

The Church of the Damascus Road

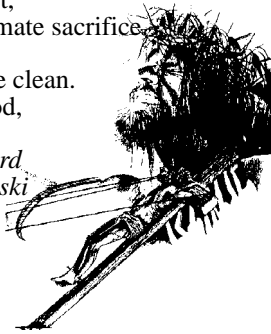
Flash!

Volume 4
Issue No. 2
April 2001
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Jesus is the Christ

Listen I want you to know,
Jesus died because He loves you so.
All your sin He has forgiven,
Just live the life he wants you to live in.
All that's required, this blessing to receive,
You must completely believe.

Jesus is the Christ,
He made the ultimate sacrifice
By His blood,
We've been made clean.
Acceptable to God,
In His regime.
Servant of the Lord
Johnny Makedonski



Oops!

Our Apologies

In the article about the Prison Congregations of America Art Contest in the last issue, the statement was made that a copy of the winning art was to be given to the congregations who gave \$100.00 or more. That statement was taken by some to mean "if you gave \$100 to the Church of the Damascus Road," when it was referring, instead, "if you gave \$100 to Prison Congregations of America." PCA sends a copy of the winning artwork to every congregation, person, or organization that donates \$100 or more to PCA. Sorry for the misunderstanding.

Pastor Lang

Wooten's Korner

Revelation 7:17 - "...for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

A friend of mine told me the reason he didn't want to become a Christian was because the Bible used the analogy of Christians being sheep or lambs and for him to admit to this would be admitting he was weak, and he couldn't do that in good conscience. Well, the more I thought about it, the more I realized we are just that weak.

Whether we consider ourselves to be the lion or the lamb, we're still weak and in need, in some form or another. Seeing our weaknesses and seeking help makes us stronger. Realizing that we can't do it alone makes us stronger. It builds a bond between those of us who struggle and those who help. All our lives we've been admitting in one form or another that we're lambs and need help. As children, learning to ride a bike, play little league, and to write, were in themselves, an admission of weakness. But, somewhere along the way our precious egos and our petty pride got so inflated that they blocked the sight of good judgment. We got to thinking that, "I am not weak, I don't need anyone's or anything's help. I can do it just fine by myself."

Horsefeathers! We are always in need, we're always weak. If anybody reading this right now disagrees with me then stop breathing, cause you're using God's air and we're definitely in need of that. Just kid-



ding about the stop breathing thing. The point I'm trying to make is: without help from someone we wouldn't know, or be able to do, any of the things we can do now.

It's the same with God. Without Jesus' saving work, we wouldn't be put right with God. Without Jesus' intervention we couldn't get to heaven. Without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't receive any guidance, revelation, or knowledge. Without God we wouldn't receive anything. So even though we don't like to admit it, we are just lambs. But the way I see it, we've got a good Shepherd leading us. So remember there's strength in our weakness.

God Bless You All,
Glenn Wooten

Inside the Flash

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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.

The Lifeline

After a few of the usual Sunday evening hymns, the church's pastor slowly stood up, walked over to the pulpit and, before he gave his sermon for the evening, briefly introduced a guest minister who was in the service that evening. In the introduction, the pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest friends and that he wanted him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service.

With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak, "A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific Coast," he began, "when a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright, and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized."

The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story. The aged minister continued with his story, "Grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life... to which boy he would throw the other end of the life line. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves."

As the father yelled out, 'I love you, son!' he threw out the life line to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body was never recovered."

By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in their pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth. "The father," he continued, "knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus, and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without Jesus. Therefore, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend. How great is the love of God that He should do the same for us. Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only Son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept His offer to rescue you and take hold of the life line He is throwing out to you in this service." With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room.

The pastor again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief sermon with an invitation at the end. However, no one responded to the appeal. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side.

"That was a nice story," politely stated one of the boys, "but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian."

"Well, you've got a point there," the old man replied, glancing down at his worn Bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face, and he once again looked up at the boys and said, "It sure isn't very realistic, is it? But I'm standing here today to tell you that THAT story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up his Son for me. You see... I was that father and your pastor is my son's friend."

Remember: It's not What you have in your life, but Who you have in your life that counts.

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.

Love

Love is being happy with what you have.
 Love is giving from the heart.
 Love is doing unto others as they would do for you.
 Love is what God gave for us when he gave his only son for us.
 Love is what Jesus gave for us when He gave his life to forgive us our sins. Amen
Michael E Nellist

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 4.2

April 2001

The 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.

Glenn Wooten, Editor.
 Harvey Fluker, Editor.

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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 515-955-3579

"Loved the wedding,
 invite me to the
 marriage." -*God*

I Will Trust

My Lord God, I have no idea where I'm going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end... I know... that you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always...

