

The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 7
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February 2004
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



CoDR on Display

During the month of December 2003 the Church of the Damascus Road was on display in the board room of the Fort Dodge Chamber of Commerce. Information about the church, and examples of newsletters and inmate art were attractively displayed for all who met in the board room to see.

Office Manager Cynthia Hanks and Outside Church Council member Lee Wilson worked together to put up the display. We will have another opportunity later in 2004 to be on display once again.

— Pastor Carroll Lang

Invisible Made Visible

Faith without ethical consequences is a lie. God does not need our sacrifices but he has, nevertheless, appointed a representative to receive them, namely our neighbor. The neighbor always represents the invisible Christ.

— J. S. Whale

Inside the Flash!

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Staying in Existence

While preparing the report for our recent Annual Meeting I experienced a 'senior moment' – one of the many that seem to permeate my life these days. After frantically searching for an article I felt sure I had lost, God led me to it – I had just forgotten the name under which it had been stored! Upon finding this "lost coin" I was reduced to tears in relief. For three weeks I had worked diligently to prepare a report that would give those attending our annual meeting a clear picture of this vital ministry but had lost the true meaning of why The Church of the Damascus Road exists.

Sensing my anxiety and noting my grateful relief, Pastor Lang gently reminded me that this ministry was about people, not just a report and a meeting. This got me to thinking. Yes, The Church of the Damascus Road (CoDR) is about people and, as far as I can see it, the following reasons are why we exist.

At one point in your lives, you former CoDR members made a bad choice and ended up in prison – inside walls that isolated you from society and your loved ones. Then one day you learned, not by chance but because the Holy Spirit led you, about CoDR. You attended a worship service, then another and before long, you were a regular member. You were introduced to the Bible and it became your constant companion. Then you made another choice – this time the right one. You asked God to become your Lord and Savior. Soon, as Christ's ambassador, you were sharing your faith and joy by sharing the Word and praying with fellow inmates. God gave you the strength to endure the punishment of your sentence and a new calling in life. Now that you are back in society, you continue to walk the narrow path all Christians must walk. Oh yes, once in a while you wander onto the wide road (all Christians do), but because of your faith in and your commitment to Christ, you are led back to the narrow path from which you strayed. You are the reason The Church of the Damascus Road exists.

Those of you on the outside who learned of The Church of the Damascus Road through a variety of ways chose to become a part of the ministry, again because the Holy Spirit led you to do so. It is your Christian calling. Your support, be it financial, as a volunteer or through prayer or a combination of all three, is vital. Without your assistance we could not be the church God means us to be. You are the reason CoDR can exist.

Years ago God gave Pastor Lang a vision and a calling to a special ministry. He answered God's call to visit and serve those in prison. As all members of the clergy know, theirs is a 24/7 job. Well, those of us who know and work with Pastor Lang are aware that he has made this ministry a 48/7 job. Just pondering how he spends his hours working with this ministry exhausts me, however it seems to energize him. God made Pastor Lang a creative person and he uses this gift to minister to those on the inside. He and his wife, Judy, work tirelessly to serve God as the faith leaders of The Church of the Damascus Road. Because these ambassadors of Christ answered His call, CoDR came into existence.

Now I challenge each of you, both former CoDR members as well as you who support CoDR. Let the Holy Spirit work. Take this ball I'm throwing your way and score. Become missionaries for CoDR. Spread the news of our church, of how God is working in the lives of these men on the inside, of how your life has changed because of your involvement with CoDR. The Church of the Damascus Road is a vital ministry. Invite the members of your church, your friends, and the members of your community to become involved. Each of us has been given one or more talents. Persuade those you know to share their talents: as a financier, a volunteer or a prayer warrior – or all three. You are the reason The Church of the Damascus Road will continue to exist.

