationship with the Lord.

Charlotte Chapter On Facebook and The Web

"Our website is fcfcharlotte.com and the Facebook page is [Charlotte Fellowship of Christian Firefighters](#). The response has been very encouraging. Both sites have been effective in promoting our monthly prayer breakfasts and we are able to keep our members informed of prayer requests.

We've purchased copies of the new FCF devotional book, *Stories of Faith and Courage From Firefighters and First Responders*. Since we still claim Wayne Detzler as one of our members, it's enjoyable to read the many entries he submitted. We also want to thank Don Biggs for purchasing devotionals for our chapter's board members. Don sent the first FCF Bible to our department in 1982 and 28 years later he sent the first devotionals." Keith Helms

* *The International Office was blessed to see the detailed outline of the Bible Studies this chapter offers. Be sure to check them out.*

Florida Members are Involved



We had some truly meaningful events around the 9/11 anniversary weekend. Many of our Florida FCF members were involved in memorials, services, and special events. **Treasure Coast Chapter** members who are on our departments honor guard team participated in several events including an area wide church service conducted in Port St Lucie, FL.

On a personal level, I was blessed to work with a Maitland (near Orlando, FL) church in a special prayer breakfast and service for the Maitland area responders on the Sat. morning of Sept 11th. Later that day I flew to Atlanta and was honored to speak at a large church that included the attendance of the Fire Chief and the Police Chief of Atlanta. Both these high ranking officials were recognized earlier in the day at Turner Field before the Atlanta Braves/St Louis Cardinals game. I also spoke at two churches the following day and was greatly encouraged by the response of their local fire departments. FCF regional director/board member, Tommy Neiman

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"
(1 Thessalonians 5:17-19 NIV).



Intentionally Leading

ARE WE INVESTING OR SPENDING?

by Slade M. McLendon
Fairhope, Alabama slmclendon@sunbelt.com

Our church recently had a guest speaker, Jeff Kinley, speak to the men about his book on “A Dad-Sized Challenge” and how to make the most of parenting. I was thrilled and excited because I have the responsibility of raising and training three wonderful children. Every day they get one step closer to flying away from the nest that Wendy and I have for them and we constantly think about the question, “Are we investing or spending the time we have with them under our control”?

Like most of you reading this article, we are busy, moving faster than ever, have crazy schedules/seasons in our lives, demands upon us from many directions and sometimes we can lose focus and start to drift. That is when God gently and sometimes not so gently (due to my drifting) reminds me about the precious truth of Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it”. What does this look like and how do we know how to live this out?

I’m sure we all fill our day, week, month and life with many good things, but are we investing in our children, spouses, family, fire department and friends that will truly have an eternal impact or are we spending our lives and running the rat race of the world. In his book, Jeff comments on the subject of quality time vs. quantity time. His point was to have true quality time in someone’s life you have to be around with quantity time. We have to look at relationships like a piggy bank. Are we putting into the piggy bank investments with our relationships or do we say one day I will get around to playing football with them, go to breakfast, have a fun date, go camping, read a book, go and serve someone in tough times, talk about their dreams . . . ?

Jesus said it so well in Matthew 6:19-21, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Let’s make sure that we are people who invest in other people and not live life spinning our wheels and then asking, “Why don’t we have a rich relationship with my children or where did the time go”? We are not guaranteed tomorrow but we have the opportunity to love and impact people today in our families, the fire department and in life. If we look ourselves in the mirror can we honestly say we are intentional in investing into people? If not, start today and spend time with those God has placed into our lives.

Sharing As He Travels: In Cleveland, OH Frank Shaper dropped off *Encouragers* to his classes. While in Monument, CO working a Smeal platform, all *Encouragers* and business cards were picked up. Likewise, when his travels took him to Sullivan, IL Fire Department and Commack, NY Fire Department on Long Island the *Encouragers* were well received.



