
The South African Report

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

Email: jvhogg@charter.net

May-June 2008

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

ELECTIONS & SELECTIONS

As the scripture says in II Peter 1:10, "*Wherefore my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall.*" Making proper choices in life are so important. Often, it is the difference between success and failure. All of us make minor selections every day, like what to eat for breakfast, which route to drive to work today, what color shirt to wear. The more pressing choices can change the direction of our lives, i.e., changing jobs, choosing a mate for life, buying a house, and the decision one makes to become a Christian. In elections this year in many nations of our world, the wrong choices will be made and every citizen will be subjected to laws and standards they did not choose. How very urgent it is that we know all the facts before we make our choices in elections or selections! Otherwise, we live with the decisions others make and impose upon us!

ADMINISTERING THE PROCESS

Earlier this year, the **Benoni** elders asked me to prepare some lessons and to assist them in the selection of additional elders and deacons for the congregation here. From April until last week, I presented Bible-based lessons on qualifications and the work of each office. Also, upon their request, I outlined the guidelines and dates for reaching a final decision on how to choose the right men to serve in these roles. After nomination forms were handed out to the congregation in mid-May, many names were submitted to the present elders, including my own name. I was greatly honored that so many who have known me for several years would consider my life to be in keeping with this role, but I withdrew my name for several reasons. I knew it would not be the right thing for me to serve as an elder and still maintain my practice of visiting and preaching to so many other congregations in various places, and the fact that we don't stay here year-round.

As planned, after much discussion, and even private consultations, this process culminated on 29 June with a special service to finalize the addition of 1 elder and 3 new deacons at Benoni. After introductions, some comments and several prayers, James Howard III, visiting with us from 16 June, a deacon himself at the **Buford, GA congregation**, made additional comments and said a most-moving prayer asking for blessings upon this special occasion. Fred Bergh, executive director of the **Southern Africa Bible College (SABC)**, also an elder as well as minister of the **Ashlea Gardens congregation in Pretoria**, also visited that day at our request to make comments and pray for success in this final step of Benoni's elder-deacon process. It was a serious occasion for this congregation and one designed to take the Lord's church well into the future in this place. Though the names of many good Christian men, possessing all (or most) of the qualifications, were suggested, they each understood

that not everyone would gain full congregational approval. We used the same fairness and procedures used in most democratic societies, and based upon scriptural examples, and pray that God approves of the outcome.

TRAINING FOR SERVICE

To follow-up on last Sunday's elder-deacon installation, I met with the elders this week to further plan specific tasks and areas of responsibilities for each elder and deacon. Additionally, they have also asked me to prepare leadership training lessons designed for all the elders and deacons. To accomplish this task, I have entitled the series of lessons as "**Complete the Unfinished Work.**" We will have at least 4 classes together. It will also be a time for discussion and questions on how best to lead the congregation. Please pray for me as I prepare for these sessions that the church will move forward in a godly fashion.

ELECTION TIME

Though we do not get involved in politics, we do have concerns about WHO will lead the nations. Not all elections are done the same way as in the USA. We do pray that God will guide events in our home country to bring about good results. We have also been concerned about the election in our northern neighbouring country that seems to go on and on. In the final analysis, when there's only one name on the ballot, choices are taken away. We are told the policy in Africa is often to "**seize power and retain it at all costs!**" Only God can intervene now to ensure peace and safety for all citizens in this troubled country to the North!

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT

Sometimes when the 'Death Angel' makes an appearance, friends and family know 'it is time.' As with **Brian van der Spuy's** death in April, he had suffered so much and the doctors had told the family often, "it is time!" In fact, I personally drove the 287 kilometres to Welkom on 3 different occasions in the last 3-4 years to say 'good-bye' to **Brian** when the doctors and his family had given up on him. But, he would recover and go on with his work, enduring the pain and discomfort in an admirable way. Though expected his death was sad and hit us all very hard.

However, in the early evening of 24 June, a call came in that totally shocked me to learn that a dear brother at Benoni had died suddenly of a heart attack. **Jimmy Mansfield** was only 57, looked the very picture of good health, and according to his family, never complained about feeling poorly or ever took a day off work due to illness. In fact, he was at work and went across the parking lot from the flat (apartment) he was renovating at a retirement unit to his work shed to get additional tools. Just as he got to the small building, he put his hands up, leaned against the wall for a moment, then fell down. Death was immediate, we were told. He never knew any enduring pain or probably didn't know what happened, the coroner said. His funeral was sad and difficult (emotionally) to preach, but easier in some ways, knowing that he was truly a Christian. I used his own Bible to

prepare the service, and read to the congregation passages he had marked or highlighted on how **Jimmy** lived his life and the things he considered important. **Jimmy** was present at every service in Benoni, even the singing practices (he had a nice tenor voice), always had a smile and handshake for everyone, and was usually the first one to greet me as I walked in. **Jimmy's** life has been tough, but he made so many friends along the way. I think all of us at Benoni were unprepared to see such a huge crowd present.

