

# *SOS Ministry Newsletter - January 2009*

## *Spiritual Warfare on the Streets*

Dear Christian Friends,

In last month's newsletter, I wrote that we had planned to witness on Castro St. on November 7. This street is known as the center of militant homosexuality in San Francisco. After I learned about the reaction in the homosexual community to the passage of Proposition 8, which defines marriage as between a man and woman, I decided to take our team to Fisherman's Wharf.

The following Friday, we witnessed at the Sony Metreon, a downtown entertainment complex containing several movie theaters. As we were leaving, I saw a poster advertising a rally the next day against Proposition 8 and took it down. Three tough-looking men saw me. They took the poster from me and put it back up. They also took a photo of our van's license plate, apparently trying to intimidate us. After we left, the three men approached Eric Martinez, who witnesses with us regularly on Friday nights. They said they were militant homosexuals who were angry about Proposition 8 and blamed the Christians for it. Eric spoke with them for an hour, explaining that the Bible teaches that homosexuality is sinful and that God has commanded us to turn away from all our sins and follow Jesus. After an hour, Eric said he had to go. The three men said he would have one minute to say what he wants and they would not interrupt. They kept their word, and Eric shared with them one last time. (After putting their children to bed, Eric's wife Charlyne prays for us on Friday night.) That same night, a team of 13 Christians from Justice House of Prayer ([jhopsf.org](http://jhopsf.org)) was witnessing in the Castro. They had been witnessing there on Friday nights for several years. While they were holding hands singing "Amazing Grace," someone threw hot coffee on them. Then, another man picked up a Bible from the sidewalk and hit one of the women in the group. Eventually, the police arrived and told the Christians to leave the area. This incident got national publicity when the woman shared about her experience on the O'Reilly Factor TV show. Please pray for these Christians as they continue to witness on Castro Street.

We had several similar experiences on Castro Street in the early 1980's. While such events are a bit scary, so far nobody has ever been injured. We do try to keep away from the Castro when the homosexuals are particularly agitated about some issue, but will continue witnessing there occasionally. "God has not given us the spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:7).

The next day, we were again witnessing at Fisherman's Wharf. This area is mainly known as a tourist area, and is quite far from the Castro, both in distance and in its spiritual atmosphere. Paul Coca sang for several hours and took a lunch break. Then Steve began to preach. Suddenly, about 200 Proposition 8

protesters came down the street. When they saw us, they started screaming at us. Several people tried to unplug our sound system. Only one police officer was present, but he quickly got some backup. All of us and our equipment were unharmed. Steve preached for a while, then I played a worship CD to calm the protesters, who soon left.

It is easy to focus on those who oppose the gospel and forget about those who are receptive. On Sat. November 8, I was taking photos of our Berkeley outreach when Robert asked me what I was doing. I started talking with him and he was quite receptive to the gospel. He was particularly interested in learning about the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. On Friday December 6, we were witnessing at Powell and Market St. While Larry DuBois was preaching, Michael started heckling him.

Eric took him aside and started talking with him. I joined the conversation. Michael is a Muslim from Palestine. He actually knew very little about Islam or Jesus. He turned out to be quite receptive to the gospel and took a New Testament from us. **Please pray** for Robert, Michael, and the three homosexuals Eric Martinez witnessed to.

### **Witnessing to Kings**

For the past few months, we have been studying examples of New Testament preaching. Last month, we looked at Paul's message to a Jewish crowd in Jerusalem after he was arrested (Acts 22). In Acts 24, Paul had an opportunity to witness to Marcus Antonius Felix, the Roman governor of Judaea from 52-58 AD. Felix was born a slave to the Roman emperor's family, but was freed. He was an extremely brutal and corrupt ruler. He induced Queen Drusilla to leave her husband, who was king of a Roman colony in Syria, to become his wife.

