

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 24
Issue No.3
May/June 2021
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

An Eye on the Future

It's difficult writing this newsletter article without being able to get inside to spend time with the guys. While I stay in touch through CorrLinks with the Presidents of CoDR FD and RC, it's not the same as being there with them for worship, prayer, support of each other and the other ministry we share. We're hoping to get back inside this summer, God willing.

Tim Fouse-Clark is the most recent chaplain for NCCF and FDCF. I have communicated with him a bit through email and he sounds like he will be very supportive of CoDR. He is looking forward to learning more about CoDR. I hope to have lunch with him soon.

We will also soon be welcoming a new warden for NCCF and FDCF. I look forward to building positive, supportive relationships with both the warden and chaplain that will be beneficial for the ministry of CoDR.

We continue to explore the possibility of CoDR being part of a shared ministry with several area congregations. We believe the relationship could be beneficial for all the congregations involved. It seems that we will probably know the direction this will go by the end of July. We are cautiously hopeful that this arrangement might provide long-term stability for all these ministries that may be challenging to realize by themselves.

We remain committed to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the men on the inside, loving and caring for them in the name of Jesus, and sharing together in being the body of Christ in the two prisons.

We appreciate your prayers, the many ways you support this life-changing ministry, and your financial gifts. Jesus reminds us that when we visit the prisoners, we're also visiting him. Thank you for your support in loving Christ as we love the men in the two prisons.

When we are able to return to NCCF and FDCF for worship we will invite all of you to join us to experience this life changing ministry for the men on the inside and those of us who are blessed to share in this ministry with them.

God bless all of you.

—Pastor Jim Davis

Possible Design for CoDR

CoDR started a long-range planning process in the Fall of 2019. We made good progress until March 2020 when the pandemic shut down our congregations, including CoDR. While most of our congregations have reopened for some form of in-person worship, volunteers are still not allowed to enter the North Central or Fort Dodge Facilities. We're hoping we will be by this Fall. Along with our ministry inside at a stop, COVID made it difficult to meet and plan for the future of CoDR. While meeting with each other has been a challenge, we have managed to make progress, but it has been slow.

One of the possibilities CoDR leadership has been exploring is becoming part of a shared or parish ministry where several congregations share staff and resources to better serve all the members we are called to minister. The CoDR Outside Church Council voted in March to have me develop a model for ministry that would include CoDR. Inside leadership is aware of what is happening and is supportive of CoDR being part of a shared parish ministry.

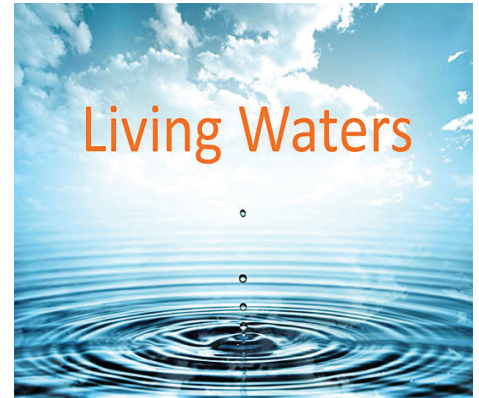
I have made a recommendation to Bishop Halaas for such a ministry that would include CoDR. After she has a chance to review the recommendation, we will begin moving in that direction. While this is changing how CoDR has been structured, we're confident being part of a shared ministry will be a blessing, and help us continue to proclaim the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ to the men on the inside through our presence and love for them.

Please pray for us as we await the time when we'll be able to be inside for worship.

We're grateful for your prayers and support that make this ministry possible.

Any questions? We welcome them. God bless all of you.

—Pastor Jim Davis



Living Waters

Drink in deeply of the Living Waters
Holding up your sons and daughters
All get filled with the Holy Ghost
Taking back all that's lost

Today's the day to take the land
Promised from when time began
Be strong and of good courage
God's Holy Spirit will go before us

Let us go in power and take the land
With Holy Ghost, and God's Right Hand
So how then could we ever loose?
Only if we should so choose

So dance before Him, all your might
And sing Him a new song
We take the land at first light
Peace in our hearts, all fear is gone

Jesus filled us with the Holy Ghost
Let the Living Waters flow
Surround us with Your Heavenly Host
Tomorrow the Promised Land we go

—William Bell-8/3/00

Inside the Flash!

