

# The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 5  
Issue No. 4  
August 2002  
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



David Athey and Robert L. Johnson II are ready to give radios to inmates on a list.

## KJYL Radio Giveaway

On June 12th the inmates at FDCF were blessed to receive an am/fm stereo boom box through the generosity of KJYL and its listeners. Through this gift 28 inmates can now tune into KJYL anytime they



Irvin Halterman receives his radio

desire to hear the word of the Lord and hear good Christian music. It is through this generosity that KJYL makes the days a little brighter for the inmates at the FDCF.

— Robert L. Johnson II Editor



Jay Rudolph (R) of Radio Station KJYL

## Inside the Flash

- Page 2 - Out of Reach
- Page 2 - The Monkey
- Page 3 - Stefani's Mom Writes
- Page 3 - Bringing Up Boys
- Page 4 - Inmate Artwork

## Musings

One day I was pondering about how luck fits into the great scheme of things. When I was in the county jail a chaplain came to minister to me. I had just started writing poetry and in one of my early poems I used the word "luck."

As he read the poem and came across this word he corrected me and said that the proper word is "blessing." I spent some time thinking this over. I could see how right he was.

Our gracious Father in heaven not only knows the past, he also knows the present and the future. Due to being all-knowing, there is no such thing as luck. All that is and will be in the world is due to his loving grace. And it is through this grace we are blessed.

It's not only important that we have faith, it's also very important that God's will is a priority in our life. Patience is also very important. This is one thing, I must admit, in which I am found lacking. I do not know exactly why I have a problem waiting for an answer, but whenever I try to solve life's problems alone, all I do is make things worse.

By including God in all that I do, and seeking his help on bended knees, I no longer have to face life alone. It is very comforting and far less stressful when I lay my burdens in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ. The next time you feel overwhelmed and burdened, be patient, pray, and believe in God. After all, he believes in you. Go in peace, serve the Lord.

— Robert L. Johnson II



## CROP Walk coming up soon!

On Saturday, October 5, and on Sunday, October 6, 2002, the inmates at the North Central Correctional Facility and Fort Dodge Correctional Facility will participate in our annual CROP Walk. Church World Service, along with many churches and organizations in more than 70 countries will walk to do their part to combat world hunger.

Even in these modern times too many people in the world will go to bed hungry. They lack the food that they need to sustain them in their every day life.

Inmates will walk laps around the yard in solidarity with those that have to walk many miles to bring back the food their families desperately need.

We invite you inmates to join us in the walk so that we can make a difference throughout the world. Contact your families and friends and ask them to sponsor your walk with a donation to Church World Service on your behalf, sending the donation to the address below.

If you readers from our supporting congregations would be kind enough to sponsor one of the walkers, send your contributions to:

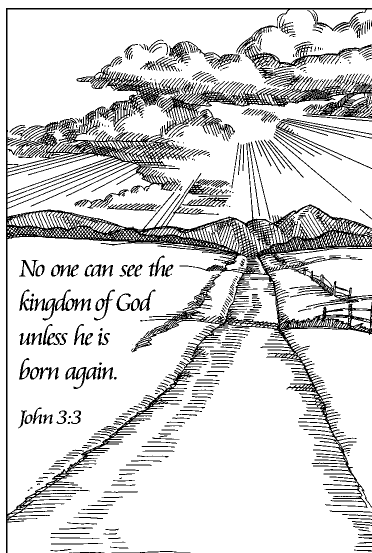
The Church of the Damascus Road  
PO Box 834  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834  
Make checks out to:  
Church World Service

Matthew 25:35 — For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.

— Robert L. Johnson II



An enthusiastic CROP Walker from the past.



No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

John 3:3

## Out of Reach

The moon and the stars  
Hold the night sky  
Why they shine bright  
God only knows why

The grass is so green  
And the sea is so blue  
How the birds fly  
There is no certain clue

The things unknown  
Are clear to the Lord  
Time for peace  
Or time for the sword

Why do we die?  
Or pass by like the wind?  
Could it be  
Because of our sin?

To have a long life  
Or to prosper and give.  
It's up to you  
The life that you live.

