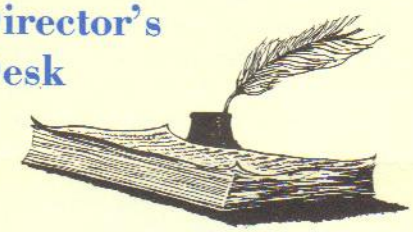
THE CONTENDER

September 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



Dear Faithful Companions:

". . .The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another."

– Nehemiah 4:19

In the Scripture quoted above, Nehemiah wisely recognized the vulnerable position of his laborers who faithfully worked to restore the great wall of Jerusalem. The enemy was positioning to intimidate and ruin their labors, so in response, the sounding of a trumpet would call them to gather together for God's protection and care.

As we find ourselves busy in ministry, it is comforting to know that we, too, depend on those moments of being drawn together with God's people for corporate strengthening and personal encouragement. In many respects we are "separated. . .one far from another", and be assured the enemy always positions himself to intimidate and ruin.

The more I reviewed Nehemiah's burden for Jerusalem, the more I identified my own "sorrow of heart" as so often we have gone up at night and viewed the brokenness of our cities. **Quite frankly, we have overdone our investigation of the need. Our cry is now to heaven that somehow by God's mercies we yet could experience a great spiritual awakening in the marketplace of men.** You that already labor upon the wall have so faithfully rallied together with us as in the "Contender" month after month we feebly attempt to blow a trumpet in the midst of adversity.

Often at CCGM it appears that I go a myriad of directions and quite frankly I do – always in each circumstance touching the still beating but weak pulse of dying youth and adults. Even this month we've "sorrowed in heart" because of the unreached, demonic strongholds on cities and individual lives. Notice that I said "dying youth" as so much of our burden reflects a broken, multiplying generation of young people. **The majority of our involvement never escapes the reality that our nation's ghettos and prisons are comprised most obviously of the young.** Illegitimate child-bearing and one-parent family is the norm. A grandmother is not hard to find in her mid-30's, and need I say that children are being reared in the most hedonistic yet despairing cultures ever manufactured by broken man.

Often people ask me, "What is it you really do?" I ache over needs, cry before spiritual leaders and pray for an awakening of hearts to the demonstration of tangible ministry on Home Missions fronts. It is no secret that the average American city is unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that it continues to spew forth the greatest portion of broken, defeated and incarcerated lives. In a very recent letter from a missionary brother in Central America, I was encouraged to read his hearing of my burden. He read recently that "30% of blacks in U.S. cities and 2% of Hispanics and 1% of the Asians (as opposed to 60% of whites) have been evangelized". In his Central American outreach to the Mam peoples, "3% are Believers and perhaps 2 or 3 times that could be considered evangelized." He closed by saying: "The need seems almost equal from here!"

Wardens, law enforcers, judicial and governmental authorities continue to be upon our hearts. The tyranny of urgent issues in individual lives often impedes our progress, but do know we yet pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the believing church for home missions agenda.

Please continue to pray with us and for us that God would open great and effectual doors! **Are you satisfied with the burden** of your local fellowship? Do you "sorrow in heart" for the closing of the breaches in our nation? Though separated and far from one another, let's build and listen as the trumpet continues to blow!

With love and great appreciation,

Jack Crans

A Letter From Linda

"Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known." – Psalms 106:8

Even David, the Psalmist, knew that **God worked** in lives to show **His** mighty power and purpose not ours (Ephesians 1:19, 20), which brings glory to God and Him alone!

Please make sure you read the testimony of Beth this month as you will be able to see one example of His great power working in a precious life. Beth has been such a tremendous blessing to me as even now she is growing into a

Continued on next page.

Linda's Letter - *Continued*

beautiful woman of God and ministers to me and encourages me!

Each month you read the positive side of my ministry with these girls, so I thought this month I would share a concern which frustrates me at times.

A few people have asked me if they could come to jail with me on a regular basis, but I never feel led of the Lord in that direction. I believe the Lord leads me this way because I don't see this as the greatest need. It makes me very sad, however, to see a girl go home to the same ungodly environment that brought her to jail. There is rarely anyone to continue teaching her about the Lord upon her release. As much as I constantly teach them that they have the Holy Spirit to lead them and give them victory, they need fellowship, encouragement and to be discipled. I wish I had more time to follow-up with them and even to visit them one-on-one while they are in jail. At the present time I have one lady whom I can count on to call and follow up on a girl desiring that discipleship after her release. What a blessing it is to have her and yet what a greater blessing and less frustration it would be if the Lord would lead others to this same ministry. If you feel led of the Holy Spirit to this type of ministry, please feel free to contact me because the doors are wide open and the needs are great.

