

Magazine Article written in the Summer 2010 of *Easy Living*
“Open Door Ministries: A Refuge in Sampson County”

It is 6:30 am and the men of Open Door Ministries are waking up to another day free. Free from the constant bondage that had so weaved its way into the very fabric of their lives. Many of these men are waking up sober for the first time in a very long time. They are waking up free from the bondage of addiction.

There will be others waking up this morning with a fresh sense of freedom too, the family members of those men who seek help at Open Doors; the many mothers and fathers, wives, and sons and daughters who for so long had been held captive by that very same bondage. They too may be waking up, for the first time in a long time, after a full night's peaceful sleep. They are waking up with a fresh sense of hope knowing their loved-one has found a safe harbor and refuge from life dominating sin; from the storms of life we call addiction. Open Door Ministries is a faith-based, Christ-centered program in Sampson County that helps men overcome the bondage of drugs and alcohol. But it is also much more than that. It truly is a place of refuge and of hope. It is a place where men can reconcile themselves to Christ and find the forgiveness needed to become that promise of God, a new creation.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

Open Door Ministries was founded in 2005 in what once was the small, family owned, sewing factory of Billy and Daisy Chestnutt. The labor of their lives that was built on old fashioned hard work and southern grit became a labor of love founded on Christian principles and a Christ-like desire to help the afflicted, comfort the troubled, and bring peace to the tormented.

The building that once provided a source of income for many families in the Delway community had now become a temporary home to many lost and weary men. And the years of preparation that God had so weaved into the lives of Billy and Daisy, what for many would be retirement years, were now about to bring fruit through many more years of missionary work, right in their own back yards. Open Door Ministries is a mission field in Sampson County started by their son, David Chestnutt. David, once a 20 year veteran of drug and alcohol addiction, is now the Pastor at ODM. Ordained in 2007, David attended Carolina Bible College and Liberty University after returning from Bethel Colony of Mercy. It was at Bethel that David once found the very same hope and refuge he now labors to provide for others. It was at Bethel that David was able to find what so many doctors, psychologist, and treatment centers, and many thousands of dollars could not provide. It was there at Bethel Colony of Mercy where David finally understood what his mother had told him for so many years. "David, you just need Jesus."

David, after returning from Bethel, seeking God's will and remembering how he had read that Charles Stanley asked God for a sign and had seen two falling stars, asked God for a sign as well. David was seeking confirmation from God that it was indeed God's will that he turn his mom and dad's back yard into a battle field for Christ.

The answer he received was simple, yet profound, "why do you need a sign to do what clearly needs doing?" The answer became even more evident as one by one, men from all over the country, came to Sampson County North Carolina in search of freedom. Men from as close as a "stones-throw", and men from as far away as Ohio, Alabama, New Jersey, Kentucky... men from California, Maryland, Tennessee and Kansas. Men who would soon find out that what Daisy Chestnutt had told her own son not so many years ago was true for them as well. "You just need Jesus".

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:36

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Every morning at Open Door the message is just as simple, yet still has an impact greater than any other message ever delivered. While the ministry has grown both in size and scope, that same simple message Ms. Daisy made years ago still echoes in the building where sewing machines once screeched; today, at 6:30 am at Open Door Ministries the message is "You just need Jesus". That message has now been heard by over 1000 men and their families at Open Door Ministries. The ministry now houses 12 men and 4 staff members every 30 days. The scope has grown to include follow-up care, non-residential care, and family care and pastoral counseling as well. With four target-specific programs, the ministry now uses that same simple message to help people of all walks of life find the freedom that only Christ can offer. I know all these things because it was that same simple message that set me free. It was that same simple message that broke the bondage of drug and alcohol use in my own life. Open Door Ministries is the same place of hope and refuge where two years ago I found harbor during the worst storm of my life. And it's the place where I too came to understand what Ms. Daisy told her own son, not so long ago..." You just need Jesus".