



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

July August 2011

Volume 34, No. 4

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the fire service and in Christ:

I am writing this so you will not see me but the love, grace, and sovereignty of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am 35 years old. I entered the professional fire service with the City of Charlotte at the age of 23. For the first six years, I rode on engine companies. Then, at the request of a very senior captain I greatly respected, I was assigned to a heavy rescue company. In Charlotte, there are two rescue companies, and these companies respond to all fires, pin-ins, and other major incidents. In the midst of this, I was newly married and buying my first home. What more could a young firefighter ask for? It was all falling into place. Except for that nagging void I felt, because spiritually, I was just about dead.

I was raised in the church. My parents took my sister and me to church whenever the doors were open. Sunday school, two worship services, Monday Awanas, Wednesday prayer meeting . . . we were even dragged along by dad to the deacon’s meetings on Fridays. At age six I professed faith in Christ and was baptized at seven. I was a decent kid until high school when I became like Israel in the Old Testament—oblivious to God, preferring my own approach to life—and starting my wilderness wanderings.

I knew I was a Christian but it certainly wasn’t apparent to others. I knew Jesus—He was my fire insurance policy—but that’s certainly not the relationship He desired with me. As James 2:19b says, “even the demons believe (in God) and shudder.” (Look in the four Gospels whenever Jesus confronts a demon and see their reaction!) Then it happened. I hit my low point on the night of July 6, 2006. Life with ME at the center wasn’t working. I knew Christ wanted to be my center. That night I tried wrestling with God, but by His grace I lost and He won. I surrendered control.

Now, He was in charge. My wife and I, with new baby in tow, started going back to church. I was sorry for my sins but would not let go of my guilt until our pastor was doing the book of Ephesians and it hit me in the face. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that “the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” —and God used it on me. What was the verse that hit me so hard? “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with



MEET A MEMBER

Jon Dygert
Firefighter II
Charlotte Fire Department, NC

Christ—by grace you have been saved . . . and this is not of your own doing it is the gift of God, and not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:4-5, 8). He loved me, even while I was still in my sins, and by His grace alone, not by any action of mine, He rescued me. What I needed to do was . . . nothing.

I started reading my Bible again and saw verses like Hebrews 4:16, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne room of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.” Wow. My sin was gone, hidden by Christ’s blood. I could leave it with Him! That is exactly what I did. And now, I could have a relationship with a Holy God.

Fast forward about six months. God really started stirring in me. I asked a Christian mentor in the fire service a question: “I don’t know what I’m supposed to be doing, but the Holy Spirit is at work inside me.” I followed his advice to pray—to keep the devil away, to keep the Spirit stirring, and to ask God what He wants from my life.

After reading verses such as 1 Corinthians 19-20, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” And Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me . . . the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” And then, during an army chaplain’s speaking engagement at our church, God gave me His instructions in three words: “fire service chaplain.”

I feel inadequate to the task, especially since many of my fire service peers know me from my younger days. But just like the apostle Paul instructs us, I am taking off the “old me” and putting on the new, and trusting Him to equip me for it. Asking God to close doors if I was misinterpreting His directions, I enrolled in seminary. God opened the door wide, providing a two-thirds scholarship to sponsor my studies.

“I was once lost and now I am found.” And it can happen to anyone! I want to learn all about His word so that I can share it and show you the loving Christ that redeemed me. God could advance His Kingdom easily by making a booming announcement from the clouds or writing, “I am God and my Son is Jesus” in the sky, but for some reason He uses zeros

like me to show the ONLY hope is in HIM! Our God IS faithful and He loves us—all we have to do is “come with confidence (faith) to His throne of grace!

Jesus lived a life of service, sacrifice, and suffering. We as firefighters understand those values. We serve the community. We sacrifice time with our families and are willing to lay down our very lives for others. We suffer in unbearable heat or dark smoke, and bury horrible mental images deep in the recesses of the mind. But why? What’s our purpose? We are created to glorify God. If we are only bringing glory to ourselves, it’s all in vain. Jesus says, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). It is my prayer that we will reflect not ourselves but Christ to our families and the communities we serve, in heartfelt gratitude for His ultimate sacrifice.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that “the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword”.



Missionary Musing

by Chief Gay Reynolds
Chaplain and FCFI Missionary



HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA

Two hundred and thirty-five years ago our country was founded on Christian values and beliefs. (Chief Lee has mentioned several times how he enjoyed watching the ships approach Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts). This country has endured for this period of time because we have held on to these core values. Lately, we have shifted toward “Diversity” in all things. And if you have a pulse (Chief Lee still does) you have observed a 180 degree swing from Christian beliefs, to worldly “gods!”

This is not an over night change, it's been going on for some time. Can we pinpoint an exact date? I would suggest it started its ever increasing push after the Korean War—a war that was controlled by politicians and not the military and thus accomplished little of its stated goal. Why? Does the word “POWER” mean anything to you? We see it today: I did in phases like “I caused”, “because of me” . . . This isn't surprising, what is surprising is that we let it happen! 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, “Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” Please notice that you and I were not included. It isn't about us, but it is about Christ! 2 Corinthians 3:5, states, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.”

This power struggle was not overlooked by our Father, for He warns us of this type of sin, this ego. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

How can we break this cycle of worldly gods in the fire service?

Let's agree to make a concerted effort
For the long haul
Of taking the fire service to Jesus Christ.

FCFI needs State Directors for all 50 states. And we need them now!

Are you ready to do the Lord's bidding? Then let's get after it! Time is a wasting! FCF would like leaders in every state, reaching out to the fire service. We would like Area Directors supporting and encouraging the State Directors. And we want the “office” to encourage, support, and facilitate all of you! It is the direction we have been going, but do you see the urgency now!

If you feel called to serve Him in His ministry called The Fellowship of Christian Firefighters, International, please contact us (fcfihq@aol.com / 1-800-322-9848).

Like the Marines, we are looking for a few good men and women! God Bless, Gay

If you feel called to serve Him
in His ministry
called

The Fellowship of Christian
Firefighters, International,
please contact us
(fcfihq@aol.com
or
1-800-322-9848).

2011 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- + Firehouse Expo, Baltimore MD July 19-23
- + IAFC — Fire Rescue International; Atlanta GA Aug. 23- 27 (Exhibits Aug 26-27)
- + Firehouse Central EMS Expo, Las Vegas August 31-Sept. 2
- + Police and Fire Games NY August 25 - Sept 5