

# **FIREFIGHTERS** **FOR** *Christ*

2012

## **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*

**A**s 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.



▲ **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.*

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Jesus later said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) The Bible also says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) If Christ died for us, we ought to

live for Him. The very mission of firefighters for Christ is to encourage firefighters to live their lives for Jesus Christ. Ministering to the needs of others is a surefire way to grow in your relationship with Him.

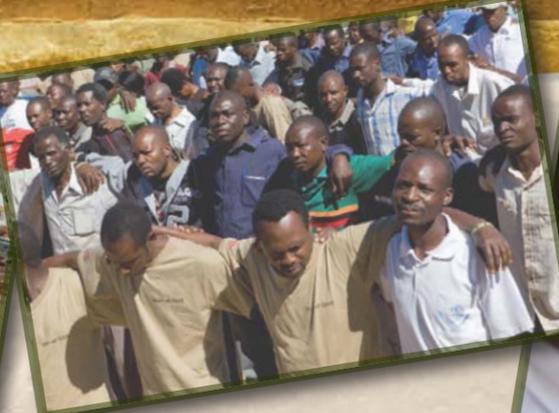
**The following is a brief description of FFC outreaches since our last newsletter.**

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 their 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 scriptures and prayer to "...make known the mystery of the gospel...and declare it fearlessly, as I should." (Ephesians 6:19,20) Our relief work provided access for us to share the gospel in a nation that has a Christian population of only one-half of one percent. We saw several people come to Christ and enjoyed some of the best fellowship with other believers from around the world.



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 I 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 muster that pitted the Irish against the Americans and ended with a barbecue at the training center.

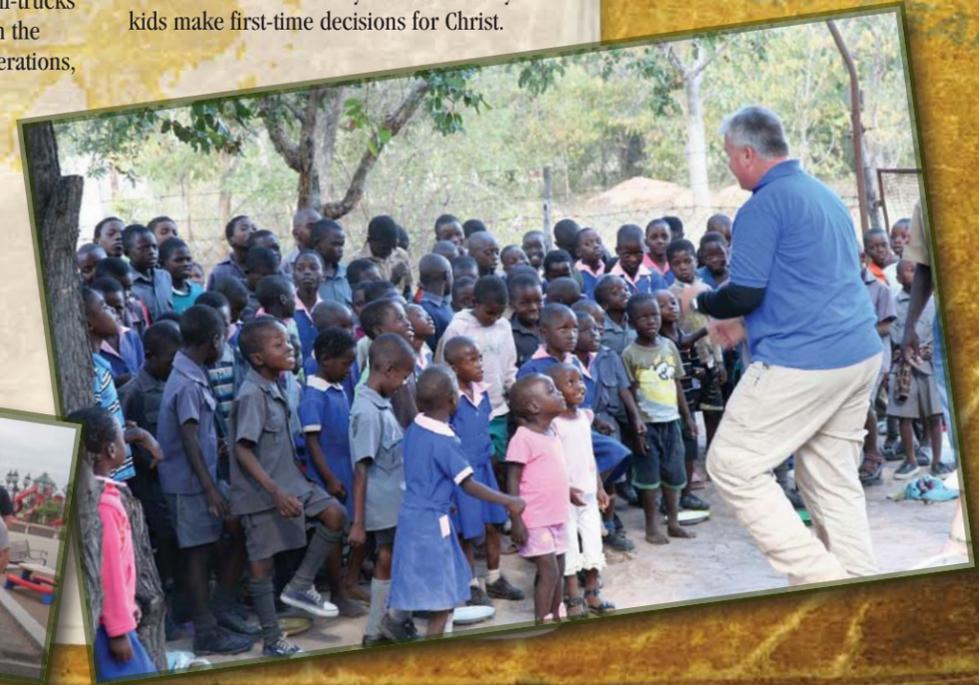


Three FFC members teamed up with two other ministries, Rock of Africa, and Influencers on a trip to Zambia and Zimbabwe. John White had been asked to speak at a men's conference in Livingstone, Zambia, which was organized by Rock of Africa. We participated in this outreach and also provided training 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.

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.



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.





The World Police and Fire Games were held in New York and FFC members from across the U.S., Canada, and Northern Ireland attended to compete and be a

witness for Christ. The New York chapter coordinated many events, which included the FFC booth at the Expo, a speaking engagement of high-profile Christian athletes, a premiere showing of the movie *Courageous*, and several other events. The gospel was shared with participants from throughout the world via CDs, newsletters, other ministry aids, but most importantly in one-on-one conversations.

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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 trained on personal rescue, auto extrication, rope rescue, and wildland operations. We were able to minister not only to those at the training conference, but at a prison, an orphanage, to a college football team, and several other Divine appointments with small groups or individuals. Multiple decisions for Christ were made throughout our trip. At the training conference alone, nearly 200 firefighters stood and came forward, making a public proclamation of their new faith in Christ.

Future trips include Panama, Haiti, Mexico, and wherever else the Lord leads. As you can see, not all trips are the same and some are 'family friendly'. As a believer, He has called you to "make known the mystery of the gospel" and demonstrate your love "with actions and in truth". Where is the Lord calling you to serve? 🇺🇸



# Challenge to Dads

*While most men will die with deep regrets, others will resolve to live for what matters most. Jim Kunaua, Head Football Coach for Orange Lutheran High School, California, gave FFC permission to reprint his email.*

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. So 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 best-selling 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.

