

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 3
Issue No. 6
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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Giving Thanks

Giving thanks! Do we ever give enough thanks to God? That is a question that a lot of us need to think long and hard about. I've been asked more than once, "What do you have to be thankful for in prison?" To tell you the truth, I asked that question myself when I first got here. Over time I began to look at things from a different point of view. One of the biggest things I've come to learn is that I have someone I can take my troubles to. Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"(NIV). Even in here I can go to the Lord with my worries, troubles and problems. After I've talked to him I am at peace. This is something to be thankful for.



It is only one of the things I have to be thankful for. There are so many things in this place to be thankful for that we never think about. Like the clothes we wear and the food we eat. I know that a few of you who are reading this are thinking, "the food and the clothes! You've got to be kidding!" Well what you need to think about is the people in the world who don't have anything. Then you will see that the food we have here is something to be thankful for.

I know I'm thankful that I have a family that loves me very much. I'm also thankful for the Christian fellowship I have in this place. I'm thankful for the people who come in to share in our worship service. So why don't we all take some time right now to thank God for all the blessings in our lives?

By Jeffery Swearingen

The above is the last in a series begun while Jeff was in prison as editor of the Flash.

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Wooten's Korner

I've been asked, encouraged, okay, I've been *told*, that it would be nice to see a continuing article like Jeff was writing. Well, truth be known, Jeff's shoes, as I discovered, were and are hard to fill. He is missed greatly, but I'm glad he's finally home with his loved ones, and I wish him all God's blessings.

First off, I have to get one thing straight: the title, and Jeff's picture, were his trademark, the signature of his articles. My trademark will not include a picture. Yes, I'm a little shy. I'm sure that those of you who know me find that hard to believe, but that's another story. I ask that those of you who are reading this bear with me, because Lord knows where we're going, which, since I put it that way, it's for the best we let Him guide us.

I'm relatively new in my faith. I was born again about three years ago. I'm still feeding on the milk of the word. I hope, as soon as I grow, that what I share with you will be of use and interest. As of late I've been studying about the trial of Jesus and the events and people surrounding it. For the past couple years I've kind of blamed Pontius Pilate for the death of Jesus, but he had a supporting cast (Judas, and Caiaphas, e.g.), so he didn't act alone. They acted with their own motives, Judas with greed, Pilate with personal ambition, Caiaphas (I believe) was guided by both. Maybe I'm naive when

it comes to the Bible, but I can't believe that these three acted the way they did, and for the motives that they felt were more important than the coming of the Messiah. What is more amazing is that they acted independently of each other.

Most of you are familiar with Judas and Pilate, but Caiaphas- he was the religious leader of Israel, a high priest. If there was a "who's who in organized religion", he would have been at the top of the list. He was the President of the Sanhedrin, a powerful seventy-one member ruling body of the Jews. What fueled this man's motive to act against Jesus? Jesus cleared the temple, that's all! He took money away from Caiaphas. So in act to get even and stop this threat to them, let's forget scripture, prophecies. Let's worry about money and position in place of service to God. Sound familiar? Me too! Guilty as charged. However, Jesus was innocent of all charges. He became sin for all of us. Someone so pure and good became vile just for us who continue to act as if the crucifixion of Christ never happened. I recognize that he did die for me. I know that he suffered so much more than I can comprehend and not for anything I have or will do. Just out of love. Love for me and love for you. So, the next time you decide to do something, check your motives- are they for you, or for Him? God Bless!

Glenn Wooten

October 2000 CROP Walk for World Hunger



Twenty-six inmates signed up to walk in the 2000 CROP Walk at FDCF.



Walking for world hunger puts a look of joy on anyone's face, especially at NCCF.

Judging Others

Since becoming a Christian and coming to prison, judging people was one of the things that I had trouble with. So I decided to go into the Bible and see what it would say, since this is the Word of the Lord. This is what I learned, and I hope that you can learn from it, too!

We shouldn't judge each other by our outer appearance (John 7:24), or by where we live, or how much money we make. We should judge others on how their hearts are, and how they are inside.

If we are critical of others, God will judge us (Matthew 7:1,2). I found that people usually respond to criticism with criticism, and kindness with kindness. Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore (Roman 14:13). Let's leave the judging to God. He will judge us according to our deeds (Roman 2:6). So do not criticize or belittle one another, but let God give you love in your heart and demonstrate that love to other people, that more and more people may be drawn to the love of God, and that God will increasingly be glorified and praised!

The Word of the Lord!

— Ricardo Ocacio
VP of FDCF CODR



CROP Walkers at NCCF wanted to make sure everyone knew why they were walking.

