THE CONTENDER

Spring 1990

". . . 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:

Recent months have allowed us both the challenge and privilege of directing the Chaplaincy Program at the Chester County Prison. Each segment of the prison population brings its own unique concerns. Women present us with issues that would break anyone's heart. Some are pregnant during incarceration, many are mothers and surely the ill effects of incarceration crush what is left of the human spirit. The crisis of the family is only compounded when close observation is made of the inmates' lives. Can you begin to imagine the weight of family need now expressed in the 700 women housed in the Muncy State Correctional Institution? Who aches over these concerns? What pulpits and people agonize on behalf of the incarcerated family groups? Do these issues have any relation at all to the exhortation of Scripture to ''visit the fatherless''?

Islamic religion is greatly impacting urban centers and is clearly evidencing its zeal in our prisons. Daily attack is carried out against the veracity of Scripture and the person and work of Christ. I often feel as though I were ministering in a foreign nation, having to constantly uphold and contend for the faith once delivered. Are God's people equipped for such a time as this?

Speaking engagements, conferences, seminars and travel have exhausting debts to be paid. Debts of time, debts of energy, debts of strength and debts of relationships. Our message and burden is not a pleasant one. In one place our burden will be heard; in another it will be stricken from the record. The indicting condition of our nation begs us to be sober minded, grave and forthright. Perishing souls overwhelm our present preparedness and responsiveness as God's people. The mission field no longer is far away - it has come home!

We must focus our energy, time and study entirely toward the lost and the building up of new believers. Somehow we must trim away excessive speaking engagements and devote ourselves more to the lives we've been raised up to rescue. We unashamedly ask that you join us in the remainder of 1990 and pledge to pray for the precise focusing of our energy and gifts to the lives and related agendas now affecting the prisoner.

Gratefully,

Jack Crans

Deliver The Dark City

by John Dawson

(Taken from ''Target Earth'' Editor Kaleb Jansen, page 74-75)

Cities can be transformed! The early days of the Salvation Army are a graphic example of the power of the Gospel to radically change the life of a city. General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, clearly identified satanic bondages of alcoholism, prostitution, and injustice in the cities of his time. His ''Army'', as they were called, penetrated the city-wide strategies which resulted in city-wide victories.

Understanding the reality of spiritual warfare is crucial as we evangelize the world. Consider this:

- Satan's Kingdom is a limited hierarchy of evil spirits.
- Principalities and powers seek to dominate geographic areas such as cities (Eph. 6).
- We are called and empowered to tear town the rule of the evil one in the name of Jesus, who is given all authority and power.
- God's power is strategically applied by discernment of the unseen realm.
- We must overcome the enemy before we employ other methods of ministry.

In a spiritual battle for a person, family, church, or city, discerning the nature of the enemy's lie is half the battle. Even today, whole countries are kept in darkness by satanic lies that have become cornerstones of a particular culture. Although the darkness is stark, it is not impenetrable. The Bible says that one day Christians will look upon Satan in amazement saying, ''Is this the one who made the nations tremble?'' (Isa. 14:16). He will be seen for who he really is - small and impotent, having held whole nations captive only through the stubborn will of people consciously embracing his lies.

Christians thus contribute to victory in a city when they have identified the spiritual opposition and its unique manifestations. Here is a list of four areas of research that can aid the intercessor.

1. Look at your city's secular history. Why is this city here and what moral and spiritual trends were involved in its founding?

Continued on next page

2. Look at your city's Christian history. Research the life of God's people in your city, particularly during times of revival. Find out what God has revealed to our forefathers of faith.

3. Identify the present day intercessors, spiritual fathers, and those with prophetic insight in your city. What are they saying?

4. Study your city's demographics. Where do people live? How many are in poverty, and why are they in poverty? What are the trends? Get the facts. Spiritual warfare does not operate in a vacuum.

Once you know what you are up against, begin warfare with worship, wait on the Lord for revelation about His strategy, and then travail in prayer until God's purposes are birthed. It is important to humbly identify with the sins of the city and to call on God for mercy. It is also important to overcome evil with good. If you are tempted to greed and stinginess, counter it with exorbitant generosity. Overcome pride with humility, lust with purity, fear with faith. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Pray with faith. The size of your faith is revealed by your plans and expectations. God's objective is plain enough. Envision this, for example: let God's heart for the city become your heart. You and your friends begin a city-wide prayer movement. There is revival in the local churches, followed by an awakening among the non-Christians, reformation of the society, and new expression of world mission. How do you perceive God? Is your God big enough for that? He waits for a people who will see Him as He is and then follow Him to victory.

Prison Reveals Growth of Islam

by Jack Crans

Islam is surfacing at an alarming rate in our prison industry. The current crisis is fueled by the spiritual vacuum of our cities and especially evidenced among the urban poor.

