

## **Render Unto Caesar**

Very early in our missionary experience, we learned that it is essential to remain aloof from the politics of the country in which you are living as an alien. The reason for a missionary's presence is religious, not political. Jesus taught us all to render unto Caesar that which is his and unto God that which belongs unto Him. In South Africa, we had literally to "render unto Caesar," for we paid income taxes to the South African government. That is right, because while living there, we enjoyed the privileges of that land, the protection of its police, the use of its highways and communication systems, and the education offered in its schools.

Political matters are not meant to be preached from the pulpit, nor should political "inferiority" or "superiority" be any factor in an individual's obedience to the gospel. We were in a country in which the non-white races were subservient. From the beginning of the history of white people in South Africa, the black people had been the servant class. The very idea of classes of people was fostered by the British colonials, for in Britain there was a servant class, albeit white in color; and by some of the Afrikaans people who believe that there is Biblical evidence that the black people are meant to be servants. With such a background reaching back as far as 300 years, beliefs and prejudices naturally developed strongly. Moving into such a society, it was necessary for us to be diplomatic, or as Paul put it, "Become all things to all people." While teaching the white people that all are equal in the sight of God and that

as Christians we must practice love, justice, and fair treatment, or in other words, the brotherhood of all Christians, we had to appeal to the darker-skinned folks to live in all ways as a Christian should, doing right in the sight of God and of the government, praying and working patiently and gradually until the time that their lot upon earth might be made better.

In Oklahoma, on one of our furloughs, we met a black school principal who thought we should go back to South Africa and lead a revolution of the black people against the whites. So adamant and vehement was he that he could not or would not see that it is *in Christ* that there is neither bond nor free, and that was how we would have to teach and preach it. Had we done otherwise, we would have had our visas taken away and lost all opportunity to preach the gospel in South Africa.

The details of the majority of sermons I've heard have been forgotten, but one of the best remembered is a sermon preached some years ago by a black man of the Zulu nation, a man with less than a high school education, but a diligent student of the Bible. Many to whom he spoke that day were servants in white homes, or worked for white bosses, not all of whom were fair and kind. His text was I Peter 2:18-23. Coming from his mouth, and addressed to that particular congregation, it was most impressive, and try as I would, I couldn't swallow the lump that kept coming into my throat. Picture a black preacher in South Africa, humbly reading this scripture to his congregation of 150 or so: "Slaves (servants), submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are



harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.” (NIV) If this sermon had been preached to blacks by a *white* man, they could have said, “Yes, that’s easy for you to say because you are not one of those servants.” There are many who disagree with this “pacifist” approach, but neither do these same people accept Jesus’ plea to “turn the other cheek.”

Often we are all too impatient when we see the need of change. But sudden change is seldom good. Laws can be passed, revolutions can be won, old governments overthrown and new ones brought in, but attitudes that took 300 years to build are not going to be removed overnight, even by excessive pressure from the outside. Russia and Cuba are saying to black Africa, “You poor downtrodden creatures! Let us ‘liberate’ you,” and then proceed to introduce other forms of suppression. White America, on the other hand, speaks to white South Africa saying, “Look at us. We integrated. Why can’t you?”

To white Americans, we would simply and humbly ask this question, “If the proportion of white and black populations in the United States had been reversed, would you have been so ready for integration?” There *is* a

difference in the courses of history of the two nations. We seek not to justify prejudices or policies, one way or the other, but simply to understand. No one on earth has all the answers.

It is impossible to express the feelings and attitudes of our co-workers and of missionaries in other places, but I can share with you the policy that John Hardin espoused. Number 1, preach the gospel. Number 2, always do your best within the bounds of what is scriptural. Number 3, obey the laws of the land and teach all classes of people to abide by those laws.

Number 3 is the place where we had particular problems in South Africa. At the same time that integration was the number one issue in the United States, we lived in a country that practiced "apartheid" or separation of the races. "Apartheid" means simply "apartness", but of course has many ramifications in its application. For instance, there was no law preventing mixed services of the church, but there was very strong tradition, so strong, in fact, that most people thought there was actually a law, and were surprised and disbelieving when told by officials that no such law existed. There were some restrictions which made mixed meetings awkward: for instance, the regulation that separate restroom facilities had to be made available if non-whites were to be in a white area.

In the *Christian Advocate* for September 1955, John wrote a long article called "Apartheid in Churches." The writing of this article was prompted by receipt of a letter which expressed concern over apartheid, whether or not it has a scriptural basis, and a statement as follows: ". . . we do not want to be mixed with politics, for we want to give

an answer to every man about our standing according to the scriptures.”

*Note* – this editorial was written in 1955 when blacks in America were still referred to as “negroes” and in South Africa as “natives”. Please remember this when reading the following quotes from the Advocate.

Reference was made to a conversation with a white lady in America in which she said the negroes were encroaching upon her part of the city and she thought they should remain in their own areas. John’s answer to her was that as Christians, we cannot allow hatred or bitterness toward another race to mar our lives. It works two ways, he said. Just as a white person should not resent the black person becoming his neighbor, so the black person, if he is a Christian, will hesitate to move into an area where his presence would be a detriment to a white neighbor. **LOVE ON BOTH SIDES IS THE CHRISTIAN’S ANSWER TO ANY PROBLEM, DOMESTIC, SOCIAL, OR RACIAL.**

To quote – “The church of our Lord is not a political institution, and there should be a complete separation of church and state. Though many denominations, through their official organs, try to influence governments, the true church, by its very nature of congregational autonomy, cannot do so . . . If someone asks, ‘What do churches of Christ teach concerning apartheid?’ we can only answer, ‘Nothing, except as the Bible teaches on it’ . . . .

“First of all, let it be stated that the ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ doctrine prevalent in some quarters is a perversion of the Bible. That pronouncement was made upon the Hivites who had tricked the children of Israel . . . the water was to be drawn and the wood hewn for ‘the

congregation and for the altar of the Lord' (Joshua 9)! Any suppression because of racial reasons purporting to come from the Bible are completely false."

The article goes on to point out how racial prejudice exists between blacks and coloreds; between blacks, coloreds and Indians, and even between different tribal groups of the black people themselves. At the same time that white people were refusing to mingle with the blacks, there was a campaign afoot among some sectors of the blacks to have nothing to do with whites. (There is a large sect of black people which will admit no white members).

Quoting again — "James teaches that 'respect of persons' is wrong. Social standings, high or low, poverty or riches, rags or robes — those mean nothing to Christ nor to a true Christian. In Christ a man stands condemned or justified for what he IS and not for what he HAS or for his station in life . . . God made MAN in His own image — not just the white race; and in recent years science has proved that God, as stated by Paul in Acts 17:26, 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' There may be other justifiable reasons for sometimes separating people, but they cannot be based on difference in blood." There is no longer a difference in Jew and Greek, bond and free, or male and female for all are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

John went on to say that he believes and accepts those scriptures but pointed out that there is another side to the question: when a Jew or a Greek becomes a Christian, he does not lose his nationality, for when the Jews refused to accept Barnabas' teaching he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). When Paul stated that there is

neither bond nor free, he did not mean that slaves who became Christians no longer had obligations to their masters, and refers to Philemon. And when Paul said they are neither male nor female, he did not mean that Christians become sexless for he gives differing exhortations to men and women. He was teaching equality of opportunity for spiritual blessings in Christ.

The article continues in the vein of faith as opposed to opinion or expediency. As an example of expediency, the meeting of separate groups of English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, etc. for the sake of simple understanding of the language does not violate any Biblical principle as long as the attitude of the individuals is not in error . . . For instance, it would be wrong to be glad that there is a language difference so that races do not need to mix. Attitude is the key. Why does one believe – or not believe – in racial groups holding separate services? Is it to raise one's own social standing? Or to keep the other person's standing from being raised? Is it to provide teaching and prayer opportunity to people in the language each knows best? Is it a matter of traveling longer, or shorter, distances to the place of meeting?

To quote once more: “. . . there is one question that should be foremost in the minds of all Christians – ‘What is best for the church of God?’ The aim of the church is to save people. What people? ALL people. Those who are prejudiced . . . and those who are not. If people do not accept the teachings of the Bible in matters of *faith*, that is their responsibility. But I have no right to demand that they accept my OPINION on any thing. In that case I would be legislating where God has not done so, and I

would thus be sinning. Here we have a great portion of the population who are prejudiced against other sections. Shall we flout these matters of expediency before such, thus antagonizing them to the point where we lose any chance of teaching them the Christian principle of love toward fellow men? This simple question will, perhaps, cause us to think, 'Must one agree to meet in mixed assembly before he can be converted to Christ?' If not, can we make such a law? If so, where is the scripture?

“ . . . If I demand MY way . . . to the damnation of souls that with other ways and other attitudes I might win, then my spirit is unChristian . . . 'Where there is no vision, the people perish', said the wise man in Proverbs 29:18. We need to take off the hindering spectacles of race, self, section, and politics, and with the clear eye of faith get on with the task before us — converting the world.

“Let us convert them and then teach them to love all men even as our Lord has loved them. It has been done. It can work. Cases can be cited of people who at one time would 'just as soon knock a native down as to look at him,' who have been won to Christ and then have been taught to love ALL men. Today those people are meeting with and even teaching those whom they formerly detested. Love can accomplish much. We must have the love of all souls. We cannot allow our selfish desire to rob the church of our Lord of its saving power.”

Changes are coming. Perhaps slowly, but surely. In about 1968, the leaders of a certain white congregation refused permission for a particular black preacher to address them at a public gathering. Ten years later,

that same black man stood before that very congregation and spoke impressively to some 500 people. It took a decade, but it happened. The black brother was well received, and white men who in their earlier days would not have shaken hands with a black man, did so without reservation. No amount of force or law or revolution can bring about the changes that are brought about by the love of Christ.

The political problems of South Africa extend beyond the borders. The native peoples of all the countries to the north have been undergoing catastrophic changes. The cry of freedom which has gone up from every quarter has had a hollow ring when the oppression of colonialism has been replaced by independent governments headed by incapable leadership. Red China and communist Russia with its satellite Cuba have gathered like vultures around a carcass. To quote Guy Caskey in an article he wrote from Tanganyika in 1963, "In every high place of government the little foxes of communism gnaw away at the tender roots of freedom. They know that as Africa goes, so goes the world."

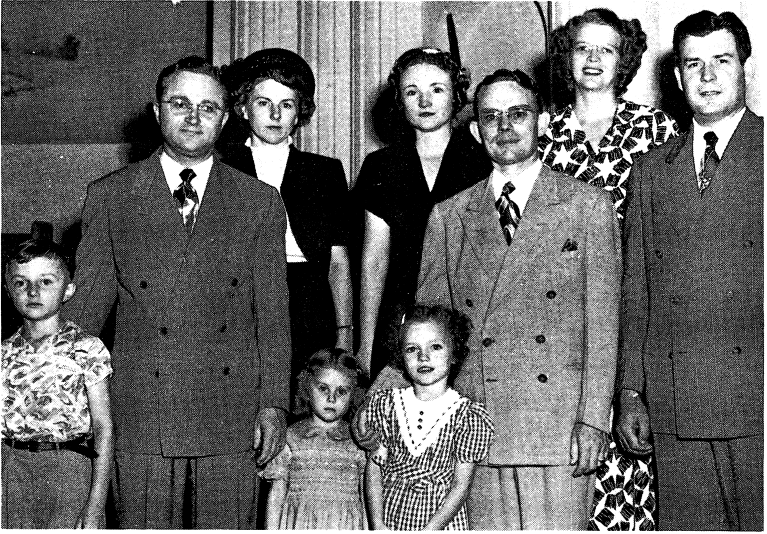
South Africa fairly bristles at the threat of communism and regards herself, perhaps rightly so, as the last bastion on that entire part of the continent against its onslaught. Guy called Africa a "sleeping giant". If so be, we need to be certain that what wakens the giant is Christianity and not false religions or the devil communism.

There is a rousing old missionary hymn that says:

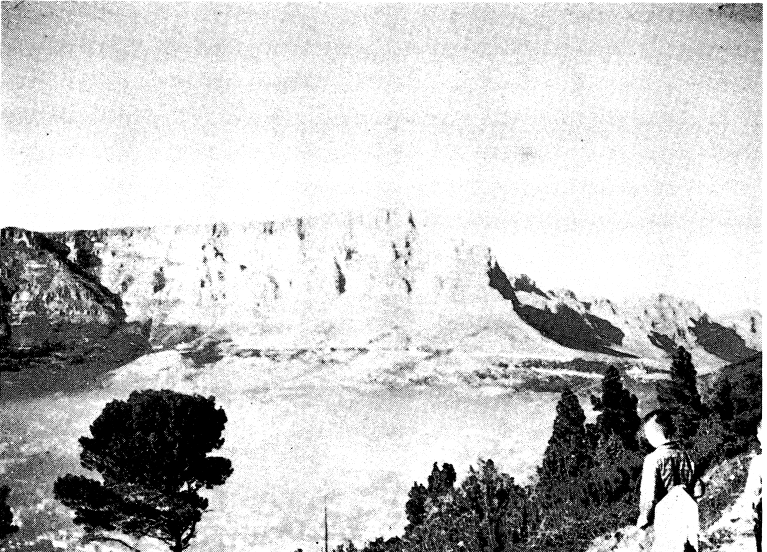
“Oh Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling,  
To tell to all the world that God is Light;  
That He who made all nations is not willing  
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

“Behold how many thousands still are lying  
Bound in the darksome prison-house of sin,  
With none to tell them of the Savior’s dying,  
Or of the life He died for them to win.”





1. The Guy Caskeys, the Waymon Millers and the John Hardins in Fort Worth, prior to departure for South Africa in 1949.
2. Table Mountain and Lion's Head, Cape Town.





