

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 13
Issue No. 3
May 2010

Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Comfort Zones

There was a subject brought up at Bible study last time that caught my attention. I couldn't put it into words, exactly then, so thought I'd write it down and speak from that. Someone brought up that he felt as if his spiritual journey had plateau-ed or leveled out. And he was not feeling the spiritual "high" anymore.

That doesn't mean you should back down or even keep your same pace. What it means is that you should push yourself harder.

Every one of us has a comfort zone, and we all like staying in that zone because it's what we are used to and what feels good to us. Especially me. Now let me stop here for just a minute. How many people were here a year ago? I would say I was a loner, a coward, and a mute (silent type), the very last thing that I ever would have done is what I'm doing right now: speaking to you. I was in my comfort zone because that's what felt good to me.

But then the more I came to church, the more I listened to the Word, and the more I shared my life and my love for Christ, the more open I was and the happier I became at the same time. The farther I am away from my comfort zone, the closer I can get to God. That's why it's so important to leave our fears to God and keep striving for that passionate fire he creates in our hearts.

We must continue to share the message of love and the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Also, it is critical that we surround ourselves with positive people who will support us and push us to go further than we otherwise would.

If you feel like your Christian life has grown boring and dull, push out from your comfort zone. You could maybe share your testimonies, or maybe invite a friend or two to church, or even go out on a limb and bring up God in a conversation where you normally wouldn't. Remember to let the light of the Lord shine through you, and you will not be disappointed.

—Paul Abbot

Inside the Flash!

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Terrorists in Church



Osama Bin Lego

Latest news reports are that six terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches. They have been identified as: Bin Sleepin, Bin Arguin, Bin Fightin, Bin Complainin, Bin Missin, and Bin Sinnin.

Their leader, Lucifer Bin Workin, trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and to work within the church to discourage, disrupt, and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a seventh group. A tiny cell, known by the name Bin Prayin, is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed that the Bin Prayin cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin, Bin Waitin, Bin Fastin, and Bin Longin for their Master, Jesus Christ, to return.

NO CHURCH IS EXEMPT!

(However, you can spot them if you bin lookin and bin goin.)

The above sounds all too true, doesn't it? Let us make sure that we are a part of the correct "cell"!

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

--Philippians 4:6-7, New Living Translation

Children's Games Needed

Several CoDR members have noted a need for children's games for the Visiting Room at NCCF. If you or your congregation have new or used games that could be played by families in the VR, please send or bring them to CoDR at 239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. Thanks for brightening the lives of the kids and the dads!



—Pastor Paul Stone



Golf Tournament

The 3rd Annual Golf Tournament fundraiser for The Church of the Damascus Road will be held June 19, 2010 at the Oakridge Golf Course in rural Goldfield.

Join us for a good time and fellowship over a meal! All proceeds will go to support The Church of the Damascus Road Prison Congregation.

A shotgun start (each pair starts at a different hole) will be at 9am. Play is two-person best shot. Prizes will be awarded.

Registration is \$35, meal included.

Carts may be rented at 515-825-3611.

Anyone interested in golfing, sponsoring a hole or providing prizes, contact Kathy Hansel at 515-356-2341 or crazycutter@wccta.net.

Bring friends and join in the fun!

Rescue Me

Oh, please — oh God
Will you rescue me?
I'm up without a paddle
In this misery.

Oh, please — oh God
Will you send somebody?
I've done people wrong
And don't deserve thee.

Oh, please — oh God
Will you forgive me?
I repent what I did,
And I want to be free.

Oh, please — oh God
Will you cleanse me?
I know you've changed me,
And want everyone to see.

Oh, please — oh God
Will you rescue me?
I'm up without a paddle,
In this misery.
Cody Anderson 5-26-08

Bumpy Ride

Searching for gems among the stones
Praying, knowing, not alone
Staying close, almost inside
Hold on tight, Bumpy Ride

Keep your mind upon the stars
Not wrong, it's right
Where our thought are
With Morning Star so bright

All the gems were stones
Once upon a time
The next one to be found
Destined to be mine

He stands and knocks upon your door
Open it gladly, see you are not alone
Why would He even notice you?
Nothing more He wants to do

Hold on tight, Bumpy Ride
But know that He is by your side
Searching gems among the stones
Peaceful till we make it home
— William Bell FDCF

For Those in Authority

“Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and his doctrine may not be blasphemed.

