

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 6
Issue No. 3
June 2003
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

From the Inside

Worship Services

Every Wednesday night at 7:00pm in the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility the Church of the Damascus Road holds worship services. Then again on Thursday night at 6:30pm services are held in Rockwell City Correctional Facility. Before and after services, inmates are encouraged to meet with the outside visitors. Attending one of these services is a very uplifting experience.



The Word of God is spoken here.

Special Thanks

On May 6th a youth ministry team from the Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp spent the afternoon and evening with the Church of the Damascus Road and led the Bible study at the Rockwell City facility. Then on May 7th they spent the afternoon and evening in the Fort Dodge facility. As I was eating supper I felt that I had the special privilege to spend my meal time in the presence of two of them. After supper they attended the worship service, and their presence and songs were a gift from God. All the members of the Church of the Damascus Road would like to extend a very special thanks to the Youth Ministry Team.

Editor, the Flash!

Inside the Flash!

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Richard Shiner "sets the table."



Pastor Lang gives thanksgiving.



The meal is served.



The visitors meet at a restaurant afterward.

Wings of an Angel

On the wings of an angel
My cares are taken away
To the ears of Jesus
Every time I pray

Patiently He listens,
Then gently from above,
He holds me ever close to Him,
Wrapped in His arms of Love

Robert L. Johnson II 1-6-2003



Singing is spiritual and spirited.

You Can Do It, Too!

A day here can be compared to standing around with a bunch of people who just lost their wallets. Imagine the hostility in a situation like that. In prison it's not much different: anger, hate, rudeness, cursing seven days a week, arguing over who won a card game, or irritated because someone didn't get his way, always trying to outdo the other. But for these people there is a way to be filled with peace, joy, contentment, and everlasting grace, and that's by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ who has been through all the things that upset and irritate us. Life's not long enough to always walk around in a grumpy mood. See, Jesus knew that we would have problems here on earth, but he was willing to walk right beside us through this life. He said "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." He cares for and loves us so much that he died so we could live. I'm living proof of his great work, so let's be in love with Christ and give ourselves to him completely. I guarantee you will be not be disappointed. You can always go back to that misery if that's what you desire, but Christ will fill your heart with such joy you'll be a changed person, and you'll welcome him all the time with opens arms. — Matt Renaud

Prison Life

There are so many people getting locked up in prisons these days. Prison life is not easy. It's more difficult than most of society may think. Part of the difficulties in prison are the fighting that takes place in here. The results of fighting are varied: 1. you could be hurt to the point of death, 2. hospitalization, 3. extra charges.

My name is Clifford Fritz. I have been incarcerated for two years. I have never been in a fight while residing at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, but due to my actions, my misbehavior and irresponsibility in regard to the laws of society I have lost my place in life especially in regard to my family. When I am released I hope to be able to patch up the scars and wounds I have caused my family. I hope that they will eventually be able to forgive me for the trouble I have caused.

While sitting in prison I have been able to stop and think about how I have hurt my family and other people, even those I don't know, because of my actions. My actions and crime are in the past and I hope to look toward the future to redeem myself and make my life better in the long run. I feel that I was wrongly convicted, but I cannot change the court's verdict, so I have to accept the charges of my crime.

I'm writing this paper to try to convince other kids and young juveniles not to commit crimes that could ruin your life and other lives. It would hurt me deeply if my family did not forgive me, but deep down I know they still love me no matter what I did.

I am now a uncle and have pictures of my family that I have not seen in two or more years. I do not get visits from family, I feel that my family doesn't care about me cause they do not visit me, but maybe they don't feel comfortable coming to see me because I have put them in a uncomfortable position.

I have only two months left before I leave Fort Dodge. I hope to not come back and will do everything in my power to succeed at life and not go down hill if times get rough. I will ask for help when needed instead of turning away and trying to handle the situation by myself.

When I get home I will have a family get together to tell them how I feel about myself and my thoughts. I will ask why they did not come to see me and try to under-

stand their reasons. I will also take some time to sit and think about what I will do to stay out of trouble.

When I get home, it will be difficult to tell my nephews that I went to prison because I broke the law and had to do time to make-up for what I did. I'm named after my grandpa and he is on the verge of dying and I feel I have dishonored the family name by getting locked up while he is dying.

I will be honest that even though I feel I have dishonored the family name, my Grandpa took very good care of us. He made sure we were clothed, had a roof over our heads, and food on the table.

