

**HAPPY FALL, Y'ALL!**

Although it is anything but Fall over here in South Africa. In fact, it's just the opposite! In August, Spring sprang all around us on cue. But then the cool weather lingered behind when Summer time came along. In fact, we have only now put away our long sleeved jackets and sweaters and the electric blanket on our bed. Most people are surprised that in South Africa, we are generally cool but remember, Benoni is at a very high altitude. We live more than 6,000 feet above sea level.

**A FOND FAREWELL TO ANN AND JERRY**

Gone are the days when we had other American missionary families working here in Benoni with us—all at the same time! In fact, six American couples and their families were in our area: Jane and Eldred Echols, Bessie and John Hardin, Ann and Jerry Hogg, Polly and Joe Watson, Lena and Doward Runyan, and Doris and Bob Stevens. The last two couples mentioned decided to come over here from the States on jobs to assist with the work here. They were what we call "Vocational Missionaries." (In their case, however, both couples were "top drawer Christians" and made a big impact on the work here. In fact, both of the men were selected to serve in the first group of elders appointed by the Benoni congregation in 1975). There is a saying, however, that "All Americans eventually go home." So one by one, those families returned home and only one couple returned later on to work with us—Ann and Jerry Hogg, with whom we have shared a close friendship over the intervening years. But now the time had come for Ann and Jerry to return to Tennessee. On October 22, we took them to the O R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg to return home to the USA. What a sad occasion that was for the two of us remaining behind. To say that we are missing them is the understatement of the year.

**"DIE, THE BELOVED COUNTRY"**

With that headline, the local newspaper reported that crime statistics in South Africa are seriously and shockingly up. That particular report ended with these four sad words: *South Africa is bleeding!* Meanwhile, the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele, admits that the South African Police Services have dropped the ball. He has vowed to put its head on a block to curb the shocking increase in serious crimes, particularly murder. "*South Africans shouldn't live in fear as a norm,*" he said. The chief crime analyst at **AfriForum Research Institute** agreed. "*There is just no scenario or context where these figures can be disregarded as unimportant or insignificant.*" But it wasn't all "doom and gloom" reported in the newspaper. Dr. Johan Burger of the **Institute for Security Studies** felt there were a number of positives which could be taken from the latest crime statistics. He said, "*What is promising is that we have new leadership in the police and they are all fairly good appointments. But it is going to take a while for them to clean up the mess they inherited.*" [Under the former RSA president, Jacob Zuma, the name of his Minister of Police was Fikile "**Razzmataz**" Mbalula." No comment!]

**"EVERYBODY HAS A STORY TO TELL"**

**In Benoni** a couple of weeks ago, the sub division of Daveyton had a tragic happening. Four unruly and blood-thirsty African teenagers had murdered 6 residents in the area. Of course, others who live in the vicinity were highly disturbed by these senseless acts of lawlessness. When the local police failed to take action, the community rounded up those four young killers and mob violence took over. The residents "*necklaced*" each of those young men while the community stood around and watched. ("Necklacing" is when victims have an old car tire which is filled with gasoline placed around the neck, to which a match is then applied. Then it is a case of "*Burn, Baby, burn!*"). As is typical, when the police did arrive on the scene, "No one had seen a thing!" **In Johannesburg** on the way home from work, a friend, Pam Smit, had stopped at a red light. Suddenly, four young Africans (each with a gun) jumped into her car, roughed her up, and stole her handbag. Over the years, "Smash and Grab" incidents have often occurred but for the robbers actually to get into the car with you is a new, very frightening ploy.

