

The Church of the **Damascus** Road

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

Flash!

Prayer

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am 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.



The Teacher

The Lord called to me gently, I said, "Yes, Lord, here I am. I will do what ever you ask, in every way I can." The Lord said to me, "Feed my sheep, take them my word that they will know. Walk in the way I've shown you, that they will see and learn to grow.

Speak my word from your very heart, in everything you say, And I will let my Spirit shine to guide you and show the way.

Trust in me as I've told you to, for there is nothing you should fear, For I am always with you, my child, whether you go far or near;

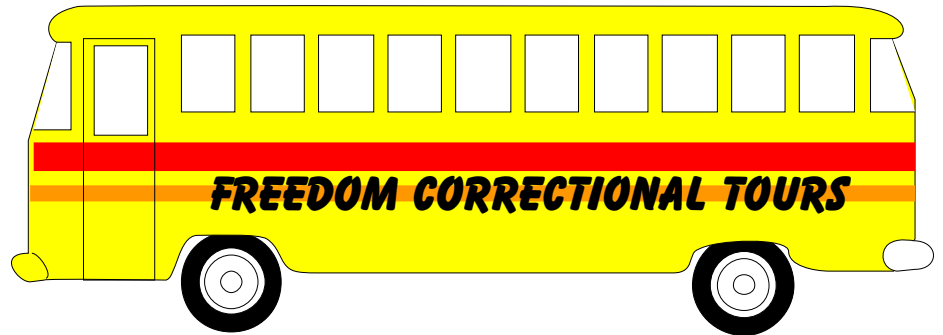
Lean on me when you cannot see or find things you don't understand. Rest in me when you are tired, when you are weak, just take my hand;

Stay in prayer and talk with me, in each day, and in all you do, That others will see I am the life that lives inside of you;

Share with all you meet each day, in love, and peace and truth, For I want all to know me, be they old or in their youth."

I said, "Lord, make me a teacher, that I may teach others who you are." And God said, "Do these things I have told you, for, my child, you already are."

— Henry Nathan Poteet 5-27-01



Don't Feed the Inmates

Hi, folks! I'm Glenn, the Gorilla. I'll be your tour guide around this place. Remember, keep your hands inside the window and, whatever you do, don't feed the inmates! As we move through their natural habitat, you'll notice different behaviors in each of them. Yes, Mrs. Cheetah, you have a question?



"Yes, I was wondering, do they make good pets?"

Heavens no, ma'am, they're only accustomed to this structured environment where all aspects of their daily activities, down to the smallest detail, are determined. They are cared for by the best professionals money can buy. The inmates adjust to this lifestyle quickly, because we eliminate all Random Acts of Kindness. They are de-R.A.K.-ed, if you will. The atmosphere is competely sterile. This way we can ensure that all the inmates' needs are met equally. Are there any other questions? Yes, Mr. Giraffe.

"Do you allow any of them to return to the wild?"

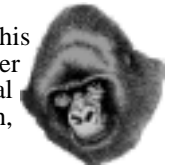
Oh, yes, quite often. I realize this place 'looks' crowded, but I can assure you they have plenty of room to roam and, yes, there is a rather brisk turnover of inmates entering this habitat and being released into the wild. Yes, Mrs. Hippopotamus, you have a question?



"Yes! Yes! I wanted to know—why can't we feed them? They look so sweet and nice you could almost hug 'em. They're just as cute as a bug in a rug!"

Mrs. Hippopotamus, I'm shocked and appalled that you would even consider such a thing! That would throw the whole order of this habitat out of balance and into an irreparable state. Why, if you were to be kind and feed just one of them, the rest of the inmates would begin to think you actually care about their well being. That, in turn, would affect the way they see themselves. Then they would believe they are above the luxurious status of an inmate. They would see that 'light at the end of the tunnel' and grab hold of that ludicrous idea of hope, hope that they can be more than an inmate, more than a burden on society, more than an embarrassment to family and friends. Then they would believe they could become a productive member of society, and where would that leave me? Without a job, and no more Correctional Tours like this. No, ma'am, we can't have that, so I must enforce the rule that absolutely, and in no circumstance, are you to feed an inmate!

