

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 6
Issue No. 4
August 2003
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



Transferred to the
Church
Triumphant
Guy A. Olson

When Guy Olson was asked why he was involved with prison ministry, he told how as a father he had visited his son in almost all of our state prisons. Since August 1997 Guy faithfully served as a

volunteer, going to church in prison as often as possible. It was very rewarding for him, but an even more important function to Guy was to assist in fund raising to make The Church of the Damascus Road



Guy A. Olson

completely supported by individuals and congregations in a hundred-mile radius.

He had retired from Arrowhead Area Education Agency, Fort Dodge, and Lakeland AEA, Cylinder, where he served as the Staff Development Coordinator. He was a charter member of the local Civitan service club and Sons of Norway. Other boards that he was involved with are: Citizen's Community Credit Union, Planned Parenthood of Fort Dodge, and the Executive Committee of the Western Iowa Synod.

Guy was married to Janice and they had recently moved to Northwood, Iowa. Guy has two adult sons, Larry and Tony, and Jan has three daughters, Anjanette, Lisa, and Shelley.

He entered into the Church triumphant at 5:05am June 20, 2003. He will be missed by all who knew him until the day comes we will all meet in our Father's kingdom.

Speaking Presbyterian

Pastor Lang was invited to a meeting of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa in Garner on July 15, 2003. Dick Hersom, a member of the Outside Church Council of the Church of the Damascus Road, who is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Dodge, made arrangements with the Presbytery leaders to give us five minutes on the program. While speaking to the gathering, Pastor Lang said that he "speaks Presbyterian" now.

Pastor Lang and Dick Hersom also put up a display in the hallway and made videos of CoDR available to interested people.

Because of our display and presentation there are now many more who have heard about our congregation and have shown interest in coming to worship with us and to support the ministry, too.

The Church of the Damascus Road is an ecumenical ministry, supported by congregations and individuals from several different denominations. If you are interested in having Pastor Lang or one of the members of the Outside Church Council speak to your congregation or group, check out the article, "Invite the Pastor to Worship," on page four of this newsletter.

Losing One's Self

The basic principle that no one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his whole person into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded or even destroyed in the process, is losing one's self. The beginning and the end of all Christian leadership is to give your life for others. Thinking about martyrdom can be an escape unless we realize that real martyrdom means a witness that starts with the willingness to cry with those who cry, laugh with those who laugh, and to make one's own painful and joyful experiences available as sources of clarification and understanding.

— Henri Nouwen



All His grace,
All His love,
His loving face
Shinning from above.
Guiding me along
With thy helping hand,
Making me strong,
Helping me understand.
If it wasn't for Him,
I would have no thanks to give.
Things would seem dark
And I would only have
one life to live.
Thank you God for what you do:
For sparing a sinner like me,
So in my heart I'll always know,
Without you, I would never be.

-Jeremiah Hemenway

God Hath

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through.
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God *hath* promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way;
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Inside the Flash!

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1000 Marbles...

The older I get, the more I enjoy Saturday mornings. Perhaps it's the quiet solitude that comes with being the first to rise, or maybe it's the unbounded joy of not having to be at work. Either way, the first few hours of a Saturday morning are most enjoyable.

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the basement ham radio shack with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning, turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time.

Let me tell you about it. I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band on my ham radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap meet. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. You know the kind; he sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business. He was telling whomever he was talking with something about "a thousand marbles." I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say.

"Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. Too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital.

He continued, "Let me tell you something Tom, something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities." And that's when he began to explain his theory of "a thousand marbles." "You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and

some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years. Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3900, which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in his entire lifetime.

"Now, stick with me, Tom, I'm getting to the important part. It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail," he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy.

"So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to round up 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside of a large, clear plastic container right here in the sack next to my gear. Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away. I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focus more on the really important things in life. There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight.

"Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure that if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time."

"It was nice to meet you, Tom, I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again here on the band. 75-Year-Old-Man, this is K9NZQ, clear and going QRT, good morning!"

You could have heard a pin drop on the band when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few hams to work on the next club newsletter.

Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss. "C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast."

"What brought this on?" she asked with a smile.

"Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. Hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles..."