3. Grassy Park church building as of early 50's.

4. Woodstock church building, Cape Town, earliest of buildings owned by churches of Christ in South Africa.





5. The train stops for tea time on the way from Bulawayo to Livingstone.

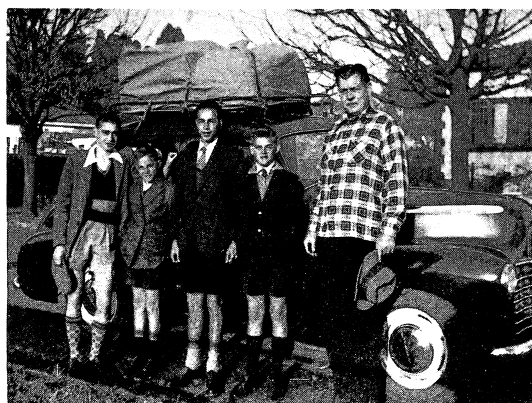
6. The group that met in the home of Foy Short in Bulawayo, beginning the congregation that became known as Queens Park East. 1950





7. The first meeting of the church of Christ in Johannesburg, May 1950.

8. Eldred Echols baptizes Doreen Blake, one of the first converts in Johannesburg.



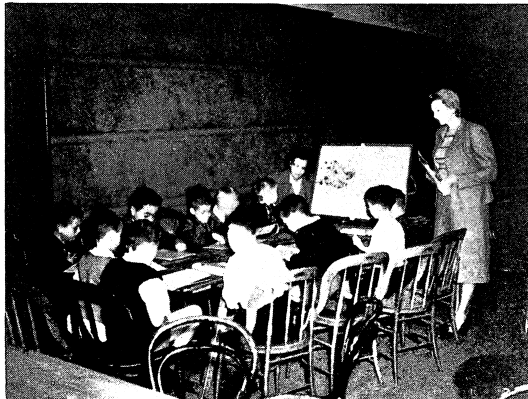
9. John with four teenage boys, ready to leave Johannesburg for camp in the Moto-wayo Hills, out of Bulawayo. 1951



10. Turffontein church building, Johannesburg, completed in 1953.

11. Johannesburg, city built on gold.





12. Brian van der Spuy working on the *Christian Advocate*, the publication started by Waymon Miller in late 1950.

13. The Fred Hockeys, converted in the Kellams campaigns in Johannesburg.

14. Marguerite Gray teaching Sunday school in a storage room of the Masonic Hall, Port Elizabeth, 1954.

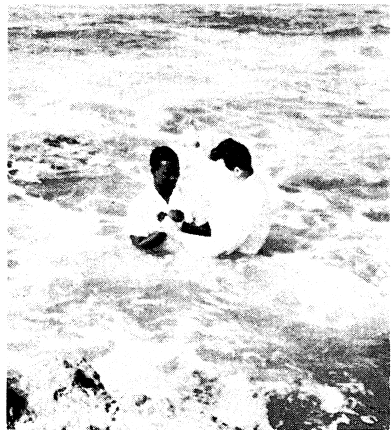
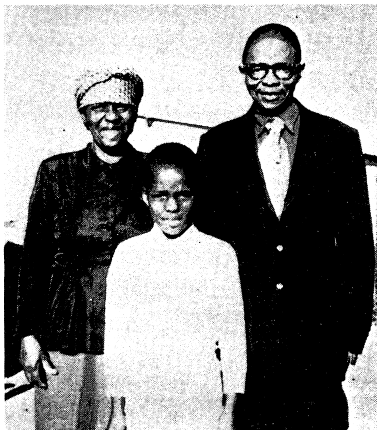


15. Marguerite Gray teaching a Bible class during the first white Bible encampment in South Africa. 1955.

16. Leonard Gray talking to Morca Njikhu in Korsten, Port Elizabeth. Morca later was forced to return to Malawi.

17. Bentley Nofemela, Dora, and Columbus. Bentley has preached for the black congregation in New Brighton since 1955.

18. John Hardin baptizing Elliott Gabellah at high tide in the Indian Ocean.







19. The colored congregation in Port Elizabeth, 1962.

20. Building purchased by the Pickering Street congregation in Port Elizabeth.







21. Pickering Street building in Port Elizabeth, after remodeling.

22. First Sunday morning congregation of the Benoni church, mid-1957.





23. The Benoni congregation, early 1959.

## **Port Elizabeth**

When the church had been in Johannesburg for two years, it was decided that although there was enough to do in that metropolitan area for a score of workers, the time was right to go into some other parts of the country. Leslie Blake, one of Johannesburg's earliest converts, and Don Gardner who had been working in Pretoria, moved to East London in May, 1952 and very soon baptized five people. The Hardins and Eldred Echols were to move to Port Elizabeth. I was awaiting the birth of our fourth son, Neal, in May, so we postponed our move until just a bit later. It was September before we got away.

In Port Elizabeth were the Fred Hockeys who had been converted in the Kellams campaign in Johannesburg. They had not reached out to convert other white people but had met from time to time with various denominations. They had, however, built up a small congregation of black Christians which met on Sunday afternoons. The Hockeys assured us that if we moved to Port Elizabeth, they were prepared to work whole-heartedly with us. There were also a few contacts from the radio program and the correspondence course, so with high hopes we made our plans to move.

I had had two babies during our 28 months in Johannesburg, so we had not been able to take any vacation trips. I had been no more than 40 miles from home in that time, so we decided to make a leisurely trip of our move, with several stops along the way. We had been living in furnished

houses, so the only furniture to ship by truck was Brian's baby bed, along with our cases of household goods. With our little Vauxhall loaded to the springs, and with four little boys making the inside of the vehicle like the traditional sardine can, we set off on the 800 mile trip via the Transkei.

John always chose, if possible, to travel by the most scenic routes while my first choice was usually to get to our destination by the shortest possible way. We went (by John's choice) by way of Pietermaritzburg (there was no church of Christ there as yet), and soon after leaving that city, we were on dirt and gravel roads. The Transkei is very hilly, and those old roads meandered over and around the hills, taking the path of least resistance. Progress was coming, however, and there was a great deal of road construction underway. The detours took us on ever more winding pathways, and on one of these more perilous slopes, we had a flat tire. Some of the detours were cut into the sides of steep hills, so narrow in places that there was not room for cars to meet. On sharp bends, we hooted hooters to notify unseen oncoming cars of our approach. If we met a car on one of those bends, one or other of the drivers had to do some careful reversing. All of my life I have hated riding on mountain roads. My enjoyment of the scenery is overshadowed by the certainty that we are going to plunge to the valley below, and all the while, I sit as far away from the downward side of the road as I can, as if throwing my weight that way could avert a fall.

When at last we drove into East London carrying with us a thick layer of Transkei's white dust, we were

welcomed by Leslie and Doreen Blake. Doreen showed her hospitality to us weary travelers by running bath water for the children and helping them to climb in for a scrub. We felt like the footsore travelers of Jesus' day when some worthy host washed their feet for them.

On the last 200 miles, from East London to Port Elizabeth, there was also a great deal of road construction underway. One day it would all be tarmac, but that day was still far in the future. Since we did not have a house to move into, our first two nights in Port Elizabeth were spent in a hotel.

Our move to P. E. had been somewhat "on faith", for moving into a new city with a family of six could be a problem. This was a booming city of 150,000 with many industries in addition to the busy seaport, so houses to rent were scarce. On a quick trip that John and Eldred had made a short time before, they had arranged for us to go to a seaside resort called "The Willows" where vacationers could camp out in little thatched rondavels, similar to native huts but constructed with cement and brick rather than mud, but still roofed with thatch. Picturesque, and fun for vacationing, they were not designed for housekeeping. September is off-season for tourists, so most of the rondavels were vacant.

Our seven weeks at the Willows were an adventure in housekeeping. Although the two rondavels assigned to us stood close together, they were not joined, so it was necessary for us to go outside to step from one to the other. We had to have all six of us sleeping in one while using the other for living and cooking. Into the sleeping rondavel, we packed a double bed, two canvas camp cots for Kent

and Don, Brian's baby bed, and our footlockers and suitcases. Neal was four months old, and at first we put him to bed in the bottom section of a large suitcase, but soon graduated him to a footlocker with its lid fastened securely open. We hung our clothes on rods suspended from the support poles of the thatched roof.

The children were delighted, especially because we were just a stone's throw from the shore where there was a shallow swimming area completely sheltered from the tides. Kent and Don were old enough to understand the rules about where they could play and to see for themselves the danger of playing elsewhere. Brian, wise little man for his age, stuck close to his big brothers, building sand castles and paddling in the shallow water. We could see them from the windows of our rondavels.

Our living rondavel was furnished with a table and some straight chairs, and a small rectangular section built onto it served as a kitchen. We bought two Primus burners which, after being preheated with methylated spirits, operated on paraffin (kerosene) under pressure. There was no electricity so we used a pressure lamp and a pressure iron. With no plumbing, the main "facility" was some 25 yards up the hill behind the rondavels, and we needed to keep our eyes open for the possible intrusion of a puff adder. For bathing, there was only a cold water shower at the bath house, meant for swimmers to wash off the salt sea water. John enjoyed this shower, but it literally took my breath away, so I took to using the old wash tub with water carried in buckets from the spring and heated on the Primus. The spring water was brackish, turning the soap to curds. It was impossible to wash clothes in it, and

drinking it was an ordeal. It made terrible tea and coffee.

Fortunately for the laundry situation, a launderette, one of the first of its kind in South Africa, had just opened up in town, so every few days, we drove some 10 miles to wash clothes. There were two long rows of washing machines and not one single dryer, which seemed ridiculous in a sea coast town where the air is often too damp for drying clothes. However, the proprietor was sympathetic when he heard our problem and let us spread our washing on the steam pipes in his boiler room. While the clothes dried, we did our shopping.

September and October are spring months in South Africa, so any kind of weather may occur. We had perfect weather at first, but then drenching rains began to fall. And fall and fall and fall. The roof of our sleeping rondavel began to leak and we all caught colds. The car had to stand outside, and the heavy dampness condensed on the motor, making it a major operation to start it each day. Someone told us to cover the motor with an old piece of blanket at night, and this worked well until one day when John asked me to reach over and pull the handle to release the catch on the hood. I pulled all right, and the handle came off, together with several feet of cable. We were unable to open the hood to remove the blanket so we drove slowly to town, not knowing what might happen. It took the mechanic a long time to open the hood, but no harm had been done.

The first service of the church was held in room 7 in the basement of the city hall on September 14, 1952. Members present that day were John and myself, Eldred Echols, Arthur Lovett (visiting from Johannesburg), and

Mr. and Mrs. Hockey. Visitors were a Mr. Russel, a Miss Coetzee, Roy Barnard and Andy Jooste. Counting our four children, we were 14 in number. Eldred preached the sermon. That afternoon, we met with the non-Europeans in Korsten. There were eight black people and four colored. Of the black people present that day, there are none remaining in Port Elizabeth, but the colored family, the Van der Bergs, eventually became the backbone of the colored church that is thriving to this day. Among the visitors at the morning service was Andrew Jooste who became well known later as he labored hard and long with the white and the colored churches in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. How elated we would have been on the September day in 1952 if we had had even an inkling of the part that was one day going to be played by one of our visitors!

Our first seven weeks in Port Elizabeth were hindered by the fact that we lived so far away from the city and had neither a home to which we could invite people nor a meeting place we could call our own. Some time was spent contacting people who had written letters in response to the radio program or were taking the correspondence course. Most of these contacts came to nothing, but the effort was made, and we were settling into life in a new area of work.

The friendly relationship we had with the man who ran the laundry resulted in making contact with a man who had a house to let, and at the end of 7 weeks at the Willows, we moved into the city. It was an unfurnished house in Summerstrand, directly behind the Marine Hotel. A high wall had been built to give privacy, and we



entertained hopes that it would also protect us from the high winds for which P. E. is well known. On that latter point we were sorely disappointed, and on at least two occasions, items of laundry were whipped out of our hands and right over the top of the six-story hotel, never to be seen again. Blowing sand can be unpleasant, and so is the layer of salty deposit on windows near the sea. The salt air caused everything from the corrugated iron roofing to the latches on our suitcases to rust.

Having always rented furnished houses in Johannesburg, we now had to buy furniture. Since we did not know that we were going to make South Africa our permanent home, we shopped at auction marts for bargains and furnished the house with bare necessities. Without carpets, the big old house had a ringing echo, and when the children forgot to close the doors properly, the wind whipped through the passageway and gave them a mighty slàm. Don developed a skin rash and had to stay indoors when the wind was at its worst. A vegetable garden planted in the back yard blew completely away, sandy soil and all — we harvested one radish. Black southeasters beat the shrubbery in the front yard so unmercifully that there was a scorched smell in the air.

Port Elizabeth was known as the “friendly city” and we soon came to love it. Kent got back into school after being out for two months. The school building had burned shortly before we moved to P. E. so classes were being convened in rooms above a restaurant just across the road from the beach. Kent enjoyed that school, frequently coming home with stories of things they had seen, such as schools of porpoises that entertained the school of children with

their impromptu ballets. We were quite concerned about Kent's reading ability when at the end of grade one, he could not read anything except his reading books which he had obviously memorized. The schools were experimenting with the word recognition method, but the next year, we were happy to learn that there was to be a return to phonetics. From then on, Kent began to read well and enjoy it.

One of our first attempts to reach the population with the gospel message was by means of a weekly ad and sermonette in the Eastern Province Herald. As a result we had some visitors and gained three members who had come from other places. One was an elderly Sister Adams who had been a member in Blackpool, England for many years, and the others were Mr. and Mrs. Vickers who had been converted during the Kellams campaigns on the Reef. Sister Adams worshipped regularly with us as long as she lived while the Vickers moved on to Nairobi, Kenya.

It was not long until the van der Bergs were baptized and continued worshipping with the black congregation. For reasons explained elsewhere in this book, this arrangement was not the most satisfactory, and as soon as feasible, we began holding services for the colored community in the van der Berg home. In late October we reported a total of 34 black and colored people attending services in the home of Noah Chingoma. A Thursday night Bible class was being held in the shantytown of Korsten, but night classes in the black residential area of New Brighton were postponed because of some rioting and a threat to burn "that white preacher's" car if he continued going there.

John wrote in a letter in December of '52 that brother Hockey admitted having exaggerated the number of possible contacts and prospective converts. There were really only a few. We called on those whose names had been handed to us, but most were not interested. One young man, Herman Horne, who was taking the correspondence course and attending the non-European service with the Hockeys, wanted for some time to be baptized, so when he and his youngest brother, Alick, accompanied us to East London for the Christmas holiday, John baptized him in the ocean. At about the same time, Herman's other brother, Al, accompanied Echols on a trip to the Transvaal. On the way, they spoke together about the way of the Lord, and much like Philip and the Ethiopian, they came to a certain water, and they both went down into the water and Eldred baptized Al — the same Al Horne who has helped to train so many preachers, first in Tanzania, and then at SABS in Benoni.

Our funds, our work, and our spirits all received a big boost when our supporting congregation in Ft. Worth sent us money for a typewriter and a duplicating machine, and also, incidentally, gave us a raise in salary to help cover the more expensive housing we had to use. Claude Guild, their minister, and brother Banowsky, one of the elders, were helpful in keeping up a good relationship between the Riverside congregation and ourselves.

By December, we had had a few more baptisms among the black people, and I had started a ladies' Bible class among them. Some of them had a problem about baptism — they thought it necessary to have fresh water and objected to being immersed in the sea. Some were

terrified of having their heads under water and would brace themselves and struggle against being put under.

For Christmas, 1952, reminiscent of the popular song, Neal got his two front teeth. We received packages from Riverside and from relatives and friends. Several sent us fruit cakes, but one of them must have traveled in the hottest part of the ship's hold, for when we opened the box, we found only a heap of bright green mold. It was thrilling to be remembered by friends back home, and the sentiments of the sender of the cake that became moldy were as much appreciated as the others.

Port Elizabeth is a clean city. The sand that blows near the ocean is white, and there is little coal used. The air is often sparkling and clear. There is nothing to equal the smell of the sea, and we often drove past the Willows, and around the point to Schoonmakers Kop. Sometimes the odor of the willows that form a thick cover over much of the ground was like that of polecat, but that would pass in favor of the salt tang that freshened our nostrils. We almost always saw monkeys along the way, and we fed them on the bread crusts and oranges that we took with us. It was often too cold to enjoy going into the water, but it was fun to search among the expanse of rocks to find sea anemones, hermit crabs, small octopi, pericloves, and periwinkles, and even the horrendously ugly sea slugs. On days when the wind was blowing strongly from land toward the sea, we would sit in the car and watch the breakers, with the spray blowing seaward like the manes of wild white horses. Port Elizabeth's weather is whimsical, for one day the bay may be like glass, and the next day the waves pound unmercifully. The 500 miles

between Port Elizabeth and Cape Town claimed the lives of many a sailor in the early days, and always there is the threat of potential fierce storms.

