# THE CONTENDER

April 1986

*". . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith . . . " – Jude 3*

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## A Message From The Director

Dear Beloved, Faithful Ones:

It is with sincere appreciation that I address your caring mind and heart once again. This issue of the Contender caught me filled with many heavy burdens which when attempting to express, I risked appearing insensitive to you whom I love much, so I have re-ordered my thoughts and written again. Please pray that in coming issues I can be more honest and clear without risking your continued love and support.

My life is one of daily extremes as I either spend myself with the most broken of lives or those most blessed. The gap between these extremes often seems unbearable so if not walking in the Spirit, I could become easily cynical or critical.

Let me say emphatically that I praise God for His Church. I rejoice in her witness and also grieve for her pains. Oh, that a revival of broken and tender hearts might occur to the pouring out of lives for perishing souls.

I recall again Josiah (II Chronicles 34) as he wept before God with tender heart for Jerusalem. I remember his **reforms and re-establishment of God's Word** and underline in my heart the way God spared his generation. Like a precious preservative Josiah permeated and impacted his nation for God.

I recall Moses as mentioned in Exodus 32:12, 14 and Psalm 106:23 how that God would have destroyed Israel for the golden calf "had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them."

I recall Abraham as he interceded for Lot's life in Sodom as he asked of God in Genesis 18:23, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

I recall Hudson Taylor as he cried to the Church for the souls of the Chinese.

I recall God as he addressed Ezekiel in Judah's last hours before Jerusalem's captivity. "And **I sought for a man** among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, **BUT I FOUND NONE!**" (Ezekiel 22:30)

Ours is a very challenging religious era in which spiritual discernment has never been more vital. Never have more denominations, sects or "spiritual" leaders been in abundance with such outspoken causes than today. The issue of what is Truth still remains the criteria for fellowship and discernment and as always can only be settled by understanding the Word of God. Many orators can gather large followings yet still the test shall be clear adherence to the Word of God. Paul warns:

> ***"For the time will come when they will not endure* sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall* turn away their ears from the truth . . . "**
>
> -- II Timothy 4:3, 4

In Ezekiel's day, according to Ezekiel 22:23-31, prophet, priest and prince were violating the laws of God! Ours is a day when in these same spheres we thirst for God's Word. Even now I know of Senators who are asking church leaders why they are corrupting the Word of God. Our generation seeks for an answer – it hungers for a way in which to walk, and somehow I sense a thirst for an outpouring of God like I have never seen in my days.

Corrections (or prison ministry) is a great part of my burden, and certainly I continually agonize over what great breach I witness in the wall of truth. Evil pours in where we have refused to stand, and God said he looks for men willing to stand in the gap. A dear Christian brother recently gave me insight into this theme of standing in the gap or making up the hedge in picturing a man willing to chase and destroy the enemy. Oh, that we would chase and destroy! Josiah, Moses, Jeremiah, Taylor and so many others were willing to take up their cross and die!

Some say we ought to pray to God for justice. I am afraid none of us wants justice. We need to cry for mercy and then in personal zeal and commitment, get busy "rescuing the perishing and caring for the dying!"

In the '60's the liberal denominations as today were united in their stand for "social justice", and defended themes which have now evidenced themselves in gay and women's rights. They saw a gap and stood in it. The gap, thanks to the liberal, non-Biblical positioning of these men, is even wider. Evil pours in with all its stench and death.

My dear Bible-believing friend and congregation, let's know God's Word and let's "work it out with fear and

trembling before a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights . . !" (Philippians 2:15)

I am not going to hide the right answers under a bushel. It is a day of overwhelming opportunity and our generation cannot wait another decade for our involvement. Let's take the lead and develop more penetrating ministry and proclamation than ever before. Rock stars, movie stars and corner bars have had their say. Please do not be satisfied til we ache and reach a lost generation of our own nation with the real truth!