Pray and repent  
Forgive and forget  
God gave you life's breath  
His Holy Spirit was sent.

And with that breath  
You would know why  
His mercy is great  
After you die

To have a saved soul  
Is the best kind.  
That is my goal  
So I'm not left behind.

If I'm not sure  
How things are  
I'll look to the moon  
And the bright shining stars

The answer is there  
It's greater than me  
The things I can't touch  
But sometimes can see.

Jeremy Cagley  
March 21, 2002

## Never Alone

Feeling miserable, so far from home,  
no one to talk to feeling all alone  
who can I turn to when no one cares?  
It was down on my knees, I found Jesus there.  
For He is the Answer, to take away all our pain,  
by His stripes we are healed, no longer the same.  
So I opened my heart, invited Jesus in,  
by His precious blood, He washed away all my sin.  
Now I spread the Gospel, for all to hear  
how wonderful life is, when Jesus is near.  
Cherish each moment seek Him every day  
accept Him as your savior, this I humbly pray. Amen

Robert L. Johnson II  
12-4-2001



## Holy Baptism

FDCF June 19, 2002  
Scott Southerland



A Parable

## The Monkey

Drug addicts tell a parable about a man walking through a jungle who came across a cute little monkey. The man gave the monkey a banana, and in gratitude the monkey climbed on his shoulder. It was such an appealing little animal the man couldn't resist playing with it. He walked away, but the monkey still wanted to play.

The man pulled another banana off a tree and gave it to him. Again the monkey climbed on the man's back, but this time he put his arms around his and held on. The man decided he'd keep the animal for awhile. Later the man reached for another banana, this time for himself, but the monkey snatched it out of his hand and ate it. The man tried to shake the monkey off, but he couldn't. As time went on the monkey grew. The man had to keep feeding him until the monkey was finally bigger than the man. The only way the man could get the monkey off his back was to fall dead. Then the monkey walked away.

To an addict, the addiction is like a monkey on his or her back, and unfortunately many addicts continue to allow this monkey to take total control of their life. What is of most importance is to recognize the existence of this monkey and overcome it before it destroys all that is near and dear to our heart.

The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 5.4

August 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.

Robert L. Johnson II, 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:

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

## The Son of Man

As I look around me  
the beauty I see  
created by God  
for you and for me

The light of my life  
taken by the hand  
this man named Jesus  
the son of man

He walked the earth  
in the body of a man  
spreading God's love  
as only He can

He brings joy to my heart  
peace to my soul  
the cleansing blood of Jesus  
has made me whole

No longer alone  
nothing to fear  
deep in my heart  
Jesus is near

The gift of salvation  
by grace given to me  
the love of Jesus  
has set me free

Robert L. Johnson II

## Church of the Damascus Road

The church of the Damascus Road  
a congregation of love  
inmates and our friends  
receiving blessings from above

Worshiping God  
allowing us to see  
praising the love  
He has for you and for me

Each of us together  
God is all around  
where two or more are together  
Jesus will be found

All of us different  
yet all of us are the same  
humbly praying  
in Jesus' holy name

Inmates expressing  
His wonderful love  
eyes are on Jesus  
in heaven above

Though we are locked up  
we are able to be  
soaring with the angels  
our souls are set free

Robert L. Johnson II

## Letter about Stephani

Dear Sponsor,  
I hope this letter finds you and your family  
very well; we are fine here too thanks God.  
The person who is writing you is Stefani's  
mother and my  
name is Fabiola;  
my daughter is  
fine thanks to the  
medical and den-  
tal attention she  
has received.

She is doing  
very well in  
school and she  
will write the next  
letter by herself,  
because she is do-  
ing her best to  
learn. Thank you  
very much for all the presents you have sent  
her and our family. I say good bye with much  
love on behalf of your sponsored child,  
— Fabiola Hernandez, Stephani's mother.



