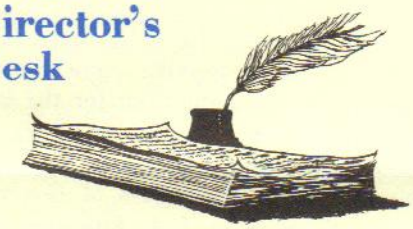
THE CONTENDER

June 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



"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." – Joel 2:12,13

Without wanting to sound presumptuous or insensitive towards God's holiness and consequent justice, I am convinced that the broken and humble hearts of God's people often become the pivotal point of His being able to save and deliver the wicked.

David cried: "Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. . .Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. . .The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalms 51:10, 13, 17)

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalms 126:6)

As I travel from city to city and church to church, I sense a growing void of compassion and intercession of God's people for the lostness of our own land. The open display of sin and the even more noticeable absence of the righteous causes deep concern which ought to prick and quicken the hearts of the people of God.

The theatre arts and courtrooms of our day are boldly declaring the proud and militant spirit of this world's god against our Christ the Lord. Read the entertainment guide of theatres and stage shows, and observe the explicit performances of singing stars and comedians, and maybe once, visit the busy marketplace of our cities and listen and see the agendas which now must consume the mercies and tears of our Savior.

We ought to be aching in heart for ourselves and for our children. The god of this age is making mock of sin. He is slandering the Word of God and he is deluding the people of God into a lethargy which, if not soon noticed, could mean the prophetic reality again of "no man to stand in the gap!"

Our God is a consuming fire! He is mighty to save! I am impressed more and more by His awful holiness and patient love. It is in the tension of His holiness and mercies that we the Redeemed labor and fulfill the Great Commission.

So often I have seen the overflowing tears of God's people during our visits to many pulpits. As we have cried the need of our generation reflected in prisons and streets, I have witnessed many who have confessed a burden and zeal for service. Many have admitted being moved by our burden and many have encouraged us to continue crying for the Home Missions field. Our hearts have been encouraged by those who have personally responded and who have individually cared to join the precious yoke of Christ's compassionate crosswork. I must be careful to note that I have also been ministered to by your literal tears and mutual zeal for our dying culture and its generations. My only regret (and it's a heavy one) is that all too many have never responded and have only given token lip service on the occasion of our visit. If my burden is real and reflects the present and continuing invitation of Calvary's precious sacrifice, then by all means we must prove by our penetrating goals and agendas that God still anxiously desires to act upon our declining and spiritually reprobate society!

As in the days prior to God's judgment of Israel and Judah, we also are called upon to turn with all our hearts to fast, weep and mourn for our generation. Our hearts must be torn and issue forth a presence and activity that boldly declares the grief and agony of a Savior, once crucified, who now liveth and is willing that none should perish.

Pray that we will mirror both His holiness and grace as we continue in His special portion allotted us in these exciting days.

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:15,16)

Only Because of Calvary,

Jack Crans

Missionary Candidate Update

Can I share my heart concerning staff at CCGM? We are a faith mission and exist only as God prospers us through His leading in the sacrificial

Continued on next page

Missionary Candidate - *Continued*

giving of His people. I am staggered by His faithfulness and must declare that CCGM exists only by the daily supply of His grace through you.

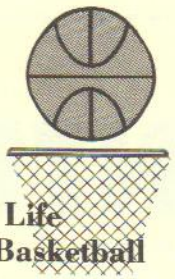
Although we have seen many churches respond and even honor us as their servants, it is the individual response to our burden which is most exciting. Many are expressing an interest in personal surrender of their lives to this particular mission field. We as a faith mission are capable of assisting in deputation of missionary candidates, and certainly long for the day of placing evangelists and pastors in strategic neighborhoods reflective of spiritual famine or local church retreat.

Stu and Nancy Tripler are presently preparing to begin full-time involvement at CCGM. Their monthly support goal is $1500 and presently they have seen the formal commitment of $728 per month. On Monday, July 6, they officially began full-time ministry for the duration of the summer of 1987, and will hereafter stipend their income in September via a teaching ministry of Stu's at Lanchester Christian School in the '87-'88 school term. They are committed in their own hearts to settle in Coatesville and concentrate on discipleship of youth and also assist in the organization of both a discipleship facility and church planting agendas.

I write on behalf of the Board of Directors and Stu, Nancy and Johanna. **We so much need for them a completed and trustworthy team of financial partners.** Perhaps this might be your opportunity to become involved.

