

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 7
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April 2004
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

They saw that
the stone was
rolled away....



Mark 16:4

A Prayer

Life is like a flower, you shall soon see.
You grow in the spring, bloom in the summer.
You shine through the days, bright as can be.
You're full of color everyone loves to see.
Some want to pick you, but they just leave you be,
because they know God is watching over you,
and the air that you breathe.

He is your soul, deep in your heart, you only need to accept with great belief.
Fall is approaching, winter is coming, your blooms are fading,
the leaves are falling away. Life is short, but God's love is strong,
the hurt that you feel, the pain that runs so very deep down inside
will soon be gone, so just hold on.

Pray, baby, and He will come with open arms and great relief,
you shall see, you just have to believe. Peace be with you for eternity.

— Finus F. Atwood FDCF '04

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A Reunion of Members and Supporters



Seven former members came to the second Annual Meeting of The Church of the Damascus Road held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Fort Dodge on January 24, 2004. After a supper provided by members of St. Mark's, information was shared about the congregation and then the former members were invited to make comments about their experience with CoDR.

Left to right in the photo above: Mark Haase (NCCF), Chris Hoover (FDCF), Darwin VanHauen (NCCF), Victorio DeLance (FDCF), Don Henrikus (NCCF), Glenn Wooten (FDCF), and George Fox (NCCF).

The volunteers and representatives from supporting churches were visibly moved by the witnesses these men gave about how God's Spirit was moving in their lives. Several outside supporters were moved to get up and make remarks as well.

A Follower of Christ

A good friend of mine helped inspire me to write this letter about my life in the ghetto. It's not an easy life, but when is life easy? I guess it all depends on what road you take. But still, whatever road you take, you're still going to run into obstacles along the way. There are two kinds of people: one is good and the other bad. One follows God, the other follows Satan. Anyway, life for me wasn't good.

In the middle of the 5th ward in downtown Houston, Texas, I've witnessed murder, rape, and robbery. I've seen it all. I've seen crackheads get their brains blown out for no reason. I've seen old ladies beaten, raped, and then robbed afterward. I couldn't, better yet, wouldn't, tell for fear of getting my brains blown out as well. But at age six, I was helping my father sell crack, dope, and about anything else he could get his hands on. At the age of nine, my Mom and Dad were divorced. My Dad moved me and my brother to Waterloo, Iowa, and at the age of twelve I was busted for possession of five pounds of pot. The Black Hawk County judge put me in the Boy's State Training School in Eldora, Iowa, until I turned eighteen. From then on I have been living a life of sin.

I am presently locked up for violation of my parole. My parole officer made me drop a urine analysis and it came up dirty. I sat a month in the county jail before the judge gave me two years in prison. While at Mt. Pleasant doing drug treatment, I met some people that have been in the same situation that I have been in. They encouraged me to go to church. The next day I gave my life over to Jesus Christ, and today I am proud to say that I walk with Jesus every minute of my waking hours. I am also proud to say that next month I will be discharging and going home to Houston, Texas, to live with my wife and daughter. I'm happy to say I am a follower of Christ. Amen.

— Lucas Lloyd 5-21-03

Explain God

The following was turned in by Danny Dutton for his third-grade homework assignment. The assignment was to "Explain God."

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth.

He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your Mom and Dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any here. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and people finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his Father, and he told his Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said "ok."

Concerning Trees...and Us

Have deep roots,
branch out,
be flexible,
keep growing on the inside,
bloom often,
show your colors,
point your trunk upward,
raise your limbs to heavens,
and bring forth good fruit,
as long as you live.

—Mark English

Which Disturbs You More?

- A soul lost in hell - or - a scratch on your car?
- Missing the Sunday worship service - or - missing a day's work?
- A sermon 10 minutes too long - or - having your lunch a half hour late?
- A church not growing - or - your garden not growing?
- Your Bible unopened - or - your newspaper unread?
- The church work neglected - or - your housework neglected?
- Missing a good Bible study - or - missing your favorite TV program?
- The millions who don't know Christ - or - being unable to keep up with the neighbors?
- The cry of the multitude for bread - or - your desire for another piece of cake?
- Your tithes decreasing - or - your income decreasing?
- Your children late for Sunday school - or - late for public school?

A matter of priorities, isn't it?
Victorio DeLance 3/19/03



The Easter Test

There were three men waiting to enter heaven. Before they were allowed to enter, St. Peter asked each man individually, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter?"

The first man said, "Uh, isn't Easter the holiday when all your family gets together to eat turkey and then you all watch football afterwards?" St. Peter shook his head. "No, no, no...that's not what Easter is."

So St. Peter walked over to the second man and asked, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter?"

The second man replied, "Easter is that holiday where you set up a tree and decorate it and that man in the funny red suit comes down the chimney and..." St. Peter cut him off. "No, no, no, that's not what Easter is either."

St. Peter was feeling very discouraged. Did anybody know what Easter was? He walked over to the third man and asked, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter?"

The third man answered, "Easter is the holiday when Jesus was crucified and then they buried him in a tomb and he stayed there for three days, and on the third day..."

St. Peter interrupted him, "Stop, don't go any further...let me go get these other two men." St. Peter summoned the first two men to come and listen to the third man's definition of Easter. "Okay, start over again and tell these men the meaning of Easter."

The third man started again, "Easter is the holiday when Jesus was crucified and then they buried him in a tomb and he stayed there for three days..."

"Go on," said St. Peter.

"And then on the third day, Jesus rose from the tomb..."

"Yes. Yes." said St. Peter.

"And if he saw his shadow, it was six more weeks of Lent."

—Mark English

His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know he's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And...that's why I believe in God.

—Ray Kerley

Faith Is

Faith is knowing that God is who He says He is, has what He says He has, and will do what He says He will do and then putting ourselves in a position where our lives depend on it.

— Pastor Graham Steele

**The Church of the
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Flash!**

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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.

Jeffrey D. Roberts, 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

Lord, It's Changing Me!

What is all this touching in church? It used to be a person could come to church and sit in the pew and not be bothered by all this friendliness and certainly not by touching. I used to come to church and leave untouched. Now I have to be nervous. about. what's expected of me. I have to worry about responding to the person sitting next to me. Oh, I wish it could be the way it used to be; I could just ask the person next to me: How are you? And the person could answer: Oh, just fine, And we'd both go home... strangers who have known each other for twenty years.

But now the minister asks us to look at each other. I'm worried about that hurt look I saw in that woman's eyes. Now I'm concerned, because when the minister asks us to pass the peace, the man next to me held my hand so tightly I wondered if he had been touched in years.

Now I'm upset because the lady next to me cried and then apologized and said it was because I was so kind and that she needed a friend right now. Now I have to get involved. Now I have to suffer when this community suffers. Now I have to be more than a person coming to observe a service.

That man last week told me I'd never know how much I'd touched his life. All I did was smile and tell him I understood what it was to be lonely. Lord., I'm not big enough to touch and be touched! The stretching scares me. What if I disappoint somebody? What if I'm too pushy? What if I cling too much? What if somebody ignores me? "Pass the peace." "The peace of God be with you." "And with you." And mean it.

Lord, I can't resist meaning it! I'm touched by it, I'm enveloped by it! I find I do care about that person next to me! I find I am involved And I'm scared.

O Lord, be here beside me. You touch me, Lord, so that, I can touch and be touched! So that I can care and be cared for! So that I can share my life with all those others that belong to you! All this touching in church -- Lord, it's changing me!

— author unknown



Vincent Ralph, FDCF 2004

Jesus Is Lord

Good afternoon brothers! Let's open with some prayer: Almighty and merciful Lord our God, we come before you, Lord, to worship and adore you. We feel your presence and we enjoy and need your presence. Please keep our families and us happy and secure all the days of our lives. I ask you now Lord to open these men's hearts and ears, that this message I'm going to give be your words, that they will edify and comfort somebody! Lord, we love you!

My devotion today is entitled: The Mechanics of the Spirit! However, before I get started I would like to ask all you brothers to please help me with something. I'm going to count to three and when I get there I would like everyone to say: Jesus is Lord! Not because I'm asking you to say it, but because you believe "Jesus is Lord" must come from your heart. Ready, one two three Jesus is Lord!