Today, migration of Muslims and propagation have brought Islam to Western Europe, England and the Americas, where it has found reception among African Americans. In 1984 at the third annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America, Ahman Kutty affirms: "Islam is here to stay. It is for us to see it more as it moved into Egypt, Iran, North Africa, Indonesia, India..." The late Ismail Faruqi at the First International Conference of Islamic Information in the United States said: "We must convert 50-75 million Americans - they are groping for salvation, and you can give them that salvation."

I would personally warn God's people to zealously and tenaciously know their Bibles and to faithfully study and understand an apologetic of the deity of Christ. If ever Bibliology and Christology were essential, it is now!

A Testimony From Leadership Bible Institute

by Michael Fuller
(2nd semester student)

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made." - Psalm 139:14

Being a "child of the sixties" I learned early in life to experiment with drugs and drink alcohol. Growing up in the ghettoes of Philadelphia, I learned to bow down to peer pressure and to enjoy the so-called pleasures I felt a need to be a part of...I grew up to be an addict to liquor and cocaine for almost 25 years of my life. Numerous rehabilitation centers, jails, stealing, sleeping on the street, in bus stations, shelters, in hospitals for a heart condition and high blood pressure, yet God searched me out.

The Lord found me after one more trip to the hospital. I had no intentions of being saved. I fought God at every turn. I knew then I had no other way to go except Jesus. I had to pray and surrender my life completely. I was saved in September 1989 and baptized by immersion in water. I now attend Calvary Baptist Church in Lancaster, PA.

With God's love and grace, I have just finished my first semester at Leadership Bible Institute...also with the help of Jim Davis of City Gate Mission for trusting in me, and for being one of my instructors; also Jack Crans for allowing me to be a part of this ministry. Yes, God is good! Yes, I am fearfully and wonderfully made to do the will of the Father, and not destroy myself. My name is not just Michael Fuller any more, it is "child of God"! "Jesus paid a debt He didn't own because we had a debt we couldn't pay." Thank God for life and good health today!

From Death Row, San Quentin

by Bylle Payton

Bylle Payton is a Death Row inmate and director of Dove Flight Ministries, P.O. Box 1405, Novato, California 94948. I quote from his newsletter:

"Of all the blessings received while on death row the one which I've been most grateful for is that of California not actually having gone through with an execution. Having lived for 9 years with the many condemned men here it is rare that I actually know the details of a man's crime other than, of course, he is here for murder. My eyes see their physical bodies, watch them lift weights, comb their hair and visit their families. I've seen fear in their eyes, joy in their smile, anger cross their face and tears stream down the cheeks of the 18 year old who cries from within for just one more chance. To me, they are as wonderful, as bad, as creative, as intuitive, as loving, as self-centered, as giving as anyone else who has ever been created by God. They are, for the most part, often victims themselves; of poor homes, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes of a psychological or biological disorder. I'm glad that God has made me to see them this way. To know them as friends, love

them as neighbors and care about them as eternal spirits.

"Well, it has been nine years now that I have enjoyed this blessing from God. Although, it does appear to many that the time has come in which one of the men here will be executed. His name is Bob. At age 19 he was convicted of kidnapping and killing two other teenagers. Now at 34 years old, it has been nearly 15 years since the crime he was convicted for. Every avenue of appeal has been exhausted and according to all worldly evidences, the newspapers, the judges and prosecutors, Bob will be going to the gas chamber within 60 days, maybe sooner.

"Upon realizing that Bob may soon pass from this life I inventoried what I'd done over the years to help this one particular individual know the truth that is in Christ Jesus. The truth that would separate him from eternal darkness and deliver him to the bosom of God our Father. Without detailing the years to you, it can be said that I've come far short of being the witness and ambassador (of God's kingdom) which would have offered him a more fair opportunity to escape the eternal grip of the evil one. Certainly, my prayers have been that Bob would be saved from execution, but not nearly enough effort did I ever place toward making certain he would sincerely know Jesus prior to those cyanide pellets being dropped into the ammonia filled bucket.

"Eternity is a long time. Please be encouraged to do all you can to share God's Word with others. In doing this, not only will others find the greatest gift ever given to man, but also you will be rewarded with blessings beyond your imagination."

Clarks' Comments

by Alan and Judie Clark

From our television sets we view the world of the city streets. Like Wyatt Earp against the villains of Dodge City, the drug underworld scene of today becomes a weak glory of good against evil. Through the media we have become accustomed to the existence of that which is ravaging the minds and souls of inner city America, 1990.

Our inner cities are like a spider luring trusting prey into its web. When the victim is trapped, the spider ingests its life blood. Death has claimed another soul. We have become so accustomed to the battle we don't know there is a war!

