

**Fire Rescue Support exists to support fire rescue personnel
before, during and after the call**

Before the Call

Teaching CISM in Niceville



The week of June 15 found me in Niceville, FL. Yes there is such a place and yes it is Nice! I was there to teach Individual and Group Crisis Intervention to several fire and EMS agencies. It was great being with these wonderful people. Beyond what we did in class, the gathering gave this group the opportunity to connect around their common goal of being better equipped to support those they serve and serve with.



Learning CISM in Baltimore

During the week of June 23, I was in Ellicott City, MD, just outside of Baltimore, attending a regional conference with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). The ICISF is the premiere organization that deals with crisis intervention in the United States and around the world. It is through the ICISF that I have my credentials to teach Individual and Group Crisis Intervention.

At this conference, I attended two courses to further my skills. Pastor Crisis Intervention and Emotional/Spiritual Care in Disasters consider more fully the spiritual care given beyond physical and psychological interventions.

While these classes were great, one of the best parts of my trip was having my son, Jon, with me. He and I were able to spend some great time together and even had the chance to visit Washington, DC.



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During the Call

Suspicious Packages



On Tuesday, June 10, Marion County Fire Rescue and Ocala Fire Rescue responded to a number of calls for envelopes containing an unknown white powder. Crews had to thoroughly and carefully process each scene. While this substance was tested and found to be harmless, the threat was taken very seriously.

Fire Rescue Support responded to the Courthouse and set up rehab so crews could get a little break from the heat while they waited for hazmat crews to do their work.



Light up the sky



June in Florida means a daily thunderstorm that rolls through in the afternoon. But on June 20, the skies put on a show far beyond the norm. One of these lightning strikes hit a home in Stonecrest which resulted in an attic fire. Crews did a great job keeping the damage confined and to a minimum.

In addition, since the homeowners were out of town, crews took the extra time to put a tarp on the roof and plywood on the window that was broken for entry. Once again, the men and women that serve show their commitment above and beyond.





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True Freedom

“So Christ has truly set us free.” Galatians 5:1

The Statue of Liberty is the ultimate symbol of freedom and hope. Like many of you, my family came to America via New York's Ellis Island. Their first glimpse of freedom and hope would have been Lady Liberty. Their first glimpse of the “promised land” would have been the torch she held in her outstretched arm. Next, they would have seen the crown on top of her head and the tablet bearing the date July 4, 1776 commemorating the date of the United States Declaration of Independence. Finally, they would have seen this inscription on the base...

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

I wonder what my grandparents experienced as they stood and looked up at the statue. Fear, uncertainty, worry. Hope, expectancy, promise. For them, America meant freedom and the chance to have a better life.

For my grandparents, the journey to freedom started thousands of miles away in Sicily. That journey continued when they arrived in America. My grandparents had to do more than simply look upon the Statue of Liberty. They had to live out what this symbol stands for.

There is another symbol of freedom and hope; the cross. The cross means not just a better life, but the best life.

However, simply looking upon the cross doesn't bring freedom. The journey to this ultimate freedom starts when we live out what the symbol of the cross stands for. The first step of this journey? Accepting the free gift that God has made available.

Almost 100 years ago my grandparents looked to the Statue of Liberty and began to live the life of freedom offered by our great country. Today we have the opportunity to look to the cross and live the life of freedom that God offers through a relationship with Jesus Christ.



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Thank you!

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