
The South African Report

Newsletter: **Jerry V. Hogg**, P. O. Box 11165, Rynfield 1514, South Africa

Email: jvhogg@xsinet.co.za

January-February 2008

Sponsored by: **West End Church of Christ, 8301 E. Walker Springs Lane, Knoxville, TN 37923** * Webpage: www.samissions.org

FROM DEEPEST, DARKEST AFRICA

In the Beginning, God said, *“Let there be light...”* Gen. 1:3, and He spoke it into existence, separating Light from Darkness in our world on Day One! God saw that it was good. Light is mentioned 272 times in the Bible (KJV) and represents good things, things you can see and touch, read and understand, work and play, love and salvation, travel and pleasures of life. Darkness is the total absence of light, obscure, underhanded, secrecy, ignorance, serving to convey fear, evil, clumsiness, awkwardness, and the unknown. As Christians, we are warned to... *“Work while it is Day, for the Night cometh when no man can work.”* John 9:4

In God’s wisdom, His invention of “light” was the beginning of illuminating the world for His chosen race (mankind). Electricity is certainly the next best invention since Time began. Try doing without it for awhile.

DEALING WITH BLACK-OUTS

All of last year we kept hearing about the “black-outs” in Cape Town when the electricity would be turned off to certain areas for long periods of time. As you can imagine, there were many complaints to ESKOM (South Africa’s version of TVA). Well, the rumor is that whatever happens in the Cape eventually makes its way North to the Reef: weather, fashion trends, economy, cultural changes, etc. So, it was inevitable that Benoni and surrounding cities here on the Gold Reef would soon experience these periodic black-outs when the electricity is cut. This is either due to ESKOM making an executive decision to cut the power to selected areas, or to storms that knock out the transformers. Then, it takes awhile to repair these kinds of hazards.

One big frustration stems from the fact that ESKOM warned the powers-that-be in government 10 years ago (in 1998) that more nuclear and other types of power stations would soon be needed to provide the whole of South Africa with electricity. Those in authority to build such facilities chose not to listen. They equipped lots of new malls and housing developments and every hut and shack with electricity in the numerous shanty towns springing up on the outskirts of most cities and towns. Now, we’re all paying the price with black-outs and higher costs! Whether the nation will EVER catch-up on this front is anybody’s guess. In just over 2 years, June-July of 2010, it is estimated 10 million visitors will travel to South Africa for the World Soccer Cup, and what will happen then? Most businesses (hotels, restaurants, guest facilities, malls) are installing auxiliary power systems to handle the unexpected. But, the main concern is for smaller facilities like churches, the Southern Africa Bible

College campus, and private homes where families cannot afford such luxuries. Many are already trying to stock up on oil and gas lamps, torches (flashlights) and camping stoves, but generators cost lots more money.

A RAY OF SUNSHINE

Before we got here on January 25th, we were told the lack of power happened almost daily, and was very frustrating and unexpected while ladies were trying to prepare meals, using their electric kettles for morning tea, drying their hair, or starting the day’s laundry. But, we have only experienced 2 or 3 black-outs since our arrival, so it hasn’t been that bad for us. It rained daily for 2 weeks during the first part of January, but the very day we got here, it was sunny and nice. A lot of folks said we “brought the sunshine” back to South Africa in more ways than one. They were glad to see us. As one entertainer says, *“We are just so proud to be here...”*— at home in Africa once again!

LET THE WORK BEGIN

Our home that caught fire last May 21st has been restored to an even better condition than before with brand-new carpets, wallpaper, new paint job throughout, with some new furniture and furnishings. From July 4th until October 15th, we lived in an apartment a few miles away. After I returned to South Africa July 23rd, Ann went back and forth to work with the contractor selecting colors and items for the condo, with the help of her sister. A few days after our SABC lectureship in September, I left Benoni to join the family in Knoxville on October 11th.

Our move back home took place on the 15th, but it was some days later before all our belonging (linens, clothing, shoes) were returned from the cleaners in Chattanooga, and our kitchen utensils, what-nots, books, etc. from a local company who had boxed and carted them away last June just after the fire. Then, the work of putting things away, pictures and decorations on the walls, and bedding in place, really began. As with most moving experiences, it was first-things-first, beds made, groceries stored, clothes and cosmetics sorted and put away, schedules maintained. It was frustrating not finding important things like business papers and Ann’s recipe file that she needed for certain Christmas dishes. However, they may show up in one of the unopened boxes at some point. Those boxes will be dealt with the next time we go home. If we don’t find them, we’ll just have to try and get substitutes or do without all her wonderful goodies like fudge & cookies.

BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

It's awhile now since we were present in Benoni on the very first day of school at the **Southern Africa Bible College (SABC)**. However, the first two weeks every year are devoted to registration and orientation as students arrive and the faculty reviews rules and regulations with them, assigns keys and dorm rooms, accumulates supplies, and resumes daily routines. Since I am not involved in these very necessary procedures, I really only need to be present and accounted for when my own classes first begin. This year for me that was on Wednesday, the 30th of January. Since then, I have taught classes every day except on Tuesdays, my day off. Even on that day, I show up for chapel and fellowship with the faculty, students and staff.

NEW HURDLES TO OVERCOME

Due to new government regulations, students coming this year from foreign countries had to show proof of medical coverage for 1 year before a South African study visa would be granted. Potential students coming from very poor areas, like Zimbabwe where life is really tough, found that to be an insurmountable burden, being able to barely afford visa costs and travel money.

Fortunately, the son of a SABC graduate living in The Netherlands, took it upon himself to secure funding for several students from churches in Europe. Johan Gerber, Malan & Salome Gerber's son (I taught Malan in the '70's) raised R15,000 and, together with some funding from churches in Zimbabwe, it was enough to pay for MedicalAid so these students could study at SABC. By February 20th all 37 students had enrolled. The late-comers will need to catch-up on assignments and notes they missed.

I am truly enjoying my studies with the first-year group. I believe them to be the most inquisitive class I have ever taught. They are attentive and show lots of interest by the thoughtful questions and comments they raise in class. This should be one more delightful year!

THE BUSINESS OF PREACHING

Part of the work I do in South Africa is preaching. In addition to teaching at the Bible College and helping with some administrative decisions and planning (like the Lectureship program), I like to preach every chance I get. But this year, after almost 4 months on the road in America, traveling to several different states seeking mission dollars and reporting to churches and individuals who help support us here, I was so very tired upon our arrival. So, it was with relief not to be called upon to deliver a sermon that first Lord's Day back. The schedule was already planned and I was just a "pew packer!"

However, sufficient preaching requests are in place to keep me busy the next several months. More on that later. With bad knees, the traveling is the worst part, but I'll cope.

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

Once again, after that first Sunday of rest, I agreed to the Benoni elders' request to fill the pulpit at least once on a Sunday in the absence of Benoni's regular preacher (also an elder), Al Horne, while he continues to fulfill his commitment to assist the newly-formed church in Kerrville, TX. Therefore, I preached every Sunday in February, sometimes twice. One Sunday morning, a returning Benoni son (and SABC graduate), Des Steyn (married to Lisa Horne) preached in the morning. He and his brother, Gary, came from Fort Worth to be with their mom, Norma, during her surgery. Their father, Aubrey was one of our very first elders at Benoni. He died some years ago. A sister, Linda O'Callaghan and her family are Benoni members. Everyone was pleased Des could preach that day. He is a most talented person in so many ways.

Once Des agreed to speak that morning, it gave me a chance to preach at the Congolese congregation in Johannesburg where another graduate works. A Benoni member, Jaap Lourens, goes there regularly to encourage them. This group of Congolese refugees are very dedicated in teaching others in the Yeoville area, and the church is growing. Many would like to return home to the Congo, but due to conflicts there, cannot do so. When they are able to go home, they will take the gospel with them.

SCHEDULE FOR 2008

This year, many visitors are slated to join us in Benoni for varying periods to assist our work. Al & Donna Horne will spend the month of March here, and again for most of September during the lectureship. Two Christian men from Hennessey, OK plan to visit SABC 2 days in April. Cindy Robinson is due mid-May for an overnigher on her way to teach again in Zambia. Johnny Robinson will come in June from Abilene for the medical-missions work in Zambia. In late May, Dan & Carolyn Spann, are coming from Knoxville with 2 young men for a 3-week teaching period in various areas. Carolyn will also spend some time in our library. In June, I am scheduled for 2 separate seminars in Zimbabwe. In-between, a brother and his young son will visit us from Georgia for a few days. A couple from West TN is coming for 4 days in August and an entire family from Texas will return for a family reunion here where they did mission work for 14 years in Durban and Cape Town. It promises to be an interesting and very busy year.

Benoni's prison minister, Louis Gerber, asked for funding to buy portable baptistries for 10 prisons. His request was met by Benoni Christians. Great response there!

And the work goes on... Pray for us these next 10 months to share the Light of the Gospel in Africa this year. We plan to return home in late November. Until then, we never forget those who assist the work at SABC and help provide for our personal needs. — Jerry & Ann Hogg