

When All Doors Close

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Our prayer at Olive Press is that we may help make the Word of Adonai fully known, that it spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere. We hope our books help open people's eyes so they will turn from darkness to Light and from the power of the adversary to God and to trust in **ישוע** Yeshua (Jesus). (From II Thess. 3:1; Col. 1:25; Acts 26:18,15 NRSV *New Revised Standard Version* and CJB, the *Complete Jewish Bible*)

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NOTE: Having a British author and an American publisher, the choice was made to keep some of the British flavor in the grammar and spelling, for example: double "l" in travelling, travelled, travellers, counsellor, counselling, etc., and words like "whilst" vs "while," "queue" vs "line," "centre" vs "center," "honour" vs "honor," etc. Most of the punctuation; however, [except for the semi-colon before every mid-sentence *however*, for example] is more American than British.

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Foreword

The Christian life is often a life of waiting, where faith is tested in a battlefield of discouragement and all doors seem to close. This is not a time to despair but to prepare, for the Holy Spirit is continually at work within us, in the quiet times and in the busy times. If we knew all the wonderful things God had in store for us and we knew they were just around the next corner, how would we spend our time waiting? Trusting Him to work all things together for our good enables us to enjoy fellowship with Him in the quiet seasons, so that when the door opens, we'll be ready to share with joy, the hope of the Cross and the promise of everlasting life.

Our call is two-fold:

- The Great Commandment – To *love God with all your heart, soul and strength.*¹
- The Great Commission – To *go into all the world and preach the gospel.*²

We are to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.³ It is true that not everyone can leave their homelands; some of us are meant to stay and serve at home, while others are called to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. For those who stay, the lost, the poor and the downhearted are always close by. The Great Commission can be accomplished whether at home or on an overseas mission.

I had the desire at a young age to fulfill the Great Commission overseas, but all those doors were closed. So, my journey started with a call to serve in my native country first, and then, after more than a twenty year wait, the door was finally opened for me to leave my family and my country and cross the cultural divide to lands I never dreamed of ever visiting. Some of these areas were places that had greatly impacted the development of the early church, like Cappadocia, the home of the first Christians mentioned in the book of Acts, Prague where the seed of Reformation was first planted, and Scotland and Wales, the lands of great revivals. Then, miraculously, I was finally able to fulfill my dream of serving in China. And, not forgetting the most important land of all, I was also sent to Israel, where recent archaeological discoveries have confirmed the arrival of the Israelites in Canaan.

God is still doing extraordinary things through ordinary people. If you are serving the Lord as an overseas missionary, or at home in your own country, each new day presents itself with opportunities to share the Good News. If you feel you could be doing more, reach out beyond your boundaries to wherever the Lord leads. He has a plan for you and He will bring it to pass. If you have been waiting a long time for the Lord to use you, be encouraged. The Lord will open the doors; you only need to take the first step.

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Kwa-Zulu Natal



1

The Preparation



*Trust in the Lord, and do good: Dwell in the land,
and feed on His faithfulness.*

Psalm 37:3



GROWING UP WITH A SWISS father in the multicultural society of South Africa helped me to appreciate the diversity of the values and beliefs of others. Our home was a hive of activity. My four brothers and I kept our mother busy. My father was fluent in four languages, and when he was agitated he would yell at us in all of them.

As a young man, and avid explorer, he ventured into uncharted territories of Portuguese East Africa, (now Mozambique) where he contracted malaria and black-water fever, which left him plagued with migraines. We had to learn to keep the sound levels down a bit, but with five lively children, it required some “quiet management.”

My father had a plant nursery at our home where he specialized in cacti and succulents, which he imported and exported all over the world. He would retreat to his plants to escape the hubbub of the household, and when the noise

filtered down to the nursery, we would all be summoned to gardening chores. Packing and unpacking prickly pears and other spikey specimens required careful attention, so silence ensued for a while.

My father would tell us stories of his travels and adventures, and his close encounters with dangerous animals, and there, the desire to experience life in other lands was seeded in me. My parents were both exposed to the Gospel in their upbringing, but my father chose to be agnostic. Thank the Lord for testimonies and for those who faithfully share them.

One of my aunts, who has now gone to be with the Lord, received a miracle healing from arthritis whilst seeing Jesus in a vision. He first appeared to her at her bedside one night in hospital, and again in the morning when the doctors came to tell her it was unlikely she would ever walk again. She promptly slipped down from the bed and went after Jesus as she saw Him walk towards the door. She then followed the Lord faithfully for the rest of her life until the day He took her home.

