General Topics :: Media Attention for street preaching

Media Attention for street preaching, on: 2005/5/31 10:12
So some of the harrasment stories from CT have gotten some media attention. There are two articles. Check it out:

The "Lawsuit claims Police halted pub preaching" article found at:

The "Free Speach on the Street" article is at:

And just today the "ABC Radio Network" in New York City called and said that they wanted to do an interview!

Re: Media Attention for street preaching - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 12:37
Brother my prayers are with you, what a great chance to share the gospel even on the radio!! these are some glorious doors the Lord is opening up for you brother don't be fearful but believing!

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Lawsuit claims police halted pub preaching
May 31, 2005
Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. -- A 20-year-old street preacher has filed a federal lawsuit against city police, claiming they tried to halt him from spreading the word of God outside of bars and popular nightspots.

In court papers, Jesse Morrell says he has a constitutional right to recite Bible verses, sing hymns and pray on the sidewalks outside of bars. The lawsuit accuses police of violating his right to free speech and due process.

"The Bible is the true map to heaven and I want people to know that simple truth," Morrell, originally from Cheshire, said.

The lawsuit contends that he was threatened with arrest last year while preaching outside of four nightclubs. According to the lawsuit, he was reading his bible outside of a Temple street pub last May and an officer threatened to arrest him.

He picked up his stool and left that bar, the lawsuit said.

But when he went to sit a few doors down at Neat Lounge, he was approached by a second officer in an aggressive manner and was told to stop preaching, Morrell claims. He tried to tape record the conversation, but the officer damaged the recorder and threw it in a trash can, the lawsuit said.

Subsequent attempts to preach at Alchemy Club and Cafe and The Back Room at Bottega the same night were also foil ed by police, the lawsuit said.

Bonnie Winchester, a spokeswoman for New Haven police, said she could not comment because it is department policy not to talk about ongoing lawsuits.

"There's no doubt if everyone agreed with what he had to say, no one would have bothered him," said Nate Ketchum, a staff lawyer for the Alliance Defense Fund, an Arizona-based Christian law firm that is representing him.

Morrell, who said he found God while spending time at a Hamden drug rehabilitation center, is currently studying at Teen Mania Ministries, a Texas-based Christian youth group. He's also looking for a publisher for a book he has written calle d "Cleansing the Temple." He said he wants to return to Connecticut to continue preaching.
General Topics :: Media Attention for street preaching

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Re:, on: 2005/5/31 14:30
I appreciate your prayers brother!

Free Speech On The Street
Preacher Claims Rights Violated
May 30, 2005
By KIM MARTINEAU, Courant Staff Writer

NEW HAVEN -- A street preacher who likes to share his Christian beliefs outside nightclubs and bars - places that promote activities contrary to the tenets of his faith - is suing city police for trying to shut down his one-man ministry.

Jesse Morrell, 20, says he should be allowed to sing hymns, read and quote the Bible and preach and pray on the sidewalks outside of The Playwright Irish Pub and Alchemy Club and Lounge without fear of arrest.

"The Bible is the true map to heaven and I want people to know that simple truth," he says.

Morrell claims the police threatened to arrest him as he tried to preach outside four city nightclubs and bars last year. His lawsuit, filed in federal court here, alleges that his constitutional rights to free speech and due process were violated. He is being represented by the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian public interest law firm based in Arizona that has fought successfully to invalidate gay marriage licenses in Oregon and allow abortion foes in Louisiana to post signs of aborted fetuses.

Morrell grew up in suburban Cheshire. He got serious about the Lord, he says, during his stay at a drug rehabilitation center in Hamden. Before that, he was in and out of the juvenile hall in New Haven for petty crimes. "Born again" at 15, he has spent the past few years preaching to people wherever they congregate - bus stops, public parks and bars.

On May 16, 2004, Morrell started reading his Bible outside a Temple Street establishment identified as "The Irish Pub" in his lawsuit. After a police officer threatened to arrest him, he packed up his stool and left, he says. He then walked to his car, grabbed his tape recorder and set down his stool a few doors away, at Neat Lounge.

A second police officer, David Coppola, approached and "in a very aggressive manner" forced Morrell to stop preaching, the lawsuit says. Morrell tried to record their conversation, but the officer ripped the wire out of his recorder, he says, and he put Morrell's stool into a nearby trash can.

Undeterred, Morrell retrieved his soapbox and moved on to Alchemy Club and Cafe, then The Back Room at Bottega, but again the police chased him away, he claims. Morrell says his curbside ministry has also encountered problems in Hartford and Waterbury.

New Haven Police Department spokeswoman Bonnie Winchester declined to comment on Morrell's claims, adding that it is department policy not to discuss pending litigation.