# Lives Lived for Jesus



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 comfort a fellow missionary who had just lost her husband in a car accident. Details of that incident remain under investigation, but by all accounts in giving his life Steve more than likely saved the lives of the three people who were traveling with him. He died as he lived, a humble servant who always looked out for others first.

These men died tragically, without warning and in ways that initially caused their family and loved ones to recoil in shock and disbelief. Quickly, support and love flooded in to Chuck's wife Pam and Steve's wife Debbie. In each case it became apparent that these

*Recently we saw the untimely deaths of two long-time Firefighters For Christ members. While these men never met, they jointly reflect the awesome power and testimony of lives lived for Jesus Christ.*

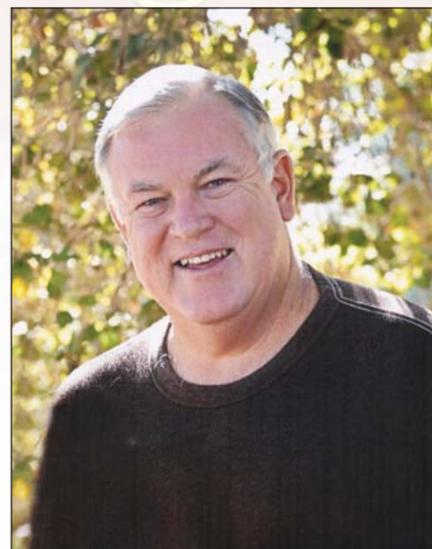
men died doing what they loved to do most, serving the Lord. That knowledge brought comfort to an otherwise unspeakable pain.

The services for both men were well attended by friends, family, the fire service 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, the Hermann property in Rochester witnessed many life-changing events including a huge bonfire the night of his funeral that was topped off by his favorite foods, pizza and ice cream. In a talk given

at the Firefighters For Christ weekend at Hume Lake, CA in 2009, Chuck remarked, "Life is short. We don't know when we will go to our last call. Live with a sense of urgency. Be bold for the gospel."



Like Chuck, Steve Holtrust was bold for the gospel. But his style was understated, serving behind the scenes, empowering and supporting those who were called to work on the front lines of the mission field. A big man who spent 32 years in the fire service, Steve made many trips to Honduras since 1996 supporting missionaries and local churches there. He built dozens of homes, churches and other facilities to help provide safe and secure places for people to live and worship. He recently became President of the Board for Beyond Partnership, an international ministry to churches and pastors.

Steve was instrumental in beginning a local Firefighters For Christ chapter that has been meeting for over 25 years. At home, Steve was a doting husband and father who loved his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:22). "Steve took such good care of me," Debbie, his wife of 36 years, said. Every speaker at his service commented on his love for his wife and three daughters. Several also related Steve to the Biblical parable about the faithful servant of whom it



**"Life is short. We don't know when we will go to our last call. Live with a sense of urgency. Be bold for the gospel."**

is said, "Well done. . . come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21).

Both men left lasting legacies in their families, the fire service and, most profoundly, the kingdom of God. Each began or participated in works that will continue for years to come. The Great Deeds ministry recently refurbished a surplus Rochester fire engine to carry tools and equipment for their work in the community. It has been dubbed "Chuck the Truck."

Steve grew up on a dairy and on a trip to Africa he noticed a need among the local pastors who were struggling to support their families and their small churches. He came home and worked with others to purchase cows to give to those pastors so they could be used to improve nutrition and create a source of income. The cows have since

increased as has the quality of life in that area of Kenya.

A testimony to both men are the wives and families they loved and partnered with. While still grieving, both Pam and Debbie know they will be able to move forward because of the way their husbands empowered them. Pam now travels to Mongolia with Samaritan's Purse in support of medical work performed at Rochester's famous Mayo Clinic. She will be going to Brazil in Spring of 2012 to work with an orphanage there. "I can hear Chuck say,

"Go ahead Pam, pray about it and do what God leads you to do," Pam said.

Debbie, a reluctant traveler, eventually accompanied Steve on many of his trips to Honduras. She also went to Africa with him and vows to return soon. "This will be hard, but because of how he helped me grow in that area of my life I have the confidence to make that trip," Debbie remarked.

Tragedy beckons the question. . . why? For those who know God, like Pam Hermann and Debbie Holtrust, the question is muted beneath the assurance that the one who suddenly perished is in the presence of the Lord. The comfort that comes from that reality sustains those most touched by the loss. But long after the final notes of the lonely bagpipe, the questions may return. What then does the aggrieved do to assuage their wounded heart? How do they manage to move forward in the aftermath of such pain?

They remember. In so doing, they are comforted again and again by the clear and unequivocal truth that their loved one left no doubt about what mattered most in their lives. By the grace afforded them by Christ, they lived well and entered an eternal rest that awaits all who believe as they did (Romans 1:16).

Chuck Hermann and Steve Holtrust left no doubt about that. 🙏



*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16*

Learn more about these two faithful Firefighters For Christ on the web.

Chuck Hermann:  
On Facebook: Chuck Hermann Memorial  
Greatdeeds.org

Steve Holtrust:  
beyondpartnership.org.



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FORWARD & ADDRESS CORRECTION

*www.firefightersforchrist.org*

**ENCOURAGING FIREFIGHTERS TO LIVE THEIR LIVES FOR JESUS CHRIST!**

# Sheep Needed in Haiti

*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 tending 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**

**A**n 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](mailto: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. 🇺🇸



*Thea and Jen's Bible teaching had a powerful impact on each of the Haitian children they taught.*



*Rick Godinez and the other FFC men were Godly role models for children at Maranatha's English Camp in Haiti.*