



County Corrections Gospel Mission

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October 30, 1990

"And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord
- Luke 1:17

Dear Warden:

If I could write three goals for Corrections, I don't think I would look much further than the above Bible text from Luke's Gospel. Within this brief verse rest three foundational thoughts that clearly measure a vital philosophy of Criminal Justice policy. Before summarizing the three thoughts before us, please also notice that the text begins with an assumption of authority. Management and control exist only by authority. The prophet Elijah was given his authority by God Himself. No one who presumes to manage a jail or prison or detention facility would deny that his powers were received by delegation. The Scriptures say often that authority in government, home and the church is given by God. It would be audacious to presume that any Corrections Manager would be free from ultimate accountability to God. As I have stated on earlier occasions, "Godly leadership makes the difference!"

We're in a "new age" that wants power and spiritual renewal, yet clearly wants no God Who is personal, much less One Who is revealed and to Whom all men are accountable. The spirit and power of Elijah clearly were traceable to the Lord Himself and because of his submission to God he was able to carry on a ministry of great consequence. Even like unto the days of Joseph (Genesis 41), man ultimately is searching for someone of whom it can be said: "There is one in whom the Spirit of God dwelleth!" You can be sure of this one truth: you'll never be greater than the degree of your submission to God. Any expectation of true greatness shall only be attained in humbling ourselves beneath the majesty and awesome authority of GOD.

John, the Baptizer, was here in Luke's Gospel compared to Elijah. The same God of the one was also God of the other. Their effect upon their generation was profoundly real! Here now follows the specific impact of their lives and their message. Remember, however, that these following wonderful themes stemmed only out of a personal surrender of these individuals to God.

First, **they turned the hearts of the fathers to the children.** Imagine with me the impact of such an occurrence. Incarcerated parents suddenly wanting to be all to their children that God intended. Even as I write, we each can probably identify someone who has come to love family as never before. If only we had the wisdom to trust God for the healing and re-establishment of homes. Recently, I was speaking with a young preacher from Sri Lanka (south of India), who is seeking to establish churches among the thousands of refugees scattered throughout the world. In reflecting upon the American city and prison system, he said: "My people have no country but they have their families. Your people have a country but have lost their homes." Oh, that God might turn our hearts to our children!

Secondly, **the hearts of the disobedient were turned to the wisdom of the just.** These leaders were such that they created in their watching world a thirst for the holy. Would it be possible that leadership today could gain the same of its constituents? May God work such in us that we exemplify such honor to His Word!

Finally, **leadership empowered by God will ready a people prepared for the Lord.** What higher goal could Corrections attain than to equip and prepare broken lives for the eventual and promised meeting we all shall have at the seat of God's Courtroom? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation...Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 2,4)

However you want to articulate it, the truth is this: No greater goals could exist for all Corrections than to see hearts of fathers turned to their children; the disobedient seeking the wisdom of the just and the preparing of lives for the ultimate appearance before THE SUPREME COURT.

This closing poem captures a little of the heart's feelings when God is shaping our agendas. It is entitled "My Little Boy's Dad".

I may never be as clever as my neighbor down the street;
I may never be as wealthy as some other people I'll meet;
I may never have the fame that other men may have;
But I've just got to be successful as my little boy's dad.

There are certain dreams I cherish that I would like to see come true.
There are things I would like to accomplish before my working days are through.

But the task my heart is set on is no mere passing fad.
I have just got to be successful as my little boy's dad!

It is the one job I dream of, the task I think of most
For if I fail my little boy I have nothing else to boast.
For all the wealth and fame I would gather, my fortune would be sad
If I fail to be successful as my little boy's dad.

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I may never come to glory, I may never gather gold
And men may count me as a failure when my business life is told.
But if my little boy can just grow up godly then I'll be glad
Then I'll know I've been successful as my little boy's dad.

With deepest respect and prayers,

Jack Crans
Jack Crans
Director

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