As Christians, our motivation is pretty simple. When Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment?” He replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind...And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 22:36-39)

We recognize our neighbors as either across the street or across the globe and define love as a verb...it requires action. In the fire service, we understand action versus words. It’s not often that you hear, “I love you” in the firehouse, but when one of our own is injured, or overcome by some other tragedy, we take action. We set up hospital visitations, perform work projects on their homes, and see to their families’ needs. We understand that action speaks louder than words. Therefore, Firefighters For Christ sends teams out to “go” to our neighbors in need, wherever that may be, and demonstrate God’s love for them.

Open Doors for Ministry

Since our founding in 1976, Firefighters For Christ has sent teams throughout the world to such places as Russia, Israel, Guatemala, Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua, China, Korea, Guam, Saipan, Philippines, New Zealand, Australia and many more countries. Recently we have sent teams to Mexico, Haiti, Uganda, Japan, The United States, Northern Ireland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Our teams are sent for the purpose of training, outreach, or disaster relief with the intent of meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of firefighters, or those affected by local disasters.

By Dan Rodriguez

FFC’s most recent outreach was a training trip to Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico. The guys trained on personal rescue, auto extrication, rope rescue, and wildland operations. Most of the firefighters trained received Jesus Christ as their Savior. Our prayer for 2012 is that many of these firefighters will be part of a new church plant in Fresnillo, which is being done through Horizonte Mexico ministries.

Continued on Page 2
The following is a brief description of FFC outreaches since our last newsletter.

We sent a FFC Emergency Relief Team to Japan to provide relief work following the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster that jolted that nation. This 10-man team consisted of members from the U.S. and Northern Ireland. We were sent to Iwaki, about 20 kilometers from the nuclear power plant, and housed in a church called Global Mission Chapel, which opened its door to many volunteer groups that simply showed up to help. At one point, we had representatives of eleven different nations speaking a variety of languages, yet with oneness in Spirit and purpose. Although Japanese culture frowns upon sharing your faith, especially in public, we were encouraged through many accounts of Divine intervention from survivors and experienced many Divine appointments throughout the trip. Our dear brother, Chuck Herman, led devotion one morning from 1 John 3:18-20, “...let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence...” For those unaware, Chuck is now “at rest”, in the presence of the Lord.

Our brothers in Northern Ireland hosted eleven firefighters from the U.S. for a week of on and off duty fellowship. Active duty firefighters were permitted to work side by side with our Irish brothers in the fire stations running calls with them, and even caught a few fires. The mission was not only to build relationships and share our faith, but also to encourage other brothers in theirs. The trip included a must-see that pitted the Irish against the Americans and ended with a barbecue at the training center.

Another Emergency Relief Team traveled to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, following the deadly tornado that tore through sections of that town. Seven FFC members from across the U.S. answered this call to help with tree and debris removal and other relief work. They enjoyed the southern hospitality of the First Wesleyan Church, which became the staging area for volunteers, and later were invited to stay at a private residence. While working amongst debris fields that were once neighborhoods, they heard miraculous accounts of Divine intervention from survivors and experienced many Divine appointments throughout the trip. Our dear brother, Chuck Herman, led devotion one morning from 1 John 3:18-20, “...Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence...” For those unaware, Chuck is now “at rest”, in the presence of the Lord.

Three FFC members teamed up with two other ministries, Rock of Africa, and Influencers on a trip to Zambia and Zimbabwe. John White had been asked to speak at a men’s conference in Livingstone, Zambia, which was organized by Rock of Africa. We participated in this outreach and also provided training for the fire department in Livingstone. Government officials and news media (National TV, radio, and local press) also attended the training. Following the training, the gospel was presented and more than half of those in attendance stood indicating a decision for Christ. We provided the same training/gospel presentation in Hwange and Harare, Zimbabwe, with similar results.

Since the devastating 2010 earthquake, FFC has sent six teams to Haiti. The most recent 12-member team included spouses, teachers, nurses, and a chiropractor. Their mission was to assist a ministry called Maranatha Children’s Home, which runs an “English Camp” that serves 250 kids living in one of Haiti’s many tent cities. They assisted in the daily needs of the ministry and taught classes in science, music, physical education, and Bible. It was a tremendous experience for all who went and they witnessed many kids make first-time decisions for Christ.

