



# Monthly Newsletter September 2014

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

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## Before the Call

### Fire Rescue Cares



We are pleased to share a Fire Rescue Support milestone with you.

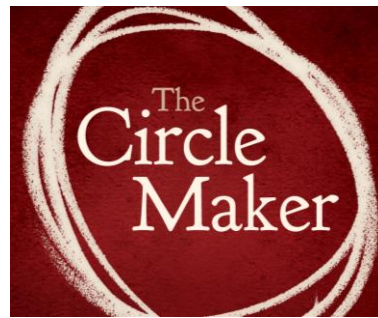
After a very busy July when we responded to 12 fires, we responded to only two fires in August.

One of those fires was a residential structure fire with units from Marion County District 1. The home was a total loss resulting in the displacement of 4 adults and 4 children. Fire Rescue Support was able to give this family some practical assistance in the form of WalMart gift cards.

The amount given to this family took the total that Fire Rescue Support has distributed in the past two years to over \$10,000. This money has helped 68 adults and 41 children start the journey of recovery after loss. We are thankful for the opportunity to tangibly share God's love with those in need.

However, our ability to give this assistance is dependent on the availability of funds. If you are interested in helping keep these funds available, go to [www.firerescuesupport.com](http://www.firerescuesupport.com) and make a donation via PayPal.

### Driving in Circles



On Monday, August 11, I literally drove circles around Marion County. Actually, it was only one circle – one big circle!

This came about because I'm reading a book by Mark Batterson called "The Circle Maker." The basis of this book is a legend about a Jewish man named Honi. A few years B.C., Honi drew a circle and stayed in this circle praying for rain. He intended to remain in that circle until the rain came, which it did. While I don't agree with all the theology in the book, I was intrigued by the notion of drawing a circle around all I was asking God for in prayer.

So I set off from my home which is east of Belleview and travelled east on Highway 42, then north on Highway 19. I went past Salt Springs into Putnam County to get around the Ocklawaha River. Going through Orange Springs, Citra and McIntosh provided the northern route. I picked up Highway 41 in Williston, travelled south to Dunnellon, then east on 484 back home.

For me, the three and one-half hours I spent driving and praying helped me see the big picture of what God has called me to do in supporting fire rescue personnel in Marion County, Florida and beyond.



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## During the Call

### Crisis Intervention in Levy County



Recently, I had the opportunity to spend some time with personnel from the Levy County Department of Public Safety. I spoke at their quarterly meeting on the topic of stress management.

Only two weeks later, on August 7, I was called by Levy County to assist them with the aftermath of a call where two dogs killed a 6 year old. Needless to say, crews were traumatized by this event. I was able to spend some time with fire rescue personnel helping them sort through what they were experiencing as a result of this terrible tragedy.

### This is Only a Drill!

Even though I knew it was only a drill, the recent mock scenario at Rasmussen College was still overwhelming. The car crash, hostage taking and SWAT team deployment seemed very real. Personnel from Ocala Police Department, Ocala Fire Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office and Marion County Fire Rescue participated in such a way that this practice session looked very realistic.

At the end of our time, I had the opportunity to address all the participants about what kind of stress they would expect to be under if this event were real.

### Fatal Car Crash



On Thursday, August 21, at approximately 10:00pm, I was alerted via pager about a traffic crash at the intersection of Highway 19 and Highway 40 in the Ocala National Forest. Crews from County Stations 4 and 15 were on scene.

As I arrived, medics were transporting the driver of one of the vehicles as a trauma alert patient. The passenger of the same vehicle was deceased.

The driver of the other vehicle was uninjured, but very shaken up. I spent time with this person and those that arrived to comfort her.

Several hours later, after the Highway Patrol and the Medical Examiner completed their field investigations, the crew from Engine 4 had to remove the deceased victim.

This has to be one of the most thankless things our firefighters do. No saving anyone; no rescue possible. As they did their work, my prayer was that God would keep them from being overwhelmed from being so close to death.



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## Faith in the Flames

You've probably heard the saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes." This is attributed to Father Cummings, a civilian missionary Catholic priest in the Philippines during World War II. The phrase was coined during the Japanese attack at Corregidor. During the siege, Cummings had noticed non-Catholics were attending his services.

Perhaps the phrase of the fire service would be, "There are no unbelievers when facing the beast." And while it's true that life-and-death experiences prompt a reality check, the focus of this article is not about those who find their faith in a crisis. Rather, I want to speak to the challenge of maintaining your faith on a day-to-day basis.

Some view faith as a crutch; something we use to get us through life. Add to this the self-reliant, always in control nature of firefighters, and you have the makings of a difficult environment to live out your faith.

So how do you remain faithful to what you believe? How do you live out your faith every day?

The answer, I believe, is found in 1 Peter 3:15. Peter was writing to the first century church about suffering persecution for their faith. Although our struggle with living out what we believe at the firehouse can't compare to their struggle, Peter's words apply very well.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3:15

As you consider this verse, I believe there are two essentials that will help you keep your faith in the flames. First, take note that you are seen as a responder in this verse. Peter says you should be answering the questions that others have about what you believe. Are others seeing your faith? Are they asking you about it? More than what you say, people will notice what you do and what you don't do. The way you live day in and day out will be the strongest indicator of what you believe.

And this leads to the second essential. How do you do the things that you do? What is your attitude as you live out your faith? Do people write you off as having a "holier-than-thou" approach? Have you become the self-proclaimed morality police? Peter says we should live out our faith and talk about it in a manner full of gentleness and respect.

Living out your faith can be a challenge. There can be a gap between what you say you believe and how you live your life. The goal on duty and off duty should be to narrow this gap and boldly live out your faith in the flames.



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Fire Rescue Support was founded on September 11, 2011, the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on America. While this day will be forever etched in our minds, those serving in fire rescue deal with similar issues every day. Although not of the magnitude of 9/11, fire rescue personnel face challenges every time they leave the station. It is for this reason that Fire Rescue Support was born. You can see a video of our beginnings by [clicking here](#).

**Thank you!**

Thanks for your interest in and partnership with Fire Rescue Support. Because of you, we have the opportunity to support fire rescue personnel before, during and after the call. Visit [www.firerescuesupport.com](http://www.firerescuesupport.com) for more information or to donate. You can also find us on Facebook. And please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance personally or professionally. You can reach me at 352-425-1643 or [joe@firerescuesupport.com](mailto:joe@firerescuesupport.com).

