

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 4
Issue No. 6
December 2001
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

At Christmas and Always

When shepherds and angels, ceramic or plaster,
are cozy in tissue and boxes once more;
When a long string of lights, in various hues,
comes down from a tree and is ready to store;

It's time to write thank-yous to grandmas and aunts,
via paper and pen, or computer and screen.
It's time to acknowledge the kindnesses shown
by loved ones yet close by, or those rarely seen.

Remember to offer the thanks that is due
to God for His great gift, a resident Savior.
this babe sent from heaven, both human and holy,
through His life and His death would all earthlings favor.

How better to demonstrate thanks to the Lord,
than choosing to model Christ's lifestyle of peace.
at Christmas, and always, to emulate caring,
in grateful response to God's grace and release!

Shelley Hundling

Christmas Day

Listen, my children, to what I say:
How a baby was born, on this glorious day.
God truly loves us, he was willing to give
The life of his son, so eternally we live.
Born in a manger, in a far away land,
This man named Jesus, the son of man,
By grace he is given, this expression of love,
to one and to all, from heaven above.
All glory to God, for showing the way:
the gift of a savior, on this Christmas Day.

— Robert L. Johnson II

Need Wisdom?

If you need wisdom, take these three steps:
go to your knees, go to the Word, and go to
the wise. God will grant your request.

— Bonnie Ricks

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Okay, it's a given: God is everywhere all the time. Everyone can pretty much agree on that, but do we ever stop to consider what that means? Well, for him to be everywhere in just our *galaxy* he either has to be pretty big or pretty fast, considering the galaxy is 58,800,000,000,000,000 miles across. If we were to walk 50 miles per day it would take 3,221,917,808,000,000,000,000 years to walk from one side to the other. Me bein' lazy by nature, I'm bettin' God's pretty big, meanin' less travel time!

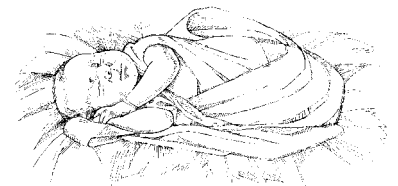
The point I'm tryin' to make is that if God is so big and all powerful (which we should all be in agreement with) look what he gave up to come to earth to save us. Look at how he came. Out of all the choices he had available to him he chose the most non-threatening: a baby wrapped in cloth in a manger.

At this point I ask, does anyone feel threatened by a baby? Me neither, and I'm pretty sure that's why he came to us as a child, so we'd embrace him and be eager to be near him, without fear, and that's the way it should be. He could have been a forceful, intimidating God, but then, would you follow him out of fear, or out of love? At the time of his birth he was the meekest of the meek, the most innocent of all, a lamb without blemish. Yet, at that point in time, God, the all powerful, was at his weakest and he(God) needed help from his human creation.

Look at all he gave up and for what — to save the likes of you and me. That in itself is an enormous sacrifice — not to mention what happened after that. So, as we begin this holiday season let's stay focused on why we celebrate, because you have a God, a Lord of lords a King of kings, who willingly and lovingly gave up all he had to save you. May your holidays be filled with joy unsurpassed, and in all you do, remember the reason for the season. God bless you all.

— Glenn Wooten

One Small Child



PCoA and CoDR

Joint Effort Fund Raiser

The Church of the Damascus Road and the board of Prison Congregations of America will join forces on January 26, 2002, to raise funds for both organizations. The vocal/instrumental quartet, Higher Power, will perform at a concert at 6:30pm in St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge, Iowa. The quartet mixes excellent Christian music (many arranged and/or written by one of the members of the quartet) with messages about living in faith in God. Former members of the Church of the Damascus Road will be present and will be invited to speak at various times during the concert. A freewill offering will be received. Refreshments will be served after the concert.



My Life with God

Thinking back on the way I've lived my life, I haven't always known God. And I know that there are a lot of people just like me. It's taken me a long time and a lot of heartache to even try to give my life to God. I always felt like God didn't love me, because if he did, my life would not be so missed up. What I never realized was all those times where I almost died and didn't, God was already there carrying me. It's hard for us to see that, because maybe we don't want to. I'm not saying that I didn't want to; what I'm saying is that I was blinded, blinded by something that is nothing but evil.. The devil needs us, he lives off us just like a spider lives off blood. He keeps us with our hands in the pot. My mom once told me to let go and let God. That little statement is so true. If we could only let go and let God, our lives would be so much easier.