“And those who (were lucky enough to) have believing masters, let them not despise them because those who we benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.



“If anyone teaches otherwise, and does not consent to wholesome words...” (1 Timothy 6:1-3a)

We are all under the authority of our government. Though there are many injustices, it does no good to murmur and mumble against them. It brings shame upon God's people who should not count on men for justice, but God.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

What these verses say to me personally is that I spend entirely too much time bickering (in my own strength) and little time looking to God and praising him in a time of adversity. The “sacrifice of joy” the Bible calls it. It would not be a sacrifice if things were going the way we would like them to.

Complaining brings on “every strife.” The Word tells us “where there is envy and strife there is confusion and every form of evil.”

The sacrifice of joy, with praise and worship of God in advance of God delivering us, brings on the power of God to our situations.

Complaining brings upon us every form of evil. Your choice, but choose wisely.
— Bill Bell 4-20-09



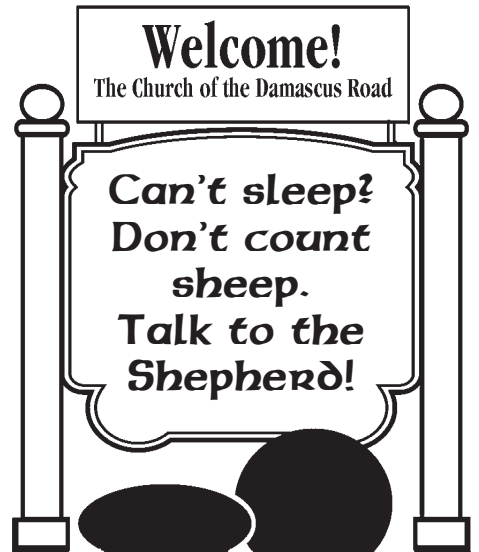
FDCF Brothers-in-Blue

The next weekend at FDCF is scheduled for June 10-13, 2010. See Pastor Stone in the Chapel for applications. Please note that visits are not allowed, so be sure to notify those on your visiting list not to visit on that weekend. The deadline for applications is May 27.

Prayer in support of the weekend is one way persons on the ‘outside’ can support this renewal activity.

—Pastor Carroll Lang

It's hard to shake hands with clenched fists.



For Heaven's Sake



The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Issue 13.2

May 2010

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.

Rev. Paul Stone, Pastor
Carroll Lang, Editor

Anyone wishing to be on our mailing list may send name, address, and phone numbers to the address below, or by e-mail at: DamascusCh@aol.com. The Flash will be sent directly to your home. Our office is at St. Olaf Lutheran Church.

The Church of the Damascus Road
239 North 11th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501



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RE-entry integration

“It’s a Ministry,
Not a Program”

They’re Now in Print!

The final touches were completed and the Reentry Handbooks have gone to press to be used to give useful information to inmates when they are released as well as for teams helping ex offenders to make a successful transition back into society. The handbook covers the following topics: Obtaining an ID; Housing; Finding Employment; Telephone guidelines; Transportation; Money Management; Education; Health and Life Skills; Family and Friend Relationships; Restorative Justice; Living Under Supervision; and Faith Considerations.



Handouts that are part of our training give insight into being a mentor to ex offenders, and practical guidelines for the team.

Although our teams experience some disappointments here and there, overall the experience brings many blessings for the team members and for the community, particularly in tax dollar savings when an ex offender becomes an ex ex offender and contributes to the health of society.

Yes, we have a pretty thorough training for teams, and we would be thrilled to train more teams. If you would like to participant in a “hands-on” ministry such as Reentry Reintegration, talk to your friends, form a team, get the training, and go into action.

We need your help in locating existing teams in parts of Iowa other than NW Iowa as well as finding more teams around the state. Please give me a call at 515-571-6566 or email me at CDLNg@aol.com.

—Rev. Carroll Lang, NW IA Director

Death

The Lord keeps bringing this topic in my mind and showing me different ways of explaining it. I believe it’s important, because almost everyone struggles with it. The topic is death.

