

The Schlelein Family

Missionaries to the Tsongas of southern Africa

FEBRUARY 2012 | LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

ATHANASIUS, AFRICA, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAMMAR

In the 4th century, an Egyptian began teaching a message that Jesus was a created being, making him *like* God, but not fully God. A courageous man named Athanasius resisted. The two sides and the debate itself soon revolved around two Greek words. Was Christ of the "same substance" with God (*homoousios*) or of a "similar substance" with God (*homoiousios*)? How one answered made the difference between orthodoxy and heresy. And the only difference between the two words was a *iota*, the smallest letter in the alphabet.

Fast forward two millennia to Africa. The Prosperity Gospel is rampant—pedaling the message that Jesus came to make us healthy and wealthy. A support verse is 1 John 5:14. Tsonga—the language we preach in—has two Bible translations, "A" and "B". "A" gets this verse right but the other fails. "B" says, "if we ask anything according to **our** will (not, "**His** will"), He hears us." The discrepancy in Tsonga is minuscule, the difference between an "h" and an "x".

... if we ask the things that **HE** wants ...

... if we ask the things that **WE** want ...

The Prosperity gig goes like this: (1) Rent huge speakers and perform a crusade. (2) Cite lots of Old Testament verses or passages like 1 John 5:14 (*only* version "B"). (3) Thunder loudly: "Whatever YOU want—a nice car, a fertile womb, a plush job—ask of God and He'll give it. If He doesn't, it's because you lack faith." (4) Ask for large donations to help God perform a miracle. (5) CHA-CHING! (6) Repeat steps 1-5 in another village.

Grammatical precision matters in Africa. I've had numerous men use this verse with me who were taken in by this hoax. I've had my preaching interrupted. And after I explained the discrepancies of the translations and the fallacy of this other gospel, they become angry at being duped by such a lie.

WE'RE A LITTLE DISCOURAGED

Over the past two months, our ministry has entered into some difficult days. Our home has been burglarized several times. There has been tension with a few nationals that have refused to repent. The chief is trying to extort significantly more money for our new church property than it is worth. Just the other day, we were kicked out of our church building with no warning and will be forced to meet in homes for some time until we are able to build.

SO PLEASE PRAY THAT...

1. Our land would be finalized so that we can begin building.
2. Solane, Yvonne, Charles, Joyce, Kati, and Donald would be converted and/or baptized.

Serving a Precise God,

Paul, Melinda, Nkateko, Tiyani & Kwatsi

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