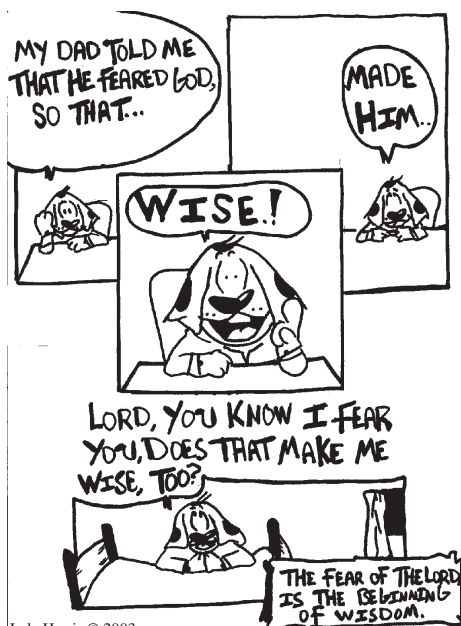
Yes, The Church of the Damascus Road is about people: those on the inside who have no hope and those on the outside who can bring hope inside by sharing their faith and resources. Remember, God created you and this ministry. May His Will prevail.

— Cynthia Henn Hanks, CoDR Office Manager & Financial Secretary



New Hymnal for Today

Above Average Is Thy Faithfulness
 A Comfy Mattress Is Our God
 All Hail the Influence of Jesus' Name!
 Amazing Grace, How Interesting the Sound
 Be Thou My Hobby
 Blessed Hunch
 Bless Be the Tie That Doesn't Cramp My Style
 Fill My Spoon, Lord
 Go Tell it on the Speed Bump
 He's Quite a Bit to Me
 I'm Fairly Certain That My Redeemer Lives
 I Lay My Inappropriate Behaviors on Jesus
 I Love to Talk about Telling the Story
 I Surrender Some
 It Is My Secret What God Can Do
 Joyful, Joyful, We Kinda Like Thee
 Just as I Am, with Lots of Excuses
 Just as I Pretend to Be
 Lord, Keep Us Loosely Connected to Your Word
 My Faith Looks Around for Thee
 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Much
 O, God, Our Enabler in Ages past
 Oh, for a Couple of Tongues to Sing
 Oh, How I like Jesus
 Onward, Christian Reservists
 Pillow of Ages, Fluffed for Me
 Praise God from Whom All Affirmations Flow
 Self-esteem to the World! The Lord Is Come
 Sitting on the Premises
 Sit Up, Sit up for Jesus
 Special, Special, Special
 Spirit of God, Descend upon Their Hearts
 Spirit of the Living God, Fall Somewhere near Me
 Take My Life and Let Me Be
 There Is Scattered Cloudiness in My Soul Today
 There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings
 We Are Milling Around in the Light of God
 We Give Thee but Still Think We Own
 What an Acquaintance We Have in Jesus
 When Peace, like a Trickle
 When the Saints Go Sneaking in
 Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following



Lyle Harris © 2003

What Does Love Mean?

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8-year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think.

- § "When my grandmother got arthritis, She couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis, too. That's love." Rebecca - age 8
- § "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4
- § "Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." Karl - age 5
- § "Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your french fries without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy - age 6
- § "Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Terri - age 4
- § "Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK." Danny - age 7
- § "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby - age 5
- § "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend whom you hate." Nikka - age 6
- § "There are two kinds of love. Our love. God's love. But God makes both kinds of them." Jenny - age 4
- § "Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday." Noelle - age 7
- § "Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well." Tommy - age 6
- § "My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night." Clare - age 5
- § "Love is when mommy gives daddy the best piece of chicken." Elaine - age 5
- § "Love is when mommy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford." Chris - age 8
- § "Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary Ann - age 4
- § "I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones." Lauren - age 4
- § "I let my big sister pick on me because my Mom says she only picks on me because she loves me. So I pick on my baby sister because I love her." Bethany - age 4
- § "When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and stars come out of you." Karen - age 7
- § "Love is when mommy sees daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross." Mark - age 6
- § "You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget." Jessica - age 8



Perspectives

Eternal Ferry of Life

For anyone who has someone dear to them pass on into the heavens of the Lord, whether it be a family member, a friend, or even a pet who has been part of the family, it is very hard to deal with.

