

The Church of the Damascus Road Echo!

Volume 6
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September 2003
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Who Am I?

As I sit and ponder:
What am I supposed to be?
Is there a special purpose?
What does this mean to me?

I know I often stumble,
Try not to grumble when I fall,
Smile through the tears,
Be a man most of all.

“Chin up,” I am told,
“Persevere with all your might.
Come on, and be a man!
You must put up a fight!”

In desperation I look up,
A defeated broken man,
When a gentle voice said,
“Please, son, take my hand.”

“I will strengthen and guide you.
Supply all your needs.
I will never forsake you,
Just come and follow me.”

No longer am I lost.
It was a very precious day.
Praise be to Jesus!
He washed my sins away!

Now I am a prince,
My Father is a King,
When the world looks upon me,
A child of God is who they see!

Robert L. Johnson II 2-21-2003

Inside the Echo!

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CROP Walk in October



The annual CROP Walk will take place at NCCF on Saturday, October 11 at 9am and at FDCF on Sunday October 12 at 1:30pm. We walk for two reasons. First we walk because they walk. Just to get food and water some people in Third World countries walk up to ten miles, carrying the water and food on their heads or backs. We walk to show our empathy and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Third World countries. Second, we walk as a demonstration to others who can see us walk and visibly see how much we care about the hunger of the world.

The CROP Walk is three miles. Easily

done in an hour. If you call or write home about our walk, some of your friends and relatives may wish to give toward the hungry y sending their donations to

The Church of the Damascus Road
CROP Walk
PO Box 834
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

Personal donations from inmates may be made with a special CROP Store Order (FDCF) or giving sheet (NCCF). Set your sights on the CROP Walk and join us for the fun and fellowship and the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing a good thing for someone else in need.

Brothers in Blue Coming Up

On the weekend of October 16-19, 2003, another Brothers in Blue will take place at the North Central Correctional Facility and on November 13-16, 2003, at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. It is a weekend where inmates, no matter whether young or old in their Christian walk, get together to spend time in fellowship with others, allowing them to not only grow closer to God, but also to learn what being a Christian entails.

We will fellowship with volunteers from outside. We will study God's word, pray, sing, laugh, and, when it is over, perhaps even cry a little.

The Brothers in Blue begins slowly (we don't want to overwhelm anyone) and builds through the weekend. You may be a little apprehensive at first, but as the weekend unfolds, you will look back on it as one of the most spiritual times of your life, and you

will strengthen the bond between you and God.

You will meet men that will minister to you in the same loving spirit Jesus did during his short time on earth. They take time out of their busy lives to serve on the team and to help you discover the love and joy that knowing Jesus has brought into their lives—the same good news that Jesus shared in his glorious ministry.

You will learn many things that will be valuable throughout your life. I encourage everyone to participate in the Brothers in Blue weekend. This will be a life-changing experience that you will cherish for the rest of your life. Just ask anyone that has attended a Brothers in Blue weekend about what it meant to them. I'm sure that they will encourage you to attend. You will be glad you did.

Robert L. Johnson II, NCF IFI

What It Means to Be Christ-Like at a BiB

Well, here we are again discussing the next Brothers In Blue. I look forward every time we have a BIB, I can feel the pres-ence of the Lord, the Holy Spirit and the Father in the whole program.

The Lord loves to see men come closer to him. Please understand that no matter what we have done in our lives God (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) will always be there for us. It doesn't matter what you are doing time for, because all sins are the same in God's eyes. We humans may think that one crime is worse than another, but we as humans are wrong, because there is no crime worse than another for they are all sins in God's eyes. For when God forgives us, he doesn't remember them any more. We humans never seem to forget the wrongs someone has done to us.

