Rick Barton Ministries

September 2026

"Souls on Board"

I was working on the fire line when I heard a call on the radio. "Helibase, this is 5 Charlie Hotel. We're leaving H1 enroute to H2. I have 5 hours of fuel and 4 souls on board." (Helibase is where the helicopters on a forest fire are staged, 5 Charlie Hotel (5CH) is the call sign for a particular helicopter, and H1 and H2 are helispots where we drop off or pick up crews or equipment on the fire.)

It hit me. "Souls on board". The pilot didn't say "resources", or "people", he said "souls". This summer has been a tragic one for helitack crews working on fires. Four "souls" perished in Northwest Colorado when the fire overran them. A helicopter crashed on a fire near my home and the pilot died. Each of these men and women rose early that morning, grabbed a quick breakfast, attended a 6 am briefing, snagged a sack lunch, and headed to the helibase. None of them considered this to be their last day on earth.

The Bible talks a lot about "souls". We are to worship the Lord with all our soul; surrendering our entire life, identity, and inner essence to Him. (Luke 10:27). It says that our soul never dies, even though our body does. Jesus used the example of Lazarus and a rich man to illustrate this. When Lazarus died his soul was comforted. When the rich man died his soul was in anguish. (Luke 16:19-31, also see Matthew 25:46).

What am I doing with my soul? Am I living today as if it were my last day on earth? Am I loving the Lord with all my soul? Am I loving my wife, family and neighbor? Am I warning others about the eternal importance of their souls?

Several of you have asked if I was involved in the series of fires in the west. As you may remember, I hung up my fire boots at the beginning of last fire season after 50+ years. However, we were able to send firefighter New Testaments and devotionals to one of the nearby fire camps, and I was personally able to give a New Testament to one of the Incident Commanders.

August happenings: Melva and I returned home from a wonderful 10-day family reunion in Hawaii on Saturday afternoon August 8th. While there we met with many of Melva's extended family and I was even able to pray with the former and hopefully future Mayor of Kauai. We snorkeled with sea turtles and enjoyed all our sons, daughters, their spouses, and our grandchildren. When we returned, we held our annual RBM Board Meeting. What an amazing Board the Lord has given us!

401 Ute Lane Gunnison, Colorado 81230 (970) 641-3583
Email: barton@gunnison.com Website: rickbartonministries.org

Retired businessmen, a financial advisor, educators, a media executive, a seminary professor, and Christian counsellors! We include both the husbands and their wives to give us a better perspective.

The morning after returning from the Board meeting, I received a call from the Pitkin CO church. Their speaker, our good friend Barry Ward, had become ill and had to return to Kansas. I was able to fill in and the Lord blessed! Two weeks later I had the privilege to fill in for Barry at the Tin Cup CO church. Our Saturday Night Worship services are going well. We are soooo grateful for these faithful folks. On August 25, I had my other knee replaced at the Steadman Clinic in Vail CO. The surgeon is a Christian and works with the US Ski Team. I was able to pray with several of the doctors.

First Responder New Testaments and Devotionals: This month we received a request from the New Life Riders in New Jersey. Every September 11 this Christian Motorcycle group visits all the police and fire stations within a hundred-mile radius and gives out New Testaments along with prayers and gift bags. It has been our privilege to help supply them with the police and fire New Testaments.

Family: Everyone has returned to their homes after the Reunion. Annie (married to our son Steve w/children Samuel and Abigail) reports her transition to teaching in a new school has gone very well! She thanks everyone for their prayers. Sara's pregnancy (our son Tim w/children Elizzabeth and Sydney) is going well, granddaughter Kai (our daughter Rebekah and husband Nick) finished a multi-discipline sports event and did very well! Hannah and Bethan (our daughter Joy and pastor husband Stephen) are learning photography. Thank you for praying for each of us!

Upcoming: While I begin my rehab, I have some wonderful brothers covering for me here in Gunnison, Tin Cup, and possibly Pitkin. Then, Lord willing, we will be sharing at Rocky Mountain Chapel outside of Cripple Creek CO (Oct.25).

Finances: Thank You to all of you who faithfully support us, either by check, bank transfer, or through donorbox on our rickbartonministries.org website. We read every note you send and pray over each donation. You are making a difference!

Prayer Requests:

1. **For the anointing of the Holy Spirit as we share locally and soon around the state.**
2. **For several men and women who God is raising up to assist us!**
3. **For Melva as she is still recovering from a "bug" she picked up during the family reunion.**
4. **For me as I begin my rehab and recovery from the knee replacement.**

By His grace and to His glory, Rick and Melva

Rick + Melva



Rick Barton Ministries Board



Granddaughters ringing the Tincup Church Bell



A few hours after my knee replacement