The statistics on Haiti are staggering, and seemingly without hope. In the early 1700’s, this island territory, once known as the “Pearl of the Antilles”, was a leading exporter of sugar, rum, coffee, and cotton. It was France’s wealthiest colony, but at the expense of some 500,000 slaves, mostly of western African origin. A twelve-year slave rebellion, ending in 1803, brought independence, but the 200 years to follow were wrought with political instability, severe violence, continued oppression, and widespread poverty.

By Dan Rodriguez

Haiti today, is recognized as the poorest country in the western hemisphere having an unemployment rate of roughly 50%. It is the second-most densely populated country in the Americas with a population soaring to about 9 million; 1 million of which are abandoned or orphaned children. Orphanages in Haiti are nearly as plentiful as coffee shops in the United States. There is little family structure. It’s said that religion in Haiti is 80% Roman Catholic, 20% Protestant, but 100% Voodoo.

Add to this scenario a 7.0 earthquake, in a country that builds primarily with cement-based products, but with no recognized building code. The result was widespread devastation with an estimated 200,000 dead, 250,000 injured, and 1.5 million homeless. This was the environment in which Firefighters For Christ was called to minister the good news of Jesus Christ.

Just days after the January 12th earthquake, email notifications went out and Emergency Relief Teams were organized. Our first team of 14 personnel arrived in country ten days after the quake and was housed in a church property in Carrefour, just west of Port-au-Prince. We worked alongside a medical team of doctors and nurses, based out of Singapore, and set up two medical clinics; one in Carrefour and the other in Leogane, the epicenter of the massive quake. Between the
two clinics, we treated about 500 people per day. Nearly all patients were prayed for, and many received Christ as they were being treated.

Our second team of 12 people departed for Haiti the day after our first team returned home. They stayed at an orphanage in Delmas, just northeast of Port-au-Prince. One of their biggest jobs was to help get the orphanage’s school back into operation. They built enough desks to seat 60 kids at that orphanage, helped repair damage caused by the quake, built shelters for displaced families, and helped at medical clinics in Port-au-Prince. They were instrumental in transforming chaos into organization, a skill-set common for most firefighters. On both trips, lives were changed, not only for those who were ministered to, but for those who went. From these two trips was born a vision of a greater mission — a crusade.

In April, two more teams were formed to support an eight-night crusade in Carrefour. Our missionary guide and translator from our previous trips, Yveto Dorce, was sent in advance to coordinate this event. He united 52 churches in the area to participate in this event, secured an event site, and had a stage built, complete with lights and a massive sound system. Many people came alongside Firefighters For Christ financially to help support the Crusade, while faithful intercessors throughout the world prayed. The results were amazing.

Our typical day was spent assisting other ministries at medical clinics or orphanages, while our afternoon/evenings were focused on the crusade. We arrived early at the site and played games with the many kids who attended. Some on our team used this time to present the Gospel, and kids responded. As the sun went down, the

**ON BOTH TRIPS, LIVES WERE CHANGED, not only for those who were ministered to, but for those who went. From these two trips was born a vision of a greater mission — a crusade.**

**The children got to play with Kathy Kositchek each evening before the Crusade began.**

**Through a translator, Brian Bandel from Waukegan, IL, shared from the Gospel of John with eight boys who gathered along the rocks of the shoreline, adjacent to the Crusade site. Each of them prayed to receive Jesus as their Savior.**

**Lt. to rt.: Danny Caldwell, Ryan Penrod, Brian Brown, Leland Davis, Bob Ameche, Jared Kunkel, John Klewer, Kathy Kositchek, Loni Ameche, (RN’s) Tom Zeuliner and Dan Rodriguez were members of FFC’s Crusade Teams. Not pictured are Brian Bandel and John White.**
band started up, and worship music filled the streets of Carrefour, drawing in thousands of people. They arrived by foot, in tap-taps, and jam-packed in buses. The walkway leading to the crusade site became a steady stream of people until there was a sea of people in front of the stage. Worship was very spirited with hands raised, much dancing, and all singing. Each night there were guest speakers, with John White closing the evening with a Gospel message and an invitation to receive Christ. Many responded. In the eight nights of the crusade approximately 80,000 people attended, with about 1,080 coming forward to accept Christ.