Another Emergency Relief Team consisting of eleven members formed for work in Joplin, Missouri, following another deadly tornado. They initially assisted in setting up “Base Camp” at Calvary Chapel, Joplin, by erecting large circus tents and off-loading semi-trucks full of supplies. They later went out in the disaster area to assist with search operations, tree and debris removal, salvage operations, and helping individuals pack-up and move what was left of their belongings. Many contacts were made with local emergency service personnel, other volunteers, and those in need. Our team was thoroughly encouraged as they watched God answer prayer daily.
Our most recent outreach was a training trip to Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico. This 20-member team consisted of 18 instructors and two translators, and was coordinated by a missionary couple from Mexico, Augustin and Jody, who have hosted us the past two years. We donated much needed equipment and translators, and was coordinated by a missionary team consisted of 18 instructors and two translators, and was coordinated by a missionary couple from Mexico, Augustin and Jody, who have hosted us the past two years. We donated much needed equipment and translators, and was coordinated by a missionary couple from Mexico, Augustin and Jody, who have hosted us the past two years. We donated much needed equipment

Friends,

Today I saw the movie Courageous, along with several football families and Coach Thomas. To call it a heart-gripping, powerful call to action for men as husbands, fathers, and leaders would be an understatement. The wisdom and truths conveyed through engaging and at times riveting and heart-breaking story telling and dialog left many of us profoundly moved.

Without giving away too much, as this movie deserves to be seen by everyone, I want to share some of the main character’s remarks:

“I’ve asked God through His Word how to be the father I need to be. I now believe that God desires for every father to courageously step up and do whatever it takes to be involved in the lives of his children. But more than just being there or providing for them, he is to walk with them through their young lives and be a visual representation of the character of God, their Father in heaven. A father should love his children and seek to win their hearts. He should protect them, discipline them, and teach them about God. He should model how to walk with integrity and treat others with respect, and should call out his children to become responsible men and women who live their lives for what matters in eternity. Some men will hear this and mock it or ignore it, but I tell you as a father, you are accountable to God for the position of influence He has given you. You can’t fall asleep at the wheel and one day realize that your hobbies have no eternal value, but the souls of your children do. Some men will hear this and agree with it but have no resolve to live it out. Instead, they will live for themselves and waste the opportunity to leave a godly legacy for the next generation. But there are some of us men who, regardless of the mistakes we’ve made in the past, will give our full strength for the rest of our days to loving God with all that we are and to teaching our children to do the same. And, whenever possible, we are to love and mentor others who have no father in their lives but who desperately need help and direction.

In my home the decision has already been made. You don’t have to ask who will guide my family because, by God’s grace, I will. You don’t have to ask who will teach my son to follow Christ because I will. Who will accept the responsibility of providing for and protecting my family? I will. Who will ask God to break the chain of destructive patterns in my family’s history? I will.

Who will pray for and bless my children to boldly pursue whatever God calls them to do? I will. I am their father. I will.

I accept this responsibility and it is my privilege to embrace it. I want the favor of God and His blessing on my home. Any good man does. Where are you men of courage? Where are you men who fear the Lord? It’s time to rise up and answer the call that God has given to you and say, “I will!”

Last Friday, just before our final strength workout, I challenged our players to finish the week with a fanatical effort, which they did, and then some. I reminded them that once game time came next Friday night, it would be too late to wish that they had done all they were capable of in preparation. I told them that we would enter the stadium with no doubts and we would leave that field a few hours later with no regrets.

Being free of doubt is the direct result of understanding and living in the grace of God, and then responding to that grace with an ironclad resolve to prepare to your fullest. The beauty of God’s grace is that it sets us free from the shackles of our sinful past mistakes, which can often seem overwhelming. Having no regrets is not dependent on a scoreboard or another person’s opinion, but rather the certainty of knowing you gave your best without hesitation or fear.

As parents, mentors, or leaders, we too can experience the state of no doubts and no regrets when we fully commit to Jesus Christ by serving and fully committing to those He grants us the privilege of being responsible for. Who then will fully commit? By God’s grace, each of us can boldly proclaim, “I will!”

