

The Church of the Damascus Road

Echo!

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The Real Saints

In a church gathering, the real saints are always convinced that they are sinners, and the real sinners are always convinced that they are saints.



A Saint?

— James Nestingen

Modern Proverbs

- God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
- A skeptic is a person who, when he sees the handwriting on the wall, claims it's a forgery.
- Standing in the middle of the road is dangerous. You will get knocked down by the traffic from both directions.
- It isn't difficult to make a mountain out of a molehill - just add a little dirt.
- If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, you can bet the water bill is higher.
- It's all right to sit on your pity pot every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.
- Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death.
- Some marriages are made in heaven, but they *all* have to be maintained on Earth.
- Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, and faith looks up.
- The tongue must be heavy indeed, because so few people can hold it.
- Too many people offer God prayers, with claw marks all over them.
- Unless you can create the *whole* universe in 5 days, then perhaps giving "advice" to God isn't such a good idea!
- You have to wonder about humans, they think God is dead and Elvis is alive!

—Ray Kerley

Attention Members:

Encourage all of you to submit articles to the Flash, and Echo for us all to read. It's good to hear personal testimonies of how God has inspired you. Let us know what's on your minds, and in your hearts.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF

Musings

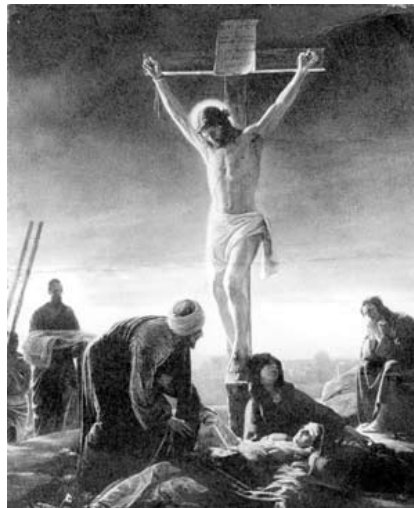
I cannot imagine how I would be able to make it through each day if it wasn't for the ability to be able to lay my pain and worries at the feet of the Lord. I can't think of a better place to do this than at The Church of the Damascus Road.

I have been told that I will be leaving soon to attend the Innerchange Freedom Initiative program in Newton. It is going to be very hard saying good-bye to all of my brothers and sisters at the Church of the Damascus Road. I have grown to love Pastor Lang, Judy, as well as everyone that comes to our weekly service. They will always be a part of me and will occupy a special part in my heart.

I remember the first time that I attended the CoDR. I had just reached GP status and came to my first service. I can remember as if it was yesterday. I chose a seat a little half way back from the front row so that I would not stand out to those attending the service. No sooner then I sat down a little old lady (forgive me Cleo) with a great smile and a twinkle in her eyes sat down beside me.

She made me feel welcome and I knew in my heart that I found my home, a church that I could call my own. A place where the love of Jesus is so thick you can literally be cut with a knife. A place that I not only could feel welcome but also a place that I could grow in my relationship with Jesus. I cannot praise Him enough for the CoDR. After all it made the unbearable time of my incarceration bearable. I pray that it will do the same for you. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

—Robert L. Johnson II



Left Behind

The message of the books is quite clear: Christ is coming again. We must be ready or we will be left behind. We have already been left behind! We are the left behind! We have already been left behind — not to scare our family, friends and neighbors with fire and brimstone. We were left behind 2000 years ago, not to scare each other about the end times, not to judge each other, but to serve in the likeness of Christ.

It is very true that Jesus left us with a number of instructions and warnings about being watchful and ready. Jesus also left us with the word that no one - not even the Son of Man himself (Mark 13:32) - knew or knows when and how "the end of the age" will come. Jesus left us with many instructions, not about scaring people into belief, but about listening to God's Word through him and living that Word ourselves and sharing the Good News with others.

—Unknown

Inside the Echo!

