



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

Jan, Feb 2011

Volume 34, No. 1

My journey began at a very young age. When I was born, my parents were told that I had a very little chance of survival. Pneumonia had set into my lungs at birth and I was placed in an oxygen tent for several months. Against all odds God brought me home from that hospital to a normal family life. A couple of years later, I was ejected out of the front window of an automobile after striking a tree head on. I sustained a head injury and was placed back in the hospital for a short time. However, these early on events would definitely not be the last or biggest trials I would face. I count them as the initial victories into a life of serving God.

I grew up in the suburbs outside Baltimore, MD. My father was a hard working man and my mother was very involved in the local church. I do remember that he was not as “sold out” for God at that time as she was. But little did we know that his life would soon change as well.

On Halloween night in 1976 the South Hagerstown Fire Company was dispatched to a working fire on Mulberry St. I remember waking up in my bed trying to catch a breath while my eyes felt like there was sand in them. I couldn't see anything. The room was black and the sounds of crackling timber embraced the air. About that time my father picked me up and headed for the balcony. He managed to bring us to safety then went back for my mother. Before he or the firefighters could make entry, the house exploded. My mother was found just fifteen feet from the back window that night. This was the evening that would change our lives forever.

It was difficult for my father raising two children on his own while mourning the loss of his high school sweetheart. My mother was only twenty-nine years old and I'm sure they had lots of big plans. I believe my father was broken when he made his way to the altar at a James Robinson convention one night. It was obvious that he would not be able to go on without giving his entire life to the Lord. A few days after that conference, I found us packing our things and heading to Texas. Apparently, James had asked my dad to come work for him in Dallas. So just like that, we had a brand new

MEET A MEMBER



Mick Moffitt,
Chief Operations Officer,
Emergency Training Center
Crowley, TX
www.TrainingDivision.com
1-877-470-FIRE

start and a new place to heal from our recent tragedy. Things were beginning to look up for us as a family. My father began working in full time ministry and my sister and I were growing up. He began assisting with several ministries and taking lot's of business trips. One I specifically remember was Lay Witnesses for Christ. This organization dealt with professional athletes and kept him pretty busy to say the least.

A knock came at the door one night while my father was on a business trip. I was home alone that night while my sister was at a friend's house. When I opened the door there were several of his colleagues standing on the porch. Now you have to realize that by this time, I was no rookie at receiving bad news. My father's friend, Sam Mings, looked me in the eye and said “Mick, I have some hard news for you.” I remember asking him “How did he die?” Those were the first words out my mouth. Apparently, my father was

killed in a car accident outside Nashville, TN. After receiving the initial blow, I was lost for thoughts, words, emotions, and everything else you could only imagine. At the time, I was fifteen years old while my sister was only nineteen. *What are we going to do? Where are we going to live? Why is this happening to me?* Those were only a few questions that were racing through my mind.

Through God's grace, my sister and I managed to make it. I now have a beautiful wife of my own and two boys. God birthed a vision in my heart through the history of my life. He has not only promoted me to the position of lieutenant within a career fire department, but He also has me involved with one of the largest fire academies in the world. I now teach a class to new fire recruits called “Character in the Fire Service.” I am currently in the process of writing a book explaining the vision God has shown me for firefighters who truly want to answer the call. Below is an outline of that vision.

“You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act” (Matthew 7:16). Listed below are the pillars of a wise firefighter inspired through Proverbs 9:1: *“Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars.”*

Fellowship of Christian Firefighters

INTERNATIONAL

Character
Honor
Respect
Integrity
Service (Servants of our community)
Teamwork

Notice there are only six pillars listed. He who dwells with wisdom has seven pillars in his house. A common placement of pillars in houses of old was to put three on each side and one in the center to support the roof. I think that central pillar represents **CHRIST**. The house may still stand, though severely weakened, with the loss of any one of the wall pillars. But, if the central pillar erodes, your protective roof collapses.

My new address is: www.maximizedmen.blogspot.com



“Character In The Fire Service” Part One

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

Have you ever had a dream that just seemed unobtainable? Maybe it was perceived too big or you just thought of yourself as being too small to fulfill it. In either case, I believe that we all have what seems to be out of reach visions from time to time. My opinion is that these visions are planted in us from our Creator and by the time they pass through our minds, they become unbelievable or overwhelming. God placed a passion in my heart many years ago that can only be reached with His anointing and your help.