The “feel” — the “personality” — of Port Elizabeth was different from that of Johannesburg. It did not have the gold-rush background, and it lacked the clamor of the bigger city. It was, at least in 1952, quite British. The Campanile, tall monument to the British settlers of 1820, guards the entrance to the harbor from the city, and a large statue of Queen Victoria stands in a prominent place near the main street. The city is not named for Queen Elizabeth, but for Elizabeth Donkin, wife of one of the early settlers.

As long as we lived in Summerstrand, we had to drive past the harbor whenever we went to town or to church. Every Sunday, on our way home to dinner, we drove through the customs gate into the harbor area to see what ships were in port. On weekends there were always two of the Castle liners from England, passenger ships which also carried the bulk of the overseas mail. They have now passed into history, having given way to faster but less romantic jet travel. In addition to Castle liners, we usually saw freighters from America, Japan, Greece, Italy, and other places. Always there were the faithful little greasy tugboats, and assorted little fishing boats looking as if a big wave could swallow them at a single gulp — which sometimes did happen out beyond the shelter of the breakwater.

Most of the fishermen who fished for a living were colored people, wiry of build and leather-skinned from years at sea, with deep squint-lines around their eyes. They sold some of their catch on the wharves, and we often

stopped to buy fresh fish from them. We always had to haggle a bit over the price and got the best bargains when our colored maid, Martha, was with us to do the haggling. Mr. Horne fished too, but as a hobby. He had perfected his skills to the point where he went out for only one variety of fish.

All of Port Elizabeth's trees and shrubs lean in one direction — away from the prevailing southeast wind. Yet the delicate-looking hibiscus (Don called them hibiscuits) thrive near the sea, as do the glamorous strelitzia, often called "bird of paradise." A mile or two away from the ocean front, we were able in later years to raise some other varieties of flowers, but our efforts in Summerstrand were wasted.

In January of 1953, the Steiniger family joined us. Brother Ulrich Steiniger had been living in Tanganyika when World War II began. As German nationals in a British colony, he and his wife were placed in separate internment camps. Sister Steiniger gave birth to Monika in her camp and Ulie only saw them a few times during the war. In the meanwhile, he was at a camp near Nhowe mission where he contacted our brethren and was converted. At the end of the war, the family returned to Germany where Ulie worked with Otis Gatewood and Roy Palmer in their mission efforts in that country. The Steinigers wished to return to Tanganyika where Ulie had been a diesel engineer at a sisal plant. He brought his family to South Africa in hopes that from there they could move on up to where he wished to go. When his application for permission to live in Tanganyika was refused, Ulie decided to remain in Port Elizabeth where there was good opportunity to use his

engineering skills in one of the many factories of that city.

When the Steiniger family arrived from Germany by ship, they too experienced difficulty in finding a house, so for about a month they stayed with us. Their four children and our four made a houseful, all the more "fun" because Ulie Jr., Roy, and Horst could not understand one word of English. When the seven little boys got too rowdy, all I could manage in German was "Nein, nein," and the rest of my speech had to be directed to our own boys. Monika, who was much older than the other children helped by taking her brothers for hours on the beach. Monika had learned English as one of her subjects in German schools, and Ulie Sr., was fairly fluent; but Erma, his wife, struggled with the language. Soon after the boys were placed in school, they picked up the English quickly. Ulie sometimes preached for our services. Once in a while, without even realizing that he had done so, he would launch forth in German, and after several sentences, move directly back into English.

## REACHING OUT

Among the activities we found to be effective in reaching people were the sing-songs we held in our large living room on Friday nights, when our attendance would be larger than at our Sunday morning services. Sister Hockey worked in a bakery and was allowed to take home two boxes of cookies each weekend. She would bring these and I would bake a cake or two so that we could serve tea. (I have to repeat that these social activities had to be limited to the white people.) We also entertained people we met by having them to dinner in our home, so with a family of six to cook for all the time, I found myself doing my

missionary work in the kitchen. One Friday night I must have been especially tired, for I found myself in the kitchen making up a parody of that war-time song, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," but I was wearily singing to myself, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Cake and Tea." We sang a lot and enjoyed it tremendously though. Eldred had taught Al Horne to read notes and sing parts, so he soon sang tenor well, always choosing "How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts."

We opened our home to the young people and put a ping-pong table in the front room so that they could come and play at any time. Roy Barnard was so impressed by this unaccustomed hospitality that he brought me the biggest bunch of red roses I had ever seen. I was surprised as could be, and no less surprised when I burned myself on the oven door as Roy was watching me remove something I was baking. I drew in my breath suddenly but said nothing. Roy marvelled that I had not uttered strong language, and thus by my silence, he had been taught a lesson in Christian behavior.

Sunday night pancakes became a regular item with the young people — American flapjacks served with brown sugar syrup. Al Horne, to this day, attributes at least a part of his faithful Sunday night attendance to pancakes and grilled bacon.

We had known for many months that the Leonard Grays were planning to come to Port Elizabeth, but it had seemed so far in the future that we had made no specific plans in their behalf. Then suddenly the time for their arrival was upon us. The furniture they had shipped arrived before they did, and to help save on storage, we had the



containers stored in our double garage. Echols found them a partly furnished house, and shortly before they arrived, we had the Grays' things moved in, with their own pieces placed in the rooms together with what belonged to the landlord. Eldred bought the makings for a couple of meals and stocked the refrigerator. Very early on the morning of August 19, 1953, we waited on the docks as their ship was eased into place by the tugs and the gangplank lowered. The early morning air was damp and chilly and tugboats don't hurry, for a ship striking against the docks with its great tonnage can seriously damage itself and the dock.

Leonard and Marguerite had spent a bad night. Little Randy was cutting teeth. It was with bleary eyes that they first saw us and their new land. We all breakfasted together in the ship's dining room and enjoyed the buckwheat pancakes — buckwheat flour is not available in South Africa. Then as we drove up the hill above the harbor, the Grays kept asking us whose house we were going to. We evaded their questions with vague answers until we unlocked the front door and went inside the house. Fred Leonard soon discovered the truth. "That's our chair," he shouted. "And another one." When it dawned on Leonard and Marguerite that they were "home," they were reduced to tears. So began the first morning of many years of service by the Grays in South Africa.

Leonard and Marguerite were zealous, dedicated Christians. Often we found that we were good for each other. John and I were more placid, sometimes slow to get involved in a new plan, perhaps missing some good opportunities by being too cool. The Grays were more impulsive, quicker to pursue a new idea, and perhaps disappointed

sometimes when the Hardins were slow to jump “onto the bandwagon.” Quite likely, whenever there was any difference of opinion, John and Leonard were each right 50% of the time. Differences were actually few, and never did any loom so large as to pose any real difficulty. When people’s hearts are ruled by the love of Christ, they work together in peace and harmony, and personal differences of opinion will fade into insignificance.

Having grown up in a Scandinavian community in the state of Minnesota, I was more reserved than most people from the southern states. Something I did or said puzzled the Grays, but the first inkling I had of offending them was when they came to me and put their arms around me, telling me that they loved their little Yankee even if she was different. It took a while for me to absorb that. They were having a special problem adjusting to me! Here we all were, aliens in the foreign land of South Africa: they had to adjust to us, we had to adjust to them, and Leonard and Marguerite had to adjust to a Yankee.

Marguerite was an excellent Bible school teacher. She had taught public school in the states, and teaching seemed to be her element. Tall, lovely, and dignified, she would manage the class with children ranging from toddlers up to 12 or 13 years of age. There was only one room available — one where cases of empty beer bottles were stacked high after the Saturday night parties in the hall. We were meeting in the Masonic hall which was rented to dance groups and parties during the week. There was supposed to have been janitor service, but every Sunday morning we had to straighten up the chairs and make

certain that there was no spilt wine or beer on them.

Leonard took over most of the preaching. He is a powerful speaker, holding fast to the faith, conservative, and strict. When you've heard a sermon by Leonard, you know just what the Bible says on that subject. He was intense and he never minced words, never compromised, and always lived what he preached. Yet he had a sense of humor so he could even laugh at himself when he realized that he had said in a sermon, "And God said to Moses, 'Take off your feet for you are standing on holy ground'." For emphasis, he repeated the quotation with the same error. The gravity of the moment, the power of the sermon as a whole, kept us from bursting into laughter right then, and we only told him about it at the close of the service.

During our first year in Port Elizabeth, we felt that the going was hard. If only we could have stepped away from our work and viewed it from a distance as an artist views his canvas from time to time, we would have felt more optimistic, seeing the picture as it was developing. We were impatient to see the greater numbers as the visible results of our efforts. There were contacts made that came to nothing. The white group seemed so small. Some who came to sing and eat cake on Friday night did not come on Sunday. Racial unrest made it impossible to go into some of the black areas.

The black congregation seemed to have been making the best progress, but then their treasurer dipped his hand into the bag and thus we discovered a new problem. For some time, we had realized that the black members did not understand the real purpose of the contribution. They

looked upon it as a source from which they could borrow money without paying interest. Furthermore, they thought of the treasury as a burial society, a sort of mutual savings account from which to draw money to pay for funerals. Perhaps they had gotten these ideas from some denominational groups but it was hard to convince them otherwise. When John tried to teach them the purpose of giving – for the spread of the gospel and for benevolence to the truly needy, they acquiesced, but only reluctantly. The next problem came when they wanted to be told the exact amounts they should contribute and were reluctant to believe that such a practice is unscriptural. Giving “as prospered” was more than they could handle and we were at a standstill.

In the white areas, we tried some door-to-door efforts, but without any real success. It did not help to learn that Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons had already knocked on those doors many times, and when our people came knocking, we were put into the same category as they. At one door, John was not invited inside, but a lady engaged him in lengthy conversation on her front veranda. She called him “Reverend Hardin,” so John explained that we do not use the term “reverend” in connection with our ministers because the only time the word appears in the Bible is in reference to God. The lady declared hotly that it was all right to use the title, that her church did so, and to prove it she brought the telephone directory and showed that her minister *was* indeed reverend. Brother Steiniger was especially disappointed in the poor result of his own door-knocking because in Germany it had been their most effective way of reaching people.

As the year 1953 moved along, we kept hearing the sad reports of the state of health of John's dad. Approaching 77 years of age, hardening of the arteries had decreased the circulation to his brain so that he was losing what had once been a sharp mind. He had to be watched all the time lest he wander off and get lost. He had had to give up preaching when the little congregation at Newkirk, Oklahoma could no longer use him. For a long time, his mind had wandered and his sermons had become repetitive. The process had been gradual, but in August, he experienced what the doctor called a "brain spasm" in which he suddenly lost most of his remaining abilities and was reduced to an infantile state, confined to bed.

Our supporting congregation readily agreed that we should terminate our period of service in South Africa immediately instead of a year later. Living in a city where ships called regularly, we were able to book passage within a few days. We had no trouble breaking the lease on our house because the owner was wanting to move back into it. Not knowing whether or not our departure was permanent or temporary, we packed our goods three ways: some to be stored but sold on our behalf if we did not return, some to be stored but shipped to us if we did not return, and some to take with us. This accomplished, we gave Leonard power of attorney to handle our affairs and got away as hastily as we could. Because Dad Hardin was already beyond the stage of recognizing even his closest loved ones, and the doctor had predicted that he would survive for some time, we did not even try to go by plane. Air travel in 1953 was possible, but not direct, and much more expensive than the ship. Our voyage of some 18 or 19 days

brought us to Ponca City nearly a month after receipt of the cablegram that called us there.

By the time our ship sailed out of the Port Elizabeth harbor, we knew that we were deeply involved in South Africa and that we wanted to return. I stood alone on the deck as the ship left the protection of the breakwater and headed out to the open sea. From there I could see the Marine Hotel and the street that runs past the house where we lived. As the familiar sight faded from view, tears ran down my face, and I remember saying to myself, "Port Elizabeth, how I love you."

Our ship landed at Boston and we took a train to New York City to board the plane to Tulsa, Oklahoma. In Grand Central Station, with only moments to spare to make connections, we had a little-boy trauma that remains in my memory like a photograph. Someone in the crew of our ship had carved some sailboats for Kent and Don, not fancy, but good and much treasured by the little boys. Kent's sailboat was placed on the wagon that carried our suitcases and was crushed. I wanted to take the heart-broken boy in my arms and get that little boat mended immediately, but we had to take him by the hand and run at top speed to get a taxi. When we reached the airport, we learned that the very plane we were to board had originated at Boston! The travel agent in Port Elizabeth had lacked the necessary information to get us onto the flight in Boston.

Our flight to Tulsa was not long and landed at nearly midnight. We were met by our brother-in-law, Ernie Shoemaker, who took us to Ponca City by car. Our reunion with Mom Hardin, at about 3:00 a.m. was a poignant moment.

John's sister Bess had been helping in the care of her dad, but she needed to get back to her own home in Tulsa, so we agreed then to remain in Ponca City with John taking the night shift in the nursing routine. Dad Hardin could not be left unattended, and brethren from the church had been sitting with him at night. Bess took our younger children to Tulsa and cared for them along with her two girls. We put Kent into school in Ponca City, and Don went with Linda Shoemaker to kindergarten. Ladies from the church brought a dish of some kind of food every day, and they also took turns washing Dad's bed linens. The loving care and concern of the church was expressed in this way for more than six months until Dad Hardin finally slept away on February 16, 1954.

The human mind contains mysteries yet unsolved. There lay a man who did not recognize his own family, incapable of carrying on the simplest conversation. Yet he imagined himself to be conducting services or having meetings with elders. He preached sermons from his bed and pleaded with imagined audiences to obey the Lord. He could sing hymns, and during one night in particular, he and John sang for hours, taking turns in leading and singing a harmony part. The words and music of those old hymns remained in his memory but he could not call John's name!

#### A CHANGE OF SUPPORT

A day or two before Christmas, 1953, we received a long envelope from our supporting congregation. It arrived together with a batch of Christmas cards, so we thought it would be another greeting. We were astounded

when we opened it and found a “Dear John” letter, with two months’ notice. The elders had decided that instead of sending money overseas, they would preach the gospel to the people right around them, converting the USA, and then, like the tides of the ocean, overflow as a great sea into other lands. This rather than, “as it were, a pitcher poured in a great wasteland.” The letter is still in John’s old files and the portion in quotes is taken directly from it. There was only one thing wrong with this new philosophy of spreading the gospel: it just doesn’t work that way. The letter was written on the church’s stationery. Printed at the bottom of the sheet was the familiar quotation, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.” Immediately above that printed logo, the elder signed his name.

This came from an eldership of good men, the congregation were ready to work, the preacher had already done mission work, and by the time of this writing, has been spreading the gospel in many parts of the world. We regarded the withdrawal from South African support to be a step backward. But also, we were hurting. We could not help but wonder if our work had been unsatisfactory and they didn’t want to say so. It was many weeks later that we received the assurance that our work had indeed been satisfactory and these same elders recommended that we be supported to return to South Africa, so stating in a letter to our new supporting church.

