

HELLO FROM THE HORNES:

APRIL SHOWERS: Here, in Africa, we experience the month of April in the fall of our year. Someone said that *"Autumn is the time of year when God gets out His crayons and colours the world beautiful!"* That is so true, but, meanwhile, whether one is in Africa or America, we all experience *"Showers of Blessing"* from above. And, no, we are not just talking about rainfall but about all the year-round blessings God bestows upon His children worldwide. In fact, here's a quote that our granddaughter, Carys Pitman, forwarded to us: *"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather."*

THERE'S FIRE IN THE PULPIT! Our good friends and fellow-missionaries, Ann and Jerry Hogg of Tennessee, joined us on the 23rd of this month and wow! They had an unbelievable flight from America to Africa this time. They were supposed to fly directly from Washington DC to Johannesburg. However, half an hour or so out of Washington to London, the pilot announced over the intercom that there was smoke in the cockpit—and *"where there's smoke, there's fire,"* right? He said they would be turning back to America. The Hoggs told us that when they landed at the Washington Airport, the runway had dozens of fire trucks along with emergency vehicles all lit up and lining the runway on both sides. As the plane taxied on down the runway, the fire trucks raced alongside them to a place where firemen came on board to examine the cockpit. They couldn't find anything wrong in spite of the black smoke but everything was offloaded: passengers, baggage, food supplies, etc. Then they all boarded another plane which safely flew them to London. This meant the Hoggs were a day late arriving in Africa and we ended up getting up at 6 AM to meet their early morning arrival. What happened to them on that first flight out of Washington made us more thankful than ever for our own uneventful trip back to Africa at the end of February! (Meanwhile, when I reported this experience of the Hoggs to our children on WhatsApp, by mistake I wrote to them, *"There was smoke in the pulpit!"* Stacey wrote back and said, "Mom, did you notice you texted that there was 'smoke in the pulpit' rather than smoke in the cockpit? Spoken like a true preacher's wife," she concluded.

A WHIRLWIND VISIT: They came, they saw and they conquered (our hearts). We have never before had weekend visitors from overseas at SABC for just three days! But Kelley and Ruth Ward did just that. They flew directly from Texas, were at the Bible College just three days, and then flew directly back home to Texas. A quick turn-around trip! They attended Friday classes at the college, shared the students' main meal, worshiped with them on the Lord's Day and listened to them sing in one of the African languages. Other than that, Kelley had a "Close Encounter" at Joburg's Lion Park. Visitors are allowed inside an enclosure to pet the cubs and younger lions and one of them "petted" Kelley back—leaving a scratch on his forearm. We fell in love with the Wards and wanted to keep one or both of them here with us but Kelley, who has a nice easy-going disposition, refused to leave here "Ruth-less!"

SWEETENING OUR LIVES: Two other Americans who visited us this month were Jeff Sweeten, minister from Jacksboro, Texas, and his wife, Kelly. They are the parents of Shane Sweeten whom we influenced to come to Africa almost three years ago to attend SABC (Southern Africa Bible College). By now Shane is a 3rd-year student whose goal is to become a full-time 4th generation preacher (his great grandfather was a preacher, his grandfather was a preacher, his father is a preacher and Shane himself also plans to preach). Three years ago, he came over here "single" to go to our Bible College and he will be returning to America "double" at the end of the year! In other words, he fell in love with one of our most gifted and spiritual young girls who also has attended SABC. They were married at the coast on the 22nd of this month by Al and at the end of the ceremony, our sweet Nicole became sweet Mrs. Sweeten!

CRIME THIS TIME: 1) ARMED WITH HAMMERS: A mile from our house is a small mall called “Northmead Square.” One day this month, three men parked their car at the mall, broke the glass display cases in a jewelry store with their hammers, and drove off with a load of jewels and watches! The police arrived on the scene but it was too late. 2) SMASH AND GRAB: One of our church families was victimized when they were on their way to the airport to meet a family member. Sitting at a red light, the window on the passenger’s side was suddenly smashed and a man reached inside the car and grabbed the young son’s cell phone before making a clean get away. 3) LIVING IN THE WILD WEST: Our Benoni church secretary just shared this on Facebook: *“Last Sunday was not exactly a peaceful one for me when I was on my way home after church. As I turned down my street, I saw two men running like crazy past my car. Then further down the block I realized why—when a man came charging past me with a gun in his hand. That same day, there was a jewelry store robbery at the Mall. I had wanted to stop there just to walk around after church. Then when I later stopped at a grocery store, a car was stolen. Guess I live in the wild east.”* (Our town of Benoni is east of Johannesburg so she could hardly say she was “living in the Wild West,” could she?)

POLITICAL UPDATE: *“Is it Poli-tics or Poli-tricks?”* In South Africa, prices were up, crime was up, and joblessness, etc. was up! The final straw was last week with South Africa’s downgrade and descent into “Junk Status” – a body blow to South Africa’s well-being economically. Some even dubbed South Africa a “Trash Nation,” blaming everything on the highly unpopular and controversial President Jacob Zuma. On Friday of that week, motorists were warned to avoid the central business districts, especially in Pretoria where the government’s Union Buildings were not accessible. They had been cordoned off by the police with bobbed wire because there was a “People’s March” that day. South Africans braved that rainy day as they took to the streets to call President Zuma to step down. There was mass action as thousands upon thousands (multiracial but mostly black citizens) marched the streets in country-wide protests to the present government. Banners and signs sported slogans such as *“Fire Zuma!”*, *“Zuma Must Go!”*, *“Save South Africa,”* *“South Africa’s Wealth Belongs to the People,”* *“South Africa is not for Sale,”* *“Deliver Us From Evil,”* *“It’s Time to Reclaim Our Country,”* and, of course, *“Let’s Make South Africa Great Again!”* The marches were mostly peaceful, but in Johannesburg the police clashed some unruly protesters with rubber bullets. Today someone suggested, *“Maybe we should pay United Airlines to forcibly remove Zuma!”* Seriously, at the time of writing this a “No Confidence Debate” was being planned for the parliament. Watch this space.

IN CONCLUSION: Each of you contributors also *sweeten* our lives! At the moment, the picture of South Africa’s economy and political scene are a bit gloomy, but to us missionaries it shows all the more how important it is for contributions to our work to continue to come in! South Africa isn’t going away! The church of the Lord is here to stay! The SABC will continue to train folks for leadership in the Lord’s Church! And we are only enabled to accomplish this task for the Master with all of you holding up our hands. Please continue to remember us in prayer and with your generous donations to the Lord’s work here. We need YOU!

ONWARD AND UPWARD,
AL AND DONNA HORNE,
YOUR MISSIONARIES TO SOUTH AFRICA

P.S. Please send donations for our work to SABC (Southern Africa Bible College), % Memorial Church of Christ 900 Echo Lane, Houston, TX 77024. Donations are tax deductible.