Titus Banta

The Meaning of Christmas

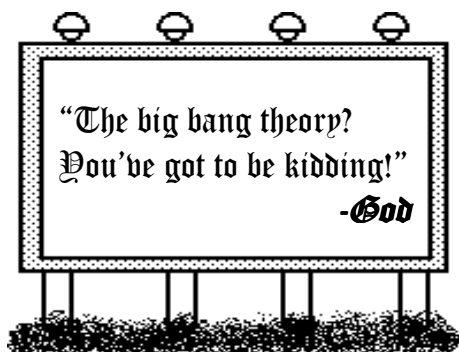
Listen, my children, it won't be long;
Listen my children, singing their songs.
carolers coming, singing their songs.
Santa'll be there, with a sleigh full of toys.
visiting all of the good girls and boys
Filling your socks, with good things to eat,
apples and oranges many things sweet,
It is on this day, my little ones,
Jesus was born, God's only son.
Give all praise to Jesus, for He is the way.
the gift of salvation, on Christmas day.

— Robert L. Johnson II

Stand Up Joe

Who can you turn to when something
needs done?
Willing to serve, Joe is the one
Seeking no reward, more then willing to
please
The first one to stand up or bow down on
his knees
Always a good friend, a joy to know.
You can always count on Stand up Joe.

Robert L. Johnson II



FDCF CROP Walk



Walkers registered for the CROP Walk.



Walkers donated to help hungry people.



Men of other faiths participated.



They're off, to "Walk because they walk."



This was Pastor Lang's view, mostly.

September 11, 2001

Remember the Victims

For the victims of the World Trade Center and, most of all, their families:

If only tears could build a stairway,
and memories were a lane,
I would walk right up to heaven
to bring you home again.
No farewell words were spoken,
no time to say goodbye.
You were gone before we knew it,
and only God knows why.
Our hearts still ache in sadness
and secret tears still flow.
What it means to lose you
no one will ever know.

— Tony Payne

Why?

Some things are never easy, harder than they seem, open your eyes, tell me what you see. A world without answers, yet we try to know the will of God, which direction we shall go?

Worldly disasters, we cannot understand why so many people all had to die. Tears in our eyes, pain on our face, to express our emotions is not a disgrace.

Sometimes we may ask, can this be Gods' will that the blood of the innocent had to be spilled? Pain and frustration on that terrible day, we all drop to our knees and humbly pray. Seeking comfort that can only come from you, help us forgive as you always do.

With open arms welcome them, we all send our love, for someday we all will join them there in heaven above.

Robert L. Johnson II

The Church of the
Damascus Road
Mash!

Volume 4.6

December 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.

Eric Conerd, 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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Are You Ready?

"Tomorrow is promised to no one."

My name is Zach Barnett and I am currently incarcerated in the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Iowa. I am 20 years old and have a 10 year sentence for 2nd degree arson, 2nd degree burglary. Right now I'm in an intensive treatment program.

The Lord has been tugging at my heart to get out and preach his good word. I was recently in Brothers in Blue, a Christian get together for 4 days, my eyes opened wider than before, and here I am writing this.

The Christian life is not easy. It's full of turns, ups and downs and bumps. We will always have problems, but God will get us through them. During times of trouble it will either bring you closer to God or pull you away. My life ain't perfect and neither is any one else's. God picked me up when I was down and showed me the way.

Salvation is deliverance from guilt and the power of sin. Acts 4:12 says, "salvation is found in no one else," meaning God can give you deliverance from the power of sin. 2 Cor. 7:10 says, "worldly sorrow brings death." This talks about worrying about the things that are wrong in this world.

Believing in something is to accept it as true, to trust and have faith. The Bible says in Mark 1:15, "Repent and believe in the good news. Confess your sins and believe God is true." The Lord said in John 20:27, "Stop doubting and believe."

Faith is belief and trust in God even though you can't see him. Romans 3:21-31 tells about righteousness through faith. Verse 23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." "We live by faith, not sight,"

2 Corinthians 5:7. Remember, faith is belief in something you can't see. We need to quit going through life by sight because the world is a bad temptation. With faith anything is possible through Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace that we are saved through faith, not by good works, so that no one can boast." Grace is an undeserved favor or gift, the undeserved forgiveness, kindness and mercy that God gives us.