A wise man once told me, when I was in a time of grieving, some words that helped soothe my pain. He said, "Everything happens for a reason. God has a chosen purpose for everyone. When they have fulfilled their purpose, they pass on to the new life." Picture this: there is an eternal sea between heaven and earth. When the Lord is in need of someone, he sends for him or her a luxurious ferry for the journey. As our loved ones pass on to cross this great sea, we stand on the shores and express our sorrows and say our farewells, saying, "There he goes! There he goes!" On the other side of the great sea Jesus stands on the shore waiting impatiently and ecstatically. As the ferry makes its way to him, Jesus says out loud, "[] Here he comes! Here he comes!"

I hope these words have opened your mind and soothed some of your pain in your loss.

— Slayne Raymon FDCF 1-22-04

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Volume 7.1

February 2004

The official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the correctional facilities at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Jeffrey D. Roberts, Editor.
 Anyone wishing to be on our mailing list may send name, address, and phone numbers to The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at: DamascusCh@aol.com. The Flash will be sent directly to your home.
 Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
 239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge, IA

Former Member Letters From Outer Spaces...

Dear Pastor Lang,

Christmas is a time when our thoughts turn to the special people God has brought into our lives and I will always remember you as a special friend and caring pastor, and that goes for your better half (Judy), also. I will never forget you and the services on Tuesdays and Thursdays (NCCF), also the volunteers that are so faithful.

It's so good that you are there to teach the men about Jesus Christ.

Elizabeth and I pray often for the Church of the Damascus Road. We want to stop at your office sometime.

God bless you, we love you and greet the men at the services.

— Elvin Johnson

My New Companion

I've met a new companion, her name is hope. I've divorced addiction and am no longer friends with dope. I no longer feel the weight of deception on my shoulder, the sound of that voice, the need to even hold her. I've put away the old, the one I used to be, my new companion, hope, it's now just her and me. I only need the chance for everyone to see my new companion is really all I need, and if you come a-knocking to see who I've become, my new companion, hope, is with me from now on.

David Bern 6-27-03

Donors, please note:

Quarterly Statements

Beginning April 1, 2004, we will be sending quarterly statements to all those who are donating to The Church of the Damascus Road. We will also send year-end statements to all donors.

— CoDR Outside Church Council

Lessons from Noah's Ark

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead, it wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit when you are 600 years old someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics, just get on with that job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high grounds.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professional.
11. No matter the storm, God always has a rainbow waiting.

Kiddy's Korner, paper from Carroll, Iowa

...And from Canada

Sunday, October 5, 2003

Dear Friends,

I pray that this letter finds you all doing well... or as well as can be hoped for, considering your situation.

Things have vastly improved for me since my return home to Canada from Fort Dodge, and I am doing extremely well.

My work has been very rewarding, and I have been promoted to Chief of Western Canada Search & Rescue Operations (see attached photo) and have since moved to the beautiful Comox Valley, on the east coast of Vancouver Island, the home of S&R for all of Western Canada.

Helen and I have recently bought our new home here, and got it at a very good price of only \$135,000.00, in a quiet and comfortable neighborhood. Our 2 sons are really enjoying the new location, and Shaun, our oldest has enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force Cadets.

I am hoping that all of you are doing just as well, and that God has been as good to you as He has been to me.

Although things started off a little rough, with my being in FDCF on a 5 year sentence for a bad check, the opportunity to learn a few things about myself, and my relationship with the Lord did wonders for me ever since. Were it not for the swift "kick in the pants" that I recieved from the experience, I am not sure that things would be quite so positive for me right now as they are.

Take some advice.. listen to Pastor Lang, the man KNOWS what he's talking about! With a cheerful smile on his face, a compassionate shoulder to lean on when things get rough (and they got roughest of all for me while I was in prison and my twin brother Kevin died), Pastor Lang worked a miracle with me. He opened the eyes of an arrogant, self-centered, self-important jerk and taught

Not Surprised

There is comfort in the fact that God can never be taken by surprise.

— Gabelein

Your Assignment

Our assignment from Jesus Christ is to be His representative in all of our relationships—to be "Jesus" to each and every person we encounter—each and every day. We should build up, not tear down. We must be an encouragement, not a hindrance. This pretty effectively eliminates griping, complaining, belly-aching, cursing, arguing, gossiping, ridiculing, criticizing and manipulating. That eliminates putting our own needs and desires first. In other words, that eliminates doing what comes naturally.