**In Secunda**, a town to our south, a SABC graduate, Alan Belcher, and his wife, Wendy, live. Alan works with the church there and also for a mining company. Sometimes he is called out at night to go underground and work. Recently, Alan arrived back home at 3:30 AM. Meanwhile, half an hour earlier, his wife woke up when she heard their dogs scratching on the front door. On the way back to bed, she saw the living room curtains blowing in the breeze and when she looked closer, she saw the burglar bars on that main window had been bent back. Yes, three armed African men had done that in order to enter the house and they were still inside the house. What followed is that Wendy was attacked and a brick was even thrown at her face. Her little finger was also broken. Somehow she managed to break free and run next doorto

where her father lives. Minutes later, when Alan arrived home, he was immediately suspicious as the dogs were aimlessly running back and forth when normally they run up to greet him. Next, he saw the bent burglar bars. He, too, ran straight over to his father-in-law's place where he discovered Wendy holding a towel up to her injured face. She was seriously bleeding so he rushed her off to the hospital. Fast forward: Of course, from then on Wendy was afraid to be alone in the house at night when Alan was called out on a job. So his employers kindly conceded that he would no longer be required to work underground at night. Both Alan and Wendy were at Lectureship in October, thanks to God's good care and protection over them.

**In Durban**, the preacher's son stopped his car not far from home to play with his drone. As he stepped out of the car, an African suddenly appeared and put a gun up against his head, demanding he hand over his bag. Bending down to get it, the young man broke loose and took off running. Barefooted, he had blistered his feet so much by the time he arrived home that he couldn't walk and had to put them up for several days to heal. That's "a close call" but at least only the bag of valuables was stolen and the young man was safe and very relieved to find his car where he had abandoned it during the attempted heist.

**In Durban also**, a young woman in the congregation had her widowed mother in her late eighties, Evelyn Kriger, come live with her. Recently, when the daughter was away from home, a couple of armed African men broke into the home. They threw her onto the floor and threatened to shoot her. "Go ahead," this faithful Christian and brave little lady, told them, "Send me on to my heavenly home." We assume those house-robbing gangsters were impressed by her sheer courage because they spared her life and left. Again, God had kept one of his aging and frail children—a still faithful Christian—safe.

### **BENONI CHURCH BAPTISMS**

The Lord has blessed the Benoni church with a number of baptisms since we last reported. When a young married couple, Enya and Francois Collins, visited our services recently, we set up a weekly Bible Study with them in our home. To say that they enjoyed the Bible Study was evident when they left our house that first night at quarter to eleven. We have now studied with them four Thursday nights and Al has baptized them into Christ. We felt an urgency as they plan to emigrate to New Zealand as soon as they can. They have already started the process. Also baptized was Jeandre Anderson, a member of the Anderson clan who have been long-time leaders in the Benoni church. Now 27-years-old, Jeandre has given up his life style as a Prodigal Son and his excitement at having been added to the church is epic—for he entered our fellowship after baptism "boots and all!" Brimming with enthusiasm for the Lord's work, he has already brought four of his friends to church – one of whom, Darren Pullock, was also baptized. Still another one who put on his Lord in baptism was 55-year-old Tillman Kotze, a high ranking commissioned officer in the South African Police Force for the past 22 years. He was brought to church by Lizelle Mostert, a former Pentecostal, who was also herself recently converted to Christ. Along with others, we too had opportunity to study with Tillman in our home. We also had two recent restorations: Tyrone Rohland whom Al baptized some years ago. For some time, Tyrone was a vibrant member of the congregation. However, a series of problems and tough times took him away from the church for fourteen years. Ultimately, he recognized that his precious soul was at stake and he returned to the fold. The other one who came forward in repentance was Jaco Kriel who has taken up the cross once again. Some of our brethren had been concerned about him and encouraged him to get right with God. Jaco prepared a moving and heart-felt statement about all those wasted years that had intervened through wrong choices he had made. He is the son of Sandy and Jan Kriel who are Benoni Christians of long standing. Dedicated parents want their children to be heaven bound and now their prayers had been answered for their boy. Praise the Lord!

### **IN CLOSING**

HAPPY THANKSGIVING, everyone! Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control, we will not be able to celebrate it with our family in America this year. "Thanksgiving," as Americans know it, is obviously not observed here in South Africa. But it doesn't keep us from counting our blessings on Thanksgiving Day – and YOU are one of our best blessings! Thank you for your support, encouragement, and prayers for both our work here in Africa and for us personally. Where would we be without the Lord . . . and without you! "We thank our God on every remembrance of you," Phil. 1:3.

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