— Unknown

For a Garden of Daily Living, Plant the following:

Three Rows of Peas:

1. Peace of mind
2. Peace of heart
3. Peace of soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash indifference
3. Squash grumbling
4. Squash selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce:

1. Lettuce be faithful
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce really love one another

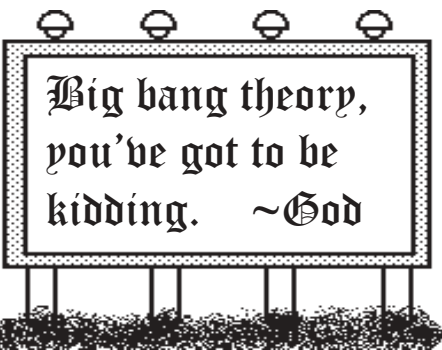
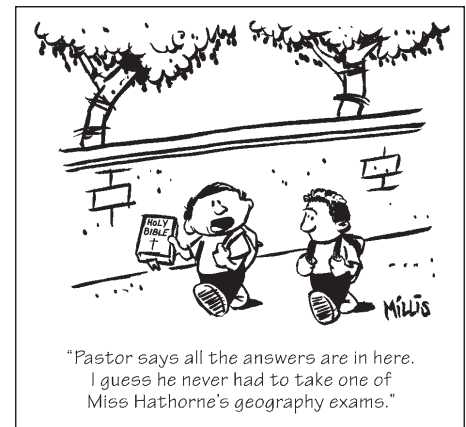
No Garden Is Without Turnips:

1. Turnip for meetings
2. Turnip for service
3. Turnip to help one another

To Conclude Our Garden We Must Have Thyme:

1. Thyme for each other
2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.



The Right Time

Your Father knows your gifts, your hindrances, and the condition you're in at every moment. And He also knows something you can't possibly know: every single person who's in desperate need of receiving His touch through you. God will bring you to that person at exactly the right time and in the right circumstances.

— Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

This Day's Thought

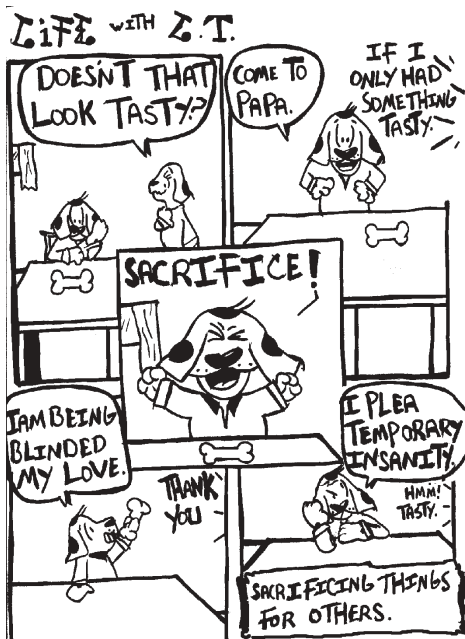
God not only calls but empowers—although the power may come only as we respond. Conversely, if we don't respond to God's call, we may cut ourselves off from the Lord's strength and become increasingly blind and deaf to God's promptings.

— Unknown

The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*
 Volume 6.4 August 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



A New Robe

Jesus was wandering around Jerusalem when He decided that he really needed a new robe. After looking around for a while, he saw a sign for Finkelstein, the Tailor. So he went in and made the necessary arrangements to have Finkelstein prepare a new robe for him. A few days later, when the robe was finished, Jesus tried it on and it was a perfect fit! He asked how much he owed but Finkelstein brushed him off: "No, no, no, for the Son of God? There's no charge! However, may I ask for a small favor? Whenever you give a sermon, perhaps you could just mention that your nice new robe was made by Finkelstein the Tailor." Jesus readily agreed and as promised, extolled the virtues of his Finkelstein robe whenever he spoke to the masses.

A few months later, while Jesus was again walking through Jerusalem, He happened to walk past Finkelstein's shop and noted a huge line of people waiting for Finkelstein's robes. He pushed his way through the crowd to speak to him and as soon as Finkelstein spotted him he said: "Jesus, Jesus, look what you've done for my business! Would you consider a partnership?"

"Certainly," replied Jesus, "Jesus & Finkelstein it is."

"Oh, no, no," said Finkelstein. "Finkelstein & Jesus, after all, I am the craftsman." The two of them debated this for some time. Their discussion was long and spirited, but ultimately fruitful and they finally came up with a mutually acceptable compromise. A few days later, the new sign went up over Finkelstein's shop. Can you guess what it read? Are you sure you want to know? Here it comes... Don't say you weren't warned.....

'LORD & TAYLOR.'

Because... And... If...

