THE CONTENDER

Spring 1992

". . . 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

"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life. AND WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?" - 2 Cor. 2:15, 16

To Our Precious Companions in Ministry.

For the next few minutes, please sit down and share with us in this work of ministry. We are going to look back to August of 1991. It was at that time, when the Crans family ventured off to the beautiful island of Spanish Wells, a Bahamian Island located approximately 100 miles east of Fort Lauderdale, Florida in the crystal blue waters of the Atlantic.

The People's Church of Spanish Wells, under the leadership of missionary Willie Pinder, had invited us to minister God's Word and be refreshed for ten days. Our landing took place during the darkness of a tropical storm. What normally were waters of blue seemed waters of shimmering charcoal. Little did we know that those dark waters were going to be a foretaste of undeniable tragedy.

Rain fell amidst the unending winds and thunder for the first two days. Visitation with the sick and shut-in and ministry of God's Word to both the People's Church and the Bahamian children marked the early portion of our visit. The joyous gatherings with Bahamian friends were refreshing. Laughter filled our hearts: the agony of ministry concerns had been set aside for just a little while.

The warm Bahamian sun blessed our souls for the Monday fishing venture and the white sands of a tiny island oasis gave rest to our broken spirits. A family picnic with the Pinders and hours in the crystal waters strengthened our hearts.

The refreshing of Monday's activities was soon to give way to the blowing rains of Tuesday. The tropical winds gave sturdy support to the darkening clouds which raced upon the shadowed tides of the Atlantic. Still at sea were the many husbands and fathers of the People's Church who made their living in the harvesting of lobster. As is common, the island's families anxiously awaited the return from sea of their loved ones. Almost two weeks had passed since the boats had journeyed away.

Fruit trees are common to the Bahamian farmers. Mangos, limes and bananas grow naturally in this region. The refugee Haitians are a common sight in their plywood shelters which house them in the farmer's orchards. The vivid contrast of our Bahamian hosts and the Haitian poor is unavoidable in the tendering of any observer's eye. The love of "Brother Willie" for the Haitian poor is likewise obvious to effect one's heart!

In the midst of a rainy morning, the farmer still busied himself in the harvesting of his crops. Squalls of rain blew thick sheets of white rain across the blackened sky. Thunder and lightning shook the land.

Suddenly a telephone rings and Brother Willie, a strong and tender leader, with hands hanging at his sides and knees almost buckling, listens to the announcement of unparalleled grief: "Stan the Mango Man and his nine-year-old Haitian helper have been struck by lighting!" From that moment on, the days of our visit to Spanish Wells would never be the same. News is slow in the

Joshua, Timothy, Jonathan, Jack & Sue

island. Emergency vehicles are non-existent. We gathered in the home of Brother Stan and waited with his family for the confirmation of their loved one's sudden call to glory.

Stan Pinder and Kensun were carried in my arms some hours later. Days of mourning would follow. The boats would gather in days for the memorial services.

The week passed with continued rains. The arrival of the fishermen was somber. The gathering of the whole island for memorial services seemed a sovereign occasion for God to work in hardened souls. Haitians and Bahamians, whites and blacks filled the People's Church and an adjoining facility. The

Gospel was preached, as was the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Brother Willie cried: "God is speaking to us! God has come close to gaining our attention! Are we listening? How much closer must He get to gain our ear?"

Visiting the scene of this grievous event, it was discovered that during the torrents of rain and lightning, Stan and Kensun (both previous believers) were seated on the ground under a mango tree, observing Haitian friends who were preparing a lamb for slaughter. There, tied with outstretched limbs in the tree, was the slain body of a young lamb. How appropriate! The details of such a tragedy began to fit together. **God in His sovereign and perfect will allowed Brother Stan and little Kensun to enter his courts. To each of them, lightning became a sudden door of entrance; to others who remained, a sobering experience of God's power and presence. The slain lamb seemed to proclaim the old, old story, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world!"**

Our lives were deeply affected in those days. The memorial service took place on Saturday; I preached all day Sunday and then we journeyed home.

Time has swept over us since those precious days of August. I look back over my shoulder and it seems as if every aspect of our lives has been sobered. Ministry has been unending! Quite literally, since touching down at the Philadelphia Airport, we have been saturated in the growing concerns of broken lives. I beg your forgiveness for the lack of communication in these many months since August. Believe me, though, that our lives have been stretched as never before!

As quoted above, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Sincerely in Christ
Jack Crans
Romans 8:28

Kids Club

by Sue Crans

"Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God." - Phil. 4:6

I've had to continually comfort myself with this verse since September with Kids' Bible Club. As many of you know, this is our third year at the project. Starting with a dilapidated room and seeing it repaired much by faithful men and women we have been able to see many children saved and growing in the Lord. Rapport with parents has grown immensely.

