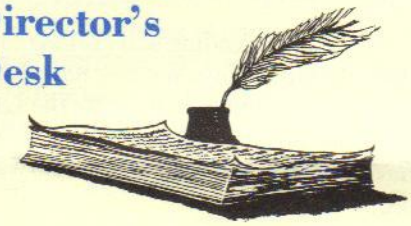
THE CONTENDER

July 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



"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."
– John 4:34

Dear Beloved-Ones:

The Scriptures are so simple, yet profound. As I reflect on my study, I can at times realize the dynamic plan and will of God for accomplishing much. So often we see a person so exuberant with purpose and direction that one thinks he will turn the world upside down. The powerful, yet tangible purposes of God when seen are more thrilling and uplifting than I can tell. However, the reality of the whole matter lies in this: **obedience!**

Opportunities, needs, open doors, programs, people and even prayers can sometimes abound, but what is needed is **obedience.** God's work in us is wonderful. It is easy to be filled with His presence after experiencing His Word or being brought to a place of fuller understanding and direction, but the need is always for **obedience.**

Many preachers, missionaries Christian laymen and great thinkers have been so taught in His word – so excited at their dreams – and yet was His glory ever revealed in them? The issue again is **obedience.**

Obedience causes one to be totally dependent on God. It takes the labor away from self and places it entirely in the power of God. It is easy to have great goals, great programs and even great churches, but the bottom line will be the manifestation of the glory of God.

I think it is very special to know that our obedience in total life and ministry shall be rewarded by His glory revealed in us. In the recent reading of the book, **Daws**, the biography of Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, I was especially impressed and encouraged. He was not a perfect man, but his eyes and heart were fixed on fulfilling a work of God which for Him was the evangelization and discipleship of young people and those in the military. He was obedient! Though cut down in the midst of his ministry by drowning, the glory of God was seen in him as he was undaunted in exalting the power and purpose of the Cross.

My dear loved one, here at CCGM, we have seen the glory of God like you have seen Him. We have studied and prayed and can attest more assuredly to his faithful presence and desire for our obedience. We see a harvest field constantly devoid of his servants and live daily in the tension of awakening the local church agendas and attempting to blaze old trails once forgotten.

The work of missions has always been evangelistic! The primary burden has been to penetrate people groups with the Gospel and then see the Lord raise His church. We go forward in this order of priority to penetrate people groups, and we trust the Lord for the broken hearts and humble, poured out lives of His people. Will God again pour out His Spirit upon America? The issue will be that of obedience.

We labor in His grace and most assuredly in His mercy. You have been especially comforting, and know that we shall go forward to a hostile yet broken workplace for the demonstration of the glory of God. Obedience must accompany our faith!

"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." –I Cor. 2:2,3

Herein, Paul declares that he was uncompromising in faith toward the crucified risen Christ, yet so honestly declared the cost of his obedience, weakness, fear and trembling.

Please pray for us as we are uncompromising in faith but surely desirous of greater and fuller obedience.

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awakening cries,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

Sincerely in Him,

Jack Crans
Director
Romans 16:24-27

Suicide and Youth

By Stu Tripler

Frustration. . .hopelessness. . .despair! These are just three of the adjectives that teens use to describe their feelings about their lives. Living in the shadow of nuclear warfare, which negates any promise of a future, has left the teens of this country expressing these feelings. It is not surprising that teen suicide is on the rise.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people aged fifteen through twenty-four, ranking behind

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Suicide - *Continued*

accidents and homicides. Over 5,000 young peole commit suicide a year, an average of one every 90 minutes. Authorities say more suicides actually occur each year, but unless they find a note (which only about 15% leave) or can prove that the person indeed took their own life, they label many deaths as accidents. Mental health experts estimate that between 500,000 and two million young people attempt suicide every year.

Two cases of suicide from the Bible come to mind. The first is Saul as he was wounded and about to be captured. He asked his servant to kill him, but he refused. Saul was left to take his own life as he feared what the future would hold for him if he fell into the hands of the Philistines. This sense of fear and hopelessness came as a result of his failure to seek what the Lord had for him (I Chronicles 10). Young people's fear of the future is a result of their failure to recognize that the only purpose there can be in life is to seek the Lord through His Word. Remember the fuss made over the movie, **The Day After**, which depicted the United States after a nuclear attack. It was interesting to note as they were listing the credits at the end that the background music was "How Firm a Foundation". As we viewed the scenes of destruction, the truth set in that the only true foundation upon which we can base our future is Christ (I Cor. 3:11). If we can present that Hope to young people today, it would enable them to face tomorrow with a purpose.

