

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



Lyle Harris' welcome party L-R: Bub Gleason, Manson; Dennis Booth, John Everts, Lytton; Jeff Buchan, Spencer; Richard Hawbaker, Grimes; Lyle Harris, Larry Lubinus, Grimes; Elmer Lubinus, Spirit Lake; Todd Brockshus, Spencer. Not shown: Candice Booth, who took the photo.

Sentences Do End

Lyle Harris served his time for his crime, over twelve years. On December 28, 2010 he was released to work release in Iowa City and was met at the gate by ten friends, who bestowed a prayer shawl on him.

After a short time of jubilation, Larry Lubinus and Richard Hawbaker began the long drive to take Lyle to Iowa City.

First stop was 24 miles later at McDonalds in Fort Dodge (at Lyle's request) where he was met by Carroll and Judy Lang. Lyle wanted a MacDonald hamburger, but had to settle for a sausage and cheese McMuffin, since they were still serving breakfast.

Lyle noticed Larry Lubinus swipe his debit card and asked what he had just done. "It's a debit card."

"What's that?" asked Lyle.

"It's like a a check only the money is taken from my account to McDonald's."

"Oh, wow!" (excited laughter). Lyle was overwhelmed and excited at all the

changes that have occurred during his incarceration, like discovering new things.

As the five sat down to eat, lively conversation ensued. Lyle wondered about his artwork on Carroll's computer and was assured that after he gets settled, and lands a job, and earns some furlough, they would get together, so, not to worry.

Lyle was to report by 12:30pm, so after scarfing breakfast, they continued on.

The Spirit Is Working

The Fort Dodge Correctional Facility's 22nd Bothers in Blue weekend (131st in Iowa prisons) was held December 9-12. Five pastors joined 25 lay outsiders in the prison. Warden Jim McKinney was asked what limit he wanted to set for the number of candidates/pilgrims. He responded that he would rather not set a limit, because anyone not allowed to attend might miss "a life-changing experience." The previous largest BiB was in June 2010. 60 inmates completed that weekend. In December 90 men completed this weekend. Eighteen of those requested and received the gift of the Holy Spirit with baptism. Fourteen more Affirmed their Baptismal covenants. The Spirit is alive and well in the Fort Dodge and Rockwell City prisons. As Philip said to Nathaniel, "Come and see." Come worship with The Church of the Damascus Road and congregations of on-fire Christians.

—Pastor Paul Stone

Lost Property

Well it has been an interesting time here this past week at NCCF. And I must thank God that His lessons have been fruitful. We recently had a lesson on forgiveness and turning the other cheek, where we are to treat our enemies with kindness and to forgive those who wrong us.

What happened was that I accidentally left my thumb drive in the computer (on my unit) while I ran to the bathroom, when I returned guess what...It was gone! And of course nobody knew who 'found it' and whoever did 'find it' has not bothered to return it.

In my new life as a Christian I was still a bit upset, not so much about the drive being kept by the 'finder' but by the loss of the information on the drive which cannot easily be replaced. (There was a lot of college work I will never get back.)

I thank God everyday for this new sense of reality he has brought into my life, and the knowledge to see that, I am just fine without all of the niceties of life. I am still not going hungry, and though it may seem that way at times, neither are you.

Despite that however, my new Christian sense is that if they really needed it that bad, then they are welcome to it. Although if they had asked I would have gladly given them the use of it, once copying my files. Or given them some commissary (since that's probably what they will sell it for).

The point I am trying to make is that since Christ has reentered my life, physical things just don't seem as important any more, and I have come to realize that God will provide to those who are in need. (Perhaps this is what happened for this fellow?)

I really cannot say, except that before I returned to Christ I would have probably handled things very badly, and caused some trouble that would have gotten me locked up.

So thank you, God, for your sense of forgiveness and patience, and for all the other wonderful realizations that have come into my life and the lives of my fellow inmates. I pray that this experience will help you when something might turn up missing in your life.

—Chad Kollasch NCCF 9-Nov-'10



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Letter from Jesus about Christmas

It has come to my attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking my name out of the season. How I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't



care what you call the day. If you want to celebrate my birth, just *get along and love one another*.

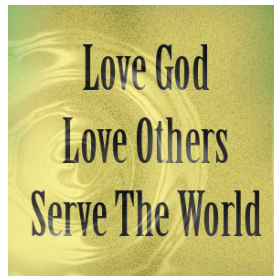
Now, having said that let me go on. If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a scene depicting my birth, then just get rid of a couple of Santas and snowmen and put in a small

Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all my followers did that there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town.

Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree, instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can remember me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish: I actually spoke of that one in a teaching, explaining who I am in relation to you and what each of our tasks were. If you have forgotten that one, look up John 15:1-8.