Buy Milk

A young man had been to Wednesday night Bible Study. The Pastor had shared about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man couldn't help but wonder, "Does God still speak to people?" After service he went out with some friends for coffee and pie and they discussed the message. Several different ones talked about how God had led them in different ways. It was about ten o'clock when the young man started driving home. Sitting in his car, he just began to pray, "God.. If you still speak to people speak to me. I will listen. I will do my best to obey."

As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. He shook his head and said out loud, "God is that you?" He didn't get a reply and started on toward home. But again, the thought, buy a gallon of milk. The young man thought about Samuel and how he didn't recognize the voice of God, and how little Samuel ran to Eli. "Okay, God, in case that is you, I will buy the milk." It didn't seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk. He stopped and purchased the gallon of milk and started off toward home.

As he passed Seventh Street, he again felt the urge, "Turn down that street." This is crazy, he thought, and he drove on past the intersection. Again, he felt that should

turn down seventh Street. At the next intersection, he turned back and headed down Seventh. Half jokingly, he said out loud, "Okay, God, I will." He drove several blocks, when suddenly, he felt like he should stop. He pulled over to the curb and looked around. He was in semi-commercial area of town. It wasn't the best but it wasn't the worst of neighborhoods, either. The businesses were closed and most of the houses looked dark, like the people were already in bed.

Again, he sensed something, "Go and give the milk to the people in the house across the street." The young man looked at the house. It was dark and it looked like the people were either gone or they were already asleep. He started to open the door and then sat back in the car seat. "Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad and I will look stupid."

Again, he felt like he should go and give the milk. Finally, he opened the door, "Okay God, if this is you, I will go to the door and I will give them the milk. If you want me to look like a crazy person, okay. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something, but if they don't answer right away, I am out of here."

He walked across the street and rang the bell. He could hear some noise inside. A

man's voice yelled out, "Who is it? What do you want?" Then the door opened before the young man could get away. The man was standing there in his jeans and T-shirt. He looked like he just got out of bed. He had a strange look on his face and he didn't seem too happy to have some stranger standing on his doorstep. "What is it?"

The young man thrust out the gallon of milk, "Here, I brought this to you." The man took the milk and rushed down a hallway speaking loudly in Spanish. Then, from down the hall came a woman carrying the milk toward the kitchen. The man was following her holding a baby. The baby was crying. The man had tears streaming down his face. The man began speaking and half crying, "We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We didn't have any milk for our baby. I was just praying and asking God to show me how to get some milk."

His wife in the kitchen yelled out, "I ask him to send an Angel with some. Are you an Angel?" The young man reached into his wallet and pulled out all the money he had on him and put in the man's hand. He turned and walked back toward his car and the tears were streaming down his face. He knew that God still answers prayers.

Easter Announcement



You are looking
for Jesus the
Nazarene,
who was
crucified.
He has risen!

Mark 16:6

I Want to Know

As we face this destructive ebb and flow,
each of us has a want to know.

Is this all that's meant to be,
all that's to become of me?
Right now it's hard to comprehend,
that this is not the only end.
There's got to be another way,
for me to meet the coming day.
In Christ our Lord I find my strength,
so I may not succumb at length.

*Servant of the Lord
Johnny Makedonski*

Best Things to Give

- To your friends - loyalty;
- To your enemy - forgiveness;
- To your boss - service;
- To a child - a good example;
- To your parents - gratitude & devotion;
- To your wedded mate - love & faithfulness;
- To all people - charity;
- To God - your life!

Our Appreciation



Cynthia Hanks

Cynthia on behalf of all of us at Fort Dodge and Rockwell City we thank you for all you do for us and Pastor Lang not only on this day but throughout the year. Thanks and God bless you.

*The Men of The Church
of the Damascus Road.*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Church of the Damascus Road
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<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.

A note to secretaries and pastors—

Copy Me, Please!

We send our newsletter primarily to congregations. It's printed on white paper so it can be copied to include all or portions of it in your newsletter or bulletin, or simply made available to members of your congregation.

Anyone wishing to be on our mailing list should send name, address, and phone numbers to The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at: DamascusCh@aol.com.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sirs:
I have to write you this "awesome" poem hoping you'll think so also. A year after I was released from the hospital I read the inspiring story of a French noblewoman named Madame Guyon. This saintly woman was arrested in 1688 and falsely accused of heresy, sorcery, and adultery by jealous church officials. During those long and lonely years of her confinement, she penned the following poem. It is an eloquent expression of the strength God will give to the suffering heart that waits on him.

My Cage

A little bird I am, shut from the fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there.
Well pleased a prisoner to be
Because, my God, it pleaseth thee.

Naught have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song.
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing.



My age confines me 'round;
Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty;
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh! It is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love;
And in thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

by Madame Guyon
Shared by Linn Essing

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy 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 (limit of 8), and at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, Fort Dodge (limit of 15), are being booked for future worship opportunities (see schedule above). If you would like to visit 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.



Contributions invited from All Readers

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