



THE SOUTHERN CROSS PROJECT

DWIGHT & BRENDA WHITSETT
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A MAGNIFICENT INFESTATION

(With apologies to Lloyd C. Douglas)

I hope you'll forgive me if I do a little reflecting as we pass from one year into the next. These transitions are always a good time to analyze the past and anticipate the future. Lately, I have been reflecting on the work Brenda and I do and thinking of changes and adjustments that need to be made.

When I caught the "preaching bug," I left university to pursue training at a preaching school. It was there that the "preaching bug," evolved into a "missionary bug." That particular critter has infested my life since 1967 and it has been a *magnificent infestation!* Without benefit of formal training in "missiology" I wound up in the beautiful city of Adelaide, South Australia and, as the song says, left my heart there.

As I review our history there I am both exhilarated and appalled. I am *exhilarated* because, in spite of my gross ignorance, I and my teammates managed to preach the gospel and bring salvation to lost souls. I am *appalled* that I preached more church than Christ. I am *exhilarated* as I think of the church we planted. I am *appalled* that I spent so much time and energy taking pot shots at the denominations. We blundered through the better part of ten years and got better at our job as the years went by. As we rolled along, we picked up a coating of experience that hardened into a thin crust of wisdom.



Baptizing in South Australia in the 1970's

But it is wise to remember that on-the-job training, while very effective, is potentially dangerous and often damaging. A few years into our Australian sojourn it became clear that my training in

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missions was inadequate. I thought, "What a wasteful way to learn how to do anything! Returned missionaries ought to train potential missionaries by giving them the benefit of their hard-earned 'smarts'." So, you can imagine my joy, years later, to be asked to join forces with Sunset International Bible Institute to train missionaries and mission teams.

Perhaps someone is asking, "So where is the fruit of such labor? Are you baptizing anyone? What good are you doing if you can't point to some fruit?" Well, my friend, look at the fields and you'll find

