

# The Church of the Damascus Road

# Flash!

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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

## It's about God

In speaking of God's grace we often hear from the "Legalistic Christian," who makes grace all about rules and regulations on how your forgiveness depends on what *you* do instead of what *Jesus* did, which is totally wrong. We also hear about "Cheap Grace" and how wrong it is to believe that because we are covered by the grace of God we can do whatever it is we want to do. When we try to work things out on our own to become righteous it will never happen. Who are we to think that now, all of a sudden, we can earn our way or find our way? Try it on your own and you will be lost. Grace is an unmerited gift. I did not earn it. It is God's willingness to allow me to stand in his presence.

One thing the devil, that great deceiver, is known for is filling your mind with thoughts that are just not true. He will try to make God's children feel unworthy and allow guilt to creep in, causing them to draw back from God's presence when they need him the most. They begin skipping church, and when they *do attend* they just sit there like stumps, constantly looking at their watches, wondering when is the service ever going to end. They have made it all about *themselves* and not *Jesus*. They have lost the desire and the love for God that they had when they first encountered the Lord. You see, whenever you make it about yourself instead of about God and you do something wrong, the enemy quickly rushes in, jumps right up on your shoulder and guilt sets in.

No matter how many times you screw up, your place is in the presence of God! God does not lock the door or change the locks to his presence. God always has an open door policy and desires to manifest his goodness in your life. He wants to heal your wounds of brokenness and forgive you. No matter how many times I mess up I can go to God and ask his forgiveness and he will call me his son.

1 John 3:1 — *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"*

— Robert L. Johnson II

## From the Pews

Here is the story of a minister who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

We appreciate your support in the life, and ministry of the Church of the Damascus Road. Thank you for your continued prayers, and gifts.

—Tony Halsrud, FDCF

### Inside the Flash!

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## Marriage Matters

We are in need of more Mentor Couples who will mentor couples that have a committed relationship in which one or the other spouse is incarcerated. One of the great by-products of the Inside/Out Dads class is seeing people grow in their life skills and their accountability to relationships with both children and spouses. Having the opportunity to help save or enhance the strength of a marriage or a committed relationship that is separated by a fence is a very proactive solution to a long term problem. Though the mentor would also be involved 'outside' the fence after release, the most valuable steps can be taken before release.

## Inside/Out Dads Class

A total of three classes have graduated at Newton with great results. New classes are beginning in all three of the facilities where we chose to begin the pilot.



## Notice

Attention! Within these walls we worship regularly with liars, thieves, gossips, backbiters, people with troubled marriages, alcoholics, and drug users. We welcome hypocrites and jealous, envious, coveting, materialistic sinners, of all types, shapes, and colors.

But the good news is this: we all have something in common — we have all learned that the Church, the Body of Christ, is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints. We have all learned that the Lord is our rest, that he reaches out to save us, and that we are the redeemed community of the saints.

We come here to worship and praise him, and to continually plan how we might be better agents of change, salt and light in a darkened world that needs the good news: that Jesus saves.

You are welcome, but be forewarned: we take Christianity seriously!

— Anonymous

## Forgiveness

Life is too short to hold a grudge, so forgive those you hate.

Just pray to our Eternal Creator and watch your animosity dissipate!

by Anthony Castro, Sr.



## Broken Chains

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

2 Timothy 2:8-10

So I say, in Jesus be free and break the chains that hold you, and God will set you free.

—Randy Elliott, FDCF

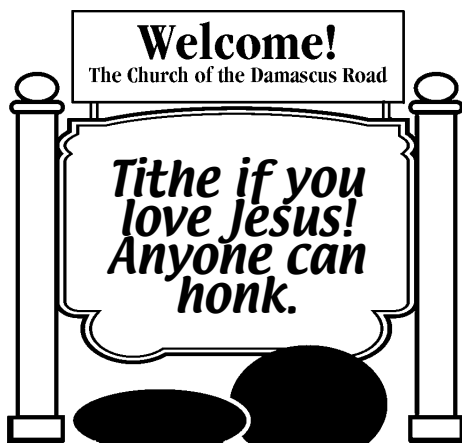
# BAPTISMS

FDCF

Travis Michael Grinnell (9/12/07)

## Memory Verses November

When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge (Proverbs 14:32). Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality (Romans 12:13). The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:40). Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud (Proverbs 16:19).



## Explanation of 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 grownups, 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. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

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 in Chula Vista. 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 trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They 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 O.K.

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.

*Written by 8-year-old Danny Dutton, Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to "explain God." I wonder if any of us could have done as well?*



## In His Presence

In Luke, chapter 10, is a story that I've read many times but have just had a revelation with the help of Jack Deere's book "Surprised by the Power of the Spirit" (Chapter 14).

It's the story of Martha and Mary (10:38-42). Martha was busy serving Jesus, and Mary was just sitting at His feet listening to His every word. Martha became upset because as was the custom the women would ready the meal and serve the men, yet Mary would not help.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Many people in the church get worried and upset about serving Jesus, the church, and people. Some have a long list of good things that they need to do everyday. But one thing is needful, and we should never let anything get in the way of our desire and passion to sit at the feet of Jesus. It is what makes us tick. Seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and everything else that we need will be added to us. It is my desire to be In His Presence, and to Hear His Voice; to be with Him above all else. AMEN

Write to: Derek Prince Ministries, PO Box 19501, Charlotte NC 28219-9501. Ask for their free Self-Study Bible Course. You will receive a 211 page book that goes through the Bible in a very unique way. You will enjoy it. — by W.E.Bell

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

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Issue 10.6                      November 2007

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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.

