

# Preface: The door

A church stands on a hill overlooking a city, town or rural centre somewhere in this country or yours. The peaked roof reaches towards the sky and a tasteful, yet compelling cross bursts from the roofline. The symmetrical design is unadorned and yet elegant in its simplicity.

The walls of the building are strong and straight, and you can see that much care has been taken to ensure that it continues to look as good as the day on which it was built. There is a fence around the outside of the building and a gate at the front. A broad and well-manicured path leads up to the large front door of the building.

The door is magnificent. One might almost consider that the whole building has been designed with the door in mind. The door is the centre-piece of the church facade. It is directly below the cross, which just as it points upwards towards the sky also points downwards towards the door, underlining its importance in the life of the church.

The door is perfectly symmetrical and constructed of heavy wood. Somedays the door stands wide open, welcoming all that might enter. The observer is left under no illusions. clearly the best and most appropriate way to enter this church is through the door.

However, there are some for whom the door is a barrier. One has had bad experiences with doors in the past and is distrustful of them. One has never had much to do with doors but has the general impression that they are old-fashioned and passe. For one, the door holds no interest at all, he is sure that lots of people like the door but it is just not for him.

Some have had the experience of the door being closed to them. Some have seen the ugly side of the door and have vowed never to pass through it again. Some, despite its prominent position, don't even seem to notice the door at all.

Many people walk proudly over the threshold into the church. They can't understand how people could have problems with a door. After all, people have been using doors for centuries!! And quite frankly, if people are not willing to do something so simple and basic as walk through the door, then perhaps they would be better off staying outside.

Some who walk through the door are concerned about those that remain outside. There have been discussions of replacing it with a modern automatic sliding door, which might attract more young people into the building. But many feel that a modern automatic sliding door would affect the building's traditional beauty and majesty. And some of the people outside would think that this was just a cynical ploy to conceal what, when all is said and done, is still a door.

Some have suggested that bright lights and neon signs above the door might encourage more people to enter the door. Some think that holding meetings and sing-a-longs just outside the door might encourage people to walkthrough. Some people have spoken to the people outside, and taken the time to give them detailed directions to the door. Still, they do not enter.

It is difficult for those who are inside. The only way they have ever entered the church is through the door. They have been using doors their whole lives and never had a single problem with them. Many of them refuse to believe that it is the door that is the problem. How can something which has been perfectly serviceable for generations now be a barrier?! It doesn't make sense.

If only there were some other way to enter. If only the windows were left open, if an underground tunnel were connected, if a skylight were easily accessible or if there was some other way to get into that building. If only a great ragged and dirty hole were cut in the side of the church for people to crawl through.

Some of the people outside have been searching for another way in. Some have had themselves shot from cannons and dropped from balloons to try to get in, but have missed the building altogether and landed somewhere else that they never intended to go.

For now it seems that things will remain the same. The church is as impressive as ever and plays an important role in the life of the community. And yet there are less and less people who are willing to walk through the door. Those inside have often entered the building since they were children, just as their parents did before them. There are entire families who do not know what the inside of the church looks like.

Everybody feels uneasy about the situation. People agree that things can't go on this way, but nobody seems to know how things could be changed. If only there was some other way to enter the church than through the door.

***by Danielle McCredden***

Should I have some reflection questions or comments on the door here?