## In Weakness, Strength

In weakness I have found strength.  
As I wait for words to arrive  
He promised He would send...  
Only then can I leave the past behind,  
Confusion clearing away like clouds,  
Leaving the clear sky I remember  
For today, once again, and alive still,  
Not forgotten or dead, yet.  
Now I know this is why we survive.  
The light is the joy that shows visions.  
Can you feel my happiness now?  
Don't think how it was better yesterday,  
It was never better than today.  
We have learned now what life holds,  
The lessons through all the pain,  
The lies must give way to truth,  
And the truth, like us now, will stand.  
Materials pass through my hands unobtained.  
Stolen or earned, they are still false messiahs,  
Nothing is learned except empty greed.  
As a being my life is healing itself.  
In loneliness I have clung to this position,  
Afraid to fall, too ashamed to reach up,  
So I found it hard to care for anything.  
For this is not life as we know it should be;  
There is death encased in the metal,  
Behind the glass we shatter, shatter.  
There is a cure for this disease  
Hidden in the trees that are burning.  
The fire was ignited in our fright,  
Our flight away from our maker.  
So small was the answer we didn't see,  
That has made us a slave to death for our crimes;  
Will we be lost forever in the burn?  
Can we stop the crawling flames or not?  
It is still far from where we stand.  
We can still ignore the truth,  
The troubled smoke on the horizon.

— Stephen Mullen, 4-12-02

## Bringing Up Boys

From a book by Dr James Dobson, here are some  
excerpts from a chapter *The Essential Father*.  
Chief among the threats to this generation of boys  
is the breakdown of the family.

The devastating impact of family dis-  
integration on children is indisput-  
able. A special U.S. commission of  
authorities on child development was con-  
vened in the 1990s to exam-  
ine the health of adolescents.  
This report, called Code Blue,  
concluded: "Never before has  
one generation of American  
teenagers been less healthy,  
less cared for, or less prepared  
for life." This is occurring, in  
one of the most affluent and  
privileged nations in the his-  
tory of the world. It is a direct  
result of marital disintegration  
and related forces at work against the fam-  
ily.



70% of African-American babies and  
19% of white babies in the United States are  
born out of wedlock. Most will never know  
their fathers or experience what it means to  
be loved by them. Only 34% of all children  
born in America will live with both biologi-  
cal parents through age 18. This is a recipe  
for trouble, especially when we consider the  
fact that 62% of mothers with children un-  
der age 3 are employed. The number was  
half that in 1975! Fully 72% of mothers with  
children under age 18 currently hold jobs.  
This busyness of mothers combined with the  
noninvolvement of fathers means that too  
often, there is nobody home! No wonder  
boys are in such a mess today!

Prisons are populated primarily by men  
who were abandoned or rejected by their fa-  
thers. Motivational speaker and writer Zig  
Ziglar quotes his friend Bill Glass, a dedi-  
cated evangelist who counseled almost ev-  
ery weekend for twenty-five years with men  
who were incarcerated, as saying that among  
the thousands of prisoners he had met, not  
one of them genuinely loved his dad. Ninety-  
five percent of those on death row hated their  
fathers. In 1998, there were 1,202,107  
people in federal or state prisons. Of that  
number 94 percent were males. Of the 3,452  
prisoners awaiting execution, only forty-  
eight were women. That amounts to 98.6  
percent males.

Some years ago, executives of a greet-  
ing-card company decided to do something  
special for Mother's Day. They  
set up a table in a federal prison,  
inviting any inmate who so de-  
sired to send a free card to his  
mom. The lines were so long,  
they had to make another trip to  
the factory to get more cards.  
Due to the success of the event,  
they decided to do the same  
thing on Father's Day, but this time no one  
came.



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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Fort Dodge,  
Iowa  
Permit #4

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

August 2002



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

### Invite the Pastor to Worship

The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to make the pastor of Damascus Road available to visit area congregations on Sunday mornings. The pastor can give a brief update on the ministry, sermon, children's sermon, adult forum, children's Sunday school opening or cross-generational class session, any or all of the above, and/or is open to suggestions. All that is asked is that there be time to prepare.

Call 515-955-3579 or write to: The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at <DamascusCh@aol.com> to arrange for a visit to your congregation. The pastor speaks Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, United Church of Christ, Covenant, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Evangelical, Reformed, Assembly of God, Nazarene, and a host of other denominations, independent, and non-denominational as well.

### Artists' Corner



Mike Becvar 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.