“A Safe and Peaceful Haven” Chaplain John Kalashian

“Iron Sharpens Iron” (Proverbs 27:17) / 262-639-9336 kalashians@aol.com

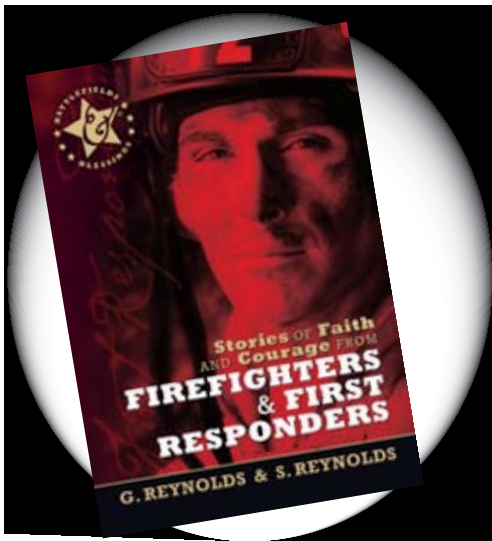
It’s 9:00 am and I’ve just arrived for “farm familiarity training” with Caledonia firefighters. Stepping out of the car my senses quickly pick up the mornings fresh crisp air and the soothing quietness of the farm and countryside. It’s a stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of city life. However, beneath this picture of peace and tranquility lies a disturbing reality. Farming is listed as the fourth most dangerous job in North America. Have you ever heard the old expression “beauty is only skin deep”? Well it certainly applies here! The fatality rate is so high that it is estimated 35 farmers will die out of every 100,000 annually. When firefighters respond to farm rescues, their senses need to be alert to all its areas of potential and existing danger. Toxic chemicals, pesticides, combustibles, heavy machinery, sharp tools, bailers, tillers, gigantic silos with spinning augers, injury causing livestock, methane gas from manure pits and large heavy loads. Farms have it all and for a first responder they all add up to create one thing—a haven of hazards!

While every firefighter understands and courageously accepts the possibility of injury or death on every call, there is actually one they can respond to, which will take them to a place where dangers don’t exist! This is the call from The Lord to join Him in “A Safe and Peaceful Haven”. His is a soft and inviting call which doesn’t require a loud alarm or blaring tone to be heard, but only a quiet stillness in one’s heart. Jesus calls you with these very words, “These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace, in the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Christ is simply saying, you can decide to leave your world of hazards behind and enter His Safe and Peaceful Haven. Like a firefighter, He has eliminated and overcome all the hazards! Enter just as you are, don’t worry about imperfections, Christ will heal and make your life new. Jesus Christ never runs out of medical supplies and He is Divinely Certified to treat any worldly affliction. “Great is Our Lord and mighty in power. He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3, 5).

While the firefighter daily strives to protect and rescue in a world of hazards, no one does it better than Jesus Christ the Ultimate Over Comer and First Responder! When you answer His call He will never fail!

Are you listening? Do you hear His call? He says, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Will you answer His call to enter A Safe and Peaceful Haven?

God bless you and your families as you serve the people who call upon you.



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Memorial Bibles: Available through FCFI


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These hardback Bibles with the FCFI logo can be sent to families or to a fire department in memory of a loved one

Orville D. “Carp” Carpenter began his new life in Heaven with Jesus, his Savior on August 3. Orville was a faithful member of FCFI since 1982. His wife of forty-three years, Barbara, shared that Orville’s service was held at the Wildwood Baptist Church in New Jersey. The North New Jersey Chapter paid a tribute to Orville at the Wildwood Fire Conference in September.



Jimmy Dean Parker, one of the founders of the Spokane, WA Chapter was an FCF member for 30 years. He joined the Spokane WA FD in 1969. Serving the Lord in many ways—including FCFI, prison ministries, and a music ministry with the Good News Brothers Band—Jimmy was a loving husband of Louise for 42 years, father of 4 daughters, and grand father of 13. He went to be with the Lord on August 1, 2010.