Another example of suicide that the Bible gives is of Judas' hanging himself after betraying Christ. His feelings of guilt for betraying whom he knew was the true Christ were so overwhelming he could not go on. The guilt of sin is such a heavy weight, yet we tend to overlook its powerful effects. Many young people carry that burden around with them wherever they go. I believe that young people today truly desire to find a release from the guilty consciences that have them wallowing in the mire of sin searching for the answers.

What is a young person really saying when they attempt suicide? It is interesting to note that 90% of attempted suicides take place in the home between three in the afternoon and midnight; a time when help is usually in the home to intervene in the act. Young people all across this nation are crying out for help, and we as Christians are failing to answer their cries. We say it does not happen to our young people, so we must be doing our job. Yes and no, we are presenting our church young people with Hope but failing to equip them with the Word of God and its ability to cut the chains of sin that bind the young people of this nation.

Next month we intend to develop thoughts for Christians to combat what studies have listed as the ten commonalties of suicide. This will be in an effort to equip them with Scripture to answer their friends' queries about suicide. We will also take a look at the effect of the family structure, alcohol and drugs and their relationship to suicide.

What the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers (FCPO) Means to Me

By Corporal Edward Rowland
Pennsylvania State Police
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

In a profession that requires constant exposure to non-Christians and crises, it is really a joy to fellowship with other police officers who share your belief in Jesus Christ.

At one time in my profession, I was interviewed for a supervisory position, but the position was given to another corporal. God sent another Christian police officer to me, and we were able to discuss this situation from God's perspective. . .that it was not His will for me to have that job. . .who are we to doubt the Lord who can name every star in the sky by name. The Lord wanted me right where I was for His purpose.

That is one example of the rewards received when one member of the FCPO reaches out to another. . .fellowship around Him!

Our Fellowship in Lancaster continues to grow in number and spiritually, and it is enriched as people share their growth in Christ. This Fellowship continually gives me renewed opportunity to walk with Him. It has played a big part in my life and will always be meaningful to me. I praise the Lord for I John 1:9 which tells us that He will forgive us for **all** of our sins so that we can fellowship with Him and others through Jesus Christ.

Prayer Needs

Praise for living quarters for the Tripler family.

Continued leading and guiding for a discipleship facility. We now have $325 towards a building, and praise the Lord there are people willing to give once we have a definite building to move forward on!

Mission staff and Board of Directors.

Chester County Prison Bible studies:
Jack – Maximum Security
Linda and Paula – Women's Section

Broken and contrite hearts so God can establish penetrating labors for His church in Home Missions agenda.

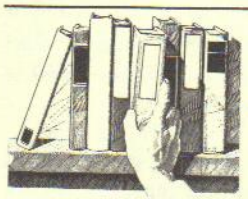
Christians who labor in Law Enforcement and Corrections

Financial support for the Tripler family.

SESTU – Praise for decision for Christ of one fellow and prayer for his on-going discipleship.

– Continued outreach ministry by CCGM and East Goshen Bible Church.

Coatesville street ministry.



From The Bookshelf

This month we highly suggest that you read the book, **America, You're Too Young to Die**, written by Leonard Ravenhill and published by Bethany House Publishers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The careful reading of this book will shake to its foundation even the greatest of ministries.

A Letter From Linda

By the time you receive this letter, I should be (Lord willing) in my new office. I am looking forward to it very, very much so I can work in air conditioning and be relieved of this terribly hot summer! I will also have more space to work in, which will certainly keep my mind focused better!

Once our office is moved downstairs, we will be calling in a repairman to work out the "bugs" in our word processing system. (We waited to have it fixed as movement of these systems can cause problems.) We will thereafter be inputting all of our mailing lists onto this system. Up to this time we have been keeping our mailing list on a computer at Leaman Advertising. We cannot express enough thanks to Mr. Clair Leaman. Note, too, that this is the same man who does all of our printing!

Stu has been doing office work, too, and is building up resources of interesting statistics. He's becoming a whiz on the word processing system!

Bible study at prison has been going extremely well, and the attendance has been excellent! There have been a couple of girls who are in for a long time, and it has been a blessing to see them respond to the truths of God's Word! Most of them have no problem seeing and believing their total depravity, and it is exciting to step-by-step teach them God's grace in lifting them out of their depravity through the gift of salvation and His grace in meeting their daily needs, whether they are physical, spiritual or emotional.

I recently had the privilege of seeing how God works through His Holy Spirit in conforming His children to His image. Those of you who have been reading the Contender for some time, might remember me asking you to pray for Beth, who was saved in prison at our Bible study. After her release, I discipled her in the Word, and to this day we have a special friendship. Praise the Lord, she came to prison two weeks ago and shared her testimony that Jesus can truly change one's life. She shared how her family and friends see the change in her and encouraged the girls to read the Bible, pray and come to Bible study. She also shared the struggles that she has in her walk with the Lord, but encouraged them to know that the Holy Spirit lives within them to lead and guide them into truth. One of her former acquaintances from her "old life" was there, and now they are writing back and forth. Needless to say, Beth continues to move forward in her Christian walk. She faithfully attends and is getting involved in an excellent Bible-believing church!

Nobody can ever tell me that God's Word, prayer and yielding to the Holy Spirit does not change a life!

I again want to encourage you to spend time in His Word. . .dig deep and let the Holy Spirit make those truths a reality in your life! The Lord has been teaching me a lot lately about prayer. . .I either hear a message on it somewhere or I am experiencing situations which I can either handle my own way and mess it up or I can ". . .go boldly unto the throne of grace, that (I) may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

God is so very, very good to His children!

For those of you who have not heard from me personally in a long time, let me tell you that I am doing very well! I love living in Coatesville (even living in the funeral home), I love going to City Gate on Tuesday and Thursday evenings to play the piano the best I know how for their services, and I still love it here at CCGM. . .even working for the man who rarely stops!

With His Love,

Linda S. Ingham

Warden's Corner

This month we saw the distribution of six Bibles to the Superintendents of four State Correctional Institutes (Frackville, Retreat, Dallas and Muncy) and two Federal Correctional Institutes (Allenwood and Lewisburg).

We praise the Lord for the response of Wardens thus far to our ministry. It is very encouraging to periodically receive a thank you letter from a Warden or Superintendent who appreciates the ministry of CCGM!

Why Discipleship?

Ernie Hollands, saved while serving time in prison, started a prison ministry and was seeing fantastic results. While at a meeting of pastors, he was asked the following question: "How many men have you seen saved in prison in the last five or six years of your ministry?" After thinking for a moment, he responded, "probably five or six thousand". The pastor following up that query with another asked, "How many of those men are out today leading successful Christian lives?" Hollands' response was staggering, "70% to 80% are back in prison." The pastor told Hollands that he was letting the men down because he had failed to provide a post-prison ministry. Hollands, convicted by the Spirit, envisioned a "large farm, set apart from the world, where ex-convicts can get their bearings and become rooted in their faith before facing the realities of life on the outside." He called the farm Hebron for a "place of refuge".

Taken from the book, **Hooked**, by Ernie Hollands, which expressed the need for discipling the paroled Christian.

Tripler Trivia

It is hard to believe that a month has passed since we have begun to work full time with CCGM. We have seen how the Lord provides if we allow Him the opportunity! This past month has been so busy, and we have barely gotten our feet wet.

It is exciting to see how God is faithful, even when we are not. A few Thursdays ago, Jack had me on the road at the crack of dawn to attend a prayer breakfast, and by evening I was tired. (I have yet to acquire Jack's ability of getting by on a little sleep, and I doubt I ever will!) That evening I went to SESTU (Southeast Secure Treatment Unit) as I do each Thursday. Needless to say, after arising very early that morning, I was not feeling too chipper about going to the facility. However, one of the men who has volunteered his time to spend with the youths dropped by and offered a ride. That extra encouragement was all that was needed, and that

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Tripler Trivia - *Continued*

evening the volunteer was able to lead a boy to the Lord. If the volunteer had not encouraged me to go, I would have missed out on the blessing of seeing the excitement on that young boy's face as he related his decision to trust the Lord as his Savior. Pray for him as we attempt to disciple him and place him in a local church upon his release.

I am also thankful for two other sources of encouragement that I received this month. Both involve local churches' willingness to be a part of a solution in helping troubled youth. First, East Goshen Bible Church has been faithfully present at SESTU, the juvenile facility, for many months, and this past week they held a picnic for the boys and their families. The Christian love that the folks from the church demonstrated to the boys and their families is so important as it supports the message that they share with the guys.

Second, we see Limerick Chapel being very responsive in the area of follow-up, as it is our desire to tie these boys into a local church upon their release. One of the young men we have been working with will be released the middle of August. One phone call to Limerick Chapel, and a connection was made! They even called back a few days later to inform us of the plans they have made to involve the young man in their church activities. We are so thankful when local churches are so willing to help!

Please pray that the Lord will send more volunteers to work with us at SESTU. Our goal is to have at least ten men to deal with these young men in a one-on-one relationship of playing table games and then sharing the Word with them as the opportunities present themselves. Pray also as we attempt to locate churches for these boys to attend upon their release. If your church would be willing to help in any of these areas, please drop us a line so we can put you in our resource file.

Because He Lives,

Stu, Nancy & Johanna

P.S. The answer to last month's trivia question was Joab. This month's question is: Who defeated the commander of the Canaanite army with a tent peg?

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: _____

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