But I am here to let you know that God will help you in everything, no matter what is in your life, for he will never leave you nor forsake you like everyone else will. So when you think everyone is against you or you think you're all alone, do not fear, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

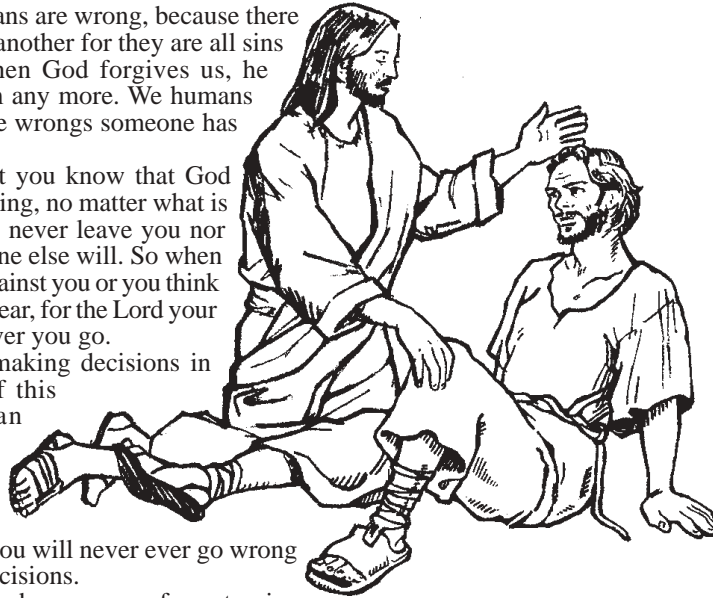
When it comes to making decisions in your life, ask yourself this question and you can never go wrong and that question is, "What would Jesus do?" For if you will follow those four important words, you will never ever go wrong in your life and your decisions.

I am inviting each and every one of you to give up the things you normally like to do for three and a half days and come to Brothers in Blue.

When I went through the Brothers in Blue, I received a blessing that I will never forget. The Holy Spirit of God moved in my life like never before, because I would only give God so much of my life and keep the rest away from him. I now know that if you really want the Lord to move in your life, then you give them every part of your heart and life. If you are not willing to release all areas of your life then there isn't much you can count on getting from them. I look forward to seeing you all there at the Brothers in Blue in October. For you will go away from this weekend deeply blessed by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave up his Life for us on the cross at Calvary 2000 years ago.

May our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, richly bless you as you turn your life completely over to him. No matter if it is at a Brothers in Blue or in your closet/room, or even on the yard.

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,
Gary C. LeCompte



Live in the Present

Believe that only one person in a thousand knows the trick of really living in the present. Most of us spend fifty-nine minutes an hour living in the past, with regret for lost joys, or shame for things badly done (both utterly useless and weakening)—or in a future which we either long for or dread. Yet the past is gone beyond prayer, and every minute you spend in the vain effort to anticipate the future is a moment lost. There is only one world, the world pressing against you at this minute. There is only one minute in which you are alive, this minute—here and now. The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatable miracle, which is exactly what it is—a miracle and unrepeatable.

Quoted from "Skimmings," Los Angeles

Asking Him from Within

As I entered alone in this tiny cell,
I felt as though I was headed for hell.
With walls cold and damp,
and the door made of steel
The only thing left to do was drop and kneel.
If I wanted to be free and filled with love,
I had to get in touch with the man above.
Only he can open my eyes and make me see,
Lift my spirits and set my soul free.
As I leave this tiny cell,
I know I will have escaped the bonds of hell.
Because I opened the book and read within,
I went to him and confessed my sins.
I knew if I wanted this new start,
I had to ask him into my heart.
He is the only one who holds the key,
To grant me "Life in Eternity."
by Chris Egenberger

Would I Step On Jesus?

Twenty-six people died because they would not step on a picture of Jesus. In the 17th century some Christians were faithfully serving Jesus on an island in Japan. According to missionary Tim Johnson, a provincial leader, called a SHOGUN, decided that these believers were a threat to the traditional culture, so he devised a fiendish trap. He placed a picture of Jesus on the street and demanded that the Christians in his province step on the picture in renunciation of their faith. When the test was finished, 26 people had refused. They were crucified at the water's edge for all to see.

