

The Church of the Damascus Road Echo!

Volume 12
Issue No. 3b
June 2009
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

ASAP

Ever wonder about the abbreviation A.S.A.P.? Generally, we think of it in terms of even more hurry and stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of this abbreviation in a different manner, we will begin to find a new way to deal with those rough days along the way:

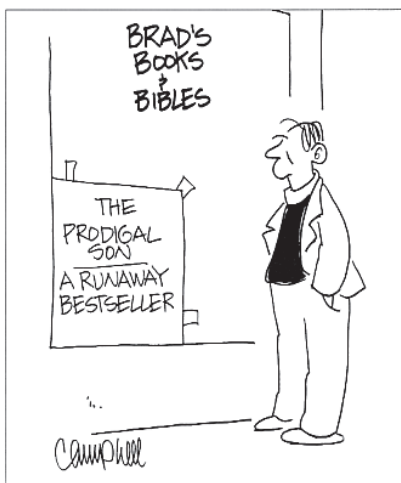
There's work to do, deadlines to meet;
You've got no time to spare,
But as you hurry and scurry-
A.S.A.P. - Always Say A Prayer.

In the midst of family chaos,
"Quality time" is rare.
Do your best; let God do the rest-
A.S.A.P. - Always Say A Prayer.

It may seem like your worries
Are more than you can bear...
Slow down and take a breather-
A.S.A.P. - Always Say A Prayer.

God knows how stressful life is;
He wants to ease our cares,
And He'll respond to all your needs
A.S.A.P. - Always Say A Prayer.

God bless and have a wonderful day!



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

God's Under the Bed

My brother Kevin thinks God lives under his bed. At least that's what I heard him say one night. He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped outside his closed door to listen. "Are you there, God?" he said. "Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed." I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room. Kevin's unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor. I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in. He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (he's 6-foot-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult. He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will.

He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas, and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them. I remember wondering if Kevin realizes he is different. Is he ever dissatisfied with his monotonous life? Up before dawn each day, off to work at a workshop for the disabled, home to walk our cocker spaniel, returning to eat his favorite macaroni-and-cheese for dinner, and later to bed.

The only variation in the entire scheme are laundry days, when he hovers excitedly over the washing machine like a mother with her newborn child. He does not seem dissatisfied. He hopes out to the bus every morning at 7:05, eager for a day of simple work. He wrings his hands excitedly while the water boils on the stove before dinner, and he stays up late twice a week to gather our dirty laundry for his next day's laundry chores. And weekends—oh, the bliss of weekends! That's when my dad takes Kevin to the airport to have a soft drink, watch the planes land, and speculate loudly on the destination of each passenger inside. "That one's goin' to Chi-car-go!" Kevin shouts as he claps his hands. His anticipation is so great he can hardly sleep the night before.

I don't think Kevin knows anything exists outside his world of daily rituals and weekend field trips. He doesn't know what it means to be discontent. His life is simple. He will never know the entanglements of wealth or power, and he does not care what brand of clothing he wears or what kind of food he eats. He recognizes no differences in people, treating each person as an equal and a friend. His needs have always been

met, and he never worries that one day they may not be. His hands are diligent. Kevin is never so happy as when he is working. When he unloads the dishwasher or vacuums the carpet, his heart is completely in it. He does not shrink from a job when it is begun, and he does not leave a job until it is finished. But when his tasks are done, Kevin knows how to relax.

He is not obsessed with his work or the work of others. His heart is pure. He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue. Free from pride and unconcerned with appearances, Kevin is not afraid to cry when he is hurt, angry or sorry. He is always transparent, always sincere. And he trusts God. Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to Christ, he comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God—to really be friends with Him in a way that is difficult for an "educated" person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion. In my moments of doubt and frustrations with my Christianity, I envy the security

Kevin has in his simple faith. It is then that I am most willing to admit that he has some divine knowledge that rises above my mortal questions. It is then I realize that perhaps he is not the one with the handicap—I am. My obligations, my fear, my pride, my circumstances—they all become disabilities when I do not submit them to Christ.

Who knows if Kevin comprehends things I can never learn? After all, he has spent his whole life in that kind of innocence, praying after dark and soaking up the goodness and love of the Lord. And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I'll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed. Kevin won't be surprised at all!