NOW ON THE WEB PAGE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PLEASE SEND YOUR CHAPTER ACTIVITIES TO FCFIHQ@AOL.COM

THERE IS A MANGER

Chaplain Marc Santorella, Danvers, VA



I live in the same neighborhood and right next door to the house I grew up in. One of my favorite things about my home is that it sits directly across the street from a beautiful Catholic Church. The Church is set back and surrounded by a finely manicured lawn. Behind the church is all forest and in any season the scene is absolutely picturesque. For as long as I remember, there's been a manger scene on its front lawn during the Christmas season. When Valerie and I were dating, we visited the manger scene every year. When we married God presented us a wonderful blessing to buy a house right in front of that manger. Every year we walk over with our children and read the story of Jesus' birth from the gospel of Luke. As the children grew, the visit developed into a wonderful family devotional time.

During the Christmas Season as I sit writing, I look out my front picture window and watch cars drive past as the manger sits quietly just a little back off the road. Some are on their way to work, home, or perhaps they're visiting a friend or a relative or just taking a shortcut to get to the mall for Christmas shopping. But drive by they do! I wonder; do they ever glance over towards the manger scene? If one was to stop, they'd see all the key players silently waiting for someone to notice them. Imagine, the entire story just waiting patiently to be told; it is the most amazing story of all; the good news of our Saviors' birth.

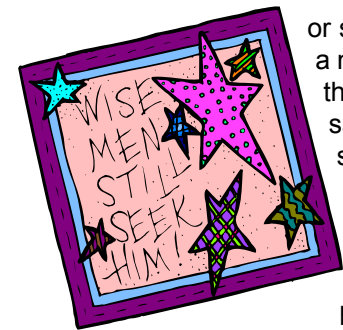
When you approach the manger you'll find three men bearing their gifts. The Bible tells us these were "wise men". Though we know they weren't at the actual birth of Jesus they did know about it. I'm sure that being "wise men" they no doubt had places to be and people to see. They were most likely men of authority in their respective kingdoms, with power, responsibility, families, yet they took the time to answer God's call. The Gospel says that "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:1-2).

Two things come to mind when I consider their visit. First, they took the time to seek out the truth of the prophecy with open hearts. Second, when they did, God was right where He said He'd be, waiting patiently for them to come. Once they found Him they were satisfied. They left the manger and we never heard anything else of them.

As a firefighter, a dad, a friend, and a believer in Jesus Christ, I know how hard it is between twenty-four hour shifts, call backs, second jobs, juggling family responsibly, and pursuing promotions and higher education to sometimes STOP and take five minutes for the Lord. On a personal note, I recently became a life and safety public educator and am sometimes overwhelmed with ideas I want to use during my presentations. These ideas take hours of preparation before being brought before an audience. Yet I have to ask myself, is my walk and call to know my God not just as important as my attention to all these earthly responsibilities? And God loves me and directs my paths so I'm able to embrace all these blessings? All throughout the Bible we hear the Holy Spirits plea for us to seek, come, spend time with Lord, and then we'll find what we need. In a reference to *wisdom*, King Solomon, who was said to be the wisest man who ever lived writes, "I love those who seek me and those who seek me find me" (Proverbs 8:17). Since God is the essence of love and wisdom, those who seek true wisdom not only take the time, they make time to seek Him. Nowhere in God's Word, or in the world today, do we hear someone having wished that they didn't take time with God.

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" Acts 17: 24-27).

Is it too often that we pass by an open opportunity to seek or spend time with God? It can be as simple as stopping for a moment to consider the story behind the manger, or taking that old Bible off the shelf and reading just one or two passages. Maybe it's time to accept an invitation to attend a service with a friend?



Brothers and Sisters as this holiday season approaches and we find ourselves racing from the firehouse to the mall for presents, let's be gently reminded that God is waiting patiently. He loves us so! He will not force us, but know that when we're ready He'll be there—quiet and

patient and willing receive us into His presence. He will accept us as we are and just as we are is all that He asks us to bring.