God is clearly at work in Haiti. In military terms, an offensive attack; in spiritual terms, a revival. The people as a whole are very open to the Gospel. Speaking with two pastors, one in Carrefour and the other in Leogane, they each stated that their church attendance has doubled in the three months since the earthquake. Doubled…in three months! Scanning the stage each evening of the crusade, many of those accepting Christ were kids; children, the future of Haiti. And herein lies the Hope for Haiti. A nation of abandoned youth will become a generation of new believers, who will turn the cultural, social, and spiritual tide of this nation. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of God.”

Pray that these children will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter 3:18
The heart behind the mission of Firefighters For Christ International came full circle during the recent Mission Possible 2010 event in Pasadena, CA. Several firefighters from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Services (NIFRS) spent over a week in Southern California meeting and working with fire crews in the host city as well as Los Angeles, Glendale and other local departments. This international exchange originated with the Firefighters For Christ chapter in Northern Ireland in 2003. The purpose has been to bring Christian firefighters from across the sea to live and work in local firehouses as a means of sharing the love of Christ through the common connection of the fire service.

By Mike Bell

Northern Ireland firefighter Paddy Quinn and his wife Wendy are fruit of this unique outreach. A skeptical churchgoer in the strong tradition of Northern Ireland’s historic denominations, Paddy believed in God but had never surrendered his heart to Christ. He had heard of the FFC chapter within his department and eventually met several of its members, including William Shiels, with whom he developed a close friendship. Paddy would often instigate debates among the Christians but he said they would always win as their love for him and Christ continued to soften his heart. In 2007, he was invited to a FFC breakfast no different than the hundreds held across America every year. There he was touched by the fellowship of believers from various churches. “As Northern Ireland has been divided for centuries because of the different churches people attend, this FFC fellowship really appealed to me,” Paddy remarked.

“I actually could meet with people and praise God regardless of what church we attended, unbelievable (in NI) but true.”

After more than a year of interacting with the NI FFC chapter and befriending many of its members, Paddy and his wife Wendy attended a Christmas event held by the group in 2008. NI firefighter Phil Scott delivered a message and later that night prayed with Paddy as he fully gave his heart and life to Christ. That next spring the Northern Ireland FFC chapter hosted MP 09. Chapter leader Robert Blair invited Paddy and Wendy to participate by hosting a Christian firefighter from America. Again a bit skeptical, Paddy and Wendy cautiously agreed. Later they welcomed Fresno, CA firefighter Jay Tracy into their home. “What a blessing from God this man brought to our home,” Paddy said. “We will never be the same again. I was greatly encouraged in my walk with Christ by these passionate FFC members from the U.S.”

Pasadena, CA firefighter Victor Laveaga invited Paddy to be part of MP10 in California, which the Lord had put on his heart to organize. This time, skeptical of his own ability, Paddy wondered how effective he could possibly be as a new believer in a foreign land. Though uncertain, he and Wendy decided to make the trip. “This has to be one of the best decisions of our lives,” Quinn enthusiastically remembers.

Paddy worked several shifts with Pasadena firefighters in a busy downtown station. His wife Wendy was encouraged in her faith as she met and stayed with FFC families in Southern California. They were able to follow up their time in Pasadena with a trip to Hume Lake to attend the annual Firefighters For Christ International weekend retreat. “On return to Northern Ireland I got the opportunity to tell the congregation in our church of the wonderful experiences we witnessed during MP10 and at Hume.”

“Wendy and I both know our Lord God used the dedicated and faithful followers in FFC to reach us and bring us to salvation,” Paddy reflected. Now having spent time in fellowship on both sides of the Atlantic, Paddy is excited to continue to reach out to others the way his brothers in Northern Ireland and California did to him.

“We look forward to the day we go back to the U.S. for MP12. Before that, we will get the opportunity to repay our brothers during MP11, which will be held in Northern Ireland next year. Maybe the Lord will use this mission to fuel people like he has done for Wendy and me.”

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Pasadena FFC members Karl Armbrust, Andy Banks, Brett Gibson, Chip Johnson and Victor Laveaga planned a full schedule for these Irish firefighters. On LAFD’s premiere fireboat they befriended LA City firefighters as they toured Los Angeles Harbor. At the Rio Hondo Fire Academy they addressed a large group of entry-level cadets and on their off-shift days they visited eleven other departments. Looking sharp from left to right are Alan Murdoch, Gavin Lowry, Rick Allen, Uel Cooper, Paul Hoey, Victor Laveaga, and Gary Thompson.

“On return to Northern Ireland
I got the opportunity to tell the congregation in our church of the wonderful experiences we witnessed during MP10 and at Hume.”

