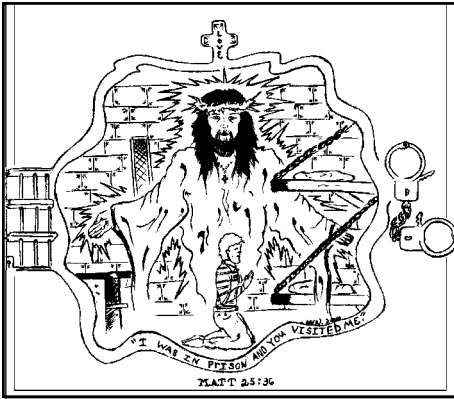


The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 4
Issue No. 1
February 2001
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

PCoA Art Contest



Our member, Michael Nellist (FDCF), entered the above in Prison Congregations of America's Inmate Art Contest.



Gerald Thin Elk, a member of St. Dymas of South Dakota, won the contest. His art work has been sent to every congregation and individual giving at least \$100.

Inside the Flash

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Opening Doors

You ever notice how Jesus has a pretty good (well actually excellent) plan, then he hands it over to us to implement it and somehow, some way, we miss the mark? Look at the church, for instance, Paul told us in Acts 20:28 (NIV) "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood." Basically, look after each other, not select the ones you'll care about, but the whole flock. Not the flock minus the red sheep or minus the green sheep. We're all guilty of selecting and protecting in the name of God.

In 1 COR. 5:12 (NIV) Paul asks a question, "what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?" That's what I want to know. Sometimes we tend to look at the church as a club with pretty strict guidelines for acceptance and to be truthful, I'm not sure that I'd meet those guidelines. I've been told I'm rough around the edges but with work I'd polish up real nice. But why? God made me this way for a reason.

I guess what I'm tryin' to point out is, as in the picture above, we tend to protect the church from those "square pegs." We tend to select those whom we accept in to our "round-hole" church. It isn't that way. Did any of the prophets, disciples, or apostles or, for that matter, did Jesus say to anyone, "I'm sorry you're not Christian material" or "thanks for coming by. Don't call us we'll call you." Yeah, sure it was in the book of... what chapter and verse? That's my point, he didn't say it, but were all guilty of it. I

suggest that we get busy and tear down those fences, put a leash on the dog and open the doors as well as our hearts.

In Romans 15:7 (NIV) it says "accept one



Ray Johnson, used by permission.

another, then, just as Christ accepted you in order to bring praise to God." I guess the reason I'm writing this is out of fear of one day being on the outside looking in. Now our church has two fences about 6 sets of razor wire, motion detectors, a perimeter guard, and a lot of cameras all put there to keep me from you. One day I'll be beyond all that and you may find me standing at the door of your church. When you see me, are you going to lock the gate or open your heart? I can't do much about my fence but my heart, like our church, is open to all

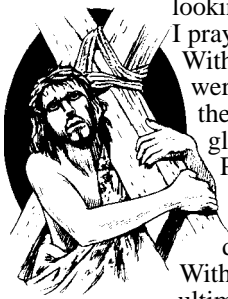
God Bless You All, Glenn Wooten

Volunteers Needed

A new Bible study is being started at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. It is produced by CFS, whose staff trains the volunteers. It is to be part of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI) program at the Newton Correctional Facility sponsored by Prison Fellowship. These studies are part of the preparation for inmate participation in IFI. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this bible study, please see Pastor Lang or use any method on page four of this issue to contact the office. Both outside volunteers and inmate volunteers will be needed.

“There on the Cross”

Through your eyes Jesus, I wish I could see,
the infinite wisdom, I truly need.
Facing this world, every day,



looking to you, on my knees
I pray.
With your blood, my sins
were erased,
the joy of salvation, the
glow on my face.
Praising you Lord, for
what you did for me,
there on the cross, that
day on calvary.
With a forgiving heart, the
ultimate sacrifice,
for each one of us, You gave up your life.