2011 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- + Fire Rescue East Daytona Florida, Jan 21-22 (Booth 110)
- + Firehouse World, San Diego, CA ; February 26 - Mar 2
- + FDIC Indianapolis, IN March 21-26
- International Board Meeting March 24; Appreciation Dinner March 25; Praise and Prayer March 26
- + Family Camp June 21-25
- + Firehouse Expo, Baltimore MD July 19-23
- + Firehouse Central EMS Expo, Las Vegas August 31-Sept. 2
- + I-Chiefs, Atlanta GA August 23- 27 (Exhibits Aug 26-27)
- + Police and Fire Games NY August 25 - Sept 5

Clean Grief

Capt. Raul A. Angulo



I used to joke and say, “My family puts the fun in dysfunctional!” It was an attempt to make light of a situation that in reality, is tragic. I’m not speaking of my immediate family. I have an intact, loving family. We’re all very close. No, I’m talking

about my brothers and sisters. Drugs and alcohol have literally destroyed my family and the relationships between us. As the situation deteriorated, I removed myself and my immediate family further away from my siblings, nieces, and nephews and became quite estranged. Perhaps some of you can relate.

I’m the oldest of six children. I’ve had a blessed and successful life. Instead of becoming an inspiration and role model for my siblings, in their eyes—due to jealousy—I became an elitist, was arrogant, condescending, judgmental, and someone who thought I was better than they. My attempts to help them throughout the years were unsuccessful. So I simply stayed away.

One night my son, Andrew, asked a sobering question. “Dad, Do you have any brothers or sisters?” Wow! I didn’t realize how estranged I’d become. My wife and I turned to each other, then I started to laugh. Not because it was funny, (well, it was pretty funny) but because it was embarrassing. It was time to return to Los Angeles so the extended family could meet my children.

I wish I could say everyone matured and outgrew their petty jealousies and it was happily ever after, but it wasn’t. In fact all they did was pass on their poison to their children, who then took it out on my kids. What a train wreck; sad and pathetic. The one caught in the middle was my mother. Though she had unconditional love for everyone, she was an enabler, incapable of practicing tough love. She desperately wanted all of us to simply get a long, but it wasn’t that simple.

Being the oldest son within a traditional Mexican generation, (my generation), I felt a tremendous responsibility to try and “fix everything”. I wanted to come to my mother’s rescue and stabilize the family. Except my brothers and sisters are no longer children. They’re grown adults with children and grandchildren of their own. I can’t make them do anything. I have no family power over them. Out of frustration, I went away again. It was easier to deal with the pain if I was emotionally and geographically removed. That included my mother. I went two years without any contact with her.

Finally, the reality of her advanced age set in. She is who she is. Nothing was going to change. I decided to re-establish our relationship. I was never estranged from my mother until recently. I decided (after severe prodding from my wife) to let it go and just love her where she’s at—unconditionally—and simply honor my mother. We agreed NOT to bring up news about the rest of the family and just enjoy each other’s company and that of my immediate family. And so it was. Every time I had business in Los Angeles, I’d take my mother out to eat and we would just have a good time. I wasn’t there to fix anything.

The last time I visited with my mom was in August. I was in L.A. for my 35-year high school reunion. I took her and my Aunt Ester out to lunch, then for ice cream. In the car, we listened to Mexican mariachi music and sang the old favorites. My Aunt Ester has dementia. She has long-term memory, but no short

term memory. Every 15 minutes, she’d ask who I was. I’d make up a new character each time with stories from the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s. Whattaya gonna do? We all laughed at my outrageous stories. I told Aunt Ester I used to hate coming to her house when I was young because her son, Pete, always beat me up, tied fire crackers to my belt loop, and lit them! After that, he sicked his dog on me! Ester responded, “I know; he was always a mean cuss!” When it was time to say goodbye, I’d take a new photo and say, “If this is the last time we’re to see each other, I’ll see you in Heaven.”

