

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN DISASTER STRIKES?

I occasionally get a testy letter or phone call demanding that I remove a congregation from our Christianity: Then and Now mailing list. With rare exception it is the preacher who is issuing the demand. Those who thus respond are of two kinds:

* Some are already committed in heart to the change agenda. They don't want to hear anything to the contrary nor do they want their secretary or elders to see any literature that might question the things they are promoting.

* Some are good men who preach truth and practice the instructions of the Master. A few of them just are not interested in anything controversial. Some of them wish to protect their elders and brethren from problems that are wracking the brotherhood. Some already have members in their congregations who are working for these changes, and they do not want anything to come into their congregations that might stir the issue into controversy. Some of them prefer to bury their heads in the sand and pretend that we really have no problem called the "change movement." They think that by ignoring it, it will never bother them.

This kind of thinking is common to humanity. There are folks who think if they never go to a doctor, they will never get seriously ill. There are people who think they need no insurance because they have not had any accidents or injuries to date. There are some who do not lock their cars or homes because they have never been burglarized. Some are not concerned with preventive health measures since they have never been sick. Those who have lived very long look at such behavior and think, how foolish! We know that sooner or later those who make such choices do meet up with the disaster they never thought would confront them.

Those preachers and elders who choose not to be informed about the change movement that is aggressively at work in our brotherhood will one day have a sad awakening. While they muddle about in their self-imposed ignorance, someone will quietly begin sowing the seed of the change agenda in their congregations. While they sleep, it will grow and spread from person to person. Then one day the challenge will surface. A sizeable number of their members will demand changes that please them. The elders and preacher will be shocked and dismayed. They will protest and try to reason with the noisy crowd...but to no avail. They will have three options, surrender their convictions and get on board the change train, resign their posts or be driven out by those who will no longer tolerate them as their leaders.

The Hebrews of Jeremiah's day did not want to hear his warnings about their sins and impending judgement. He asked them the piecing question, "And thou, when thou art made desolate, what wilt thou do?" (Jer. 4:30). When the rain began to pound the earth, imagine the consternation of those who chose not to heed Noah's warnings. When the Roman army cast its siege works around Jerusalem, imagine the dismay of those Jews who had refused to hear Jesus' warning. Such will be the fate of those congregational leaders who close their eyes and ears to the warnings of dangers now facing the Lord's church. JHW