
The African Report

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“CHANGES OF SEASONS!”

Where does IT say (in the Bible) that we MUST have a change of seasons? I know the Word of God speaks about “a time of Harvest, a time to plant and a time to reap....” but does the Bible say ANYWHERE that it must be so unbearably COLD (or HOT)? Most people think (and perhaps TALK about) Africa being so very HOT – well, let me clue you in here.... Africa DOES get Hot, but at this time of the year, it gets unbearably COLD and it is true! And, that is how it is right now in Benoni, South Africa! Even as I am typing this newsletter, I am drinking a cup of HOT tea, and sitting with a full-size warm, woolly blanket wrapped around my icy feet and toes that have on warm woolly bedroom socks - the skid-proof type! I know, I know – it is Summertime in the Northern Hemisphere where most of our readers (and supporters) live – it’s the middle of July when the kids go swimming almost every day, and you ‘re picking blackberries and fresh fruit off the trees(or vines) for canning or freezing in packets for the Winter. Lucky folks you are at this time of the year! By the time we finish our yearly work here in Southern Africa and board that plane on Oct. 25th, it will just herald in the rainy season here in Africa and while you will then feel the cooler winds of Autumn, so you can look forward to COLD weather to come your way - it will be turning Springtime on this side! All this lets us know that God knew what He was doing when he ordained the Seasons and He does not allow one area to have all BAD weather, while others enjoy GOOD weather continually. Thank you, God, for all that YOU made for us here on Earth and do not let some of us suffer in the Cold Temperatures forever!! But, today, I am soooo very COLD!!! And, my feet are icy cold. So are my fingers - but alas, I cannot put on gloves and then make my fingers hit the right keys! So, there you have it - please forgive the mistakes if/when I hit wrong keys. I will admit, though, it has been a bit warmer this week and in most of July, but June was very COLD with temps in the single-digits! 6 deg C. That’s very cold even for here!

I will do my best to make sense here today. It has been busy getting details of this annual lectureship organized and confirmed and ready to roll

now in this second month of our report! But, that’s Jerry’s task - to plan the Lectureship, get confirmation from ALL the Speakers! He works hard at this, too. At the end of September, many of our USA visitors will have already arrived—ready to speak to us that next week. It will be an awesome Lectureship, I am sure! Something to look forward to with lots of joy, and to see so many friends from other places in Africa, perhaps family members who have moved the thousand-miles to Cape Town, or 350 miles south to the city of Durban, or to other faraway places. We welcome them all “home” to Benoni, and are anxious to hear how the church is doing in their city! It is always a time of Grand Reunions of Family & Friends.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

It was early in May that we had a surprise visitor to walk into the Chapel Room at SABC one morning. It stunned some of us sitting there, as we’d had no notice that anyone new was going to be on campus that day. Come to find out ONE of our teachers did know. He had been notified this young gentleman was coming to be on campus for awhile, and he (the teacher) had arranged to have him “collected” (as they say here) at the airport, and had arranged a room for him to stay on campus. But, we (the Hornes and Ann and I did not know he was coming here.) Of course, as soon as the last song ended, we four jumped up (well, Ann didn’t “jump up” as she struggles every day to just slowly “hold on to the chair or the bed, wherever she’s sitting just to push herself into a standing position” and grab her cane, then walk toward her destination!) But, some of us did “jump” up to greet him. Come to find out, he had just gotten off the plane, coming all the way from the Memorial congregation in Houston, TX to visit us here for a month. What, then, was so surprising was.... the Hornes (Al & Donna) are supported by Memorial, and this congregation also sponsors the Bible College here in Benoni, S.A, and even THEY did not know of his coming. He was a tall young man, slightly on the heavy side – not really fat, but very muscular and with a dark-complexion. We knew right away he was of Spanish descent! He introduced himself to us as “Ray” - if he gave his last name, I didn’t hear it, though at some point during his month-long visit, he did mention it! He said he & his family

were members at Memorial and the cong. there had helped him raise funds for his trip here. He had come to “see the work” and help out when and where he could, for the entire month of May. He did do some preaching at area congregations, also going with some of our students, and visiting the near-by Zenzele Squatter Camp. We were with him often as he stayed in one of the apartments just up the steps from our flat, and he often rode to Benoni church with us. Ray enjoyed preaching elsewhere, the students arranged for that and went with him. We enjoyed being with Ray and I hope he thoroughly enjoyed his stay with all of us at SABC! Ray made a good impression on us and we hope he will return one day, and perhaps stay longer, maybe as a student or teacher or missionary to work with one of the African churches in some capacity. That would be nice.