Recently, my mom had a massive stroke. She can no longer speak, has right side deficit, and it’s doubtful if she even knows who anyone is, including me. She’s in a nursing home and will probably stay there until she dies. But I’m OK. My last visit with her was good. I’m at peace and I have clean grief. I can’t say that for some of my siblings, nieces and nephews. They’ll never have the opportunity to make things right with her. They’ll never be able to say “I’m sorry” and they’ll never hear “I forgive you”. My mother’s final memory of their lives will be that of disappointment.

This is a sad story, but there’s a sadder one still. The twinkling of an eye is going to happen fast. For those who aren’t prepared for the day or the hour, the devastating consequences will be eternal. Matthew 25:1-13 is the story of the Ten Bridesmaids. Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins who took their lamps out to meet the Bridegroom. (For those of you who are truckmen, *virgins* refers to everyone, not just women. The Bridegroom is Jesus Christ). Five virgins were wise (prepared) bringing extra oil in jars, while the other five were foolish (unprepared), only carrying the oil that remained in their lamps. In all of Jesus’ parables, He tells us to be watchful and diligent because no one knows the day nor the hour of His return.

The Bridegroom was delayed and everyone became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out; “Here’s the Bridegroom! Come out and meet Him!” Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “No” they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both of us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy oil, the Bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir! Open the door for us!’ But He replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’”

Use this Christmas season to make peace with your parents and enjoy them while you can.

As firefighters, we see daily reminders of how suddenly things can change. Auto accidents, a fire, trauma, a stroke, or heart attack, can all happen in a twinkling of an eye. Often, painful situations are left unresolved causing extreme guilt and regret in our lives. We all make choices. And some choices have eternal consequences. Focus on decisions you control. You cannot control the decisions of others.

If you can relate to my story, use this Christmas season to make peace with your parents and enjoy them while you can. For some of you this may not be easy. There may be years of pain to overcome but remember, honoring your father and your mother is the first Commandment with a promise, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)

Continued on page 13

By Rick Barton
barton@gunnison.com



What Does The Word Say?

By Dwayne Clemmons,
Bumpass, VA
dmlemmons@earthlink.com



The Winds Are Coming

It was a classic case of a slow moving, wilderness fire gone bad. A fire that was being managed for resource benefit, consuming acres of dead and diseased trees had erupted one afternoon and destroyed a popular resort and was encroaching on another. I'd transferred in from another fire as safety officer. Our incident command post was located in the dining hall of the second resort where the previous safety officer had developed an evacuation plan.

Like many large or complex incidents, we'd been assigned a meteorologist from the National Weather Service. He set up shop with his computers, satellite antennas, and pixie dust to begin cranking out weather updates and forecasts. At our noon *Command and General Staff Meeting* he announced that within an hour we would receive strong downdrafts which would greatly affect our fire behavior. What should we do?

Jesus told us that He would return to earth to bring about our deliverance, but also that He would expect us to be doing His will, prepared for His coming. (Luke 12:35-36). He told us some would think that since He hadn't returned yet, they could kick back, abuse their positions and be lazy. (Matthew 24:43-46) Looking around, do we see that today? Do we see churches, denominations, and individual believers acting as if Jesus wasn't going to return? Are we acting that way ourselves? Our Lord warned that He would come unexpectedly, while folks are going about their business as usual, "Be dressed ready and then they will suddenly be caught for service and keep up in judgment! (Luke 17:26-30)

On the fire that day, we decided to notify all the crews and rehearsed our move to safety. Sure enough within an hour the microburst hit! We rang the bell and ordered the fire crews into the safety zone. No one was hurt, the resort was saved and the meteorologist received a new bottle of pixie dust, compliments of the incident management team.

"So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Matthew 23:44).

"Be dressed ready and then they will suddenly be caught for service and keep up in judgment!" (Luke 12:35).

Continued from page 12

While we're here on earth, God can work within us to cover all our hurts with His grace. He says heaven will be a place where every tear will be wiped away. There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain. (Revelation 21:4) However, if you're running away from God, for what ever reason, return to Him while there's still time. There will come a day and an hour when the foolish will be caught off guard and find themselves on the wrong side of the fence. Let's see, wiping away every tear? No more death, crying, or pain? Or weeping and gnashing of teeth—Hmm. Failure to recognize the gravity of that choice and remain in rebellion with God will earn you the right to hear from Him from behind a closed door, "I tell you the truth, I don't know you."