In late August, Head Start, a federally funded program, called and asked if they could "share" the room with me. Since I had been there so long and had established a rapport with the families, they would fully cooperate with my program. To make a long story short, they have totally taken over the room, from bulletin boards to wall space, to every inch of the room: there is no remaining evidence that Bible Club has existed. Each Thursday now we must use a very small room for our 30+ children and helpers. As you can well imagine, it has become a real source of discouragement. I ask for your prayers. As evidenced many times before, it can change things.

Now for some good news! The Tenant Council at the Oak Street Project has given us the use of an apartment. It's in wonderful condition and has several sizeable rooms. Our heads spin with all the things we can do with this area. First, we have begun new Bible Clubs to add to those already continuing at Parkway's location. A club for teen girls has begun with an average attendance of 12. This is led by Diana Lyons. Usually the girls meet at our home on Thursdays after school. God has provided new helpers and teachers for clubs and we now find ourselves with weekly numbers that range from 55-90 children.

Please pray for us! God knows what needs to be done and we are anxious to be a part of doing it. (James 5:16)

Jack and I have become involved in the Tenant Council at Oak Street and have been constantly maintaining a rapport with the women who presently represent the needs of the project. We have hosted these precious friends at our home for dinner and have enjoyed the privilege of being called upon for ministry to the critical needs of Oak Street families.

Because of your generous sharing with CCGM, we have been able to assist in legitimate needs concerning food, rent, counsel, clothing, toys, networking of new and greater resources and the challenging of area youth to the needs of our fatherless poor.

If you are reading this letter and know of someone whom you know to be burdened for the projects and who has training in ministry to the family, we are certainly anxious to share some wonderful open doors for ministry.

It appears that the baseball program may become a reality in just weeks for the children of the two projects. Pray as God directs a particular church to this end.

Please know that we anticipate a very powerful summer in the Children's Bible Club program. Kool-Aid, cookies, canned punch and paper products are always an ongoing need.

You have been such a blessing!

Chaplaincy: Walking with Jesus

by Jack Crans

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him, followed after him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him: ALL MEN SEEK THEE. And He said unto them, LET US GO..."
- Mark 1:35-38

While in seminary in 1975, I had to read a book entitled *Ministering to Deeply Troubled People.* Quite honestly, I don't remember a thing about its content, but I'll never forget its title! It ex-

presses what has always been the desire of my heart: to minister to people who hurt.

It wasn't long ago that I was quick to pray, "Lord, let my eyes affect my heart!" This prayer once uttered by Jeremiah himself seemed appropriate to my situation and calling. However, I was asking for something that as yet was unable to sustain. **The burden of people and their depth of need is without question an area which only God Himself can supply!**

Walking into a prison as a Chaplain seems to draw the attention of many broken souls. A tugging of one's clothing, a shout from a doorway, a cry from a cell, a note from a prisoner, a call from an officer, a page from an intercom, a message from the telephone, a letter in the mail. . . and those urgencies and more press in upon you.

The needs are great and the urgency seems to crescendo! The tragic puzzles of human life seem to have lost so many pieces. Like Humpty Dumpty, lives seem hopelessly broken.

"Jesus," they cried, "All men seek Thee!" Pressed by the crowd, worn by the demands, aware of the time, Jesus slipped quietly away. Not just away to pray, but AWAY! **Jesus left the beckoning town.**

"Let us go INTO the next towns, that I may preach." (Mark 1:38) Here Jesus clearly reveals **His priority and His purpose,** to **proclaim His redeeming love to the sin sick soul.** As the prophet earlier in Scripture implied, **There is a balm in Gilead**!

As a Chaplain, I come face to face with the true reality of the prisoner's life and his need. The loss of his family, the anguish over his or her children, the heaviness of sin's guilt and shame are heavier than human heart can bear to endure. The identification with such pathos is demanding of the supernatural. Surely, if God doesn't equip the Chaplain with attending graces, his ministry is destined to fail.

The 600 lives of Chester County Prison are only a small reflection of the **one million incarcerated in American prisons.** Los Angeles County Jails house over 23,000 lives, while Graterford Prison here in Pennsylvania houses 4,200. Philadelphia Prisons climb near the 5,000 mark and statistics unveil the harsh reality that **prisons don't heal**!

I am thoroughly convinced that God wants our hearts to be broken for the lost! Whether you are overwhelmed by the hurting souls of a prison, a city, a nursing home, a suffering nation or the souls of your own family, God wants our hearts to be tender to others. Most importantly, however, God wants us to lean on Him, absolutely, in the carrying out of such ministry.