Rev. Carroll Lang, Pastor  
Tony Halsrud, 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](mailto: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 50501

# Reentry AfterCare!

Here's what been happening since August:

**Reentries:** two men and two women became AfterCare participants after release from several Iowa facilities in August, and we have a growing list for September. August also had several 'assists,' in which we are asked to help identify and network resources to ex-offenders released to a community that may not participate in AC. We have a wealth of contact information for Faith Based and Community based services all over the state. With this information we can "assist" people during reentry by connecting the services to those who need them. We receive many calls from parents, spouses, friends, counselors and release coordinators at the facilities, and Probation/Parole Officers in the Judicial Districts. Connecting this information to those who need it is just one more way that we can serve others. Often when I'm connecting the resource to the need other services are found and our capacity increases again.

**Presentations/Events:** the past few weeks I've been to a number of meetings, both informational and organizational:

- Orchard Place in Des Moines that helps children with mental health needs.
- Family Tyme Ministries that is in the process of securing a former retirement home in the Des Moines area that could house up to eighty people with the possibility of industry on site.
- Lutheran Family Services in the Omaha area where they have two transitional houses and are looking at ways to fill the thirty percent vacancy rate in the Lincoln area, by those who need it most. I was extremely pleased to hear that they involve participants in their transitional houses into the neighborhood associations.
- Parkside Baptist, and Saints of Salvation ministries (SOS) is networking with Christ for the City in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area to have a banquet on October 26<sup>th</sup> to use as a Presentation on Reentry. Steve Weis, from the Judicial District and I will speak at the banquet. We will present the steps of bringing a number of Faith Based and Community Based services together in a collaborative effort, followed by a training that will be scheduled later in the year.
- ICIW at Mitchellville, Pastor Arnette and I did two presentations at the facility, one for management and one for staff on Reentry AfterCare. It's always a great thing to be able to communicate with all the stakeholders in this ministry. Not only is it valuable to communicate what Reentry AfterCare does, it's just as important to dialog ways to work together in the future.

- Big Brother/Big Sister has contacted us about helping to identify possible children in the Polk county area that could be matched with a mentor.
- Institute of Self Worth: Vic Porter author of "A Curriculum for Life" and his crew met with me to discuss how we can weave the two ministries together. If you've ever visited with Vic you will hear him say that change is "within." His curriculum on DVD can be facilitated by volunteers, or the inmates themselves, and is a powerful vehicle to change within using the word. Much like the natural outreach from Church of The Damascus Road, stepping into Reentry AfterCare, we want to see the ministry be available to help support those that have experienced the "change within" after they walk out the gate.
- Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist: I attended a meeting and conducted a presentation on AC for six different pastors gathered to discuss Reentry. Prison Fellowship did a presentation before me, and all the participants feel the need to meet again to work toward a collaborative effort for a Reentry Ministry supported by all.
- Davenport at a Training Event: I was blessed to meet Janet of GROW Ministries who has been serving the personal needs of women during reentry in the Quad City area. A collaborative event is being planned for mid November, involving the Jesus Mission Camp and other Faith Based and Community Based services in the area.
- Eagle Grove, I did a presentation on Church of the Damascus Road, Reentry AfterCare, and all of its supportive ministries to a women's group that represented two churches in the Eagle Grove. This was a great group and the excitement has generated a Reentry AfterCare Team Training in the near future.

### Reaching Out:

Jim Davis from Ames is organizing a system where each AfterCare Team will have someone who is a contact person for the Team, for AA, or NA. Considering that over ninety percent of our AC Participants relocate, this will be a great connection by a "friend" for transportation to meetings and well as just having a relationship with someone in their new community.

I'm sending my very first Application to a candidate for Reentry AfterCare in Hawaii, and we are also receiving applications from TX, CO, NM, OH, SD, and MO. In most cases these folks are identified by a family member who has a positive environment for the participant to come home to, but understands that they will need some help.

## It's a Ministry, Not a Program

### Upcoming Training Events:

If you are interested in training, contact me at the address at the end of this article.

### Sponsorship Meetings:

I held the second meeting with the Sponsors at NCCF on September 4<sup>th</sup>, and it was good to see the leadership present in the room. The sponsors at ICIW are meeting bi-monthly and are doing a great job of identifying candidates. They are being very honest and observant in whom they sponsor, and have created a STACK of applications. We are now putting the building blocks in place for the other facilities as well.

Blessings and Peace  
Church of the Damascus Road  
Reentry AfterCare Director  
P.O. Box # 1613, Fort Dodge IA 50501  
#515-230-8815  
paul.aftercare@gmail.com



### \$100-a-Month Club

*Donors of \$100 or More Per Month, both Churches & Individuals*

Augustana Lutheran, Manson  
Bethany Lutheran, Spencer  
Emanuel-St. John Lutheran, Lytton  
First Lutheran, Algona  
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Grace Lutheran, Fort Dodge  
Immanuel Lutheran, Forest City  
New Covenant Christian, Fort Dodge  
Our Saviour's Lutheran, Callender  
Our Saviour's Lutheran, Humboldt  
St. John Lutheran, Pomeroy  
St. John Lutheran, LeMars  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2007

### 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.

### Artists' Corner



Corey Mitrucker FDCF '07



John Bell FDCF '07



www.codrcare.org

### 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.

### NCCF Church Council

Jeremiah Janes ..... President  
 Daniel Skalla ..... Vice President  
 Billy McGonigle ..... Secretary  
 Lyle Harris ..... Nathaniel Wilcher  
 Levi Dull ..... Matthew Beem  
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### FDCF Church Council

Tony Halsrud ..... President  
 Corey Mitrucker ..... Vice President  
 Joey Vazquez ..... Secretary  
 Randy Elliott ..... Story Tellers Chairman  
 Unfilled ..... Librarian  
 Christopher Ward ..... Andrew Richards

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

6:45pm 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