

How the SPF Began

The Street Preachers' Fellowship began in 1978 in Pensacola, Florida by seven (7) street preaching students from various parts of the United States who were attending Bible School, and actively preached on the streets of Florida during the months of April until September as they were allowed by the Bible Institute they attended. Street Preaching was limited to those months by the School to force the students to concentrate on their studies for most of the school year, and to limit the eruptive impact that open air preaching has on a local community. Open air preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, when done continuously without let up in any community, greatly effects and troubles the hearts and consciences of lost mankind, and when continually and daily saturated over a small area, often erupts into enormous upheavals of the status quo and religious leaders, that ultimately brings down the wrath of man and government upon the church that supports such ministerial reproofs of a lost and dying world. Accordingly, out of student body of over 200 students, there were only seven young men at that time that were zealously persuaded that open air evangelism was a vocational calling that they felt compelled of God to "eat it up" (Revelation 10:9) "as a burning fire shut up in their bones, and they were weary with forbearing, and could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9) silent all year round.

Accordingly, they organized themselves into a fellowship, which they called The Street Preachers Fellowship, and pooled their money together to buy time on the local radio station to take turns and preach a 30 minute sermon each Saturday, so as to vent out that "fire shut up in their bones" during the months when the Bible Institute forbid them to preach in the open air in the local community where the Schools was located. Even in the atmosphere of a Bible College, the zeal of many waxed cold before they were ever graduated, and as each of these seven young men continued to actively preach on both the radio and the sidewalks, their increasingly learned fellow students forsook them in both endeavors, until the regular Saturday afternoon street preaching time drew less and less, until one day, the seven stood alone.

WHERE ARE THE STREET PREACHERS

*Last eve' I perceived as I walked down the street,
Seven men of God as they went out to preach.
They went through the highways, the streets of the land;
Crying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."
But where are their fellow that stood with them there?
Proclaiming God's Word to all that would hear?
One year there were thirty and ten men of God,
Who "stood in the gap" with a Sword and a Rod.
Last year there were thirty; this year there is ten.*

*Now there are seven. O, where are the men?
Where are the Street Preachers God called to this place?
Where are the men that did once run the race?
Where are the Preachers that did cry near and far?
We're too busy", they said- Miserable liars ye are!
Nay, but there was room when it came time for fun;
Only no time for the race to be run!
Only no time for this Jesus ye serve!
Save Sunday and Wednesday, for Him ye reserve.
Ye call yourselves "preachers": Nay but ye are
Cowards, chickens, women ye are!
Stand up for Jesus ye true men of God,
And return to the highways with your Sword and your Rod!
For the people do perish, as sin takes its toll!
And no man careth at all for their soul!*

SPF

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As their time as students of the Word of God passed, and each entered the ministry across the country, their number decreased and increased (John 3:30) with "the increase of God" (see Colossians 2:19), until there remained of the seven, just one minister that over the years refused to relinquish open air preaching as a major part of the calling of God to preach the gospel to every creature. Time and time again, that lone minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ would witness his beloved brethren, give up their open air preaching, for a more refined and far less troubling style of church ministrations, most of whom would follow the errant philosophy embraced by the "Cowards for Christ" ministerial union that "Open air preaching is a small portion of the New Testament ministrations, and we should not allow that small portion of the ministry to destroy our ministries".

Throughout the chronicles of Church History, the body of Christ has always had a certain small group of saints, that to their dying breath utterly refused to give up Christ and His command to "preach everywhere" (see Mark 16:15 & 20). Franklin Hamlin Little [American Society of Church History] said in 1952,

"From the beginning of history only a small band have ever went the right way before God, and the Anabaptists stood in that line of the faithful. Their hymns and records of martyrdom are the self-conscious account of a people of integrity, whom God Almighty has chosen to carry the meaning of history."