Before that support was found, we had to begin, and quickly, to find a sponsor. We soon became acquainted with the task which has beset almost every one of our missionaries – fund raising. We had 16mm movies of our



first years in Africa, and in early 1954, there had not been a great number of fund-raising missionaries traveling among the churches. Our presentation was novel enough that we could fill an itinerary with at least 5 nights a week. Plagued by wintry weather, John came down with a severe case of laryngitis and was ordered by the doctor not to speak for a week, but other than that, he kept busy for many weeks. No support was forthcoming until John decided on one of his trips to call on and greet his old friend, Cleon Lyles, then preacher for the congregation at 6th and Izzard Streets in Little Rock, Arkansas. Cleon told him that the congregation was in a position to help somebody and that he would speak to the elders. Very soon the arrangements were made and we were taken under their sponsorship immediately, so that we did not have to go without income for even one month.

Support problems settled, we went about and visited relatives in Minnesota and Kentucky, and just prior to our departure from the USA, we spent a week in Little Rock. During the week, we became acquainted with some of the members, but it would have been better to have remained with them for at least a month. A congregation that supports a missionary needs to have a chance to get to know him and his family personally.

We departed for South Africa in mid-July when a record heat wave had pushed the temperature higher and higher each day until the thermometer topped out at 115 degrees on the evening that we boarded our train for Chicago. It was a posh, air-conditioned train and we had a large, comfortable compartment. Excited little boys clambered into the upper berths and peeped out through the canvas webbing which would keep them from falling to the floor. At Chicago

we changed for New York where we spent three days, taking the children to see Radio City and the Empire State Building, and having a ride around the island on a sight-seeing boat.

The ship we traveled on from New York to Port Elizabeth was identical to the one on which we had sailed home. These were much more comfortable than the ship on which we made our first voyage in 1949. We now had spacious rooms, some comfortable chairs, a clean deck for play, a lounge, and a more pleasant dining room: these are factors that make the difference on a long voyage with several small children. We had a stop at Cape Town and spent a day or two in the harbor there, having the opportunity to go ashore and do some sight-seeing. We visited the Scotts at Grassy Park, and with a rented car we drove around the city and began to appreciate what a unique spot it has in the world and what a beautiful place it is. This was our first time to ride the cable car to the top of Table Mountain. At first my mouth was dry with fear, but then I remembered that people ride the cable cars every day to reach the restaurant at the top, as did other people who had to get there to maintain the area for tourists. I relaxed then and enjoyed the breathtaking view. From the top, one can look out over much of the city and the harbor where the ships look like a miniature toy set. On foggy days, the city may be entirely obscured; and sometimes in summer the "table cloth" is likely to hang over the mountain. We were in luck, for the day was perfect.

This time it was the Grays meeting the Hardins in the Port Elizabeth harbor. They took us first to their home in Parsons' Hill, then to the house that they had rented for us

in Walmer. It was a temporary place, available for only four months, but during that time we would have opportunity to make other arrangements.

## Port Elizabeth Again

After an absence of almost a year, it took a little while to return to the swing of things in Port Elizabeth. Echols had gone to Tanganyika to investigate possibilities of starting a school there and then gone back to ACC to work on a Master's degree. Leonard had been on his own. In East London, Ray Votaw had replaced Leslie Blake who had gone back to secular work in Johannesburg and Don Gardner who had returned to America. Joe McKissick had replaced Caskeys and Millers in Johannesburg. Only in Pretoria did the personnel remain the same, with Martelle Petty their preacher. In 1954, it was possible to summarize our brotherhood's progress in South Africa in this short paragraph. By the time of this writing it would take many pages.

Leonard had found hard sledding in the Port Elizabeth work. There was much indifference, the attitude of "live and let live" — it doesn't make any difference what you believe as long as you are sincere. With members of most denominations content to attend services once or twice a month, it is hard to teach new converts to assemble to worship on the first day of every week. With most people accustomed to dropping a small coin into the contribution plate, it is difficult to teach sacrificial giving. Also, we were living in a place where people flock to the beaches in the mornings because more than likely the wind will be blowing too hard by noon. (Maybe we should have had services in the afternoon instead of morning. That is

a moot point. How far does one go to cater to people's habits?)

The ping-pong table had been moved to the Gray's garage and they continued to invite the young people into their home, much as we had done. Marguerite made pancakes on Sunday nights, and they continued the Friday night sing-songs, though with fewer goodies accompanying the tea.

A really big problem in the black group had surfaced, bringing us face to face for the first time with a condition that had come about because many black men must work in the cities, leaving wives and families in the homelands. Many of the men took second "wives," or more accurately, "women of convenience" in the city. In a culture where polygamy is accepted, these people may have thought less seriously of this situation than we did, but even among themselves, they knew it was not accepted in the churches with which they were familiar. The men introduced their local women to us as their wives, and we accepted that, but word came to us after a while that the church in Korsten was known as the "fornicating church." John and Leonard began immediately to preach and teach on what the Bible has to say about marriage and morality. After sufficient time had elapsed for the men to learn and act upon their new knowledge, it became necessary to withdraw fellowship from them because they refused outright to mend their ways. Only one man, Morca Njiku, left the woman he had been living with.

Morca had a hard time. He was from Malawi, and since the Malawi people had a reputation for being good workers and honest people, Morca had a good job at a hotel near the beach. New laws were passed to govern population influx, and if a black alien had been in South Africa less than

a given number of years, he had to leave. Hard as it may seem, the law was necessary to protect the local black population and assure that there would be jobs and housing situations for them. But Morca didn't want to go. The police checked frequently to see if foreign blacks' papers were in order, and Morca's boss said to him, "Morca, if the police ask me about you, I don't know you." So when fellow workers saw the police coming to make a check, Morca would hide in the walk-in refrigerator. In a way, we all thought this was very funny, and truly, we did not want to see Morca leave, but of course it wasn't right either, and finally he came around to tell us good-bye.

We may have had one or two letters from Morca after he left us, but other than that, he simply disappeared from our lives. It was in October, 1983, more than 25 years after we told Morca goodbye, that I had a letter from brother Doyle Gilliam. Doyle had worked for many years in Malawi and went back for a visit in mid-1983. Part of his letter is quoted here: ". . . in Blantyre, I met a brother Morca Njiku. He asked me if I knew you and John. He was unaware of John's passing. He felt very close to both of you and was especially grateful because John is the one who taught him the gospel in Port Elizabeth in 1953. He said that John first taught him, and then he was baptized by Leonard Gray. I was very impressed with this brother and his evident love for the Lord and for you and John." Never underestimate the power of the seed you have sown. For many years, we never heard a word from Morca, and now this wonderful news!

In February, 1984, I received a 7-page letter from brother Morca himself, from which I quote a few portions:

“ . . . . I am very glad to see you letter like I do see you with my eyes. I thank Lord that brother Doyle Gilliam what he has done. I am sorry about the death of brother Hardin it has broken my heart . . . . I told my people here about brother Hardin and sister Hardin that if brother J. Hardin and sister Hardin are not going to enter eternal life most of us shall be in hot fire.

. . . . Everywhere I was preaching with Joseph Chirwa and at Chombe Estate where I use to work. I and brother Thera we did open church there. We had 35 members and it was difficult to turn them to a Christian . . . . I am getting grey behind my head the hair is finished there is a round table glass, but I strong still . . . .”

Brother Morca has nine children, one of them a boy whom he named “Hardin Njikhu.” One of the sons, together with three other children at school, were given Cola drinks with poison in them and died. Morca himself was laid up for 3 months with the effects of snake bite. Morca’s place of work was very far from his home and he could visit his family only occasionally. He describes the trip as follows:

“ . . . . It is very far from here (to the place of work). We leave Blantyre Tuesday morning at 5 a.m. and arrive at Chipoka the same day at 4 p.m. At Chipoka we take a ship at 10 p.m. and arrive at Nkhata Kota 6 a.m. next morning, from Nkhata Bay that is the same day, but we do arrive at Nkhata Bay 7 p.m. from Nkhata Bay to my home 15 miles.”

Morca is now living in Blantyre where he reports that jobs are very scarce. When he wrote, he was out of work and had had most of his clothing stolen. Life can be very hard for someone in that country. He closes his letter by saying, "I always sing song number 9 – 'Trust and Obey' because there is (no) other way to be happy in Jesus."

Within the black group in Port Elizabeth were a couple we began to refer to as "matchmakers." When they attempted to match a certain single man with a particular girl, an argument broke out, deteriorating into a fight with the two women tangling on the floor. The husband of the one picked up a piece of firewood with which to "discipline" his wife but struck the other woman instead, knocking her out cold. The following Sunday, all apologized publicly and shook hands. Happily, in 29 years of experience in Africa, this display of uncontrolled temper by church members was the first of only two, the other being a hot argument between some colored people near Johannesburg.

The white congregation seemed to have reached a plateau. There was some discontent among the members, some thinking John and Leonard to be too conservative, others that they were too liberal. In fact, there were so many origins and religious backgrounds of people in that little congregation, it is a wonder that we got along as well as we did. There were the British-South African Hockeys, the German Steinigers, the American Grays and Hardins, the ex-Methodist Joostes, two British ladies with remote connections with the church in England, and the Hornes who were part English and part Afrikaans with backgrounds in the Anglican and Congregational churches. We all had to



work at the job of accepting one another as Christian brothers and sisters, "in honor preferring one another," and overlooking differences in personalities, nationalities, and matters of opinion.

In 1954, Al Horne's father died. Al had decided that he wanted to go to Abilene Christian College and become a preacher. Al's mother, newly widowed, wanted Al to give up that plan and stay near her, but Al knew that his two brothers would take care of her. With mixed emotions, he left for Texas at the tender age of 17. At ACC he did very well, for he set as his goal to earn grades as high as Eldred Echols had done a few years earlier — some of the highest grades in the history of that college thus far. At ACC, Al met and married Donna Whittaker, and in 1959 they went to Tanganyika to work with Eldred and Jane Echols. Eldred and Jane had met in Ft. Worth, Texas, earlier in 1959 and were married after a whirlwind courtship and the assurance that Jane was willing to go to Africa. In 1964, Echols and Hornes all moved to Benoni. Al Horne is now the head of Southern Africa Bible School there.

### SINGING SCHOOLS AND TRAGEDY

The choice of John Hardin to go to South Africa in 1949 had been because of his experience and ability as a song leader. He had hoped to be able to hold numerous singing schools, but the need had not arisen to any great extent because of the small size of the congregations. It was decided by late 1954 that the time was right for such schools in Johannesburg and Pretoria, so during the break between the school years, we traveled to the Rand.

It was just after Christmas. Two days of the

Johannesburg singing school had been completed when we received an urgent phone call with the news that Martelle Petty had been critically injured in a motorcycle accident. John and Joe McKissick drove to Pretoria immediately, arriving at the hospital only moments before Martelle passed away, never having regained consciousness.

Dolores Petty had given birth to the Petty's third red-headed daughter on December 22 and was remaining in the maternity ward for a few extra days because of minor complications. Martelle had visited her in the early evening and had taken home her little bedside radio for a minor repair. He put the two little girls to bed and left them for a few moments, he thought, while he went quickly to return the radio to Dolores. It was misting, and in the glare of headlights on busy Church Street, he missed his turn, did a "U" turn to rectify his error, was struck by a car, and sustained a severe skull fracture.

Martelle had sold his car to obtain funds to contribute to the purchase of property in Tanganyika where he hoped to go into missionary work with Guy Caskey and Eldred Echols. Perhaps we can say that Martelle Petty was a martyr for Christ — had he not sold his car as an act of faith, he would not have died when he did.

On the morning after the accident, the gardener had come to work in the yard and found that the two little girls were alone. The hospital personnel had failed to look in Martelle's wallet where they could have found identifying papers, so nobody had been notified of the accident some 10 or 11 hours earlier. A policeman who had been at the scene of the accident had told Eric Elliot, a member of the fire department and a member of the

church in Pretoria, that the accident victim looked like Eric's preacher, so the two hastened to investigate. As soon as the news reached Dolores, she left the baby in the care of the nurses, dressed herself, and went home to the little girls.

The Pettys were a young family, devoted to one another and to the Lord. The Greek man at the corner tea room described Martelle perfectly when he said, "Mr. Petty was the sweetest man I have ever known." Martelle and Dolores had married young and were only 26 when Martelle died. He had already been preaching for 10 years, nearly 4 of them in Pretoria.

Martelle Petty was laid to rest in the old cemetery in Pretoria. Dolores bore up well, not only because she had the little girls to think of, but because she had great faith. As quickly as arrangements could be made for her flight, she was on her way back to her people in America. We went to the airport to bid farewell to a brave lady, heart-broken, but courageously carrying her tiny new baby, closely trailed by two little girls, the sun glinting on the red hair that they had inherited from their daddy.

All of us agreed that if Martelle had been able to speak to us, he would have said that we should carry on and have the singing school as planned, for the work of the church must go on. We stayed in the Petty home then, and held a good week of singing. We remained in Pretoria for a second week in order to help with the preaching and teaching and to close out some of the legal matters following upon the Pettys' departure.

Pettys were to have returned to America later in 1955, and it had already been planned that the Carl

McCullough family were to take their place; but they were not due to arrive for many months. It was decided therefore that the Leonard Grays would take up temporary residence in Pretoria to help that church and that the Hardins would carry the work load in Port Elizabeth.

### ALONE AGAIN

Left to work alone in Port Elizabeth once again, we faced many days of discouragement with heavy loads of responsibility. We had come to the end of the short-term lease on the house Leonard had rented for us in Walmer, and had lived with the Grays for a week before going north for the singing schools. The housing problem was solved for the immediate future when it was arranged that we would stay in the Grays' house while they were in Pretoria for the coming months.

The house was in Parsons Hill, a lovely new suburb. From a picture window in the living room, we could look out over much of the city and the harbor. We could count the ships as they came and went. Sometimes the harbor was so busy that as many as 12 or 15 ships would be waiting in the roadstead. Occasionally, on one of Port Elizabeth's rare windless days, there would be a hazy condition causing a mirage in which the horizon seemed to vanish and the ships appeared to float, ghost-like, in the sky.

We moved our school boys to the Herbert Hurd school in Newton Park and bought for each of them the required forest green blazers with grey grosgrain binding around collars and lapels, and the distinguishing school ties and belts. Sometimes the boys walked to school and sometimes rode the bus. On windy days they hated the

walk because the sand would sting their bare knees – that space between knee-high socks and short grey flannel trousers.

We kept Miner, the servant girl who had worked for the Grays. Miner loved the children, especially 3 year-old Neal whom she dubbed “Messpot,” following him through the house, indulgently picking up the litter that he left everywhere. While Kent and Don were in school Brian and Neal played together very well. Brian had always liked being “big” and Neal enjoyed being “little,” so they played daddy and son. Neal would call “Daddy,” and when John would answer, Neal would exclaim vehemently, “Not you!”