—Unknown



Inside the Echo!

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Robby's Night

At the prodding of my friends, I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Hondorf. I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa. I've always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons—something I've done for over 30 years. Over the years I found that children have many levels of musical ability. I've never had the pleasure of having a prodigy though I have taught some talented students.

However I've also had my share of what I call 'musically challenged' pupils. One such student was Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single Mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. I prefer that students (especially boys!) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby.

But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano. So I took him as a student. Well, Robby began with his piano lessons and from the beginning I thought it was a hopeless endeavor. As much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel but he dutifully reviewed his scales and some elementary pieces that I require all my students to learn.

Over the months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he'd always say, 'My mom's going to hear me play someday.' But it seemed hopeless. He just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled but never stopped in.

Then one day Robby stopped coming to our lessons.

I thought about calling him but assumed because of his lack of ability, that he had decided to pursue something else. I also was glad that he stopped coming. He was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later I mailed to the students' homes a flyer on the upcoming recital. To my surprise Robby (who received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and because he had dropped out he really did not qualify. He said that his mother had been sick and unable to take him to piano lessons but he was still practicing. "Miss Hondorf, I've just got to play!" he insisted.

I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital. Maybe it was his persistence or maybe it was something inside of me saying that it would be all right. The night for the recital came. The high school gymnasium was packed with parents, friends and relatives. I put Robby up last in the program before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he would do would come at the end of the program and I could always salvage his poor performance through my 'curtain closer.'

Well, the recital went off without a hitch. The students had been practicing and it showed, then Robby came up on stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked like he'd run an eggbeater through it. 'Why didn't he dress up like the other students?' I thought. "Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?"

Robby pulled out the piano bench and he began. I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen Mozart's Concerto #21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories. He went from pianissimo to fortissimo, from allegro to virtuoso. His suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by people his age. After six and a half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo and all were on their feet in wild applause.

Overcome and in tears I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. "I've never heard you play like that Robby! How'd you do it?"

Through the microphone Robby explained: "Well, Miss Hondorf, remember I told you my Mom was sick? Well, actually she had cancer and passed away this morning, and, well, she was born deaf, so tonight was the first time she ever heard me play. I wanted to make it special."

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening. As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed into foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy and I thought to myself how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil.

No, I've never had a prodigy but that night I became a prodigy... of Robby's. He was the teacher and I was the pupil, for it is he that taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in yourself and maybe even taking a chance on someone and you don't know why.

Robby was killed in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April of 1995.

—Mildred Hondorf



Cure for Self Righteousness

I was shocked, confused and bewildered
as I entered Heaven's door
Not by the beauty of it all,
or the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
who made me sputter and gasp--
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
the alcoholics and trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
who swiped my lunch money ...twice.

Next to him was my old neighbor
who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought
was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal?
I would love to hear Your take.

How'd all these sinners get up here?

God must've made a mistake.

And why's everyone so quiet, so somber?

Give me a clue."

"Hush, child," said He. "They're all in
shock. No one thought they'd be seeing
YOU!"

—Ray Kerley



My God

My God is gracious

My God is just

My God is righteous

Praise Him I must

—Kyle McMenamin FDCF 2006

The Church of the
Damascus Road
Echo!

Issue 12.3b

June 2009

An official publication of The Church of the
Damascus Road, a Christian Community of
Reconciliation, serving the inmate popula-
tion of the correctional facilities at Rockwell
City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

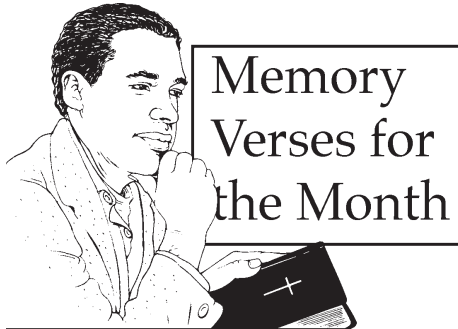
Rev. Paul E. Stone, Pastor

Rev. Carroll Lang, Editor

Memorize Scripture?

