



## **Brotherhood Watchdogs**

**By Keith Greer**

During the past few years, there has been much wrangling and writing concerning brotherhood watchdogs. Some of our brethren seem to think that those who expose false teaching and/or false teachers have made themselves into watchdogs for the brotherhood. Others believe they are forming parties and seeking those who will join. It's becoming very tiring and petty.

The term watchdog is not in the Bible, but the word watchman is. A watchman is a person who is employed to stand guard or keep watch. Does God need such persons today? Does the Lord's church need watchmen? Before someone accuses me of violating church autonomy, let me state that I am not speaking of watchmen over the brotherhood.

God set Ezekiel as His watchman over Israel. (Ezekiel 3:9-19) He was to warn the wicked about their ways and bring them to repentance. What if the watchman, knowing who is wicked, does not warn them? God will judge the wicked according to their sins, but He will also hold the watchman accountable for failing to warn the wicked of the consequences for their actions.

Is a gospel preacher responsible for warning only the local wicked? Paul told Timothy to preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2). Where? From my study of God's word, I'd say it's wherever people are lost and dying in sin. How can I remain silent while error is being taught and not warn of the dangers accompanying such teaching. If a fellow-preacher is preparing to conduct a series of lessons for a congregation in the local area; and I know this brother believes and teaches error on a matter of truth, do I have a God-given duty

to say something about it? Or, do I sit in my office and say "well, I'm not a member there, so it's not my problem."

While I cannot tell another congregation who it can and cannot have for meetings, I can warn of the error this brother teaches. If I do, does that make me a brotherhood watchdog? How can any preacher keep silent when sin and souls are involved?

Yes, the Lord's church needs godly watchmen. It appears that many have become fearful of pointing out error and false teaching among us. We must face up to the fact that we have among us some wolves in sheep clothing. Have we lost our love for the souls of our brethren who could be swept away by error?