Firefighters For Christ’s last World Games event was the showing of Courageous. The movie is now available on DVD. From the New York Times bestselling authors of The Love Dare comes another powerful book—The Resolution for Men. This book is an unapologetic call for men to live courageously for their faith and their families. It is designed to strategically challenge you to become the man God created you to be. The author talks about how to let go of the past, become a stronger spiritual leader in your home, win the hearts of your children, and pursue the ironclad character God wants to develop in each of us as men.
By Mike Bell

Chuck Hermann, an active Battalion Chief from the Rochester, Minnesota FD, was killed while falling a tree on his property in advance of hunting season. Chuck had recently returned from a trip to Tuscaloosa, Alabama where he worked with a Firefighters For Christ Emergency Response Team (ERT) cutting hundreds of downed trees in the aftermath of deadly tornados. He was no rookie when it came to using a chainsaw and bringing down large trees. No one witnessed exactly what happened, but it was apparent to those who came to his aid that Chuck did not suffer. One moment he was joyfully “living on the edge” as he loved to say, and the next he was in the presence of the Lord for whom he “lived out loud.”

Steve Holtrust, a retired Deputy Chief from the Ontario (CA) FD, was shot and killed while in Honduras where he went to work for the Hermann property in Rochester, and the community. In Rochester, Chuck was a well-known figure as his family ran an auction business for many years. His funeral was covered by local news stations and left no doubt what his life was all about. One speaker said, “Few people I know have touched more people than in the ways that Chuck did. Chuck was larger than life. He was full of passion for life and passion for God.” (These newscasts can still be seen by doing a search for Chuck Hermann on the Internet). Chuck’s son-in-law said that Chuck would give his life for his friends and fellow firefighters to personally know Jesus as their Savior. The message of salvation through Jesus Christ was given at the conclusion of Chuck’s service. Afterwards, many indicated by a raised hand that they had prayed to ask Jesus into their lives. One person, through an email to FFC, acknowledged that she had accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. She said, “I want to live my life serving others as Chuck did.”

Along with his wife Pam and others, Chuck operated a ministry called Great Deeds, which organized projects to assist local residents in need. He boldly lived his faith, praying every day that God would use him in “a mighty way.” A hazardous materials instructor, he taught for many years at the Mississippi State Fire Academy where he initiated a Bible study that eventually drew several fellow instructors and students.

Chuck’s wife Pam called him an “adrenaline junkie” who was a daredevil at heart, but poured every ounce of that enthusiasm into serving others and sharing Christ. From dirt bike races to bonfires, Chuck operated a ministry called Great Deeds, which organized projects to assist local residents in need. He boldly lived his faith, praying every day that God would use him in “a mighty way.” A hazardous materials instructor, he taught for many years at the Mississippi State Fire Academy where he initiated a Bible study that eventually drew several fellow instructors and students.

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In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus told his last recorded parable, The Sheep and the Goats. In it (paraphrased) the King rewards a group of people, identified as sheep, for tendng to His various physical needs. When this group, now described as ‘righteous’ asks, “Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, etc., and tend to your needs?” The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.”

By Dan Rodriguez

An opportunity exists for us to serve our King of Kings by serving the “least of these” in Haiti, which is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. During June 23-30, 2012, FFC hopes to send two teams to Port-au-Prince. Godly men and women are needed to minister to the tent city children who attend Maranatha Children’s English Camp. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the center of curriculum, with English, science, crafts, PE., and music also being taught. Last summer, FFC’s team witnessed many decisions for Christ, and those weren’t the only lives changed—just ask Jennifer Elizarraras and Thea Van Gordon. At the end of their week both campers and volunteers had tears in their eyes as they prepared to return to the United States.

The second team will be made up of doctors, nurses, paramedics and EMT’s. At times this medical mobile team will interact with the English Camp but will be housed in a Port-au-Prince hotel. They, too, will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Meds are needed for this trip. Please contact JohnWhite@FirefightersForChrist.org, if you have access to meds or if the Lord is leading you to be on one of these teams and be counted among the sheep.