

## OPENING

The church doors are opening, Father.

How could it be,  
Your churches—closed?

Perhaps it was a good thing:  
Perhaps we have given too much attention  
to the trappings of faith;  
Perhaps we have been distracted by buildings;  
Perhaps we have obsessed about ornaments;  
Perhaps we have centred our faith on symbols.

We are your Church,  
And your Church was not closed;  
Your Church **is** not closed;  
Your Church **will never** be closed.  
We have been here—  
And we will continue to be here—  
Sharing the Good News Jesus taught us;  
Living the way Jesus showed us;  
Serving others as Jesus urged us;  
Following Jesus and worshipping you.  
The Church is central,  
But the building is peripheral.

Keep me always, Father,  
Living in you,  
Connected with your family,

And being the Church—  
Even when health,  
    or age,  
    or location,  
    or rules,  
Keep me from church.

*To: The Christians in Corinth, invited by God to be his people and made acceptable to him by Christ Jesus. And to: All Christians everywhere—whoever calls upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and theirs. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you all of his blessings, and great peace of heart and mind. (1 Corinthians 1: 2–3, TLB)*