Here's an interesting outcome to this situation: **Paul Mansfield**, one of Jimmy's son, and his wife are faithful Benoni members. The other son, **Matthew**, is also a Christian, and had even attended classes at SABC for awhile. However, **Matthew** had gone back to his old crowd of friends and had wandered away, being estranged from his father and the family. Just a week before **Jimmy's** death, **Matthew** phoned **Tom King**, a Benoni deacon and the one who had taught and baptized **Jimmy** and the boys, and said that he wanted to return home (like the Prodigal Son). On Monday night, the 29th, Matthew visited his father and they made amends. **Jimmy** died the very next evening. I think about, "What if the two had not had time to make up?" "What if **Matthew** had not decided to come home now.... no doubt he would have lived a life of regret!" One shouldn't delay such reunions with their family or with the Lord Himself!

HERE AT THE HORNE HILTON...

The **Hornes** did it! They set the pace years ago by putting out the WELCOME mat and treating everyone so nicely by offering 'bed and breakfast' (with lunch and dinner and even laundry service thrown in the mix), and hanging that VACANCY sign out! **Donna** even has a GUEST BOOK out for everyone to register, except there's no cost or room-rates. What a good example of hospitality they provided for younger missionaries, emphasis on younger-though not by many years, like the **Hoggs**! When the **Hornes** are in residence, they are always having overnight guests or folks for "tea," counseling sessions, or conducting well-attended marriage enrichment or evangelism classes right here in their living room. Well, how could we do otherwise? Though we haven't held regular classes during the week this year as before, we have hosted a lot of different groups for tea, dinner, overnight (and longer) stays, or just to talk. Also, during the leadership process this year, I met with the two elders (**Chris & Eddie**) here for discussion and some planning sessions on several occasions. Oh, if only these walls could speak, what stories they could tell of all the gatherings over the years!!!

Now, for the first time in many weeks, we can literally hang out that VACANCY sign, too. Our latest guests, **James Howard III** AND **James Howard IV** left on the 30th. As with all of our guests, we put them to work. James III worked with me several hours in the SABC Student Computer Lab to download some software and improve internet access capabilities. Also, before the school holidays began, and during exam week, he spoke to our students in chapel and enjoyed some fellowship time with them. It was great having father and son with us at the **Horne Hilton** for 2 weeks. They are from the **Buford, GA church**, one of our supporting congregations. Also, **James III** is head of their

foreign mission work, and had visited **Ed & Lina Crookshank** in Malawi before coming to see us. We trust they will have a chance to tell others of the work at SABC and in Lilongwe. I'm sure with their enthusiasm, **James** and **James**, the **Less** we called him will have stories to tell of their African visit. We enjoyed hosting such polite and helpful guests for a short while.

In May, **Cindy Robinson**, spent an overnighter with us enroute to teach at **Namwianga Mission School in Zambia**. Her husband, **Johnny**, was to pass through here with the 200+ medical team from Abilene mid-June for a couple of weeks in Zambia this summer, but we did not get to see him. We were probably on the road somewhere. **Cindy** said that **Johnny** had completely recovered from his brain surgery in 2005 here in Johannesburg. From Knoxville's **Hardin Valley church**, we had the pleasure of providing housing on campus for **Dan & Carolyn Spann, Blake Wilkerson** and **Robert Simpson** (also from the **West End church in Knoxville**). Their trip was a long time in the planning to provide some Youth seminars by **Blake** and **Robert** and for **Dan** and me to once again team-up for leadership and discipling seminars in Venda and Cape Town. **Dan** also preached in Benoni and Pretoria, taught some classes at SABC, and presented chapel talks.

Carolyn is always a welcome guest here as she provides guidance and hands-on assistance in our developing SABC library. Recently catalogued are many books donated from the **George Bailey** library. It is such a blessing to know that books our students use in their research came from such a worthy gospel preacher. As you know, a library is never fully completed – there is always new material being developed and the work never ends. However, ours is looking great and proving useful.

We also welcomed **Curtis & April Hays** from the **Lewisville, TX church** with their two youngsters. Though others provided their accommodation and much of their travel, we were glad to take them to the Lion Park just north of Johannesburg one afternoon. Being a real expert in computers, **Curtis** also came here ready to work. He helped raise funds for a firewall and other computer parts he installed for our new equipment. He setup and programmed 8 of our student computers and showed me how to add memory chips to enhance their performance. Whatever would we have done without **Curtis** and **James** coming our way to assist us in this work? Thanks, Guys!

VISIT OUR WEBSITES

No doubt, some have accessed our personal website: www@samissions.org and we hope you found it helpful concerning our work here. It has been updated recently. The website for SABC has also been renewed and upgraded: www@southernafribiblecollege.org. I think you might learn more about us by visiting these two sites online.

As we leave you this month, please remember to pray for us and the 4 new Christians baptized by SABC graduates, 2 in Cape Town and 2 in Benoni. I need special grace and faith as I prepare to teach leadership classes at Benoni in the next few weeks. We appreciate all your prayers and support of us as well as the Bible College. Come and visit us in Africa some day to experience the "pull" she has upon those who once visit her shores! The VACANCY sign is posted and the WELCOME mat is out!

–The Hoggs of Africa