Respectfully,
Jack Crans

Ministry Report



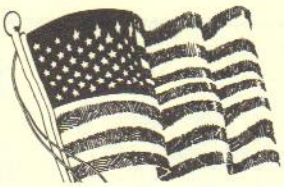
Word of Life International Basketball Marathon

". . .the word of the truth of the gospel. . .bringeth forth fruit. . .in you!" – Colossians 1:5,6

On Friday evening, June 19th, Lonnnie White, "Mag" Peterson, Joe Martinez, Brian Hoggard and Ronnie James arrived at our headquarter/home for a "night's sleep" prior to a 5:00 a.m. departure for Schroon Lake, New York. Those five and Stu, Nancy and precious little Johanna rendezvoused at that exact hour to encounter an impressionable week of Bible, basketball and fun. By the weeks end, each young man had personally acknowledged their need and desire for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They placed fourth in a field of nine teams which represented cities from San Diego, Chicago and Toronto. Lonnie White won the honored "Sportsmanship Trophy" and Stu Tripler humbly accepted the recognition of "Coach of the Week". All of these young men will be returning to Coatesville High School in the Fall and most, if not all, will be playing for the Red Raiders.

Please pray as we love, encourage and disciple these very special young men. Above all, pray that the compassion and visible ministry of the local church will effectively call them to Christian maturity and service.

Your faithful gifts have made this event a reality! Thank you!!



"America, You're Too Young to Die"

"And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among you." – Ezekiel 2:5

On Monday, June 15, over 800 gathered at Coatesville Area Senior High School's auditorium for the impacting challenge of Life Action Ministries of Buchanan, Michigan. The evening drew representation of Government, Corrections, Law Enforcement, the local church and various interested lives. There were seven declared commitments to Christ and at one portion of the program, hundreds knelt to pray for personal and national revival! The entire evening, though lending itself in theme to Believers, was certainly no small declaration of our need to return to the values and principles which mad America to prosper. The response of God's people was clear testimony of our potential to gather publically and also a testimony to this broken city that we plan for our Savior to be more visible and available in the marketsquare and concourse places of our own back yard.

Tripler Trivia

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life."

– Proverbs 13:12

"Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

– Proverbs 29:18

These verses came to my mind as I reflected upon the week that Nancy, Johanna and I had spent at Word of Life with five young men from Coatesville. As we scanned the hundreds of young people from all across the country, unhappiness was etched on many of their faces. I could not help but think of the hopelessness presented by our society to these youths. The more I read of

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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: _____

teen suicide, the deeper the burden grows within my heart to present to the young people of our country the true Hope which only can be found in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

The week turned out to be very encouraging. It was exciting for us to see the results as the Hope was presented to the young people. Four of the five young men we took responded to the Gospel call (one had already accepted Christ as Savior). Guys and girls, who at the beginning of the week would sit lifeless during the meetings, were now responding to the speakers. What caused the change? Not neglecting the Spirit's convicting power and the clear presentation of the Word of God, the atmosphere generated from those who work at Word of Life nurtured hope within the lives of many of the young people.

Granted we cannot reproduce the atmosphere of Word of Life, where the young people are not influenced by TV, radio or the newsmedia, but as youth leaders, pastors, parents, teachers and young people ourselves, we can purpose within our hearts to minimize those influences upon our lives. Let's pray that as God allows us the opportunities to present the Hope found in Christ to the young people of our environs, we will be found faithful!

Please pray for us as we attempt to disciple these young people who have made decisions for the Lord! Pray that we will be able to daily demonstrate Christ's power in our lives.

Because He lives,
Stu, Nancy & Johanna

P.S. Nehemiah's name means "Jehovah consoles". It would be interesting for me to see how many people actually read this part of the letter and attempt to answer the question. Maybe this month, you could send a quick note giving your answer to this question: What nephew of David was made "chief and captain" of the army and was later ordered killed by his cousin?

Prayer Concerns

That God would allow us to know His clear and perfect will regarding the actual placement of a discipleship facility which would benefit the Chester County and southeast Pennsylvania region.

That God would be praised for His healing and care in Joshua's recent surgery. Thank you for all the cards and prayers!

That God would move upon every recipient of the Contender to bear both personally and corporately the concerns of this ministry.

That penetration of Corrections and high crime areas would be granted the evidence of much everlasting fruit.

That God would generate effective discipleship ministries out of the local church on behalf of new-born city youth.

A Typical Day At CCGM (Summer) As Told By Jack Crans

The following article is written for the purpose of communicating a brief dip into the well of our experience. You may find its contents funny (that's O.K.) or you may find it somewhat tragic (that's O.K., too). Truly, some days are more defined and less disruptive, while others can be literally more consuming. I would suggest that you read as we do – with laughter and tears! Above all, realize the thoughts brought across in my summary paragraph at the end. We love you for caring and reading!

4:30-5:30 a.m. I arise. . .let out the dogs. . .shave. . .bathe. . .dress and pray. My prayer burden is that God might give wisdom and time for the tyranny of the urgent agendas sure to come.

5:30 a.m. A trip to the coffee shop. . . look at the day's agenda. . .catch up on the news. . .talk to patrons. . .pray for a profitable few hours until my family awakes!

Pause: By now the dogs are back to sleep. . .Shannon Butterfield has quietly gone off to work (he sleeps in Jon's room) and a briefcase of letters to answer and notes from Linda beckon me to discipline the next few hours. I pray that God would quicken me to know Him more deeply and also give me full instruction in His Word!

