THE CONTENDER

Jan.- Feb. 1990

". . . 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

by Jack Crans

The following quote from a sermon by Ravi Zacharias says more than I could personally pen. It was taken from the writings of Michelle Quoist.

"Lord, why did you tell me to love all men. . .? I have tried, but I come back to you frightened. Lord, I was so peaceful at home. I was so comfortably settled. It was well furnished, and I felt cozy. I was alone. I was at peace, sheltered from the wind and the rain and the mud. I would have stayed unsullied in my ivory tower.

"But Lord, you have discovered a breach in my defenses. You have forced me to open my door. Like a squall of rain in the face, the cry of men has awakened me. Like a gale of wind, a friendship has shaken me. As a ray of light slips in unnoticed, your grace has stirred me, and rashly enough, I have left my door ajar. Now, Lord, I am lost!

"Outside, men were lying in wait for me. I did not know they were so near — in this house, in this street, in this office; my neighbor, my colleague, my friend. As soon as I started to open the door, I saw them with outstretched hands, burning eyes, longing hearts, like beggars on church steps.

"The first ones came in, Lord — there was, after all, some space in my heart. I welcomed them. I would have cared for them and caressed them — my very own little lambs, my lone little flock. You would have been pleased, Lord. I would have served and honored you in a proper and respectable way. Till then it was sensible.

"But the next ones, Lord — the other men, the thousands of men — I had not seen them! They were hidden behind the first ones. There were more of them. They were wretched. They overpowered me without warning. Lord, we were crowded in. I had to find room for them. Now they have come from all over in successive waves, pushing one another, jostling one another. They have come from all over — other towns, from all parts of the country and the world, numberless, inexhaustible. They don't come any longer, Lord, but they come in groups, in thousands, bound to one another. They come bending under heavy loads, loads of injustice, of resentment, hate, suffering and pain. They drag the whole world behind them with everything rusted, twisted or badly adjusted.

"Lord, they hurt me! They are in the way and I see them everywhere. They are too hungry and they are consuming me. I can't do anything any more, Lord, as they come and they push the door and open the door even wider. Lord, my door is too wide open now! I can't stand it any more. It's too much. It's no kind of a life. What about my feelings, Lord, my family, my peace, my liberty, and what about me? Lord, I have lost everything! I don't belong to myself any more. There seems to be no room for me even in my own home.

"Don't worry, God says, You have gained all, because while men came in to you, I, your heavenly Father, and I, your God, slipped in among them."

Please continue with us. Our personal hearts are so encouraged by your individual and corporate support.

Nothing could more excite my hopes than the response of God's people for such a time as this.

For a wonderful Savior,

Jack Crans

American Jail Association and the American Correctional Association

by Jack Crans

CCGM is actively represented to the leadership of these two excellent professional associations of Corrections leadership.

We were represented in the ACA Winter Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, January 14-17, and visited the offices of the AJA and its Executive Director, Mr. Dick Ford, on January 30.

We invoke your prayers on behalf of our maturing role in these two arenas of great opportunity. Doors could never be more open to our ministry, yet time, finances and literature preparation has never been more at a premium.

Upcoming conferences in Reno, Navada and San Diego, California are prayerfully being considered. It is in these areas of outreach that God's Word can be applied with great impact. The faithful supply of God's people to such opportunity is of no small concern.

My Testimony of Life at Leadership Bible Institute

by Ralph "Chris" James

"Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" (Ps. 103)

When I rededicated my life to Christ after years of being an unwilling but powerless captive prisoner in the demonic clutches of cocaine addiction, I fervently asked the Lord to provide me with a feasible means of learning the Word of God and what His will was for my life. God answers prayer! The Lord has placed me in the perfect atmospheric setting, to pursue the ministry of His calling.

Through God's magnificent, life-enhancing power, I've been afforded at LBI the unique opportunity to submerge myself in the Lord's divine Word.

I am gaining a great wealth of knowledge, along with an anointing of the Holy Spirit. The studies at LBI offer quite a challenge, but II Timothy 2:15 instructs me to "study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." We're also blessed to have instructors that are willing to give us personalized attention when we desire it.

When I finally came to the stark realization that I had nothing left but God, I discovered that God was extremely sufficient. I also came to the conclusion that throughout my trials and tribulations, the Lord was with me in the darkness as surely as He is with me in the light.