My Mask

I keep my mask with me everywhere I go, In case I need to wear it, so my face doesn't show! I'm afraid to show my face, afraid for what you'll do. You might laugh at me and say mean things, or I might lose you. I'd like to take my mask off and let you look at me. I want you to try and understand and please love what you see. So, if you'll be patient and close your eyes. I'll pull it off slowly so please, understand how much it hurts to let the real me show. Now my mask is off, I feel naked, so bare, so cold. If you still like what you see, you are my friend.

I want to keep my mask and hold it in my hand. I need to keep it handy in case someone doesn't understand. Please protect me, my new friend, and thanks for loving me true. But let me keep my mask until I love me too!

Chris Egenberger

A Promise Kept

The stars shone clear and bright on that chilly winter's night when God, keeping His promise, sent the Messiah to save us.

Entering this world like any other mortal, Jesus was sent through heaven's portal to be nurtured in the blessed virgin's womb, then live and die; but, unlike us, escape the tomb.

On the night heaven came to earth, the angels sang of Jesus' birth. Shepherds, wisemen, townsfolk, too, came to worship the savior so pure and true.

If Jesus was born today would we take the time to stay at the manger in praise and adoration then, of His birth, tell all in jubilation?

Or would we be too busy and involved trying to get our problems resolved to realize God kept His promise by sending Jesus, His Son, to save us?

It's not too late to claim Jesus as your own and you must if in heaven you wish to be known.

It takes little time to fall upon your knees, confess, then ask God, "Come into my heart, please."

Once Jesus is in your heart a brand new life is yours to start God's footsteps will echo yours. He'll guide you through life and its detours.

And when our earthly journey is done God will call His own, one by one, into that heavenly home He has prepared.

Then, like Jesus, from the tomb we will be spared.

Cynthia Henn Hanks

Walk With Him

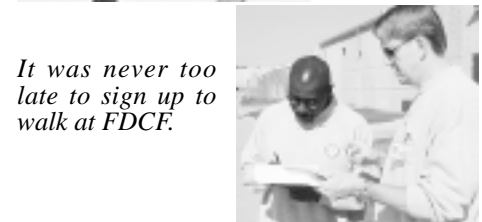
Down on my knees I humbly pray, talking to Jesus everyday. Opening my heart I let the Holy Spirit in, taking this sinner washing away all my sins. My eyes are opened He shows me the way, spreading His word each and everyday. I am a vessel a vessel of love, blessing given to me from heaven above. My life now has a meaning away from all sin, praise be to Jesus I now walk with Him. Amen

Robert L. Johnson II

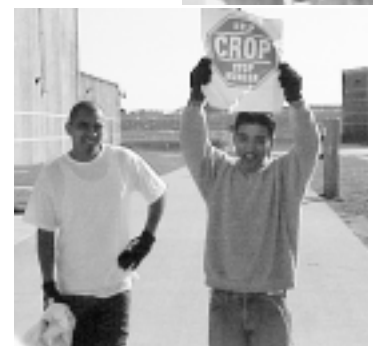
An air of celebration permeated the FDCF group of walkers as they thought about why they were walking.



James Smith and Aaron Hays kept a lively pace while walking at FDCF.



It was never too late to sign up to walk at FDCF.



Besides CROP Walk stickers, some of the walkers held up signs while walking.

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 3.6

December 2000

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.

Harvey Fluker, Editor.

Glenn Wooten, Contributor

Jeff Swearingen, Contributor

If you are reading a copy of this letter that is not yours, you can subscribe and receive your own copy by writing to:

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To the Church of the Damascus Road: A Special Thanks

My brothers and sisters, I want to give special thanks to the people that come in from the outside to share worship services with us inmates at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility and the North Central Correctional Facility (Rockwell City). Your visits mean a lot to us and show us that there are people out there beyond the fence that do care. I also want to give a big thanks to Pastor Lang and his wife, Judy, for giving their time to set up special activities for us inmates that allow us to grow in our faith.

I am on my way out of prison and I want all the inmates, especially those who take part in Damascus Road to know that they have been a great help in my growing with our great savior, Jesus Christ. You will all be in my prayers and in my heart. I would like to say to those inmates that are not sure about Christ to please give the Church of the Damascus Road a try, and your feelings may be different.

With this I will close, giving a special thanks to our savior, Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord be with you all.

Shawn Mapes



CROP Walker, Shawn Mapes(L, article above) and his brother, Michael Nellist at FDCF.

