THE CONTENDER

June 1986

". . . 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

A Message From The Director

I greet you in Christ's love and trust you are finding time to read The Contender as we so graciously receive our monthly printing through the sacrificial costs borne by Leaman Advertising. As you have noticed, the workmanship is of best quality and to God we rejoice for Brother Leaman and his staff.

Please now come with me to some most pressing thoughts:

"Break Up Your Fallow Ground!"

(Jeremiah speaks to God's people)

"We have by some accounts, the most drug-ridden society in the industrial world."

– Editor, Time Magazine

"The drug crisis in America alone is a 25 billion dollar drain on the United States economy annually. One out of every 12 smoke marijuana regularly, heroin has 500,000 known customers and over 5 million presently use cocaine which is the 'newest plague' to attack the passion and emptiness of man!" – Time, June 16, 1986.

Prisons and jails are under construction across the United States, courts are backlogged in an abundance of cases and legal arguments all while law enforcement agencies confess deepest frustration in the apprehension of drug users and pushers.

One can call **the drug problem** an epidemic, a crisis or a plague, yet it **reveals nothing really new about the human condition** that God's Word has not already clearly revealed.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

– Jeremiah 17:9

I do not want to appear insensitive or cynical regarding the present moral and ethical condition of our present American neighborhoods. The history of man's quest for new highs and new means of self-abuse is endless as each generation of man since Adam has been plagued with the works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Adultery: extra-marital relationships of a married man or woman with someone not his or her spouse

Fornication: (porneia - root of pornography) unlawful sexual behavior usually outside the marriage relationship

Uncleanness: moral degeneracy, vile, filthy passions

Lasciviousness: wanton, lustful desires

Idolatry: bowing one's life to ideas and possessions while adulterating the worship of God . . . other gods.

Witchcraft: ("pharmacy" is its root word) . . . certainly to be paralleled with drug abuse (mind control) and abnormal stimulation of the mind and body.

Hatred: enmity (enemy of . . .)

Variance: quarrelsome and contentious

Emulations: jealousy

Wrath: angry, fierce indignation . . uncontrollable

Strife: provoking

Sedition: divisive

Heresies: forming parties, sects, denominations

Envyings: detract, ill-will

Murders: slay, kill by plan

Drunkenness: intoxication

Revellings: letting loose, no limits, no accountability, carousing

It should be no surprise that man performs these actions. All of us are sinners and within our Adamic nature, "the old man" or "the flesh" dwelleth no good thing! Why is there such an open display of the flesh? Is there a standard that should go up against it? As I said not long ago, Satan can cease having to be cunning as he meets little resistance in these most apostate days.

I believe there are definite restraints possible to the dilemma America now faces but must confess, as well, that the cure has often become the victim.

First, God ordained **the family** to be the vehicle through which we would preserve His truth and His witness in the world. Like Abraham, it should be said of us all: **" . . . he will command his children and his**

household after him and they shall keep the way of the LORD to do justice and judgment: that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He had spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19) Or, as stated in Proverbs 1:8, 9 **"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head and chains about thy neck."** My first observation for the excessive public display of the sinner is most obviously **the failure of the parent to submit to the spiritual necessity of Christian nurture in the home.** The youth and adults loitering on the street or occupying the tap room and singles bars have obviously either dishonored a parent or been the victim of a parent who failed in the spiritual stewardship of the family. Like the days of Deborah, we need for God to "raise up a mother" or of John the Baptist's day "fathers whose hearts are turned to their children."

Second, excessive public display of the sinner today is caused by **the divorce of Government from God.** When we lose our reference point to authority and justice, we can anticipate growing, failing justice systems and lawlessness cloaked in "human rights". For example: Can you imagine those even suggesting that AIDS "victims" are discriminated against "just because they happen to be homosexual"? Respecting those innocently infected by birth and blood transfusions, I hardly think we should cover up the more evidential truth that AIDS like other venereal diseases is transmitted in the violation of sacred, physical and moral absolutes. I believe there are rights and wrongs. **Ours is to search the precious Scriptures "which by reason of use" lend discernment to the understanding of "human rights" and "human wrongs".** (Hebrews 5:14)

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth (rights); and I will pardon it."
– Jeremiah 5:1

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil . . . he is the minister of God . . . "
– Romans 13:3, 4

Third, the "salt", "light" and "reconciling commission" of **the Church** is often **in retreat** which brings cause again for the excessive display of public sin.

"The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law (Word of God) know me not: the pastors transgressed against me . . . and walked after things that do not profit."
– Jeremiah 2:8

" . . . for my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish (stupid, drunken) children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."
– Jeremiah 4:22

" . . . amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment . . . obey my voice and I will be your God . . . walk ye in all the ways I have commanded you, that it may be well with you . . . the wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the Word of the LORD: . . . this is a nation (a peculiar people) that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth."
– Jeremiah 7:5, 23; 8:9; 7:28

The public impact of God's people does have social implications, particularly in a democratic America.

