

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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A guest editorial

The Good News That Troubles the World

Florida School of Preaching Lectures
A Review by Billy R. Davidson

On Monday morning, January 16, a large number of brethren assembled in the auditorium of the South Florida church in Lakeland for the beginning of the annual lecture program. The theme had been announced and advertised for several months in advance. In looking over the subjects to be discussed and the speakers invited to participate, one could very well imagine it would be a time of rich blessing. At the end of the program on Thursday evening it was no longer a matter of imagination but of reality. It would be impossible to write concerning every speaker and his subject in this article, but I would like to call attention to some impressions made on me.

I was blessed to be able to hear 29 of the 32 lessons on the program. The three I missed were on Wednesday when I had to return early to Clearwater to teach my regular Bible Class at the Central congregation. But, having heard the

above mentioned 29 lessons, I can well imagine what I did miss on Wednesday afternoon and evening. Fortunately, I can buy the tapes of these lessons and also read them in the very attractive book published by the school of the lectures.

It is beyond my ability to put into words the joy it is to be one of a large audience who love the Lord and His Word. One quickly realized this was the case as he listened to the lessons presented in a most powerful way and to the chorus of "Amen" that regularly expressed agreement and support with the speakers' points. This audience was not interested in opinions or "think so", but in the pure, simple and undefiled Word of God. It was refreshing to hear speaker after speaker quote or read from recognized versions of the Holy Bible. Modern translations which so often express error were not welcomed nor read.

There were some brethren who are giants in our brotherhood

who were part of the program. What a joy to sit at the feet of brother V. P. Black as he presented themes so vital to our day. On Monday morning he spoke concerning *The Good News and Our Reward*; on Tuesday *The Good News and the Church*, and on Wednesday *The Good News and Grace*. All his lessons were powerfully delivered but I was especially thankful for the Tuesday and Wednesday lessons. Why? Simply because in our day we hear and read so much, even from some in our brotherhood, to the effect that the church is not essential to the salvation of our souls and that we are saved by "grace alone" without anything else being needed. Brother Black very plainly pointed out that if the church is not essential then why in the name of common sense did Christ die for it! Relative to the doctrine of grace, he showed plainly how that everything God has given, including His plan of salvation, is a matter of grace. No one denies salvation by grace, but we must realize

this simply speaks of God's part in our salvation. Obedience is man's part and he responds through the action of his faith.

Brother Adron Doran delivered two lectures showing that there was trouble during the Restoration Period. This was because some would not follow the Word or were already practicing error and the Word of God confronted them. Brother J. E. Choate followed these two lectures with two directed toward the current troubles in the church. The answer to both problems, restoration period and present day, was and is a return to the pure Word of God without addition or subtraction.

Brother Winfred Clark has been a regular on this program for a number of years. He was unable to fill his place on Monday due to illness and brother Stearsman filled in. Brother Clark was able to present his regular lessons Tuesday, Wednesday and the concluding one on Thursday evening. As I listened to his very effective presentation my mind went back to the times I listened to the late brother Gus Nichols and brother Franklin Camp. It seemed rather obvious that these two giants of yesterday have greatly influenced his study and the manner of delivery. As with other brethren on this program, one does not hear an uncertain sound from brother Clark. His concluding lecture, *Confronting the World with Good News*, served as a fitting climax in its very positive approach and the challenge laid before each of us. When the service on Thursday night had concluded every person with whom I spoke expressed how thankful they were to have been there.

It has been the practice of the school to invite former students to be a part of the program. In fact, they had a major part in the program. William Howard, of Daytona Beach, who completed his work at the school

in the spring of 1994 spoke on Monday night on *The World Trouble Jonah*. Neil Lopez from Jamaica, NY, delivered a most powerful lesson on Tuesday evening on *The World Troubled Elijah*. David Dominessy of Dunnellon, Florida, spoke on Wednesday evening on *The World Troubles the Christian* and Larry Williams of Bradenton, Florida, on Thursday night on *The Good News Troubles Denominationalism*. A current student, Freddie Bell, opened the program on Monday morning with *Why Does the Good News Trouble the World?* All of these are talented brethren and they made everyone associated with the school very proud and thankful.

As said in the beginning of this article, it is impossible to speak of all the brethren, but this does not mean they did not do their job well. Every lesson was well prepared, powerfully delivered and gave glory to God in Heaven. But I cannot conclude without a word concerning the lesson brother Stearsman delivered on Monday morning in place of brother Winfred Clark. Rather than juggle the schedule and maybe cause confusion, he took the time himself and delivered what is in my opinion the keynote of the entire program. He spoke about *The New Testament Church*. Major emphasis was placed on the submission of the church to its Head, Jesus Christ. As he concluded there was a chorus of "Amens" which thundered from the audience. It is regretful this lesson is not in the book, but I would urge brethren everywhere to order the tape from the school. Play it to your entire congregation. Use it in your Bible classes. This lesson and the one delivered by brother Black while on the same subject, did not overlap in content. The both deserve the widest circulation possible.

A beautifully bound book of the lectures has been printed and is

available from the school. There is information on the back page of this edition of the school paper relative to the book. It is already a very valued and welcomed addition to my library and it will be to yours also. I urge you to purchase it and read it to your spiritual enjoyment and the uplifting of your faith.

