THE CONTENDER

March 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

Dear Beloved:

"Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers . . . that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." III John 5, 8

It was not many years ago that I remember teaching the Third Epistle of John. Then, as a pastor, I can remember the great joy I had in sharing the precious truths of John's thoughts in verses 5 through 8. Our church was growing with missionary zeal and support, and bonds of love were developing in wonderful ways towards our missionary family. We could recall precious personal concerns of our beloved in New Guinea and the Bahama Islands. Needs, concerns and burdens were constantly exchanged to the encouragement and support of those dependent on our care and displays of love. I enjoyed this particular section of our study because of an obedient church family.

The Apostle John likewise says of beloved Gaius, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (v. 4) What were the aspects of obedience that God highlights in this portion of John's letter? What was Gaius and his church family commended for that caused John such rejoicing and thanksgiving? I believe clear evidence here points us to the faithfulness of God's people in support and care of their missionary family.

As we look at verse 5, we see commended the church's faithfulness to the brethren they knew and those they did not know (strangers). The hearts of God's people went out to the clear display of love in the touching of ministers of the Word of God. They not only loved the brethren they knew, but had hearts wide open to those they'd never seen or met. The criteria for this gracious love was their allegiance to the proclamation of God's Word to the Gentile or heathen lost. Hence, they were faithful to the proclaimers themselves.

In verse 6, John emphasizes their charity or better rendered, Godly love (agape). The whole church fellowship of which John was a member knew of their faithful displays of missionary support. Godliness was their character as here they effected the continuation of the missionaries' task in carrying them forth along the journey of their ministry. He says, "thou shalt do well.. if thou bring (them) forward on their journey."

John describes in verse 7, the supreme calling of these "brethren and strangers" as he describes their going forth as being "for His name's sake!" Paul says in II Corinthians 5:14: "The love of Christ constraineth us...!" The early obedient Church recognized the compelling draw of Calvary's love and the great commission to herald His salvation to the ends of the earth. Missionaries were sent and carried along by the faithfulness of God's people. But, what a motive! It's all for His name's sake! In this same passage (v. 7), John states emphatically that the unbelieving heathen (Gentile) to whom the missionary is sent, does not understand the value of the missionaries' message. We, the believers, do! Hence says John, missionaries "take nothing" of the Gentiles (lost) to whom they are sent." The implication clearly commends the Church for Missions support.

He capstones his entire exhortation in verse 8 by manifesting the wonderful truth that the faithful brethren of the local church are like Gaius, "fellow-helpers to the truth". The missionary cannot labor without the faithful prayer and wholistic support of the Body of Christ.

In our first year at CCGM, our mailing list has grown beyond 1500 lives. I believe almost all who receive "The Contender" are born-again. Less than ten percent know us personally; hence, to many we are "strangers". As I thought on III John 5-8, I rejoiced to know that many are praying and supporting our burdens though "strangers". Isn't this the commending word and exhortation of John? "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to the strangers!"

We praise God that we can continue into the Spring of '86 because of you! Those we touch daily are not our supporters – we've gone to the lost. If you ponder long on these thoughts, you will understand with us the dependence that must be placed upon God for you. After all, those most benefiting and knowledgeable of our labors are the lost (Gentile) and not the actual providers of our daily bread and needs.

You, the faithful, fellow-worker surrender with us to the precious "name-sake" for which we labor – the Lord Jesus Christ!

Continued on next page

"With eternity's values in view, Lord,
With eternity's values in view,
We will do each day's work for Jesus,
With eternity's values in view!

In His bonds,
JACK CRANS

Board Member Spotlight

This month you will be hearing from Joseph Pitts.