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Don't Leave It On the Desk

There was a certain Professor of Religion named Dr. Christensen, a Studious man who taught at a small college in the western United States. Dr. Christensen taught the required survey course in Christianity at this particular institution. Every student was required to take this course his freshman year, regardless of his or her major.

Although Dr. Christensen tried hard to communicate the essence of the gospel in his class, he found that most of his students looked upon the course as nothing but required drudgery. Despite his best efforts, most students refused to take Christianity seriously.

This year, Dr. Christensen had a special student named Steve. Steve was only a freshman, but was studying with the intent of going on to seminary for the ministry. Steve was popular, he was well-liked, and he was an imposing physical specimen. He was now the starting center on the school football team, and was the best student in the professor's class.

One day, Dr. Christensen asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. 'How many push-ups can you do?' Steve said, 'I do About 200 every night.'

'200? That's pretty good, Steve,' Dr. Christensen said. 'Do you think you could do 300?'

Steve replied, 'I don't know... I've never done 300 at a time.'

'Do you think you could?' again asked Dr. Christensen.

'Well, I can try,' said Steve.

'Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I have a class project in mind and I need you to do about 300 push-ups in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it,' said the professor.

Steve said, 'Well... I think I can ..yeah, I can do it.'

Dr. Christensen said, 'Good! I need you to do this on Friday. Let me explain what I have in mind.'

Friday came and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room.

When class started, the professor pulled out a big box of donuts. No, these weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the BIG, extra fancy kind, with cream centers and frosting swirls. Everyone was pretty excited it was Friday, the last class of the year, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend with a party in Dr. Christensen's class.

Dr. Christensen went to the first girl in the first row and asked, 'Cynthia, do you want to have one of these donuts?' Cynthia said, 'Yes.'

Dr. Christensen then turned to Steve and asked, 'Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Cynthia can have a donut?'

'Sure.' Steve jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve again sat in his desk. Dr. Christensen put a donut on Cynthia's desk.

Dr. Christensen then went to Joe, the next person, and asked, 'Joe, do you want a donut?'

Joe said, 'Yes.'

Dr. Christensen asked, 'Steve would you do ten push-ups so Joe can have a donut?'

Steve did ten push-ups! , Joe got a donut.

And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten push-ups for every person before they got their donut.

Walking down the second aisle, Dr. Christensen came to Scott. Scott was on the basketball team, and in as good condition as Steve. He was very popular and never lacking for female companionship. When the professor asked, 'Scott do you want a donut?' Scott's reply was, 'Well, can I do my own push-ups?'

Dr. Christensen said, 'No, Steve has to do them.'

Then Scott said, 'Well, I don't want one, then.'

Dr. Christensen shrugged and then turned to Steve and asked, 'Steve, would you do ten push-ups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?' With perfect obedience Steve started to do ten push-ups.

Scott said, 'HEY! I said I didn't want one!'

Dr. Christensen said, 'Look! This is my classroom, my class, my desks, and these are my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it.' And he put a donut on Scott's desk.

Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. You could start to see a little perspiration coming out around his brow.

Dr. Christensen started down the third row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry. Dr. Christensen asked Jenny, 'Jenny, do you want a donut?'

Sternly, Jenny said, 'No.' Then Dr. Christensen asked Steve, 'Steve, would you do ten more push-ups so Jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?' Steve did ten. Jenny got a donut.

By now, a growing sense of uneasiness filled the room. The students were beginning to say 'No' and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks.

Steve also had to really put forth a lot of extra effort to get these push-ups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face, his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

Dr. Christensen asked Robert, who was the most vocal unbeliever in the class, to watch Steve do each push up to make sure he did the full ten push-ups in a set because he couldn't bear to watch all of Steve's work for all of those uneaten donuts. He sent Robert over to where Steve was so Robert could count the set and watch Steve closely.

Dr. Christensen started down the fourth row. During his class, however, some students from other classes had wandered in and sat down on the steps along the radiators that ran down the sides of the room. When the professor realized this, he did a quick count and saw that now there were 34 students in the room. He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it.

