# THE CONTENDER

February 1988

*". . . 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 Family in Christ:

As I sit down to compile thoughts on our most recent month of ministry, I must quite frankly confess that my mind is once again spinning. To capsulate and edit so many critical relationships and opportunities seems almost anticlimatic. The more difficult facet of this work which we want you to clearly understand is that we honor confidences, and quite frankly we cannot begin to tell everything. Precious lives have opened to us most wonderful dialogue and relationships for which we have been praying and trusting God. Wardens, law enforcers, pastors, the incarcerated and neighbors have broken our hearts with need and challenges which drive us to Him that called us.

As a result, our Newsletter at best is a vapor compared to the deep waters of ministry. Adoniram Judson, upon going to Burma, spoke a most clear truth which we at CCGM can relate to so vividly. He said, "I have discovered a gold mine of human need, and I am coming to you **asking that you would hold the ropes** as we seek the treasure." I am reminded of the Lord's encouragement of Paul in Corinth when He assured him " . . .Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: **For I have much people in this city!"** (Acts 18:9,10)

I wish I could detail for you the OPEN DOORS and the special lives that are opening them. I wish I could cry to you the specific names of dear men and women for whom we labor that Christ might be unto them Lord and Redeemer. I wish you could sit with me among inmate brothers and sisters hungry to grow in grace, and I also wish that you could be a companion of the aimless youth and adults reflected daily in our cities and market places.

Dear, dear loved one, please understand that WE are in a most needy FIELD OF MISSIONS. Terms such as "missionary, harvest, unreached, church planting, indigenous peoples, opposing governments, whitened fields, rescue and perishing" are as legitimate at "Home" as they are "Foreign". **Calvary's blood is America's only hope!**

I am absolutely convinced and unquestionably surrendered to the conviction that America needs revival. The same power and outpouring of the Holy Spirit that moved Believers to China is nothing short of what must take place if our own generation and that of our children have any hope for the America many of us have enjoyed.

It was said so wisely by John Whitehead in his book, *The End of Man*, that the quest of men for "personal peace" has been redefined and **secular man today is saying,** "just leave me alone, don't trouble me with the troubles of other people, whether across the world or across the city. **Let me live my life with minimal possibilities of being personally disturbed, regardless of what the result will be in the lifetimes of my children and grandchildren."**

For you who still are ready to dream and labor, we beseech you to pray for us. We shall be no more effective than the hand of our God upon us through you.

To Him be Glory in the Church,

JACK CRANS
Galations 1:3-5

## Nehemiah: A Testimony To The Church

By Jack Crans

"And I arose in the night . . ."
—Nehemiah 2:12

Approximately 450 years before Christ, Nehemiah wept over Jerusalem. He heard reports of the broken city and by God's mercies through a Gentile king was able to powerfully **exalt the glory of God in the midst of opposing leaders and peoples.** I love the imagery of Nehemiah **examining the ruins while all the world slept.** His interest in the testimony of Jerusalem was a vivid example of God's desire for glory in the midst of this evil world.

According to Nehemiah 2:10, "it grieved them (the unbelieving neighbor) that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." So shall it ever be until Christ returns in His glory. There shall always be an opposition, yet what a privilege to know that we can rise up in the darkness of this world and zealously contend for the faith of the Gospel.

The army of builders called together in Nehemiah 3 is again an inspiring testimony of God's willingness to move men when they **set themselves to be ser-**

*Continued on next page.*

**Nehemiah** - *Continued*

**vants to His glory in the midst of this world's system.**

We may very well be in the final seconds of this day of grace. **The urgency of these late moments ought to bring us before His throne for perhaps our final orders.** Oh that we might have "a mind to work"! (4:6)

## Pioneering: Missions At The End Of The 20th Century

By Jack Crans

Traditionally, we have all been excited and moved at the rich history of Christian Missions. Who has not heard inspiring illustrations of Hudson Taylor, Jim Elliott and the faithful train of evanglists, revivalists and missionaries? I have been absolutely broken at times by the stirring testimonies of dedicated lives and have not failed to retell the great stories in my own preaching. The more I live, however, the more I am convinced that we are entering new and critical agendas which are going to require a rethinking of priorities, resources and strategies both in the local church, the Christian college and surely the Mission agencies.

This past summer, Destiny '87 was convened in Atlanta, Georgia, for the purpose of raising a missionary consciousness for not only Urban America but also the critical shortage of minorities represented among the missionary teams of popular mission boards. **Why in a country such as America is there a shortage of indigenous missionaries for the increasing crisis of Urban America and the world?**

Questions needing to be raised and thought upon are difficult to even discover no less ask. After all, America has been rather proud of her missionary efforts around the world. We have been the source of great missionary vision for years. How could we be failing now? Is the urban church so weak that it is not reproducing itself in the private sector of our housing projects and high-rise neighborhood? Are ministries such as Urban Alternative under the direction of Pastor Tony Evans signs of the times? Are ministries such as Campus Crusade, Prison Fellowship, CCGM and Child Evangelism indicating something? Even as I write, I am in question. Look at the powerful outreach of Word of Life Basketball Marathons and the Bill Gothard Seminars and Focus on the Family. Moral Majority, Pro-Life Movements, Bible Colleges and Christian Media abound yet **our nation appears to be classified more and more as a traditional mission field.**

I do not need to be told what is the Biblical agenda for Missions. I know it must be **the effective work of the local church!** As a matter of fact, the American Sunday School Union began in 1790 and posed quite a challenge for many years until finally the local church assumed the responsibility of the church school, and now, of course, it is no phenomena at all. The point of the matter is this, **the Sunday School movement was actually the pioneer that brought the poor outcasts of society into the church.** Could it be that efforts to reach the family, the college students and the homeless would one day be the work of the local church?