During our stay in the Grays’ house, we had four cases of measles at once, so we turned the big bedroom into a hospital ward, hung a blanket over the windows to darken the room, and sat it out. TV was still 20 years away, but we had recently bought a good record player and radio, so we bought a few children’s records, a spare speaker and a length of wire so that the boys could listen in their darkened room. The radio provided such old American favorites as Superman and Lone Ranger as well as Noddy and other English and South African stories for children.

Another addition was made to the Hardin household – a mongrel fittingly called “Scamp” who dug up my pansy bed, carried shoes out of the house and chased the neighbor’s chickens, but otherwise was a lovable and indestructible pet. She could have won prizes in high jump, for we found no wall or gate that could restrain her. She was not large, but she could clear a 6-foot wall by barely touching the top of it with her feet as she went over.

## FISHER STREET - KORSTEN

Thursday afternoon was traditionally maids' time off. The girls would usually go to visit friends and relatives in the nearby black townships, do some shopping, or just catch up on rest, and if the weather permitted, lie or sit on the ground and talk. It was the best time to hold a Bible class for women, so we would take our maid and pick up 3 or 4 others, drive to Korsten township, and meet with some of the women who lived there. I could teach this group directly in the English language because all the women had worked in the homes of white people and knew a moderately simple vocabulary. I was teaching a series of lessons on the book of Acts, and having talked for quite some time on obedience to the gospel, I asked if there were any questions. One hand went up. Thinking I had reached through to someone, and that she wanted to know more about becoming a Christian, I said, "Yes, what is your question?" She asked, "Why do you wear lipstick?" Gathering up my shattered composure, I had to explain my position about the use of makeup: that I had never used much of it, only a touch of color to brighten up an otherwise washed-out complexion; that in my circle of friends and in the church where I had been in the past, moderate use of makeup was accepted, that I believed it to be wrong only if it placed a woman in the wrong category so that she would be thought to be deliberately tempting men — oh, I had a time of it! Obviously, the one who asked about my lipstick had been in the company of some religious people who thought all use of makeup to be sinful. All the while I thought she had been listening *to* me, she had been looking *at* me. Incidentally, lipstick must have

stayed on better in 1955 than it does in 1983 – I can't keep it on for half an hour any more. As for makeup, it needs to be like Paul's eating meats – if it causes a weak brother (or sister) to stumble, we won't use it.

Despite the fact that black South Africans were oppressed, underpaid, and underprivileged, they were still better off than their counterparts in surrounding countries. There were a great many Rhodesians, Malawians, and others who had moved into South Africa to seek work in the cities. Before population movements were so closely watched and regulated, it was possible for these people to enter South Africa in search of work. Because there was a severe shortage of suitable housing for them, they built shantytowns for themselves, "squatting" wherever there were a few square yards of space. They used old sheets of corrugated roofing iron, parts of large packing cases, and anything else they could get hold of. Whole families lived in shacks not much larger than 10 by 12 feet, with doors opening onto alleys of mud and filth. Plumbing was non-existent. Single taps were located a block or two apart, and overflowing outhouses teemed with stench, flies, and disease.

Some of our church members lived along "Fisher Street," in the midst of the conditions just described. We kept special shoes on our back porch, to wear only when we visited such an area, not because we felt superior to those folks but in order to protect our own family from disease. Yet we were amazed at how scrubbed and spotless the interiors of some of the shacks were. We asked, not "how can these people be so dirty?" but "how can they live where they do and still be as clean as they are?" Perhaps they had built up some immunity to some diseases,

but there, as in the Rhodesian bush country, gastro-enteritis, spread by filth and flies, killed many babies and young children.

There was a very old man in one of these shacks who had a small pension to collect each month, and when he became ill, John obtained the necessary forms to fill out so that he could obtain the money from the post office. We would take this pittance to the old man's shack and visit for a little while. He shared space with a married daughter, her husband, and several children; yet there was but one single bed in the room. He explained that the children slept on the floor and the adults took turns using the bed.

Among the squatter population was a group of Rhodesian black people who became known as the "basket makers of Korsten." They had their own religious group of some 800 members and lived in a sort of commune. They had the reputation of being honest and hard-working, and although they practiced polygamy, they were good moral people in their own way. They observed the sabbath, believed in Holy Spirit baptism, and called themselves the "Apostolic Sabbath Church of God." Their leader was called a bishop — Bishop Elliot Gabellah. The bishop was introduced to John, and soon began to come to the study for Bible lessons. It wasn't long until one day we took Gabellah to our favorite pool among the rocks at the shore for baptism. At low tide, the pool was clear and quiet, but that day, there was a strong wind whipping up the waves, and it happened also to be high tide. With the waves and the foam washing over the rocks surrounding the pool, Elliot Gabellah was immersed, disappearing



momentarily in the white froth.

We had high hopes that the conversion of this leader would give a real boost to the black church work. He should have been able to convert many of his followers, for he was a man who could persuade others. When he began to inquire about going to college in America, our first reaction was enthusiastic. John took the first steps in helping him to obtain a passport and other papers, but soon we began to suspect that the man was more interested in personal advancement than in studying the Bible or in preparing himself to return and preach to his people. He spoke more of politics than of religion, so John explained to him that he was not interested in helping him to get to college in the states unless he would promise to preach the gospel.

About that time, the government was moving alien squatters out of the country. This was a move to protect the local South African blacks from some of the competition in the job market and to keep the locations such as Korsten and New Brighton from being ever more and more overpopulated. It was the same ruling that forced Morca Njiku to return to Malawi, and the basket makers of Korsten had to return to Rhodesia. At about the same time, we lost track of Gabellah. After a while we learned that he was doing considerable work with John Maples in Durban, even assisting with a short preacher training school. Later, he joined a denomination, and eventually may have become a Muslim and gone away somewhere for some higher education. Some of this was only hearsay.

Some 20 years later, in the mid-70's, when there was considerable political unrest in Southern Rhodesia and several parties were vying for power, we read in the

newspaper the name of Elliot Gabellah, a rather important man in one of those parties. We never knew if this was the same person and could only reason that there are few black people with the name "Elliot," and we had never heard the name "Gabellah" anywhere else, so we thought it quite possible that it was the same man.

Mid-1955 marked a step in the progress of the non-European work when a separate congregation for colored people was started in Schauderville. To an integration-oriented person, this may sound like a step backward, but in a society so divided by well-defined color lines, it meant that there would be a greater chance of reaching colored people who may not have consented to meeting with blacks. The colored van der Bergs had been willing to meet in the mixed group, but their untaught neighbors did not share that feeling. Long before the beginning of separate colored services, there had been large numbers of colored children attending evening Bible classes in the van der Bergs' home.

## A LOW PERIOD

While we had encouraging progress in the colored work, we were concerned almost to the point of alarm about one individual, and perhaps two, in the little white congregation. We had lent our car once or twice a week to a certain young man for him to go to friends and teach Bible classes. He said he did not want us to accompany him because these were young people and he wanted to use a "young" approach. We believed him, and thought him to be a zealous Christian. I think now that he was, for a while, just that. One morning, he returned the car with a large scrape from a side-swipe collision, but that

can happen to anybody. But when he returned the car another time with large quantities of sea sand and popcorn on the floor and seats we became suspicious about the "Bible classes." When John questioned him, he was evasive and began to manifest a bad attitude about many things. As the weeks passed, we feared that he would leave the church altogether and perhaps influence another to do the same.

It was on a day during this depressing period in our story that John and I sat at the dining table in the house on Parsons Hill. We had finished our lunch. Kent and Don were at school, and Brian and Neal had returned to their play. Overseas mail had arrived — a high point in the week. Our spirits had been low and we were looking for something to lift them up. In this frame of mind, we opened a letter from John's sister and brother-in-law. They went on at great length about the successful campaign of a popular faith healer in the midwestern states. He had collected followers by the thousands, they said, so surely the Hardins ought to be able to do as well. John usually had a great sense of humor, but he saw no humor in that letter. He looked woebegone!

It was only years later that we learned their side of the story. The two had collaborated in writing the letter, thinking it to be a good bit of "leg-pulling" designed to give us a laugh and cheer us up. We were buried so deep beneath our pile of woe that we could see no humor in it. There is a lesson in that incident. Letters do not convey the "tone of voice" or the expression on the face of the writer. There has been many a serious misunderstanding arising from letters written in one "tone of voice" and read in another. So when a person writes letters, he needs to make certain

that the recipient will understand. When receiving letters, read with discernment, believing that people who love you do not mean to hurt and offend.

Part of our problem at this time was that we were working alone. Echols was gone for good. Grays were to be gone for months. Missionaries need the companionship and the listening ears of co-workers. Sometimes one merely needs another shoulder to cry on. Jesus sent the 70 to preach, two by two. In the book of Acts, it was Paul and Silas, or Paul and Barnabas. We needed to have John and Leonard. When a congregation is better established and there are mature Christians with whom to work, a single preacher is adequate, but the Port Elizabeth work was not quite three years old, and there were not yet the kind of mature men in whom John could confide.

## TUNNELS

Sometimes there are “tunnels” in our lives. We were in one of them, and we couldn’t see the light at the other end. Tunnels are a “way through,” but sometimes they are very long and dark. Once when John and I had a few days’ vacation, we visited the northeast Transvaal where one of the points of interest is a disused section of old cog railway going through a tunnel. It has been preserved as a historic monument, and we decided as most tourists did, to walk through it. My eyes are always slow to adjust to changes in lighting, so I took John’s arm as we walked into the darkness. He walked confidently and I thought how good his eyes were to see anything at all. I felt completely blind. John said he could see a dim light ahead, marking the other end of the tunnel, but I couldn’t even see that.

When I complained of my poor eyesight, he laughed and said, "Maybe if you took off your dark sun-glasses, you might be able to see it too." I'll not be-labor the point with spiritual applications of that incident. There *was* a light at the other end of our Port Elizabeth experience, but it was a while before we saw it.

### THE JOOSTE STORY

During our furlough of '53 - '54, Leonard baptized Andy Jooste. Andy was one of the visitors at our very first service in September 1952. He visited frequently, and he was often among the young people who came to our home in Summerstrand to play table tennis and enjoy the Friday night sing-songs. Now in '55 we were getting to know him well, and his teenage sister Valerie was visiting our services. Andy was eager to have his entire family converted, but he labored under a tremendous handicap — his father had a problem with alcohol. A fine, likable man when sober, he gave his family problems whenever he yielded to his habit. He was an expert carpenter and cabinet maker but never kept a job for long. Quiet little Mrs. Jooste worked hard to be the main support of the family, and they lived by managing frugally in a tiny house. Little sister Patty was happy and sweet, a proper little ray of sunshine, but retarded. The older sister, Connie, had already married and moved away.

On a sunny day in May 1955, Valerie Jooste and our oldest son, Kent, were baptized at low tide in our little pool among the rocks. Both Andy and Valerie stand far above average in our memory, for they have remained steadfast and true, standing firm through difficult times.

Eventually the older sister Connie was converted and together with her husband, Johan Pienaar, they have worked hard for the church of the Lord wherever they have lived. Mrs. Jooste was baptized, and now the family circle was nearly complete. Patty, forever a child, never let go of her innocent faith. It is necessary now to skip even further ahead of the story to a gospel campaign that was being held in Port Elizabeth in 1968. Leonard Gray had been living in the states for some time but had accompanied the campaign group to the scene of his earlier labors in Port Elizabeth. Leonard was preaching on a particular Sunday of the campaign. At the close of the sermon, he invited his hearers to respond. Try to imagine the emotion that welled up in Leonard's heart when he looked up and saw Mr. Jooste making his way to the front of the building, and the tumultuous joy in the hearts of the Jooste family when husband and father publicly confessed his faith in Jesus and was baptized.

When will we learn to let God hold the future? Had we but known in the "down" days of 1955 what was to happen some 13 years later!

#### THE CAR – A NECESSARY EVIL

Once again we had a car that was giving us a lot of trouble. We had replaced the old '49 model with a '53 Vauxhall when we were able to take advantage of a special plan offered to missionaries by General Motors. They provided cars at great reductions until some denominational group began to obtain the cars for non-missionaries. That entire plan was scrapped, so the innocent had to suffer with the guilty. When we found the '53 car to be

inadequate for our growing family and that it spent as much time in the shop as out, we had to do something.

General Motors assembled the Vauxhalls in Port Elizabeth, but we needed something bigger. We were offered the opportunity to import a car from the states, and in 1955 the customs charges were still very reasonable. (Later the customs doubled, and then rose to a figure equal to the purchase price of the imported car.) We could order the model of Chevrolet we wanted, even to our choice of color, and we had one built for us with a right-hand steering wheel. The only hitch to the plan was that payment had to be made before the car was shipped, but the Lord and John's good mother were with us. Mom had sold her big house and bought a smaller one and had some cash which she willingly lent us. She agreed that when we received the new car, we would sell the Vauxhall, live on the money from that sale for a couple of months, and have our salary sent directly to her by our supporting church, and then pay her back the remainder in monthly installments until the debt was cleared.

There were snags: the first check Mom sent us was made out wrong and had to be returned. Manufacture of our specially ordered car was delayed by internal factors. Shipment by freighter is always indefinite as to time, but eventually we landed our sea-mist green Chevrolet with white top, later to become known as the "Gospel Chariot." While we waited extra long for the delivery of the Chevy, the Vauxhall had added a few thousand extra miles, and the government had added a regulation that the purchaser of a used car had to pay down 45% of the purchase price and finance only 55%, thus making it harder for us to find

a buyer. We did some belt-tightening, but, as always, we made it.

### A PLACE TO MEET

Time began to press us to do something about our own housing as well as a decent place for the church to assemble. The hall we were renting was always dirty and smelled of beer and wine, the final touch occurring when a visiting lady happened to sit on a chair that had some sticky wine on it. She was a finicky person anyway, and after that, she never visited our services again.

We began to search for a house that would lend itself to residence cum meeting place so that we would have two for the price of one. There were several houses that could have been satisfactory, but they all cost too much. We could finance a house with a mere 10% down payment, but even that was more than we had in the church treasury. When we asked for help from our supporting congregation, we were turned down because they had been reading scary articles about South Africa's political and racial conditions. They were afraid to invest any money in property when it seemed as though "the white population of South Africa were about to be driven into the sea." We could see no grounds for this fear and we were sorely disappointed, but everything worked out for the best eventually. John's mother came to the rescue once again, and although we had not yet paid back all of the car money, she lent us a few hundred dollars so that we could close a deal on a house. The property we bought at 9 Pickering Street, Newton Park, was very old. The house was not at all pretty, but it was well built and stood on a large lot. The Hardin family



paid enough rent for the dwelling portion of the house to make up a large part of the monthly payments. We would have had to pay rent somewhere, so we reasoned that we may as well be paying off church property with that money.

The congregation began meeting in a room at the front of the house, intended to be a bedroom. At this time it was large enough to accommodate the small group. Because we had no money with which to purchase seating, we would carry in our dining room and kitchen chairs, foot lockers, trunks, and Samsonite suitcases. Sunday school classes were held in our kitchen and living room.

For our family, we had a living room, kitchen with dining nook, one large bedroom with a sunny glassed-in area for a sewing table, and a medium sized bedroom opening onto a small glassed-in porch. The four boys had to share one bedroom, so John purchased materials and built two sets of bunk beds. This set-up elicited the comment from our doctor, who made house calls, "Well, that's one way to solve the parking problem." A small room off the living room made a good study for John.