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Yours in His yoke,

Jack Crans

## Authority — Delegate For Truth

Proverbs 8:15, 16 ***"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all judges of the earth."***

Ephesians 6:1 ***"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."***

I Peter 5:1, 2 ***"The elders which are among you I exhort . . . feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight thereof . . ."***

The entire study of "Authority" opens up great related themes concerning government, the family and the church. In all three spheres, we see special persons appointed to responsible powers and responsibility. Whether a governor, parent or pastor, the criterias of power, leadership and instruction are clearly laid out.

Authority is a theme we shall briefly explore in this issue of the Contender and that of May. We believe it focuses our attention on three areas of leadership and centers plainly on God's order and direction for this world. We also believe that **where authority is not obedient to God a major breakdown occurs in lives under its power.**

We have discussed in time past, the role of law enforcement and government personnel as being "servants of God". This is a constant reoccurring theme at CCGM as we herald the challenge of God's Word within the leadership offices of Corrections.

Those to whom God has delegated authority have within the natural bounds of their roles also inherited criteria for leadership which I choose to call appropriately – **TRUTH. Inherent to government, family and church are most definite stewardships of obedience to divine principles.** Spiritual laws, if broken, disintegrate any authority structure. Hence, anything less than spiritual faithfulness while in authority promises loss of power and control to that authority and also crisis to the ones under that authority.

To explain, without exception, a government official or parent or pastor who would assume one's role as it i **UNDER GOD**, without yielding personally to God's revealed laws, is only committing eventual stewardship debts before the living God.

To whom much is given, much is required! Fathering, governing or pastoring each possess the privilege yet also the liability of indebtedness to God. **Today, except for those still moored in the Scriptures, there remains no longer even the awareness that Authority implies accountability**. Pastors, parents and presidents will answer to God for their communication and advancement of God's revealed Word and Will as obeyed in their governing opportunities.

***Pastors rule under God according to His Word.***

***Presidents rule under God according to His Word.***

***Parents rule under God according to His Word.***

***Spiritual Authority clearly exists in each sphere.***

When thinking of these three areas, please understand that each sphere or authority usually involves others delegated offices who also bear a stewardship under God. Governments have courts and police, for example, while pastors have teaching staff and missionaries, and parents delegate their children's education to teachers.

As we labor in Corrections, we constantly see the vivid reminder of Authorities in Crisis. It is almost an exception today to meet or hear of **Authorities** (parent, government or church) where the Holy Word of God is the criteria for wisdom and leadership. Ours in contrast is a day of exalting the human "rights" over the leadership and institutional **rights** and obligations of God-ordained leaders.

II Timothy 3:16, 17 ***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine (truth), for reproof (warning), for correction (right paths), for instruction in righteousness (training): that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (equipped) unto all good works."***

God's Word when ignored in government, family or church yields clear evidence for collapse in any society.

Because we believe there has been a major breakdo throughout history in these three areas of authority, we will discuss in our next issue the absolute and only remedy as being a return to the Word of God in all three spheres of leadership.

## Board Member Spotlight

This month you will be hearing from Herschel A. "Chip") Elliott.

Dear Friends:

My wife, Marcia, and I have known Jack and Sue Crans since 1974 when we were all ministering and worshipping at the First Baptist Church in Kennett Square. Since that time our families have grown in a parallel fashion with each couple taking a turn until we had three sons each. Following Mark (now 10 years old), Mike (8) and Jonathan (5), we had a little girl, Christy (3). We are waiting for the Crans' to respond in kind before we proceed any further!

We have lived in State College, Pennsylvania, for almost two years since I took a position at Penn State University as Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Environmental Resource Management Program. I believe that controlled use of natural resources and prudent consideration of the environment is good stewardship of what God has entrusted to mankind.

Since my wife is a former school teacher and I am also involved in education, our ministry within our local church (Calvary Baptist) has been in the Christian Education Program. Marcia has been faithfully teaching the 1st and 2nd grades in Sunday School this year. I have just completed a year as Adult Coordinator on the Christian Education Board and have taught the college age and an adult class within the last year.