At the moment, Morrell is studying at Teen Mania Ministries, a Christian youth organization in Tyler, Texas, with his mother's blessing. The founder and president of the organization, Ron Luce, is a member of the White House Advisory Commission on Drug-Free Communities - an appointee of President Bush. Morrell says police in Texas have harassed him and even thrown him into jail for his public preaching.

Morrell also shares his beliefs via a website, "www.newenglandoutreach.com," and is looking for someone to publish his new book, "Cleansing the Temple." In August, he'll start work at another evangelical boot camp in Texas, the Great News Network. Eventually, he says, he intends to return to Connecticut and continue his preaching here.

"There's no doubt if everyone agreed with what he had to say, no one would have bothered him," said Nate Ketchum, a staff lawyer for the Alliance Defense Fund. "If everyone agreed with the speech, there'd be no need for the First Amendment."
Re: - posted by mileslewis (), on: 2005/5/31 18:33
Way to go brother... Seems like they represented you pretty fairly.

I hope we don't run into this much hassle in Toronto. LOL

Miles

Re:, on: 2005/6/1 14:58
So this story has made it into a lot of different papers, even The Wiccan News! I searched it in google.com

It's also been talked about on the TV News, Channel 5 a few times I'm told:


Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/6/1 16:30
Jesse

Brother it seems to be on alot of websites!! praise the Lord. I really do encourage the body of Christ at SI to get behind you in prayers as this continues to become a bigger issue.

Lawsuit claims police halted pub preaching
http://www.boston.com/news/local/connecticut/articles/2005/05/30/...
http://cbsnewyork.com/news88/...

WOW I am quite blown away it has been listed as an "assosiated press" item and therefore is basically appearing on 10 0's if not 1000's of news sites :-)

and even on a wiccan site: http://www.wiccanweb.ca/article-9909.html

Your name appears on that items so that does definetly speak to the fact that we need to pray for brother Jesse's spiritual protection over all of this.

Re:, on: 2005/6/1 23:05
I've had some Christians wonder if this is a Christian thing to do. But there is nothing un-christian with desiring to have the same rights every other American has. I do not enjoy taking up a federal lawsuit against the police. But what they have done is a crime against free-speech, a crime against America, and a crime against Christianity. Just because we are Christians doesn't mean we sit idly by while the rights our Christians fathers bleed for and died for are being ripped away from us by a secular society. There is no other legal avenue that I can pursue to show these police officers that they are also a subject to the law. I am also very thankful that a case like this is not being swept under the rug by the media!!
Re: our rights as christians - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2005/6/2 16:30

Jesse,

I applaud your efforts and your boldness! But I do wish you would reconsider your christian witness, especially about the lawsuit. This is not about your reputation or how you look in other people's eyes or your rights. I know this is only my opinion...

"As soon as you begin to live the life of faith in God, fascinating and physically gratifying possibilities will open up before you. These things are yours by right, but if you are living the life of faith you will exercise your right to waive your rights, and let God make your choice for you. God sometimes allows you to get into a place of testing where your own welfare would be the appropriate thing to consider, if you were not living the life of faith. But if you are, you will joyfully waive your right and allow God to make your choice for you. This is the discipline God uses to transform the natural into the spiritual through obedience to His voice.

Whenever our right becomes the guiding factor of our lives, it dulls our spiritual insight. The greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but good choices which are not quite good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best. In this passage, it would seem that the wisest thing in the world for Abram to do would be to choose. It was his right, and the people around him would consider him to be a fool for not choosing.

Many of us do not continue to grow spiritually because we prefer to choose on the basis of our rights, instead of relying on God to make the choice for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard which has its eyes focused on God. And God says to us, as He did to Abram, "...walk before Me..." ( Genesis 17:1 ). "Oswald Chambers

"I need to be so utterly God's that He can use me or hide me, as He chooses, as an arrow in His hand or in His quiver. I will ask no questions: I relinquish all rights to Him who desires my supreme good. He knows best." -Dr. Helen Rosevare

keep pressing on to know Him, brother! :)

In His love, Chanin

Re:, on: 2005/6/2 17:51

I do appreciate your concern Chanin. I respect you greatly and truly value what you have to say.

I wrote this awhile ago but think it fits in here:

Going to Court

Regarding going to court over street preaching and other issues, did not even Paul appeal to Ceasar? Authorities have been established by God. Why fear calling on them for help when appropriate? Yes we must call on God for help and never fail to do so. But authorities are from God. So could God help us through His authorities?

Although not too long ago I may have been in agreement with you men about not getting involved in court. However, now that I personally face opposition from the police just about everytime I try to preach, I know something needs to be done if the gospel will be preached. The cops either shut me down before I even start preaching, or shut me down after preaching no more then 5 minutes. I want to be able to start and finish a sermon. I want the lost to be able to hear the gospel. That is my main concern and burden, and with this opposition that is not happening.