It mesmerizes me that out of all God's creations, only man has the capacity or is able to say "yes" or "no". Praise be to God that I said yes!

Through exploring God's Word, I have discovered that Christianity is not merely a way of doing certain things, but it is a certain way of doing **all** things.

Saints, if you're looking for something to give your life to, look to the One Who gave His life for you!

May God richly bless you and heaven smile upon you!

Yours in Christ, our soon and coming King,

Ralph "Chris" James
Leadership Bible Institute

Kids Club

by Sue Crans

"As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him."
- Ps. 18:30

There have been times this winter in Kids Club that I've really had to fall back on that verse. We've had both sweet and sour. Our room has been broken into numerous times, a water pipe broke and part of our ceiling caved in and the room flooded, windows have been broken, etc. In spite of it all, our hearts continue to ache to reach those children for the Lord.

We had two decisions for salvation a few weeks ago. Pray for Porcha and Dee that they will continue to allow the Lord to work in their lives.

Some of our girls that are older (9-12) have been so faithful, and I felt the need to get to know them better, so we decided to have a pajama party. What a fun night! I felt like a giggly young girl again. We had lots of food, games, and I had the chance to share seriously about the choices that they will be making soon in their lives and how important it is to make the right choices that honor the Lord.

Pray for us (Betsy, Carol, Gail and me) as we continue to try to make an impact for the Lord on these kids' lives. It is not always easy, but as the verse states, God's way is perfect and His Word is tried. He'll be our buckler for those rough times if we trust Him.

Carver Bible Institute and College

Atlanta, Georgia

by Jack Crans

It was my privilege to participate in the annual Missions Conference of this wonderful Bible School in Atlanta, Georgia on February 21 and 22. Located in the heart of Atlanta, this school was founded to equip Black Leadership for both Home and Foreign Missions opportunities. I not only was privileged to participate in the speakers' forum, but also had my heart again tendered for the pressing crisis of the U.S. city.

Strong Bible Schools are an indication of the vision of the local Church. As the vision and burden of the local Church grows, so do the schools. I am convinced that America's Missions-minded churches are going to have to carefully and urgently review their commitment to the training of indigenous leadership for the impending challenges of our national spiritual and urban crisis.

Unless we implement similar strategies at home as we have made so accessible abroad, we shall lose our nation. The response and encouragement of Missions-minded churches to the urgent need for indigenous Bible training schools is critical. If anyone ought to be sacrificing for the urban poor and its youth, it ought to be the strong and historically Missions-minded churches. What better investment of the Mission dollar could be made than to support the training of a new generation of urban leaders?

My own heart was encouraged by Dr. William Hungerpiller, President of Carver Bible Institute. The exchange of hearts and commitments to future networking has firmed more assuredly our development of our own Leadership Bible Institute.

"What we retain we may lose, but what we give to Christ we are sure to keep."
- Carver Bible Institute Sign Post

Clark's Comments

by Alan and Judie Clark

In the Christian life it is often easier to praise the Lord when we are on the mountain top. We tend to hide from the times of trial when in our hearts we cry out to the Lord in agony like the prophet Elijah. . . "Is anybody out there, Lord? Does anybody care?"

We need a balance in our Christian walk. It is in those moments of seeming defeat that our hearts become tender and we lift tear stained eyes to our Savior and experience sweet victory in Him.

Such has been the establishing work of LBI; a unique and vital new mission field. The enemy has attempted in countless ways to destroy this infant work, from without and within. LBI has been like a child struggling to take its first steps. But praise the Lord, we are standing!

We began our classes as scheduled on January 15, with 6 men. One has dropped out. It is a blessing and victory to see these 5 men who were once broken by a life of alcohol, drugs and crime now diligently studying the Word. Three of them have recently been baptized and joined the church we all attend.

Thank you for caring, praying and supporting LBI. As a result, five leaders are snatched from the hand of the enemy and preparing for full time service for the Lord.