It was enough to convince me Jesus was alive, but my twelve year old mind succumbed to a lie that a person could only be a Christian if you came from a Christian home. The enemy held me in that grip for nearly seven years, until—one day—I decided to ask God myself. And to my surprise, He accepted me. The presence of the Holy Spirit surrounded me, and I immediately flowed with thanksgiving. How easily we can be deceived. Anyone can be part of God's family, whether we are raised in a Christian home or not, we all need to be spiritually reborn. This is a gift of grace that cannot be earned.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.
— Ephesians 2:8-9

From that day, my name was registered in the Lord's book and my citizenship in heaven secured. Psalm 87 became my "born again Psalm."

And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her." The Lord will record, when He registers the peoples: "This one was born there."
— Psalm 87:5-6

My enthusiasm in my new faith was faced with much scepticism at home, but I toughened up quickly and stood my ground. I felt an urgency to share the Gospel with my two younger brothers, having no idea then, how crucial it was as their lives were soon cut short. They both died within a twelve-year period as young men, after ongoing battles with chronic illnesses that resulted in severe depression and ended in suicide. God prepared me for their deaths in dreams, and I have since never doubted that the Lord's hand is not too short to reach out and save the lost in their final hour. Knowing I had planted seeds of faith in my brothers was a great comfort to me, and together with the dreams the Lord gave me, left me with a peaceful assurance that they were safe with Him.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!
— Romans 11:33

People often asked if suicides can go to heaven. It's not the act of taking one's life that sends people to hell any more than good works can earn us a place in heaven. Accepting, or rejecting Jesus as our Saviour is what determines our destiny. He alone can forgive sins.

God is on the Throne. He sees the end from the beginning and knows all things even before they happen—not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from Him (Matthew 10:29).

Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is to bring Christ up from the dead).

— Romans 10:7-8

I've spoken to many people over the years who have dealt with the death of a loved one. Some say it changes their outlook on life and how they spend their time. For others, it increases their interest in eternal values and the world seems less appealing. I turned my attention to studying God's Word and pursued every available course that came my way; from Bible surveys, discipleship and evangelism, Psalms and worship, to a Bachelor of Theology and eventually a Masters in Christian counselling. I studied fervently and argued unswervingly with my father about the Bible, the reality of God, heaven, and hell. My father was unyielding, but the Word of God proved more powerful, and never returns void (Isaiah 55:11). My father eventually repented and accepted Jesus as his Saviour two weeks before he passed away at the age of ninety-one. His deathbed conversion brought me into an even deeper awareness of God's grace and His faithfulness to those who persevere in prayer for the unsaved.

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

— James 5:16b

As the years progressed from the time of my salvation experience, I grew in expectancy of what the Lord would do with my sacrifice:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. — Romans 12:1

Like most new believers, I was bursting with zeal and eager to serve. I had many repeated dreams and in one of them I saw a young girl in a long white dress. She had bright amber hair

that shone like the sun and she was standing among tall dark fir trees. I pondered on the dream, but didn't quite know how to interpret it. I thought it might be a ministry to children and tucked it away in my heart, knowing that the Lord would reveal it when I was ready. Then, one evening while walking along a deserted beach in Northern Natal, South Africa, the dream came to mind again. Songs of worship filled my heart; Scriptural songs of David and Dale Garrett, a New Zealand worship team. I felt drawn to the land as the Holy Spirit whispered to me in a still small voice that I would one day live in New Zealand. However, that revelation was for an appointed time. My mission journey was to start in my home country. The Lord is gracious in giving us glimpses of the future to encourage us, but the still small voice comes softly and gently, and one has to listen carefully so as not to miss it.

Fully convinced that I served a faithful God who would give me the desires of my heart,⁴ I poured out my requests to Him in prayer: I wanted to see people come to the Lord and to experience revival in a foreign land; like the Welsh revival in 1904, and the Hebrides revival in 1949. And I longed to visit the places of the Old Testament and walk the paths that Jesus once walked.

Inspired by all the books I was reading at that time: Hudson Taylor's *China Inland Mission*; the adventures of Gladys Aylward, who rescued nearly a hundred orphaned children from lives of terror in the mountainous regions of China; and Jackie Pullinger, *Chasing the Dragon*, who rescued hundreds of youths from the drug-lords of Hong Kong, I yearned for adventure. I envisioned being a missionary and serving in China, so I prayed the prayer of offering from Isaiah chapter 8: "*Here am I! Send me!*"

No door opened, and for good reason. China was under communist rule with a policy of eliminating all religions.

