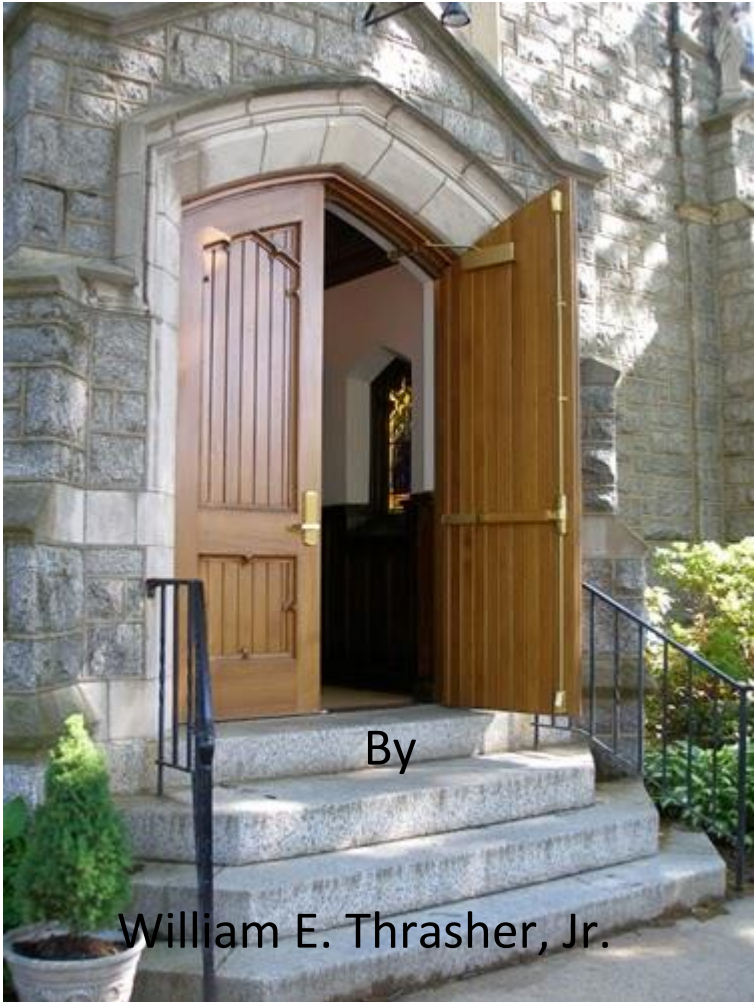


# The Church with an Open Door



By

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# The Church with an Open Door

*And to the Church in Philadelphia write: These things said He that is Holy, He that is true, He that has the Key of David, He that opens, and no man shuts: and shuts, and no man opens.*

*I know your works: I have set before you and open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and kept my word, and have not denied my name.* Revelation 3:7&8

Have you ever considered how attracted to and driven by brands we as humans are? Branding dictates much of our existence. What type of clothing we wear, where the cloths come from, what kind of food we eat and where it's purchased from, what type of care we drive, even the church we attend is influenced by branding. Whether we are willing to admit it or not, branding plays an important role in our lives. Those of you that drink

Coke rather than Pepsi, eat at McDonalds rather than Burger King know what I'm talking about. Those of you who only shop at Dillard's or Marshalls vs Walmart or Dollar General, you know what I'm saying. Branding is everywhere! Baptist, Methodist, Catholics, Seven Day Adventist, or Non Denominationalist, we even choose those by brand as well. The truth is we cannot escape branding.

We are taught in Revelation 13:16-18 that the mark of the beast will be branded on the right hands and forehead of those who follow him; “ <sup>16</sup>*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:*

*<sup>17</sup>And that no man might buy and sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

*18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”*

That is not the brand that we as followers of Christ should strive for!

But don't think that not having his mark won't stop trouble from coming to look for you. Sometime ago there was a shooting incident on a college campus where the gunman singled out Christians and shot them in their forehead while only wounding those of other religions.

The reality is some of the brands we are influenced by really do define who we are and what we stand for. Any church, regardless of its denomination, that proclaims to follow Christ is branded as a Church with an Open Door. Now, that's a good brand. It's a solid brand. It's a brand worthy of attention, it's a brand that deserves gleaning its deep implications.