Confession is saying what you believe, and also telling your sins to others. Romans 10:9 Says 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 John 1:9-12 states that if you are a Christian but yet you hate your brother (anyone around you, people you know or don't) you are still in darkness.

Being born again does not mean going back into your mother's womb, it is entering God's family through faith in Christ. In John 3, Jesus is talking to Nicodemus about being born again. Verse 3 Jesus said "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Nicodemus asks "How can a man be born again when he is old?" Jesus answers "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit." Read further in John 3.

Forgiveness is to pardon or excuse, to no longer blame or be angry with someone who has done you wrong. Matthew 6:14 is talking about if you forgive someone when they sin against you so will the heavenly Father forgive you. Verse 15 goes on to say if you

do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Colossians 3:13 says get along with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have with one another, Forgive like the Lord forgives you.

After reading this, did it open up your heart and eyes? Are you willing to give your life up to the Lord? If so say this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I know I have sinned and am apart from you. I want to be closer to you and have a fresh start. Lord please forgive my sins. Come into my heart and show me the way you want me to live. Thank you, Lord. Amen"

Now if you have recited this prayer the Lord is with you. Find other Christians and ask them to help you read and understand the Bible.

Thank you for reading this, I hope it helped out. Share it with a friend or anyone you don't know. All scripture from NIV Bible. God bless all of you.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Adversity (trouble) is:

- God's way of getting our attention.
- God's way of conquering our pride
- God's way of motivating us to seek him
- God's way of purifying our faith
- God's way of increasing our hatred for sin.
- God's way of making you evaluate your priorities
- God's way of sifting our friendships out
- God's way of preparing you to comfort others
- God's way of revealing to us our weaknesses

This Day's Thought

God not only calls but empowers—although the power may come only as we respond. Conversely, if we don't respond to God's call, we may cut ourselves off from the Lord's strength and become increasingly blind and deaf to God's promptings.

— Unknown

Dear Editor—

Thanks

Our sincere thank you from the Stratford (Iowa) Women of the ELCA for the opportunity to worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ on Wednesday, September 19, 2001. We were all very impressed with the wonderful service, baptisms and communion, as well as the opportunity to visit with the inmates! It was truly an inspiration for all of us—and hopefully we will be back again to worship with you. God bless.

— Jean Bjustrom



Dear Editor—

Thanks

Thank you so much for sending the newsletters. I will read them and pass them on! Every avenue to spread the gospel is a help.

— Eleanor Evans

Dear Editor —

We have received your newsletter for several months and we always enjoy its contents.

But in the last issue one article stands out highly, "Scripture is Life" was so meaningful and it spoke of Barry Chubick's strong faith in God.

As I'm a new believer his tips on memorizing scripture were helpful. He speaks a powerful testimony to all of us. He should evangelize more as he has a special gift.

I'm sorry about his heavy sentence, but now he can use his God-given talent and preach the good news of God to other prisoners who are struggling.

I found much comfort in reading the Bible when our daughter was sent to prison. Simultaneously, I had three big surgeries to recover from during that time, too. I had to sit in my recliner for 2-1/2 yrs, but I could read the Bible. That got me through many days.

In Jesus' love, a reader

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December 2001



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

NCCF CROP Walk



Ready to walk for world hunger.



The walkers took off in a bunch!



Another group was close behind.

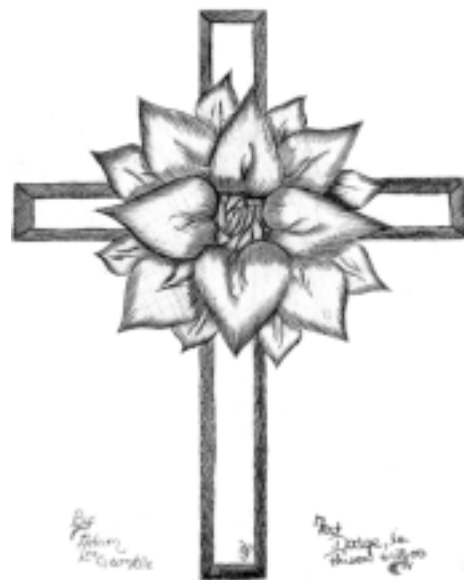


Pastor Lang's view of the walk.



If WE gt tired from walking, imagine what it's like for hungry people to walk.

Artist's Corner



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 Wednesdays Holy Communion
7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

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