— Bonnie Ricks



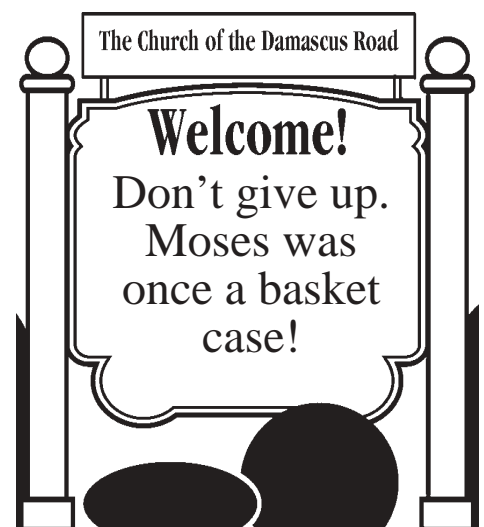
Chase Parent-Quinn and Luke

him the value of faith, hope, and love. These lessons are ones that now play a crucial role in my life, and are ones that I urge all of you in the Iowa Correctional System to cling to. THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!! Again, thank you for your help, and I and my family will be praying for you.

Yours in Christ,
Charles Parent-Quinn

P.S. Inmates seeking correspondence may write to us at:

Chief Charles Parent-Quinn & Family
Canadian Volunteer Emergency Res-
ponse Society/ Search & Rescue
Western Canada Headquarters
2061 Noel Ave.
Comox, British Columbia
CANADA
V9M 1Z1.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

February 2004



<http://www.dodgenet.com/~cjang/index.html>

Invite the Pastor to Worship

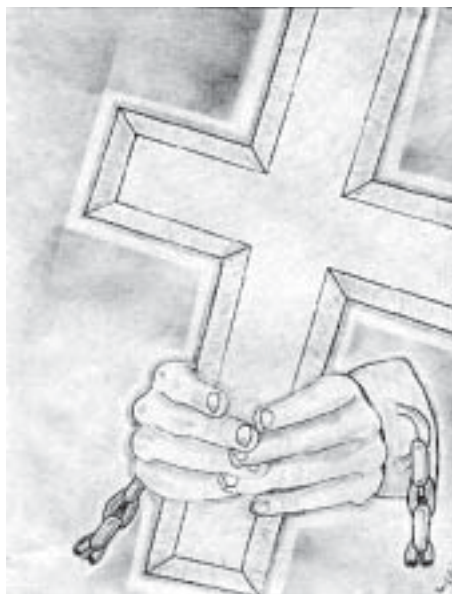
The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to make the pastor of Damascus Road available to visit area congregations on Sunday mornings. The pastor can give a brief update on the ministry, a sermon, a children's sermon, an adult forum, a children's Sunday school opening, a cross-generational class session, or any or all of the above, and is open to suggestions. All that is asked is that there be time to prepare.

Call 515-955-3579 or write to: The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at <DamascusCh@aol.com> to arrange for a visit to your congregation. The pastor speaks Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, United Church of Christ, Covenant, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Evangelical, Reformed, Assembly of God, Nazarene, and a host of other denominations, independent, and non-denominational as well.

All Readers: Send Contributions

The editor of this newsletter is inviting ALL READERS, inside and outside to send in articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Artists' Corner



Jamodd Sallis, FDCF



"Let him who is without sin...."
 Jeremiah Hemenway, FDCF

NCCF's Church Council

Marc Leonard
 Vice President
 Seth Vredenburg
 Secretary

FDCF's Church Council

Tom Warner President
 Terry Schoon Librarian/Secretary
 Jeffrey Roberts Editor
 Loren Berger Charles West
 John Bothwell Richard Shiner

A note to secretaries and pastors—

Copy Me, Please!

We send our newsletter primarily to congregations. It's printed on white paper so it can be copied to include all or portions of it in your newsletter or bulletin, or simply made available to members of your congregation.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang

Worship & Bible Study FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
 6:30pm Fridays Prayer Team
 7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Bible Study
 6:30pm Thursdays Holy Communion