I think you would agree that the fire service is a very trustworthy line of work. Common citizens place their most valuable possessions in the care of a professional individual wearing a uniform. It has always amazed me when a father would patiently wait outside of an ambulance while his teenage daughter was being assessed by two men in uniforms. That my friend is trust. This trust has been established over decades of men and women serving with character and integrity.

God gave me a vision that deals with the character of community servants. I was reading through Proverbs 9:1 when it hit me. The Scripture says, “Wisdom has built her house. She has hewn out her seven pillars”. God began to speak to me concerning how the seven pillars could be applied to firefighters. I started writing what seemed like “character traits”. They appeared in the order below:

Character
Honor
Respect
Integrity
Service (Servants of our community)
Teamwork

Only six pillars listed. He who dwells with wisdom has seven pillars in his house. A common placement of pillars in houses of old was to put three on each side and one in the center to support the roof. I have no doubt that central pillar is symbolic of CHRIST. The house may still stand, though severely weakened, with the loss of any one of the wall pillars. But, if the central pillar erodes, the protective roof collapses. What this spoke to me was that our character may often crack, but our faith in Him cannot.

We will begin a journey through the pillars listed above over the next several issues in the *Encourager*. But before we begin ask yourself the most important questions of all.

If I were to look inside myself today,
Is Jesus Christ my central pillar?
This is the foundation of what's ahead.

I look forward to our journey!



FCFI PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

by Chaplain Gay Reynolds



PAST

The ministry of Fellowship of Christian Firefighters dates back to the early 1970's when several Denver Christian Firefighters discovered they weren't the only Christians on their department. Realizing that the tragedies and dangers inherent in their profession played on the minds and emotions of first responders, they knew that with God's strength and peace they were better able to cope. A resulting Bible study, based on Hebrews 10:24-25, opened their eyes to the importance and need for Christian firefighters to support and encourage one another in their daily walk. That Bible study led to monthly meetings of concerned and interested firefighters. In 1977, the Lord used a conversation between two firefighters, Duncan Wilkie of the Denver Fire Department, and Ron Melott, formerly of the Portland, Oregon Fire Department, to show the need for such a fellowship on a national basis. Because of their conversation and the interest shown nationally, the pilot group, including Bob Crum and John Barker, organized the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters, International: a nonprofit, nondenominational organization, incorporated in Denver in 1977. It received its first national exposure at the FDIC and ISFSI conferences in Memphis, Tennessee in March of 1978 and is now a recognized entity within the fire service. It began as an at home ministry where the founders shared in decision making, ministry outreach, and housing the office. Later it moved to an office building in Denver. Then, in 1995, when funding was at a minimum, it was my wife, Sue's, and my blessing to accept the positions of missionaries for the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters, International and move the office to our home. In an attempt to be good stewards of God's money, this move made it possible for the majority of donations and membership money to go to reaching more first responders. Brainstorming and goal setting followed. Placing station Bibles, one of the original ministries, grew. The prayer for a pocket New Testament was answered when IBS (now Biblica) called and asked for our partnership in the creation of such a tool. The result was *Answering The Call*, a New Testament with inserts from members of FCFI across the country who willingly shared their testimonies and stories.

Other goals included the establishment of an International Board and Regional Directors to share in the ministry and provide a more personal contact with regional members, Bible studies written for and by first responders, a daily devotional book, submissions by members to the newsletter to encourage others and share the similarities, challenges, and comfort that God provides, and increased member and chapter involvement in this, God's ministry, to first responders. When the Attack on America took the lives of so many innocent people and first responders, an awareness of having God's comfort and peace and sharing his Word grew. Likewise involvement in FCFI expanded.

