



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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MEET A MEMBER

I've traveled around the world for different missions. I've lived twelve years in other countries. I've made good friends and learned to love and value many people and cultures. But nothing comes close to the way God has engraved the FDNY on my heart. It is closely tied to the unusual way He brought me to Himself. This is my story.

When I was eleven years old, my family moved to Mexico City. Three months later my youngest brother drowned at the age of three in a tragic accident. That night, God spoke to me in a dream saying, “Tell your mother that Phillip is alright. He is with Me.” This was my first encounter with Him and it gave me both a conviction of God being real and an expectation that one day I would join my brother in heaven.

Being transplanted to a foreign country made me more self-reliant, less likely to follow the crowd. In Mexico I was the only non-Catholic in a conservative Catholic school and a very independent thinker. I thought I could explore philosophy, the paranormal, intellectual skepticism, and any train of thought I wished without ever endangering my secret hope of going to heaven. When I went to college I was driven—working and going to school full time. I had my career and future all mapped out.

After two years of college in Mexico City, I transferred to the University of Washington in Seattle. While there, I really began to search for truth. I had a deep turmoil inside over all the conflicting teachings I'd heard or read. I was a sucker for any wacko that had an extreme idea. I listened, debated, and talked with anyone who seemed to know what they were talking about—but God protected me. Whenever I was in danger of getting sucked into a quagmire of lies mixed with truth, He gave me a sense of something being wrong and I backed away.

My friend Lorraine, a native New Yorker, tried to share her faith in Christ with me but I quoted philosophy she didn't know and she had no answers for me. She said I seemed so hardened she didn't even have the faith to pray for me.

The day after I turned twenty-one I had a dream; actually



Suzanne Hagelin, Seattle, WA
FDNY Prayer Support Team

O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?
1 Corinthians 15:55

a dream within a dream. In the second dream, I was in my future walking around and a voice said, “This is your future.” It seemed pretty good to me. I'd been able to attain my goals and felt pleased. Plus, it felt cool to have this prophetic type experience where some “being” was giving me a glimpse of the future. In this dream I walked into a large public hall. I looked around before looking up at a white high domed ceiling with dark beams crossing at the top. As I looked up, the voice said, “Go north.” And I woke up. But I was still asleep and didn't know it. I felt a sense of urgency and was puzzled about its meaning. At work, I talked to people about my dream, but no one was able to help me decipher what it meant. As time went by I quickly lost the sense of urgency. I fell back into my complacent attitude and the routine of my daily life. It seemed like a very short time—you know how dreams are—a few weeks or maybe a few months went by. And as the dream continued, I entered a large building, looked around, and had a strong sense of déjà vu. I lifted my eyes to the high ceiling over my head and saw that white dome with the dark cross beams. Then everything went dark. It ended. I found myself in total darkness surrounded by a terrible emptiness and I knew I was dead. I began screaming over and over again, “Oh, my God it's too late!!” I'd ignored the warning and wasted all the time I'd been given. Now it was too late. It was terrifying. Yet it lasted only a fraction of a second. I woke up again and this time I really was awake, and though I wasn't actually screaming out loud, inside I was freaking out, completely unnerved. I was disoriented and had difficulty realizing it had all been a dream that happened in one night. It seemed as if I'd lived those months and tasted that death and right as I was being swallowed up in darkness, God snatched me out and placed me back in time. I know this is not what happened, it was just a very intense dream.

Early in the morning as I got out of bed and dressed, I kept ringing my hands and weeping, unable to shake the torment that had gripped me. Time was short, a sudden, inexplicable death was hanging over me and I did NOT understand what

Fellowship of Christian Firefighters
INTERNATIONAL

I was supposed to do. That whole day I wandered alone on a beach on Puget Sound, searching, pondering, and trying to figure out what the message meant. I found nothing. The next morning, my Christian friend stopped by. I hadn't seen her for weeks.

"You look upset," she said.

I burst into tears as I shared my dream.

She smiled and said, "Jesus is calling you."

"But, what did He want? What was I supposed to do? What did 'Go north' mean?"

"When you think of 'north'," she said, "which way is north?" I pointed towards the north. "That way," I answered. "No," she responded, "I mean like on a map." I was too distressed to get it and I must have stared at her dumbly.