*Musings of a Prison Poet
by Robert Johnson II*

Well Kept Secret

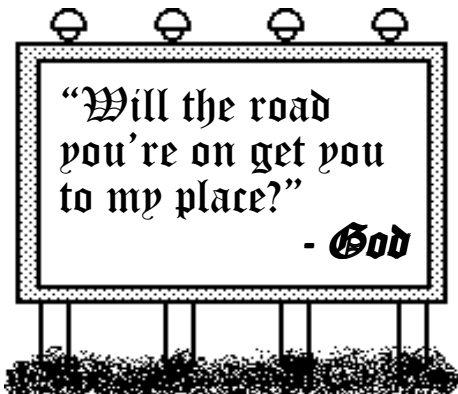
Have You Seen It?

In May of 2000, students from Waldorf College recorded video footage of The Church of the Damascus Road during worship and of people commenting about what this ministry means to them. 7-1/2 hours were recorded and then the students edited all that footage into a thirteen minute masterpiece. In June, it was shown to a congregation and one of its members offered to pay to have a copy of the video sent to every congregation in the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The list of all the congregations was used to send a copy to each and every one of them. If you are a member of one of the ELCA congregations in the Western Iowa Synod, have you seen the video? Is it somewhere on a pile, or on a shelf, or in an obscure cabinet?

If you have not seen it, be sure to ask your pastor or your secretary where it is and see it for yourself.

Then:

If you have seen it and shown it to everyone you know, take it to the other churches in town and share it with them.



Crucifixion

A medical doctor provides a physical description:

The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement.

The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed.

The victim is now crucified.

As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain — the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet.

As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through his muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, and throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air cannot be drawn into the lungs but only exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath.

Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subsided. Spasmodically, he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues.

Finally, he allows his body to die.

All this the Bible records with the simple words, “and they crucified him” (Mark 15:24).

What wondrous love is this?

Please send this to as many people as possible so that everyone will know the pain and suffering our Lord Jesus Christ went through for us. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. (Isaiah 12:2)



God's Grace

God's grace, there's nothing that can compare,
there is nothing like it anywhere.

It never ends and it is free,
it softens the hearts of you and me.

It's the greatest gift you could ever receive,
it is a response to the simplest need.

It comes in many forms like sun and rain,
yet it eases your mind and takes away the pain.

It's a sign of Gods love for me and you,
it's priceless and of the ultimate value.

It shows God's love for every man,
it's part of his eternal plan.

It turns your days from bad to good,
exactly how His endless love should.

And if we are ever at Satan's face,
just think of the Lord's wonderful grace.

If he shall help you through those times of trial,
you may even be able to push on with a smile.

For know God always keeps watch over us,
and in my life that's a very big plus.

Grace helps us up when we are down,
and makes a smile out of a frown.

God loves us all and always will,
that hole in my heart is what He fills.

Oh heavenly Father I praise you now,
in every possible way that we know how.

I thank you for allowing me to live,
in every way I can, to You I give.

If only I could be much more like You,
it is Your will I wish to do.

Lord hear this prayer where ever You are,
that by living through You I shall go far!

Amen

Solomon Alaska Smith

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 4.1

February 2001

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

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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Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

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239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge

515-955-3579

Healthy Competition

Once upon a time long ago, there was a season when neither the Packers nor the Vikings made a post season playoffs. It seemed so unusual that the management of both teams got together and decided that there should be some sort of competition between the two teams, because of their great rivalry. So, they decided on a week long ice fishing competition. The team that catches the most fish at the end of the week, wins.

So, on a cold northern Wisconsin lake (we'll give them the benefit of the doubt or they'll whine about home field advantage), they began their contest.

The first day after 8 hours of fishing, the Vikings had caught 100 fish and the Packers had 0. At the end of the 2nd day, the Vikings had caught 200 fish and the Packers 0.

That evening, the Packers coach got his team together and said, "I suspect some kind of cheating is taking place." So the next morning he dressed one of his players in purple and gold and sent him over to the Viking camp to act as a spy. At the end of the day, he came back to report to the coach. The coach asked, "well, how about it, are they cheating?" "They sure are!" The player reported, "they're cutting holes in the ice."

Isn't It Funny?

