

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 5
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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



Who is a hero?

Who is a hero, who does it take
to stand ever so tall for every one's sake?
Willing to go, willing to be
there to defend our right to be free.
There is nothing in life
that comes without cost;
willing to give all
so our freedom's not lost.
May the Lord bless, bless one and all
to be willing to answer our Nation's call.
All of our prayers for all of you
the fearless defenders
of the Red, White, and Blue.

Robert L. Johnson II

Servant and Brother

Kemberly Joseph Fender, 43, of Council Bluffs, died December 16, 2001 at home, a victim of suicide. His funeral was December 19, 2001, 2pm at Light of the Word Church. Cards and memorials may be sent to the family in care of the funeral home: Hertz Funeral Home, 420 South Oak Street, Carson, IA 51525. The following is a tribute to "Stand Up Joe."

Joe Fender, servant and friend to our Lord, a father, brother to all, and gone all too soon. He was a man of pure faith in God and in others.

Joe came to us as a warm ray of sunshine on a cool fall day. He touched many of us with his smile and friendship. To look at life through Joe's eyes was to see the joy of friendship, to find the silver lining in the clouds. He left us all too suddenly. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by us all. He truly is a "Stand Up Joe." Good bye, Joe.

— Glenn Wooten

Inside the Flash

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Wooten's Korner

Sometimes the best disciple is the one we don't know or the one who serves in obscurity, because his reason for service is pure, not for self glory, but for the aid of those in need. If I asked anyone with a working knowledge of the bible to name five examples of disciples who served God faithfully, they would have no problem doing so or giving example after example of faithful, selfless service. But if I asked for one example of someone who served in obscurity, could you name one without researching it? Me either! I did look though, and I found four examples of discipleship in obscurity. The first is in John 6:1-15: the boy who gave Jesus what food he had to help feed the five thousand. Why didn't Jesus make an example of this boy to the others that were there? He did! By showing that as servants, we are to be happy to serve for the sake of pleasing those who help as well as pleasing God with our humble attitude.



The second example is in 2 Kings 5:1-14: the maid was so wondrously used to help Naaman. In verse one, we see exactly who and what Naaman was, but when we get to verse two, all we know is that she was a "young girl from Israel" (NIV). She was a maidservant to Naaman's wife. But without her intercession, love and care for her master, Naaman would not have seen the prophet in Samaria and been cured of leprosy.

The third example is in 2 Cor 8:18-19, where we find a letter from Paul telling the church in Corinth that he is bringing along with him a brother with very high credentials. He is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. But again, he remains anonymous to us. Is it unintentional? I think not. Again we are shown how we are to serve in obscurity we are to be stage hands in the play of life of which is to be the star.

Another example I stumbled onto, literally, when I dropped my bible and it fell open to Isaiah 52:13—53:12 in my bible (NIV) it is titled "the suffering and glory of the servant." I read it and was moved, because I felt it fit perfectly into this, especially Chap 53:2B. It shows us how common or everyday this perfect example was- nothing that would stand out to us, nothing that would draw our attention to him. I'm speaking about a well known example, actually, Jesus. But again, my point is he served and gave glory to God.

Some thirty years ago my father would always drag us kids out during the winter to shovel the driveway. Well we had a neighbor, an elderly woman named "Lil" and she lived alone. So every time it would snow, Dad would pick two of us kids to sneak over her house and try to shovel her sidewalk and driveway before she could see us. I'm not sure how many times we shoveled or how many times she caught us but my point is that we were serving others in obscurity and pleasing the father. Our only desire should be to help when and where we are able, not the recognition that can be attached to it. When we accept recognition, we take away from God, and I think we do enough of that already.

In Luke 17:9 Jesus asked the disciples and us today an all too important question "would he thank the servant because he did what he was told?" I guess the point I'm trying to make with the help of Jesus is that we shouldn't expect, want, or live for thanks or praise for what is expected of us as true servants of God.

In conclusion, in 1 Peter 5:6 says: "humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (NIV). Pretty good rule of thumb- if we just apply it. Of course, that could be said for the whole bible.

— God bless you all, Glenn Wooten

Obstacles

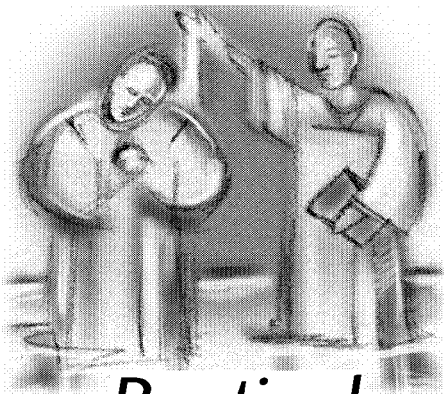
are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your God. — Henry Ford

Outside Council Profile



Richard Hersom

Richard is the newest member of the Outside Church Council of The Church of the Damsascus Road. Dick is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Dodge. He is presently serving as an elder on the Session as well as the Mission and Stewardship Committee of First Presbyterian. Dick is retired from the Feed Division of Land O Lakes and has also retired as Lt. Col. from the Iowa Air National Guard. He is a member of Golden 'K' Kiwanis service club and a volunteer at Trinity Regional Medical Center. Dick and his wife, Janet, live in the Lakewood Addition, north of Community Orchard. They have three sons and four granddaughters.



