County Corrections Gospel Mission

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Dear Warden:

> "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the law, to do them. But that **no man is justified by the law in the sight of God**, it is evident, for, The just shall live by faith."
> -- Galatians 3:10,11

> "Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But **where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.**"
> -- Romans 5:20

The United States continues to incarcerate more individuals than any other nation on the face of the earth. The industry of Criminal Justice grows more powerful with each passing session of Capitol Hill. Legislatures mandate laws, penalties and Houses of Correction while unidentified and seemingly unconcerned millions pathetically sleep through the heartbreaking reality of a growing national dilemma. After 22 years of ministry in the Criminal Justice System, my personal convictions and observations cause me to ache deeply over the malignant growth of the penal system. While need exists for the punishment and segregation of violent offenders, we've grown only too comfortable and satisfied with the costly and tragic warehousing of people who seemingly don't mean a whole lot to the majority of "law abiding Americans". This piety is best seen in the church, where too often we've lost sight of the above mentioned truths. "**NO MAN** IS JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW"...MOREOVER, THE LAW'S PRESENCE MULTIPLIES OUR SINFULNESS, BUT WHERE SIN ABOUNDS, GRACE **SHOULD** MUCH MORE ABOUND.

The Bible talks specifically about two uses of the Law: (1) ".. the law was our **schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ**, that we might be justified by faith" (in a Savior) (Gal. 3:24). The purpose of the law was to reveal our common and truest condition: the fact that all men are sinners (law-breakers). What was meant to be holy, just and good ultimately became the standard that declared our sinfulness! Hence, the scripture: "There is none righteous, no not one." (2) The law was meant **to produce a sanctifying process in the human heart** by its application to the personal life. At its best, the law would bring an individual to see his own sinfulness and consequently his or her need for a savior. IN SHORT, THE LAW OUGHT TO BRING ONE TO THE CROSSWORK OF CHRIST. HENCE, THE WONDERFUL TRUTH QUOTED ABOVE: **"WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND"**.

A third use of the law has grown more prominent than the two mentioned above, this being the thought: that by introducing more laws into a legal system, it would change the vital moral fabric of a nation. What sadly occurs, on the contrary, is a massive segregating and warehousing of "sinners" that tragically moves away from the most needful purposes of the law and establishes a slippery slope of human waste unparalleled in our nation's brief history. This "third use of the law" has metastasized at our very feet. It behooves us to re-evaluate the first two uses of the law. A spiritual awakening is our only hope and our nation's only cure.

I know that I have sounded critical of the present state of affairs in the Criminal Justice System. My deepest grief is not with you, the administrator, but with the "millions pathetically sleeping" while children, parents, and countless family members languish in a shattered life and system that need to be cured itself.

I have recently been chosen to serve on the Justice Fellowship Task Force under the umbrella organization of Prison Fellowship. The careful balance of needs both of the system, the offender and the victim are undergoing great evaluation and study. It is my hope that you as a key player in the Criminal Justice industry will take time to communicate your personal concerns to our ongoing national workshop.

Especially know that my heart is thankful for your daily commitment to serve the many crises implied in this letter.

Respectfully,

Jack Crans
Director

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