



County Corrections Gospel Mission

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Dear

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (authorities). For there is no power (authority) but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power (authority), resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (authority)? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

- Romans 13:1-4

I send you greetings and sincerest desires that you have enjoyed a profitable summer. Though still a stranger to many, I need to write and continue seeking some degree of rapport with you. Accompanying this letter is a brief introductory statement concerning my work, and I also quote my purpose statement for you:

County Corrections Gospel Mission is a mission of the local Bible believing churches committed to Pennsylvania's Correctional Personnel and the lives and needs clearly represented by the Pennsylvania county prison communities.

As I walk amidst the broken and declining atmosphere of our city streets and high crime areas, I am constantly called to the mandate laid upon the Church to minister in the lives now often forsaken. You are given personal care and custody responsibility for the many individuals who've made shipwreck in the world. The mood of youth and adults grows more and more reactionary against God's Word (the Bible) and morality declines at an almost unprecedented rate. Without trying to be dramatic, the obvious day for Corrections is only yet ahead as a turn from God only yields the greater fruits of crime and delinquent behavior.

I have been visiting with many department leaders in Corrections including Juvenile Detention administrators, Wardens, Police and Sheriffs and am finding a consistent agreement that the Church needs more penetration within communities desperately suffering from crime and family breakdown.

The caution to be noted in these days of growing lawlessness is the common pitfall of "the tyranny of urgent things!" In trying to maintain a volume of information, procedure and directive, we must almost stop and re-evaluate the overwhelming task now laid upon the shoulders of Correctional officials. You have been expected to do so much yet have been appreciated so little.

My friend, you see things as they really are, and I am sure you realize how much we need the wisdom that ultimately only resides in the Lord God. I firmly maintain a steadfast allegiance to the Bible and believe it to be the stabilizing plumbline for Corrections in the coming decade. A standard is needed to continue any hope of progress in Corrections, and beneath all the rhetoric of politicians, do-gooders and judges must be a high view of God's ultimate knowledge and authority in the affairs of men.

As a special servant of God in these coming critical years, I hope you will be helped by the raising up of a supportive, clearly defined ministry that in the midst of the storm assists the stabilizing of our hopes for a personal God who can still change broken lives into wholeness. One man said recently, "we've neutered our communication of God." In other words, we surely want Him around but not enough to meaningfully change a life. I may be old fashioned, but I still believe that God alone can give peace, hope and potential to the Correctional system's ultimate reasons for existence.

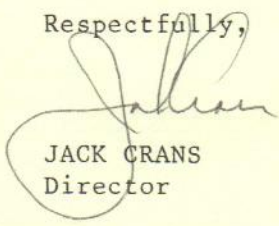
As I close, I trust you've read with some moments' pause to reflect, and I also trust that you know of our constant prayers on your behalf. Why do we pray for you?

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

- I Timothy 2:1-4

Thank you for caring. Your comments are always welcome and hopefully we shall continue in some parallel relationship in these critical days.

Respectfully,


JACK CRANS
Director

JC/lsi
Enclosure