Baptized

December 19, 2001 at FDCF
Charles West

January 16, 2002 at FDCF
Wayne Coper
Justin Evans
Daniel Heidt

January 17, 2002 at NCCF
Jerry Majerus
Richard Rowell

Congratulations to these new members of God's family in Christ. The rest of the congregation and our visitors fill the role of sponsor for each newly baptized brother.

Emergency

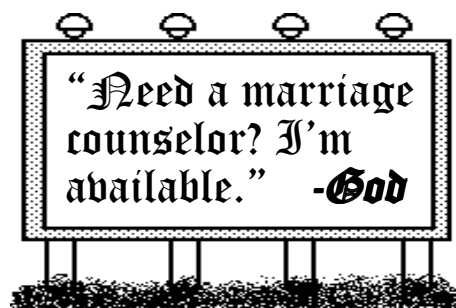
Does anyone know what three numbers one dials in case of emergency? That's right! 9-1-1. Well, I think this is an emergency, so let's dial up these numbers, only if you would, please turn to Psalm 91, the first verse:

Psalm 91

- ¹ You who live in the **shelter** of the **Most High**, who abide in the **shadow** of the **Almighty**,
(Read that again. Now, let's continue.)
- ² Will say to the **LORD**, "My **refuge** and my **fortress**; my **God**, in whom I **trust**."
- ³ For he will **deliver you** from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;
- ⁴ He will **cover you** with his pinions, and under **his wings** you will **find refuge**; his **faithfulness** is a **shield and buckler**.
- ⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day.
- ⁶ Or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.
- ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
- ⁸ You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.
- ⁹ Because you have made the **LORD your refuge**, the **Most High** your dwelling place,
- ¹⁰ **No evil** shall befall you, **no scourge** come near your tent.
- ¹¹ For he will **command his angels** concerning you **to guard you** in all your ways.
- ¹² On their hands **they will bear you up**, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.
- ¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.
- ¹⁴ Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.
- ¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.
- ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

This is really a great Psalm. If you look back and see all that the Lord is for us, you really get a feeling that he will take care of us, but look back at verse 4 and read how his faithfulness will be your shield and buckler. What does the Lord have to be faithful for? He is the Almighty, the Creator, the Alpha, and the Omega. He is Omnipotent. He really has no reason to be faithful, but he is. That means he is faithful in us, so I'm going to do all I can to prove that his faithfulness is right. Think about it.

—Nicholas J. Clark



What Do You See?

Lord, thank you for your faithfulness in everything I need,
For you are my strength, my hope, my joy,
you fill my life indeed;
With more than what is in my heart, beyond what my eyes can see,
You fill me with your Spirit, Lord, to be all that I can be;
Let me not focus on things of this world, but simply on seeking you,
That I may find the fullness of Christ, in everything I do;
For what I have, you've given to me, to have as a blessing in life,
Be it riches, wealth, or humbleness, or the love of a family and wife.
Yes, all things come from you, Lord, and to you all things shall return,
Through tests, victories, or losses in life, may I seek your truth to learn:
To know that you are first in my life, above all I have, or do, or see,
And know in my heart it all is yours, these things you've given to me;
Open the eyes within my heart, to see all you have done,
Teach me to love as you love me, through Jesus Christ your Son;
Allow me to share in your joy, Lord, let me know of your wisdom in peace,
For the things of this world will pass and fade, but you, Lord, will never cease;
And when I hurt or suffer with pain, fill me with your strength not mine,
For you are the Lord God that conquers all, and lasts forever beyond all time;
Each day, Lord, let me be thankful, for your faithfulness to me,
That when I awake each morning in life, my eyes will know what to see.

Henry Poteet

The Church of the **Damascus Road** *Flash!*

Volume 5.1

February 2002

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.

Robert Johnson II, 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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Showing Us His Glory

Reading a newsletter I received from New York, I noticed an article about God's glory and how most times we don't even see it. Well, I had to stop and ask myself, "Do I really NOT see all that glory?"

The answer is, "Yes, I overlook (as do many persons) the wonderful things our dear Lord has given to us." We have so many things to be thankful for. And now, as our country goes through these trying times, we have a great need to come together in the Lord and show him our thanks for having his hands in our lives.

Many of us have lost so many things, but we forget what our dear Lord gave for us, his only Son, who died so that we may live. Always remember that the trials we have help us to grow. It may seem hard, but God has a plan for you.