Tertullus, an attorney representing the Jewish leaders, began by flattering Felix. Actually, the Jews hated Felix, who had done nothing good for them. But Felix enjoyed watching the Jews, who he knew hated him, engage in flattery to win his favor. Tertullus went on to say that Paul was "a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world." He also accused him of "profaning the temple." He gave no details to support these accusations. Tertullus concluded by requesting that Felix's chief captain Lysius come down to confirm his charges (Acts 24:8). However, Lysius had previously written Felix that "I perceived [Paul] to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or bonds" (Acts 23:29). Lysius' testimony would not have supported the accusations against Paul.

Paul denied the accusations against him, but admitted that he held to beliefs that the Jews considered heresy. He said he believed all things written in the law and prophets, and had a hope in the resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust. "Therefore, I always do my best to have a clear conscience before God and people....As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control, and the coming

judgment, Felix became afraid and said, 'For the present you may go. When I get a chance, I will send for you again.'" Acts 24:16, 25.

Felix clearly did not think Paul was guilty of violating Roman law. However, he kept Paul in prison at Caesarea for two years, hoping to receive a bribe. He was a corrupt politician who came under conviction as Paul witnessed to him. However, he resisted the Holy Spirit's work in his life, and, as far as we know, was never saved.

Felix was removed as Roman governor in 58 AD and replaced by Porcius Festus. Festus kept Paul in prison to please the Jews, even though he considered him to be innocent. Paul appeared before Festus, King Agrippa II and the king's sister Bernice.

King Agrippa was an Edomite (descendant of Esau), the last of the Herods, and was quite familiar with Jewish beliefs. His sister Drusilla was Felix' wife. His father had killed the apostle James and was later "eaten of worms" (possibly fly larvae) (Acts 12).

Paul gave his testimony, telling them how he persecuted Christians before Jesus appeared to him in Damascus. "But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles" Acts 26:22-23. Festus realized that Paul was well-educated but thought he was crazy: "much learning has made you mad." Festus was a gentile and these Jewish beliefs seemed very strange to him.

Paul asked King Agrippa if he believed the prophets. Agrippa responded, "Can you so quickly persuade me to become a Christian?" (NIV) or "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (KJV) Agrippa was not about to admit that he believed the Jewish prophets in front of Festus, and probably was ridiculing Paul's efforts to convert him. Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I wish to God that not only you but everyone listening to me today would become what I am-- except for these chains!" (Acts 26:29) In Luke 21: 12-13, Jesus said, "They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony."

Paul's imprisonment gave him the opportunity to witness to several Roman rulers. Paul spoke of having a clear conscience and of "righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment" before these corrupt, self-indulgent politicians. He also spoke of how Jesus fulfilled the Jewish prophecies and was resurrected from the dead. Even though they all seem to have rejected his message, Paul was a faithful witness for Jesus Christ to kings as well as to common people. When Paul spoke before these rulers, others were present in the room. Some of

them may have gotten saved through his witness. In Phil. 4:22, we learn that there were saints in Caesar's household.

We need to be faithful to testify to both "small and great." We don't know how God will use our witness, but we can be certain that He *will* use it.

## Coming Events

*Note: Outreaches are subject to change. Call (510) 531-5325 or 926-3299 (**new cell phone**) to confirm outreaches or for more information.*

**Friday January 2, 9, 16 and 23 Witnessing in San Francisco neighborhoods.**  
7:30 - 10 PM

**Sat. January 3, 10, 17, and 24 Evangelism Outreach. Berkeley** (Telegraph and Haste St.) **or San Francisco** (Jefferson St. between Powell & Mason). Our location depends on the weather. Call Saturday morning for our outreach location.

## Ministry News and Needs

**Thank you** again for your prayers and financial support for this ministry. We still have two openings in our Oakland ministry house. We are looking for men in their 20's or 30's who are spiritually strong, have administrative gifts, and are committed to evangelism. We need to train younger believers in evangelism – to reach a new generation and help us continue this work of evangelizing San Francisco and Berkeley.

**Please pray** that God will bring the right people for our house. Also, please continue to pray that the Berkeley City Council will not take away our freedom to minister in that city. Our **CD of the Month** is **The Calling of God** by Martin Wandira. Martin is a young evangelist from Uganda who witnessed with us last August.

Yours in His love,

Larry Rosenbaum