

The Power of the Word

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On a Sunday morning in 1971 my husband, Danie, and I first met Joop and Mia Versteek who introduced us to the Gideons, an association of Christian business and professional men whose purpose it was to promote the Gospel of Christ. They were first and foremost in the soul winning business and achieved this by placing New Testaments in hotels, hospitals, motels, prisons, medical rooms, armed forces, colleges, universities, school students, and nurses.

My husband and I filled out the membership application form on that morning. A week later Joop informed Danie that a school placement had been arranged at Forest High School and enquired whether Danie would like to accompany the two other Gideons doing the placement? Danie agreed, where upon Joop asked whether he would be kind enough to collect the boxes of school Testaments which were stored at his home, on his way to the school. Danie collected the boxes the following morning, drove to the school and parked in front waiting for the other two men to arrive. Time passed and he realised the school would be starting soon, yet no trace of the other men.

Perhaps he should report at the Office to make sure about the day. This he did and was informed that the placement was arranged for that morning, where upon the Secretary called one of the porters to assist Danie with the boxes to the Assembly hall. Here the porter neatly placed them on the platform and arranged a chair for Danie to sit on while he was waiting for the school staff.

By this time, it was obvious that no other men were going to come to his rescue in this venture, so he opened one

of the boxes with his car keys, took out a little Bible, and started paging through it, hoping to discover help. In the front was the history of the Gideons, the index of help Scriptures and at the back the way of Salvation as well as the prayer to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. The bell went, the children filed in and the Headmaster and staff trooped in wearing black cloaks and mortarboards.

When Danie was introduced he felt like fainting, but gritting his teeth and praying for God's help he stood, and looking down on the little open New Testament still in his hand, he took a deep breath and spoke. First, he thanked the Headmaster and staff for the privilege afforded to be there, then he read from the first page, the history and purpose of the Gideons, as well as drawing their attention to the last page of the Way of Salvation, and the prayer to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. Now he invited the children to come forward to receive their own personal copy of the Word of God.

It was when the first little Standard Six girl stood before him with her open hand, and with such expectancy on her face and shiny eyes looking up at him, that something happened to Danie. A joy flooded his heart and he realised this was a divine appointment of the Lord, specially arranged for him. He spoke an encouraging word to each pupil and shook their hands, as if he had been doing this all his life. After the last Matric boy received his New Testament, Danie turned to the Headmaster and thanked him again for the great privilege of being able to hand each of the pupils their own copy of God's Word.

The Headmaster smilingly nodded at him, and as everyone was leaving, one of the teachers asked him if he could have a little Testament. At this, two other teachers followed suit and Danie gladly gave each their own copy. As the porter assisted Danie again with the boxes back to



his car, Danie enquired from him whether he would like a little New Testament, and the man was very pleased. This time Danie went through the Way of Salvation with him as well as the Prayer, and the man accepted Jesus there and then with much joy. This was the beginning of a new vision for Danie, and school placements became his priority.

Danie discovered that Soweto fell in our jurisdiction, so he approached the necessary Authorities to obtain their permission to distribute Bibles to the school pupils, but this was denied him. Danie would go every three months, but always received a “No”. He requested all the other members of Gideon camps to pray for the opening of these doors, trusting God to open them.

In the beginning of 1976 he went again only to receive the usual “No”. However, the next day he received a telephone call from a Principal of one of the schools who explained to Danie that he and two other Christian Principals regularly have prayer meetings together and have been praying for years that the Gideons would bring Bibles to their schools. It came to their attention that Danie had requested permission the previous day and was refused. ***“Please Mr. Brink, we need these Bibles desperately for the children. Is it possible that you could come to our three schools? We will meet you outside Soweto and escort you to our schools for the placements.”***

Danie was overjoyed and agreed to come in two days' time. He organised two other Gideons to accompany him and two days later, armed with the necessary boxes of Bibles over which much prayer had been uttered they arrived at the border of Soweto, where their escorts were awaiting them. They were welcomed with open arms and joy - teachers had in each case, arranged for the pupils to be in the assembly halls, in order that the placements would go smoothly. The pupils could choose in which language they wanted their Bibles, in their own mother tongue or in English. Several requested one in the mother tongue, but the majority wanted one in English.

On 16 June 1976 history in South Africa was altered forever when school riots broke out over the whole of Soweto. We all prayed for the pupils and teachers of the three schools whom we knew had received the Word of God just three months before. A week after this Danie received an urgent call from the Bantu Authorities requesting his presence in

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their office. When Danie arrived the gentleman to whom he had all these years requested permission, spoke, ***“Mr. Brink, I think you know why I have requested you to come and see me. We knew you went to Soweto three months ago to those three schools that had requested you to bring them Bibles, and now I must tell you that those three schools were the only ones where no protests of any nature occurred; not a single window pane was broken, no lessons were interrupted, everything went smoothly and peacefully. That is why you are here. Now we are asking you to please come and flood all the Soweto schools with Bibles. Could you please come every day?”*** Danie was more than willing to distribute Bibles to all the pupils; and so began regular Monday visits to schools in the strife-torn area.

One morning after a placement an Inspector of schools was present and seated next to him. After paging through the New Revised Standard version, she requested extra Bibles to be placed in schools as readers for the pupils. So, it happened that for a while the Word of God was for several pupils in Soweto, the media through which they were taught English.

“For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword (or stones) piercing even to the dividing as under of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we have to give an account to” (Hebrews 4: 12-13).