Open Your Eyes

How can I make you see, that I'm a better man than I used to be.
Open your eyes!
I no longer have to beg, steal, or borrow,
I live for today, not for tomorrow.
I've done away with my evil way's
I now see bigger and brighter day's!
The Lord has touched my heart,
this has given me a brand new start.
This is the man I've always searched to be,
now that I've found the Lord,
this is what set me free.
How can I make you see,
open your eyes,
the word of the Lord is the only way to be!
Amen

Michael E Nellist

Natural Highs

- Laughing so hard your face hurts.
- A hot shower.
- A special glance.
- Hearing your favorite song on the radio.
- Lying in bed listening to the rain outside.
- Finding the sweater you want is on sale for half price.
- A bubble bath.
- Giggling.
- A good conversation.
- Finding a \$20 bill in your coat from last winter.
- Laughing at yourself.
- Laughing for absolutely no reason at all.
- Having someone tell you that you're beautiful.
- Laughing at an inside joke.
- Falling in love for the first time.
- Accidentally overhearing someone say something nice about you.
- Waking up and realizing you still have a few hours left to sleep.
- Your first kiss.
- Playing with a new puppy.
- Having someone play with your hair.
- Sweet dreams.
- Hot chocolate.
- Watching a good movie cuddled up on a couch with someone you love.
- Wrapping presents under the Christmas tree while eating cookies and drinking eggnog.
- Going to a really good concert.
- Winning a really competitive game.
- Making chocolate chip cookies!
- Spending time with close friends!
- Seeing smiles and hearing laughter from your friends...
- Riding the best roller coasters over and over.
- Watching the expression someone's face as they open a much-desired present from you.
- Watching the sunrise.
- Getting out of bed every morning and thanking God for another beautiful day.



Judy Lang Mike Last and Mike Cormack



Lil Posegate and Irene Adams Kathy Hansel

Hard Work CODR Fund Raiser

On September 9, 2000 the Outside Church Council of the Church of the Damascus Road held a fund raiser. The Webster County Branch of Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company provided additional volunteers and matching funds up to \$458.00. 130 people came to eat hamburgers, beans, potato salad and cookies and bars. The funds raised will be used for special projects and already sixty Master Builders Serendipity Bibles have been purchased.

From us "Hardened Christians" on the inside, we thank you for your efforts in helping us. For those who pledged financial support, we also thank you. The photos above are of some of our most diligent helpers, Judy "Itty-Bitty" Lang, Lil Posegate and Irene Adams, the "Sugar Sisters," and Kathy "the Truck Drivin' Beautician."

We even had some dignitaries who came to help, State Representative Mike Cormack, a member of the Outside Church Council, and Rev. Mike Last, assistant to Bishop Curtis Miller of the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our thanks to all who took part.

Glenn Wooten

NCCF CROP Walkers are also saying...



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A note to secretaries and pastors—

Copy Me, Please!

Although there are many individuals included, our database primarily lists congregations, to which a copy of our newsletter is sent. It is printed on white paper so that (all or portions of) it can be copied into your newsletter or bulletin, or simply copied and made available to the members of your congregation.

Anyone who would like to be on our mailing list should send names, addresses, and phone numbers to The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or E-Mail us at: DamascusCh@aol.com for faster communication.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang



Baptized in the Name of the Lord

November 15 at FDCF

Evan Budding
Johnny Clark Sr.

The Answer

Blessings come in so many ways,
for each and everyone I give the praise,
looking to him answers I seek,
ever so humble ever so meek.

For it is in His time the blessings I'll receive,
patiently praying on bended knees.
Knowing what's best the Lord will provide,
deep in my heart He knows what's inside,
knowing my thoughts reading my mind
in His infinite wisdom the answer I'll find.
Amen

by Robert L. Johnson II

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

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

Visitors Being Scheduled

Visitors for The Church of the Damascus Road worship services at the North Central Correctional Facility, Rockwell City, and at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, Fort Dodge, are being booked for future worship opportunities (see schedule above). If you would like to make one or more visits to either the Fort Dodge or the Rockwell City services, reservations need to be made soon to ensure the date you would like. Contact Cynthia at The Church of the Damascus Road office, 515-955-3579 or e-mail to "DamascusCh@aol.com" to schedule a time. The necessary forms and information will then be sent to you prior to your visit.



<http://www.dodgenet.com/~cjang/index.html>

Contact us by E-Mail:
DamascusCh@aol.com

The Church of the Damascus Road now has a dedicated E-mail address which is checked every day. Just type your names, addresses, phones, Social Security numbers and birthdates right into the message box and we'll get right back to you and let you know whether there's enough space left for your visit.



Contributions invited from Readers "on the Streets"

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