At LBI we are training leaders to go into the thick of the battle. We are arming them with the Word and teaching them how to use the tools of ministry. Our men are involved in the local church and working in inner city ministry. It is amazing to see these men who were once on the corner selling dope now on the streets giving out Bible tracts. How wonderful the grace and love of Jesus!

God bless each of you for your prayers and support.

A Cry From A State Prison Inmate

(Name withheld to protect him)

"What is a State Prison: The people who've never been here would say it's a place where you go when you've done wrong...it's a place where you learn to do what's right so when you come out you're a better person...it's a place with a wall around it which no one really knows what goes on inside... That is the place that the so-called good people out there send the young, the old, the weak and the strong and place them in a cell that's only big enough for a dog...Let me tell you what a prison really is and what it really does to a man.

I'm an inmate here at a State Prison. I've been in and out of prison for 17 years out of 35 years of my life...today the courts don't care one way or another if a man is guilty...all they want is to get that man out of the way...they have done that with me and I'm sure with so many like me...then they can't understand why they have so many men in prison today. A few months ago we had the trouble up at Camp Hill Prison, which by the way was a little thing to what's to come, this prison here is a **bomb**...the talk here is another Camp Hill...there's 4500 inmates in this prison...two times as many as Camp Hill...the thing here is that men are ready to die...they believe in dying for this fight - every day a man gets hurt here. I've been here for 2½ months and five men have died in this prison. Things happen here that people wouldn't believe - if you're weak you can't make it here...you'll be raped and killed and forgotten...no one will help you... Some officers here look the other way, guys get beat every day by other inmates...Drugs, there's more drugs in here than on the streets - they drink wine all day long...the place is a bomb and that's no lie...in the news they say it won't make it through summer - well, that is true: it won't! People will die in this jail - prison officers along with the inmates will die together.

I said once if I could put a picture of hell together, this would surely be the pit of Hell itself...

I'm a born again Christian and I love the Lord Jesus and I pray and every day God keeps His hands on this prison...I also pray for every inmate in this prison to find another way...until people can find another way to help their brothers in prison there will never be peace but only war...men must be men...you cannot make a man live like a dog and that's what has happened - in 17 years I have never seen anything like this.

Please pray for us here.

From The Bookshelf

The Solemn Assembly
by Richard Owen Roberts

International Awakening Press
P.O. Box 232
Wheaton, Illinois 60189

This $1.00, 16-page booklet is one of the most challenging and needful articles for our day. If ever there were any hopeful course for our churches, this is it.

County Corrections Gospel Mission
P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320
Spring Report 1990

Warden's Corner

In March - May, we have sent two Bibles to Wardens.

A recent trip to the American Jail Association Conference in Reno, Nevada, afforded Jack the opportunity to address one seminar of the participating Corrections leaders.

Our monthly letter continues to be written and sent to Corrections leadership. We are pleased to report that God has faithfully supplied many systems with Spirit-led personnel. Please remember to prayerfully support our outreach to administrators in Criminal Justice. Annual participation in the American Jail Association, the National Sheriffs Association, the American Correctional Association, the Christian Legal Society and the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers is so essential to a maturing impact of God's Word to these key Law Enforcement and Corrections organizations.

Executive Director of American Correctional Association Cries Out

From an article by Anthony Travisono
"On the Line", May 1990

"Today, one out of every 24 American males is under correctional supervision. How many more will we need to have in our custody before new prevention efforts are developed and carried out?

"The criminal justice system is not, and never was, solely responsible for crime prevention. We have tolerated various levels of crime in our society depending on the social and economic culture of the decade. Correctional populations have varied greatly from decade to decade, even though the crime rate has stayed relatively stable. For the past 15 years, we have, as a culture, been in the punishment mode and have adopted this as the method to solve the social ills of our time. We also rely on community control to stop violence, and as long as the violence continues, we as communities and as a nation should keep it up.

"Our huge budgets need to be successfully reallocated to community programs. Somebody out there knows how to do this. So let's find out who has the key and stop this madness.

Areas to Designate Gifts

Christmas
General
Leadership Bible Institute
Memorials
Oak Street Project
Snack Foods
Warden's Fund

Note:
All gifts are tax-deductible; a receipt will be sent.

The Contender is a bi-monthly publication of County Corrections Gospel Mission,
P.O. Box 1136,
Coatesville, PA 19320
(215) 383-9378

County Corrections Gospel Mission is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.
Director, Jack Crans
Secretary, Arlene Losch;
Board of Advisors:
Mr. Mark Blair,
Dr. Howard Blandau,
Pastor Leland Dittman,
Dr. Joseph F. Eckman,
Dr. Herschel Elliott,
Mr. Joseph R. Pitts.