

HELLO FROM THE HORNES:

**NOW YOU SEE THEM – NOW YOU DON'T!**

Staying in Africa eight months this time, we'd planned to wing our way home to America at the end of February as usual. Instead, we found ourselves marching through March and then scrambling to find a Delta flight. That done, it suddenly dawned on us that we were flying home on April Fool's Day. We hoped that didn't mean we were two April Fools for flying on that particular day known for its Tom-foolery! However, our departure was smooth from the beginning, starting with a special farewell occasion given us by our beloved Benoni congregation. We knew it would be difficult to leave them permanently towards the end of this year so we told them our April 1-July 15 absence from them now would be "a practice run." Their love sweetened this temporary departure and we brought with us to America fond memories of the Benoni church – our home congregation during all these years. After all, it's Benoni where Al has been the pulpit minister for 53 of the 60 years we've been missionaries in Africa. And by now, we have worked with five generations of Benoni Christians. Precious Memories. . .how they linger. . .how they ever flood our souls. . .

**OUR "YEA DAY!"**

And by the way, a Benoni shop we had gone into the day before offered each customer a cup of hot chocolate and a doughnut. Of course, we accepted but asked what the occasion was to which the saleslady smilingly explained, "Today is YAY DAY." "Oh," we thought, "It may be *her* "YAY DAY" today but *ours* would be on Monday, April 1st – because that's the day we'd get to travel home to see our four children and their families. Yes, that's right – all four children. Having moved last year from Kerrville to Fort Worth meant we would in future get to see two of them – Lisa and Steve – on a regular basis. Then on May 2, Lynda and John Staiger are due to fly in from their mission work in New Zealand to attend the Harding University graduation of their second daughter, Suzie. And while they are staying with us, Stacey wants to come from Memphis to visit us for three weeks. So all four siblings can be together and visit as they once did "back in the day." So one "YAY" is not good enough unless you spell it YEAAAA! We plan to enjoy our family as we further work at settling into our Fort Worth home. Then on July 15, we will make our final flight back to South Africa to empty and sell our Benoni house we have lived in for 52 years. Again, Precious Memories.

**BENONI, SON OF MY SORROW**

At one time the little town of Benoni was known as "The Jewel of the East Rand." It was immaculately clean with a nice little downtown shopping mall and also plenty of parks. Our children remember growing up there in the golden years of Benoni. Now, however, all of southern Africa seems to be struggling morally, politically, and economically, etc. For one thing, South Africa has "load shedding" (electrical shut down of the grid in various areas). As a result of the power outages, there is a tremendous cost to be paid by South African tax-payers. The reason why it has been found necessary to have load shedding is because of 1) General government corruption, 2) Expanding the grid to include outlying villages without building additional power stations -- which places tremendous pressure on the grid (the demand for electricity exceeds the supply), 3) Many electricity technicians were required to give up their position to less experienced local people as a result of affirmative action, 4) South Africa has a culture of non-payment. People expect to receive services free but pay nothing towards them. 5) Due to the fact that many of the white population are unable to find jobs, emigration has become their only choice in making a living for their family. This has robbed the country of many experienced workers. No wonder Benoni is seen now as a town living up to its name – "Benoni: Son of my Sorrow," Genesis 35: 18.

## **SORROW UPON SORROW**

News reports emerged earlier this year revealing that the country's government approved a new law allowing for the confiscation of land which would be transferred to black citizens. The controversial legislation was endorsed by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who pledged to hand the lands owned by white farmers since the 1600s to black citizens of the country without compensation for the owners. So, more than 200 farmers from South Africa applied for humanitarian visas in Australia after allegedly suffering attacks for being white, according to the Australian Home Affairs Ministry. Claiming persecution, those white South African farmers were now seeking refuge in Australia. The response by the Australian Home Affairs Minister, Peter Dutton, announced his willingness to start fast-tracking humanitarian visas for all those farmers who had endured violent rural crime at home and wished to move Down Under. The government policy evoked strong disapproval both in the country and internationally, with a reported upsurge in violence against white farmers. In 2017, some 82 people were killed in a record 423 farm attacks and last year, there were 109 attacks and more than 15 murders. Unabated criminal activity is still the order of the day in South Africa.

## **A HOT TOPIC: SOUTH AFRICAN CURRY AND RICE**

Will Rogers called Texas chili "The Bowl of Blessedness" which is to say that there's more to it than just beef and beans. As Joe Cooper, a chili aficionado, wrote: "Chili—real chili, Texas style —must have the strength 'to chin itself' even with a big rock at the bottom of the pot. It will not make water run uphill but it will stoke a locomotive to the next coal bunker!" When we read that, we thought it would also describe South African curry which is traditionally seasoned to serve HOT or HOTTER! Evidently Dagwood thought the same. In a comic strip, he sits down at the kitchen table and says to his wife, Blondie: "I hope you used plenty of curry powder. I like my curry hot." She suggests he try it and see. After taking just one spoonful, Dagwood screams, "Y...E...O...W!!" He runs to the bathroom where he sticks his mouth underneath the running faucet, all the while shouting at the top of his lungs, "H...E...L...P!" and "F...I...R...E!" Returning to the kitchen, he calmly sits back down to resume eating his plateful of curry and rice and in an aside to Blondie, he smiles, "That's the way I like it." (By the way, if you're reading this and thinking, "But curry and rice is an Indian dish." Correct! But South Africa's population includes a multitude of folks from India who taught us how to make and enjoy curry.)

## **IN CLOSING**

In spite of South Africa's present issues which are so worrying, in many ways it is still a fascinating and lovely country. As one person put it, "It's really beautiful. It feels like God visits everywhere else but lives in Africa." No wonder we ourselves feel that "Our hearts will always beat to the rhythm of Africa."

Onward and Upward,  
Al and Donna Horne,

Your missionaries to & fellow workers in South Africa.

PS. We will be writing at least one more newsletter after returning to South Africa in July (Lord willing), so you can keep up, not with the Jones' but with the Horne's.