The sheltered front yard lent itself to growing flowers, so I had a large bed of dahlias, two beds of carnations which thrived in the sandy soil, and some of the largest Shasta daisies I have ever seen. We tried with only moderate success to raise some vegetables in the back yard, but grew some waist-high marigolds. A golden shower climbed right up the back porch wall and onto the roof.

The house had been built before there was a good supply of city water, and in the back yard was a shallow fish pond about 9 feet square under which there was a large underground cistern. By chopping out the concrete bottom

of the fish pond and filling in the cistern to a suitable depth, we were able to build a baptistry. Since it was the Hardin family's responsibility to maintain the property, including the baptistry, we permitted the children to play in the water. We would have liked to have a pump to drain the little pool for cleaning, but again lacked funds, so it was necessary to dip the water out by the bucketful. This became the gardener's job every so often.

#### A TIME TO EXPAND

By the time we had moved to 9 Pickering Street, the Grays had returned from their temporary work in Pretoria. We began to have more visitors at our services and it looked as if we were ready to move ahead. It was time to make a big effort to reach more people. 1956 was upon us. Our fifth son, Dale, was born in February that year, and for the first couple of months he slept in a bassinet in our bedroom. Plans for expanding the meeting space affected those arrangements, for the only way to enlarge the space without adding onto the house was to remove the partition between the meeting room and our bedroom.

Removing partitions in any South African house is a messy job because of the brick and plaster construction. We knew this, but little did we expect that the partition to be removed was made of solid concrete and would require the use of sledge hammers to break it down. We moved our bedroom furniture into the little study – I should say we crammed it in, including a little bed for Dale. For the next week or two we had a covering of fine white dust over everything as the wall was being chopped

out.

After the partition was removed, there was replastering to do, the floor to be repaired, painting to be done, and curtains to be made. All this was done at minimum cost with members doing the labor. One night, close to midnight, several men had been painting when one of them, Bob Bentley, said that he wanted to be baptized. The work was halted for the night, and a little service held right there amid the mess of paint, and Bob was baptized.

Finished at last, the big empty room looked shiny and new, but barren of even a stick of furniture. We wanted strong, non-folding chairs, not only to look better and be more comfortable, but to eliminate the noise of folding chairs. With this in mind, John and Leonard visited a furniture factory and found just what we needed. Another church had ordered 80 blond-wood chairs and then decided they didn't want them, so the lot was offered to us at a reduction if we would take all 80. This was more than we needed at the moment, but a good value. At a business meeting, the men of the congregation decided to buy them, and we were given six months to pay, interest free. We knew we would have to do some scraping at the bottom of the barrel to make payments, but we believed we would grow and need those chairs.

## THE LORD PROVIDES

One evening, soon after we moved into our new assembly room, Leonard arrived from the post office just a few moments before meeting time. He handed John a letter with a familiar return address — a couple who had sent us small sums from time to time to assist the work. Imagine

the wonderful surprise when we found a large check enclosed with a letter explaining that they were sharing a bonus with us. When the exchange rate was figured, we discovered that the gift was sufficient to pay the entire price of the chairs except for half a chair! That money was already on the way to us when the men decided to buy the chairs, but only the Lord knew it then.

Living in the “church building” – which is literally what we were doing – presented a few problems. With our living quarters being used for Sunday school rooms, we were constantly having to move furniture. Our bathroom was the church’s restroom, and when there was a service to be held, I refrained from cooking so that there would be no food odors drifting through the little auditorium. When there was to be a baptism and the weather was cold, we would empty the water heater into the baptistry, but even that was nearly futile, for the water temperature would be raised only a degree or two.

John had had to move his study to make a place for our bedroom, and he set up his desk and duplicating machine in the sunny spot that I’d once had for my sewing. We were pretty crowded, yet had spacious quarters in comparison to the shanties on Fisher Street.

John and Leonard saw the need of a leader for the black congregation, so they made a trip into the Transkei to contact Bentley Nofemela, with whom they had corresponded. They found his home without any trouble, and drove a short distance off the main road and through a gate in the fence. They conferred with Bentley for a while, and when they stepped outside, there were a dozen or so mounted men, some of whom were police. It seems

that our white men had violated the law by going beyond the fence into black territory. They were about to be fined rather heavily but their pleas of ignorance of the law were heard and the fine was reduced to little more than a token. A short time later, the Nofemela family moved to Port Elizabeth to work full-time with the black congregation – a noteworthy step forward for the church. Bentley is a Xhosa as are the majority of black people in the Port Elizabeth area.

Housing was difficult to find for Bentley and his family of four, so we arranged for them to live temporarily in our servant's quarters. At that time this was possible, but in later years, there were strict rulings against allowing anyone except bona fide servants to occupy such accommodations. Bentley's wife, Dora, worked in the house several days a week, and when Dale was old enough to be propped up and look around, he enjoyed watching her, especially when she was ironing. Dora sang softly as she worked – such a joy! Bentley proved to be a hard worker, having arrived at the time that the little black congregation was staggering from the trauma of withdrawal of fellowship from all those who would not straighten out their lives by separating from their illegal wives.

## PERSONAL

Mothers mark many events in life by associating them with the times of birth of children, or the various activities in which they engage. Memories come flooding back to me when I think of the year and a half that we lived at 9 Pickering Street. There was the time that Kent had a severe earache and Brian had a cluster of warts on his knee. Side by

side on a shelf were two little bottles of medicine: oily ear-drops for Kent and acid for the warts. In the wee hours of a night, Kent awoke complaining of his ear. I poured a few drops of the oil into a teaspoon and held it for a moment over a burner to warm the medicine. Sleepy as I was, I noticed that the drops looked too thin, and on examination, I discovered that it was the acid. Suddenly I was wide awake with the horror of what I had nearly done. The acid being meant for warts only, with cautions not to spill any onto normal skin, I went cold and then hot when I thought of what it would have done to the inside of an ear. I poured every drop of acid down the sink and decided we would get rid of the warts some other way. Kent got his proper ear drops then, but I didn't sleep another wink that night. It wasn't long until Brian fell on the gravel driveway and removed every one of the warts in a split second.

The 1956 school year ended in early December, and Kent planned to spend the holidays at the swimming pool. Instead, he came down with the mumps, and dreamed night and day of the day his quarantine would end. The last day of quarantine was beautiful and warm, so we gave him permission to take a book up into the tree house and read quietly. When I called him to come into the house, he reached for the rope with which he would swing down to the ground, missed his grip, fell, and broke a wrist. What tragedy for a boy about to have his 11th birthday, for now there would be no swimming at all until it was time to go back to school.

Kent's time at 9 Pickering Street was beset with problems: twice he was bitten by dogs belonging to neighbors, and once he stuck a garden fork into the top of his foot, so

he became a familiar figure in the hospital's emergency room. We all felt bad when his pet budgie escaped and flew out an open window and a search of the neighborhood was fruitless.

Don, at eight, was a sweet, tender-hearted boy. He had emptied his piggy bank and put his savings in the collection for our building fund. But the best of children are tempted too, and something or somebody whispered in his ear that he should light a fire in the tree house. The little blaze was soon extinguished, and Don learned that fire can destroy the things you love. Don had a lovely soprano voice, and in church, people would turn to see who it was that sang so well. It was at this time that he had his first pet pigeons, the beginning of an interest that continues on into his 30's.

Brian started school in January of 1957. The Herbert Hurd school was so crowded that they would take no new first-graders whose birthdays fell after February 28. Brian was to be 6 on March 9th. He was very tall for his age, and mentally more than ready for school. The school board would make no exception in his behalf, so I called the principal of the Summerwood school where Kent and Don had attended earlier. Brian would be accepted if we could manage the transportation, and we got him enrolled. He needed to ride two buses each way with a transfer in the middle of town, so for a while, I went with him, but he soon learned to make the entire 6 mile trip by himself. I was much relieved when I heard him come in the door after his first day on his own. Only once did he make a wrong move – he got onto a bus in town which had a "G" after its number, meaning that it went only as far as the golf course. Instead of panicking as some youngsters would have done, he got off that bus and waited for the correct

one to come along.

My mind's camera has two pictures preserved forever in my memory. Sometime before Brian started school, I sent him on his big tricycle to get something from the store, two blocks away. Soon he came running home with a look of utter catastrophe all over his face. His trike was gone! John went with him to see if they could find it, and a little while later, back came Brian, catastrophe replaced by ecstasy, a happy grin from ear to ear and beyond. The trike had been moved, mischievously or otherwise, and they had found it a couple of doors away from where Brian had parked it.

A real tragedy in the Nofemela family struck us all. Little Patricia, close to the same age as Brian and Neal, was a sunbeam. Oblivious to color of skin, they played together, Patricia always singing, singing in the sweetest, clearest tones. Our children all caught cold and sore throats during a spell of damp, chilly weather, so we were not overly concerned when Patricia also developed a sore throat. The family, still living in our servant's quarters, had found a house in the black residential area, so on a drizzly, dismal day, they made the move. Having loaded their possessions on a donkey cart, they climbed aboard and drove out of the yard. Tiny Patricia was bundled up in a big blanket against the damp chill. That was the last time we saw her. Her sore throat turned out to be diphtheria, and despite treatment in the hospital for contagious diseases, her little sweet voice was forever stilled. We laid her to rest in a lonely pauper's grave on a day when the rain was driven at a slant across the drab, muddy graveyard. Only her folks and the Grays and I were



there — John was away at a singing school in East London. The only consolation for the Nofemelas was that Patricia would not have to grow up into a world where her people struggle so hard for the little that they have.

### MAPLES TO DURBAN

We always had a good way of remembering the date of the arrival of the John Maples in South Africa. Enroute to Durban via ship, the freighter on which they were traveling was to be delayed in the Cape Town harbor for many days. The Maples were weary of the ship, so they traveled by train to visit with us until the ship made its call to Port Elizabeth when they would reboard and sail to Durban. They were with us on Sunday, February 26, and the Hardins, Grays, and Maples all had dinner at our house. That afternoon, to give the members of the congregation a chance to get acquainted with the Maples, we held open house and served tea. In the evening, during the service, I began to have some familiar uneasy feelings, and shortly after we had gone to bed, I told John it was time for him to get dressed again and take me to the hospital. At 4:00 a.m. on the 27th, Dale Owen Hardin made his entrance into the world. That is how I remember that it was late February 1956 when the Maples arrived in South Africa, and early March by the time they finished their voyage and landed at Durban to begin the work of the church there.

John and Leonard did a lot of teaching and held many discussions with people of all races and religious backgrounds during these months. A letter John wrote in April of 1956 tells about a discussion with a Catholic doctor and a Mormon man which went on until 3:00 a.m. This type

of discussion sometimes did not accomplish much in the way of persuading men to change, but John always said that he learned a great deal by explaining to people what he himself believed and why. His own faith was invariably strengthened, making him better prepared to teach others in the future. On this occasion, John and Leonard had already promised Billy Malherbe that they would go fishing with him at 3:30 a.m., so they didn't even go to bed that night.

It was frustrating that many people would promise "for sure" that they would visit our services, and it took us years to learn that people often find it hard to come right out and say "No" to an invitation, so they will say, "Yes, yes. Definitely. I'll be there." There have been lists made of the unusual excuses folks make for missing services, and to these lists we could add quite a few. One family all stayed away because their dog died and they were too upset. One man didn't turn up because he had a "bad" eye, and another was interviewing prospective boarders. One lady could not attend Sunday school because that was her baby's bathtime, and he would be upset if she changed it.

#### RHODESIA AGAIN - A VACATION

With all the activity and responsibility — living in the church house — or having the church meet in our residence — and having a fifth little boy, I became very run down. Complicating my condition, or perhaps initiating it, was the very bad case of flu followed by an extended attack of bronchitis in July and August the previous year. I had been left with chronic asthma as a result

of it, and had trouble with long bouts of coughing. The damp coastal weather was no help, and my doctor recommended that I get away for a good vacation. Vacation with a baby 3 months old? And four other boys? We had no money for such a trip, and hardly gave it a second thought. Then John received a letter from Orville Brittell at Sinde Mission, inviting him to go on a hunt and take pictures. The hunt didn't interest John, but photography did, and he finally persuaded me that this was just the vacation I needed. The doctor thought so too, but when I said I must take the baby with us, he said, "No! That would be no vacation."

This was one of those times when the Lord works in mysterious ways to provide what we need. Sister Malherbe, mother of Abie Malherbe who had left Johannesburg to attend ACC, was in Port Elizabeth with her three youngest children: Billie, Lettie, and Claude. Living on the tiny amount she received from Child Welfare, the four of them had a single room in a big old house, a room which never saw a ray of sunshine and was always chilly. Our house on the hill had some rooms which were warmed and cheered by lots of sunshine — just what Malherbes needed. We moved them into our home, and in return for the care of our children, we paid all their expenses for the period of 5 weeks that we were away. Lettie, then about 17, said that Dale would be her baby and she wanted to fix his formula and take most of the responsibility for him. Sister Malherbe had had 10 children of her own so we had no fear as to her capabilities. We made arrangements with our doctor and with the pharmacist that the Malherbes could put any medical needs on our accounts.

We made leisurely stops and visited churches that had not been there just a few years before: East London where the Votaw family were living and working, Durban where the Maples had settled in and a small congregation was meeting in the Boy Scout hall, Johannesburg where the McKissicks were carrying on the work, and last of all before leaving South Africa, we visited the McCulloughs in Pretoria. Driving north out of Pretoria, there were no other churches or mission points to visit, so we headed across the border into Rhodesia and on to Bulawayo.

In Bulawayo, we stayed with the Henry Ewings. We had met them when they came through Port Elizabeth after having landed an imported car. Beth is a daughter of the W. N. Shorts. I stayed with Beth for three days while Henry, Alan Hadfield, and John made a 3-day trip into the bush to a village called Ndedele. They all did a lot of preaching and baptized a man, and, said John, "had a lot of fun because those were two fine fellows to be out with."

From Bulawayo we drove to Victoria Falls and found the Zambezi running so full that we could hardly see anything for the spray, a complete contrast to the dry year of 1949 when we had last been there. We slept in blanket rolls on the ground one night, despite the dampness. The ground was hard, but it was fun.

At Sinde, we learned that the hunting trip had been called off, so that gave us more time to sightsee at leisure, and we drove up to Namwianga for a little while. Since our first visit there, a boarding school for white children had been opened in addition to the older school for the black children. Missionary families at distant points had to teach their own children at home or send them away to

boarding schools, so they decided to open the Eureka boarding school and invite the children of white farmers in the area to enroll. In 1956 they had an enrollment of 46. The Shorts took care of the boys and the J. C. Shewmakers had the girls, in dormitory arrangements.

At all the stops along the way, John was asked to preach, teach classes, or lead singing and he loved every minute of it. The point farthest from home that we visited was Lusaka where the Henry Pierce family worked with the black people. Working on something less than the proverbial shoestring, they had built a group of 4 or 5 small rectangular buildings, out of sun-dried brick, the roofing being of thatch except for the kitchen which they had managed to roof with corrugated iron to avoid fire hazard — cooking was done on a wood stove. There was not money for glass windows and Henry had made shutters out of packing cases. Some years later, the Pierce family were able to move into town and live in a house while the buildings they had first erected were used for students in a preacher training school. Although we realized what hardships the Pierces had undergone to live as they did, John and I enjoyed sleeping in one of those little buildings with the smell of the thatch overhead.