Dr. Christensen went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row, Steve was really having a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set. Steve asked Dr Christensen, 'Do I have to make my nose touch on each one?'

Dr. Christensen thought for a moment, 'Well, they're your push-ups. You are in charge now. You can do them any way that you want.' And Dr. Christensen went on.

A few moments later, Jason, a recent transfer student, came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled in one voice, 'NO! Don't come in! Stay out!'

Jason didn't know what was going on. Steve picked up his head and said, 'No, let him come.'

Professor Christensen said, 'You realize that if Jason comes in you will have to do ten push-ups for him?'

Steve said, 'Yes, let him come in. Give him a donut.'

Dr. Christensen said, 'Okay, Steve, I'll let you get Jason's out of the way right now. Jason, do you want a donut?'

Jason, new to the room, hardly knew what was going on. 'Yes,' he said, 'give me a donut.'

'Steve, will you do ten push-ups so that Jason can have a donut?' Steve did ten push-ups very slowly and with great effort. Jason, bewildered, was handed a donut and sat down.

Dr. Christensen finished the fourth row, and then started on those visitors seated by the heaters. Steve's arms were now shaking with each push-up in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. By this time sweat was profusely dropping off of his face, there was no sound except his heavy breathing; there was not a dry eye in the room.

The very last two students in the room were two young women, both cheer leaders, and very popular. Dr. Christensen went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, 'Linda do you want a donut?'

Linda said, very sadly, 'No, thank you.'

Professor Christensen quietly asked, 'Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?' Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow push-ups for Linda.

Then Dr Christensen turned to the last girl, Susan. 'Susan, do you want a donut?'

Susan, with tears flowing down her face, began to cry. 'Dr. Christensen, why can't I help him?'

Dr. Christensen, with tears of his own, said, 'No, Steve has to do it alone. I have given him this task, and he is in charge of seeing that everyone has an opportunity for a donut whether they want it or not. When I decided to have a party this last

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**The Church of the
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An 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.
Rev. Carroll Lang, Pastor
Tony Halsrud, Senior Editor
Chad Bechtel, Editor

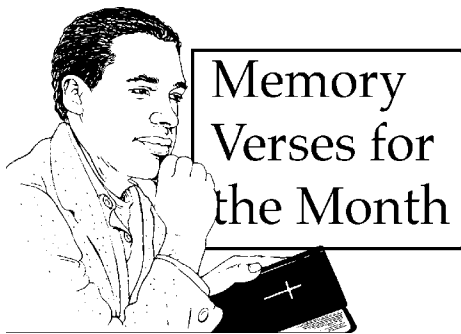
Your Favorite Scripture

Do you have a favorite scripture verse or verses in the Bible? Tell us what the Word of God means to you and where it is in the Bible. We will publish it in our newsletter each month. We all need encouragement every single day of our lives. We may never know how one single word from someone can affect us until we meet Jesus Christ and all is revealed. Is your daily goal to please Him? We need to abide in His word so that He will abide in us. And we will see God through our actions.

We must be able to "talk the talk" if we are trying to "walk the walk."

Give your scripture references to Pastor Lang or any Inside Church Council member.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF



In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:6).

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me (Jeremiah 33:8).

From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you (Job 5:19).



Story Tellers

Story Tellers is the third Friday of every month at FDCF and the third Saturday at NCCF unless a scheduling problem arises. You can read a book to your child on tape, and then send the book and audio cassette tape home for your child to listen to you read to them, and read along with you. The tape, and book are free to you. You just pay regular mail home to your child, or, at FDCF, you can send them out on a visit like regular property through R&D. Sign up with Pastor Lang, or at our regular worship service, or with any Inside Church Council member.



The Water of Life

To beat the summer heat, we're often refreshed by a cold drink. Complete the puzzle below for a reminder of what Jesus offers us when we thirst.

