THE CONTENDER

Spring 1995

". . . 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

12 Studies for Determining Life's Meaning:

First cause
Authority/rule/government
Time/land/seas/foods
Man's origin
Man's nature
Man's history
Origin of nations
Nature of nations
History of nations
Stewardship/responsibility
Blessings/judgments
Eternity

Observing the sphere of nations at the end of the 20th century doesn't create for everyone a sense of nostalgia or soberness. I am sure that there are on every continent people both young and old, rich and poor, weak and powerful who exist without thought of life's meaning or consequence. Equally, I am sure that there are young and old alike within each longitude and latitude who contemplate and search for the meanings and purposes of their lives.

The twelve studies noted above seem to draw together the foundational issues which confront all of us and which largely determine our attitudes, our choices and our own biographies.

The interpreting of these twelve investigations will be somewhat affected by individual inheritance, oral tradition, formal education, logic or even some form of supernatural revelation. The living soul of a distant tribesman or a sophisticated university professor is capable and naturally given to such areas of concern and individual reason.

Recently, I had the privilege of traveling to Washington, D.C. to hear an address of Dr. Ravi Zacharias (Evangelist/Apologist) before a notable gathering of "World Vision" supporters. The topic of both theme and discussion was Violence and Children.

It was no surprise to me that Dr. Zacharias chose Habakkuk, the prophet, for his text and perspective. Consequently, his opening remarks echoed the following:

Habakkuk 1:1-4 "The burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see. O LORD, how long shall I cry unto thee of violence and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me; and there are those who raise up strife and contention.

Therefore, the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore, justice goeth forth perverted."

The question before the audience that night was concerning violence. Why is there so much violence in the world? Is there an answer?

Dr. Zacharias once having asked the question, immediately pronounced an even greater query: Why is man on the earth in the first place? To paraphrase his commanding point: 'If one is unwilling to answer the question concerning the purpose of man on the earth is one eligible to solve the problem of violence?' Quite authoritatively Dr. Zacharias passionately cried: "If you're not willing to know the purpose of man in the 'first cause', how can you ever explain the violence of man in his final condition?" (paraphrased as remembered)

This reasoning and these forceful words are not arrived at in a vacuum...I am somehow convinced that Dr. Zacharias has clearly investigated and agonized over these truths by some personal wrestlings with the 12 studies noted above...

As I close the opening thoughts of this issue of **The Contender**, I can't help but recall the wise decision of Mr. Ted Koppel at the Dedication Ceremonies of the Holocaust Museum in beginning his remarks with the reading of Jeremiah's lament:

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, with which the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." Lamentations 1:12

Here again, a perspective of calamity and judgment which draws upon the lessons and investigations of the past!

The Oklahoma City tragedy was only one of a million headline bullets... Bosnia, Abortion, 154 Police Officers killed in 1994 or the 22 murders that I could personally recall to you in my own brief experience are all symptoms of something much deeper...Who will dare to discover it? Can technological man exist long without a divine perspective?

From where I labor and agonize, the Holy Scriptures have continued to answer the questions. **Surely, the LORD has spoken in history, HE has intervened in history and HE has shown us who we are in history....Oh, to be quickened by HIS PERSPECTIVE and HIS SOVEREIGN DECREES!**

With Soberness!
Jack Crans

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN PEACE OFFICERS

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A few weeks ago thousands of peace (police) officers gathered on the nation's capital to honor the 154 Law Enforcers who were killed in the line of duty within that year. I personally stood beside an Iowa State Trooper who was escort to a slain officer's family that had been shot and killed by a 14 year old boy in a stolen automobile.

The president's address suggested that the addition of 100,000 more peace officers to America's streets will be a solution that works in relationship to crime. Although, I fully endorse and celebrate the growing presence of peace officers...I must also admit that the necessity of such is a clear admission that something is clearly wrong with our nation. The 'answer' is not police presence.....this is only a 'symptom' of our nation's turning from God. (Even the Czech Republic Police observed this.)

While some peace officers mourned the loss of their peers, others were chronicled in the Washington Post as shaming their own uniforms through drunkenness and disorderly conduct in our Washington's night clubs and bars.....ON THE CONTRARY, it has been my privilege to serve on the National Board of the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers (FCPO). The most recent months have included one Board Meeting and at least three major conferences.

The FCPO gathered with law enforcers at Word of Life Bible Conference and Los Angeles Assistant Police Chief (retired) Mr. Bob Vernon in March. Again, in Colorado Springs at Glen Eyrie (The Navigators Headquarters) the FCPO gathered with Mark Kroeker (South Central/Los Angeles Assistant Chief of Police) and most recently, I had the privilege of hosting Assistant Chief Vernon for a three-day ministry in Pennsylvania.

