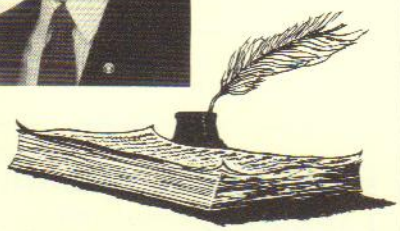
THE CONTENDER

April 1987

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

Published for the faithful supporters of County Corrections Gospel Mission

From The Director's Desk



Dear Faithful Companion:

I want you to know how much I love you and how grateful I am for your faithful **encouragements** both in prayer and financial sacrifices. The great pastor-preacher, Frederick B. Meyer, noted: "If I had my life over again, I would devote more time to the ministry of comfort and encouragement." In Paul's letter to Corinth (2 Cor. 7:5f) he addresses this same theme when he says, ". . .we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus. . .when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more." We count you so special and feel so helpless in returning your affections and tangible ministry shown toward us. It is my earnest prayer that you might read this "Contender" knowing that you personally have made it all possible.

Gratefully for Him,

Jack Crans
2 Timothy 1:9

PRISONS: Reservoirs of Accumulating Crisis

My prayer is that we would agonize for lost and broken lives as never before. Correctional facilities, courts, and mental health facilities are small, but growing reminders of a human crisis. The crisis of man's separation from God is ever growing and **our public institutions certainly mirror needs of unparalleled proportion.** Please read the following facts as reported in two excellent publications: "Corrections Compendium" and "Corrections Today." (April '87)

- 40 state prison systems operate under court orders because of crowding violations.
- Overcrowding threatens to defy legislation and construction budgets and threatens by sheer weight of numbers to turn prisons and jails over to inmate rule.
- States are in a frenzy of prison construction presently exceeding costs of $4 billion.
- Populations of State and Federal Prisons (not even including counties) have more than doubled in the last decade to more than 530,000 inmates.
- Nationwide, prisons grow by a thousand inmates per week.
- 19 states set free more than 18,000 convicts because of prison crowding.
- Crowding means increased tensions, higher sense of impending violence, larger food and medical lines, and forced mixing of security classes.
- Bulging prisons do not reduce the continued crime rate.
- Mandatory sentences and public pressure increase prison population, hence spiraling the pressures upon police, courts, and criminal justice officials.
- Inmate services are more and more restrictive due to overcrowding.
- California alone will be 44,000 beds short by 1991, and have a prison population nearing 95,000 lives.
- There are no easy answers when the public wants "retribution" for a theft of $10.00 and are spending $20,000/year to house one inmate.
- $70 million/week is the present projected growth debt of prisons and jails.
- The year 2000 will probably begin with the largest death row population in U.S. history or else executions must begin at the rate of one/day to break even by 1990.
- The need for alternatives to Corrections include the shortage crisis of half-way facilities and community participation.
- Geriatric needs are confronting prisons as well as substantial social disease dilemmas such as AIDS.
- The proportion of blacks and Hispanics is expected to increase as available evidence points to urban areas being more likely to produce chronic and high rate offenders.
- Long-term alternatives and solutions are desperately needed.

Pray for Shannon Butterfield – Now laboring at Sandy Cove Bible Conference

You Are Personally
Invited to
Attend a Special Evening of
Fellowship for Revival
on
Monday, June 15th
7:00 p.m.
Coatesville Area Senior High School
"America, You're Too Young To Die"
with Life Action Ministries
Buchanan, Michigan

Our Special Summer Opportunities And Felt Needs

Philippians 4:18, 19

". . .a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

1. $6,000 **Reconstruction and Renovation of Headquarter Office and Discipleship Area.** This cost includes plumber and carpentry costs.
2. $ 500 **Word of Life's World Mission Conference at Niagara**. . .Especially designed to expose Jr. and Sr. high youth to the opportunities and urgency of lost people. . .We want to choose 4 Jr. high boys for this special weekend in May.
3. $1,200 **Word of Life's International Basketball Marathon**. . .June 19-25th. Six Sr. High boys will compete for trophies and especially be exposed to one full week of God's Word and God's people. (These boys are 16-18 year olds of Coatesville High School.)