This concludes our tour today. Thank you for thinking of Freedom Tours when you want to see the world's best in inmates in their natural habitat. Remember, folks, one act of kindness could change an inmate forever, but, whatever you do, don't feed an inmate! God bless you all!



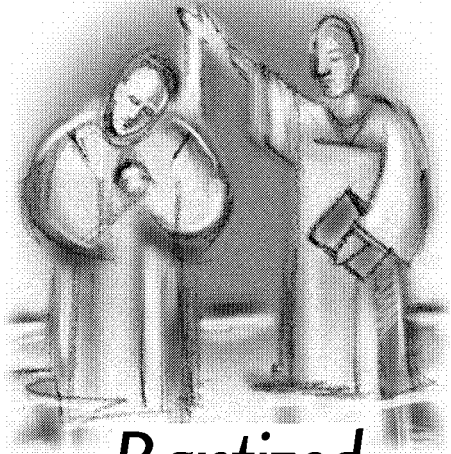
Inside the Flash

Page 2 - Face of Aftercare

Page 3 - Where I Stand

Page 4 - Inmate artwork

Glenn Wooten



Baptized

July 18, 2001 at FDCF
Titus Banta
David Bishop, Affirmation

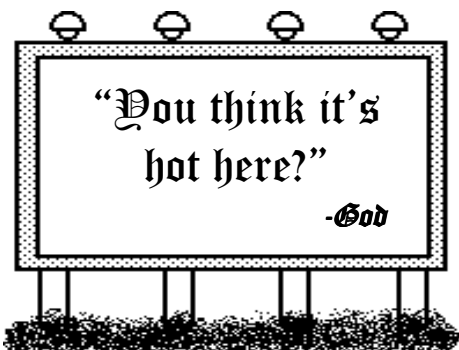


SEND US, LORD,
TO CARE
SEND US, LORD,
TO SHARE

Loner Christian

I can be a Christian by myself.
Leave my dusty Bible on the shelf.
I'll sing a hymn and pray a bit.
God can do the rest of it.
My heart's the church, my head's the steeple.
Shut the door and I'm the people.
I can be a Christian by myself.

I'll break some bread and drink some wine.
Have myself a holy time.
I'll take the off'ring then I'll know
Where that money's going to go.
So please remember, Lord, when I die,
Give me my own cloud in the sky.
After this life with its labors
Don't bug me with needy neighbors.
—from a song by Avery & Marsh



Doug Messerly and Jeff Murrow chat while waiting for their orders.



Jeff Raines, Jeff Murrow and Doug Messerly.

Transition Team

The Face of Aftercare

On June 30, 2001, at 8:30am, Jeff Murrow was released from the North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City, Iowa. He was met at the gate by two of the transitional aftercare team from Webster City, Iowa, Jeff Raines and Doug Messerly.

The Webster City Aftercare Team of about 7 persons had anticipated Jeff's release and had located an apartment, found a bed, a table, some chairs, and some kitchen utensils. On the way to Webster City, the three of them took some time to get Jeff some extra clothes by shopping at Dollar General, Goodwill, and the Crossroads Mall. Then they stopped for lunch at Tom Thumb's on Fort Dodge's west side, with Pastor Carroll and Judy Lang.

Jeff was really looking forward to his hamburger and you can see by his expression it was delicious!

The Church of the Damascus Road is getting started encouraging teams like the one in Webster City to provide aftercare for



A look of pleasure crosses Jeff's face as he enjoys a simple treat—a hamburger.

released inmates who need some help getting back into society as law abiding citizens. Training sessions are held from time to time to prepare teams to do this vital ministry in their communities. If you would like to minister in this way, contact The Church of the Damascus Road at PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by calling 515-955-3579.