If you want to give me a present in remembrance of my birth here is my wish list. Choose something from it:

1. Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way my birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell me all the time.
2. Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.
3. Instead of writing the President complaining about the wording on the cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up... It will be nice hearing from you again.
4. Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of my birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.
5. Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.
6. Did you know that someone in your town will attempt to take their own life this season because they feel so alone and hopeless? Since you don't know who that person is, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile; it could make the difference.
7. Instead of nit-picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word. Even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas" that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. Then stop shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families.
8. If you really want to make a difference, support a missionary-- especially one who takes my love and Good News to those who have never heard my name.
9. Here's a good one. There are individuals and whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them, buy some food and a few gifts and give them to the Salvation Army or some other charity which believes in me and they will make the delivery for you.
10. Finally, if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in my presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine.



Don't forget; I am God and can take care of myself. Just love me and do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. Check out the list above and get to work; time is short. I'll help you, but the ball is now in your court. And do have a most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love and remember. I love you,

—Jesus



Join Outside Council

You are invited to consider being a member of The Church of the Damascus Road's Outside Church Council. The OCC is responsible for the financial support of the congregation, and the management of the church office, while the Inside Church Councils, made up of inmates, are responsible for the life, worship and ministry of CoDR in the prison.

The OCC meets every third Wednesday of the month at 11:45am for a catered lunch followed by the business at hand.

Terms of office are 3 years in rotation. If you feel called to this special ministry, please call 515-955-3579 or email DamascusCh@aol.com.

NCCF Brothers-in-Blue

The 27th Brothers in Blue weekend at NCCF will be March 3-6, 2011. Applications will be available soon, and the deadline is February 24. Even if you are not sure you'll still be here by then, sign up anyway, just in case. This renewal ministry has been an awakening for many.

—Pastor Paul Stone



The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!
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 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



Donors of \$100 or More Per Month, both Churches & Individuals

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- Rollin & Cleo Swanson, Fort Dodge
- Chris Tostenrud, Everly
- Leila Wilson, Fort Dodge
- M&M Leonard Woodruff, Rockwell City



RE-entry integration

"It's a Ministry,
Not a Program"

Won't You and Your Friends Help?

As you can see from page one, even those who have served long sentences are eventually released. In fact, 96% of all men and women who are incarcerated will be released, either to work release and parole, or when they completely discharge their sentences, and many have no one to turn to and no place to go. That's when the Church (the body of believers) can fulfill the parable of the sheep and goats and "do it for the least of these my brothers and sisters."



Our Reentry Reintegration ministry will train and prepare you to welcome an ex offender back into society and help her or him make a successful transition. Now, we're not saying it will be easy, but we know from experience that it is a rewarding ministry and, like any ministry, it is filled with sorrows and joys, hard work and feelings of success. A successful former member sent the message of joy below.

Size is not limiting. Lytton, a town of 255 population, has already covenanted with three ex offenders. In Sioux City, where there are more resources, the team is working with five or six ex offenders. In Humboldt there are often three, and in Fort Dodge the team is working with three to five.

There can be a vital ministry of aftercare in your area as well. We need your help in locating existing teams in parts of Iowa other than NW Iowa, developing 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



The Miracle of Birth

My cousin and her husband tried for ten years or better to have a baby. Knowing how badly she wanted it, I prayed and asked for prayer from others for her. During our prayer time before The Church of the Damascus Road bible studies on Friday night in the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. We prayed together. She was told by doctors that she was unable to conceive. They tried artificial insemination twice, both failed. They decided to adopt. After few years of missed opportunities to adopt, my cousin told me that in August of 2009 they decided to give up trying to adopt and to turn it over to the Lord. In December of 2009, I got a call from her telling me she was pregnant, and on September 27, 2010, they had a beautiful baby boy, Dane Jasper. Healthy. Thank you, God, and thanks to everyone who prayed. God can do anything, even when medical professionals say otherwise.

—Terry Schoon, Former Member

Obedience

We all have to face our giants
As we travel down life's path.
Often time wondering
How long this journey lasts.

Weary as we face each hurdle
Slowly wearing down.
Seeking many answers
That is never found.

Yet still we must go on
And not let the enemy win.
Tempting the weary
To turn away and sin.

Still we must be determined
And forge our way ahead.
The enemy cannot win
For to lose we are dead.

For life is given to those
Who walk the righteous way.
Obedience to Jesus
Each and every day.

Robert L. Johnson II 4-17-2010



The Church of the Damascus Road
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 Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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January 2011

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, 239 N 11th St, 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

Inmates:
 There was no original inmate artwork for this space, but you 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.



www.codrcare.org

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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- Arthur Bennett Vice President
- Chad Bechtel Secretary
- William Stark Story Tellers
- Jose Acosta Librarian
- Michael Downs Clerk
- Lyle Harris Larry Maxwell
- James Yeater Eddie Wilson
- Tyrone Sutherland Larry Barton
- Robert Parker

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

FDCF Church Council

- Paul Abbott President
- Jon Ellingson Vice President
- Cody Anderson Secretary
- Larry Pratchett Sean Wendling
- Raymond Reynolds Michael Brown
- Brandon Walstrom Wayne Smith
- Russel Klein Nathan Merrill

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

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

NCCF Rockwell City

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