

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers *for Christ*

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Close the Door, Please!

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

When I was young, I spent a lot of time playing in the backyard, in the street, or at the neighborhood park. Being one of six children, there always seemed to be a kickball game going on behind our house, a game of freeze tag on the front lawn, or “baby in the air” in the street. If the rest of the kids on our block were around, we quickly divided into two teams and played “jail-break” by the hour.

Even when I was alone, I would play step-ball or wiffleball, conjuring up a contest between my beloved New York Yankees and the despised Washington Senators in my mind. But each of these games had one thing in common: my siblings and I would occasionally forget to close the door on our way outside.

In our haste, we wouldn’t latch the screen door properly and eventually, it would swing wide open. Invariably, my father would holler, “Close the door! We don’t own the utility company, you know.”

Funny he should say that, because we didn’t have central air in the house I grew up in, but I understand now the meaning of his words. My dad wanted us to get in the habit of closing doors behind us... whether it was to keep cooler air in during the summer months or warmer air in during the winter. And yes, to keep bugs out throughout the calendar year.

Recently, I began applying those childhood lessons to my prayer life. Instead of simply asking God to open doors of ministry for me, my family and Risk Takers for Christ, I have started asking Him to simultaneously close doors, too.

You see, as I grow older, both spiritually and chronologically, I have learned to appreciate the value and importance of closed doors. And yes, the absolute necessity of knowing when to say “no.”



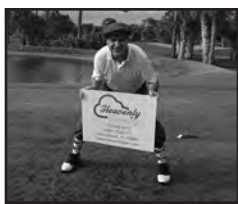
Life these days seems a lot more complicated than it used to be... at least to me. With the expansion of the suburbs, multiple cars per family and the development of shopping malls, what used to be a simple trip to the local store now can take all day because of the virtually unlimited options. And once the internet was invented - and personal computers, smart phones and other electronic devices became commonplace - those options increased exponentially.

The same goes for ministry opportunities. It used to be that your ministry was limited to the church you attended or the community you lived in. Now it is possible to minister halfway around the world in real time. And that is a good thing... a very good thing, as a matter of fact.

However, today’s technologically-advanced society can also overwhelm us with choices. The result of this information overload can be what some people call the “paralysis of analysis.”

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Pictures from our Old Hickory Golf Tournament on May 1st at Sandridge Golf Club in Vero Beach, FL



The Alarm Clock Blues

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

“I was mad at my alarm clock this morning!”

That comment was made by my 26-year old son, Chris, who serves as our part-time Program Director in addition to his full-time job as a surveyor’s assistant. During the workweek, Chris gets up around 6:15 a.m. in order to be on site by 7 a.m.. And so, Saturday is generally his one day to “sleep in.”

Except, that is, on the second Saturday of each month, which is the day designated for our regular prison ministry trips. Which is why, on May 13th, the alarm on Chris’ phone went off at 4:30 a.m.

But after watching me get up early - and get home late - in order to minister in prisons across America for his entire life, Chris knows that sacrifices have to be made. He also realizes that losing a few hours of sleep pales in importance to the souls that hang in the balance.

And so, Chris and I - along with five other basketball players and one non-playing volunteer - met at a local church for prayer at 5:15 a.m. before boarding our rental van for the 2-hour and 11-minute drive to Hardee Correctional Institution in Bowling Green FL. Once there, we played two games in heat and humidity against two different (and very well-rested) inmate teams.

Thankfully, there was a nice breeze blowing, which kept the temperatures from being too oppressive. The downside was that 20-mile wind gusts are sure to affect your shot on an outdoor court.

Despite the elements - and being extremely short-handed - our small squad rallied from a 14-point deficit at half-time to make it a close game in the morning. And even though he was a bit sleep-deprived, Chris still managed to pour in 16 points.

You’ll never guess who our second-leading scorer was that game? It was a 57-year old grandfather who made four 3-pointers on his way to a 14-point performance. Who says that God doesn’t perform miracles anymore?

However, the real miracle was what happened during our

halftime gospel presentation. Joe Payton shared his personal testimony and then I was privileged to present the gospel. About 50 inmates listened attentively as we spoke and another 250 men received gospel literature throughout the vast recreation yard.