My mom was there for us, too, but my Dad wasn't. The reason why my Dad wasn't there was because he would go to the bar and waste his paycheck on beer and alcohol. He would not help pay for food, clothes, bills, or rent. All he thought of was himself.

My Dad used to physically abuse us kids and my Mom. My Mom would tell him to stop going to bars and to start being a father and husband. I told my Dad that if he did not stop abusing my Mom I would kill him. My Mom called the cops and had him arrested for child abuse and domestic abuse. He would get out the next day and apologize to us, but then later on if he got mad, he would start all the abuse again. In 1970 my Mom moved out of the house to get away from my Dad. We moved in with my Mom's Aunt Louise until we found a place of our own.

After we moved in, mom met this guy and they dated for a while. Later on this guy asked my Mom to marry him and she said, "yes," so they got married and he moved in with us and we were introduced to him. I told my Mom I did not trust him because he could turn out to be just like my other Dad and start abusing her and us. After awhile of watching and getting to know him, I started to trust him and like him. He would help pay the bills, buy us clothes, and take us out to dinner.

Now it's 1994 and my Mom and I got into a fight and I told her I was gonna go live with my Dad. So I moved in with my Dad, who had met this lady at a bar. They dated for awhile then got married. Soon he was back to the old behavior of wasting his checks on beer and alcohol at the bars. Then he would come home and get into a fight with my Mom and abuse her. One time he pulled a knife on her, so I pulled out my gun and I pointed it at him and told him to drop the knife or I was going to kill him. Mom was so so bad she had black and blue marks on her. Mom called the cops and he got arrested. The next day he would get out and abuse her again for having him arrested.

I finally learned to fight back to defend my Mom and myself, but that did not always help. I eventually moved to my Grandpa's house to stay. I told my Grandpa what my father did and my Grandpa went to the house to try to talk some sense into

him. After school I got a job. On the weekends I go to my Grandpa's to help around the house. My Dad would be there and try to associate with me, but I would not respond to him.

One day I got a call at work from my Aunt and she said something was wrong with my Grandpa. I found out after I left work that my Grandpa had a spell, so I stayed with him until that night. Then I went back to my Aunt's house. The next day my Grandpa had another spell. My Aunt and my Grandpa were on the boat. One day my brother, Kevin, and I went to look for Grandpa and could not find him, so we went back to the house and there was Grandpa sitting in the living room drinking coffee smiling at us. I told him there was nothing to be smiling about because we could not find him and we were worried. My Grandpa later on apologized for making us worry about him.

You see how my life on the streets affected my actions and choices in my behavior that helped lead me to a life of crime and to get locked up for my bad choices. I'm not using that as an excuse for my faults, it's just what helped me along.

Love is everything when it comes to hard time. If you don't have someone to care about you while dealing with the complicated side of life, there there is no point in caring about life or anything for that matter.

What I'm writing to you about is: everybody needs someone to care for you and to love you, just like you need to care for and love somebody.

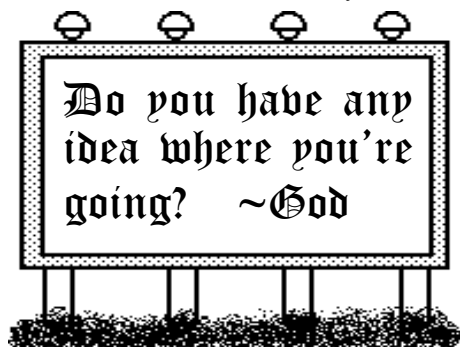
You need to stop and think about what you do, so you don't get killed or arrested and hurt the people that love and care for you the most.

Sincerely, Clifford Fritz #6061410

Jesus in Prison

Jesus Christ came into my prison cell last night, and every stone flashed like a ruby.

— Samuel Rutherford



The Church of the
Damascus Road
Flash!

Volume 6.3

June 2003

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.

Richard G. Shiner, Editor.

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.

Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge, IA



\$20 bill

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In a room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you, but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the \$20 dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air.



"Well," he replied, "what if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.

"My friends, we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, we will never lose our value. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, we are still priceless to those who love us. The worth of our lives comes not in what we do or whom we know, but by WHO WE ARE.