Brother Jackie Stearsman, Director of the school, and the Board of Directors are to be commended for having put such a powerful program together for the benefit of brethren throughout the Central Florida area. In addition, brother Stearsman had the responsibility of keeping everything moving on schedule and generally seeing that a myriad of details were properly handled. It would be impossible for this writer to imagine the pressure brought on him during this week. To his compliment, everything went smoothly! I certainly appreciate what he did and I trust other brethren did also.

On Thursday evening, January 19, I returned to my home in Clearwater tired physically, but greatly refreshed in soul and spirit. I have been drawn closer to my Lord, closer to some very fine brethren, and feel determination to serve my Lord and His church with greater zeal! I am very thankful to have had opportunity to attend the lectures of the Florida School of Preaching, and already look forward to the program next January. If you haven't attended this lecture program, why not plan to take the third week in January 1996 and attend. You will not regret it.

The Harvesters

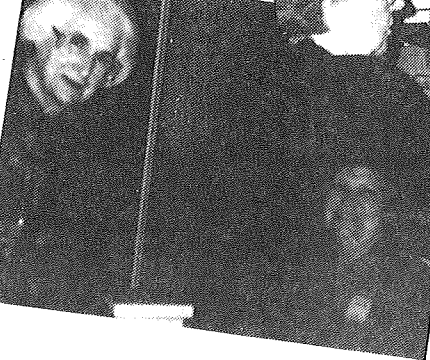
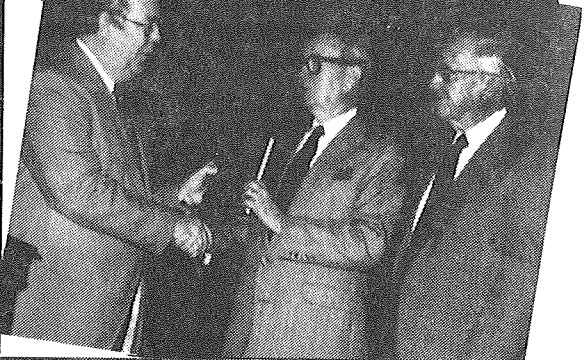
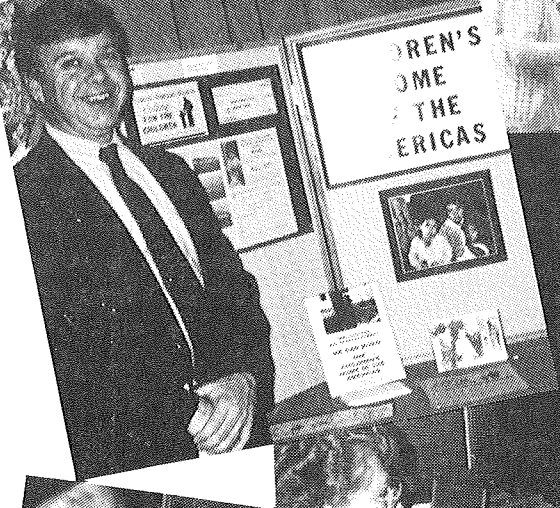
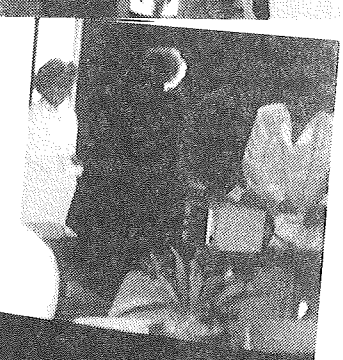
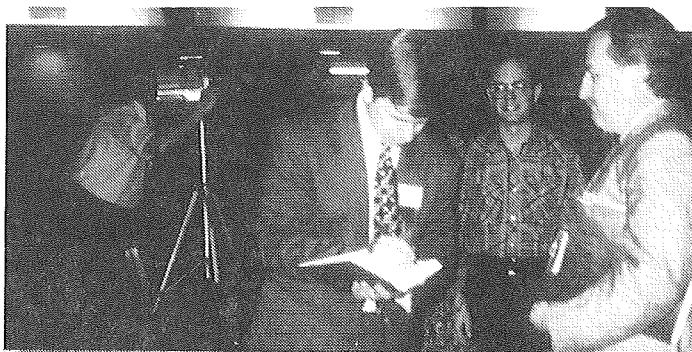
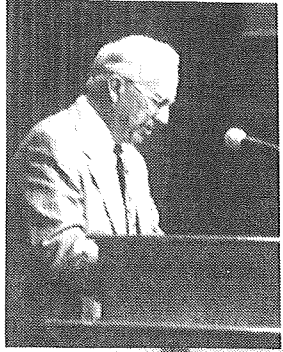
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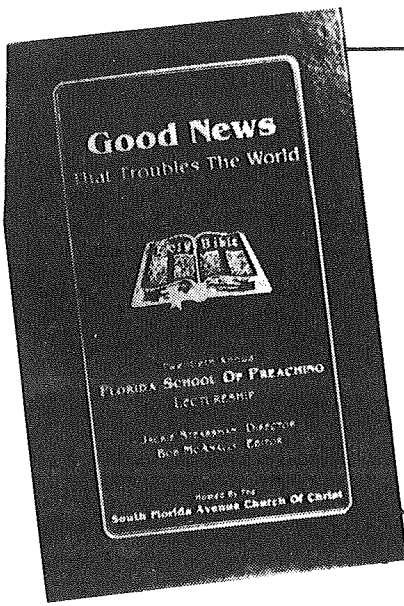
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