I feel like flying, and I don't know why
Birds, planes and me,
from the depth of despair,
my wings take to the air.

Because...

I feel like crying and, with a sigh,
I hold my arms up to the sky.
Hurt and anger, like a disease
Seeped into my soul as it begins to freeze.
Cold hearted, I cry inside
the pain I've caused, I can't hide.

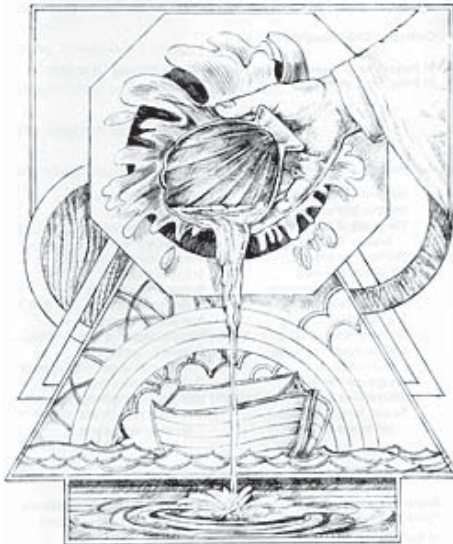
And...

I know from heaven above
Jesus Christ has shown me love.
The words I say and the things I do
Reflect a man who is completely new
And like the people and places I went before
All we wanted was more and more.
Feeling empty and alone again this day
Is a life lived that doesn't have to stay that way

If...

You open your arms and close your eyes,
Lift your prayers up to the sky.
Ask God to forgive your sins,
Let your words ride the wind.
He gave his son to die for you.
God wants you to start a life anew.
Now stand up and kneel down.
You have the truth,
You are no longer bound.

-Daniel Skalla



Holy Baptism

NCCF

July 17, 2003

Dale L. VanHeiden

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

Listen Up!

Our Father in heaven,

Jesus instructs us to direct our prayers to "Our Father in heaven," not to angels or saints. Our prayers are to be directed to God, and Jesus tells us to call him "Father."

Hallowed be your name,

Hallowed means to be revered, honored, and glorified. In this we praise our heavenly Father for who he is and what he has done.

Your Kingdom come,

This is a request for God to establish his kingdom, his rule and authority, on earth. Imagine a time without evil and suffering; don't you long for God's kingdom (Rev. 21:4)?

Your will be done on earth as in heaven,

Our truest happiness comes from our complete submission to God's will. Here we pray that people on earth might submit to God's will as perfectly, readily, and unceasingly as the angels in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Here we are taught to acknowledge our complete dependence on God for our day-to-day needs. We ask for "bread" as the simplest of our needs, and in that word we include all that our bodies require.

Forgive us our sins.

Next is a petition for God to forgive our sins. We must confess that we are sinners and need God's daily gifts of pardon and forgiveness. We are instructed to keep up a continual confession at the throne of grace, a continual habit of seeking God's mercy.

As we forgive those who sin against us.

We should not, however, expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts toward others. We must not expect to be forgiven if we cannot forgive others.

Save us from the time of trial.

Here we acknowledge our desperate weakness when facing temptation and God's great strength. Ask God to strengthen you to keep you from sin.

And deliver us from evil.

Jesus teaches us to ask God to deliver us from the evil in the world, from the evil within our hearts, and from the evil one, the devil. As long as we are on this earth, we will constantly see, hear, and feel the presence of evil, and we need to ask God to protect us.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN.

Victorio DeLance 3/14/03

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August 2003



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Invite the Pastor to Worship

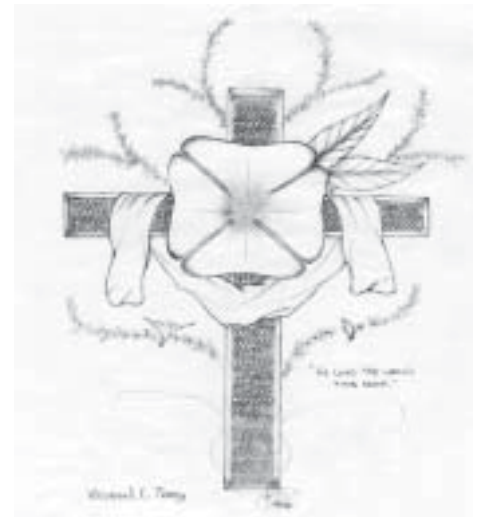
The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to make the pastor of Damascus Road available to visit area congregations 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



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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

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