

## The origin of this Ministry

My journey to this ministry began in 2001 when I was asked to build a project for our church that would commemorate the building program. Bags of nails were given to each family. We were asked to withdraw one nail daily and pray for our new church. After many weeks, the nails began to accumulate in the Pastor's office. I was asked to consider building something from the nails.

I had never done anything like this before, but I was willing to consider it. I decided to pray about what to do with these nails. The most amazing thing happened! I felt that the Lord laid on my heart an idea to create a cross from the nails. From a distance, the piece would look like a cross. But when the viewer came nearer to the cross, he would notice that there were words visible on it. The words that can be noticed are the "riches of Christ". Things like joy, love, life, hope, peace, truth, forgiveness, grace etc. So the meaning of the cross is this: If you take the time to draw near to him, he will give you these riches.

To this day, a seven foot high version of this piece hangs in our welcome center of the church. After receiving much encouragement and gratification from this project, I decided to continue my work of honoring the Lord. To this date, I currently have 6 copyrighted pieces and I have enjoyed the journey of praising him through artwork. It has also been a very unique way to express my faith



"Cross of Nails"  
Hidden word: "PEACE"

## Christian Artwork

I have a passion to honor God through art. It is my intention to produce works that will cause the viewer to ask questions, pursue and worship the Lord in thought. My life message is to testify to the truth. These sculptures are not intended to be the object of worship, only a means of drawing attention to God. I feel good about creating pieces that reflect the message of Jesus Christ. It has been fulfilling to express myself through this mission of honoring him.

## Metalwork Techniques

The tools of the art studio primarily involve heating, welding and cutting. All of the designs started with concepts on paper, then they were prototyped in metal. I work with a variety of metal compositions. Most of my pieces use some combination of copper, steel, stainless steel and bronze. Pictured to the left is a copper rose being heated with the torch. After quenching from a white hot heat, the copper assumes a brilliant red color. The roses are then finish formed and welded into the crosses. They symbolize life within the cross.



## Symbolic Themes

The photo below shows a portion of the cross entitled "The Message". Within this cross is a nail vine that runs throughout the piece. The roses are placed symbolically to represent the places that His hands and feet were bound to the cross. The many names of God are cut from stainless steel..



"The Message"  
The Way w/ Rose



## Artist's Background: William Wells Johnson, Jr.

Following my metalworking interests in HS, I attended Penn College. Graduating with a certificate in welding, I entered the work force. Years later I enrolled at Millersville University and graduated with a BS, M in Technology Education. I have taught metalwork to students at Hempfield HS in Landisville, PA, since 1988.



## Studio Location...

Iron Nature—Metalwork for His Glory

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