Someone has perceptively noted that if the only burden of the local church is to middle-class suburbia, the church is nothing more than a country club with religious overtones. I have observed that present day Christianity has all but overlooked some of the clear directives of Scripture such as helping the poor and fasting. By and large, the command to "remember those in prison" (Hebrews 13:3) also falls into this category. CCGM is committed to ministering to this forgotten segment of society. Please continue to pray for CCGM and support it financially. There are a multitude of voices calling us to give our resources to things that do not matter and will not last. By investing in the souls of lost men and women, we can gain eternal benefits.

## Special Summer Need

Word of Life and Baptist Bible College offer Basketball Camps for Jr. and Sr. High Boys, June 28 - July 5 and June 15 - 21 respectively. The overall cost (some to be earned by 8 - 9 boys attending) will be $1,000. This is a good investment in preparation for continuous discipleship at the high school level. God's will be done!

If you are interested in donating to this need, make your checks payable to CCGM and designate them for the "Summer Basketball Project".

## April's Overview

(Please note that complete information regarding a month's activities would require lengthy reports.)

Six first-time decisions for salvation in Christ.

Bibles were personally delivered to Wardens of Mercer, Lawrence, Butler and Montgomery Counties.

Networked youth of Steelton, Philadelphia and Coatesville in basketball ministry. Praise God for Philadelphia/Harrisburg workers.

Began distribution of literature for Corrections personnel. "The Greatest Warden Alive Today", "Right Makes Might", "Capital Punishment: A Biblical Summary" and "WARDEN Acrostic".

Addressed churches in Philadelphia, Delaware, Lancaster and Montgomery Counties.

CCGM led ministries in Maximum Security and the Women's Division at Chester County Prison weekly.

Visited Chaplains of Huntingdon State Correctional Institution and Huntingdon County Prison.

Wrote to all Pennsylvania Wardens.

Focused again in Chester, Pennsylvania, and have praises to God for four Pastors already there and ready to work together.

Continual discovery of believing Correctional leaders is a real encouragement.

Our home and office were busy daily with young people. Though occasionally a strain, we shall keep doors open while praying for the needed Youth Center in Coatesville.

## Volunteers Needed

1. Someone to run errands to Lancaster, West Chester, Coatesville, etc. Gas reimbursement will be provided.
2. People to participate with special ministry events such as basketball marathons, picnics, etc.
3. People to disciple and follow up incarcerated lives.

## Prayer Concerns

Volunteers as noted above.

You would be a prayer warrior.

Beverage and snack foods for constant flow of people in and out of our house.

Delaware County Prison and Montgomery County Prison surely deserve prayer this month.

Wayne County in-prison seminar to be held May 30 - June 1.

Corrections Week at Word of Life – July 12 - July 19.

Broken hearts in our local Bible-believing churches.

April 1986 Report

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## On The Home Front

As the discipling ministry here at home continues, we have many praises and many prayer requests. With the constant flow of boys, there is a continual drain on our food budget. We praise God for those who are helping in this area. One church is faithful with paper products and snacks, another man helps us out with meat and a ministry nearby shares some of their surplus with us. Our God is faithful.

Please pray diligently for the boys. Many have come to know the Lord as Savior, but they have to daily struggle with home situations and streets that condone immorality, drugs and godlessness. Pray that they would understand that being a Christian is not a "religion" but a lifestyle, a personal daily walk and relationship with the Lord. Pray that Jack and I would have the wisdom to know how to best move them in this direction, to the eventual involvement in the local church.

Pray for Jonathan, Timothy and Joshua as they give up much for the sake of the ministry. They not only share their Mom and Dad but their home, too. Our burden daily grows as we continue trusting God for the powerful display of each of you through the local church.

– Sue Crans

## On Institutions

I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth.

I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. **Every institution in which m are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.**

– Martin Luther

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