"Is it this way?" She said, pointing towards the heavens and it hit me like a great revelation. "Yes!" I cried out, but I still didn't understand how to act on the message. She explained that Jesus is the Savior and He wanted to rescue me. I needed to give Him my heart. And she led me in a simple prayer asking for Jesus to forgive my sins and come into my heart. I prayed like a child with tears streaming down my face.

Even now, I'm unable to write this story without tears and a quivering in my stomach, knowing what He rescued me from. Faith may come easily for some people, but for me it took a terrible shock to drive me to desperation. All my knowledge and confidence were insignificant in the face of what I'd seen, but the Spirit of God anchoring my heart and granting me faith to believe in Jesus, was very powerful and dramatic. I've never been the same.

Since then, God extended my life, gave me children, and made my life fruitful and meaningful. I enjoyed these blessings and put my dream behind me for many years. Then, it came back to me on September 11, 2001. As I watched the towers burn and fall, my heart was there with them. I remembered what it felt like to perish in an instant. Suddenly I knew that in my dream I'd been a victim of a terrorist attack. I knew the name of one man who worked Port Authority offices, Tom Kelly. I prayed for him to escape. I later learned he was one of the very last people to get out.

The following July I went with a team from our church to New York City. We did a number of service projects and intercession for the city. I met firefighters who survived. I saw in their eyes a reflection of what they'd lived through. God broke my heart with His compassion for them. I related to their despair and the grief and disorientation that had torn their world apart. No matter where I went after that, I felt as if I were still there at Ground Zero. I lived, breathed, and dreamt my prayers for the firefighters of the FDNY. This compassion for them motivated me to start the FDNY Prayer Support Team. People from all over the world joined. Regular e-mails followed with prayer requests and news items that gave me and many others an understanding of how to pray.

Being in Seattle when your heart has been left in New York is very difficult and so God kindly granted me the opportunity to visit several times a year and to see the faces of those He called me to pray for and love. Over the years, a small and faithful team of people, who also love the FDNY, have shared in this blessing including my husband, Jack, four children, and most of all Brenda and Stu Ries. We've shared this ministry together and I could not have managed without them.

In recent years, the sorrow and grief have lightened, but the call to pray remains the same. Around the world, when people think of the FDNY, they remember those men who laid down their lives and they realize what it looks like when people decide to be heroes. Many have told me of their love and respect for them—in France, Ukraine, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, to name a few off the top of my head.

We began the prayer conferences to bring together like-minded people in prayer for the FDNY. Working together with Annette Douglass, Russell Stammer, and the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters has been a great joy. We've seen many answers to prayer, sometimes miraculous ones that give us confidence that although we have no way of measuring our prayers, they have all been heard and cared for by the Living God who loves the firefighters more than we do.

"I, (Jesus), give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;
and no one will snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

The FDNY Prayer Support Team is a ministry of Calvary Chapel Bothell in the Seattle, WA area.

Website: www.fdneyprayer.org

Twitter: @fdneyprayer

Send email prayer requests to: pray@fdneyprayer.org

Personal prayer requests are kept confidential.



Let Us Never Forget!



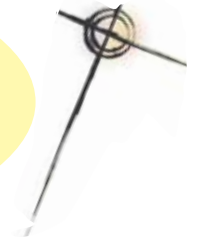
Let us never forget! These words have been on the lips of first responders and more important in their hearts, since September 11, 2001.

This coming September marks ten years since the attack on America. Consider approaching your churches to plan a service or outreach for the first responders in your area. If you contact us, (fcfihq@aol.com) we can send you some suggestions for a Blue and White service, developed by Regional Director Russ Stammer and his chapter in NJ.

If you are planning a service. Please give us the highlights so we can share them with others. Your ideas may be just what others have been looking for.



by Chaplain Gay Reynolds



EASTER!!! What a great time of the year. I think a close second to Christmas, Easter is the most meaningful period of celebration. Had a Pastor say we have an “empty religion”—that is, an empty cross, an empty tomb and, if you will, an empty earth. Our Lord beat death and rose to sit at the right hand of His Father – God. He sits there today to be our intercessor. As my Grandkids would say “Way cool!”