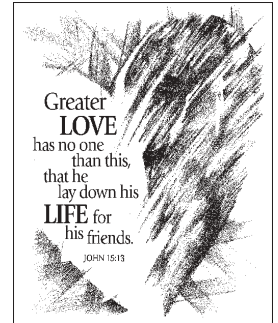
It's sobering to realize that the apostle Peter, when questioned about his loyalty, denied that he was a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). But it was that same Peter who deeply regretted his choice and gave the rest of his life in bold witness for Christ.

Every day we are confronted with situations or decisions that tempt us to betray the Lord by choosing the world, the flesh, or the devil instead of obeying him. We need his help to keep from denying him by acts of sin or disobedience.

*Jesus is all the world to me,
And true to Him I'll be;
O how could I this Friend deny,
When He's so true to me?—Thompson*

To keep from denying Christ, you must rely on Christ. Matthew 26:69-75

From the Daily Bread devotional



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

Volume 6.5a September, 2003

The official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the medium security units at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Gary LeCompte, Editor,
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Where My God Is

How many of us have heard that question "Where was your God when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked?"

Well, I know where *my* God was the morning of September 11, 2001, and he was very busy! He was trying to discourage anyone from taking these flights. Those four flights together held over 1000 passengers and there were only 266 aboard. He was on 4 commercial flights giving terrified passengers the ability to stay calm. Not one of the family members who were called by a loved one on one of the high-jacked planes said that passengers were screaming in the background. On one of the flights he was giving strength to passengers to try to overtake the hijackers. He was busy trying to create obstacles for employees at the World Trade Center. After all, only around 20,000 were at the towers when the first jet hit. Since the buildings held over 50,000 workers, this was a Miracle in itself. How many of the people who were employed at the World Trade Center told the media that they were late for work or they had traffic delays?

He was holding up two 110 story buildings so that 2/3 of the workers could get out. I was so amazed that the top of the towers didn't topple when the jets impacted. And when they did fall, they fell inward. GOD didn't allow them to topple over, as many more lives would have been lost. And when the buildings went down, my GOD picked up almost 6,000 of his children and carried them home with him. Reassuring his frightened children that the worst was over and the best was yet to come. He sat down and cried that 19 of his children could have so much hate in their hearts and now they are lost forever.

He sent his children that are best trained for this disaster and had them save the few that were still alive, but unable to help themselves. And then sent many others to help in any way they were needed.

He still isn't finished though, he held the love ones that were left behind in his arms. He comforts them daily. His other children are given the strength to reach out to them and help them in any way they can. And I believe he will continue to help us in what is to come. He will give the people in charge of this great nation the strength and the wisdom to do the right thing. He would never leave us in our time of need.

So when anyone asks, "Where was your God on September 11," you can say, "everywhere"!

And yes, although this is without a doubt the worst thing I have seen in my life, I see God's miracles in every bit of it. I keep praying for those who don't believe in GOD, every chance I have. I can't imagine going through such a difficult time and not believing in God. Life would be hopeless.

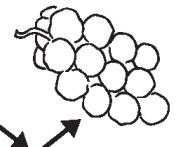
Author: Unknown Fellow Believer



Answers on page 4

The Harvest

Harvest time was very important to the Israelites. They had three harvests each year: barley in spring; wheat in summer; fruits in autumn.



Find these foods that the Israelites harvested, and circle them.

- | | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------------|---|
| GRAPES | HERBS | OLIVES | APPLES | GOURDS |
| BARLEY | NUTS | BEANS | ONIONS | LENTILS |
| ALMONDS | LEEKs | FIGS | CUCUMBERS | |
| WHEAT | MELONS | RYE | POMEGRANATES |  |

H	A	C	B	R	Y	E	B	R	V	E	N
G	A	U	A	S	N	O	L	E	M	S	U
R	L	C	R	F	I	G	S	T	A	T	T
A	M	U	L	I	M	B	E	H	A	N	S
P	O	M	E	G	R	A	N	A	T	E	S
E	N	B	Y	E	S	E	L	P	P	A	K
S	D	E	H	R	O	N	I	O	N	S	E
V	S	R	E	S	G	O	U	R	D	S	E
T	I	S	M	E	S	L	I	T	N	E	L
S	E	V	I	L	O	W	H	E	A	T	H



Artwork by Robert Matheson, FDCF



Artwork by Robert Matheson, FDCF

Your Mouth!