One thing all humans have in common is death. It is a fact that from the time we’re born, we’re dying. Everyone has a separate clock ticking away, hour by hour, day by day, year after year. For some, the end comes quicker than others. Modern medicine only prolongs the ultimate outcome at best.

We have all lost someone who we dearly loved, whether it be parent, child, spouse, grandparent, or perhaps a close friend. We have all been in those shoes. Do you struggle with the thought of when or how it might happen?

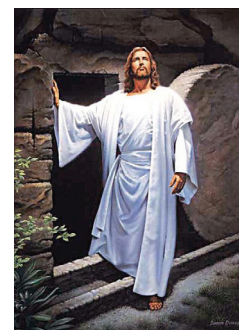
I used to be terrified of dying. That started when I was 12 years old, when I held my grandpa’s hand as he slowly slipped from life, losing a long battle with cancer. From that time until I was 21, I refused the thought of death and God at the same time. It wasn’t until my accident that I was truly awakened.

Most of you know my testimony of the night of the accident (“My Encounter,” printed in the September 2009 Flash—ed.). When I knew my chance of surviving was over, I sat there in my crumpled truck next to my friend who had just passed away before my eyes, and I prayed. I prayed for God’s mercy and forgiveness and, just as the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:8, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

At that moment there was no more pain, no more sorrow, just bright light and perfect peace. At that moment I was in the presence of the Lord. It wasn’t my time, yet, because he sent me back. I believe the reason is to share my experience and the message of the Lord’s awesome grace and unconditional love.. I still carry that peace in my life today and the knowledge that when I leave for that final time, I am going home to be with my heavenly Father.

So, if you still struggle with the idea of dying, remember Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” And how do you get there? Start with Romans 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Just remember, death is only scary if you know you are going to die without Christ.
—Paul Abbott

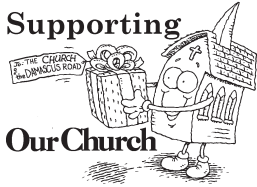


The Church of the Damascus Road
 239 North 11th Street
 Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Thanks for
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May 2010

Invite the Pastor

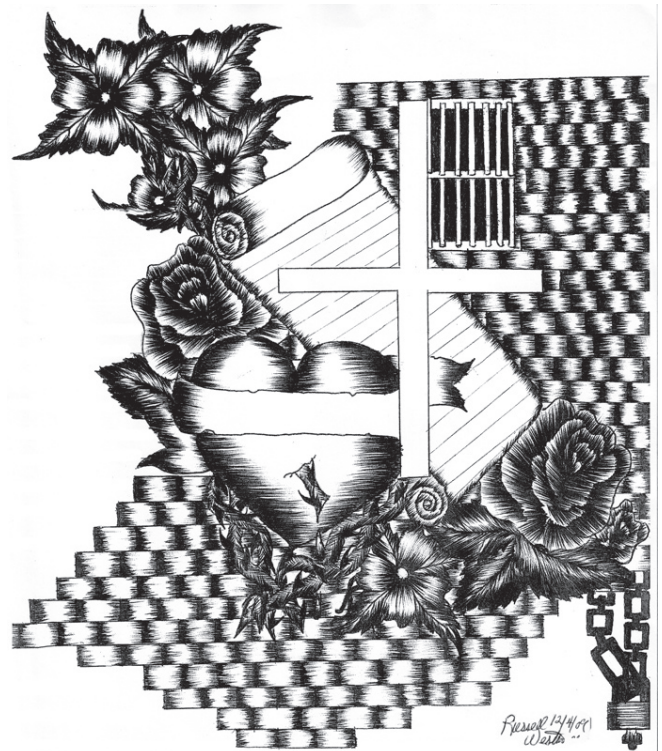
The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to enable the pastor of Damascus Road to visit area congregations on 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, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, 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, Mennonite, Nazarene, and a host of other denominations, independent, and non-denominational, too.

Artists' Corner

Drawing
 by
 Russell
 Weston
 2009

Inmates:
 You, too, can have your artwork displayed in the Flash! and the Echo! Simply hand your art to Pastor Stone. It will be scanned and then returned to you.



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.

NCCF Church Council

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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 Paul Stone

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

6:30pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
 6:00pm FridaysPrayer Team
 6:30pm FridaysBible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm TuesdaysBible Study
 6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion