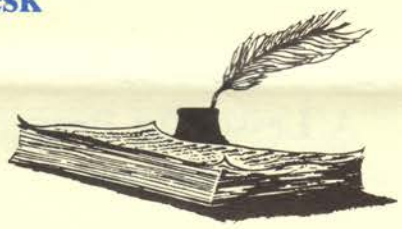
THE CONTENDER

July-August 1989

". . . 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



Luke 4:18-19,21: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . .and He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Dear Companion in Ministry:

In 1959 my father and mother moved our family into Coatesville, Pennsylvania. My exposure to racism, poverty, broken families, desegregation and a nation "on fire" would be the beginning of the breaking of my heart.

The powerful yet tender announcement of Christ in the above text clearly declares our wonderful hope. The model it presents, the character it demands and the mandate for mission it targets is only the inauguration of a ministry that reflected Christ's total fulfillment of obedience to the revealed character of God as recorded in both the Old and New Testaments.

When taking the tender impressions of my youth and throwing them up against the clear manifestation of the above truths, it is perhaps easier to understand the following conclusion of Dr. Keith Phillips, founder and director of World Impact, Inc.: "The treatment the poor receive from God's people has always been one of the most accurate indicators of the health of the Church and its relationship to God."

Next to redemption, perhaps the dominant theme of the Scriptures is what is expected of God's people in their treatment of the poor, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger. . .under the Old Testament Law it is important; in the Prophets it is second only to Kingdom truths, and its theme can only be the more pronounced since the commencement of Grace as declared in the Gospels and Epistles.

It might be very truly said that God's blessing of His people is ultimately tied to their treatment of the poor. Often it is easy to miss out on these major blessings because of mental or geographical isolation. Uninvolvement or simply non-exposure can so easily isolate the believer from the pandemic growth of broken and destitute lives. Christ's personal example in the Gospels and the cry of the New Testament Epistles call continuously for God's people to accurately reflect the God Who saved them among these people groups.

Perhaps the following biblical examples will help us each to measure our own level of commitment to the costly and sometimes inconvenient ministry to the least and lost.

1. It is not Christian to preach the Gospel to a hungry child when failing, where possible, to nourish his need. It is, however, very Christian to provide the food and support necessary to his lack, while at the same time unchristian to neglect to minister equally the Bread of Life.

2. It is extremely difficult to minister to someone with whom you won't even live. Modeling Christ in the community you hope to reach is vitally important. The concept of a godly home is far more understandable to a little boy who witnesses it than to a little boy who in no way can relate to the experience of "godly fathers" and "godly husbands".

3. The mandate of missions calls for discipleship and never stops at the point of evangelism. ". . .go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19,20) How often do we feel the frustration of heart when we see decisions for Christ but no fruit? How many broken peoples have responded to the preaching of the Gospel but have never been discipled? This great gap between evangelism and discipleship can always be seen when the presence of committed Christian leadership is vacated or unattended. Thousands of broken and destitute peoples await the coming of God's people. Missionaries, disciple-makers are so desperately needed!

Dr. Keith Phillips of World Impact outlines the "making of a disciple" so well. First, there must be a death to self. Imagine if you had been on the Air Florida flight that crashed into Washington's Potomac River. Plunged beneath the icy waters and drowned, God comes to you and says, "I'll make you a deal: you can be born again, but it will cost you something. Do what I ask, go where I ask, no questions asked." But we protest: "No way!" But then you realize your predicament and answer: "Yes, Lord! I want to experience New

Continued on next page.

Director's Desk - Continued

Birth. I'll realize from now on that I am living on your time and not my own. I'm willing to be what you want me to be. By your grace in my life, I'm yours!''

At this point begins the new life...born again to reproduce that character of Christ in others. The disciple-maker, or missionary, must be committed to the life of the individual he would hope to reach and love for Christ's sake.

Finally, there must be a realization that Missions and lost peoples are not oceans away. 90% of urban ghettos have been recorded as unchurched and unreached. The pagan population in urban America is twice the size of the nation of Canada, seven times larger than Cambodia, larger than Viet Nam and larger than every country in Africa but one. Our unreached peoples number more than all countries in South America or Central America except Mexico and Brazil.

We can no longer be content to preach to the four corners of the world, but neglect our own cities. The hour has come to be involved with the poor and oppressed of our own nation. As a Corrections leader so adequately stated at the recent American Correctional Association Congress in Baltimore, ''We've allowed the growth and crisis of a Third World people in what we once believed to be a First Class nation.'' If ever there were a call to be answered by God's people, it is the call so common to that answered by Christ Himself: ''preach the Gospel to the poor''!

