

Fishing In Lava by Adam Hofer

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said to Peter and his brother, Andrew, “and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matthew 4:19). This passage is an important passage for two reasons. First, Jesus expected that they would follow him even though they both were actively casting out nets to catch fish (Matthew 4:18). Second, Jesus redefined their life mission as fishermen of people. In the same way, we are commanded to follow Jesus and become fishermen of people. However, that is easier said than done. Ministry work is often like fishing in lava. We are called to wait patiently for opportunities to share the love of Christ and guide people to Christ in often toxic environments where brokenness, addiction, and wickedness abound. Yet, occasionally we feel a tug on the line and ministry happens! That is what happened recently with a man I’m going to call “Isaiah.”

Every Wednesday and Friday, I start my day with a hot cup of coffee at The Banquet where I check on my brothers and sisters on the streets and pray over them. I’ve done this for years now. I’ve found that ministry work is natural over a table where food is present. I went to The Banquet around 7:15am, surprised that our Faith Community Nurse, Gloria, beat me there and was already talking with an individual. I walked by her and went into the eating area as I normally do and saw an individual I’ve been investing time into. As I walked his way, another

man, Isaiah, called me over to talk. I met Isaiah for the first time five weeks earlier and consistently checked up on him on a weekly basis since I met him, but I could tell that Isaiah needed a friend that morning. The conversation started with tears and a confession that meth is taking over his life. He told me that he



wakes up for meth, goes to the homeless shelter to sleep, and the cycle continues daily. We spoke for a while about his options and thankfully, the conversation naturally transitioned into a Gospel talk. He heard the message many times, but the message was resonating on a deeper level that morning. We were on holy ground. Just then, out of nowhere, a man sat down next to him and told Isaiah not to listen to me because I was teaching about Jesus Christ. The man quoted Scripture, yet his theology was contrary to the Gospel. For fifteen minutes, the man did not give me time to speak to Isaiah and was, in a sense, claiming him. I could see clearly that I was in a spiritual battle. Eventually, Isaiah and I got away from him and spoke and prayed outside The Banquet.

When we opened the Center of Hope that morning, Isaiah came in to

continue our talk. In our two-plus hour conversation in my office, I learned about his abusive childhood, his long history in the military that haunts him today, his time in a biking gang, and his current battle with meth on the streets of Sioux Falls. He is no stranger to pain. There were many tears in our conversation. Yet, he realized that morning that he desperately needed Jesus. We spoke of God’s love and forgiveness extensively. Sometimes recognizing that God loves and forgives you is easier to understand than knowing how to love and forgive oneself. Our conversation was fruitful. He was given a Bible, was connected to resources to deal with his addiction, was prayed over, and was invited to one of our Bible studies.

We are called to follow Jesus and to become fishermen of people. Fishing requires patience and being present. Being a fisherman is hard and is not meant to be easy. Yet, we are called to be faithful as God is faithful with us. Ministry on the streets is like fishing in lava. However, God does miracles! Often, we deny God’s command to follow him out of fear or insecurity. We must remember, however, that missionaries of darkness never rest and are always out and about leading people astray. Missionaries of light need to step forward and live into their purpose of loving God and others in radical ways. Look at the clock. It is FISHING TIME!

Mark Your Calendars!

Breakfast Fundraiser

On **Saturday June 25 from 8:30am to 11:00am**, we will be having a Breakfast Fundraiser at First Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota (**2901 East 26th Street**). At the event, you will enjoy pancakes, coffee, and a silent auction! The silent auction will begin online a week before the event (June 18) and will end the morning of the breakfast. All profit for the event will benefit our **Earn-Your-Way** program where guests can earn bikes, ID assistance, Birth Certificates, and steel-toed shoes/boots through community service at our partnering agencies. The program has blessed many people! However, the program does put financial strain on the Center of Hope. Your financial support is crucially important to keep the program operational. Our financial goal for the Breakfast Fundraiser is to raise \$10,000 for this new program. We hope to see you all there!

Bike Overflow Fundraiser (THIS WEEK!)

From **Tuesday June 7 to Friday June 10**, we will be having a fundraiser event for our Geared-To-Empower Bike Ministry! We believe strongly at the Center of Hope

that we are called to be effective stewards of what God gives us. With that said, we have enough bikes to meet the needs of our guests and their families. However, we are having a hard time staying within budget for bike locks and the bike parts needed for bike repairs. Bike locks are costing us three times more now than three years ago! The Bike Overflow Fundraiser is a time when we allow the general public to come to the Center of Hope and buy bikes for their families if they qualify or not. All profit from the fundraiser will be reinvested into new bike locks and parts.

Geared-To-Empower Bike Ministry is ramping up!

We are looking forward to what God has in store for our Geared-To-Empower Bike Ministry this year. Historically, we have focused our attention on adults. However, we expanded our program to include whole families. Last year, 16% of the people who used the Bike Ministry were under the age of 18 years old. As the word gets out that our Bike Ministry has expanded, we believe the percentage will increase. This is an opportunity to share the love of Christ to ALL ages. We are grateful that our community has supported us so strongly with bike donations that we are able to expand our Bike Ministry. We are excited to share the Good News of Jesus, offer bike safety education to children, and be a continued presence where people are in our Travel Repair Stations this biking season!

Mission:

The Center of Hope exists to walk alongside people, to bring spiritual and physical health, and ultimately to change the community one life at a time.

Vision:

The Center of Hope encourages and mentors people with the hope of redemption through Jesus Christ. Our focus is holistically addressing physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of individual that can only come through creating relationship and accountability. We work in partnership with community organizations to engage in a consistent and positive interaction with guests.

Principles:

1. All people are created in God's image.
2. Self sufficiency
3. Holistic Ministry
4. Reconciliation
5. Partnering to Serve

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Center of Hope appreciates the gifts In Memory of — Clarice Haan, Iva Elbers, Duane Vos, Roger Klíngenhagen, Grace Struiksmá

Your Gifts Change Lives:

Stock or Commodity Gifts—Talk to your financial advisor about gifting stocks and commodities to the Center of Hope.

Make it Double—Check with your employer to see if they will match your charitable contributions to the Center of Hope.

Be a Sustainer of Hope—A **monthly gift** will bring stability to individuals and families. Give online at: www.centerofhopesf.org

Financial Update

Fiscal year runs from April to March, for the year 2021-2022

April—To Date. Income
\$50,758

2022-23 Budget Need
\$393,343

Help us save on postage by receiving your newsletter electronically! Send your email address to info@centerofhopesf.org Also, please let us know if we need to update your mailing address.