This month I will be taking a day to visit Dee-Dee who was transferred to Muncy State Correctional Institute. We keep in close contact and she is doing very well!

I cannot thank you enough for your prayer and financial support to me. It is because of your faithfulness that girls are being saved and growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Love,

Linda Ingham

How The Lord Jesus Christ Changed My Life!

By Beth (Pufko) Dieter

In high school I started out smoking pot and hanging out with the wrong crowd. As time went on I found myself getting involved deeper and deeper into a life of drugs and wrong relationships. Finally in the summer of 1985, when I was 22 years old, I found myself in jail and a total mess. I would lay in my bed in my cell consumed with feelings of guilt, fear and hopelessness, and I cried everywhere I went.

I started to go to Bible Study on Thursdays and it was there I met Linda. Each week I came I would cry because I hated my life and where it got me. As I listened each week, the Holy Spirit began His work in me until I finally became saved. I would read my Bible and pray and go to all the services available at jail.

October finally came and I got out of jail and since that time God has directed my steps. Upon my release I worked with Linda in the offices of CCGM. It was there I learned to type and other basic office skills. I then got a wonderful job as a data entry operator. The company I worked for recently went out of business, so I am temporarily unemployed. It is my desire and goal at this point (unless the Lord directs me differently) to work in a small doctor's office and eventually get into hospital administration.

During this time period, Linda discipled me in the Word on a weekly basis, and from that time spent together the Lord has given us a beautiful friendship. When I was discipled, I went through many painful times because God's Word, and the truth of it, had an effect on me. Little by little, however, the pain is going away as I am learning the victory I can have in Christ. It has not been easy coming out of a worldly lifestyle, but after two years, I can really praise Jesus, my Savior.

Since coming out of jail, I was baptized at Hephzibah Baptist Church. I was married and my husband and I are both becoming active in Limerick Chapel. I have been growing in the Lord through that church, my personal Bible study and the new and right friends He has given me. God is using me, too, to show Jesus to my family, and now while I am unemployed I am going to jail with Linda on Tuesdays to testify to the girls that Jesus came to save them from a life destructive to themselves not only now but for eternity. I am also taking a computer course and am learning to sew!

My favorite passage of Scripture is Psalm 27 and my favorite verse is Psalm 16:8.

"I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

I know that my life is a living testimony of how God's power through His Holy Spirit controlling me can change a life. If you would have told me four years ago that I would be going to church, reading my Bible, hanging around Christians, etc., I would have laughed in your face! But you know, I thank the Lord so much that he raised up County Corrections Gospel Mission, and you, its faithful prayer and financial supporters and it is my prayer that many more will come to know Him as their personal Savior!

On The Homefront

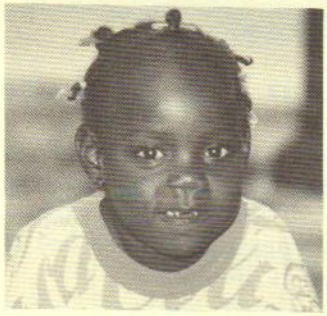
By Sue Crans

It is a busy time both for family and ministry. The boys are back in school (Jonathan–8th grade, Timothy–5th grade and Joshua–1st grade), and many young men are spending a lot of time at our home. We have been working with several of these boys for two years and are seeing quiet yet encouraging evidence of His working. In each of their lives there is evidence of growth. Please pray for them as many are making decisions concerning college and are

Continued

looking to Stu and Jack for direction. **Our desire is to see them in Christian schools, but often our efforts are frustrated by lack of finances and other obstacles.** Wouldn't it be a blessing to see some young men develop into leaders for Christ?

Please pray for a darling little girl named Shakida who is five years old and living with us. We pray for greater opportunities to work with her mother who presently needs divine intercession towards the needs of her life. Shakida has been a real blessing to our home these last three months. Pray for her family as we seek total restoration to His glory! Presently she is enrolled at Lanchester Christian School in the Kindergarten class.



Shakida

Continue to pray for Jon, Tim and Josh as they do their studies for school in the midst of a hectic household. Pray for Jack and I as we touch and guide the many lives now confronting us daily. We need the Lord to give us the emotional, physical and spiritual stamina necessary in these days.

Pornography and Teenagers

By Stu Tripler

A Canadian study reviewed by the Attorney General's Commission on pornography "indicated that children between twelve and seventeen had the greatest interest in pornographic material and were the prime purchasers of it."

