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**MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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**Burlington Man pleads Guilty to Federal Arson and Hate Crime Charges**

Davenport, IA- On May 8, 2008, Kevin Michael Ravelin, 29, of Burlington, Iowa, appeared before United States District Judge John A. Jarvey and entered guilty pleas to numerous charges related to the April 29, 2007 fires at the First United Methodist Church and the First Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Iowa, announced United States Attorney Matthew G. Whitaker. Specifically, Ravelin pled guilty to the following charges:

Count 1, Arson, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 844(i) and 2;

Count 2, Attempted Arson, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 844(i) and 2;

Count 3, Obstruction of the Free Exercise of Religion in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 247(a)(1), 247(d)(3), and 2;

Count 4, Obstruction of the Free Exercise of Religion, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 247(a)(1), 247(d)(3), and 2;

Count 5, Use of Fire to Commit Federal Felonies, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 844(h)(1) and 2; and,

Count 6, Use of Fire to Commit Federal Felonies, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 844(h)(1) and 2.

A plea agreement was entered into by the government and the defendant in which they agree that the appropriate sentence to be imposed is a term of imprisonment of 35 years (420 months). There is no agreement between the parties concerning the amount of any fine or the term of supervised release. The Court retains the right to accept or reject the plea agreement. This agreement also calls for Ravelin to pay an assessment of \$100 to the Crime Victim Fund.

In the early morning hours of April 29, 2007, Kevin Ravelin set fire to the historic First United Methodist Church in Burlington, Iowa. The structure, originally built in 1888, was completely destroyed, taking with it many important artifacts and documents related to the founding and early settlement of Burlington. Ravelin also attempted to set fire to the First Presbyterian Church, located immediately across the street. This effort, fortunately, was mostly unsuccessful, causing comparatively minor damage. Ravelin performed these senseless acts because of long-held anti-Christian sentiments. It was this anti-Christian animus that formed the basis for the charges in both Counts 3 and 4, Obstruction of the Free Exercise of Religion, as Ravelin damaged those churches because of their religious character.

This investigation was conducted by the Burlington, Iowa, Police Department, the Burlington Fire Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, including its National Response Team, the Des Moines County Sheriff's Office, the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office and the Iowa Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Investigation Crime Lab, with assistance provided by numerous other law enforcement agencies.

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