Dear Friends:

I was raised in the Philippines as my parents were missionaries there, and at a young age I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. I met my wife, Ginny, while attending Asbury College, and we were married after graduation at which time we both became school teachers. My teaching was interrupted by military service. After five and one half years of service as an officer in the Air Force, including three combat tours in Southeast Asia and living in Texas, California and Massachusetts, our family settled in Kennett Square. In 1972 I was first elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from Chester County and currently am in my seventh term. My wife Ginny presently teaches at Upland County Day School. We also have a small nursery business as Ginny and I both enjoy working with plants. When time permits, I enjoy woodworking, painting, writing and hiking, but most of all family activities.

We have three children, Karen, age 23, who will graduate from nursing school in June; Carol, age 21, who is a dental hygienist; and Dan, age 19, who is a freshman business major in Gordon College. Our family attends and is active at Willowdale Chapel in Kennett Square. I have served several terms on the Board of Elders and I am presently vice-chairman of the Board and liason with the Moral Concerns Committee, Junior Church and the Facilities Task Force Committee. I have taught Senior High, College and Career, Couples and the Men's Sunday School classes. I especially enjoy working with local missions groups and encouraging new believers.

The moral principles and precepts contained in the scriptures ought to form the basis of all our Civil Constitutions and Laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.

– Noah Webster

March's Overview

Prepared the following for publication: Two tracts, "The Greatest Warden Living Today" and "Right Makes Migh a pamphlet on Capital Punishment; and updated CCGM brochure.

Speaking engagements included an adult Sunday School fellowship in Delaware County, a Men's retreat in Lansdale, Capital Bible Seminary, a Lancaster area Mission's Conference, Philadelphia College of Bible night school in Philadelphia and a Women's Fellowship in Atlanta, Georgia.

Personal meetings were held with chaplains, youth workers, Philadelphia pastors, Coatesville's police chief, police officers, Coatesville's Youth and School Guidance Department, and a contractor concerning a Youth Center in Coatesville.

Wardens in Pennsylvania were personally and corporately addressed.

One week of vacation was spent with my family in Atlanta, Georgia.

David Winkey continues his second semester at PCB and Shannon Butterfield continues growth at the Bowery Mission in New York City.

Weekly Bible Studies continued in the Maximum Security Section and Women's Section of Chester County Prison.

"Let nothing turn us from the truth that God has determined, that we become strong under fire, af the pattern of the Son. Nothing else will do!"

– Elliott

Special Warden's Bible Fund Begins

A dear saint of God, the Rev. Harold Atkinson, of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, recently went to be with his Lord following a tragic automobile accident. His faithful prison burden and ministry there at Montgomery County, prompted Warden Roth to recommend memorials monies to be designated to County Corrections Gospel Mission. After a very encouraging time with Rev. Atkinson's son, David, we felt led to begin a special continuing fund that allows us to place personalized copies of God's Word into the hands of prison wardens as we visit with them.

This account will be named at a future date, but we want you to know of this new blessing of our Lord. Praise His name!

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me voi but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11

"Parachurch" Organizations and the Local Church

I closed my related article on Parachurch organizations in the February '86 Contender with this statement: "Rather than be critical of the dear beloved penetrating our world for Christ, let's seek God for wisdom in being more present in the hungry, perishing world of lost men ourselves."

In that issue, I keyed in mainly on Job and his often overlooked public testimony. I recalled briefly the Biblical testimony to his Godly lifestyle prior to his testings. There, also, I suggested him to be a definite Biblical model of practical, public obedience to his Lord. When Job went "downtown" his presence was known, experienced and respected! When he suffered I am sure that the poor, blind, orphaned and oppressed also suffered. **"The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it."** -Proverbs 29:7 **"When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth."** -Proverbs 11:10

I want to go on record **again** as saying I love and exalt the program of God through and under the obedient Bible church. I admit that I do appreciate the support institutions outside the church such as Keswick Colony for Alcoholics in New Jersey, the Bowery Mission in New York City and Christ's Home for Children in Lancaster County to name a few. History will bear truthful support to the clear relationship of revival in the church to benevolent, caring ministry to the poor and neglected of our own streets. I believe it was George Whitefield who in his revival preaching began the first orphanage in America. The YMCA started out to proclaim Christ but miserably lost its course and today deserves no other title than **Y**esterday's **M**emory of **C**hristian **A**ction.

