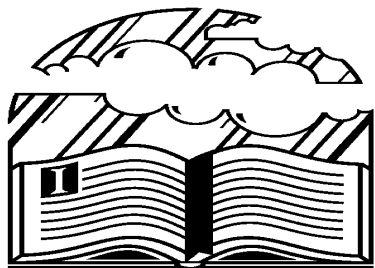


# The Church of the Damascus Road

## Echo!

Volume 9  
Issue No. 5a  
September 2006  
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



*It is time to seek the Lord, that He may rain righteousness upon you.*  
Hosea 10:12

# 101%

## Hosea Parable

There was once a man who, while walking along a path, fell into a hole and could not get out. The harder he tried the deeper the hole got.

A doctor came along the path and the man said, "Help me! I fell into this hole and I can't get out." The doctor wrote out a prescription with some advice and threw it down into the hole and continued along the path.

A priest came along and the man said, "Please help me, I'm stuck in this hole." The priest said some words and wrote out a prayer and threw it down into the hole and continued on.

Finally a friend came along the path and the man said, "Please help me! I've fallen in this hole and I can't get out no matter how hard I try!"

The friend immediately jumped down in the hole with him. The man said, "What are you, crazy? Now we are both in this hole together!" But the friend said, "**Yes, but I've been here before and I know the way out.**"

Moral? It doesn't take experts to help you out of the hole you find yourself in. What it takes is someone who has been there before and knows the way out.

What equals 100%? What does it mean to give MORE than 100%? Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving more than 100%? We have all been in situations where someone wants you to give over 100%. How about achieving 101%? What equals 100% in life? Here's a little mathematical formula that might help you answer these questions.

If: A-Z is represented as the numbers: 1-26,  
Then: H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K is: 8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98%  
and K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E is: 11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96%  
But, A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E is: 1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100%  
AND, look how far the love of God will take you:  
L-O-V-E-O-F-G-O-D 12+15+22+5+15+6+7+15+4 = 101%

Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that: While Hard Work and Knowledge will get you close, and Attitude will get you there, it's the *Love of God* that will put you over the top!



Encourage one another and build up each other...

1 Thessalonians 5:11, NRSV

## Helping Hands of Grace

For joys and tears, you've been there through the years, with helping hands of grace.  
For kisses and hugs, watching me catch those lightning bugs, with helping hands of grace.  
For all the meals, and putting band-aids on my wounds to heal, with helping hands of grace.  
For helping me with what I didn't know, and sitting through all my TV shows, with helping hands of grace.  
For Christmas Eve night, going to church to sing 'Silent Night', with helping hands of grace.  
I miss you now and I'll miss you then, for now is your time with us to end. Go be with God with helping hands of grace.  
-Ellis Robinson FDCF

## Acting the Fool

Have you ever met someone that the word humble or meek does *not* come to mind when you think of them? We are all equal in the eyes of God because all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Jesus came to

save the lost and we all are lost since all have sinned. (Luke 19:10). So it stands to reason that we are all equal in God's eyes and it is foolish to think you are better than anyone else.

You just can't seem to tell a fool anything because his mind is set right from the get-go. It is not only an attribute of immaturity to not be able to take constructive criticism in life, it is down right foolish. A fool often can't seem to learn because he just plain does not listen. Sound like someone you may know, maybe even yourself? I know I can be prone to act a fool when I fail to think.

"The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice" (Proverbs 12:15).

— Robert L. Johnson II

## Inside the Echo!

Page 2 - Enjoying God's Creation  
Page 2 - There Is Hope  
Page 3 - Singing praise  
Page 3 - Puzzle  
Page 3 - Pastoral Resumé  
Page 4 - Love Commandment  
Page 4 - Just for Today, Lord  
Page 4 - Brand of Shame?



## Enjoying God's Creation

**God:** Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long lasting blooms attract butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.

**St. Francis:** It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

**God:** Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

**St. Francis:** Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

**God:** The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the homeowners happy.

**St. Francis:** Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little they cut it, sometimes twice a week.

**God:** They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

**St. Francis:** Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

**God:** They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

**St. Francis:** No Sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

**God:** Now let me get this straight They fertilize grass so it will grow. And when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

**St. Francis:** Yes, Sir.

**God:** These earthlings must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

**St. Francis:** You aren't going to believe this Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

**God:** What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

**St. Francis:** You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

**God:** No. What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter and to keep the soil moist and loose?

**St. Francis:** After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

**God:** And where do they get this mulch?

**St. Francis:** They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

**God:** Enough. I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have they scheduled for us tonight?

**St. Catherine:** Dumb and Dumber, Lord. It's a real stupid movie about....

**God:** Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

## There is Hope

I thought that I could handle things on my own.  
I was proven wrong when my actions were shown.  
There is a spirit inside of me that dwells deep within  
The unfound barrier that has no end.  
I'm talking about the guy that chooses to sin.  
He's not aware of what he's got,  
Allowing himself to be fooled by the devil's plots.  
Take a shot, experience and explore,  
'Till you finally can't seem to take any more.  
You still don't know what life has in store,  
Until you let the guy in that's knocking at the door.  
You do your part, He does His,  
Jesus Christ loves his kids!