This is not just one cop in one location. This started in Connecticut and now is happening in Dallas and Tyler, TX. I can't even finish my sermons! I feel I will have a greater impact on the world for Christ if I "appeal to Ceasar". Yes certainly laws must get changed, but I agree that ultimately it is the hearts of men that must change. The world will not be won by discussing in heathen courts whether or not we should preach, we must preach the gospel regardless.

Like I said, not too long ago I would have been in complete agreement. I am not sure if you guys preach on the streets or not or have been arrested for the gospel, but when in a similar situation as myself you may have similar thoughts.
George Whitefield also eventually decided that the wise thing to do was to go to court so hinderances to preaching would be stopped. We read about it in "George Whitefield" by Arnold A. Dallimore pg 137:

"Whitefield decided the time had come to take the rioters to court...The outcome of the trial was that the jury brought in a bill of defendants guilty of the whole information lodged against them. It was a complete victory for the Methodists. Whitefield then had the right to prefer damages against the rioters. But having shown these men that they were subject to England's courts of law, he chose to forgive them and let the matter drop. This victory was strategic in the life of early Methodism. Had the rioting continued unchecked, the work would have suffered. But now the perpetrators knew they where not able, as they had assumed, to escape all punishment, and although the violence did not cease, from this point onward it was increasingly curtailed."

But ultimately brethren, whether free or in jail, we must preach the gospel. Opposition or no opposition, God's Great Commission still stands. He didn't say "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, so long as they let you." The greater the opposition, the greater glory God will get!

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/6/2 18:22**

Quote:

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Regarding going to court over street preaching and other issues, did not even Paul appeal to Ceasar?
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Paul appealed to Caesar because he was *already* under trial. He did not dare attempt to drag Caesar to court. Remember brother Jesse, our fight is not against flesh or blood, but against principalities and powers and wicked forces in heavenly places.

Quote:

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I know something needs to be done if the gospel will be preached. The cops either shut me down before I even start preaching, or shut me down after preaching no more then 5 minutes. I want to be able to start and finish a sermon. I want the lost to be able to hear the gospel. That is my main concern and burden, and with this opposition that is not happening.
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Though my persecutions for preaching the gospel are far less severe than what you have faced, I too have been effectively shut down by the powers that be, often within minutes of opening my mouth. This was especially disappointing because sometimes I drove quite a distance to do this open air ministry. So, what did I do? I prayed and fasted that God would give me favor in the eyes of the local authorities. Eventually, that favor was gained, and the last couple times I have gone out, I have preached undisturbed. This is to be preferred over law suits. Paul highly discourages law suits in Corinthians, because of the impression it will give upon the unbelieving world. It's one thing to be dragged into court, it is quite another to drag others.

Quote:

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This started in Connecticut and now is happening in Dallas and Tyler, TX. I can't even finish my sermons!
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What is next, suing Dallas and Tyler? This problem is spiritual, not legal.

Quote:

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But ultimately brethren, whether free or in jail, we must preach the gospel

Amen!

Re: lawsuit - posted by Smokey (), on: 2005/6/3 1:14

Jesse:

I am sure that you are not going into this lawsuit without prayer, and seeking the guidance of Holy Spirit. If you are sure that this is His will then continue. As well meaning as some of the advice is that others are directing at you, I can't help but think of the friends that came and gathered around Lot. I will be praying for you.

Greg

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/6/3 6:32

1 Cor 6:1 1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? 4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, 6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? 7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

Re:, on: 2005/6/3 10:09

1 Cor 6:1-8 is talking about taking another Christian to court. That is not the case here. If I could settle the matters with the police at a Church I would rather do that, but I bet they aren't up for it.

We have to remember that courts have been appointed by God. God even established a court system with Moses for the Nation of Israel. There is nothing wrong with court or lawsuits, the problem comes when people abuse it which seems to happen more often then not.

Re:, on: 2005/6/5 23:30

ps. I've been thinking very reasonably about this whole situation and came up with a few thoughts.

When it is Presidential election time, and there is a certain man you want to become President, what do you do? Do you pray ONLY that he be elected and not go to vote? Or do you pray and vote? Of course we should pray and vote.

Or if someone steals your car, what do you do? Do you pray ONLY “God please bring that thief back with my car? and never tell the police? Or do you pray and also file a report?

Well this is a situation when thieves are trying to steal our rights away, so what should we do? Should we ONLY pray and not file any report? Or should we pray and take action, appealing to higher powers?

I don't see why we should apply a reasoning to this situation that we certainly would never apply to any other situation.