

# *SOS Ministry Newsletter - May 2009*

## *Motivating the Church*

**Dear Christian Friends,**

Recently, a Christian showed me a video on “You Tube” of Penn Jillette, of the well-known magic, comedy duo Penn and Teller. Penn is a self-proclaimed atheist, who frequently ridicules God, the Bible, and Jesus in his routines. In the video Penn tells of the meeting he had with someone who had been watching his show the previous night. The man complimented Penn on the show and said nice things about Penn as a person. Penn talked about how nice the man was, how sincere he seemed, and how he looked him in the eye as he talked.

Then the man handed Penn a pocket edition of the New Testament and told him that he was proselytizing. Penn said that he felt the man knew that Penn was an atheist and that he was trying to save his soul. Penn said he has always believed that if you are a Christian and you don't proselytize that you are not to be respected.

He said, “If you truly believe that there is a Heaven and Hell and that someone is going to go to Hell that it is your moral responsibility to try to save that person from Hell. I have no respect for an atheist who feels that a Christian should not proselytize. How much do you have to hate someone to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate someone to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

In his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Pastor Rick Warren wrote, “There are only two things you can't do in heaven that you can do on earth: sin, and witness to unbelievers. Which of these two do [do you] think Christ has left us here to do?” Over the years, I have found a major difference between those Christians who consistently witness and those who don't. Those who regularly witness — almost without exception — are very conscious of the reality of Heaven and Hell, and have an intense burden to save people from eternal torment in Hell. Those who rarely witness don't think very much about the fact that the unbelievers they encounter every day are heading for eternal torment.

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once wished that all his workers could spend 24 hours in Hell so that they would obtain the burden for souls needed for effective ministry. In Luke 16, the rich man suddenly developed that burden as he was tormented in Hell. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers "lest they also come into this place of torment." An experience of Hell's torment is sufficient to give even a wicked sinner a burden to evangelize the lost. While we cannot visit Hell, what we can do to develop a greater burden for souls is to spend time meditating on scriptures concerning God's judgment and eternal punishment.

Sadly, most churches are preoccupied with their potlucks and other social activities while the world is going to Hell. Modern Christians face lots of pressure and need times of rest and relaxation. And married people need to spend time with their families. But we must find time in our busy lives to reach those who are headed for eternal torment in Hell. Few Christians are too busy to commit a few hours monthly to evangelism. Pastors can stir up their congregations by preaching regularly on the need for evangelism and the reality of Hell, praying continually for God to send forth laborers, starting some ongoing outreaches and setting an example by participating in them.

The Greek word "ekballo," used in the expression "send forth laborers into his harvest" in Matthew 9:38, is used in the next verse for casting out demons. Apparently, it is as hard to get a Christian to witness as to drive out a demon. If you've ever tried casting out demons, you know how stubborn they are! In Acts 8, we are told that after the persecution led by Saul, the church was scattered throughout Judaea and Samaria. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (v.4). It took persecution to force the church to do what Jesus had commanded them to do. We feel secure in our church buildings, but need to be cast out into the harvest field.

Christians often tell me, "You have to have a special calling to witness like you do." But if you saw a child drowning in a swimming pool, would you think "I'm not called to be a lifeguard" or "I don't have any special training in lifesaving"? No, you would make every effort to save that child! Once you see the urgency of the task, the question of "calling" becomes irrelevant, even foolish.

Although we are concerned about unbelievers are heading for Hell, the subject of "Hell" should not be the main thing we are preaching. Repeatedly screaming to unbelievers "You're going to Hell" is not an effective way to evangelize. While we do need to talk about sin, repentance and God's holiness, we do not necessarily need to discuss Hell in every witnessing conversation. If we do discuss the subject, we need to do so with great gentleness and love. Until an unbeliever appreciates the seriousness of his sins, he will not think it reasonable that God would send him to Hell.

I pray that God will use this teaching to open your eyes to the ways Satan seeks to keep you from witnessing, and that you will be given a renewed desire to witness for Jesus — both in your everyday life and through special outreaches. Please pray with us that God will cast out laborers into the harvest fields of this world, including the San Francisco area.

We have the Words of Life that can change the eternal destiny of those we meet. We need to use every hour we have left to reach as many as possible for Jesus. Will we keep silent or will we open our mouths?

## ***SOS - San Francisco July 17-25, 2009- 30th Year Anniversary***

SOS - San Francisco is an opportunity to get training and practical experience in evangelism. The hardest part is overcoming apathy and fear. Once you actually come to SOS, God will give you divine appointments to witness to people. He will give you the right words to speak to each person. The experience you get during SOS week will help you become a bolder and more effective witness for Jesus in your everyday life.

Don't miss this year's SOS outreach. We have enclosed a card and registration form with this newsletter. This year we will again be meeting at Park Presidio Bible Church, 10th Ave. and Cabrillo, San Francisco.

Contemporary Christian music pioneer Chuck Girard will be ministering throughout the week. Registration begins on Friday July 17 at 6 PM. Meetings are scheduled daily except Sunday at 8 AM from July 18-25. If you live in the Bay Area and must work, you may join us at night and on weekends.

Evangelism training will be provided throughout the week. We will be holding daily noon worship rallies in city parks, bringing the church to the street. Free housing is available during

the outreach. Bring a sleeping bag and foam pad. If you prefer, we can send you information about inexpensive motels in the city. We will be serving breakfast and lunch from July 20-25.

For the 4th year, a youth group from Christian Life Assembly of God in Paydon, Utah, will be joining us. We expect other youth groups to participate. Youth under 18 need adult supervision. This outreach is an opportunity to bring the love of Jesus Christ to people who desperately need to know Him. This outreach is guaranteed to change your life — and the lives of those you will reach for Jesus.

This is our 30th year to bring together Christians to proclaim the gospel in San Francisco and Berkeley. Please pray that God will bring many laborers, especially youth groups, to help us bring in a harvest this summer. We hope that many Christians who have participated in SOS outreaches over the past 30 years will join us, in addition to those who have never been to SOS.

## **Coming Events**

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

Friday May 8, 15, 22, 29 Witnessing in San Francisco neighborhoods. 7:30 - 10 PM

Sat. May 9, 16, 23, 30 Evangelism Outreach. Berkeley (Telegraph and Haste St.) or San Francisco Call for outreach location.

## **Ministry Needs**

Thank you again for your prayers and financial support for this ministry. Like others, we have been affected by the financial recession. Our income for January through March has decreased by 31% from last year.

We have requested 14 permits from the SF Park Department. Please pray that we will get these permits and that the price for them will not increase. We spend about \$2000 a year on permits. 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 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. 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 Growing in Christ by Steve Gregg.

I hope many of you will join us for an outreach this next month.

Yours in His love,

Larry Rosenbaum