Lt. to rt.: Uel Cooper was chauffeured by Ryan Watson, who volunteered as a driver for one of the days of the mission.

Lt. to rt.: Alan Murdoch and Engineer Rudy Flores. The MP2010 team was showered with gifts from their Pasadena Fire Department hosts. At Station 39, the crew took blankets off of their beds to give to their Northern Ireland brothers.

After enjoying a great breakfast at the Rose Bowl and tossing footballs on their famous field, these gregarious lads were joined by Pat Stilson for a farewell picture with Captain Rick Omelas. A few days earlier, Rick was their awesome tour guide as they saw the sights in and around Los Angeles.
Fire and ice typified the 2010 Hume Lake Firefighters' Retreat. Coupled with the Firefighters For Christ pre-conference event, the four-day gathering in California's Sierra Nevada mountains delivered an awesome weekend of fellowship, worship, biblical teaching and encouragement. The fire of God's Word, intimate prayer and warm personal interaction in the setting of the thawing snow and ice of a rough Sierra winter provided ample opportunity for attendees to experience refreshment while being challenged in their faith and walk with God.

Over 300 people attended the event. Most came as couples, however, many who traveled greater distances attended alone or with friends. The conference is designed to reach those who attend in either fashion. This year many came from several states outside California including Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Washington, Arizona and Nevada. The International aspect of Firefighters For Christ was highlighted by the attendance of firefighters from Northern Ireland, Scotland and missionaries from Mexico, who hosted a recent FFC Outreach (see Winter 2010 FFC newsletter). Between the inspired meetings and unbelievably meals were snowy hikes, icy inner-tube runs and for the first time an exciting firefighters’ muster held under a warm sunny sky.

The weekend began with an intimate gathering on Thursday night in a small chapel that was highlighted by a time of sharing led by FFC favorite Eric Simpson. Simpson brought a crate of oranges and had people pick up a piece of the fruit to speak words of love and encouragement into many lives. Several FFC chapters shared various activities and outreach events they had held the past year. This included the just completed Mission Possible 2010 held in Pasadena, CA in which several firefighters from Northern Ireland were hosted by Pasadena and other Los Angeles area firefighters.

Friday, the men and women split for a morning of worship, teaching and interaction. Both sessions provided a panel format for a question/answer time. Not surprisingly, topics ranged from marriage, life in the fire station, kids, how to share one’s faith, finances and balancing work life and home life. Both groups were able to quickly get into the deep end of the issues bringing to bear experienced wisdom on real life scenarios.

The Hume Lake Firefighters’ Retreat began Friday evening bringing many more people to the camp. Mickey Stonier, a pastor and Chaplain for the San Diego Fire Department, was the speaker. He was able to immediately connect with and relate to the group having ministered, worked with and served with firefighters for over 17 years. He presented a series on “Famous Last Words.” Using examples from the lives of Moses, David, the Apostle Paul and finally Jesus Christ, Stonier encouraged the group to choose the life, grace and purpose God intends for those who are called into a relationship with Him through Christ. These powerful words are actually available on the Hume Lake website (http://www.humelake.org/blog/messages/).

As usual, the conference ended too soon. This event has occurred for over 30 years and continues to be a signature moment for Firefighters For Christ. It is often remarked by Hume Lake staff that the Firefighters’ Conference is an annual highlight for them as well. As explained by this year’s conference host, it is the deep fellowship, love and camaraderie shared by firefighters and their spouses that enables the weekend to quickly develop into a meaningful and life-giving retreat that actually inspires them as they so faithfully serve. While the planned meetings and events of the weekend provide some structure, it is often the informality of the mealtime gatherings, walks around the lake, quiet times in a lodge or a simple nap on a Saturday afternoon that provide the most profound and long lasting memories of this highly anticipated weekend.

For 2011, the Firefighters for Christ Weekend and Hume Lake Retreat are scheduled for March 31–April 3. It is not too early to register. This can be done by contacting Hume Lake (559-335-2000 or www.humelake.org). Plan early, bring friends who may not know the Lord or can simply use the time away. There is plenty of room for more people to attend. This year several people came in groups, which seemed to provide a safe environment for those who might not otherwise attend such an event. It also provided a greater opportunity to form winning teams for the many competitive events available during open time on Saturday. The group from the City of Orange (CA) FD swept all the events, including the first annual Firefighter Muster and broom hockey matches. The challenge to dethrone the reigning champs should be reason enough to gather some friends to make the trek to the Firefighters For Christ/Hume Lake Retreat in 2011.
By Keri Swanger

On Saturday night at the conference, a very humble Contra Costa County Firefighter (Dave Manzeck) stood up and asked for a prayer request. Dave asked that God would give him an opportunity to reach out to more of his firefighter friends and colleagues and allow him to share the message of Jesus Christ with them. Dave would like to see more members from his department attend the Firefighters’ Conference next year. Please take a look at the links below to see the ABC news video clips of Dave in a daring and dramatic helicopter rescue of an elderly woman. She almost drowned in a flood canal during a severe rainstorm. An interview with Dave followed the rescue.