**Can we look for the day when Mission agencies are not needed? Can we look for the day when Bible institutes are equipping the underprivileged and academically misfortuned?** Can we look for the day when all who sing hymns in assemblies on Sunday morning will speak boldly of Him who saves in the workplace and setting of home?

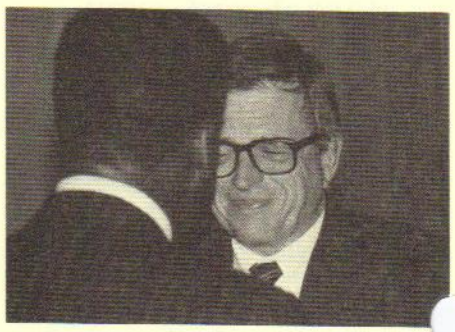
It would be the dream of every mission board to have indigenous leadership. **Urban America, as well as the Third World is drunk with sins' sway.** Pioneers are needed! **Questions need discovered and wrestled with in urgent prayer!** *Bible School faculties, mission administrators and pastors need to come together in critical "think tanks" for analysis of the changing agendas and opportunities for Missions.* I actually believe that with serious prayer and available hearts as the spirit of the dear widow of Luke 18, we could yet see marvelous coordination of resources within the body of Christ.

Man has always been a dreamer. The Olympics just ended and evidenced for us; many a dream come true. Athletes achieved life-committing goals, parents and nations swelled with pride. Industrialists and financiers will dream and think-tank on profits and competition. Senators and armed forces will dream and labor for national freedoms and the Church, the blood-bought purchased possession of Christ will. . .?. . .?. . .? America waits! Its cities linger on hopelessness! **Oh that we might ask the right questions and have the courage to answer them!**

CCGM is available wherever possible to at least participate in needed dialogue and prayer!

## Warden's Corner

Pennsylvania's Commissioner of the Bureau of Corrections, Mr. David Owens visited the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. where he was able to spend considerable time with members of Prison Fellowship's fine leadership staff. Particular fellowship was carried on between Dr. Daniel VanNess (President of Justice Fellowship) and Commissioner Owens regarding alternatives to incarceration and various opportunities and experiences now particular to the needs of Pennsylvania. **I was especially impressed by the warm love and attention extended by the Prison Fellowship staff in making our Prison Commissioner a very special guest in our nation's capitol.** The prophetic challenge of Mr. Colson at the Leadership Luncheon I am sure will be heard again and again! CCGM extended a very sincere thank-you to the Prison Fellowship family for making the journey most exciting. Above all, we praise God for our Commissioner who thought it important enough to travel to such an event.



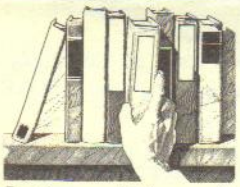
*Commissioner David Owens being greeted by a most humble servant, Mr. Chuck Colson.*

**Commissioner Owens has been named Co-Chairman to the**

**Pennsylvania's Governor's Prayer Breakfast to be held in Harrisburg on May 10.** The keynote address for that critical assembly of leaders will be Mr. Ron Powell, New Hampshire's Correction's Commissioner and beloved Brother in Christ.

We have been blessed this month by several gracious notes and phone calls from Corrections personnel which tend to stimulate our labors and directions in this work.

*Please continue to pray for Corrections and Law Enforcment authorities as they often are the most critical link to the potential impacting of men, women, boys and girls for the cause and hope for knowing Christ.*



## From The Bookshelf

*Justice and Mercy, (A Christian Solution to America's Correctional Crisis),* written by Donald Smarto, Tyndale House Publishers. This book shows through interviews of wardens of more than 80 prisons across America, the impact of prison ministries on the Corrections system.

## Dropouts: What Can We Do To Keep Kids In School?

By Stu Tripler

It is hard to believe, but based on the nation's average, in a room of 10 kids, 3 will drop out of school. This strikes home with me because of the five guys we took to Word of Life last summer, two have dropped out of school. **Who are these dropouts and what can we do to help?**

Statistics tell us that the typical dropout is a minority male who needs to either support himself or his family. They are from single parent homes, near the poverty level and have easy access to drugs or alcohol. The highest percentage of dropouts come from the larger cities in the southern part of our country. (Interestingly, the lowest dropout rate was found in the farming belt of the Midwest.)

Ironically, those statistics would seem to suggest that where a kid is kept busy working productively (on a farm) they learn some discipline which they apply to their school work. That offers one of the solutions to the dropout problem: occupying young people's time productively. What a great opportunity for church youth centers, game rooms, or athletic programs to draw kids into the church!