A Most Special Burden

I'm convinced that we need a facility of discipleship. Sending broken lives 100 miles away to Keswick and Bowery is great, but certainly not the ultimate answer. My prayer is for an outpouring of pastors' hearts, and broken spirits for desiring this long overdue ministry of care and Bible training of otherwise critically wounded and despondent lives . . .I'm not praying for THE MINISTRY, but **a ministry** which can be modeled over and over again by God's people in answer to the inevitable growing crisis of youth and adult corrections.

Local church involvment is essential. Many have cared to contribute to our purchase of facilities, but as yet have never done so. We can only act on behalf of these needs as you respond. . . Please know that we are ready now to move prayerfully forward. Although we sense we are loosing our grip on Old Mill, it's still not too late! Would you give?

In like need, Stu and Nancy Tripler are praying earnestly to serve full time – Take my word for it – The Harvest is Great. . .Stu and Nancy are so, so needed. . .Please hear the soul-cries we are so careful to represent!

May God bless you for caring with us.

Jack
I Samuel 12:24

Prayer Concerns

- Definite action for Discipleship facility. Funds and property.
- Robert Branch, Maurice Robinson, and Bob Bradfield at Bowery Mission, Manhattan, N.Y.C.
- Shannon Butterfield at Sandy Cove
- "America, You're Too Young To Die" Rally June 15th, 7:00 p.m.
- Word of Life Basketball Marathon on June 19-25th, Schroon Lake, NY
- New State Prison Commissioner - David Owens
- Corrections and Law Enforcement Officials
- Wisdom for overwhelming agendas of CCGM
- Stu and Nancy Tripler
  Linda Ingham
  Sue, Jonathan, Timothy and Joshua Crans
- True Fellowship of believing churches
- Southeast Secure Treatment Unit (Juvenile Detention facility ministry at Embreeville)
- Women and Maximum Security Prison outreach at Chester County Prison
- Praise for God's Unfailing Mercies and Grace
- Praise for you!

President Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer (April 30, 1863)

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. **Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!** It behooves us, then to **humble ourselves** before the offended Power, **to confess** our national sins, and **to pray** for clemency and forgiveness."

Rebirth Of America

by DeMoss Foundation

"Born again" has become a catch phrase of our generation. It is applied to an incredible array of things and endeavors. One newscast refers to a resurging sports team as being "born again." A do-it-yourself magazine tells how to have a "born again" attic! The once-cursed Chrysler Corporation is dubbed a "born again" industrial giant. So the list goes on, and how unfortunate, for this beautiful term has been taken out of context, maligned and misused.

Who coined this phrase, anyway? And what did he mean by it? The originator, of course, was Jesus. He utilized this expression one evening when he was approached by a prominent man named Nicodemus. An esmed Jewish lawyer, Nicodemus, me to Jesus seeking spiritual counsel. Jesus' seemingly nonsensical response was, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

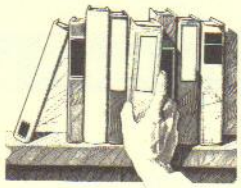
Be born again? "How is this possible?" Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied that just as one is born physically, he must be born spiritually. And he added for emphasis, "Marvel not. . .ye must be born again."

The only true rebirth is spiritual in nature. It is experienced when one turns in genuine faith and repentance to Jesus Christ and receives his free gift of salvation.

How then can a nation be reborn? Clearly it is not possible nor plausible that everyone in this or any other country would voice a collective prayer of faith and repentance. But **national rebirth can occur when a great number of individuals turn to God.** Such has been the case in the noted spiritual akenings of past generations.

The answer to life's deepest needs is not to be found in better education, good government, profitable commerce, or any other dimension of this world. Only in Christ is there hope, for any person and any nation.

The Rebirth of America is not a noble aspiration. It is a desperate need and, by God's grace, may become a glorious reality, at this crucial hour.



