

TROUBLEMAKERS in the CHURCH

by David Wilkerson

We need more troublemakers in the church! I pray that every member of the body of Christ would become a troublemaker! We need an army of troublemakers who have become so full of the Holy Ghost they will stir up and trouble New York City and every other city around the world; trouble their wicked institutions - challenge the established dead churches - trouble the leaders, the mayors, the city councils, the community leadership! In other words, we need Holy Ghost troublemakers moving in the Spirit, proclaiming the kingship of Christ so effectively that whole cities are stirred!

Paul and Silas were two the world's biggest troublemakers! The Bible speaks of "men that have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26, NAS). Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy were such men, walking in the power of the Spirit. As seen in Acts 16, when the Holy Ghost forbid them to speak the Word in Asia, they obeyed. When they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit would not permit them, they went instead to Troas, under the Spirit's direction. Paul then had a vision of a man calling them to Macedonia, so they set out immediately to Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia. When they arrived, a fortune teller followed them about, crying, "...These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). After enduring it for many days, Paul turned and "...said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:18). Suddenly the whole city was in an uproar: this fortune teller was apparently a big tourist attraction, but now she was healed and praising the Lord!

Paul had upset the status quo. He had challenged the devil who had been having his way for years. The slave-owners of the delivered woman then dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace to stand trial before the city magistrates. The charge was, "...These men... do exceedingly trouble our city" (Acts 16:20). "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks" (Acts 16:22-24). It looked as though Satan had won. The new converts must have been stunned! But all the power of God is with Holy Ghost troublemakers! "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God... and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison was shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:25-26). The jailer, seeing what had happened, even fell down before Paul and Silas, saying "...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Those city officials and religious leaders went to bed thinking, "We did it to them! That's the last we will hear of those vagabond troublemakers. We really shut them up and scared them!" But what a commotion the next day! I can imagine sergeants knocking on the doors of the mayor, city council members, and the religious leaders, telling

them, "Quick! Get down to city hall - we've got a big problem!"

In a state of shock, the officials probably responded, "What? An earthquake? The prison doors opened? Their chains all fell off? They didn't even try to escape? The jailer joined their faith? They're Romans?!?" Now, they were really afraid. It was a crime to beat Roman citizens (Paul and Silas were both Romans). "What do you mean they won't budge from our jail? They demand what? For us to come down and apologize and escort them out of jail? " And they came... and brought them out... begging them to leave the city" (Acts 16:39).

I love it! Here they were, not flaunting their spiritual authority, but merely acting as ambassadors of King Jesus. As they had witnessed Christ's power being mocked, Paul and Silas now wanted that little riverside prayer group to see how God manifests His power to those who stand up against the forces of hell. They went directly to the house of Lydia - and what a meeting that must have been! I would think Paul told that house group, "See! The devil can rage, the powers that be may threaten - but God has all the power! God will stand by you if you take a stand!"

I preach a great deal on prayer and I believe in the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous. But praying alone, praying by two's and three's, or even in a large prayer meeting will not alone shake a city! Elijah was a man of powerful prayer, but it was more than his prayers that shook Ahab's kingdom and enraged Jezebel: He called the false prophets to Mount Carmel and challenged them. Jezebel had slain God's prophets and led Israel into apostasy and the horrible idolatry of Baal worship - and no one had challenged her! Seven thousand believers had not bowed, but they were silent, unknown, and afraid. So along comes Elijah, the troublemaker! Ahab called him "the troubler of Israel!" (1 Kings 18:17). Elijah ended up at the Brook Kishon with a sword in his hand, slaying hundreds of Baal's false prophets "in the name of Jehovah."

Elijah was not a polite gentlemen with the devil and his crowd. While "...they leaped upon the alter... Elijah mocked them [derided them]" (1 Kings 18:26-27).

The church of late has cowered before the powers of darkness due to the lack of holiness, for the Scripture tells us, "...The righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Some will say, "But Jesus was meek - He never opened His mouth or resisted when they took Him to be crucified!" But that was because the hour of darkness had come, the hour He was to be given into the hands of the enemy. He was not silent in the temple when driving out the money-changers. He was not silent when calling religious leaders serpents - blind guides - whited sepulchers - a brood of vipers (see Matthew 23). He even told some boldly that Satan was their father!

Many churches today are full of silent, gentlemanly diplomats, not wanting to make waves! Nobody wants trouble! So the devil's kingdom goes unchallenged. We have more than enough smiling, mousy Christians!.....