Although the religious policy became more relaxed towards the late 1970s, tolerance of Christian churches came under the principles of the “Three-Self Patriotic Movement.” These principles still apply today and are explained in chapter nine.

Missions Starts at Home

The mission fields were ripe in my own land, and as China was not yet an option, I sought the Lord on how I could serve at home. The small burgeoning town where I lived on the east coast of Northern KwaZulu-Natal was destined to flourish, and so were all the newly planted churches. Knowing that new churches come with fresh enthusiasm, I called them and enquired about their outreaches. One church was organizing teams to visit the sick at home, while another was training disciples for door-to-door evangelism. Others were visiting bus stops and taxi ranks to hand out gospel tracks, and planning monthly trips to rural hospitals. I asked them all if I could join in; they were delighted and didn’t mind that I wasn’t a member. It was on these precious outreaches that we experienced the signs and wonders that so often accompany the preaching of the Good News.

First Things First—Get Involved

Getting involved helped boost my confidence and overcome my fears. For our evangelism outreach, we approached people with a questionnaire on spiritual thinking. We always went out in teams of three and I always hid behind my two companions when it came to knocking on doors. Then one night they decided it was time I did the talking. So, on our next house visit, when the door opened, they both stepped aside and left me to face a very large man. I quickly looked from one team member to the other. They simply smiled and waited for me to speak.

I nervously introduced myself and our team to the man and then posed the opening questions, and to my surprise, we were invited in. My team members took a seat at the far end of the room and watched as I stumbled over my words to explain our visit. It turned out that the poor man had recently lost his wife and needed encouragement. When I realized how trivial my fears were in comparison to what others were suffering, I was able to minister to the man and even pray for him. Once I had learned to shift my focus from myself to the needs of others, I was free to be of help to those I was sent. These outreaches prepared me for a future counselling ministry.

How Will They Know Unless Someone Tells Them?

We prayed with the sick and the lonely and even with hardened atheists. We would often be surprised to see them in church the following Sunday, and their families along with them. At the taxi ranks and bus stops, we sang between the cars and buses and proclaimed the name of Lord—this chased the sangomas (witchdoctors) away and gave us a chance to share the real Good News. There was always someone who would listen and allow us to pray for them. No work for the Lord was ever wasted.

These Signs Will Follow

One day, while ministering in song at a hospital in the rural areas of Zululand, a little boy got up and danced. Loud cries rang out from the nurses and they never settled down even after the praise and worship came to an end. When we asked what the excitement was about, we were told that the little boy, still dancing, was lame from birth. Although Mark 16:17 tells

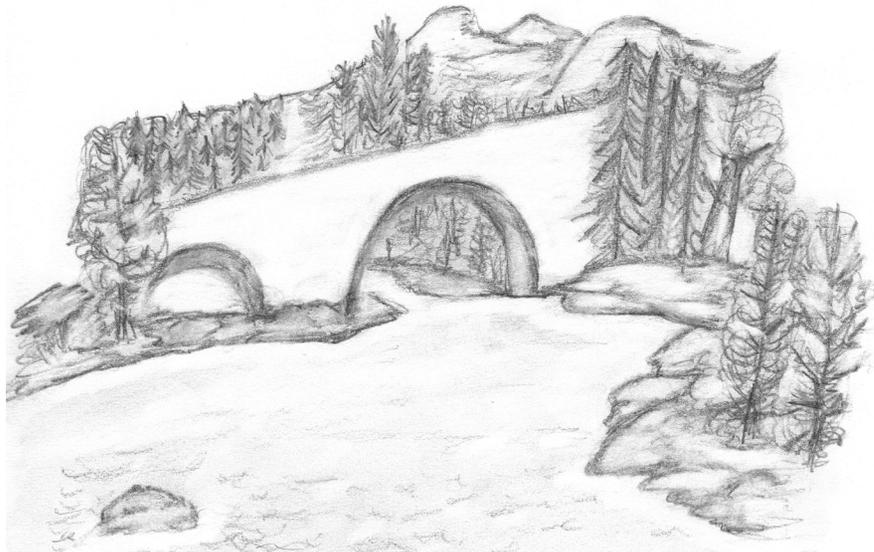
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Rivers of Living Waters