Oh, dear brother in Christ, I appeal to you! I beseech you! I have walked too long in too many spiritual deserts and famine areas to know what's really the truth in America's streets. We need compassion like never before. **Our zeal for great local churches must be coupled with zeal for tangible ministry to the lost!** I dream of the day when Chesters and Coatesvilles and Philadelphias and Gallups will see not just heart-broken, soul-winning pioneers, but a clear outpouring upon **fellowships** of local, Bible churches to the penetrating and tangible presenting of themselves in Christless America.

It would be so easy to cry on your shoulder the heartache of seeing so huge a crisis and so little tangible activity of the Bible church in high crime, addicted America. Right now as I write, Satan aggressively develops purer and less expensive heroin, he builds Godless rehabilitative efforts and ironically churches want to grow without agonizing over the masses of perishing souls partially reflected by American prison and mental facilities.

Oh, that God would move the Church to penetrate high crime America! Oh that we would exalt His name in the marketplace through **tangible** efforts to reach the lost soul and heal the broken, battered life.

It is going to demand cooperation of kindred church fellowships. No one can do it alone... revival would bring pastors together to see common needs.

Please, please read the Contender; it cries and cries to you, dear beloved!

If I continue on for any reason amidst the often misunderstood and distressing response to CCGM, it is the fact that I live and labor to see the day when the local Bible community comes together to agonize over the dilemma of sin and its devastation in broken lives. It is not enough to have church. It is not enough to Biblically prove the wrongness of "parachurch" ministries. It is right, however, to minister and labor for lost souls through tangible ministry created under the local Bible church fellowships.

I know you are already facing many pressing issues and burdens in both your own church fellowship and the many missionary needs around the world, and for those I am extremely sensitive and grateful for your concerns. We pray for you and rejoice for your constant labors and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. However, it would be unfair to overlook the continued pressing issue of lost souls in our own streets. Someone must weep and begin making definite plans and strategies for the touching of these lives in these deteriorating days of the American cities. CCGM is here to help you do that. We pray for laborers for our clear tasks and also welcome any invitation to assist in the creation and development of local church ministry to the lost reflected in U.S. streets and prison.

You and you alone are asked to pray. **God's burdens are our challenges and opportunities**. There's no limit to what any fellowship could accomplish locally if planning, prayer and compassion were the priority.

I will guarantee a few things: "When men **see** your good works they will glorify your father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) "With well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (I Peter 2:15) And evidence will exist like never before that there is "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14)

Alcoholics, drug addicts, youth, the homeless, the single-mother and the friendless await you now! The size of our Home Mission field has grown embarrassingly huge – **an outpouring of God's Spirit is the absolute need of the hour!**

Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep forever.

– Thomas Jefferson

March 1986 Report

P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320

County Corrections Gospel Mission

Prayer Concerns

Salvation and growth of both prison and street lives.

A new-born Christian who begins 20 months of prison time for vehicular homicide. He requests special prayer for his wife and two children.

Audio-visual presentation of our ministry and burden is underway.

Burden and development of ministries under the local church. **Please note:** When we say "local church", know that you belong to one where you are so please do not limit our scope of vision to the Philadelphia area.

Summer Camp scholarships to Word of Life Basketball camps.

Praise for God's continued faithfulness.

Chester, Pennsylvania, ministry with pastors and police.

Fellowship of Pennsylvania Chaplains and Corrections Officers.

Wisdom for use of our time and opportunities.

Leaman Advertising as they labor to publish our burden.

Preparation of hearts to receive our literature.

Pastors and Bible-believing churches as they access Home Missions opportunities and priorities.

All those in authority.

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