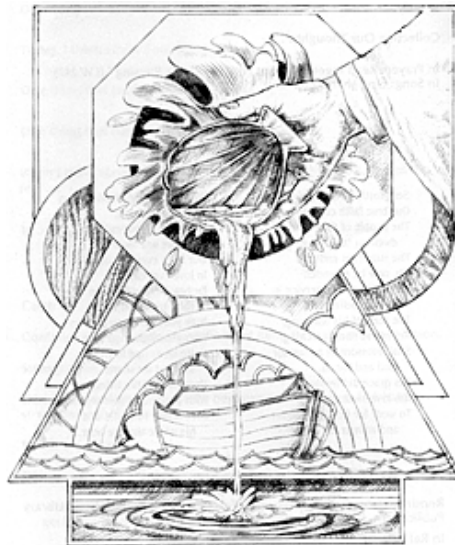
You are special - Don't EVER forget it. Count your blessings, not your problems. Never be afraid to try something new.

God Speaking

The man whispered, "God, speak to me," and a meadowlark sang, but the man did not hear. So the man yelled, "God, speak to me," and the thunder and lightning rolled across the sky, but the man did not listen. The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you," and a star shone brightly, but the man did not see. And, the man shouted, "God, show me a miracle," and a life was born, but the man did not notice. So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me, God, and let me know you are here." Whereupon God reached down and touched the man, but the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

I found this to be a great reminder that God is always around us in the little and simple things that we take for granted, even in our electronic age, so I would like to add one more: The man cried "God, I need your help," and an e-mail arrived reaching out with good news and encouragement, but the man deleted it and continued crying.

The good news is that you are loved. Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way that you expect. Expect the unexpected. Have a Happy Day!



Holy Baptism

FDCF

April 20, 2003

John Raymond Bothwell

NCCF

April 20, 2003

Rodney Lee Housholder

Dale Clell Jones, Jr.

Clarence James John Thede

May 1, 2003

Gary Goings



Enter to win!

CoDR Art Contest

The Church of the Damascus Road is soliciting art entries for this year's Donor-Partner Print. Entries need to be submitted to Pastor Lang by August 1, 2003. The Outside Church Council will choose one to use and make arrangements with the winning artist to publish his artwork (unused artwork will be returned). The winner will receive a study bible.

Artists should develop their artwork to depict what The Church of the Damascus Road has meant to them or what CoDR can mean for others.

The winning artwork will be distributed as prints to donors who give \$100 or more to CoDR. It's a wonderful way for inmates to have an impact on how the people in Iowa view prison ministry.

Praise

With a joyful heart, Praises I sing
All Glory be to Jesus, Hosanna to the king.

The king of all the ages, the blessed Prince of Peace
The one true Son of God who came to serve the least.

He shed His precious blood for all upon the cross
So that we may be forgiven, no longer to be lost.

To choose to fellow Jesus, to walk with Him each day
Give your heart to Jesus, this I truly pray.

Robert L. Johnson II 3-24-2003

In Heaven

With Him, a heavenly place.
No sin, only His loving grace.

No sorrow, for He is near.

Always a tomorrow,

Always bright and clear,

Streets of gold, a cheerful light,

Never too cold, such a wonderful sight.

Joy and laughter, loving and caring,

No sin will shatter,

God's place of praising.

Jeremiah Hemenway FDCF 2003

The Church of the Damascus Road
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

June 2003



<http://www.dodgenet.com/~cjlant/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, a sermon, a children's sermon, an adult forum, a children's Sunday school opening, a cross-generational class session, or any or all of the above, and 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.

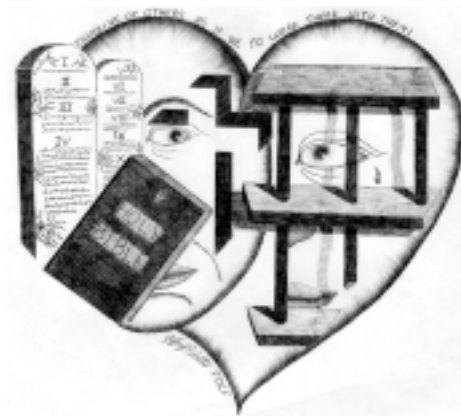
All Readers: Send Contributions

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.

Artists' Corner



Vincent Ralph(FDCF)



Jeff Roberts(FDCF)

NCCF's Church Council

Michael Batten	President
Marc Leonard	Vice President
Willie Curry	Secretary
Gary LeCompte	Robert Edgington
Nathan Sayre	Donald Wise
Rodney Housholder	Dale Jones

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.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang

FDCF's Church Council

Tom Warner	President
Victorio DeLance	Secretary/Librarian
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Jeremiah Hemenway	Jeffrey Roberts
Clifford Canny	Christopher Hoover
Terry Schoon	Charles West
Daniel Skalla	Maury Wilkerson
John Bothwell	James Elkins

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