

# Damascus Road Justice League

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## Meeting Needs With Humility: Avoiding the Christian Caste System

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* – Philippians 2:3

For 40 years I've observed church as it is practiced here in America, and while I've seen many good things, I have seen something that troubles me. I call it the Christian Caste System. Here's how it works. Within the first five minutes someone walks into a church, that person is tagged – labeled by the clothes they wear, by how they conduct themselves, as either one of the “needy” or one of the “ministers.” Within moments, it seems like a big “plus” sign or a big “minus” sign is engraved on that person's forehead, and, once engraved, it's very hard for that person to ever step out of the category they are put in. If that person is one of the needy, then they tend to be excluded from the relationships that matter. People avoid them, and relate to them only for purposes of “ministering” to them. On the other hand, if someone is a minister, that person is not allowed to have needs, and risks serious rejection and misunderstanding if he or she shares real needs or becomes vulnerable.

But the reality is this: We all have needs. However, when Christians must hide their needs from others, we end up with duplicity, hypocrisy, and worse. A recent series of pastoral suicides in the Carolinas has been tracked back to the need for pastors to always perform, to always be “on stage”. I'm glad that the Christian Caste System mentality is not part of the Damascus Road Church DNA, and I believe we want to guard against it by honoring everyone we help.

When we reach out our hand to someone who has needs, our heart is saying this:

I respect you. I value you. I listen to you. I give you permission to minister to me. I give you permission to teach me. I give myself permission to have needs that I share with others. I don't have all the answers. But I do carry the Answer with me. And where I can, I will bring Jesus to the place of your need, and I know you will do the same for me.

Giving each other dignity is more important than giving each other money – more important for the other person, more important for ourselves, and more important for our church.

### What is the DR Justice League?

- We are a team of people seeking to fill the gap between provision and need among the people in our church, our neighborhood, our city, our world.
- We are missional: We make a tangible and eternal difference in the lives of real people.
- We are relational: We build relationships on a foundation of trust. We offer dignity, respect, humility, good humor, and love.
- Our core values are summarized by Isaiah 58 (justice and compassion), Matthew 28:18-20 (disciple making), 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 22:36-38 (love).

## New Developments

*From the desk of Amy Agnew*

Never underestimate your power to make a difference. The choices you make will change lives ... in our church, in our neighborhood, in our city, and in our world. That excites me.

This month we will be highlighting 2 new developments: **Road Exchange**- an online resource tool that will help bring our DRC Body into a hopefully closer reality of taking care of and providing for each other. And the **Crisis Team**, who will be here for you in times of desperate need.

We also will be collecting full size toiletries for the Dane County Domestic Abuse Intervention Services.

So read on and find out ways that you can connect into the Isaiah 58 challenge.

By the way, have I mentioned how honored I am to work with such a dynamic and gifted team of people in the DRJL? They are fantastic people and I hope you can get to know them all 😊

## Road Exchange

Have a need? Want to help? The Road Exchange will be something like a free Craig's List for the people of DRC. If you need a ride to work, or want to help someone clean their home, or you need a washing machine, or want to donate a computer to someone at DRC, or whatever ... the Road Exchange will be for you. We will be rolling out the Road Exchange with live demonstration on a Sunday morning in May!

As a church we are also exploring how we might be involved in the Dane County Time Bank. The Time Bank offers individuals and organizations the opportunity to trade time volunteered in the community for assistance from other volunteers. You provide an hour of assistance; you get an hour of help. For more information on the Time Bank see [danecountytimebank.org](http://danecountytimebank.org), [info@danecountytimebank.org](mailto:info@danecountytimebank.org), 608-663-0400. If you would like to be on the Time Bank team for DRC, contact [amy@damascusradchurch.com](mailto:amy@damascusradchurch.com) or 467-1071.

Remember we are all people of need and we are all people of provision!

## The "911" Crisis Team

**The "911" Crisis Team is ready for action.**

When tragedy strikes someone here at DRC, we want to be ready to provide support, physical help and encouragement. We've put together a team to do just that- Dan Peck, Amy Agnew, Marleah Grinnel, and Carri Jones. If crisis hits you: please reach out for help. Contact Dan Peck at 575-1641 and he will notify our team. We will strive to meet needs in a timely and gentle way. Crisis, may it stay far from you but if illness, an accident, death, injury or abuse affects your life, please call the number highlighted above. Our team will be ready to hold you up in times of trouble.

## D.A.I.S.

- 1 in 4 women will be a victim of domestic violence at some point in her lifetime (National Institute of Justice, 2000).

- 3 million American children are exposed to domestic violence in their homes each year. (American Psychology Association)

Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) intends to give our clients the strength to move forward and to heal. **DAIS operates the only shelter serving victims of domestic violence in Dane Co. in its 25-bed 2-bathroom facility.** Last year, DAIS has seen a 145% increase in the number of people seeking shelter without an increase in financial support, in fact some local funding has been cut for next year. The agency is currently in a crisis situation, last year many victims seeking shelter were placed on a waitlist for services. One woman and her 4 kids were on our waitlist for 22 days; she stayed with her abuser until space was available.

