

In the tracks of a missionary - Chapter 4

Open Doors or Empty Places

We remember a time in Houston when a friend began selling these “door viewers” – a small ‘monocular’ eyepiece device installed on a door. It enabled one to have a limited view through a closed door to see what might be on the other side. Then you could decide to open the door, or not. The spiritual life is much more secure: Everything is in “*full view of the Lord*” (Prov. 5:21), and if the missionary is prepared, God will open the doors!

We have learned how Christ taught the Apostles of how they were to recognise open and closed doors as they were sent out on their 1st missionary journey. They were to take only what was necessary, seek only those open doors where people were hungry for the Gospel and Truth; and wherever they were rejected or doors were closed to them, they were to “shake the dust off their feet” and move on. But sometimes we travel down roads when we really don’t need to, failing to see the direction in which God is leading us.



Entrance doors main auditorium Berachah Church

Have you ever tried to open doors that God planned to be closed? Or have you tried to close doors that God meant to open? We have, too! If it doesn’t open easily, take a crowbar and force it open! **Wrong!!** We missionaries, as do all believers, need to have the discernment and perception (Greek word ‘*aisthesis*’) to know what is best (Phil 1:10). When God opens doors there are opportunities on the other side. When we try to open doors, there are only self-imposed problems and distractions. ***The difference is striking!*** When God opens doors, it is an absolute pleasure! When we open doors, it is an absolute pain!! Better to spend more time preparing, and let God do the work in bringing in the hearers. Our pastor would say that if we are flying in a Boeing 747 at 30,000 ft, it doesn’t do any good for us to get out and push! We’ve done that, too!

Therefore, more than ever, your prayer support is a critical part of our ministry. The more you are informed, the better and more effective can be your prayers. So, we would like to keep you advised of the broken down doors and empty places, and of other doors in need of prayer.

On three separate occasions, we had been informed of “SAPs.” This is not the South African Police Service, but rather, SAPs refer to *Self Appointed Pastors*. These men are a growing group of Pastors in rural villages, desiring to serve God, but they don’t know how. They want to teach, but they have no doctrine. They want to help, but in the wrong ways. They want to learn, but have no one to teach them. We know however, that their faith and positiveness will never go hungry and they will never be thirsty (Jn.6:35). These are the “young men” of 1Pt. 5:5 and Titus 2:6. They need to be taught the very basics of God’s Plan of Salvation and the Spiritual Life. Then they can become the true and good shepherds of their own flocks.



Prayer Request: That to those SAP’s who are positive to learn God’s Word, that doors might open for us to teach them with the wisdom and discernment Paul spoke of to Timothy, in 2Ti. 4:5 - *But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

Secondly, there has been a great door opened, and now the hinges need a little oil from your prayer support. There is an informal college of Bible students scattered throughout this province. The students are eager to learn, and desire to become workmen and women, approved by God. Yet, their shepherds, are those of Ezekiel Chapter 34: “. . . *shepherds who only take care of themselves . . . so they (the students) are scattered because there was no shepherd . . . and they became food for all the wild animals (false teachers) . . . and no one searched or looked for them.*” God opened these doors and Tom has taught the students many different times in many different locations. However, the wild animals of unprepared and false teachers (the wolves)



emerged; and the students are not being fed. The shepherds are too caught up in themselves, disorganised, competitive and distracted from the true focus of the spiritual life – The focus of *growing in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pt. 3:18)*. We ask your prayers for these students, that they continue to be fed Truth, and that they be protected from the jealousies and infighting amongst the shepherds. The founder of the college, Professor Johannes, is an honourable and humble shepherd. He too, needs your prayers.



Professor Johannes

Prayer Request: For continued open doors in our ministry to teach the students, and as in the days of Ezekiel, the students may come to know *Who* is their True Shepherd who will take care of them: “*For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them*” (Ezk. 34:11).

The subject heading of much of Tom’s teaching is “*Christian Professionalism.*” God has honoured this message with many open doors. It is a subject that can be, and is taught for months on end. It is a subject that includes every aspect of the “Protocol Plan of God” as taught to us by R.B. Thieme Jr. Subjects range from salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, to Divine Solutions for Human Problems. We have encountered many, many hang ups about eternal security and post salvation sins: A total lack of understanding God’s Grace and His Essence. Yet, we have seen that with persistence, discernment and numerous different approaches to teaching the Grace of God and His Attributes, those who are positive ***finally get it!*** Grace is not only heard, but Grace is seen in the conduct of one’s ministry, and we have been taught not only from our Pastor, but from the Apostle Paul himself that . . . ***Unlike so many we do not peddle the Word of God for profit; on the contrary, in Christ, we speak before God with sincerity*** (2 Cor 2:17).

Yes, it is an ongoing challenge, especially when trying to deal with cultural differences and terminology. But we have been given the information and together with the power of the Holy Spirit to make known the “mysteries” of His Word, we press on: Knowing that . . . ***to whom much is given, much is expected; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked!*** (Luke 12:48)

Prayer Request: That as we continue to study and teach we are able to communicate in such ways and with such practical and meaningful illustrations from a wise and discerning heart, full of God’s Truth (1 Kings 4:29 and Eph 1:17)

The storms of opposition never let up, and neither does His Matchless Grace! It is abundantly provided! Your prayers for our mission and for the peoples of this nation are demonstrated and seen in the *Doors* that God has opened for us. We simply say, Thank You!

We have but one mission: *But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ to those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life* (2Cor. 2:14-16)