The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Isaiah 32:17



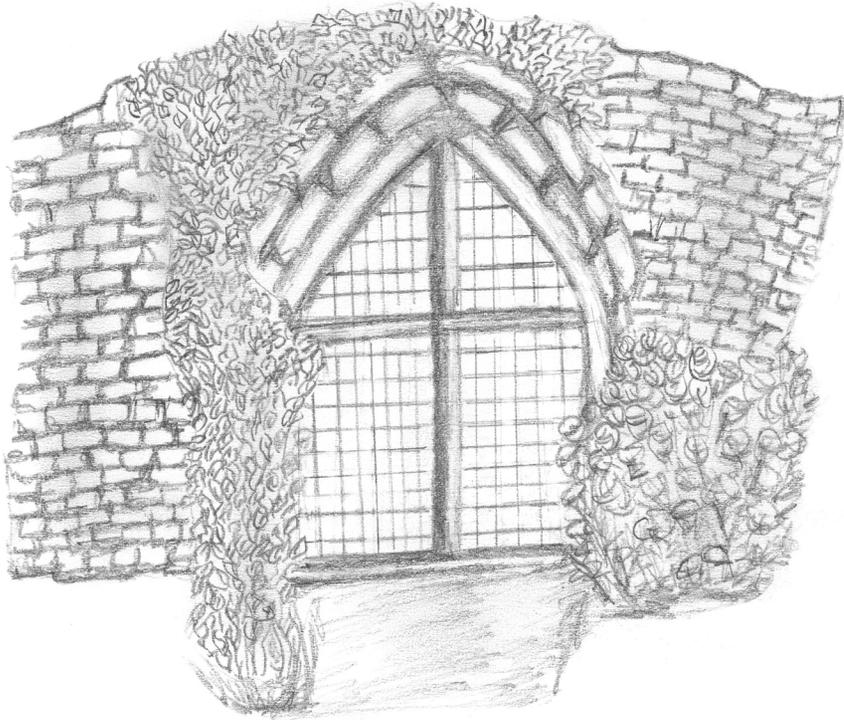
River Spey



*M*Y FIRST TRIP TO THE HIGHLANDS in Scotland was to the little town of Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park. It was there that I dreamed once again, more than twenty years later, of the little girl with bright amber hair. She was standing among the tall fir trees just as before. This time when I awoke, I felt it was more than a ministry, it was a coming revival that would bring the church into a closer walk with her Lord.

My trip was only for a month, but it proved fruitful. I was able to start the process for a UK work visa.

My first stop the following year was Salisbury in England. I immediately sought a church and to my surprise met up with friends from South Africa. One contact leads to another and on a trip down to Bournemouth I met a South African lady involved in a ministry to aid Jews from the Ukraine to Israel. She shared with me how the Lord gave her the Russian language without



Usk Castle Gate



3

When All Doors Close



*Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths,
where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find
rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16



WHEN MY TWO YOUNGER DAUGHTERS and their families left for New Zealand, I stayed behind in South Africa to help my eldest daughter with her final arrangements for her emigration to Australia. Once the families in New Zealand had settled, I flew over. I was not able to acquire a resident visa and had to enter New Zealand on a visitor's visa with a nine-month extension. I felt confident that it would be enough time for a door to open to secure my stay, so I joined a local church and on occasions, served at the training centre as a guest lecturer. I felt right at home teaching discipleship, worship and New Testament studies. However, when my visa expiration date approached, my hope of remaining in New Zealand began to dwindle. I held on fast in faith that something would turn up at the eleventh hour; after all, this was where I was destined to be.

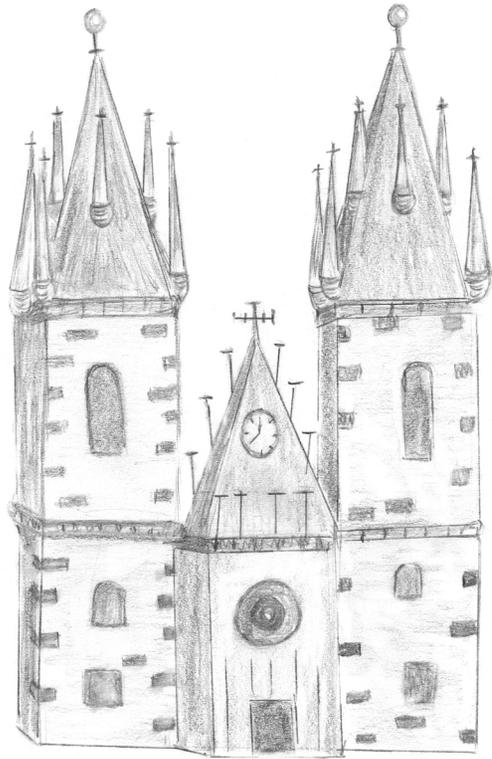
The church I was attending could sponsor me as a missionary, but I would have had to raise my own support, *without* a New Zealand work permit. Immigration advised me that I would have to wait another three years before I could be sponsored on a parent visa, and then there could be a further two-year wait once the application was submitted. The door was slowly closing. I was confused and becoming increasingly anxious; I would soon be without a home and country. I called immigration again.