PRESENT

Presently, FCFI has over 2000 members. Station Bibles continue to be placed with thirty-five recently placed in Calgary, Canada. An active board and regional directors are available and sharing God's Word. Over 37,000 *Answering The Call* have been placed by FCFI in first responders hands and many more than that by Biblica. Member and chapter involvement is on the rise. Many are hosting booths at regional and local conferences. We are thankful for those willing to share their love for the Lord in *The Encourager* which has grown from six to sixteen pages. Several Bible studies are now available written by and for firefighters. The International attends on the average of six major conferences a year to share God's love, Word, and FCFI's ministry vision. A web page and international prayer chain has been developed and are run by the dedicated members Scott Nasby (WV) and Mike Gurr (FL). Last year, FCFI was contacted by AMG Publishing to author a 365 day devotional. Members came to the forefront and *Battlefield Blessings, Stories of Faith and Courage From Firefighters and First Responders* was introduced and well received at the International Fire Chief's Association, Fire Rescue International Conference in Chicago the end of August. Nearly 5,000 copies have already been distributed.

FUTURE

FCFI would be falling short of God's plan, if they failed to put sharing God's Word foremost in its outreach. To do this, you are needed. Regional areas and the International Board are in need of more leaders. Our former pastor once said that a church will die if the nursery is empty and the baptismal dry. Likewise, FCFI needs its proverbial baptismal and nursery to stay full. We need young and more experienced members to join the already experienced leadership to bring balance and new ideas to the ministry and to train to one day take over leadership roles. While God has blessed Sue and me with good health, we are in our senior years and would be falling short if we didn't encourage and recruit new leadership to one day help lead FCFI.

GODLY LEADERSHIP

Godly leadership requires strength and faith beyond human ability. It takes sacrifice, time, careful ordering of priorities, and most of all dependence on God and His guidelines. Leaders need an authoritative strength, but most of all they need to be sacrificial servants willing to take the challenges and hardships along with the abundant blessings. God is good to Sue and me, and we can truthfully say the blessings have far surpassed what we ever expected or deserve.

In the King James, leadership is used seven times. More frequently the word used is *servant* in place of *leader*. Some of God's guidelines for leadership are presented below. Please, look them over, perhaps extend the search in God's Word, and

Pray about your involvement with FCFI.

PRAYER AND PREPARATION

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ” (Colossians 4:2).

COURAGE AND RELIANCE ON GOD

Moses, an initially reluctant leader and servant relied on God to equip him for the tremendous leadership role he was called to perform. When he passed the “baton” to Joshua, he summoned Joshua and said to him in front of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deuteronomy 31:7-8).

AN ENCOURAGER

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:13).

In Colossians chapter 2:2 Paul urged followers to be encouragers and said, “. . . that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” This encouragement was grounded in Christ not in a philosophy.

And of course FCFI’s key verse, “. . . but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).

DENIAL

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

RELIANCE ON GOD

Throughout biblical history, when people relied on God, He always sustained and led them. One such example that explains God’s leading is clearly stated in the words of Abraham’s, servant “Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives” (Genesis 24:27).

PLEASE CALL

Please call us if you feel God’s calling for your increased involvement in FCFI.

PLEASE JOIN US IN INDIANAPOLIS

Consider joining the International Board Meeting March 24 at FDIC in Indianapolis.

The most effective ministry to first responders relies on other first responders reaching out. You can identify. You have been there. And remember:

God doesn’t always call the equipped, He equips those He calls.



FCF Foothills Chapter!



Our November meeting was held at the Pelham First Baptist Church in Greenville. The ladies provided a delicious breakfast, and we took up an offering later in the meeting. We began by presenting old and new business and discussed purchasing a case of the devotional, *Stories of Faith and Courage From Firefighters and First Responders*. I encourage anyone that has not obtained a copy to do so!—My wife and I are using it as a couples’ devotion on the mornings that I go on shift. I just had to give that brief commercial!

I was especially honored and blessed to bring the devotional for our morning meeting. I spoke of David and Goliath and the “giants” that David and we ourselves face. As a chapter, we also discussed sponsoring one of our members to attend the FDIC next year to represent the Foothills Chapter.

Our meeting turnout has been a blessing with an average of about twenty in attendance. It isn’t primarily the number, but the blessing of seeing new faces and those getting off shift making an effort to join us.

May the Lord bless each of you in the New Year and I am looking forward in what the Lord will do in 2011. Rob Hitt S.C. FCFI Regional Director FCF Foothills Chapter.

Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons (Leaders) from 1 Timothy 3: 1-10.

“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons” (1 Timothy 3:1-10).