- How simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's falling apart?
- How we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says?
- How everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says (or is it scary)?
- How someone can say, "I believe in God" but still follow Satan (who, by the way, also "believes" in God)?
- How you can send a thousand jokes through the e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing?
- How the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of Jesus is suppressed in the school and workplace? (Not really funny at all, is it?)
- How someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week? (Are you laughing?)
- How I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me. (Are you thinking?)

From: Don E. Crosswhite (Pulpit Helps)

The Bible Is an "All" Book

Why an "all" book? I got curious the other day while looking up some references, including the word, "all." I was amazed when I tallied up my counting to discover the Bible is truly an "all" book. There are over 5,000 "alls" in the Bible.

Here is an "all" verse: *For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.* (1 Corinthians 15.27,28 NRSV)



When I think of you,
my red heart turns blue.
This is the feeling I get when I'm
not next to you.
Love is the only feeling that seems
to come to mind,
the one emotion that I always
seem to find.
You're everything I will ever need,
You are my water, my sun, and the
air I breathe.
I can't think of anything more,
to think of anything else would
simply be a bore.
These are just a few thoughts that
I seem to find,
a few thoughts that fill my mind.
When I think of you!

Michael Nellist

About our Board Members

Michael Cormack

Mike Cormack is Fort Dodge's Republican Representative to the Iowa Legislature, a resident of Fort Dodge, and a member of Riverside United Methodist Church. Mike has a keen interest in corrections in Iowa and also a sense of Christ's call to minister



to those who are in prison. This is Mike's first year on The Church of the Damascus Road Outside Council and has faithfully served (when the legislature is not in session, of course). It is rumored that he arranged a snow storm so he could attend the January Outside Council meeting, but that rumor could not be verified.

Meandering thoughts:

- The Dark Ages were caused by the Y1K problem.
- Money isn't everything but it sure keeps the kids in touch.
- What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
- Am I ambivalent? Well, yes and no.
- The statement below is true.
- The statement above is false.
- He who dies with the most toys is still dead.
- Time is fun when you're having flies...Kermit
- If your feet smell and your nose runs, you're built upside down.
- Here I am! What are your other two wishes?
- Taxation WITH representation ain't much fun, either.
- Corduroy pillows are making headlines.
- If at first you don't succeed, redefine success.
- Half the people in the world are below average.
- Honk if you love peace and quiet.
- A picture may be worth a thousand words but it uses up a thousand times more memory!
- If a thing is worth doing, wouldn't it have been done already?
- Ham and Eggs: Just a day's work for a chicken but a lifetime commitment for a pig.

Char Stone
Resource Teacher
Robert Blue Middle School
Eagle Grove

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The Church of the Damascus Road

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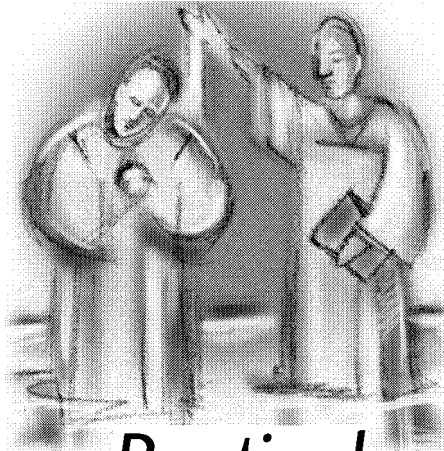
A note to secretaries and pastors—

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

December 20 at FDCF

Robert Johnson II

John Burtlow

December 21 at NCCF

Bradley Phillips

Kenny Phillips

Humbly

Lord, as we look upon you in your manger, who is even worthy to be in your presence? Knowing you left your heavens

to come die for us, and that we would nail you to the cross, for our sins to be relieved.

How can we gaze upon your majesty? So pure, God's innocence and glory to be seen.

The only way we can find the Lord is humbly on our knees.

Yes, Lord, the only way we can find you, is humbly on our knees.

by Roger Andrews

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm WednesdaysHoly Communion

7:00pm FridaysBible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm TuesdaysBible Study

6:30pm ThursdaysHoly 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.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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.