May 28, 1990

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Dear ^F2^:

> "Therefore also, now, saith the Lord, turn even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; And tear 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

We can amass statistics until our nation crumbles, or we can be moved to seek God's face for solutions to our national woes. Powerful people are now in position to either beg heaven's assistance or proudly ignore the resources of God's wisdom at perhaps the cost of our nation's life. If ever we needed a prophet, it is now. The verses quoted above are as true today as in the hour they were spoken by the prophet Joel.

Our Criminal Justice system ought to awaken us to tears for America's homes. The growing census of the incarcerated only begins to reflect the tragic fact of the fatherless and motherless of our land. Children face great odds in the drug-infested and violent streets of our cities. Materialism and promiscuity abound, creating all the more hopelessness for the present judicial system.

Out of the hopelessness, however, I still hear and see the raising up of key factors that lead me to yet hope for the years ahead in Corrections. When any nation has been in a time of moral and spiritual decline, the righteous judgment of God has been apparent. While some of these judgments are immediate and final, resulting in deaths among the wicked, others are gracious and remedial, resulting in brokenness, prayers, repentance and extraordinary seeking of God's face. Finally, God raises up immensely burdened leaders.

At a recent meeting of the American Jail Association, I heard the possible testimony of a few burdened leaders who may help set the pace for the 90's. My own personal conviction is that Corrections leaders need to play a vital role in awakening this nation and its people to a soberness that God may yet use to heal our land.

The following verses say a little of what I feel today:

The Warden As Intercessor

I heard a Warden speak today.
His words were solemn and grave.
He cried the woes his eyes had seen
Though Christ had come to save.

I heard a Warden cry today,
His years spent keeping grief.
He called to all to hear his heart
Though none would lend relief.

I heard a Savior cry today.
His tears and life He's spent
Seeking to win a Warden's ear,
Reminding us why He was sent.

I heard a Warden cry today
His heart now bent with pain,
Realizing his role...shouting deep from his soul
"With Christ we've all to gain."

So if we would dare hear a Warden cry,
Listen and notice the tear in his eye
For out of the steel and the block and the chain
A prophet is calling, "We've only to gain!"

When the Keeper can see that our only advance
Is to pray and weep and give God a chance,
His sober reflections will unceasingly say:
"Lord, hear us and keep us from ruin today!"

Please know that I pray God's richest blessing and strengthening of your life! Especially know that I am trusting God for the prophetic voice of Corrections leaders. Your impact on this country and its churches has yet to be measured...Go for it!

Respectfully,

Jack Crans
Director
Proverbs 29:18

JC:al
Enclosure