All men will seek you as Christ is seen in your life. You will be pressed on every side; you will be challenged; you will be overcome with a sense of insufficiency. Then, and then alone, you will either beg **His enablement** for such a burden, or fail in **your own meager efforts** to make a difference.

Chaplaincy keeps us sober. It's not just the talk of ministry and the expression of a visionary: it's the real thing. Woe is to the Chaplain or Christian worker who fails to "depart to a solitary place and there to pray".

Balancing the proclamation of the Gospel and the meeting of human needs went hand in hand with the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew when to pray, when to stay, when to meet need, and when to depart to another town. Make special note of this: **He wanted to go to town**!

Chaplaincy strips one of any sense of greatness and places them in a ministry of intercession and absolute dependence upon God.

Summer Camp Scholarship Program Camp Sandy Hill

Camp Sandy Hill is located in North East, MD and is the location to which we sent 15 Kids' Clubbers last summer. We have been offered an opportunity to send many more children than last year to a week's experience at camp and have been given the incentive to create this opportunity in the following way.

WORK DAYS AT CAMP SANDY HILL are needed in preparing the camp for its 1992 season. The labor spent at Camp Sandy Hill can be your way of securing a child's opportunity to enjoy a week of Christian camping in the summer months. Materials are supplied for the various projects. All we need is your time and talent.

Cabins need roof repair, grounds maintenance, painting and even some new construction are in view. If you are interested in giving some of your time and energy to such a task, please notify me by mail or phone as soon as you possibly can.

Write immediately to P.O. Box 1136, Coatesville, PA 19320.

Prayer Concerns

- Need for new secretary with Word Perfect 5.1 skills
- Need for God's leading regarding possible acquisition of the Old Mill Bible Conference Facility
- Need of staff for Oak Street Housing Project/youth and family support
- Praise for God's faithful provision
- Praise for pulpits which contain compassion for the fatherless and poor
- Praise for Kids' Bible Club volunteers, Carol, Diane, Gail, Alice, Ina, Kenny, Sam, Dottie, Rob, Bob, Wayne and Bill
- Rejoicing for Mr. Alford's promotion to Bensalem YDC
- Thanksgiving for George, Art, Frank and others who support SESTU ministry
- That God might bring revival to the Church
- Wisdom for Jack as he directs Prison Crusade which runs concurrent with the Greater Philadelphia Billy Graham Crusade

County Corrections Gospel Mission
P.O. Box 1136 • Coatesville, PA 19320
Spring Report 1992

South East Secure Treatment Unit

by George Welsh

Nine boys have professed to accept Christ as their own personal Savior in the three years since conducting our voluntary Shop Class. We can bear witness to the fact that God still works miracles in lives.

We are just now beginning to see open doors in the follow-up of our shops boys as they are released. The best part is that of a Hispanic boy by the name of Rafael. While at SESTU and in our shop program, he accepted Christ as his personal Savior. He was burdened for 3 of his Hispanic friends and led them to accept Christ as Savior as well. Rafael is from the city of Lancaster. With our assistance, he has found a little Hispanic church in the same block as live his Mom and Dad. Pastor Dean Bracewell has only been in that area for 3 months, but has seen a new work grow to 20 people. Pray for Pastor Bracewell as he ministers among the Hispanic people of Lancaster. He is networking with the Water Street Mission and making himself available to as many young lives as God will give him. Rafael and his sisters are attending church there now. His mother would like to see all the family going to church. Please pray for this!

Rev. Melvin Floyd of Neighborhood Crusades in Philadelphia is going to assist where needed in matching SESTU boys with Philadelphia churches.

Christmas saw all boys blessed with gifts from area churches and families, and present goals of our ministry include the establishment of an intramural basketball program through an area church fellowship.

Thank you for all of your assistance and sharing with us!

CCGM Office Loses and Needs Secretary

In February, CCGM suffered the loss of our secretary, Arlene Losch, due to injuries from an auto accident. She is much better, but will not be able to return. As a result, CCGM is in urgent need of a skilled secretary with a working knowledge of Word Perfect 5.1.

We ask that you pray for Arlene and her family as they make necessary adjustment and also that you prayerfully assist us in the search for this urgent concern.

For more information, or to make a recommendation, please write: P.O. Box 1136, Coatesville, PA 19320.

Areas to Designate Gifts

SESTU
General
Memorials
Snack Foods
Warden's Fund
Chaplaincy

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

Board of Advisors:
Mr. Mark Blair,
Dr. Howard Blandau,
Pastor Leland Dittman,
Dr. Joseph F. Eckman,
Dr. Herschel Elliott,
Mr. Joseph R. Pitts.