I think it is important for me to share at this juncture three important points:

1. A brand is only as good as the product that represents it.
2. The agents of the brand must first believe in the products efficacy if they are to convince others of the product's worthiness.

3. The success of the brand is greatly dependent on the effectiveness of the marketing strategy.

Many years ago Zenith Electronics had as the slogan for its brand: "The quality goes in before the name goes on." The message that Zenith was conveying to the buying public was that only products that had been proven to meet their quality standards were worthy to wear their name. As time passes some companies change their slogans in order to keep their brands relevant but not the good ones; Maxell House Coffee after all these years still proclaims that their coffee is still "Good to the Last Drop" It must be so they are still selling by the truckloads.

***A brand is only as good as the product that represents it.***

I remember when I was wrestling with the decision to accept my call into the ministry my former pastor had to eulogize his father who had also been a pastor at one of the older established churches in my home town. I was not only inspired by his courage to preach the eulogy but I was most impressed with the power in which delivered the message” An Ambassador for Christ. After experiencing that powerful word I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt I too wanted to become An Ambassador for Christ. There was no way he could have preached with that much spirit without having first believed that his father truly was an Ambassador for Christ, that he was, himself,

an Ambassador for Christ and that it was possible for those who believed, me in particular, could also become an Ambassador for Christ!

***The agents of the brand must first believe in the products efficacy if they are to convince others of the product's worthiness.***

I was drinking a cup of coffee one morning and I reached for one of those individual packets of sugar to sweeten the coffee. As I was pouring the sugar into the cup I noticed that something was written on the back of the packet. It said "He who has a thing to sell and goes and whispers in a well is not as apt to get the dollar as he who stands on the roof and hollas."

***The success of the brand is greatly dependent on the effectiveness of the marketing strategy.***



I want you to stick a pin in these three points as we revisit for a moment our scripture text for today so that we can see how they relate to **The Church with an Open Door.**

*And to the Church in Philadelphia write: These things said He that is Holy, He that is true, He that has the Key of David, He that opens, and no man shuts: and shuts, and no man opens.*

*I know your works: I have set before you and open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and kept my word, and have not denied my name.* Revelation 3:7&8

Philadelphia- in Lydia, twenty-eight miles south-east of Sardis, was built by Attalus Philadelphus, King of Pergamos, who died in A.D. 138. It was

nearly destroyed by an earthquake in the reign of Tiberious (Tacitus) Annals.

The connection of this church with Jews there causes the address to it to have an Old Testament coloring in the images employed. It and Smyrna alone of the seven churches received unmixed praise.

***He that is holy***- as in the Old Testament “the Holy one of Israel.” Thus Jesus and the God of the Old Testament are one. Non but God is absolutely holy ( Greek, “hagios”, separate from evil and perfectly hating it).

***He that is true***: True to His word of promise or threatening.

***he that has the Key of David***, that is, the key to the house of David, mentioned in Isaiah 22:22 ( And the key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and non shall shut, and he shall shut and non shall open)

***he that opens, and no man shuts, and no man opens.***

All which is expressive of the government of the church being on his shoulders, and of his absolute and uncontrollable power over it; who opens the treasures of His Word, of His Grace, and of wisdom and knowledge, and communicates with them and shuts or hides them from whom he pleases; who opens and shuts the door of the kingdom of heaven, and introduces into His own people, and excludes others.

***I know your works:*** Their labor in preaching and propagating the gospel. Christ not only knew and observed, but approved of a promised liberty to go and success in their labours, under the notion of an open door.

***For you have a little strength,*** Strength in numbers and at least mustard seed strength. “A brand is only as strong the product that represents it:”

And kept my word, “The agents of the brand must first believe in the efficacy of the product if they are to convince others of the products worthiness.”

And have not denied my name, The success of the brand is greatly dependent on the effectiveness of the marketing strategy. Our marketing strategy is very plain and very simple and still most effective;

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. That is the mission of the Church with the Open Door!