“Apply for a student visa,” the immigration officer tried to sound hopeful. A student visa required a letter from an academic institute, so I called one of the language schools. TEFL (Teach English as a Foreign Language) classes were only held if there were enough people to warrant it, and there weren’t. I would have to wait for the next course. I called another school, but they were not offering the course I needed—the door kept closing. The Lord was leading me out, but where was I to go? The next day, I received an email from New Zealand immigration. I had to exit the country in less than four weeks. My fingers raced fervently across the keyboard as I searched the internet and prayed all the while: *“Lord, open a door, open a door!”*

A friend called me to tell me that an international language school in Prague, Czech Republic was open for more candidates and they guaranteed jobs after training. I phoned the school to confirm and explained my situation. I was assured that there were plenty of jobs in Prague and I would get hundreds of contacts to pursue while on the course. Most importantly, I had peace to go; not because of a man’s promise, but because of God’s promise, that He would guide me in every situation. I felt an urgency to move on.

The next thing was to apply for a Schengen visa to enter the Czech Republic and the embassy was in Australia. I called them and once again explained my situation. They were very

helpful and sent me all the documentation via email. I was to courier the papers to Australia, and, providing everything was in order, they would process the visa as soon as possible. I sent off my passport and papers and booked my flight in faith that my passport would be returned in time. My visa was granted two weeks before my departure. I left for Prague on 28th February 2009, sad and confused that the door to New Zealand had closed on me. I have learnt ever since, that when all doors close and I feel as though I’m standing in an empty hallway, to praise the Lord, His timing is always perfect and He does considerably more than we can ever hope or imagine. Oblivious to the adventures that lay ahead, and that I was finally going to China that very same year, I rested in the promise that: *All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).



Tyn Church

4

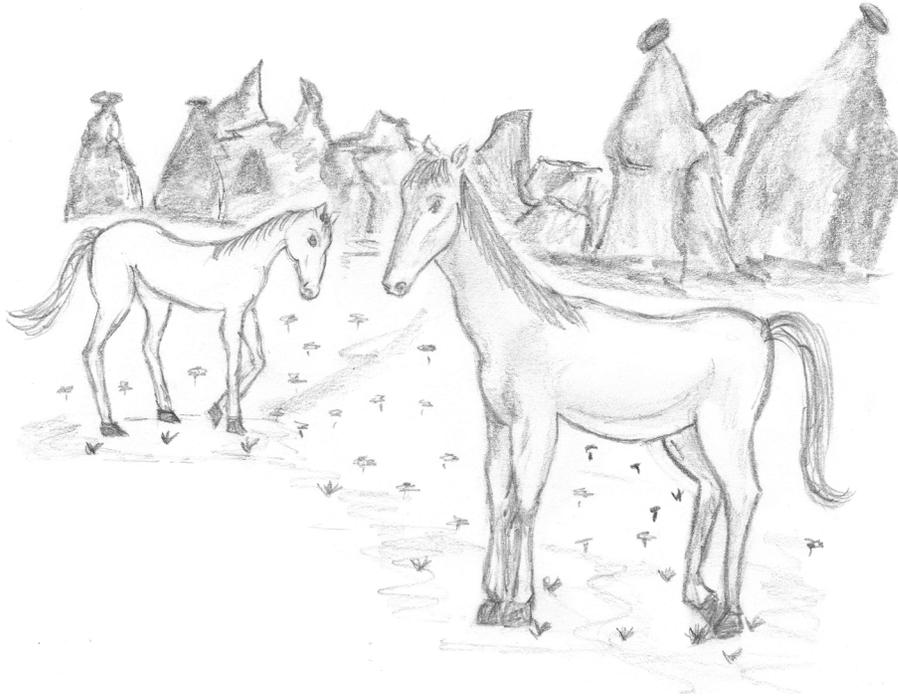
Prague

And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.