Bob Vernon and Mark Kroeker keynoted the occasions noted above. They represent 'command' in all its intent and purpose under God! Through thoughtful study, the best of Law Enforcement experience and through their gifts of administration and exhortation, they strengthen hundreds of precious peace officers and wives in their commitment to God's Authority and God's Counsels!

Thanks to Pennsylvania Legislator (Majority Chairman for Appropriations) Joseph Pitts and a most excellent committee for The Commonwealth Prayer Breakfast, Assistant Chief Vernon was able to address nearly 500 state leaders. The commanding presence of Mr. Vernon, coupled with his zeal for God's Word, brought forth a long soberness and a standing ovation at the meeting's conclusion. The Gospel was declared with clarity and nearly 150 leaders waited in a slow-moving line for his book: "L.A. Justice: Lessons from the Firestorm".

Further meetings with the Pennsylvania State Police Commissioner, Pennsylvania Family Institute, Chester County Prison Administration, Family Impact of Hershey, The Executive Officers of Lukens Steel Company and an evening public rally were carried on with great power and the blessing of God.

If ever I have been in 'The School of the Prophets', it seems to be such in gatherings with the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers. They are in the streets of our cities....in our homes and in the midst of suffering children. These peace officers are true servants of the Most High God!

Pray as the FCPO continues to mature and know that my involvement is both a privilege and great responsibility. Especially, pray that a new chapter of the FCPO will soon be chartered in the Chester County areas of Coatesville and West Chester, Pennsylvania.

LONDON, ENGLAND THE FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN PEACE OFFICERS

The first two weekends in October will be important to the networking and maturing of The Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers. October 5-8 will involve a peace officers' conference in Keswick, New Jersey....most probably featuring the speaking gifts of former Deputy Sheriff of Hamilton County, Tennessee, Mr. Jim Hammond. Presently Jim is in Haiti, training new peace officers for the task and responsibilities of that agonizing nation.

October 13-15 will be a time for the gathering of Christian Peace Officer Organizations from all over the world. Think about this for just a moment! Doesn't it encourage you to know that there are some leaders in authority who are actually encouraging one another in their maturity and obedience to God?

I have been invited to accompany Mr. Grant Wolf, Executive Director of the FCPO, to this international conference. The experience will be valuable to me personally and I bring a burden for Correctional Administrators which presently needs to be constantly encouraged. Assistant Chief Bob Vernon (LAPD) will once again keynote these meetings.

Please pray concerning this and know that your prayerful counsel and support will do much in making this a reality.

YOU ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN!

Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens..."

If someone were to ask me what aches my heart the most I would most probably answer the following: **To fail in my personal display of love and encouragement towards the precious lives that I clearly know exist in missionary work, in prison cells and in the day to day struggles of personal and family crisis.** My life is confronted daily with more people and predicaments than any man could attempt to touch! I literally cling to your prayer cards, your letters, your appeals and the memories of your very special conversations and appeals for encouragement. My comfort, if any is to be had at all, is in knowing that my Lord Himself had to live with the reality of knowing that

most broken and contrite hearts would never be in His physical view. Occasionally, a Bartimaeus or Zaccheus would look into His eyes...but, so many more who languished would have to content themselves with the fact of His graces and His love!

Beloved Missionary... I have you on my heart as you labor in Argentina, Costa Rica, New York City, Indonesia, Lebanon, the Bahamas, Philadelphia, Mexico, Arizona and the nations!

Beloved Prisoner... Do you really believe that you have been forgotten? You are written in our hearts....your trials, your prayers, your regrets and your over-whelming appeals have driven me to the Savior's Graces. The hunger of your heart and the empty longings of your lonely cell are so heavy upon us... Who but Jesus can heal the hurt?

Beloved Neighbor and Friend... Do you think that no one sees your loss? Do you think that your personal trial is out of our minds and our prayers? Believe me, I could never forget you nor our conversation! But, how can love so deep be shared with so many?

Oh, to talk with each one of you face to face! To hear you share your concerns, your needs, your joys and your prayerful plans would be my privilege... after all, you have listened to me, too. You have touched my life and you have stayed upon my heart!

Forgive me for what sometimes seems shallow concern.... for the depth of my love and daily carrying of your precious life is an unending and genuine cry in my heart!

PENNSYLVANIA'S CRY FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against a brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken...thus the land was desolate after them,...for they laid the pleasant land desolate." -Zechariah 7:9-14

The winter of '94 and spring of '95 were partially occupied by the demands of a ten-city series of 'public hearings' to which I fixed my schedule. Under the auspices of Justice Fellowship and its Pennsylvania State Director, Dan Tonkovich, I sat on a study panel hearing the testimonies of criminal prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, victims of crime, peace officers, prisoners and criminal justice practitioners. Pittsburgh, Scranton, Harrisburg, Williamsport, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Allentown, Muncy and Graterford's State Correctional Institutions were part of the host sites. The purpose, as understood by myself, was to seek counsel from those individuals whose lives are seasoned with the experience and wisdom associated with crime, victimization and the prosecution and punishment of lawlessness, and to determine the present and real strengths or failures of current Criminal Justice Systems, and to implement and craft a plan that actually applies Biblical Standards of Restorative Justice to present systems.

