The Call Of Open Hearts

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The targets of gospel preaching are always the open hearts of listeners wherever they may live in the world. In Hebrews 10:16 the writer quotes from Jeremiah's projection of how God’s will would be made known and received in the Christian era when he says, "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts and write them on their minds." In Jesus’ teaching he projected the same principle in one of his parables: "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering, produce a good crop" (Luke 8:15). The actual evidence of the truthfulness of such statements is found after Peter had preached the gospel to a multitude in Jerusalem: "When the people heard this, they were pricked to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:38).

I have witnessed and experienced the power of the gospel many times on "noble and good hearts" in my work in Africa. One example was a man named John Gomede who found my address on a tract we had printed and distributed. He invited me to his home to teach him and his family near the village of Nongoma in Zululand. He lived among animists who did not want Christianity to come to their area. They threw rocks at my car when I drove through a bush trail to the place where John lived. The walls of the house were of mud, the roof was made of thatching and the floor was a mixture of cow dung and clay, all evidence of his poverty. The home was filled with his family and a few friends. I preached all night, rested a bit the next day and then I preached and taught again. I then baptized John and his family and friends into Christ.

I went back several times to teach the new Christians. I discovered that those who opposed John and his Christian convictions pulled up his crops, killed his chickens and did what damage they could to cause him to renounce what his heart told him was true. I encouraged him to move to a safer place, but he resisted and instead he manifested a Christian spirit in all that he did. He served his neighbors by hauling water and plowing their gardens with a span of oxen that he owned. Eventually other hearts were opened by John’s kindness, service, and teaching. There are now fourteen congregations that John has started in the areas surrounding his home and a Christian spirit prevails in the hearts of dozens of former unbelievers.

There are thousands of "noble and good hearts" in many places in the world that would respond as John Gomede did if only there was someone to preach the message of salvation to them.