This month we are collecting toiletry items for the clients in shelter. We are in most need of: Deodorant, Lotion, Toothpaste, and Size 5/6 Diapers. Full-size items please! Drop them in the hallway by Kids Church. THANK YOU!

There is also great need for volunteers in the shelter!! The shelter often is at capacity and having a volunteer to be there to provide assistance to the shelter advocate and to the families would be a blessing to all. DAIS welcomes volunteers, but does require that those having contact with our clients undergo training and be available to work at least three shifts per month. If interested in volunteering, please contact the business line at 251-1237. The next training is in October and more information about volunteering is on the website below.

DAIS offers 24-hour Crisis Line, Crisis Response, Legal Advocacy, Support Groups, and Shelter. If you are in need of any of these services, please call the crisis line at 251-4445. More information about the agency and domestic violence is available on the website <http://abuseintervention.org>

## Road Home

### What is The Road Home?

The Road Home serves homeless families with children in collaboration with local faith communities and organizations. They are committed to the empowerment and long-term success of children and families, to serving each family with dignity and respect and to achieving results in helping families improve their lives. In its simplest form, The Road Home helps homeless families get back on track, providing assistance with low-income housing, obtaining employment, childcare, basic life skills, etc.

So far this year Damascus Road has helped twice at our partner church Immanuel Lutheran when they hosted overnight guests. We as a church have served four meals to the families in the program and provided evening and overnight assistance. In addition I personally (James) had a blast being attacked by rambunctious boys while helping out in the evening.

We have also provided mattresses, sheet sets, and welcome baskets with lots of STUFF for the 12 families we have helped move into new apartments. Thanks to everyone who contributed!!

Some items are always needed for the families, so feel free to call and ask if you have something to donate. July is the next time we help at Immanuel Lutheran, so keep your eyes open for more info in late June.

Contact info:

James & Jamie Cayo (608) 444-3213 or [jamiēcayo@yahoo.com](mailto:jamiēcayo@yahoo.com)

## The River

We want to thank our wonderful donors and volunteers for their support through the first four months of the year. April was another record month for family visits. During the course of any pantry session we try to speak with many of the volunteers. They are often amazed at how well organized everything seems to be. When one considers all the activities running at the same time and the large number of participants, there is lots of opportunity for breakdowns. The pantry frequently serves 150 families in one and a half hours.

We are excited to report that we have received two grants already this year. The pantry received a grant from the Madison Rotary Foundation to use for the installation of donated HVAC equipment. The total cost for this project is \$9,000, the Rotary grant will cover \$5,500. We still need to raise another \$3,500. This project is critical to safe food storage. It is not unusual for the indoor temperature to be 95+ in the summer months. We were able to purchase a 12 passenger van in April with a generous grant from the Madison Community Foundation. The purchase allows us to offer safe and reliable transportation to pantry clients and volunteers. Thank you MCF. Thanks also to a generous individual who provided the funds for a pallet jack with a scale. This piece of equipment has been high on our list for a couple years now.

The pantry has also begun serving dinner during the Tuesday evening session. Our client families have been very appreciative. They usually shop in the pantry first, and then stay for nice family dinner. We still need lots of volunteers to help with the Tuesday dinner from 4:30 – 7:00 DRC will be committed to helping the RFP every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Sign up at the DRJL table. It's a wonderful way to serve with others who you go to church with. The summer months are a great time to volunteer at The River. We need lots of help in all areas. Most of the very dedicated UW students, who volunteer during the school year, are gone for the summer. However, the number of families using the pantry continues to increase in the summer. Take some time this year to serve others at The River.

### Pantry Financial Need

The River logged 2352 family visits for April 2010, that's an increase of 57% over April of 2009 and a new record for pantry visits in one month. For the first 4 months of the year the growth is 46%. We don't see the growth in attendance slowing down any time soon. People are still having a very difficult time finding employment. This means that the pantry is spending more than ever on food. Our food expense rose 49% over the same January through April period, going from \$14,685 in 2009 to \$21,917 in 2010.

As a result of the increase in food, rent, and payroll costs, The River is currently running a **deficit** of over \$30,000 through the first four months of the year. Please consider a financial donation to The River.

Damascus Road Church is committed to helping with the meal on the 2nd Tuesday each month. Please consider helping out! You can serve food, bus dishes, help do dishes and clean up from 4:45 to 7 PM. Please sign up at the welcome table. Anyone who wants to help cook should contact us directly at [river@theriver-madison.org](mailto:river@theriver-madison.org). If you prefer, you can help in the food pantry, please plan on 4:30 to 6:30 for pantry helpers.