Experience and testimony revealed the failure of the Criminal Justice System to either rehabilitate or contain the growing number of incarcerated lives entering its doors. Alternative sanctions (punishments), restoration of victims and community peace were issues of intense concern. The warehousing of 1.4 million offenders has not impacted the crime rate of our cities nor the immediate dilemma of attempting to build ourselves out of the problem. Quite possibly, unless new and Biblically-based solutions are implemented, the future will most surely promise the predictable horror of one-half of America being directly under the supervision of an authority of the Criminal Justice Systems by the year 2050.

From a 7:00 am "Justice Fellowship" breakfast through an 8-10 hour 'public hearing' our panel of approximately 10 Justice Fellowship Volunteers would listen to testimony, cross examine and record the able representatives of courts, prisons, ministries, parole, police and criminal justice offices. From the wife of a prisoner to the testimony of the Pennsylvania Attorney General we would sit with open hearts and minds. A criminal court judge, Philadelphia's Mayor and mothers of slain children testified before our panel. Life-sentenced prisoners in Graterford SCI, incarcerated mothers in Muncy SCI and prison staff and administrations testified as well.

Presently, the Commonwealth is awaiting our findings, our Biblical applications and our plan for the implementation of Restorative Justice to Pennsylvania. Ours is an hour that calls for the wisdom of God as once modeled in the hearts of Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah and Job. The city of Coatesville and Chester County are just two areas representative of the need for fullest access to these studies. Victims of crime, 'at-risk' neighborhoods and citizens at-large await the counsel of these 'public hearings.'

May the directives of God's Word and counsels of His Spirit be meaningfully sought, learned and applied! May those in authority be courageous and wise enough to implement a system that best reflects the counsel and character of God!

THE CAMP AT OLD MILL AND OUR FOCUS ON CHILDREN

The Summer of '95 opened with an 18 day "Touch of God" Crusade which gathered under an 800 seat tent with the Sutera Twins of Canadian Revival Fellowship. The fallow grounds and broken walls of the camp facility have clearly been revived through the gracious blessings of God! Restored buildings, mowed lawns and sounds of song, preaching and laughter visit the old Bible Conference grounds which were set apart for God's Glory in 1933!

The cry of Ralph Sutera couldn't have been any more appropriate to our current desire and prayer: "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalm 85:6)

David and Janel Trout, Sue Crans and Dottie Shirk each labor with intensive dedication for the goal of bringing God

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Spring Report 1995

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County Corrections Gospel Mission

the glory in the work and burdens of County Corrections Gospel Mission. With prayerful surrender to God's Purpose and God's Callings, these precious servants have quietly and faithfully yielded themselves to the performance of God's graces in their lives!

From the agonizing darkness of the prisons to the warm and tender joys of children in our Bible Clubs, we continue to see our need for absolute surrender to God. To think that an 18 day 'Revival Meeting' would begin the Summer of '95 would have been more than any heart could have imagined just two years ago...." Youth Mission Teams", a two-week 'Wilderness Adventure' for Coatesville's children, gatherings of little ones from Chester and Brooklyn only highlight an awakening and visitation of God's Graces to our lives!

We want to invite you to the "Fourth Sunday Night" Meetings at The Camp at Old Mill. Weather permitting, the services will be held outdoors in the grove. Bring your folding chairs and blankets....Meetings will begin at 6:30 pm!

Fourth Sunday Night Meeting Schedule

Sunday, June 25
Sutera Twins Tent Crusade
Sunday, July 23
Pastor/Evangelist Richard Krueger
Sunday, August 27
Pastor/Evangelist John O'Cain

Please remember.....The Work of God continues as His Grace continues to move upon the hearts of His People! County Corrections Gospel Mission remains a testimony to His Mercies as you continue to prayerfully support its ministries.

With most earnest testimony we each lift our hearts in thanksgiving to God for your love and faithfulness to us! The truths of 2 Corinthians 9:8f have been our most common experience!

Write to us.....come and be with us in the Fourth Sunday Night Meetings at The Camp at Old Mill!

OLD MILL NEEDS

Air Compressor
Canoes
Carousel Slide Projector
Jig Saw
Reciprocating Saw
Shop Vac
TV/VCR
Large Garbage Bags
Paper Products:
Paper Towels
Toilet Tissue
Cups, Plates

Areas to Designate Gifts

General	Memorials
Old Mill	SESTU
Snack Foods	Warden's Fund

County Corrections Gospel Mission is a non-profit organization. Please make all checks payable to CCGM and designate your desired gift area; all gifts are tax-deductible; a receipt will be returned to you for your records.

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