6:00-8:00 a.m. Study. . .meditate. . plan attendance to ministry goals and participate in intercessory prayer for my dear, special wife and three sons.

8:00 a.m. Linda arrives. . .makes me confess what I have not finished the night before! She reads the paper and briefs me on important issues. . .begins her daily secretarial duties.

8:35 a.m. Phone seems to begin ringing. . .unplanned needs arise in a broken life. . .we promise to intercede and the course of the day hopefully yields a tangible meeting of needs.

9:15 a.m. Linda is off to the post office . . .I kiss my family and either begin correspondence or depart for a prison, a pastor or an area of need.

10:00-12:00 noon Have either completed counseling, ministered in prison or gained some distance in wading through my briefcase notes and things to do. Studied and meditated on impacting Corrections for Christ, and wondered how on earth the Lord could begin tackling the exhausting human needs reflected by Coatesville alone. Also received a collect call or two from a prisoner or someone in a program at a discipleship facility. By now we have discovered some encouraging effort in ministry that we needed to commend by letter.

12:00-2:00 p.m. Dictated letters, paused to look at the progress of the renovation of the ministry area and prayed for our own discipleship facility, half-sick because of the need. The living room is jumping with my sons plus 3 to 6 other visiting teens who seem to always be thirsty or hungry. I pause to listen to their basketball stories. I sign for a special delivery. . .counsel a broken life that appears at the door. . .and wonder why the grass isn't mowed!!

2:00-4:00 p.m. I run to the bank. . . pray and plan for better penetration of Coatesville, Chester, Norristown and Philadelphia and am briefed by Linda on what I must do by the next day. I talk to those of a local church seeking involvement. I call a realtor concerning a discipleship facility. . .and certainly

Continued on back page

June 1987 Report

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

Typical Day - *Continued*

pray for wisdom when to trust God for needed supply and when to ask.

4:00-6:30 p.m. I wonder where the day went. . .wonder why we're not sure whether to set dinner places for 6 or 10... answer the phone of those who know they would catch me at dinner. Talk to Shannon, Jon, Tim, Josh and Susie (my darling wife) and also hear from 1 – 4 others who just happened to drop in around dinner time. . ."Hey, who drank all the iced tea?". . .At least we can be thankful that a church dropped off some punch and snacks today.

7:00-12:00 Midnight Entertain in our home...visit local basketball court... get home in time for calls to Law Enforcers and wonder who will sleep where. . .someone's on the back porch awaiting return to a discipleship program. . .a little 5-year old girl, whose mother and father are both in a drug program, is in with Josh and Tim. . .two teens decide to stay on the living room floor and Shannon sneaks off to some privacy in Jon's room.

As Sue and I lay in bed, we wonder where the day went. . .did we ever stop to hug or kiss? I will have to rise early to catch up on study and dictation. . ."Oh no, the doorbell is ringing. . .honey, we need another pillow!"

Summary: All in all, it's hectic, but critically vital for us to ache through the busy agenda of people's needy lives **while always hoping** God shall one day raise up through His people special outreach to youth, ministry to the addicted and nurture of the new believer who presently seems intimidated by the structured church. **Oh, that we might make Christ accessible – oh, that we might spend and be spent for Him!**

Warden's Corner

From mid-July to the beginning of September, we will see the distribution of 12 Bibles. The recipients of God's Holy Word will be the two top officials of the American Correctional Association, the Warden of Clarion County Prison, the Superintendents of our six State Correctional Institutions (Cresson, Waynesburg, Frackville, Dallas, Muncy, Hunlock Creek) and the Superintendents of the three Federal Correctional Institutions (Allenwood, Lewisburg and Loretta).

From August 2 – 5, Jack will be attending the American Correctional Association's Conference. Pray for continued outreach to the lives there.

Praise for the following article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on June 30, 1987:

Senate backs Owens to run state prisons

HARRISBURG – The state Senate yesterday confirmed David S. Owens Jr. as head of the state's 15,000-inmate prison system.

The nomination of Owens as commissioner of the Corrections Department was approved unanimously and without debate, 48-0.

Owens, former superintendent of the Philadelphia prison system, was praised by Sen. M. Joseph Rocks (D., Phila.), who said Owens had distinguished himself during a lengthy career in Philadelphia.

Rocks said the "gain to the commonwealth will be Philadelphia's loss."

Owens started in the Philadelphia jail system in 1964 as a corrections officer and held various positions before becoming superintendent in 1980.

He was nominated to the state post by Gov. Casey.

CCGM is personally excited at the appointment and asks you to remember Mr. Owens in prayer as he has accepted this very honoring yet difficult task. Just for the record, Mr. Owens recently resigned his post as Superintendent over the Philadelphia prisons where he has already proven to be very encouraging and supportive of the goals and ministry of CCGM!!

– I Timothy 2:1-4