From The Bookshelf

Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders, Moody Press

"The real qualities of leadership are to be found in those who are willing to suffer for the sake of objectives great enough to demand their whole-hearted obedience." "It is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attacked by confession of sin, and much heartsearching and humbling before God, by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless, uncompromising, and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified."

Epistles of Christ

(2 Corinthians 2:14) – 2 Corinthians 3:7)

John 17:18, 23 – "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . .that the world may know that thou hast sent me. . ."

The above editorial cartoon indicates the cynicism and sarcasm of the secular press concerning the public and private behavior of believers. As one looks at the constant and faithful appeal of scriptures, both Old and New Testament, God constantly appealed for the display of His glory in the lives of His people.

Not only do we fight and devour one another, but often bring open rebuke upon our testimony because of subtle **or** bold spiritual rebellion.

If ever a day called for public testimony to the truth, it is now.

In Ezekiel's day, the holy city had become the "bloody, violent city (chp.22). Jerusalem had become a place of innocent bloodshed, idolatry, and a place of reproach and mocking to the heathen world. **Ted Koppel of Nightline would have had a hayday interviewing Ezekiel concerning the lewd behavior of God's people.** What was especially grevious was God's intrinsic desire to see the privileged nation of Isreal declare his glory. Instead, "those that be near, and those that be far from Thee, shall mock Thee, which art infamous and muched vexed." Vs. 5 Her governmental leaders were slaughtering the innocent; parents were dishonorable and dishonored; there was oppression of the poor; insensitivity to the widow and fatherless; hatred and disrespect for the sacred (including the Lord's Day); lewdness; violence; incest; fornication; robberies; business fraud; and to capsulate: "Thou hast forgotten me, saith the Lord God." (vs. 12)

The hour is late and God still graciously tarries. . .perhaps we can still seek His healing at our churches and hearts? Perhaps He would yet allow another cleansing fire of revival in the American city? Let it never be said of the church at the end of the 20th Century: "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 22:36)

"Exhort (encourage) one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13)

April 1987 Report

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

Tripler Trivia

Many times I am asked by people, "How can I serve the Lord?" That question often brings to mind the words I once heard a preacher say, "God wants our availability as much as He wants our ability." In II Chronicles 6, Solomon is dedicating the Temple and explains the desire of his father, David, to have built the Temple. Solomon relates what the Lord said to David in verse 8, ". . .forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, **thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."** David was commended of the Lord for his willingness.

Even though David was not able to build the Temple, he did not stop there. In I Chronicles 22:5, David "prepared abundantly" for Solomon to have the material to build the Temple. **The Lord may not always use us as the instrument to accomplish His goals, but He expects us to utilize our abilities to aid His work.**

Are we willing to serve the Lord? We can start serving the Lord daily by sharing what He has done for us with others. Our preparation is our daily study of the Word and prayer time with our Father. If you are burdened for a particular need, find out all you can through books or others about that field. If we are willing to serve, the Lord will direct our paths. Be patient! Remember, Moses spent 40 years of preparation (little did he know it) in the desert of Midian before he became the Lord's instrument to free His people from Egypt.

Because He lives,

Stu, Nancy & Johanna

P.S. I heard a few comments about the title of this section of the Newsletter. People wondered why there was not a trivia question. Well, here it is! Keeping with the thoughts on willingness and preparation, where is Solomon's Temple located? The answer will be in next month's column.

Contender is a monthly publication of County Corrections Gospel Mission, P.O. Box 1136, Coatesville, Pennsylvania 19320.
(215) 383-9378
County Corrections Gospel Mission is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Director, Jack Crans; Secretary, Linda Ingham; Board of Advisors, Mr. Mark Blair, Dr. Howard Blandau, Dr. Joseph F. Eckman, Dr. Herschel Elliott, Mr. Joseph R. Pitts

Pray for Mark and Roger – Two very special young men whom we love.

Tear off and return only as God leads.

Dear Jack:

☐ **I/we have prayed and sense definite leading to support Stu and Nancy Tripler. Here is my/our pledge to encourage them in their ministry at CCGM.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount per month: _____