Hosea 2:20

*I*T FELT COMFORTABLE TO BE back at Heathrow Airport, seeing all the familiar shops and finding my way around the terminal. I walked past a room stacked to the ceiling with unclaimed baggage and peered in through the glass partitions. The bags all appeared to be labelled, but still unclaimed. After six months they get auctioned off. I had missed planes, trains, and buses, but never had to deal with lost luggage. I shuddered at the thought of arriving in a strange country without my belongings. To add to my fears, I had not packed a fresh change of clothes in my hand luggage. *Next time I fly*, I thought, *I won't take that for granted again, and carry the necessities on board.* I sat down to enjoy a quick coffee, and then off to collect my boarding pass. There was just enough time to get my ticket and catch the airport bus to the next terminal.

Finally, after a 28 hour sleepless journey, I arrived in Prague, where my fears unfolded before me—no suitcase on



Cappadocia



6

Land of Beautiful Horses



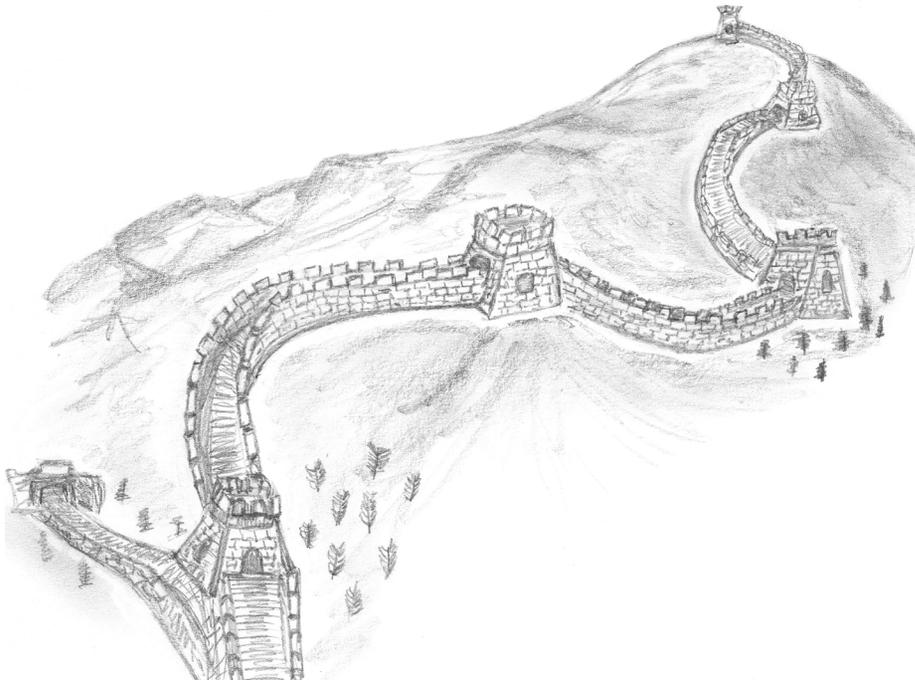
*They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way;
they found no city to dwell in.*

Psalm 107:4



MARKET STALLS LINED THE BUSY bus terminal and the smell of hot spicy foods wafted from each side. I felt a little vulnerable being the only foreign woman in sight—it drew a lot of attention. I was thankful that I didn't have to negotiate a ticket and I could go straight to my coach. I climbed on board and took my seat. The coach was crowded and stuffy, and I was beginning to feel nauseous from the strong smell of garlic in the increasingly stifling heat. At last, the engines roared and the air-conditioner turned on. It was a four-and-a-half-hour drive into the desert. I had a window seat and turned my attention to the surrounding terrain; mile after mile of flat arid land. We were on our way to a desert after all, what could I have expected?

After two hours, we stopped for twenty-five minutes to stretch our legs, and then back on the road again. The women appeared agitated; hands were going up and something was



The Great Wall



8

Land of Dragon



For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age

Ephesians 6:12a



I LANDED IN CHINA DURING THE H1N1 FLU epidemic. Cards were distributed on the airplane before we disembarked. We had to tick the boxes: headache ... no, sore throat ... no, blocked nose ... err, yes. I always have a bit of nasal congestion when I fly. I ticked the box and thought no more of it.

The minute I stepped off the flight-stairs and into the transit lounge, I was ushered into a makeshift medical booth and repeatedly asked a battery of questions.

“No,” I answered over and over, “I’m not sick.” Now that I was off the plane, I could breathe freely; my sinuses were clear. That didn’t seem to satisfy the medical attendants; they continued with the interrogation, so I demonstrated to them.

“Look, I can breathe,” I said, holding one finger against the left nostril and inhaling deeply and then I did the same with the right. Finally, I was given another form to fill in requesting my