THE CONTENDER

August 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 Beloved Encourager:

I greet you in the unceasing bonds of Calvary's love!

Summer is passed away, while the season of Autumn boldly moves in to prepare all nature for the arrival of winter. Crisp, cool evenings, shortening days and the annual search for lunch boxes herald also a soon return to school. In the distance one can hear the cadence of drums as new lines of youth prepare a marching band and the unison voices of helmet-clad boys call out their signals for the start of the football season. Mothers scurry through department stores trying to redress their growing troops while fathers seemingly keep pace with World Series hopefuls and NFL replays. Sunday Schools adapt new curriculums, universities are in full swing and someone inevitably says, "Christmas is just around the corner!" On and on we could continue the evidencing of summer's end.

Jeremiah said with tears, "The harvest is past, summer is ended, and we are not saved." (8:20) His burden was for God's people to return to God's favor and repent both personally and nationally for the healing of their land. His intercessions were violently rejected and ushered in the captivity and collapse of his beloved Jerusalem. Just as seasons come, they go. The days for planting and harvest inevitably end as so often lives are left with memories of failing obedience, aimlessness and personal bankruptcy. **As God brings the day of opportunity and blessing, so also arrives the hour of reckoning accounts and confession of our stewardship.** Just as summer can be spent with regret and failure, so also the personal seasons of our lives.

Recently, I reviewed the prophetic book of Joel and was reminded of this same theme of seasons of blessing being terminated by days of accountability. God sent a plague of locusts to humble the people of God and to warn them of an even more terrible day, the day of the LORD. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, it is nigh at hand. . .Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel 2:1, 12, 13

The Scriptures speak so loudly and clearly that present history is on a collision course with divine justice. Though Israel was established from its plague, the birth pangs of God's judgment were unheeded in her continued history of captivities and dispersion.

America is a Gentile nation. We have been living in the summer and harvest seasons for a long time. We are rich and increased with goods – **abundantly endowed with God's Word, but so tragically nearing a day of reckoning.** Our sins are flagrant, excessive and malignant. God is staying His hand – how long?

What a day to sound the alarm and blow a trumpet. It was God's priests who were called to be heralds of His holiness, and today the burden remains at the altars and pulpits of America to sound the alarm. Is there repentance and weeping in God's house? Are there intercessions for our broken nation? Could it really be true prophetically that summer is past, the harvest is ended and we are not saved?

Oh, that we would say with weeping – There is a balm in Gilead! Oh that we might be intercessors before the inevitable arrival of the day of the LORD.

With urgency and love,

Jack Crans

American Correctional Association Conference Report

By Jack Crans

The following thoughts I hope will capsulate for you the spirit and agenda of the New Orleans, 117th Congress on Corrections attended by me in early August.

- The opening plenary session was moving, as in the context of emerging and difficult Corrections agenda, a chaplain likened the Conference to the hopeful expectations of the eventually tragic space-shuttle crew "Columbia" who stated: "We can do it!" The chaplain soberly asked, "Can we?" He continued by calling Corrections officials to humbly admit their needful dependence on God. "It's too big for us alone!"

- Su Cunningham (ACA President) warned: "Tough times are ahead and Corrections leaders must have courage

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to assume leadership roles and boldly do what is right!" She also expressed deep concern over rising statistics of the young, violent offender. 53% of violent crimes in the U.S. are committed by children (FBI statistics '86).

● Corrections Commissioner of California (formerly Juvenile Offender Executive) said, "We did the best we could with the kids since we had no power to effect their parents, teachers and preachers."

● Drug Enforcement Agency Representative for President Reagan stated, "Cocaine is the achilles heel of the United States". He also firmly stated that "punishing the user" was the only hope for curbing illegal drug trade. "Demand is the problem needing addressed – not supply! There was a 350% cocaine death increase last year in the U.S."

● A Federal Judge said, "Two words exist on which freedon hinges: Respect (Authority) and Responsibility (Stewardship)".

● 95% of all inmates eventually leave the system and enter the community.

● There are 500,000 reported heroin addicts in the United States and heroin price is down while its purity is up.

● There is a crisis in Corrections. Now is the hour to seize the opportunity for involvement.

● Only 15% of State prisoners nationally are employed during incarceration. Idleness abounds.