"There are more stores selling pornographic videos than there are McDonald's hamburger restaurants."

I shutter as I read these quotes from **Pornography: A Human Tragedy** edited by Tom Minnery. First of all, to think that children were prime purchasers of pornographic material overwhelmed me. Secondly, the realization that pornographic videos are more readily available than a hamburger from McDonald's is astounding. The impact on young people's lives has to be devastating.

Being a new father, I am learning how impressionable kids are. Johanna is not yet a year old, but seems to understand what she watches on television. One evening while Johanna was still awake I was changing channels to see what was on television and I stumbled across professional wrestling. The action really attracted Johanna's attention. After watching it for a while, she grabbed her teddy bear and started bouncing up and down in a way copying what she saw the wrestlers doing. I was amazed and saddened. I realized the negative influence that the wrestling could have on her and that even at her young age I needed to be ever so careful with what she viewed. Even though wrestling isn't the worse thing in the world, it demonstrates how impressionable children can be. Can you imagine the effect of pornography on developing young minds?

You say that as a Christian, what cause do I have to worry about pornography? Beware, it touches more of us than we care to admit. A study (taken from **Pornography: A Human Tragedy**) conducted among 600 people found:

1. 91% of males and 82% of females had seen a magazine which depicted couples or groups in explicit sexual acts.

2. The average age of first exposure was 13.5 years.

3. A larger precentage of high school students had seen x-rated films than any other age group, including adults.

4. 84% reported exposure to such (x-rated) films.

5. 46% of junior high school students had seen one or more x-rated movies, and the average age of first exposure for these students was 14 years, 8 months.

I am not suggesting that our young people are typical of those found in this study, but are we aware of what our youth are reading or viewing? Many of the television shows would be classified in the category of soft porn. Other studies have shown how desensitized one becomes with the constant viewing of soft porn and the resultant desire to view more explicit material. One reason for the interest in this topic was a result of ministering in a local prison and coming across a Christian young man whose downfall in part was due to the influence of pornography. I remember Paul's encouragement to the Romans in Chapter 12, verse 3, and to the Corinthians in his first letter, chapter 10, verse 12. Let us all try to practice the teachings of Romans 12:1,2 and renew our minds daily to withstand the wiles of the devil which we all face.

A Worthy Agenda For The Local Church

Organize a task force of mature Believers who would be willing to wrestle with the following questions. **We would love to hear more from you concerning these suggested questions** and those you would raise that will stir hearts to think and seek God's greater working through the local church.

1. Are we effectively reaching the unchurched youth of our city? What responsibility is upon us for this need and what resources and commitment would be required to make a meaningful and permanent impact?

2. If we were to have a "hot-line" telephone ministry for cocaine addicts, etc. what resources or facilities would we need to accomplish the meeting of needs?

3. Do we understand "Missions" as including the inner-city and institutions of our own nation and if so, do these fields require missionaries?

4. Does God intend for a Believing, local church to be established among every people group? Do we know of people groups near us who by culture or location really deserve their own church and fellowship? Explain!

Continued on back page.

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Worthy Agenda - *Continued*

5. What is your feeling about "para-church" ministries? Define the term. Is God using such ministries? Why do they exist? Where do they fit into the ministry of the local church?

6. Is our church an encouragement to missions and para-church ministries? Should it be? What clear guidelines do we have for our position?

7. If one were to say that all "para-church" ministries be outlawed and closed, what would be the resultant issues confronting the local church?

8. Are we facing a day in America wherein we ought to be reviewing our church goals and objectives?

Prayer Concerns

That God would use our presence at the **Warden's Symposium** on October 22,23.

That God would anoint the missionaries now being called and placed in **Chester**, Pennsylvania.

That God would enable **Believing Law Enforcers** and **Corrections Officials** to be faithful and burdened with vision.

That God would multiply the tangible resources of His Church for **the touching of addicted lives.**

That God would **anoint pastors** with compassion and sorrow of heart for our dying cities.

That **God's people** would hear the same warning trumpet as we labor "far from one another".

That **God would empower** our minds, hearts and flesh to do His will.

That God would continue equipping and encouraging each of us **to patiently wait on Him.**

That God would help us **to disciple** the teen boys who frequent our home daily.

That you might be blessed for your faithful attendance to our families and ministries.

That **Stu and Nancy Tripler, Linda Ingham** and **the Crans'** might be found faithful to know and perform to His glory.

From The Bookshelf

This month we recommend the reading of **The Making of a Disciple** by Dr. Keith Phillips the founder of World Impact. It is published by the Fleming H. Revell Co.

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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: _____