For Calvary,
with deepest gratitude,

Jack Crans, Director

Mailing List Reviewed

We have cut our mailing list in half and trust we have properly deleted and retained the appropriate persons. If you know of anyone whom we have mistakenly deleted, please let us know. The last thing we want to do is reduce circulation and communication among those who care!

Leadership Bible Training Institute

by Jack Crans

The summer has been a tremendous season for learning greater dependence on God and maturing in the administration of LBTI. First, Shannon Butterfield and Alan and Judie Clark labored faithfully as a team throughout the months of July and August. Men came and went. Some stayed for one night, while others occupied in the Word as long as six weeks. Some came from prison, others from parole officers, and most from the street. All sought temporary sustenance, none to date stayed. One man currently is failing with AIDS while another is seeking gainful employment and the building of a new life in his Christian walk. Most men weren't ready for LBTI.

The assessment of the short weeks of summer could cause some to be discouraged or quit, but instead the setbacks and lessons have driven us to better application procedures, greater dependence on God and more formal and deliberate planning of our LBTI ministry.

Presently, three major issues confront our experience at LBTI. First, Alan and Judie Clark trust God for their full support. They labor now by means of seed monies that were earmarked in a special gift received for such a program a year ago. They are missionaries, and shall continue only as long as God provides. I would rather they continue in a development of the curriculum, application procedures and staffing than to spend them in deputation. Please know that no work can be accomplished without the ultimate benevolence of God's people.

Secondly, we are receiving increasing requests for such a program as LBTI from both Chaplains and the various Christian ministries now laboring among the incarcerated and/or their neighborhood areas. Breakfast missions, urban churches and concerned believers shall continue to appeal for such a training program.

Third, addressing the communication gap of such a concept as LBTI is most important. Indigenous leaders have always been the need of missions, church planting and evangelism. Somehow in our own nation, addressing the theme of Missions is still not sitting comfortably with the ''mission-minded church'' when speaking to the issue of the urban poor. Those principles for Missions thought normal and accepted abroad seem ignored and often unaddressed at home.

We are excited at both the practical impact of LBTI on the eventual students we shall touch, while at the same time are anticipating a meaningful impact and awakening of the suburban church to the crisis of leadership now facing the urban poor.

Psalm 39 — A Lesson In Prayer

by Jack Crans

David the King was under the great frustrating oppression of some adversary. He was troubled so deeply he wanted to let go of his tongue and do what a tongue does best: aim and destroy! He was literally ''hot'' with frustration and absolutely ready to set on fire the course of hell.

Note, however, that he judges his haughtiness and anger and says, ''I will keep my tongue with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace...the fire burned hot within me...sorrow was stirred...I opened not my mouth.''

When David finally speaks, he doesn't wag his tongue or aim and destroy (the mark of immaturity). He addresses God: ''And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days...that I may know how frail I am.''

Here David teaches a great lesson in prayer: Hold thy tongue from sin and hurtful speech and teach thy heart to burn hot in a desire that can only be quenched and stilled by God alone!

It was so precious to see David's wrath turned into petition because he bridled his tongue.

Are we frustrated and oppressed? Whether we pray or prey will depend on our maturity in Christ.

Clarks' Comments

by Alan and Judie Clark

It does not seem possible that we have been in beautiful Lancaster County for over two months. There have been adjustments for us as a family through this transitional time. God has blessed and provided in many ways and we praise Him each day for His goodness and grace.

Although Jack has introduced us in the previous issue of the Contender, we would like to take this opportunity to share the Lord's leading in our lives and of His guidance to CCGM.

At age 26, in western Pennsylvania, we both accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. God spoke to our hearts through His Word and called us to the mission field. A year later Alan enrolled at Tennessee Temple University.

Our youngest of three children was continually ill with bronchial pneumonia. Physicians told us she would not live beyond two years old in the humid climate of Chattanooga. Frustrated and fearful for our child, we moved.

To make a long journey short, we settled in Rittman, Ohio. The Lord led us to Calvary Baptist Church where we served Him in youth ministry. We also worked in jail ministry and began a fundamental outreach in detention homes. We saw much fruit, but also experienced many frustrations. The laborers were few and we allowed the enemy to discourage. We left the detention ministry in competent hands and moved back to western Pennsylvania and into the dairy business.

We loved the farm, yet continually in our mind we knew the Lord had called us to serve Him in missions. Jonah did not fare well when he ran from the Lord. . . nor did we. The Lord literally took us from dairy farming and placed us in Bible School. In 1988 we both graduated from Practical Bible Training School in New York.

We praise God that all four of our children have accepted the Lord. Jill is 21, has attended Practical, lives and works in Rhode Island. Jack is 19, a junior missions major at Practical. Charity is 14 and Aaron is 10. Both attend Calvary Baptist Christian School, Lancaster.

We are presently laboring on structure, application and curriculum. Brochures, detailing LBI and in the process of being written and printed, will soon be available upon request. Applications for enrollment will, God willing, soon be ready for distribution by pastors, wardens and Chaplains.

In this newsletter we have attempted to share a brief personal testimony and touch on the beginnings of LBI. We are excited and challenged to be on the cutting edge of a unique ministry much needed today. We are anxious to hear from you; to get to know you personally or answer any questions you have regarding LBI. Our address is 442 Strasburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602. Phone 717-687-6181, or contact CCGM.

We need your prayers and support for staffing and the financial need to run and operate LBI; we need local pastors to get involved as teachers, chapel speakers, volunteers for our pastor apprenticeship program. We have an immediate need for a piano for our chapel and a 16-passenger van.

God bless each of you,

Alan and Judie Clark

Oak Street Kids Club

by Jack Crans

The summer rains brought great problems with mildew and deterioration of our Kids Club building. The local newspapers encouraged us in the midst of the summer, however, by citing our efforts as a sign of hope in the midst of an often depressing area.

Today, however, the room has been repainted. A dehumidifier spares us the mildew and we enter the new school year expecting a multiplied impact and involvement among Oak Street's precious families.

Between special county, city and church outreaches and park swimming concessions, we did suffer in attendance of our Kids Club. A big summer's end splash for the children was held at Sandy Cove Bible Conference, though, which triggered a good startup for fall participation.

Sue has enjoyed personal times with some of our Kids Club girls as they often would stop by the house. Our burden only grows the more deeply as we speak with leading mothers of the Oak Street Project and learn more and more the need for missionary staff among these broken peoples.

Headline after headline cries Oak Street's crisis of drugs and still today it awaits the tearstained pulpits and compassion of Coatesville's Bible-believing fellowships. The time for addressing our fullest involvement will never be better.

Please know that we would love to share our heart with you concerning the challenge confronting us at Oak Street. You and your Church could make the difference!

Warden's Corner

In July and August, five Bibles were mailed to Wardens in Pennsylvania and neighboring states. We also continue to write to wardens and Corrections leaders monthly. How we praise God for such an opportunity to reach those in a position to affect the lives of all the prisoners!

On August 14-17, Jack attended the 119th Congress of Corrections hosted in Baltimore, Maryland. The theme was "Facing the Crisis In Corrections: Vision and Shared Responsibility". What a humbling experience to hear the leadership of juvenile and adult Corrections cry their burdens for a national crisis. Oh that we as believers would be so involved and concerned with our national dilemma! Jack's heart was blessed by the agonizing and sobering themes of the conference.

We are trusting God for the wisdom and means to represent our heart and hope in the upcoming ACA conference in Nashville, Tennessee in January, 1990. There is much to be said concerning such a conference and surely we need your support and prayers as we daily interact with Corrections leadership.

July-August Report 1989

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

Southeast Secure Treatment Unit

by Jack Crans

We have just received another wonderful opportunity to minister to the precious lives of this juvenile detention facility. I have in my possession the names, birthdates and clothing sizes of SESTU's boys. Birthdays normally come and go...no one notices...no one cares!

I am asking you on behalf of SESTU's most gracious staff to answer the call for your involvement in the life of one or more of these tender lives. In just a few months or years, they face the high expectancy rate of adult incarceration. Now is the time to love them and minister to them.

Beyond the personal birthday sponsorship, we are also looking for committed friends who will help us multiply our effectiveness through more active volunteerism and commitment to individual boys and the general themes of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Perhaps it is time to overwhelm SESTU with Sunday School class projects, individual ministry and tangible Christian love. The door is wide to enter. **Call us or write us soon!**

Women In Prison

by Jack Crans

"On any given day in the United States, an estimated 21,000 women are separated from their children because of the mother's incarceration for a law violation. Over the past years there has been an 85% increase in the numbers of females incarcerated. As a result, an increasing number of children are suddenly separated from their mothers. It is also estimated that 50% of incarcerated females have one or more dependent children who were living with them before conviction. In addition, research studies show that the average number of children for each incarcerated mother ranges between two (2) and three (3), as well as having children over age thirteen.

"A 1986 study indicates that there are 500,000 children whose mothers are presently incarcerated and a sizeable number of women give birth while incarcerated.

"Research indicates that mothers in prison often lose all control over where and how their children live and tend to lose confidence in their own ability to be mothers. Their children may develop deep anxieties, have trouble trusting others, may do poorly in school and get into trouble with the law."

— Georgia Dept. of Corrections
Project Reach Handbook

Areas to Designate Gifts

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

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

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