“He is risen!” If those words do not excite you, perhaps it's time to reflect on your true acceptance of the Lord – Christ Jesus. As you know, without His birth, His death AND His ascension into Heaven, we would have no hope of a future with Him. He came from Heaven to be as man, fulfilled His mission, and went back to be with the Father. John 6:38 states, “For I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.” And John 6:62, “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending where He was before?”

I get so uplifted when I reflect of the meaning of Christmas, first, and then Easter. Prayerfully, you do also!

I think we sometimes get caught up in the things of “today” and the “now”, that we lose focus on the importance to the “tomorrows!” Yes, I am referring to our eternal life with the Lord. I know, I know, we are in the fast food life style. I want it and I want it now! But the Lord is not into the immediate life style. He is a God of patience and according to Hebrews 11:39, 40. He is not in a hurry. In verse 13 it explains that while living by faith, they did not see the things God promised, but had to wait until they were with Him.

So, why are we in such a hurry to have “everything,” both worldly and spiritually? God is faithful to those that believe in Him. We must enjoy the opportunity He gives us of serving Him on earth, and then look forward to serving Him in Heaven.

How Can we serve Him? Let's look at the Fellowship of Christian Fighters, what an opportunity exists in our own little part of the world. Yes, the fire service – it is where we live. Fellowship – that is what it is all about! Hebrews 10:24,25 tells us not to give up meeting together, but to encourage one another. Many members feel alone or rejected if they “stick to their guns” in following the Lord's teaching. Chapters see their members looking for service opportunities in other areas. Yet, we are admonished to meet together and to encourage each other, I would add, daily. Are we so short sighted that “today” over shadows “tomorrow”? I hope not! By fellowshipping together, we develop friendships to enable us to accomplish more together than if we remain apart. Dwayne Clemmons in March 22 of *Stories of Faith and Courage from Firefighters and First Responders*, states: “I challenge you as a Christian to purpose in your heart to be deliberate in your actions, and to commit to God to not forsake spending time with your family. To fellowship with them, encourage them, exhort and edify them, and be the glue that binds them together. To provoke them to love, love them to life, and lead them to God. It is all about relationship. This begins with your relationship with God”.

Family unity – isn't that how we perceive our personal “family,” as well as our fire department “family?” How can I urge you to keep on keeping on? Be that Light unto your department, to your family, to those God puts in your path. DO NOT take the passive way through life! Remember, the Lord did not. He took the path that was laid out for Him. And He did it to completion! Can we do any less? Let us keep meeting together in 2's or 3's or ? for His glory. Let us continue to encourage one another, to support as needed and to “be there” in their time of need.

On a sad note, we were informed of the home going of Ted Hellmann. A true man of God. He retired from FDNY in 1958, and continued serving His Lord until he was called home. He ministered to FDNY members for a long time and in prisons in NC. What a testimony of one's love for the Lord.

Meet A Member

We'd be honored to have you share your testimony in an upcoming *Encourager*. Please share from your heart. There is no standard format for outline, just sincerity. The key emphasis is to encourage others. Below are some ideas to help you.

Your Name:

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SOME OTHER IDEAS! Your home life, family and early Christian life; trials or challenges you've faced; What being a Christian means to you; Influential Christians in your life, Christian counsel, Favorite Scriptures and how they've comforted you or what they mean to you; The point in your life when you came into a personal relationship with Jesus; Areas in your life that Christ has changed; Ways God has strengthened you, your family, or department:

Please prayerfully consider submitting your testimony. Feel free to call: 1-800-322-9848 or send your testimony to Sue at (fcfencourager@aol.com) in an e-mail or a Word attachment.

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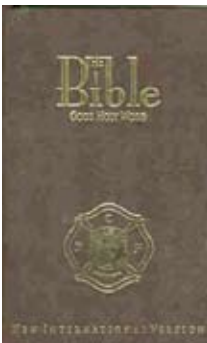
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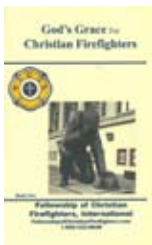
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"Let us encourage one another," Hebrews 10:25

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.



"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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