View a documentary about The River at this link, <http://www.youtube.com/v/DINTKZP9Wbo>

# Isaiah 58 (New International Version)

## True Fasting

- <sup>1</sup> "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.  
Raise your voice like a trumpet.  
Declare to my people their rebellion  
and to the house of Jacob their sins.
- <sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;  
they seem eager to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that does what is right  
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.  
They ask me for just decisions  
and seem eager for God to come near them.
- <sup>3</sup> "Why have we fasted," they say,  
'and you have not seen it?  
Why have we humbled ourselves,  
and you have not noticed?'  
"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please  
and exploit all your workers.
- <sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,  
and in striking each other with wicked fists.  
You cannot fast as you do today  
and expect your voice to be heard on high.
- <sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,  
only a day for a man to humble himself?  
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed  
and for lying on sackcloth and ashes?  
Is that what you call a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD ?
- <sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?
- <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe him,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
- <sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
- <sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.  
"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
- <sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land

and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

- <sup>12</sup> Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

- <sup>13</sup> "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath  
and from doing as you please on my holy day,  
if you call the Sabbath a delight  
and the LORD's holy day honorable,  
and if you honor it by not going your own way  
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,  
<sup>14</sup> then you will find your joy in the LORD,  
and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the  
land  
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

## Uganda Updates

A big thank you to everyone who donated clothing and shoes for the children At Father's Divine Love Ministry! The children will be so blessed. Thank you to Dan Peck for storing these things until we can take the gifts to them!

We are in the process of making a brochure that explains the sponsorship program for the kids on Lingira Island. We will be having a sponsorship drive for these children in the month of August.

**Urgent prayer request:** Please pray for the families in David Livingstone's community and congregation, who just suffered the loss of many children, killed by a drunken bus driver last month. The children were in a school van when the bus hit them head on. David has spent the last few weeks visiting each family and offering them prayer, sympathy and comfort.

### Contact

If you would like more information on how you can partner with this project, please contact Sandy Williams at [sandywilliams@tds.net](mailto:sandywilliams@tds.net).

## Haiti Updates:

**Haiti Baby Formula Blitz!** Thank you for your generous donations of baby formula and bottles. We collected 5 boxes of items to send off to the [relieffrain.org](http://relieffrain.org) for Haiti relief. Thanks for helping being like Jesus and making a way for those in need.

### **Haiti Benefit Concert - Sunday May 16th 6pm ~ hosted by the Damascus Road Youth Group.**

Join us for an incredible night of music, dancing, but most importantly, raising money for the people in Haiti still struggling in the aftermath of the earthquake. Refreshments will be provided, and donation jars are going to be stationed all around, keep an eye open! We will also have a ticket raffle to auction off a surprise item! Don't miss it!

Tickets are a base price of \$7 ~ (If you feel led to give more, please don't hesitate!!!)

**Bands and Musicians:** Transient, Dan Wenzel, Travis Agnew, Carol Brandt, and a few more impromptu performances

### **There are kids in this neighborhood that would love to come to church with you.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County currently has ten children in this neighborhood on the waiting list for a big brother or big sister mentor. They estimate that they have another 200 currently waiting for interview in order to be added to the waiting list. Please consider becoming a mentor to one of these kids. You are coming to church on Sunday anyway so you will be in the neighborhood. A simple once a week commitment to pick a child up, bring them to church and then spend a little quality time with them afterwards can have a huge impact on the life of an at risk kid, as well as yours. Please consider becoming a mentor in the coming weeks. DRJL will be sponsoring a recruiting drive in the month of July. If you would like more information in the meantime, please contact Kevin Fountain. [kfountain001@gmail.com](mailto:kfountain001@gmail.com) 608-220-5462

### **Save the Date:**

During the week of July 24-28 we are putting together a killer Vacation Bible School for our **neighborhood** and we would love your help! The Theme is **Hero Headquarters**- where kids join forces with God. We will help kids discover that if they're willing to be used by God in any situation, no matter how big or small, they can make a difference. Please Sign up NOW at the DRJL table to help or contact [Amy@damascusroadchurch.com](mailto:Amy@damascusroadchurch.com) for more information.

## Short Term Missions Connects

The following YWAM outreaches are scheduled and accepting applicants. You can help to create a missions experience that will change the lives of your youth group as they reach out to other parts of the world! Each of these will include a 4½ day training/ministry prep at the YWAM Training Center near Sun Prairie. Unless otherwise noted, they are for youth 13-18.

- San Francisco: June 18 – July 2. Work with the poor and homeless.
- MadReach (Madison outreach for youth groups): July 4 – 13. Urban outreach. MadReach will integrate training and ministry into each day. Other dates are available.
- Dominican Republic: July 25 – August 8. Work with children and with the poor
- Haiti: August 13 – 27. Earthquake relief and rebuilding, and children's ministry.
- Haiti: August 8 – 22. (18+) Earthquake relief and rebuilding.
- For families: Family outreach, tentatively to Native Americans. Dates TBD.

If you would like more information about any of these outreaches, please email [ywam@ywammadison.org](mailto:ywam@ywammadison.org) or call the YWAM office at 608-255-0500 ext. 306 and ask for Michael or Wayne.