

Delivered from Demon Possession

Mark 5:9

*Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"
"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."*

Working in the little village of Vila Elsa had been a real battleground for many months. These last few months had been very discouraging. One of our new believers had been forbidden to attend our services by her husband. Another had become depressed and attempted suicide on several occasions. Another teenager had been hospitalized in serious condition with a strange skin infection which covered his body. Another recent convert denied her faith.

We had a wonderful deliverance ministry of a man who was a warlock (a male witch) and a medium. Alair received the Gospel of John we had distributed house to house and loved what he read. It was strange when he showed up at the church. The service was already in session and we were worshipping. As he walked in the door suddenly everyone got quiet. He came in with his dog as well, which is not unusual in this little village.

As we were concluding the service and serving communion I began to serve the grape juice and speak of the blood of Jesus. Immediately his dog stood up and ran forward growling and snarling and showing its teeth at me. It was a strange experience, almost a physical attack.

After the service I asked Delfino, our lay pastor, who that man was and why everybody got quiet. It seemed everyone knew Alair. He told me that Alair was a powerful spiritist warlock for the whole northern part of *Porto Alegre*. *He was a Pai de Santo, (father of saints) a priest of Umbanda and Candomble*, a medium and the head of spiritism and black magic for thousands of people in the northern region of Porto Alegre.

Alair came back to church several times. After every service he would tell me that he received the Gospel of John and read it all the way through. He said he loved reading it. He loved hearing about Jesus. He wanted to thank us for giving him the Bible. But each time I would try to tell him about Jesus, he would get nervous and irritated.

One day as I stood by my car speaking with him I determined to clearly present Christ to him and invite him to receive Christ. As soon as I started speaking about Jesus he became angry and agitated. I was determined to pray over him whether he liked it or not. So, without his consent, I started to pray. At that point he actually took his fist and smashed into the side of my car, denting it.

On another occasion he came by the church again and talked to me about loving the Bible he had received. I told him that it was nice that he liked the Bible but he needed Jesus. He said he wanted to receive Jesus, but each time I talked to him about Jesus he would get angry and he didn't know why.

That night the youth service was over so we put everyone out of the church and asked Alair to come into the church to pray with us. Steve Renicks, my missionary colleague, and I did this because we believed that there was going to be a demonic encounter and we didn't want our young people influenced by it.

For two and a half hours we talked, shared Christ, prayed, pled the blood of Jesus, and claimed the victory in Jesus' name, all to no avail. Each time we would tell Alair that he needed Jesus he would begin to pray then would gag and choke, fall on the floor, and writhe in pain. At times he would lose control of himself and become violent. He couldn't hurt us or release himself from the circle of prayer (we held our hands around him as we prayed). Though he was a strong 36 year old man he couldn't break our hold. Finally, after one particularly difficult demonic outburst, he passed out on the floor.

Twice more he raged overturning pews and smashing the pulpit. Then he'd awaken from passing out and would ask what happened. We told him that he was trying to pray, but demons would not let him. We told him that the demons he had received in spiritism and witchcraft could not stop him from receiving Christ as his Savior because demons could not block his will.

We were exhausted. We wanted to be done with this ugly business. At one point Alair managed to pray confessing his sins. We were overjoyed by this. I remember Steve saying, "Good! We're done here! Let's go home." But I sensed he wasn't free at all. Then the Holy Spirit prompted me to tell Alair to not only confess his sins, but invite Jesus to come into his heart. He tried over and over again, but couldn't get the words out, as he would gag, choke, become violent and then pass out.

Finally, in exhaustion, Steve and I didn't know what to do. We had tried everything we knew how to do. They don't teach you this stuff in Bible School or seminary. So we picked up a hymnal while Alair raged and we began to sing praises. As we sang Alair melted to his knees in front of the cross that was hanging on the wall.

This time he came back to his senses very upset that someone broke the church furniture. We again told him what was going on, and again he said he really, really wanted to receive Jesus. This time, however, when he prayed he started to choke, but forced the words out, "Jesus... come...into... my...heart..." As soon as

he said, "Come into my heart" he suddenly burst into joyful tears, confessing his sins and praising God for his forgiveness. He was free!!!