" . . . they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge."
– Jeremiah 5:28

Am I suggesting a Social Gospel – God forbid! I am recognizing through most stinging Biblical example that **the toleration of public sin has some direct responsibility easily traceable to the public impact of the people of God.**

Perhaps as Jeremiah, who knew no success, we ought to pray for his commission as well:

"I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way! !"
– Jeremiah 6:27

We can busy ourselves fretting over the sinful concerns of public sin **or** continue excited in the most critical stewardship of personally living and speaking God's Word and Grace to the declining moral, spiritual and ethical values of a nation known as: "One Nation Under God".

I love you all and do rejoice in your most caring interest!

For His Glory!

Jack

Potential Of The Local Church

As I look at the overwhelming odds of the Correctional setting and meet the exhausting needs of the incarcerated and high crime neighborhoods, I am convinced **OUR AGENDA** is ideally capsulated below. Your opportunities

are endless. Your day to "look unto the HARVEST" is now!

"God's program for the evangelization of the world involves the local church. *Unless local congregations are firmly established in each population center that has been evangelized, there is no satisfactory way of conserving the results of evangelistic efforts.* **Planting churches is the ultimate goal of all missionary work.** Missionary labor, either at home or abroad, no matter how brilliant, will have little permanence unless this is accomplished. Only through the establishment and functioning of local churches scattered throughout the **population centers**, integrated in part to the culture of that area, and independent of all outside control and support, can an area originally designated as a 'mission field' lose that title. **Mission fields are areas where there are no churches.**"

– Arthur Glasser
(China Inland Mission, now
Overseas Missionary Fellowship)

Warden's Corner

Below is sample of our monthly Warden's letter and the front covers of our recently published literature. You surely deserve a look.

County Corrections Gospel Mission
P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320 • (215) 383-9378

June 18, 1986

"An epidemic is abroad in America, as pervasive and as dangerous in its way as the plagues of medieval times...We have, by some accounts, become the most drug-ridden society in the industrial world."
-- Richard M. Smith
Editor, Time Magazine
6/16/86

Dear Warden

"Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words, AGAINST this place, and AGAINST the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD."
-- King Josiah
II Chronicles 34:27
624 B.C.

Oh, may God cause you to read this letter! Quoted above are two individuals of two eras. Both realize a great disease of the human heart and both cry in perhaps similar fashion for the awful dilemma of a people. One cries to the public and the other to God. It is time the public cry goes before the living God!!

We are in a world that seems unable to solve its own puzzles. We co-exist in our cities with clashing ideologies which vary as night to day. On one corner a church and on the other corner a gathering of pimps and addicts...it seems sad, but the two seldom meet!

I once heard it said, "it's not so tragic when children are afraid of the dark; but most tragic when grown adults are afraid of the light!" We need answers and we need them very soon -- the system's failing -- lives are perishing and a generation of little ones deserves to know why.

I could be writing to senators or preachers, but due to my continued burden, I address you, the Correctional leader. I am rather tired and frustrated with man's worn out "solutions" and new thought on criminal behavior and application of law. I may be old-fashioned but I want to go on record as holding to a return to the precious Book now almost ignored in our nation's courtrooms.

This precious Book, the Bible, has been the one steadfast anchor of America -- it has been lately ignored, scoffed at and even spit upon. Regardless, it still preserves for my children and my loved ones, a steadfast, trustworthy course for life and godliness. It reveals a right path and all essential elements needed to achieve it's glorious end.

The Old and New Testaments are filled with lessons of men's failures and God's faithful deliverances. Their pages are complete with examples of obedient leadership and godless tyrants...therein is explained good government, true justice, mercy, family, corrections, love, patience, tenderness, meekness, self-control and the holy, good and just qualities of the law. In short, if one really wants to succeed or fail, the ultimate test of one's true character is mirrored within its rich and valuable pages. I might add, however, that wisdom is never found by those who refuse to seek her out!

I know that many faiths are represented among Wardens but can safely share three things we all know and agree upon by nature of our being created in God's image:

1. We know, according to God's Word, that there is one true and almighty God and that He is holy.

2. We know, according to God's Word, that we are personally sinners and confirm this by conscience if not the application of law.

3. We know, according to God's Word, that the holy, living God will one day judge the sinner.

These three facts, which cannot truly be denied, bring each of us to a dilemma: what can I a sinner ever do to satisfy a holy and loving God?

God himself has answered this dilemma in sending a Savior, Jesus Christ! In the Old Testament and New Testament God has always required sin to be punished and His righteous demand was always met by an innocent, willing animal's lifeblood -- finally and forever, He completed His mercy for sins in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is at the place of the gracious provision of God's mercy that we find our lives humbled and drawn to His fellowship.

I know that what I am saying is perhaps not totally understood or even well received, but regardless, it is for me the greatest antidote for the frustrating and crippling disease of man's present predicament. One can attend seminars on one human invention after another, but my most honest conviction is ever the more colored by the mandates and steadfast truths of God's Word.

You, as an individual Warden, might feel as many do -- that you are on the "bottom end of the Criminal Justice System". Let me assure you -- yours is the most influential and potentially life-effecting structure in the Criminal Justice process. The fermentation of truth and the power of your commitment personally to God's Word will eventually be one of the greatest tests of your growing impact on the Corrections field.