● "Corrections is caring!" On the issue of the death penalty, it was clearly stated, "Corrections officials are caring and sensitive to their residents. We are emotionally absorbed in their lives. Why must we, the caring, be the executioner?"

● There are 22,800 ACA members and their voice is growing very strong.

● As I reflect on so very much of the Conference, I must say I only wish there were more evidence of believers in the system. If ever Christians ought to be in the forefront, it certainly would be necessary in Corrections. **Why**, as a general and almost predictable observation, **has the Christian separated himself out of this world? We need to re-evaluate the difference between separation out of the world and separation from the world.**

● I praise God we can daily attempt to be in the midst of perishing men!

A Letter From Linda

Praise the Lord, CCGM offices are now in the basement of the Crans' home. It is beautiful and spacious. . .feel free to stop by and see!

Continue to pray for the Bible study with the women at Chester County Prison. This month I had the most wonderful privilege of taking my mother with me to share her testimony with the girls that it is possible (by the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit) to grow up in an ungodly environment and still live a victorious Christian life and bring glory to God! "According as **His divine power** hath given unto us **all things** that pertain unto **life** and **Godliness** through the **knowledge of Him** that hath called us to glory and virtue." II Peter 1:18 This was not only a blessing and encouragement to the girls, but it was most special to me as I have come to realize that next to salvation, the most precious gift God has given to me is the heart of my mother. . .to see broken lives of girls made whole through all that becomes theirs due to Jesus' death on the Cross. For this I can only give **praise** and **glory** to God, my Heavenly Father!

Pray for the following girls who continue to be such a blessing to me as they ". . .grow in **grace** and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!" II Peter 3:18

Dee-Dee (she's now at Muncy State Correctional Institute), Sharon (she's now at the Gaudenzia House), Melissa (my friend and former inmate, Beth, has been writing to and visiting her), Valerie, Ruthie, Billy Joe, Sugar, Cynthia, Judy, Chrissy, Monique (newly saved), Dawn, Brenda.

It is my hope and prayer that in your daily walk with the Lord you may". . . **know Him** and the **Power of His resurrection**" as ". . .it is **God which worketh in you** both to **will** and to **do** of **His** good pleasure" **by His Spirit!** Phil. 3:10; 2:13; Gal. 5:25

With His Love,
Linda Ingham

Suicide And Youth

By Stu Tripler

Edwin Schneidman has defined suicide in ten commonalities based on his study of those who have attempted suicide. The Bible answers each one of the commonalities (interestingly, many of the commonalities of suicide are similar to those of depression) and provides comfort in time of need.

1st Commonality The common purpose is to seek a solution.

Biblical Answer We can find the answers in the Lord. Psalms 108:12, 13 "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly." Phil. 4:13; I Peter 3:15

2nd Commonality The common g is the cessation of consciousness.

Biblical Answer Because of sin our conscience is pricked. Romans 8:7 ". . . carnal mind is enmity against God. . ." Romans 2:15; Phil. 4:7

3rd Commonality The common stimulus of suicide is intolerable psychological needs.

Biblical Answer Our conscience can be healed through forgiveness in Christ. Psalms 86:5 "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Ps. 32:1-5; Jer. 31:33-34

4th Commonality The common stressor in suicide is frustrated psychological needs.

Biblical Answer Our minds can be changed. Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is th good, and acceptable, and perfect, will o God." Phil. 2:5; 4:6-10

Continued

5th Commonality The common emotion in suicide is hopelessness-helplessness.

Biblical Answer We have hope/help in the Lord. Psalms 31:24 "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Prov. 13:12; Ro. 15:13

6th Commonality The common internal attitude is ambivalence.

Biblical Answer We can understand the struggle and know it can be overcome. Ro. 7:15-25: Ro. 8:1-13

7th Commonality The common cognitive state is constriction.

Biblical Answer When there seems like no way out, Christ can provide streams in the desert and a way in the wilderness. I Cor. 10:13; Is. 43:19: Mt. 19:26

8th Commonality The common action is aggression.

Biblical Answer Actions reveal what is in the heart. Through Christ our minds can be renewed. Prov. 23:7 "For he thinketh in his heart, so is he!" Mt. 12:34-35: Ro. 12:1-2

9th Commonality The common interpersonal act is communication of intention.