(If not loud enough, do again)
Okay— Great response! Now I would like to read something out of the word of God. -1 Cor. 12:3— God's word says; therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the spirit of God says, "Jesus be Cursed" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the holy spirit. (Repeat)

So, now I see by the response, that everyone here is now filled with the Holy Spirit, not just any Spirit wandering around here on planet earth, but "The" Holy Spirit.

God's Holy Spirit! Now we need to learn how to use the power of the Holy Spirit so we can stand and fight against the devil.

I look at it this way. I compare this human body to the engine of a car. We need three things for a car motor to run. One- is fuel. We all now have a full tank- filled with the Holy Spirit. 2nd, now we need some spark to ignite this fuel. Does anybody have any suggestions of what spark we can use? (Take a few Suggestions)

Phi. 4:6 (Thanksgiving)-(Prater) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to, God.

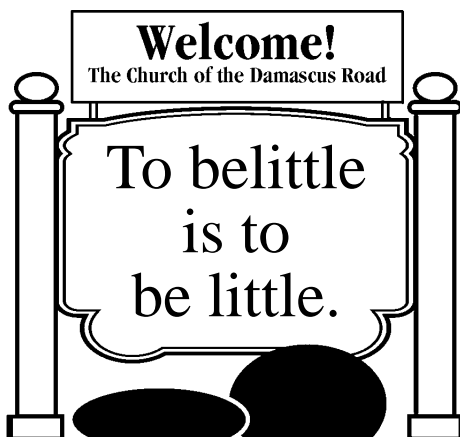
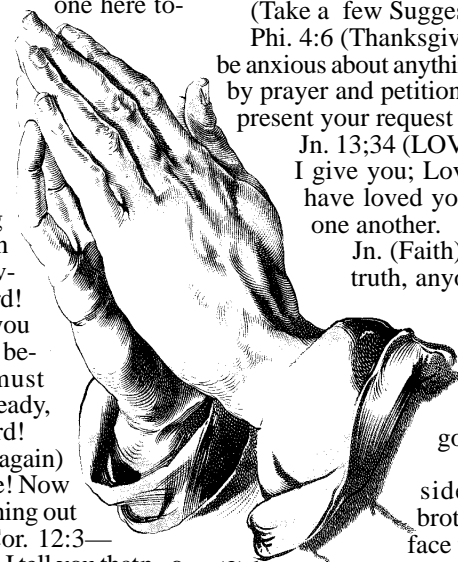
Jn. 13:34 (LOVE) A new command I give you; Love one another, As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Jn. (Faith) 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the father.

Js. 1:2-3 (Joy) Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

(3) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Is. 54:7-8 (Kindness) "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep (compassion) I will bring you back. (8) in a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you" says the Lord your redeemer. (author unknown)



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April 2004



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Invite the Pastor to Worship

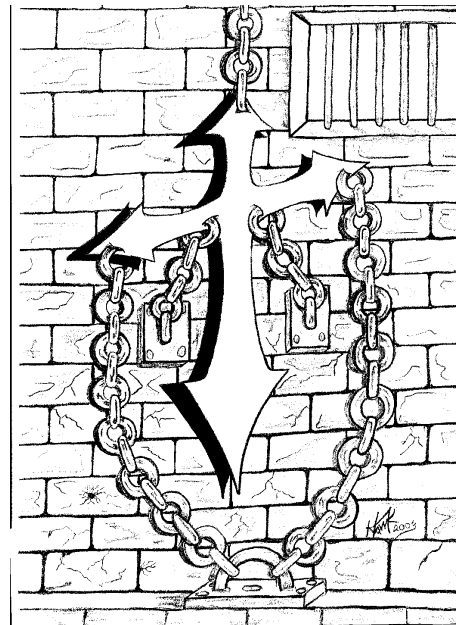
The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to make the pastor of Damascus Road available to visit area congregations 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, Mennonite, Nazarene, and a host of other denominations, independent, and non-denominational, too.

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



Darrin Haack 2004



Jaime Gonzales Hurtodo FDCF 04

NCCF's Church Council

Marc Leonard President
 Seth Vredenburg Secretary
 Gary LeCompte Dale Jones
 Robert Barr John Bothwell
 Robert Tiggs

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

Terry Schoon President
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 Matthew Carmichael Jason Schoby
 Michael Reibsaman Steve Houghton
 Brian Underwood

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
 6:30pm Fridays Prayer Team
 7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

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