In times of such turmoil as we are facing now the Lord impressed upon me the need to ask Christians this question. What does it mean to have peace that passes all understanding? So, What Does The Word Say?

Philippians 4:7 says, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

When you read this Scripture you ascertain several interesting facts. Peace only comes from God. He is the only one who can give you real peace. Peace means to live as one, have rest, and quietness. We all know that in this world we will have trials and tribulations. The Word says that we don't have to fear the world because He has put all things under His feet.

This peace we're discussing is not an absence of trouble, but rest and quietness in the middle of the trouble. The World looks to medication, sports, alcohol, and a host of other remedies to find this peace. Isn't it wonderful to know that we, as Christians, have the one and only answer for them?

The Bible goes on to say that this peace passes all human understanding. This is not a feeling, goose bumps, or some spiritual gimmick. This is authentic, genuine, and pure confidence in the love and power of God. He loves us so much and desires for us not to be anxious, worried, or concerned. Again, this is not mindless oblivion. This is a assuredness that only comes from a covenant relationship with God.

Once you have this peace your heart and mind will be kept. You don't have to earn it, you can't buy it, and you will never be able to fake it. Trust me, I know. When you allow God to have His way you will not be unduly concerned with the care and problems of this life. You will function in a more efficient manner. You will be more productive than you can imagine.

All of this is accomplished through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He was crucified on the old rugged cross, went to hell and stole the keys to death and the grave, and was resurrected by His Father to sit on the throne for eternity. Everything He did, said, and accomplished was so you could have this peace that passes all understanding.

I suggest you to take time and truly seek God on this topic. We are called, anointed, and appointed as ambassadors for God. People need to see us operating in this peace so they will question us as to how we obtained it. God must be so real in our lives that we will not fathom operating without Him. When this happens you will begin to change your environment, your sphere of influence, and the world.

Consider the following questions:

- Do you understand this peace?
- Do you really desire this peace?
- What do you need to do to have this peace?
- Do you really believe He wants you to have peace?

Meditate on this until the next time.
Be blessed and "Let The Spirit Reign!"

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"Let us encourage one another," Hebrews 10:25

MESSAGE INSIDE

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
always offering joy
in my every prayer for you..."
Philippians 1:3,4

The Lord brought you
To mind today
May His blessings be yours,
I pray.

And may you feel
the Joy, strength and love
That comes from
Our loving Father above.



WITH
SINCERE
SYMPATHY

"Let us encourage one another," Hebrews 10:25

MESSAGE INSIDE

"I am the resurrection
and the life;
he that believeth in me,
though he were dead,
yet shall he live."
John 11:25

It's easy telling other
To take courage and to pray
We only learn how hard it is
When our own pass away.

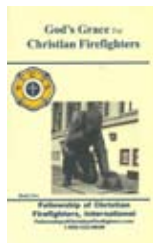
But may it help to comfort you
And ease the loss you bear
To know that there are other hearts
That understand and care.

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HEBREWS 10:25***

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- To glorify God in the fire service.
- To find fellowship together for individual growth in the Christian life.
- To serve the cause of Christ through the church of one's own choice.
- To encourage those in the fire service in their Christian life.
- To share locally in planned fellowship meetings, individual contact, and prayer.
- To share nationally through participation in fire conferences and expositions.
- To bring all Christians in the fire service to a common goal of praying for the fire service and its members.
- To share on an international basis through an Annual International Conference.
- To have contact, internationally, with fellow Christian firefighters.
- To care for widows; meeting spiritual as well as physical needs.
- To care for firefighters in times of need.
- To place Bibles in fire stations.
- To distribute New Testaments to individuals in the fire service / EMS



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“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection,” (Phil. 3:10).

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***EVANGELISM
EMPOWERMENT
ENCOURAGEMENT***