Dave was the rescue swimmer being lowered by the CHP helicopter into the water. At one point the helicopter hit some type of unstable air causing the helicopter to suddenly drop and fully immerse Dave under the chilling water for somewhere between 10-40 seconds. Dave refers to this moment being under water as his “Jesus moment”. Dave said after this event happened he has an even stronger desire to share the Word of Jesus Christ with everyone and anyone who will listen.

Dave explained in his news conference, which was televised nationwide, that there was “no luck” involved in this rescue and credited being a “Christian” for the positive outcome. He shared his faith and how God was moving in and through him to save this woman. During the first rescue attempt when he went under water, Dave dislocated and tore a ligament in his right shoulder. He is a very strong man and was still able to pick up the woman’s lifeless body with only one arm, while hanging from a helicopter in raging water.

Since Dave was interviewed on television, he has received numerous words of praise from firefighters throughout the country. Additionally, several churches have contacted Dave after hearing his interview and have requested him to give his testimony regarding this experience.

We know it’s only the beginning of God reaching out to others through Dave. Hume Lake gatherings are special and it’s wonderful to see God’s work continuing on after we leave. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to serving God and others at Hume Lake that weekend. God was moving in such a powerful way! Thanks. Romans 8:26-30

http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/video?id=7382654
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The Manzeck’s household has been busy since the rescue. Their new baby’s arrival was scheduled near the time of Dave’s shoulder surgery. Never a dull moment!

Answered Prayer

“I would like to share an awesome story, which I believe all began at the Firefighters’ Conference at Hume Lake and is directly contributed to the power of group prayer.”

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President’s Letter

Dear Firefighters For Christ, Do you realize that others are praying for you? They may be relatives, neighbors, friends or acquaintances. They might not even know you.

By John White

One night my wife awakened me to pray for Christians in Bolivia. The Lord told her they were trying to escape from deadly persecution. Neither of us had ever heard about this Christian community but learned a month later that the very night she prayed, the Lord saved them from a group of terrorists who wanted them annihilated. They all escaped across the border unharmed. I thought at the time, if the Lord wakes up my wife in South Pasadena, California to pray for His people in Bolivia, whom is He waking up in China to pray for me? The answer came a few years later when a Chinese man, who I did not know, called me. For fifteen minutes he prayed fervently for my healing. When we hung up, God reminded me of my question.

In my forties, I found a 3 x 5 card my dad had written when I was ten years old just before he died. He underlined the words Answered Prayer and then wrote, “Received assurance from God’s Word today. Isaiah 44:3, ‘I will pour out my blessing and my Spirit on your offspring.’” Prior to my birth, my dad prayed God would give him a son with a heart of an evangelist. God spared my life a number of times during my years in the Navy and fire service so this prayer would be answered.

My mother, now a widow, crippled in a wheel chair, and having only one child, prayed incessantly for me over the next twenty-five years. One night, in desperation, she called her best friend. Together they prayed that if God had to take my life, my soul would be saved in the process. A few days later, I was going end over end in a sports car with no seat belts on the Hollywood Freeway. When the car was lifted off me, I had a small tear in my sport coat but not a scratch on my body. God was honoring my mother and father’s prayers to keep me alive until He had poured out His blessing and Spirit on his offspring.

The accident got my attention and through a series of events, I completely surrendered my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God’s plan for me was to start a prayer time between 7-8 AM in the LAFD headquarters station. Guys started meeting on all three shifts for a time of prayer each day. This spread to other stations and soon Firefighters For Christ began and God’s ministry became international.

The power of prayer is awesome. I encourage you to download FFC’s prayer letter each month at www.firefightersforchrist.org. Pray these scriptures and watch the Lord accomplish His purposes as we surrender our lives to Him. Our prayers and the prayers of others will bear fruit that will last for all eternity.

Your brother in Jesus,
John White

“We have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to Him and never stop trusting Him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same temptations we do, yet He did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.”

Hebrews 4:14-16