### MOOKA'S VILLAGE

We returned once again to Namwianga and then made the 50 mile trip out to the “end of everywhere” — Kabanga, where Dow and Helen Pearl Merritt had spent many years. From Kabanga we rode with the Orville Brittells in their truck, about 20 miles beyond the mission. Orville was not stopped by the fact that there was no road — we just took

out over the fields. It was the dry winter season, so we didn't have to worry about anyone's crops. After being stuck for over two hours in the mud of a creek we had to ford, we finally came to Mooka's Village where there had been Christians for many years, and found three generations of Christians in one family.

Most names escape my memory, but I shall always remember Elifha. Never have I seen a more beautiful or more graceful and gracious lady. She was so pleased to have all of us visiting her village that she brought us a chicken and some eggs, and enlisted the help of a number of other women to set up a camp for us. With tall grass and reeds, they hastily constructed a wind-break which also afforded us privacy, and in no time at all we were made comfortable.

We held a service around a campfire that night. Orville knows the tribal language and speaks it fluently, so he acted as our interpreter. Later, he set up a screen and John showed slides that he just "happened" to have along. In such a remote village, they had no idea of the vastness of an ocean, and oohed and aahed over pictures of it, and of the Empire State building and other buildings in New York City. We had some slides of people and places in Africa, but the picture they liked best was one of their beloved sister Merritt. When they saw it, they all said, "Ooooooooooh! Helen Pearl!" and insisted in having the picture left on the screen for a long time.

Camp cots were set up in the bed of the truck for Augusta Brittell and the girls and myself while John and Orville dug hip holes in the sand and made themselves comfortable on the ground. Orville was solicitous of

city-bred John and feared that he would not sleep well, but few things ever kept John from sleeping. In the middle of the night, one of the little girls wakened Augusta and said, "Mommy, I'm scared! I think the hippos have come up out of the river." Augusta listened for a moment and then relaxed. It was John snoring.

On the return to Kabanga, we got stuck again, this time in a vlei, or swampy ground. A black man was running ahead of us to prevent just such an incident, but we had only the two left wheels on firm ground while the right rear wheel went down to the axle in mud. A team of six oxen was brought round to pull us out, but the middle yoke wanted to pull sideways. We got nowhere until the ornery pair were removed and the four cooperative beasts pulled together and got us out. Each time we were stuck, Augusta immediately set about making a little fire and boiling water for tea. At first I thought this ridiculous, but soon realized it was a good thing. The liquid, the sugar, the good flavor, and perhaps the "lift" of the caffeine all went well. Orville and Augusta had been together on many of these trips and had been stuck many, many times.

We were taken to another village not far from Kabanga where the people had not responded well, either to the gospel or to education — they had decided to close the school. It was a contrast to Mooka's Village where there were Christians with some education — clean and obviously progressive. Here there were women with reeds through their noses, and most of the women smoked gourd pipes. These gourds had a rounded blossom end about four or five inches in diameter and a long slender neck leading to the stem end. They were filled with water which filtered the

smoke that came from a chimney-like attachment fixed onto the large part of the gourd. To make it easier to draw on the pipes, the women had knocked out their upper front teeth. What they smoked was a combination of several things, one of which must have been dagga or pot, for they said it made them feel "so good."

### SINDE TO KRUGER PARK AND HOME

Back at Sinde for a few days, we observed how the orphanage had grown since our 1949 visit, for they now had 63 children, the original ones being in school. We were beginning to feel like the horse whose head has been turned toward home — chomping at the bit. We'd had a refreshing time of it, my cough had nearly gone away, and we were thinking of home and the boys. John persuaded me to take time for a broad swing to the east to go through the Kruger National Park. We entered at the northern gate and took two days to drive slowly down the 200 miles to Malelane Gate at the southern end of the park, stopping to photograph animals all along the way. This was the first of many visits we made to Kruger Park, a place which we learned to love. We drove through Swaziland on terrible dirt roads, stopped at the rest camp at Hluhluwe for the quietest night of our lives, made a quick visit to Durban, and then headed down through the Transkei to East London and home to Port Elizabeth. We had traveled 6,000 miles.

### SINGING SCHOOL AND VBS

The week after our return, John held a singing school in East London and reported that those people loved singing so much that they never stopped before 10:30 each



night. That was enough to warm the cockles of any song leader's heart. With prospective singing schools in Pretoria and Johannesburg later that year, John was beginning to feel good about his work.

Immediately after the singing school, we had a Vacation Bible School in Port Elizabeth. As far as we knew, this was the first VBS ever to be held by anyone in South Africa. We had distributed some 2,000 leaflets in the neighborhood, and on the Monday morning, we had no idea how many would turn up. We averaged about 46 for the 5 days which was fantastic and about all our facility could hold. We closed on Friday night with an open house for parents, with fair attendance and encouraging words from a good many. Some said that their children had learned more Bible in one week than in all their years in Sunday schools, and the way was open for other VBS's in the future.

We had our first baptism in the outdoor baptistry in the back yard when Pam Garth, a young lady who had been studying with us for nearly a year, was immersed. There were a number of other interested people by that time, and John actually wrote to his folks, "We are more full of enthusiasm for the work now than we have been in recent months."

In September of '56, John reported that Leonard Gray was in Rhodesia holding a series of gospel meetings in several places and had baptized about 30. Meanwhile John was having weekly Bible studies with the Jooste family and with the Bentley family, Mrs. Bentley being the mother of Pam Garth. Our services were being well attended with some visitors right along. Our Brian had made good friends

with a little boy at the corner of our block, and his mother began to visit our services. She was only "almost persuaded" but she brought her neighbor, Granny Swaats who was converted and remained faithful.

### WE BEGIN TO THINK OF A COLLEGE

September 1956 is the first record of the thinking of our brethren in South Africa toward the establishment of a school to train preachers. We'd had only a few South African men to go to the states for studies by that time, but enough to begin to realize, along with our workers in other nations, that a good number of such men never return to their home countries, so the purpose for which they are sent to American colleges is thwarted. Even more important is the principle that it is not the purpose of missionaries to Americanize overseas churches, and education obtained on home ground will in most ways be more suitable. Usually it is better for a man to study locally and then be supported locally rather than depend on American support.

In the little Free State town of Harrismith there had been an agricultural college which had closed down, its vacant buildings for sale at a minimal price of \$14,000. In early November all of the missionaries met there to look it over and hold a conference about it. There was a considerable amount of enthusiasm and a lot of desire, but the practical issues of funding, administration, staffing, and student recruitment loomed so large that it soon became obvious that the time was not right. There were not yet enough members of the church from which to draw students. It could not be an accredited institution for a very long time so it would be difficult to persuade very

many to attend. It was 8 years later that the Southern Africa Bible School had its tiny beginnings in Benoni.

Just after the Harrismith trip, John and Leonard visited the Grassy Park congregation in Cape Town and held several services with them. The main purpose of the trip, however, was to determine the plausibility of starting a purely white congregation in Cape Town. There had been small congregations meeting since the turn of the century, the membership being mixed — mainly colored people. Those white members in the existing congregations were perfectly happy to be in the mixed group, but there were many whites who did not take that attitude and so may never be reached with the gospel. Conrad Steyn, who had been converted in Pretoria, had been studying in the states and was due to return to South Africa soon, desiring to work in Cape Town. The brethren in that city agreed that for the sake of the growth of the church, it would be good to have a separate white group.

The December school holidays of 1957 gave us a break to go to Johannesburg and Pretoria where John held some very successful singing schools. When we use the word “successful,” it does not mean that we now had two congregations who could sing everything well, but there was a lot of interest and there were many who learned to enjoy singing. It takes more than five nights to learn to read notes, and some people never do so, even after several such schools. One lady with a lovely soprano voice sang well from memory and had considerable natural musical talent. During the closing moments of the final night of the school, John had us attempting to learn a new song by sight reading. He needed to turn his attention to the tenors and

basses, but when he did, the soprano floundered. When he asked the lady to please read the notes and carry on while he helped the men, she said that she was unable to read the notes. John raised his bushy eyebrows slightly and looked at her questioningly. She squirmed a bit and said, "I'm a soprano and I don't need to read the notes so I wasn't paying attention." What would *you* have said to her?

Johannesburg did better than Pretoria in their singing, mainly because Pretoria had three tone-deaf men who loved to sing and did so with all their might and main. In selecting a choir, a director can exclude the unmusical ones, but with congregational singing we teach that we sing to praise the Lord and not to tickle the ears of humans, so tin ears or true, all are encouraged to do their best.

On our return to Port Elizabeth after the singing schools, we stopped at Harrismith and met Andy deKlerk, the first South African student to return from schooling overseas and begin to establish a congregation.

#### FIRST OF MANY CAMPS

We hit the ground on the run when we returned to Port Elizabeth, for there was just time to make final preparations for the joint encampment we were planning with the East London congregation. Bob Bentley had obtained a large number of wooden packing cases, and for weeks the men had been busy constructing some pre-fabricated buildings. We might have done better to collect all the tents we could have found and set up camp that way, but with the larger wooden structures, we could have the women and girls in one and men and boys in another, while the third was to become a cook shack and storage place.

We had to hire a moving van to haul the huge pre-fab parts to the farm near Grahamstown.

The camp site itself was beautiful, being situated in a grove of trees in a valley with a stream running through it into a dam a little farther down. The stream must have been one of the few remaining in all the country that had water pure enough to drink unboiled.

A total of 50 attended the encampment. An adult Bible class was held in the cook shack, and thanks to the fine weather, we had a number of children's classes under the trees. There were plenty of games and sports for the youngsters, but when John tried to prove that he was one of them, he twisted his ankle. It was an enjoyable week and some of us were sorry when we had to break camp and go home so some of the adults could return to their jobs. While we were packing up to leave, a puff adder was seen moving away from the area of the women's accommodation, but we had no incidents with anything more troublesome than the mosquitoes that fed on us at night.

## VISAS AND THE SECTS

Correspondence dated January 1957 brings to light the answer to a problem we had been concerned about — several Americans had had visa applications refused. Because a government does not have to explain such refusals, we could only guess the reasons. Kenneth Adams, Paul Hall, and Ardron Hinton had made applications in the states, and Dow Merritt was wanting to move from Kabanga to Grassy Park in Cape Town, and all were turned down. There was reason to think that their applications were refused because they were wanting to work with all

racess. The government wanted to prevent entry of those who might stir up trouble among black and colored people. There had been some in some denominations who had done that very thing.

A visit to the American Embassy by John and brethren McKissick and McCullough during the time of the singing schools turned up some surprising information. The gentleman at the Embassy agreed that the race question could be the problem. Then he went to the files and brought out some letters, the contents of which were no less than startling. When the South African Embassy in Washington received a number of visa applications from members of the church of Christ, they decided to investigate the church. They corresponded with a "council of churches" (that is all they said by way of description) and were told that the church of Christ was a "small, unrecognized sect." That little phrase bore two damning words as far as South African officials were concerned. "Unrecognized" had particular bearing because until 1963, when official "church recognition" was done away, "unrecognized" churches could get no marriage officers, could get no building sites (in the case of black churches), and had many other difficulties in legal areas. The word "sect" is anathema, particularly in the Dutch Reformed church. Being Calvinistic and "orthodox," they preach against "the sects."

The man at the American Embassy advised our brethren to find some men of influence in Washington such as a congressman who was a member of the church or knew of it, who could approach the South African Embassy on the American side with the hope of dissuading

them from their position. In Port Elizabeth, John and Leonard visited with the American vice-consul who gave them the name of a particular man at the "South African Desk" in the Department of State in Washington.

Another channel was used by writing the details to A. R. Holton who was then preaching for the congregation at 16th and Decatur in Washington, D. C., in hopes that he could be of sufficient influence to be helpful. Adams, Hall, and Hinton's applications had been refused and they had turned to other pursuits. In the mill were applications from Gene Tope, Tex Williams, and Abe Lincoln. What went on in all of those offices, behind closed doors, we never knew, but very soon, those three last named had their visas, and from then on, there was little trouble for others who wished to enter South Africa to work with the church of Christ.

As aliens, we always felt the need to be circumspect in our personal behavior and worked toward the keeping of a good name for ourselves and for the church. As far as I know, the church of Christ in all of South Africa has had a good record as far as the government is concerned. This is not true of every denomination, and there have been some missionaries who have been asked to leave the country. We always obtained the necessary permits to enter restricted areas such as locations and reserves, and we never preached politics but always encouraged people of all races and nations and beliefs to live peaceably.

Moving on into 1957, we faced the departure of the Grays in May, and looked forward to the arrival of the Williams and Lincolns in July. For a while, John was left to carry the entire work load in Port Elizabeth and was also

driving to East London, about 200 miles, to assist them in the absence of Ray Votaw who was away holding gospel meetings.

#### PORT ELIZABETH UPDATE

When the Hardins left Port Elizabeth in mid-1957, Tex Williams and Abe Lincoln took over the work. A year later, Tex moved to Pietermaritzburg to start the church there, and Abe carried the work load in P. E. During Abe's stay, there was considerable renovation done at the 9 Pickering Street property: an apartment was added and an indoor baptistry constructed. During Andy deKlerk's first period of service in P. E., his family lived in the apartment. In 1961-1962, the present property at 42 Pickering Street was purchased — a stark hall that had belonged to a Dutch Reformed church. Essential alterations were done at that time, and about 5 years later, in 1967, major remodeling was undertaken. With the addition of a foyer, office, and classrooms, designed by Andy Jooste, an attractive and serviceable structure was provided.

The "anti" situation is discussed in a separate chapter but enters into the Port Elizabeth picture here. During Andy deKlerk's first years in that work, he did not openly espouse "anti-ism," but during the time he was furthering his studies at Florida College, there was certain correspondence which brought the "issues" to light, and he was informed that he would not be invited to return to the Pickering Street church while he held his stated views.

DeKlerk did return to Port Elizabeth and started another congregation. In the months that followed, many sympathizers went to his side, perhaps not so much on



doctrinal grounds as on the basis of personal friendship. The group first met in a scout hall and a shopping center, finally owning their own building in Cape Road. Andy Jooste writes, "From 1962 to 1964, I worked with the church (and in full-time architecture) trying to plug leaks — and to protect the colored church, with whom I was working, from the new heresy of which they had never heard."

The Doward Runyan family arrived then (vocational missionaries), and Doward was of infinite help in rebuilding the shattered work. Charlie Tutor made frequent trips from Grahamstown and was instrumental in getting Joe and Polly Watson to move to Port Elizabeth in 1965. Joe preached for the church there until 1969. All worked hard for a campaign headed by Ivan Stewart in 1968, and when a second campaign was held in 1971, the Watsons returned to assist. One of the campaign workers was a lady named Freda who later became Andy Jooste's wife.

In about 1970, deKlerk left Port Elizabeth. The "anti" split had reached its climax and their work went downhill and eventually broke up. By 1975, most of its members had returned to the Pickering Street church.