Like that poem, *Footprints in the Sand*, God is carrying us through our battles. We live by faith, a faith that shines through whatever comes our way in life. It is a faith that he has everything under control.

Ask God to show you his glory and he will truly shine in your life.

— Titus Banta

Who's Henry?

Norman Neaves, an Oklahoma City pastor, tells of a man who approached him after worship on Sunday and asked — or so Dr. Neaves thought — "Who in the world is Henry?"

A bit confused, Dr. Neaves said, "I don't know. I'm not sure I know what you're talking about." The man pointed to what he called the "word" on the cross in the sanctuary. It was the letters "INRI" which the man seemed to be pronouncing "Henry."

Dr. Neaves could not help but chuckle a little. Finally understanding what the fellow was asking, the pastor explained that the letters "INRI" actually stood for words which were placed on the cross where Jesus was dying. The letters stand for Latin words.

The letter "I" is the first letter in Iesus (yay-soos), which stands for "Jesus." The "N" stands for "Nazareth." The "R" stands for "Rex" which means "King" in Latin. The last "I" is the first letter in the Latin word meaning "Jews." Thus "INRI" means in Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Actually, Pilate had the sign written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek so that everyone who stood at the foot of the cross could read the sign in the language with which he or she was most familiar.

The Resurrection proves that Jesus is indeed King of the whole world as well as Lord and Savior.



Musings

As I was musing about what the year 2001 brought us, one thing stood out over all the rest; the terrorist attacks. As we began 2001 the farthest thing from our minds was an attack of such magnitude on our soil. This became a wake up call that showed us, one of the strongest nations in the world, that we are not untouchable. Even a nation such as ours needs to count God's blessings and be thankful that this terrorist attack did not happen sooner. It could very easily have taken many more lives, with so many other nations having the technology to create nuclear weapons. Many nations will sell this such technology to whoever has the wealth to spend.

Then I turned my focus on what the year to come has in store. As I thought about it, I became somewhat apprehensive. I prayed to the Lord that no more innocent lives be taken, and that all of the families of those who have lost a loved one in the senseless acts of terrorism will be able to receive comfort and acceptance that can only come from you.

I have trouble with the taking of even one life. I believe that the only one that has the right to take a life is the giver of life. This is the one and only true God, the creator of all. This is only his right. I feel that claiming this right puts me on a level with God, with the authority of God, and that is far more

than any man may claim.

I then asked the Lord that only good things would come to us: No more senseless killing of the innocent for any reason. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and told me that we all must experience the good with the bad. By having the bad to measure alongside of the good we are able to see how good the good things truly are. If all things were the same, we would not recognize our blessings and not know what to be thankful for. Then he spoke to my heart that trials and tribulations build character and facing the unknown helps to build our faith. So, whatever the upcoming year has for us, realize that we do not face it alone: the Holy Spirit is in our heart.

Be confident that the life of the righteous will have victory over what is of the world. We do not face death because by grace we have eternal life. No one can take away this God-given life from you. This is bought for us on that glorious day on Calvary. Be ready when Jesus comes back in all his glory. Remember that he who is in you is far greater than he who is in the world. Also remember that on that glorious day we will all join with the saints in heaven and rejoice that peace has finally come. Will you be ready? Go in peace serve the Lord.

Robert L. Johnson II

The Quilt

As I faced my Maker at the last Judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with the other souls. Before each of us laid our lives, like the squares of a quilt, in many piles. An Angel sat before each of us sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that is our life. But, as my Angel took each piece of cloth off the pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares was. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in everyday life. I saw hardships that I had endured, which were the largest holes of all.

I glanced around me. Nobody else had such squares. Other than a tiny hole here and there, the other tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened. My Angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air. Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the light, the scrutiny of truth. The others rose, each in turn, holding up their tapestries. So filled their lives had been.

My Angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise. My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. I hadn't had all the earthly fortunes. I had love in my life, and laughter.

But there had also been trials of illness and death, and false accusations that took from me my world as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and begin again. I had spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance in my life. I had often been held up to ridicule, which I endured painfully; each time offering it up to the Father in hopes that I would not melt within my skin beneath the judgmental gaze of those who unfairly judged me. And now, I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it.

I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light. An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with eyes wide. Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me. Light flooded the many holes, creating an image. The face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me, with warmth and love in His eyes. He said, "Every time you gave over your life to me, it became my life, my hardships, and my struggles. Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let me shine through, until there was more of me than there was of you."

May all our quilts be threadbare and worn, allowing Christ to shine through.

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February 2002



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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 in 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. If you are in a congregation that is not of the Western Iowa Synod of the ELCA and would like to see this video, call the Church of the Damascus Road office and request one.

Artists' Corner



Submitted by Jeff Briggs, NCCF



Drawn by Adam Gamble, formerly 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 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.