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Come, You Blessed of My Father

By: William E. Bell 05/05/06

Those who work in Corrections will tell you that many people who are subjected to jail and/or prison will find GOD. They call it "Jail House Religion" because it has been their experience that soon after one is no longer incarcerated; they leave that "Religious Experience" behind. For the most part they are right.

I for one do not doubt the sincerity of these jail house conversions. God will use a crisis situation in our lives to draw us near to Him. Very few would call out to Him, with a broken and contrite spirit, without some sort of crisis or hardship.

Spiritual transplants occur as people become Christians and receive a new heart. But to grow strong in the Lord they must receive intensive nurturing, renewing their minds with the Word of GOD. Their spirits are a new creation in Christ Jesus, but their souls (minds) and flesh (bodies) want to continue on in the things they are used to.

It is exciting to be part of the birthing process, by praying them into the Kingdom of GOD. However, it is necessary to nurse new born children of GOD on the Word, and to intercede for them till Christ is formed in them. The Churches involved in prison ministry for the most part focus on in prison services and Bible studies, which is a very important part of the process. But what has been lacking is the aftercare ministry, which would continue the work when a prisoner is released.

No one is suggesting that coddling these people is the answer, but if we deal with them scripturally, we do not want "the cares of this world nor the deceitfulness of riches to choke the Word from their hearts." We must help provide fertile ground for the seed to grow and bear fruit (Mark 4:14-20).

Paul wrote to the new Christians at Galatia: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19). These were baby Christians to whom Paul wrote, ever careful to see that they receive the right teaching and grow to maturity. He prayed fervently, interceding for them, holding them before the Throne of GOD.

Jesus told us that when we withhold things from His children that they need, when it is within our power to provide it to them, that we are in essence withholding it from Him. We will be held accountable for our actions on that great and terrible day of His coming!

I want to hear on that day; "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit that kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.... I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Mathew 25:34-36, 40).

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Rather than question these conversions of those who are in prisons, because of the outcome once they are released, maybe we should question how the world describes "Jail House Religion."

Would there be a different result if the Church became accountable for these new converts, rather than release them into the same environment from which they came, and expect a different result?

Let us step back from the wisdom of the world and take a look at this issue in light of scripture: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are new" (Corinthians 5:17).

"Bill had been a drug smuggler for years. He lived on both sides of the border between the U.S. and old Mexico. He was arrested this side of the border in New Mexico and ended up serving prison sentences in two states as a result of those convictions. Though he had been addicted to narcotics for years, he rationalized that what he did was not so bad, because all he sold was marijuana. Over the years, seeing what narcotics did to people, ruining their lives, he would not be a part of that evil. He never realized that marijuana also had a lasting effect on people, just as alcohol or tobacco..."

While in jail he got a chance to observe the Church services held right on the cellblock every Sunday. He noticed that even the most hardened criminals were quiet and respectful when the pastor came and spoke about Jesus, and after about two months of asking questions he realized that Jesus Christ had to have been the Son of GOD. While reading the prayer on the back of a pamphlet, asking Jesus into his life, he felt as if warm oil had been poured out over his head, and that he was at peace. He knew without a doubt that something had just happened to him. In his spirit, all things had just become new. That was in 1986.