Probably the most effective way to reach these kids who are thinking of dropping out is to show them the consequences of their decision (Galatians 6:8) The life of hopelessness that can result and its fear may be enough to motivate a young person to stay in school.

What happens if you have to deal with a dropout? If they cannot be readmitted to school right away, encourage them to find a job to occupy their time as too much free time leads to problems. Tutoring them provides an excellent opportunity for discipling.

If you do not have kids like this in your church, why not contact your school district and ask them for names of people you might contact to start a tutoring program or implement a job bank in your church to employ them with Christian employers who could encourage them in the Lord and back to school.

Showing the dropout you care may mean they start dropping into your church. Remember, people are supposed to know we are Christians by our love!

## Special Conference News

**Word of Life announces a Law Enforcement/Corrections Weekend at Schroon Lake, New York, beginning Friday, April 29 through May 1, 1988.** The keynote speaker will be **Mr. Ron Powell, Commissioner of the Bureau of Corrections of the State of New Hampshire.** Please make note of this special opportunity for fellowship and challenge.

## Prayer Concerns for CCGM

In obedience to Hebrews 13:3, remember **believing Brethren** who are **in prison.** Identify yourself as though you were there with them.

**Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers** in the midst of changes in organization, with special mention of Jim Hammond (Chattanooga) and Ralph Evans (Los Angeles).

**United Indian Mission, Flagstaff,** Arizona, and their great burden for the American Indian. A particular request for **Pastor Dan Fredericks** of Fort Defiance, Arizona, that God would grant him wisdom and a great door of utterance in the **Navajo Jail System.**

April 29 - May 1 — **Word of Life Law Enforcement/Corrections Weekend.**

**May 10 — Pennsylvania Governor's Prayer Breakfast** with speaker Commissioner Ron Powell of the Bureau of Corrections, New Hampshire. Involve your local law enforcer, corrections personnel and legislator. FCPO fellowships are most welcomed. If you are interested in attending please let us know!

**Tuesday night Basketball Outreach** in Coatesville. Thirty-two young men are actively participating and completing weekly Bible studies.

**Wardens, Superintendents** and **Sheriffs** who direct our prison systems and juvenile detention facilities.

**Stu** and **Nancy Tripler's** need for full financial support.

**Unspoken** opportunities and needs.

**Faithful pastors** whose hearts are tender to broken lives.

Still a desire and opportunity for someone to replace Linda as **secretary** so she can be freed to perform more effective follow-up of women offenders.

## Tripler Trivia

The book in the Bible which provides **guidelines for welfare** is the **book of Ruth** with its provisions for gleaning. For this month's question: How many miracles did Elisha perform?

County Corrections Gospel Mission
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February 1988 Report

## A Letter From Linda

Last week I had a wonderful meeting with five ladies who are interested in volunteering to work with girls whose lives are broken by drugs, alcohol, immorality, crime, etc. As I meet girls in my Bible Study, **I will connect them with a volunteer who lives in their geographical area who will begin a life of discipleship with them.** This will entail writing to them while they are in jail, possibly visiting them in jail, meeting as many needs of the family as they can (with their own church as a resource) when they are in jail and upon their release being a friend to them who will always be there to point them to Jesus. **It is our goal to see the entire family of the inmate loved by a local church.** I'll spend as much time as the Lord gives me to help volunteers in this area, who can thereafter **work this type of ministry into their own local church.**

You know, if God uses 'lil 'ole me, He can certainly use you! Very often I am asked the question, "Do those girls really relate to you, do they like you, etc.?" I have to answer yes, because "the love of God is shed abroad in (my) heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto (me.)." (Ro. 5:5) God has put His love which is strong and true (Agape love) in my heart for them. I can only testify that they see that love and as a result they are drawn to Christ. God is always faithful in giving me wisdom and discernment in teaching and counseling them as I claim His promise in I Corinthians 1:30 which says "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom. . .". To be honest, I get awed at His work, too, but I know that "Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it". (I Thessalonians 5:24)

I say all this because **we at CCGM cannot do the work. God has called the church to evangelism and discipleship.** There's so much more I could say. Do know, however, that I would love to come to your church and share in much detail what I have learned and how I have seen the Lord take me, an ordinary church-goer, and use me in a way I could have never done myself!

In His Mercy & Grace,
Linda Ingham

**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:** _____

## Reminder: Word of Life Basketball Marathon

So far we have received $65 from a supporting church to be put towards the $2000 needed for scholarships to send 12 guys to the **Word of Life Basketball Marathon June 25 through July 2.** If you are interested in funding this, please designate a check for the WOL Marathon.

## The Ethics of Christ And The Blood Of Christ Inseparable

"Those who would take the sermon preached in the mount from the North of Palestine at the beginning of Christ's ministry without taking the blood that was shed on Mount Calvary in the south of Palestine at the end of Christ's ministry are in deadly peril. Their light is out! For **the ethics of Christ without the blood of Christ is a vain and empty show.** It is nothing more than the religious activity of the old nature who crucified Christ."

— Donald G. Barnhouse