The problem we face is not how to better memorize Scripture, but how to receive the greatest benefit from what we do memorize. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is vital here. Plus, we must learn to assimilate the truth we receive through the process of meditation explained in this rhyme... "I have six helping friends, they taught me all I knew. They are: why, what, how, where, when, and who!"

— Follow Up Ministries



Deuteronomy 10:17 — For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

Proverbs 27:17 — As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Matthew 5:37 — Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

1 Corinthians 13:13 — And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Romans 10:9 — That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 Corinthians 13:14 — Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.



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 Stone, or at our regular worship service, or with any Inside Church Council member.



Fathers of faith

Fathers do amazing things for their families, but the greatest gift our dads can share with us is their faith in God.

Complete this puzzle to read Isaiah's advice to fathers.

Directions: Working left to right, first write down all the 1's in the word blanks. Continue with the 2's and finally the 3's.

1 The	2 as	3 tell	1 living
2 I	3 their	1 the	2 am
3 children	1 living	2 doing	3 about
1 they	2 today	3 your	1 praise
2 fathers	3 faithfulness	1 you	

“ _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ ; _____ , _____ , _____ .” Isaiah 38:19, NIV

Answer: "The living, the living, the living — they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness." Isaiah 38:19, NIV

Inmate Artwork



Saul encounters the risen Christ on his way to persecute Christians in Damascus (Acts 9).



Ananias touches Saul and scales fall from his eyes (Acts 9).

Drawings by Jeff Briggs NCCF 2002

Lament of a Native American

Memories go by and drift away into the minds of men,
 But they never entirely erase themselves, for only in death can forgetfulness win.
 For life is full of misery and suffering and anguish
 So it's better to die than continue in all this anguish.
 But, if one must continue to bear the load and burden,
 Then he should do it with grace and with strength and with power.
 'Cause when we all meet up yonder in that happy hunting ground,
 We'll all be equal and happy when we're judged that final hour.

—Jehoshua Dillinger NCCF 2009

Shrewd

An Iowa corn farmer walks into a NYC bank and tells the loan officer he is going to Norway on business for two weeks and needs to borrow \$5,000. The bank officer tells him that they will need security for the loan, so the farmer hands over the keys to his new Ferrari. The car is parked in front of the bank. The corn farmer produces the title and everything checks out. The loan officer agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan.

An employee of the bank then drives the Ferrari into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

The bank's president enjoys a good laugh over this farmer using a \$250,000 Ferrari as collateral against a \$5,000 loan.

Two weeks later, the farmer returns, repays the \$5,000 and interest, which comes to \$15.41. The loan officer says, "Sir, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found you are a multimillionaire.

What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?"

The farmer replies: "Where else in New York City can I park my car for two weeks for only \$15.41, and expect it to be there when I return?"

Ah, ya gotta love those Iowa corn farmers.

—Unknown



Worship Opportunities

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

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

FDCF Pastor Contact Hours

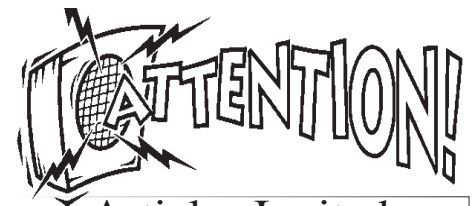
4:00pm - Count Wednesday
 2:30pm-4:00pm Friday

NCCF Rockwell City

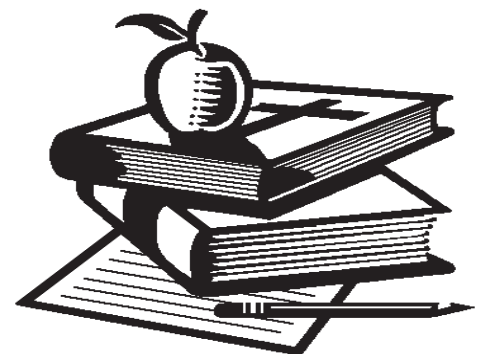
6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
 6:30pm Thursdays.....Holy Communion

NCCF Pastor Contact Hours

2:00pm - Count Tuesday
 2:00pm - Count Thursday



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. Give all your newsletter submissions to Pastor Stone.



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!