Letter from the Editor

Well, hello! My name is Titus Banta, and I'm the Editor of the Flash. I'm really excited about traveling this new and exciting journey. I have many new ideas for the Flash in the next few months.

I believe that change is very important in order to have a newsletter that's on top. And that's exactly where I would like the Flash to be. I believe that it is very important to get the word of God out to the inmates and the public.

I also feel that there are many inmates who have some really good things to share. I ask that you please send me some of those great ideas, so that we can share them with others. So, in closing, I hope that you enjoy our little part of the Lord's great works. Thank you again for taking interest in the Flash.

Sincerely Yours,
Editor Titus Banta

The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 4.4

August 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.

Titus Banta, 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:

The Church of the Damascus Road
PO Box 834
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834
Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge
515-955-3579

Outside Council Profile



Weston Thompson

Weston grew up in the Rockwell City area and attended school there. He is a graduate of the Rockwell City High School class of 1949. He served as Assistant Manager of the Farmers Coop Elevator from 1949 to 1956, with a break in the middle to serve in the Korean War from 1951 to 1953. In 1956 he became a farm operator and owner until 1993 when he retired.

Weston's partner and wife, Mary, have three daughters and one son. Both Mary and Weston enjoyed traveling while raising their family. They have been active in church work with the United Methodist Church and served in positions of leadership on many boards and committees. Weston has served in community activities such as Secretary of Farmers Coop Elevator board of directors, President of Rockwell City Jaycees, served on the Calhoun County Soil Conservation board, and is a member of the Lions Club. He is currently on the board of the Calhoun County Museum and serves as chair of the building and grounds committee. He also serves as curator for the farm section at the museum. In recent years he has worked with the Pocahontas Camp of the Gideons.

Weston's hobbies include the restoration and collecting of old cars and tractors. He and Mary also enjoy playing golf whenever possible. He currently holds a Private Pilot's license, but no longer own a plane. He enjoys helping their farm operator in the spring by driving his tractors and in the fall by operating his combine. "It almost seems that I have not even retired from farming," Weston remarked. In 1993 Weston had an opportunity to travel to Ukraine and demonstrate new equipment and farming methods. While there he gave away a dozen New testaments printed in Russian, they were very Hungary for God's word. Recently He has enjoyed visiting with the members of the Church of the Damascus Road and is serving on the Outside Church Council.

Where I Stand

Laughter and smiles have crossed my face,
 But now my soul is weaker in the race.
 My heart has lost what it used to treasure.
 Disappointment now is what I feel, where
 is my faith?
 The sun used to glow, within it shine.
 What I thought I had, turned out not mine.
 Where did I differ in this world or this
 race?
 I thought I had found my peace, my place.
 Why did I lose it, oh, why has it gone?
 God gave me a love, was it all wrong?
 Give me a reason, help me to understand.
 Despair seems to surround me, with hope I
 can stand.
 I need love, I need truth, I need a friendly
 hand. My heart cries to be touched, to be
 warm again.
 Once I had love with a wonderful wife,
 But now I'm alone, where is my might?
 Why is it when there's happiness to hold,
 Then a sad song always seems to touch
 your soul?
 I know God's love has directed me
 through the storms.

Why did I not know you were my
 strength, my guide, and through the
 heartaches you even cried, stood by my
 side?

You've counted each step that I've taken
 in this world, leaving your reflection upon
 my face. In the darkness you have kept me
 strong, and moved me from place to place.
 I haven't lost anything, you led her home.
 Through this redeeming joy you bless me
 with psalm.

Though I still feel pain some days and
 some nights, I wake each morning to the
 beauty of your light.

Now there's more pleasure added to my
 life, the will to live, the will to give, the
 will to fight.

By your hands I was bound with grace,
 Like a beautiful flower I have grown in
 the right place.