After a quick bite to eat at a nearby restaurant, we returned to Hardee for the second game. This one was equally close, but was cut short in the third quarter due to time constraints. Fortunately, God timed things just right, as Tom Palladino was able to share his full testimony and Brandon Taylor brought a challenging - and very convicting - gospel message. Altogether, an estimated 500 prisoners were exposed to God’s plan of salvation that day!

Not only did Chris not mind waking up early on his day off, but he - and the rest of our team - can’t wait for our next prison trip. Thanks so much for your prayers and financial support that make each trip possible.

Editor’s Note: Our next prison trip is to Desoto CI in Arcadia FL on Saturday, June 10th. As always, your prayers are very much appreciated!



Close the Door, Please!

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And so, when I am presented with multiple ministry opportunities - all of which seem equally good on the surface - I have started asking God to close all the wrong doors until only the right one(s) remain.

In the military, they call this the K.I.S.S. method, short for “keep it simple stupid.” Well, I will readily admit that I can be spiritually obtuse on occasion, so having God close the doors that He doesn’t want me to walk through saves us both some precious time... and eliminates some potentially costly mistakes in the process.

As his brothers used to tell “Mikey” on the old Life cereal commercials: Try it... you’ll like it!

The First Church of Pyrotechnics

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

“The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them.” - C.H. Spurgeon

“I can’t go to church there anymore,” my nephew told me. Then he added with more than a hint of exasperation and disdain, “It’s not a worship service; it’s a performance.”

My nephew went on to describe the multi-color laser light show that accompanied each service complete with technicians running up and down the aisles with large television cameras mounted on their shoulders. One of their jobs was to zoom in on individual worshippers, hoping to catch a close-up shot of them praising God with an enraptured look on their face.

Sounds silly, doesn’t it, and more than a little commercial. Well, welcome to the modern-day church, where the end seems to justify the means as long as the seats are filled and the offerings are large.

So what if we imitate the world in such a way that it’s hard to tell the difference... if there is one. As long as everyone leaves the pep rally on an emotional high, it doesn’t matter whether the Bible was actually preached or if true doctrine was, in fact, taught. After all, it’s more important that people have a good time at church and exit the doors with smiles on their faces as they hum the latest worship chorus.

I don’t know about you, but I don’t want God’s Word measured out to me in baby-size spoonfuls. I am not a spiritual child, so give me heaping portions of meat. And while you’re at it, you can keep the bells and whistles - and yes, the pyrotechnics - to yourself.

One last thing.. I want to occasionally leave the sanctuary (not the auditorium) chastised and even heart-broken over my sin. Save the 24/7 pep rally for someone else.

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them.” Jeremiah 31:9a (NKJV)

Real Winners Take Risks

Jason Day walked off the 18th green disappointed at the AT&T Byron Nelson Classic on May 14th, but he didn’t have any regrets.

Yes, Day missed a 4-foot par putt on the first playoff hole to lose the tournament to Billy Horshel. But he had a 4-footer because he tried to hole his 52-foot birdie putt to win.

“That’s what you’ve got to do if you want to win; you’ve got to take risks,” Day said. “If you don’t take the risks, you’ll never win.”

Day hasn’t won in more than a year since the 2016 Players Championship, but he’s finally healthy again after dealing with a back injury late last year. His attention is also back on his game. Day withdrew from the WGC-Match Play to be with his mom, Adenil “Denning” Day, who was battling cancer. She’s recovered and is back in their native Australia.

Our Staff & Board Members

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Rebekah Bailey, Director of Communications
Trustees: Keith Cutting, Rev. Thomas Griffin,
Rev. Paul Mace, Steve Navarro, Chaplain Louie Tروف
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Upcoming Risk Takers Events:

- ◆ June 10: Softball at DeSoto CI, Arcadia FL
- ◆ June 17: King's Baptist Church, Vero Beach FL
- ◆ June 17-18: First Church of God, Vero Beach FL
- ◆ June 23-25: Joint Ministry with Lifted in Faith
- ◆ July 8: Basketball at Avon Park CI, Avon Park FL
- ◆ July 10: RTC board meeting, Vero Beach FL

**Take a Risk! is a publication of Risk Takers for Christ, PO Box 651421, Vero Beach FL 32965-1421.
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