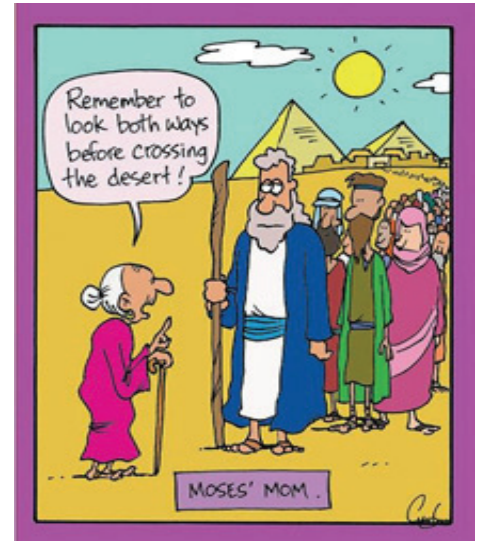
For the next three years, while in prison, he studied the Bible, and it was evident to everyone he knew that something was different about Bill. He was very different, almost peculiar.

When he got out of prison in 1989, and moved back home with his family, he very soon found himself back in his old lifestyle starting with alcohol, then pot, and on to narcotics, and within one year he was in worse condition than he had been before.

Mathew 12:43-45: "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives,

Continued next page

Holy Humor



Welcome!

The Church of the Damascus Road

**Every path
has a few
puddles.**

Get the Flash! in a Flash

To receive the Flash! electronically as a .pdf, just send us your email address (include your name and address so we can stop sending by mail) to cdlng@aol.com.

Thanks!

—Carroll Lang, Editor

**The Church of the
Damascus Road
Flash!**

Issue 24.2

May/June 2021

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.

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Judy Lang, Proofreader

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 can also be sent to your email address. Our office is at St. Olaf Lutheran Church.

The Church of the Damascus Road

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Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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Email: DamascusCh@aol.com

Thank You
FOR YOUR HELP

“It’s a Ministry, Not a Program”

I needed clothes & you clothed me. I was sick & you looked after me. I was in prison & you came to visit me.

Thank You, William E. Bell

Invite a Council Member

Our worship services are on weeknights so that people on the outside can worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. This allows members of the Outside Council to visit congregations on Sundays, and give a brief update on the ministry during worship, or to the children, an adult forum, or a cross-generational class session, or any or all of the above about CoDR, and are open to suggestions. Just need 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 email <DamascusCh@aol.com> to arrange for a visit.

Inmates:

You can have your original artwork in this space in the Flash; get permission from your counselor to hand it to the pastor. It will be scanned and then returned to you.

James Rainer "Jesus On the Cross" FDCF



Artists' Corner

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May/June 2021

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. Inmates, get permission from your Counselor to hand it to the pastor. Don't be bashful.



www.codrcare.org

CoDR on FaceBook

The Church of Damascus Road is now on Facebook. There are currently a few videos and pictures and will be updated when more are available. Also check for updates for upcoming events. To LIKE us, log into Facebook with the link <https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofthedamascusroad>

NCCF Church Council

Kline Goeders-Pres/ST -Lib
Tim Smith-VP
Zachary Dye-Sec Troy Johnson
Tanner Rosberg Jesse Flynn
.....
.....

FDCF Church Council

Trekel Barker -Pres/ST . Bradley Bauman-VP
Dakota Reme-Sec Travis Mosley
Doug Young Kristopher Crabtree
Joseph Chapman Quartez Watson
John Lusk Matthew Nants
Aaron Britton

Weekly Schedule

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

Reintegration Steering Committee

Unfilled-Pres Judy Lang-VP/Treas
Candace Booth-Sec Kelli Glasgo
Mark Juhl Ed Fleming
Doug Rossbach Dave Bohnet
Jan Enderlin Connie Gustafson
Joyce Phelps Carroll Lang-R/R Director
Rev. Jim Davis, Interim Pastor

Outside Church Council

Mark Juhl-Pres Dave Bohnet-VP
Judy Lang-Treas Doug Rossbach-Sec
Joyce Phelps Kelli Glasgo
Ed Fleming Candace Booth
Carroll Lang Jan Enderlin
Connie Gustafson
Rev. Jim Davis, Interim Pastor

Weekly Schedule

6:30pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
5:30pm Wednesdays . Bible Study/Council

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.

Thank you for your support.

Carroll Lang, Editor