Now I'll share what's been given to my
 heart:

The gift of life, the gift of peace, the gift
 of love. Where I stand is in God's hand.

by Dick Powell

Dear Pastor Lang

I wanted to thank you for giving me strength and happiness. You picked me up out of the hands of depression and pulled me upright again. I was so lonely until you came by with Jesus by your side. Pastor, my spirit is at a high for all the days to come. I was lost until you came by with all your joy. You were glowing with it, and you gave me some. When you left, I danced a little jig, I was so happy you read my kite. And as I started reading the "Echo" you gave me [ed: an inside, in between newsletter for inmates], I started getting all these little goose bumps, millions of them. It's hard to believe that there are people out there that care, but there really are.

Being in this little room can get a man down, so far down that he starts to believe no one cares. But there are people like Pastor Lang who do care, and one is a spirit. As I went on reading the "Echo" I started to cry, because it was coming to an end. But there was a tap on my shoulders reminding me that people care and Jesus is one who cared a whole bunch for us that he died for us. It's true—if you're down in the dumps, call on Jesus and the Father, because they'll never come to an end.

My point is, if you remember that people care, you won't need to be picked up out of the dumps so often. And, if we are all wise, we'll know that there's always tomorrow.

And thank you, Pastor Lang, for caring so much for others. And thanks for making the Church of the Damascus Road possible for me and for others just like me! I'll see you soon. May Godspeed be with you. God bless you from your brother,

Milton Carlos Barron

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.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Church of the Damascus Road
PO Box 834
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

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U.S. Postage
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Iowa
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<http://www.dodgenet.com/~cjlang/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.

Visitors Being Scheduled

Visitors for The Church of the Damascus Road worship services at the North Central Correctional Facility, Rockwell City (limit of 9), 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. During office hours (8am to 12noon, Monday through Friday) you can call 515-955-3579 and give the information to the office secretary, Cynthia Hanks. or send an e-mail message to "DamascusCh@aol.com" to schedule a time. The necessary forms and information will then be sent to you prior to your visit.

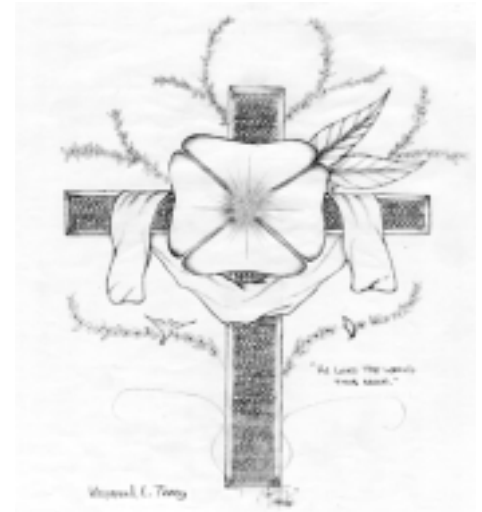
Reader Response

Dear Mr. Wooten,
I am assuming you wrote the reply to Ms. Warren so I addressed this note to you. It is Friday morning after breakfast; I have much on my schedule to get done but your newsletter came yesterday and I was gone all day so had to open it before I started this day.

Thank you for that printed reply to Ms. Warren's excuse for not going to church. I have been witnessing to two families for about 3 years, encouraging worship attendance, parenting class attendance, Sunday School attendance, Bible Study attendance, devotions, home Bible reading, etc. They have attended occasionally or sent their children sporadically during this time but none are participating at the present. Your written reply just gave me some support and affirmation I needed to remind them that "anything or anyone who keeps you from God, is SIN." Thank you for your faithful and intentional witnessing to our Triune God. God Bless You!

Jean Matter

Artist's Corner



"He loves the world this much,"
by Waymond Tenny, FDCF

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 may 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. The Flash will be sent directly to your home.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang

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

All Readers: Send Contributions

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