

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

VOLUME XIV

FEBRUARY 1994

NUMBER 7

Trouble

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

In the world there may seem to be an overabundance of difficulties. Even those who should be able to cope with difficulty may find themselves overcome with the burdens and disappointments of life. There are a number of terms that show different aspects of this phenomena. I have in mind such terms as "tribulation," "trouble spots," "troublemakers," "trouble-shooters," "peacemakers," "Peacenicks," et al.

REALITY

The child of God should not be alarmed when he faces trouble (I Pet.4:12-16). The Lord faced it and prepared His faithful disciples to face it. Some of His words are: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The Apostle Paul summed up his life as follows: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). When Paul kept the faith

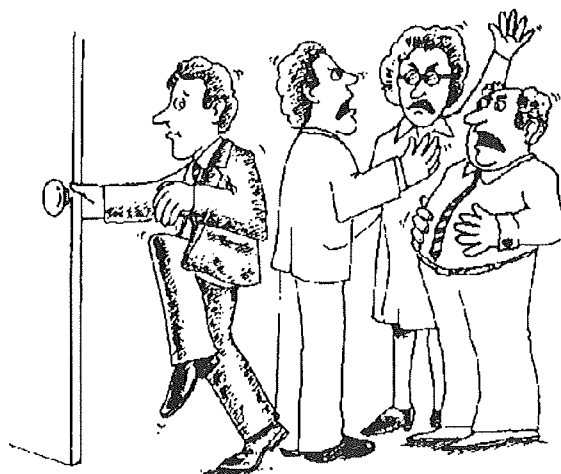
he was following the course of life demanded of him. In following the course and keeping the faith, trouble was sure to follow. When he revisited the newly planted churches, he wanted them to be prepared to face sure conflict. Luke writes of his visiting these brethren and his purpose in doing so: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). To the Romans he wrote the following: "And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh sted-

fastness" (Rom. 5:3). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35) "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

It is to have a false view of reality to think that the truth can be presented to a rebellious society without trouble.

TROUBLEMAKERS

In the Bible we are made aware of individuals who caused trouble to themselves and to others. Jeroboam led Israel into sin by developing a false system of religion (I Kings 11-13; II Kings 17:22-23). This eventually led to their extinction as the Northern Kingdom. In the New Testament there were persons named who were troublemakers. John the Apostle was rejected by Diotrephese. He not only caused John problems but he created difficulties for traveling evangelists and their supporters (III John). At Ephesus Paul had trouble-



makers and desired Timothy to be alert to their evil ways.

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words" (II Tim. 4:14-15).

A careful reading of the New Testament will show in most places Paul preached, he encountered troublemakers. Some were his own relatives. Troublemakers will always cause difficulties for those who preach the message of the Lord. When people can not answer in argument from the message being presented, they may resort to creating problems. They did so to Stephen and were not satisfied until they had taken his life (Acts 7 and 8).

TRouble SPOTS

The Bible provides us insight into the confrontation of truth and error by pointing out some key places where this took place. The Jerusalem brethren had their trouble spots. The Grecian widows being neglected was a trouble spot (Acts 6). Circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses meant much to some early members of the Lord's church. It caused much controversy, debate, and meetings among some of the Apostles, Jerusalem brethren and the Antioch brethren (Acts 15; Gal. 2). Much of the New Testament addresses such trouble spots. Left alone would mean that the church of Christ would be nothing more than a sect of the Jews. This was not true, and it could not be left unanswered.

Corinth was a trouble spot. Paul visited there at least two times following his eighteen month stay when the church was planted in Corinth. He sent others there and also wrote three letters to them. To the Corinthians cred-

it, the Second Corinthian letter states that they corrected their wrongs and were commended by Paul (II Cor. 7).

If we understand the New Testament we must understand that much of it was written to address troublemakers and trouble spots. With the New Testament in hand and maintaining an honest soul they were able to identify and deal with troublemakers (wolves in sheep clothing).

Today there are any number of trouble spots facing the faithful. They may come from centers of education, from certain publications, and special gathering of groups with a particular human philosophy or religion to promote.

Some are determined to create change and the change they seek is not authorized by the Bible. Some are determined to force it upon brethren—the faithful have trouble ahead.

TRouBLeSHOOTERS

Because there were troublemakers and trouble spots, this created a problem for Paul. He could not be everywhere, so he chose faithful men who could be relied on to assist him in edifying the souls. Paul left Titus on Crete to work with brethren there to settle some problems. Faithful troubleshooters there were to stop the mouths of some. Troubleshooters like Titus are needed today (Titus 1:4-5,9). Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to do the work of an evangelist and the work of an evangelist is that of troubleshooting. True spirituality can not be realized if there is no recognition of what is a problem and what must be done to solve the problem.

Some preachers are unwilling to be troubleshooters. These will do most anything to oppose those that are opposing

the wrong. Some will label the trouble shooters with less than Christian motives. This brings me to another idea—Peacenicks.

PEACENICKS

These folk are of the philosophy and religious conviction that peace is to be had with any and all except those who desire to be limited by the Bible and what it authorizes.

Like political Peacenicks of our day they can find all manner of flattering things to say of the enemy but have the most unflattering vocabulary toward those that will not accept peace at any price. It would be hard to find a peacenick today that supported Russia. When she fell from within there is no "virtue" in praising her. Today, with the Crossroads Movement identified and in shambles, and with the Boston Church of Christ Denomination so far out that even secular society knows they are not a part of the faithful body of Christ few of the Crossroads/Boston "Peacenicks" are silent and we are happy to see it.