KEY:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

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 $\overline{5+7}$ $\overline{12-3}$ $\overline{9-3}$ $\overline{6-1}$ "
Revelation 22:17, N&V

Answer:
 "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." Revelation 22:17, NIV

Don't Leave it on the Desk
Continued from page 2

day of class, I looked at my grade book. Steve here is the only student with a perfect grade. Everyone else has failed a test, skipped class, or offered me inferior work. Steve told me that in football practice, when a player messes up he must do push-ups. I told Steve that none of you could come to my party unless he paid the price by doing your push-ups. He and I made a deal for your sakes.

'Steve, would you do ten push-ups so Susan can have a donut?' As Steve very slowly finished his last push-up, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him, having done 350 push-ups, his arms buckled beneath him and he fell to the floor.

Dr. Christensen turned to the room and said, 'And so it was, that our Savior, Jesus Christ, on the cross, pled to the Father, 'Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' With the understanding that He had done everything that was required of Him, He yielded up His life. And, like some of those in this room, many of us leave the gift on the desk, uneaten.'

Two students helped Steve up off the floor and to a seat, physically exhausted, but wearing a thin smile.

'Well done, good and faithful servant,' said the professor, adding 'Not all sermons are preached in words.'

Turning to his class, the professor said, 'My wish is that you might understand and fully comprehend all the riches of grace and mercy that have been given to you through the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He spared not His only Begotten Son, but gave Him up for us all, for the whole Church, now and forever. Whether or not we choose to accept His gift to us, the price has been paid.' 'Wouldn't you be foolish and ungrateful to leave it lying on the desk?'

—Author Unknown



Lord, Prop Us Up

Every time I am asked to pray, I think of the old deacon who always prayed, "Lord, prop us up on our leanin' side."

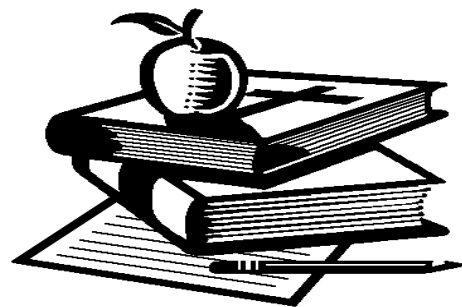
After hearing him pray that prayer many times, someone asked him why he prayed that prayer so fervently.

He answered, "Well sir, you see, it's like this...I got an old barn out back. It's been there a long time, it's withstood a lot of weather, it's gone through a lot of storms, and it's stood for many years. It's still standing. But one day I noticed it was leaning to one side a bit. So I went and got some pine poles and propped it up on its leaning side so it wouldn't fall.

Then I got to thinking about that and how much I was like that old barn. I've been around a long time. I've withstood a lot of life's storms. I've withstood a lot of bad weather in life, I've withstood a lot of hard times, and I'm still standing too. But I find myself leaning to one side from time to time, so I like to ask the Lord to prop us up on our leaning side, cause I figure a lot of us get to leaning, at times.

Sometime we get to leaning toward anger, leaning toward bitterness, leaning toward hatred, leaning toward cussing, leaning toward a lot of things that we shouldn't. So we need to pray, 'Lord, prop us up on our leaning side, so we will stand straight and tall again, to glorify the Lord.

If you stare at this barn for a second you will see who will help us stand straight and tall again.



Check Them Out!

The Church of the Damascus Road Librarians are inviting you to come to the chapel (MPR 23 in FDCF H Building; Treatment Center Room A in NCCF), and "check out" the books, tapes and compact discs in our library! There are many genres of books to choose from! We hope to see you there!

Abundantly Saved

Psalm 93 inspired

The Lord reigns
He is clothed in majesty
He girds Himself with strength
He has established me

His throne is of old
And is everlasting
When we are open
He floods us with waves

The Lord of many waters
Yea, of mighty waves
He surely will pardon
And abundantly will save

Floods lift up their voices
And lift up their praise
The new world is established
And abundantly saved

— William Bell FDCF



Articles 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 WednesdaysHoly Communion
6:30pm Fridays Prayer & Bible Study

FDCF Chapel Hours

4:00pm - Count Wednesday
2:30pm-4:00pm Friday

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion