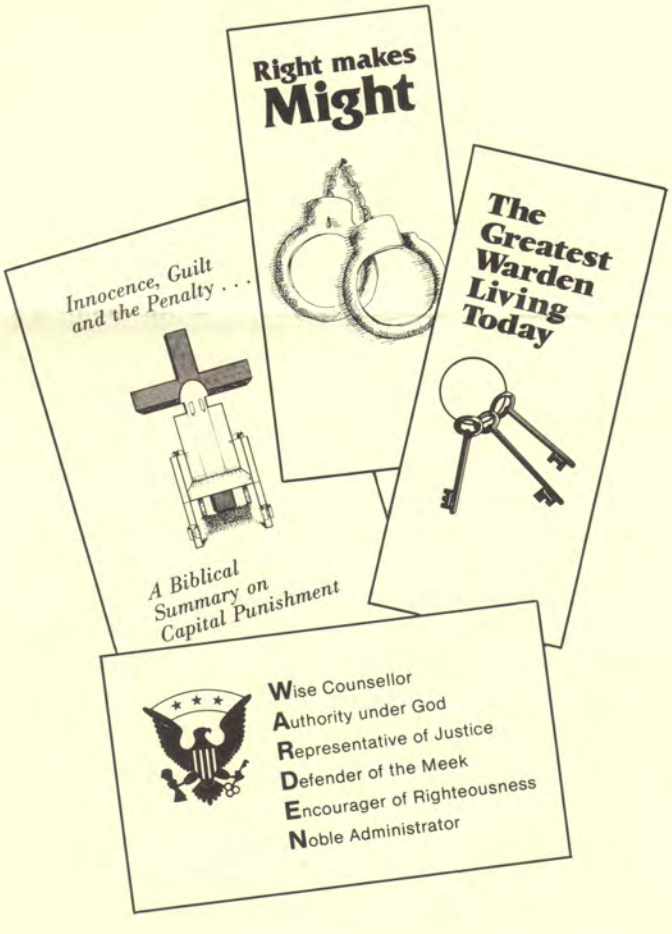
I know this letter is somewhat bold, but please know I would rather be honest than manipulate through vague conversation!

Please write as I really do look forward to knowing you much better!

May God richly bless you,

JACK CRANS
Director

JC/lsi



June 1986 Report

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

June's Ministry Review

The month of June entailed many hours of Bible study in preparation for our **Church Outreach Seminar** to be ready this Fall. The prayer of our hearts is for honest and sincere Home Mission's strategies. In a day of growing apostasy, cults and open mocking of God's precious Word, our own cities, villages and marketplaces need the ministry of both evangelism and ministry/church planting. We believe this time of preparation will allow the local church many open doors to **pray, plan** and **plant** powerful "marketplace" strongholds for the Gospel and nurturing of difficult Home Mission fields. Details of this ministry will unfold in our next two issues of the Contender.

Eight young men, ages 15 - 19, traveled to Baptist Bible College in Clark Summit for their annual **basketball camp**. Some of you made a special contribution to this particular opportunity and we certainly praise God for your sensitive and very evident care towards this work. We look forward to great fruit in the coming days for their individual lives.

Letters from **Wardens**, State Prison **Commissioners**, **Congressmen** and **Pastors** have greatly encouraged our work and focus this month. A growing rapport with the **Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers** is also quite evident as indicated by recent conversations with national staff. Many of you praise God with me for the very committed and faithful Biblical priorities they are using in the maturing of FCPO goals.

Letters and pamphlets are being sent monthly to Correctional leaders.

Spoke in churches in Coatesville, Downingtown and Elverson.

Approximately **34 Wardens** will receive a Bible this summer through my visiting them. This is being accomplished through the **Warden's Bible Fund**.

Prayer Concerns

Youth Center/Shelter for Coatesville. We are still exploring options.

Chester Pastors as they develop ministry.

Pastors to open their pulpits to this work of evangelism and church support.

New believers at **Wayne County Prison** with Chaplain Dunsmore.

Chaplain Nick Barbetta, **Holmesburg Prison** in Philadelphia.

Chaplain James Christmas, **Chester County Prison**.

Chaplain Dave Myers, **Lancaster County Prison**.

Chaplain Wilbert Brett, **Delaware County Prison**.

Praise God for FBI Agent, **Skip Alexander** of the Washington, D.C. area as he newly assumes a great task of regional representation for the FCPO. Pray for him as he develops guidelines for new FCPO chapters so greatly needed throughout the country.

Justice, Mercy Conference

In next month's issue Linda will highlight for you her attendance at the Justice, Mercy Conference held at Wheaton College in Chicago, Illinois on June 30 to July 2.

Contender is a monthly publication of County Corrections Gospel Mission, P.O. Box 1136, Coatesville, Pennsylvania 19320. County Corrections Gospel Mission is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Director, Jack Crans; Secretary, Linda Ingham; Board of Advisors, Mr. Mark Blair, Dr. Howard Blandau, Dr. Joseph F. Eckman, Dr. Herschel Elliott, Mr. Joseph R. Pitts