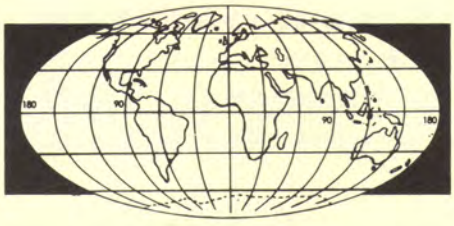
We also praise the Lord for providing a much needed 24 passenger bus from Newlin Automotive in Coatesville. The main house where the men live is being papered and painted as God's people have responded to this, another need of LBI. We have received your gifts through the mail, your prayers and encouragement. Thank you all so much.

If any church or organization would be interested in having us speak and give testimony, please contact us for available dates. We are here to serve you through the Lord in the challenging ministry of LBI.

God's blessing to each of you dear ones in Christ!

A Thought to Caution Our Strategy Meetings for Missions

by Jack Crans



Having seen the flight of God's people into the suburbs, it's only predictable that the city has become what it is. Missionary executives of well known organizations must consider their own accountability for the challenging of the suburban Church in these critical hours. Perhaps no better spokesman exists for the perishing millions of the United States city than the Foreign Mission executives who appeal to the traditional Church for the world in crisis while noticing clearly the spiritual plight of their own back yard.

"The greatest evil is not done in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. . . it is conceived and moved, seconded, carried out and minuted. . . in clean, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voices." - C.S. Lewis

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Editor Needed

Our "Contender" newsletter requires much time and commitment. It is only worthy of our Savior that God would raise up an Editor who would assist the most excellent communication worthy of the dear broken lives we attempt to reach.

If you would prayerfully consider volunteering to this task, please don't hesitate to write and express your interest.

Chester County Chaplaincy Ministries

by Jack Crans

Since January 1, 1990, County Corrections Gospel Mission has been directing the Chaplaincy services at the Chester County Prison. This 620 bed facility has cried an overwhelming crisis to the people of God in its own jurisdiction. The reflection of deeply troubled families and communities is on every hand, yet the stirring of pulpits for such a time as this could never be more urgent.

One meeting was held with 31 pastors wherein I was able to express some of the challenges now facing the area churches. UNLESS A STRATEGY CONSISTENT WITH MISSIONS CONCEPTS ABROAD BE SOON IMPLEMENTED AT HOME, WE MUST INEVITABLY FACE THE COLLAPSE OF OUR NATION.

I would be more than willing and certainly encouraged to bring to you and your church the personal reflections of this one arena of a national crisis.

The Prison mirrors a mission field. One wonders if this generation can ever really link up with a task as costly to SELF-INTEREST as the Great Commission.

Warden's Corner

Five Bibles were sent to new wardens in Pennsylvania and across the country in January and February.

"Our willingness to sacrifice for an enterprise is always in proportion to our faith in that enterprise. Once men are dominated by the conviction that a thing must be done, they will stop at nothing until it is accomplished."

- Zwemer

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P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

From The Bookshelf

Taking Our Cities For God
by John Dawson
Published by Creation House

Although we don't agree with every theological position taken, Mr. Dawson will surely awaken us from a complacency that now keeps the Church from making an impact!

"In a time of war, battles are won by the strategic concentration of force. Soldiers don't just attack along a scattered front. They follow a plan designed by a general with a big map and lots of information. In some of our cities, it's so long since our soldiers received news about the progress of the battle that they've stopped shooting. They are wandering about the battlefield, preparing food and generally attending to their own comfort."

Write to a prisoner.

Call or write to us for details.

Association of North American Missions Convention May 1-4

Spring City, Tennessee

by Jack Crans

I look forward to being able to represent the burden of CCGM at the upcoming annual meeting of the Association of North American Missions. It is our desire to be an active member of ANAM upon completion of an audit required for ANAM member organizations.

This fellowship of Missions will allow me to be in much richer communication with Mission leaders who are prayerfully and intently preparing continued strategies for the evangelization of our own embattled continent.

An excellent array of speakers will be available, such as Larry Burkett, Dr. Jack Van Impe and Dr. Kenneth Hannah, who is President of Bryan College.

We pray for tasks equal to our powers, but pray for power equal to our tasks.

Areas to Designate Gifts

Christmas
General
Leadership Bible Institute
Memorials
Oak Street Project
Snack Foods
Warden's Fund

Note:
All gifts are tax-deductible; a receipt will be sent.

The Contender is a bi-monthly publication of County Corrections Gospel Mission,
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Coatesville, PA 19320
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County Corrections Gospel Mission is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.
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