The time will come when some of the modern Peacenicks will try to disassociate from those for which they have so much affection. Peacenicks cause problems in the church. They caused problems for Paul. There were those who persuaded him to act as though he were Jewish in order to satisfy some unstable Jewish Christians (Acts 21). It did not

The Harvesters

Published Monthly by the Florida School of Preaching 1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803 (813) 683-4043

Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman

Board of Directors

Gordon Methvin, President	Maurice Davis
Paul Thornhill, Vice President	Kenneth W. Franklin
J. H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary	George K. French
E. Robert McAnally, Treasure	Wallace Maxwell
B. C. Carr, Director Emeritus	Dale Spung
Elmer Burgett	Jackie M. Stearsman
Jack D. Cronk	Gene Stilwell

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

work for Paul and it will not work for us. The Bible will not permit fellowship with Peacenicks who compromise truth in order to have a make believe unity. "... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

PEACE OFFICERS

In the Lord's church there are individuals that are charged with the oversight and care of souls. Informed souls know that these are the elders. One of the first signs of trouble in faithful congregations by troublemakers is their move to undermine faithful elderships. The Crossroad/Boston crowd did this from one part of the brotherhood to the other. Liberal troublemakers do the same.

God-ordained-leaders must identify and oppose troublemakers that peace and harmony might prevail. In this climate babes in Christ can be protected and developed. Troublemakers will make merchandise of babes in Christ as long as it is profitable to them. When finished they will discarded them.

Much trouble in the brotherhood could be resolved if Godly elders would assume their peace keeping duties.

FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL

The 1994 Lectureship is history. We have much to make us feel a debt of gratitude and pride.

The Lectures were put in print (see section by brother McAnally on back) and the cost of this production is covered, thanks to you the friends.

The Annual Lectureship cost is in the realm of \$6,000.00

each year. This is to cover the transportation cost, lodging costs and enable each speaker to receive something for his service. Because of the friends of the school this cost was covered. Some of the speakers come at a sacrifice and simply returned their check refusing to accept any pay for their services. This included transportation and lodging costs as well.

A couple who have been long standing friends of the school have contributed \$5,000.00 to enable J.H. Blackman, Jr. to better produce the tapes of the tape library. We are blessed with friends.

Many friends of the school have taken boxes of books to distribute at their home congregations and some have bought books for gifts to relatives and friends.

In the nineteen years of the lectureship there has never been a contribution taken. Funds have always been provided by the freewill, sacrificial, loving generosity of our friends.

The fellowship enjoyed during the lectureship week is always one of the high points. Seeing former students return and have a part in lectures is always a joy to those who helped them while in school

and to share in their progress following their training.

We are planning the 1995 lectures. They will be in the third week in January. If you are a friend of the school I know you will be making plans to be with us. If you are not a friend of the school we are convinced that if you will attend one lectureship that you will be convinced that you will not find a better group of Christian friends than those that make up the family of friends of the Florida School of Preaching.

If you were not able to attend make sure you secure a copy of the book or tapes. It is the next best thing to being here.

WORSHIP: HEAVEN'S IMPERATIVE, OR MAN'S INNOVATIONS?

CURTIS A. CATES

Foreword by:

GARLAND ELKINS

WORSHIP:

HEAVEN'S IMPERATIVE,
OR
MAN'S INNOVATIONS?

CURTIS A. CATES

"For some time the need has existed for a "handbook" on worship that will sketch what God desires and demands of us in the Christian age in worship to Him. Those who are seasoned in the faith need to be reminded of these things and those young in the faith need to learn them. Also, the need is now critical for a "handbook" that will expose and refute many of the numerous innovations in worship that certain men and women in the church who have lost their faith are seeking to force on the church. **This book fills both of these needs in a marvelous way.** I applaud Curtis Cates for this excellent tool, and I heartily commend it to one and all!"

Dub McClish, Denton, Texas

CATES PUBLICATIONS, 5512 Cottonwood, Memphis, TN 38115 (\$3.50 plus \$1.00 Post. & Hand.)

1994 Lectureship Follow-Up Report . . .

Church of Christ
SCHOOL OF PREACHING
LECTURESHIP
JANUARY 17 - 20



What a tremendous lectureship it was, with outstanding preaching and excellent attendance — over four hundred registered guests came from sixteen states and as far away as Ontario, Canada. It was truly a week to be remembered. One brother wrote, *"The Lectureship was great in every way. Solidarity in Truth was evident in every lesson... I feel the 1500 mile trip was richly rewarded. We wish you well in your good work in FSOP and look forward to being with you next year."*

Many compliments were received on the Lectureship book. A sister wrote, *"The book is beautiful inside and out... I believe the book will have a far-reaching effect on the growth of the School, ultimately resulting in the saving of lost souls."*

Note: There are still some copies available. One thousand and two were published and we now have only about two hundred fifty. Be sure to get a copy for yourself. Also, they make good presents, buy one for a friend or loved one. Call or write to the address below. The price is \$12.00 plus \$2.25 shipping and handling. Thanks.

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE
LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

DIRECTOR: Jackie M. Stearsman
Phone (813) 683-4043

Address Correction Requested