And History will record, that the Anabaptists Martyrs were not slaughtered and burned at the stake for just what they believed, but were to a man, woman and child killed because they would not shut up about what they believed in the public forums of this evil world. And American History, true factual history of

the body of Christ in America will testify before God and man, that by 1984, there were only two Anabaptists churches remaining in all the world, one in Somerset County Pennsylvania, and the other outside Greenville, South Carolina; both of which were pastored by fervent Open Air preachers, the youngest of whom was the single remaining minister of those seven Florida Bible students whose open air fervency created the Street Preachers' Fellowship. Today, there are hundreds of Anabaptists Churches throughout the world, with an International Presbytery of national bishops that unanimously elected that fervent open air street preacher as the Presiding Bishop of their International Presbytery, and that Presbytery in turn subsequently chartered the Street Preachers' Fellowship to continue that zeal for the Lord throughout the body of Christ. That less than the least of all saints, has for almost 40 years now, in maintaining that same vigilance, been involved in over 47 arrests in three different countries for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the open air. In so doing, at the costs of spending over 63 days behind prison and jail house bars in what the Bible calls "in prisons more frequent" (2 Corinthians 11:23), and constantly working with many street preachers facing constant arrests and imprisonments for "walking worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1), it has been our constant desire, and also the constant request of Federal Judges, Supreme Court Judges, lawyers and most street preachers, to organize a worldwide fellowship, and standards institute for establishing both Biblical and Judicially recognized standards of ministerial conduct of the Open Air Evangelists. The open air street evangelist has from God, the calling (1 Corinthians 1:25-27/ 4:9, 10) in the ministry that is without exception, the most controversial aspect of the New Testament gospel ministrations. Such a fellowship must needs exist not just for establishing recognizable standards from both Biblical standing (Ephesians 6:10-14), but also for Judicially recognized associational standing in the Courts of Justice, which the Judges will be compelled to recognize, uphold and protect as a God called vocation of Biblical and Constitutional proportions for all of its members individually. Such associational standing demands not just the establishment of standards, but also the training and educating of members to follow such standards in order to be protected as a body, and not as independent, and isolated movers before the Courts.

Hence, the Street Preachers' Fellowship has been organized for the voluntary, and active fellowship, assistance and education of Street Preaching Ministers of God Almighty from all over the world, who are actively engaged in not just preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, but who have the courage and character to warn a wicked world of the penalty and judgment of sin. Such men of God, possessing the character of "the express image" of God's person (Hebrews 1:3) are constantly approving themselves the ministers of God "in prisons more frequent" (2 Corinthians 6:4, 5/ 11:23) as this wicked nation and world demonstrate their hatred of God (Romans 1:30) in conflicts and confrontations with the street preaching lovers of God, who will not compromise or shut about Jesus Christ in the public arenas of this world.

Street preaching evangelists are not new to the body of Christ. The Anabaptists have always been open air evangelists, and their testimony and public witness has inspired and motivated Christian ministers throughout the world to follow this example regardless of their particular beliefs. Howbeit, the open air street preacher often, if not always found himself alone, fighting a losing battle against authorities bent on silencing his open witness and continual preaching. And when arrested, the street preacher most oft could not find a lawyer that would represent him, and when he did find one, without exception, they knew very little of Constitutional and International rights in order to adequately represent the God called street preacher. Consequently, the open air evangelists was left to represent himself before the courts, and without exception, they were continually convicted and jailed, and suppressed under color of law, that compelled most to completely give up their open air preaching in order to maintain either their pastorates or ability to work and provide for their families.

When we first began preaching in the streets of America some 40 years ago, there were not enough men of God actively doing so, to even attempt to organize. And though the judges of the higher courts constantly advised the few that did to join ranks, it collided with this obvious weakness. Why organize 7 men? But today, God has raised up a formidable army of street preaching fanatics, that are tired of the death tolling silence of 95% of Christian ministers who have confined the preaching of the gospel behind four walls while sin runs rampant in the streets of our communities, our states and our nations. And hundreds of them are ready to help one another like nothing before, and with Bibles in hand, and signs following, they are joining ranks for the common cause of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature, as mighty men of God, “and terrible as an army with banners” (Song of Solomon 6:10).

The Fellowship’s goals are to structure and assist each member in the fulfillment of that purpose. Already, the battle is being drawn, and the fight is on in numerous places across America and the world, as God fearing open air street preachers grow tired of the last fifty years of pathetic excuses from the cowards for Christ, who have taught that the street preacher has to obey man rather than God to maintain some Laodecian ministerial reputation of men pleasing, ecclesiastical effeminacy. From the beginning of the church, the scriptures have been clear that “We ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29). Let the cowards of Christ rail on, as the men of God’s calling preach on! If you have the calling from God, and the courage and character to keep preaching regardless of the costs, the Street Preachers’ Fellowship has a place for you. When the conflict grows, it is our Creed as Street Ministers to be there with you. Come try us, and see what God will do.