In a world today where morals and decency seem almost to be a thing of the past, I often think of why or what may be the reason. Now we could blame government, society, cults, music, or a myriad of things. But what do ALL of the aforementioned items have in common? Mouths! Each one of those things are all comprised of people with mouths.

Why do I believe that mouths are the cause of the decline in our moral standards? Simple; where did you learn what you know? From someone or a group of someones, i.e., teachers, parents, friends, professors, overheard conversations, the guy screaming at McDonalds, television, politicians, spouses etc., the list goes on and on.

In ancient cultures (and some today) history is handed down by word of mouth. In Matthew 15:2, it says "Why do your disciples break the tradition of Elders?..." The Pharisees where talking to Jesus and the "Tradition of Elders" were Rabbis who had meticulous rules. These rules were not put into writing until AD 200. This is about 170 years after Christ was crucified. This is called the Mishnah.

I realize that some may scoff at this premise, but believe me, if you stop to think about it, it holds water. When we speak to others, what comes out of your mouth? Is it positive or negative in connotation? How many times have you "lashed out" using your mouth? I can say for myself A LOT. In Matthew 15:18 Jesus says "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a person unclean."

So now think about this—you have one person in a group of five, and that person is swearing and so forth. After a while you catch yourself doing the same thing. It is infectious to say the least. Or you may catch

yourself berating someone or your kid. I am guilty as charged. It is hard to break old habits. In James 1:26 it says, "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." Throughout Proverbs the writer talks of the "fool" and his mouth and it always ends up that the Fool's mouth gets him in trouble or just plain shows him to be a fool.

As a Christian, I am also human, as are you. We all find ourselves at times using our mouth the wrong way. How can we praise our Lord Christ with the same mouth used to hurl vile insults, curses, judgments etc.? 1 Corinthians 10:23 "Everything is permissible—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible - but not everything is constructive." What does this mean to you?

Next time you use your mouth for slander, cussing etc. take note of it (mentally). Post-it Notes work, too (I've got 2 or 3 in my room). After awhile you won't be doing

the same thing. Once something is given attention it is easier to discern. Take for instance the kid in trouble at school. Is he really that bad, or has he just made himself visible and therefore open to more attention from the teacher?

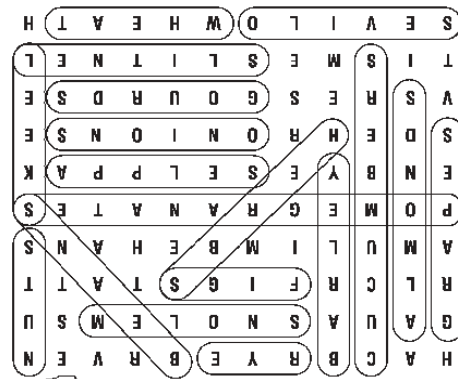
Tell someone something good, not negative. In life we almost always notice the negative (look, his hair is messy, there's a spot on her shirt etc.) this then tends to give you negativity towards that person. Try this: look at someone and try to pick out the similarities, not the differences (trust me, it is hard at first). You will find that the more you do this, the better you will feel, not harboring that negativity!

God gave us all mouths, but I assure you some of the things that come out were NEVER intended to come out of that mouth.

I myself write this and have done a lot of the things I am speaking against. But I work on it daily and it is getting better. Praise the Lord!

by Dominick Marcott

Answers to word find puzzle on page 3.



Contributions invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting **ALL READERS** to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
6:30pm Fridays Prayer Team
7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
6:30pm Thursdays Holy Communion