August 22, 1989

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Dear ^F2^:

The recent 119th Congress of Corrections just closed in Baltimore, Maryland. Thousands of powerful leaders rallied to the theme: "Facing the Crisis in Corrections". The mood, as usual, was one of renewing old acquaintances and refreshing of spirits, but unquestionably woven through the air was a new era of vision and increased shared responsibility in Corrections management.

Chief Executive Officers with staggering burdens relentlessly addressed deep national concerns with the sincerity of mature leadership. As a minister of the Gospel, I walked daily through the maze of our national power-brokers for Corrections. My spirit vacillated from excitement to stress as I sensed the agonizing truth of a nation in trouble. Often I wished that the average preacher could be so aware and sensitive as Corrections managers are for the realities of our national crisis as reflected in our prisons. My heart was turned to the need of the world two thousand years ago when it was said of John the Baptist, "He shall turn the hearts of fathers to their children and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just and make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

The Corrections Crisis cries the increased reality of our nation's Spiritual Crisis! If ever we needed fathers to turn to their children, it is now. If ever we needed the disobedient to turn to the wisdom of just men, it is now. If ever we needed a people prepared for the Lord it is today. You, as a Corrections leader, must be encouraged and commended for keeping the burden alive. As an ACA member, my heart is all the more charged to address the crisis of our nation's moral and spiritual fabric. How can one resist being sober in an hour such as we now face?

In light of the need for vision and shared responsibility in the crisis of Corrections, it only seems appropriate that I introduce a man who in sacred Scripture stands above his generation. As the primary advisor to a King and as spiritual leader of his nation, he mirrors for each of us an example worth emulating!

First, Samuel ministered unto the Lord. He sought the heart of God on a daily basis and therein found the necessary wisdom and power for each moment's agenda. Secondly, Samuel ministered in a day when vision was rare and God's Word was hidden. Like unto our own present dilemma, the tendering of hearts and the organizing of minds seems impossible apart from the available resources of heaven. Third, Samuel matured as he spent time in the presence of the Lord. He was recognized nationally as a leader with unusual vision and direction. Finally, Samuel let none of God's wisdom fall to the ground. He made application of spiritual truth to the practical dilemmas of his nation and its leaders. Perhaps summarizing his character best is this quote from his own heart: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King." (I Samuel 12:23-25)

My closing thought is that you might know both the presence and wisdom of God. I surely count it a joy and privilege to have a small part in sharing the responsibility and seeking the vision necessary for the impacting of the Crisis in Corrections!

May the Lord richly bless you!

Jack Crans
Director

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Enclosure