— Nathan D. McLaughlin, FDCF

## Singing Praise

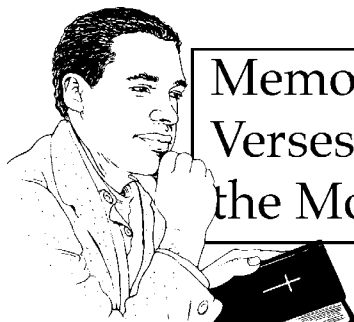
Lord, I come to you with my hands  
held high, and mouth opened wide.  
Lord, I love you, as you once loved me.  
Lord, I give you my life like you gave me Christ.  
Lord, I pray that I know you for the rest of my days.  
Lord, I pray that you guide me to your gates.  
For I am a sinner who is lost  
I am blind, for only you I see.  
I am weak, but you make me strong.  
I once cursed, now you've cleansed my mouth.  
I know not what I do, unless I walk for you.  
Lord, I needed and you gave to me.  
Lord, I was lost and you showed me the way.  
Lord, I was a prisoner, but you set me free.  
Lord, for you I live the last of my days.  
Until Christ comes and shows his face,  
I will sing in praise.

— Richard Strum 7/02/06 FDCF

## Dear God,

Please forgive me, for this I humbly pray,  
My days are forever filled with darkness  
Please Lord guide my way  
For Jesus is my savior  
Through him I confess my sin  
No longer afraid of this spiritual battle  
My Savior will always win  
As I bow my head and close my eyes  
A tear slides down my cheek  
Remembering all the times he's made me  
Strong when I was feeling weak  
Please God forgive me for the pain  
That I've caused to the ones that I love  
I know my savior has forgiven me  
He sent me a blessing today  
A mother's unconditional love.

— Bobby Dixon FDCF



## Memory Verses for the Month

### Memory Verses:

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. *John 15:5*

Jesus wept. *John 11:35*

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven. *Ecclesiastes 3:1*

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

---

Issue 9.5a      September 2006

---

An 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  
Kyle McMenamin, Editor



## Living in '06

You know you're living in 2006 when...

1. You accidentally enter your password on the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.
4. You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.
5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.
6. You go home after a long day at work and you still answer the phone in a business manner.
7. You make phone calls from home and you accidentally dial "9" to get an outside line.
8. You've sat at the same desk for four years and worked for three different companies.
10. You learn about your redundancy on the 11 o'clock news.
11. Your boss doesn't have the ability to do your job.
12. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
13. Every commercial on television has a website at the bottom of the screen.
14. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.
15. You get up in the morning and go on-line before getting your coffee.
16. You start tilting your head sideways to smile. :)
17. You're reading this and nodding and laughing.
18. Even worse, you know exactly to whom you'd like to forward this message.
19. You are too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.
20. You actually scanned back up to check that there wasn't a #9 on this list.



## Check Them Out!

The Church of the Damascus Road Librarians are inviting you to come to the chapel (MPR 23), and "check out" the books in our library! There are many genres of books to choose from! We hope to see you there!

## Articles invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting **ALL READERS** to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

## Brand of Shame?

Two brothers were convicted of stealing sheep and were branded on the forehead with the letters ST for "sheep thief." One brother, unable to bear the stigma, tried to bury himself in a foreign land. But men asked him about the strange letters. He wandered restlessly and at length, full of bitterness, died and was buried in a forgotten grave.

The other brother said, "I can't run away from the fact that I stole sheep. I will stay here and win back the respect of my neighbors and myself." As years passed he built a reputation for integrity.

One day a stranger saw the old man with the letters branded on his forehead. He asked a native what they signified. "It happened a great while ago," said the villager. "I've forgotten the particulars, but I think the letters are an abbreviation of Saint."

— Macartney's Illustrations



Charles Miller FDCF 2006



## Love Commandment

*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father and I will love him, and and will manifest myself in him. Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man loveth me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:21-23 KJV).*

What are Jesus' commandments? *That we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, body, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31).*

The word of God says that love is fulfilling the law (Romans 13:10).

God is love! When we walk in love, we walk in his realm, his very nature compels him to care for us and protect us.

God is love! He knows how to give us the good things in life far better than we could for ourselves! All we have to do is ask (Matthew 7:11).

How many parents want their children to go through life poverty-stricken, nose to the grindstone, sick, afflicted, downtrodden, downcast, down and out?

That should make you excited! Know that God wants what is good for us; "**prosperity, health, wholeness**" And will give it if we ask!

— Willam E Bell, FDCF

## Just for Today, Lord

I will live through the next 12 hours and not try to tackle all of life's problems at once.

I will improve my mind. I will learn something useful. I will learn something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

I will be agreeable. I will look my best, speak in a well-modulated voice, be courteous and considerate.

I will not find fault with a friend, relative or colleague. I will not try to change or improve anyone but myself.

I will have a program. I might not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two enemies—hurry and indecision.

I will do a good turn and keep it a secret. If anyone finds out, it won't count.

I will do two things I don't want to do, just for the exercise.

I will believe in myself. I will give my best to the world and feel confident that the world will give its best to me.

— Author Unknown

## Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays .....Holy Communion

6:30pm Fridays ..... Prayer & Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays .... Prayer & Bible Study

6:30pm Thursdays.....Holy Communion