Biblical Answer We can help bear another's burdens by leading them to Christ. Gal. 6:2: Job 34:28 "So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted." Ps. 34:15; Prov. 21:13

10th Commonality The common consistency is with life-long coping patterns.

Biblical Answer New habits and patterns can be established in Christ. Titus 2:7; Eph. 4:17-32

Christ most definitely is the answer!

Tripler Trivia: Jael was the answer to last month's question. Who did John say he was thankful for that he had a good reputation among the brethren?

On Some Have Compassion

Making A Difference

By Jack Crans

John 17:18 "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them **into the world.**" – Jesus

Galations 1:15, 16 "But when it pleased God. . .to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him **among the heathen** . . ." – Paul

Philippians 2:15 ". . .**in the midst** of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. . ." – Us

On the basis of clear evidence only suggested above, can Believers sincerely:

- have Christian schools while at the same time ignore the public school crisis and its youth?
- say they are missions minded and ignore the degenerating family and neighborhoods of our own cities?
- pray for abused children and juvenile delinquency, and ignore the unending burdens of government programs such as Children's Services, Juvenile Probation and Parole?
- be concerned about crime and drug abuse and ignore the idle masses of aimless lives huddled or hustling in our streets?

If Christians would dare enter the arena of real life and its broken situations, we would find resultant victory because of our presence!

Crime Stats

There are more inmates in all our prisons than live in the cities of Atlanta or Pittsburgh, the states of Wyoming or Alaska or 39 nations of the world.

Of every 100 crimes committed, only half are reported and only 10 arrests are made. Of those 10 arrests, only 5 to 6 will be charged with the result of only 2 being sentenced.

*Both from *Crime and Its Victims*, by Daniel W. Van Ness.

Prayer Concerns

That God would impact Pennsylvania Corrections through the apt leadership of Commissioner, David S. Owens, Jr., pictured above.

That the redeemed in Law Enforcement and Corrections would "say so" and their commitment to God's glory be evident in their professions.

That Warden Eugene Daugherty of Clarion County recover fully from heart by-pass surgery.

That Mr. Skip Alexander (FBI, Washington, D.C.) abound in wisdom as he leads for Christ on the National Board of the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers.

That Philadelphia Policeman, Mr. Maurice Hughes, will have courage and guidance as he has been named Chaplain for the Philadelphia Police Department.

That God would lead and provide for the exact facility for discipleship of broken yet regenerate men and women.

That God would be praised for His faithful provisions and manifold attendance to our needs daily.

That our growing involvement with teens would be molded into effective grounding of young men for Christ.

That Stu and Nancy Tripler would experience the total needed financial support of their call to serve Christ at CCGM.

August 1987 Report

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

Warden's Corner

This month we hand-delivered Bibles to the two top officials of the American Correctional Association at their annual Conference.

A meeting was held with two State Commissioners and a Superintendent of a Georgia Penitentiary.

From The Bookshelf

The highest recommendation we can ever make to you is the reading of **The Bible, written by the Living God!**

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye **received the Word of God** which ye heard of us, ye received it **not** as the word of men, **but** as it is in **truth, the word of God,** which **effectually worketh** also in **you that believe.**" (The Holy Spirit takes God's Word and it works in us to conform us to His image!) I Thes. 2:13

"...If ye continue in **my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall **know the truth and the truth shall set you free.**" (Free from the penalty and **power** of sin in your daily life!) John 8:31,32

"Let the **word of Christ dwell** in you **richly.**" (Nothing else will satisfy you like Him and His Word.) Colossians 3:16

Special Need Of CCGM

If any of you have in your library and would be willing to sell to CCGM a copy of the book, *Designed to be Like Him*, written by Dwight Pentecost and published by Moody Publishing Company, we would be extremely grateful! We make this request because this book contains excellent truths for young Believers and is no longer published. Thank you!

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: _____

One Reason Why CCGM Exists

"It is impossible for you and I to bear the deafening noise of the world's heartaches, but **there is one place in the world where there is an accumulation of all human suffering that is in the heart of God.** God then takes some of those heartaches and funnels them down into the hearts of His servants so they might sense His burden and proclaim His message. This **holy anxiety** is an indispensible prerequisite to a clear communication of Christ."

– Ravi Zacharius, Evangelist

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