It was such a shock when we learned of the death of Ivan Currie, early one morning in June! He had not been retired from his job but a couple of years, and was all set to enjoy some freedom from constant work-- play some golf, travel back to his homeland in Scotland, and enjoy time with his grandkids, but that was not to be. He actually died on the golf course where he had met up with some of his buddies for a day of leisure! His heart decided his life was over, I guess. Anyway, he died on June 21st in Benoni. His “Celebration of Life” service was a most sad occasion. Family & friends came from all over to say goodbye and offer comfort to his wife, Marlene, and all of the close family members. It was hard to believe we had lost this dear friend and beloved brother in the Lord! Please pray for Marlene and the family at this tragic time!

HOUSE-SITTING, AGAIN!

Early in June this year, the Hornes got an urgent call from their son (I think it was) that they **MUST** make a trip to Texas on some urgent business matter – to sign some legal papers in person! So, off they went, and kindly asked us once again if we would and “could” we pack-up our belongings and move into their big, roomy house on Pretoria Road to “see” to things once again, until their return! We’ve done this many times before and know the routine at their place. Of course, we agreed to do this favor for our bestest friends here on the Mission Field, as we have had to call on them many times, too. So, here we are (still) in the middle of July, waiting for their return from Texas! Also, they have had to “see” some of their doctors there, esp. Donna’s, to make sure her medications are working as they should. Since she developed RA (Rheumatoid-Arthritis) a couple of years ago, she has suffered terribly, and has struggled to find the right medicine. Most of it makes her so sick at her stomach, she suffers a lot. Please pray for Donna that she can find relief! So, until they return, we will gladly help them out by looking

after their home and belongings here on Pretoria Road, IF we can endure the extreme COLD and the sounds of the big trucks and all other traffic that go up and down the road here, day and night! We don’t get all this traffic out on Cloverdene Road by the Bible College—it being a rural route, there is less traffic.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This being the mid-winter public school holidays here in South Africa, the Benoni church always organizes their VBS during the second week of the holidays, so it has just finished on Friday night, the 30th of June (last week). Of course, everyone had a very exciting week, esp. the kids.

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FILLING IN

While Al & Donna have been in Texas the past few weeks, there have been several of us local preachers who have “filled-in” for him – in the pulpit and in teaching the Adult classes (Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights). Benoni being the location of the Bible College, several of the men here have been trained to preach and teach. So, I don’t have to do it all in his absence! I have done some, but also have enjoyed hearing the different ones “preach the Word” during Al’s absence - they don’t often get that opportunity at Benoni, which is probably the largest congregation in this area (+250 on a Sunday, about 160-170 Sunday night, and less on Wednesday Night.) I guess I don’t really keep up with the count, but it is practical experience for the ones here who have the training and the knowledge to speak, and the ability, but less chance to use their talents than elsewhere, I suppose.

Secular job opportunities in this area are greater than in smaller towns, and that keeps a lot of fellows here for sometime after they graduate from the college, I guessy

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We must say so-long for now, and hope to finish out our sojourn here in mid-October, after our annual SABC Lectureship (Oct. 1-5). Then, we plan to pack-up our suitcases again to head home to Tennessee once more. Until then, we convey your prayers for us, esp. for our health and safety, and that our labor

here will be fruitful and profitable for the advancement of the Lord's Cause here on this Earth. May God bless each of you, esp. those who help with our support, as we work for Him.
Until the next time! — **Jerry & Ann Hogg**