

ENCOURAGING FIREFIGHTERS TO LIVE THEIR LIVES FOR JESUS CHRIST

FIREFIGHTERS **FOR** *Christ*

*Welcomes
World Police & Firefighters
To New York City*



www.FirefightersForChrist.org

Firefighters For Christ

INTERNATIONAL

By Dan Rodriguez

As we emergency service athletes gather from around the world, let's pause to consider the significant international events that have occurred since our last meeting two years ago in Vancouver. Consider the *natural disasters* alone. Those that have claimed a hundred or more lives include: a typhoon in the Philippines, earthquake/tsunami in Samoa, earthquake in Indonesia, floods in India, earthquake in Haiti, earthquake in Chile, flooding in Pakistan, earthquake/tsunami/nuclear crisis in Japan, and tornados in the United States. The death toll for the disasters listed above is over 230,000 and those affected or displaced are in the tens of millions. REALLY?! In just two years? And these figures don't reflect *other international tragedies* such as medical epidemics (flu and cholera), widespread draught and starvation, political unrest, terrorist acts such as suicide bombings, and war. Yes, the past two years have been packed with significant events... of biblical proportion... and *Firefighters For Christ* has been busy sending teams out to assist.

Since our founding in 1976, we have sent teams throughout the world to such places as: Russia, Israel, Guatemala, Brazil, China, Korea, Guam, Saipan, Philippines, New Zealand, Australia and many more countries. In these past two years 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.

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."* We recognize you as our neighbor 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, plan fund raisers, 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.

Jesus later said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." The Bible says, "But God *demonstrates* His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." If Christ died for us, we ought to live for Him. It's the very mission of *Firefighters For Christ* to encourage firefighters to live their lives for Jesus Christ. Ministering to the needs of others throughout the world is a surefire way to grow in your relationship with Him.



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NEVER FORGET

On September 11, 2001, FDNY Captain Carlos Vazquez was in the Bronx when he heard that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. He immediately headed into the city. As he approached Lower Manhattan where his Engine Company 33 was located, he saw people who looked like they had been covered with bags of flour.

Carlos boarded a confiscated truck loaded with equipment, as he and other guys headed to for what soon would be forever known as Ground Zero. "The dust looked like snow on the ground. I saw my engine. It was damaged by falling rubble and on fire. Later I found the lone survivor from my company and asked him, 'Where are the guys?' He said, 'They're all inside. They're all gone.' We began to weep."

Later, after spending several days on the rubble pile, Carlos opened the newspaper. Reality hit as he saw the pictures of 343 of his fellow firefighters that had perished. "The building came down in seven seconds. It didn't matter how the Stock Market was doing that day, or how much money anyone had in the bank. All that mattered was where you were going to spend eternity, and if you knew the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior."

The Bible tells us, "*These things I have written that you may know that you have eternal life.*" (1 John 5:13) Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.*" (John 14:6) God's Word says that if you have Jesus, you have life. If you do not have Jesus, you do not have life. (1 John 5:12)

As police officers and firefighters we don't know what we will be facing from one minute to the next but we all know that sooner or later each of our lives will end. For some, like the heroes of 9/11, it could be sudden and unexpected. For most, it will be after we turn in our badge. The one certainty is when that day comes, we will face eternity with one of two possible

outcomes—eternal peace in the presence of God in heaven, or unspeakable bondage and torment in hell forever separated from God.

The Bible says, "*All have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in His gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing His life for us.*" (Romans 3:23-25).

Do you want to know with certainty that you will spend eternity in heaven? John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world (that's You) that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" Jesus said, "*The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.*" (John 10:10) You can receive Jesus and the security of knowing what will happen after you die right now through prayer.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins, that You were buried, but arose from the grave as Your Word says (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). I ask You now to come into my heart and life and forgive me for my sins, as You promised in Your Word (1 John 1:9). Help me to follow You and live according to the plan that You have for my life. Thank You, Lord, that You are now living within my heart. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

As you remember the tragedy of September 11, 2001, NEVER FORGET how completely God loves you. He sent His Son Jesus to give you life now and forevermore. Read the Bible, which is His Word to you. "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" says the LORD. "*They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen.*" (Jeremiah 29:11-12)