Before Joe Watson left Port Elizabeth in 1969, he ordained Milton Wilson to succeed him in the work. Milton was strong on personal work and converted several families, while Doward Runyan and Andy Jooste carried much of the pulpit work. In early 1973, Colin Kauffman, a SABS graduate, began to preach for the Port Elizabeth congregation, supported at first, and later supporting himself by means of a secular job. Colin's forte was working with the young people so that a strong youth group became active. Colin eventually returned to his home city of

Pietermaritzburg.

At the time of this writing, Wayne Speer, an American evangelist, is preaching in Port Elizabeth. Brother Speer reports a strong revival with attendances pushing the 200 mark, and a great number of restorations and baptisms. An effort was being made, he reported, to unite the colored congregation with the white congregation, but it can be expected that a general move in such a direction may be some time in the future.

## **Benoni 1956-1958**

Until early 1957 we were little more than just aware of the existence of a town called Benoni. We may have been there only one time. It is one of the gold mining towns that stretch out on either side of Johannesburg, Benoni being to the east. It is about 20 miles from downtown Benoni to the Johannesburg City Hall. From Benoni came a "Macedonian call" – "Come and help us!"

For many years there had been congregations known as the churches of Christ meeting in Benoni and Boksburg, two towns which have lately expanded and become almost as one. These people followed many of the same basic tenets as we, but used instrumental music and were weak in the knowledge and practice of some of the doctrines which we hold to be essential. Their leader made a trip to America, and when he returned to Benoni with funds for a new church building, all were pleased. Pleased, that is, until a new sign was erected bearing the name, "Christian Church." Some said, "What's in a name?" but others said that the name of the church as they read it in the Bible is "Church of Christ" as in Romans 16:16. Many would say that this was not much of an issue over which to divide, but these folks began to hold their own services, meeting on Sunday nights in a school hall.

Perhaps the best thing that can be said of the new group is that they recognized their weakness. They were sheep without a shepherd. They knew that they were on a right path, but wanted more teaching. It was "Auntie

Kate” Anderson who sat down with the Reef telephone directory one day, looking for any possible listings of “Church of Christ.” Finding such a listing in Johannesburg, she called and got Joe McKissick on the phone. After an hour’s conversation with Joe, Auntie Kate had the assurance that the Benoni group would have help. Joe conferred with Carl McCullough of Pretoria, and they agreed to take turns teaching a Bible class on a weekly basis, meeting in various Benoni homes. This was good, but Benoni wanted more, and they asked if there might be someone who could move there and work with them all the time.

In early 1957, it did not take long to make a mental survey of all the preachers in South Africa: McCullough in Pretoria, McKissick in Johannesburg, Maples in Durban, deKlerk in Harrismith, Votaw in East London, Steyn in Cape Town, Hardin in Port Elizabeth. Who could move to Benoni? With Tex Williams and Abe Lincoln due to arrive in Port Elizabeth by the month of August, there would be three men in one city, so it seemed obvious that the man most readily available to move to Benoni was John Hardin. With that in mind, John made a trip to Benoni to visit and give the members a chance to decide if they wanted to invite him.

During this visit, John could see that there were numerous weak points in their faith and practice but nothing which could not be worked on and changed, because they were open to teaching and eager to learn. John wrote to our supporting congregation in Little Rock, explaining in detail the situation and asking their approval. We were taken aback by their reply, saying that they had

agreed to support us to work in Port Elizabeth and that they would terminate our support if we moved to any other place.

### TESTED AND TRIED

John, a meticulous keeper of files and other records, was certain that he had his copy of the original letter of agreement with the Little Rock brethren, but a long and diligent search failed to produce it and we had only our memory upon which to rely. We believed the letter had stated "to work in South Africa," not "to work in Port Elizabeth."

Our fellow workers in South Africa agreed with our assessment of the situation. Benoni needed someone right away. It was the right psychological moment. The people were ready. After long hours of prayer and consideration, we decided to make the move and depend on the Lord to work out the problems of support.

We first requested the Little Rock brethren to continue our support for three months so that we could find other means. This they agreed to, and they also assured us that they would pay our return ship fare when the time came. Joe McKissick tried to find support for us from the states, Carl McCullough offered us a place to live in Pretoria if we could not find somewhere in Benoni, and Reg Carr tried to find secular employment for John so that we could be self-supporting.

Of all the unpleasant tasks in life, John found asking for money to be at the top of the list. He decided he would write one letter to everyone he knew who might be willing to help us, both churches and individuals. The Benoni

brethren promised to find us a house and pay the rent. We decided to make the move in July since that was the mid-year break between school terms: Kent was 11, Don 9 and Brian 6.

A short while before we were due to leave Port Elizabeth, I was assured by my doctor that my symptoms were indeed another pregnancy. My health was fairly good, but I had another bout of bronchitis in May. Don was to be 9 on the 15th and Neal 5 on the 14th, but I was in bed, unable to make their birthday cakes. Don, a great believer in birthdays and cakes, insisted that he would make one, so I found him the simplest recipe in the book, and he produced a cake that tasted very good. A few friends had a small party in the dining room, and I was able to enjoy it from the adjoining bedroom.

In keeping with doctor's orders that I do no heavy packing, I packed only suitcases and left the rest to John and the movers. Dale, then 17 months, was disturbed by the sight of our furniture being carried out and packed into a van, so I took him into the part of the house used for church meetings, gave him his own pillow and wrapped his favorite blanket around him. He was content.

Since the van was to take three days for the trip to Benoni, we were not in a hurry. On the first day, we drove only the 200 miles to East London to spend the night with the Votaws. Early the next morning, I awoke, bleeding profusely. The Votaws' doctor came in haste, gave me an injection, and ordered me to the hospital. I was prepped for a D and C, but a greater emergency than mine arose and my case was postponed until noon. By that time the bleeding had stopped entirely so the doctor decided to wait.

Nothing further developed, but I was kept flat on my back for a week.

John and the four older boys went on to Benoni when they saw that I was going to be all right, for they needed to check on the house and the arrival of the furniture. Dale stayed with the Votaws and spent his days toddling after the gardener. After the week was up, I stayed at Votaws for a few days to regain my strength and then flew to Johannesburg. The doctor had given Dale a mild sedative so that he would sleep on the plane, but it worked the other way and Dale walked up and down the aisle, sharing the cakes and scones that were served with the passengers' tea. The East London doctor kept track of us through the Votaw family and never ceased to marvel at the fact that I carried Gary full term and had a normal delivery. He called Gary a "miracle baby."

Mid-July is mid-winter in South Africa, and after living for 5 years in Port Elizabeth where nearly all heating was electrical, I had forgotten the murkiness of the air where large quantities of coal are consumed. Benoni's sun began to glow a deep red long before sunset, and before the end of the daylight hours, its last rays were over-powered by the heavy pall. Nearly everyone used coal for heating water and in fireplaces. It was only many years later that smoke-restricted zones were created.

The owners of the house, who had just moved to Rhodesia, left the servant girl who had worked for them, saying that she was good and reliable. The first thing I noticed was the smell of "medicine" about her – for her cough, she said. I'd never smelled cough mixture like that before, and soon we discovered that she was brewing beer

in her room, not 25 feet from our back door. We notified the police who came and dumped several gallons of the home brew. After we fired the girl, she hung about the neighborhood, scaring our children with numerous threats about what she was going to do to all of us.

John returned to Port Elizabeth for a few days to welcome the Williams and Lincolns and to help them adjust to their new country. Reg Carr helped me to find a reliable maid and came by daily to see that we were getting along all right. Dale was missing his dad, and one evening, when Reg came to the door, he flew into his arms and clung tightly to his neck, relaxing then and falling asleep.

#### “HE CARETH FOR YOU”

Not knowing how our request for support was going to go, we lived as frugally as we could against the possible day that there would be less income than that to which we had become accustomed, sewing, mending, making do, and buying foodstuffs most carefully. The Benoni members were so full of love for us, and there were so many prayers in our behalf that we never fell victim to worry. They told us, “We prayed you every inch of the way from Port Elizabeth to Benoni and we’re not going to stop now.”

Our last check was to arrive from Little Rock in October. Coincidental was the fact that Little Rock was very much in the South African newspapers because of the racial unrest in that city in 1957, so with our little personal problem and their large racial problem, Little Rock was in the minds of our Benoni people.

By September, we had assurance that regular checks of varying sums would be coming to us from Bowling



Green, Kentucky; Borger, Texas; Tompkinsville, Kentucky; Berwyn congregation in Chicago; Mary Lou McKissick's parents, Tommy Perkins in Dallas, and a few other personal friends. The total was not yet enough to keep us going, but we received lump sums from Waxahachie, Texas; Bardwell and Altus, Oklahoma; "a man" in Brownsville, Texas; John's sister, Bess, and others. Most touching of all was the occasional check from an old sister Kester of Ponca City who lived entirely on a skimpy old-age pension — \$20.00 from her was like the proverbial "widow's mite," for surely she must several times have given all she had. Later we had regular support from other sources but we never could forget the experience of opening letters from friends in the states as well as South Africa and the Rhodesias and finding checks enclosed. In early 1958, Bossier City, Louisiana began to assist us monthly.

John kept a record of every cent we received during the 20 months we were in Benoni, and counted in the amount of the rent paid for us by the church. At the end of that time, he totted up everything and divided by 20, and on that day we stood in awe in the presence of the Lord. The average monthly figure came to within a few pennies of the monthly salary we had been receiving when supported by Little Rock!

The sequel to the story came several years later when we were living in Pretoria and John was redoing his files. From between the pages of numerous letters fell a single small sheet. It was headed "Little Rock" and consisted of a very brief statement which in essence said, "We agree to support John Hardin to work in the spread of the gospel in Africa for a period of 5 years, at the end of which time we

agree to return him and his family to the United States.” It was signed by all of the elders. “In Africa!” Not just “in South Africa.” Not just “in Port Elizabeth.” We could have gone from Timbuktu to Cairo to Nigeria to the Congo or to Benoni and still been “in Africa.” But nowhere could we have learned the lessons we learned by striking out on faith by moving to Benoni without assurance of support.

Ten years later, in a letter written by Foster Ramsey, who through the years had worked with churches helping to support us, he said, “Tex Williams says that Benoni is the best work in South Africa, and I am sure that much of that can be attributed to your leaving Port Elizabeth a number of years ago and going over there and working with that group.” John answered brother Ramsey’s letter and stated, “Yes, Foster, I think time has vindicated my decision to move from Port Elizabeth to Benoni. Actually, Port Elizabeth has come a long way also, especially seeing it was divided over ‘anti-ism’ some time ago . . . . Joe Watson, their preacher, is in the states . . . . wish you could visit with him. I am to hold a singing school in Port Elizabeth after Joe returns in July. (1967)” As Paul once said, “These things that befell us turned out to be for the glory of God.”

### BENONI BEGINS IN EARNEST

When we first arrived in Benoni, we had services only on Sunday evenings as that was the only time the hall was available. Early in September, 1957, we held the first Sunday morning service ever, in the home of Foy Anderson, Auntie Kate’s son. Because some of the men worked shifts

in the mines and because the group were not accustomed to meeting on Sunday mornings, the attendance was only 21, including 7 Hardins.

Most of the early members were from two families: the Andersons, including the Foy Andersons, Beyers Anderson, Piet Jouberts and others; and the Botes, Momberg, Bothma group – the three women were sisters. Not all the members were related, but the close family ties were good because the stronger Christians among them went to work to bring the weaker ones to the church.

Enthusiasm is contagious, and once we had the use of the hall for both Sunday mornings and evenings, attendance swelled. Usually we had larger audiences in the evening, for that was the time friends were brought to hear the gospel. An attendance report for late September showed 34 for the morning service and 61 that night.

Very soon, John was busy every night of the week with classes in homes all over the town. With the McKisick's due to leave Johannesburg in November, John was appointed editor of the "Christian Advocate." According to a letter I wrote to John's mother, he was so busy that he had not had time to write. She replied, "Any son who is too busy to write to his mother is too busy."

## TIME FOR THE FAMILY

John did find a bit of time to spend with the boys. Kent had decided to join a little baseball team, and John occasionally helped with coaching and with transportation. The game has never become one of South Africa's favorites, and funding was difficult, so we mothers sewed the uniforms.

Don was always a lover of pets of all sorts, and as long as he lived at home, we had somewhat of a zoo in our back yard. John helped build a pigeon loft out of some large wooden packing cases, but that was only the beginning. One day Don pocketed his allowance and headed for town to buy stamps for his album. Instead he returned with "Thumper," a large white rabbit. A cage was made for Thumper, but it soon became his life's ambition to dig his way out. Somehow he was always found, and was later provided with a mate, but the attempt to raise rabbits was met with a disaster in the form of coccidiosis — none of us knew the correct way to build hutches to prevent the spread of the disease. Added to the zoo were guinea pigs, white rats, bantam hen and chicks, chameleons, and the most enormous frog we had ever seen. Scamp, the mongrel, lived up to her name in most respects, but she never attacked the other pets, and once actually carried back a number of guinea pigs that had escaped from their cage.

John preached long sermons, and, as he called them, "meaty" ones. Since we were to be in Benoni for a maximum of 20 months, he wanted to give them all he could in the limited time. The people were eager to listen and learn, and despite the jokes and comments about long sermons, there was great growth in numbers and in knowledge.

#### "URGENT IN SEASON"

It soon became evident that there was weakness in doctrinal knowledge. The members who had come out of the old group had been immersed for baptism, but in their own words, "That was about all." As they heard sermons

on obedience and repentance, they began to realize that they had never been taught the real meaning of repentance, and when they became aware of the fact that repentance precedes baptism as illustrated in the book of Acts, they found that they had not been baptized properly. They had not repented but just had been dipped into water. Never once did John preach that they needed to be immersed again, but one by one and two by two, and sometimes three or four at a time, they decided to be "rebaptized." Baptism is to take place only once. If the first was a dipping without repentance, the second would be the true baptism. If the first had been true baptism, the second would have been a mere dipping. He explained this to them, and yet it was difficult to avoid the expression "rebaptized." Since we had no baptistry in Benoni, and no suitable outdoor spot for immersing, we made many trips to Johannesburg to use the Turffontein baptistry. It is probably accurate to say that every one of the original members who had come away from the old church group underwent what they then concluded was their true baptism into the Lord.

## BIG JOHN

John was a big man, and, to use a modern expression, he "came on strong." He appeared always to be self-confident, to have everything under control. In many ways he was a giant of a man, firm in his faith, zealous for the church, tireless in his efforts to reach people. As his wife, I saw and usually understood his weaknesses as he surely must have seen mine. There was a certain amount of insecurity in his nature, somewhat of an inferiority complex.

He felt, for instance, that his lack of university education made him beneath those who held degrees. His lack of experience in the pulpit before we went to South Africa made him unsure of his ability to preach. Except for short periods of time when he had been left to hold the fort alone in Port Elizabeth, there had always been someone else with more preaching experience, and whether correct in his assumption or not, he had felt that his co-workers had thought him to be less capable than they. In a letter to his folks, written after five months in Benoni, and after more than eight years in South Africa, he wrote first about the way in which people had come to our financial aid, "It makes our hearts glow to know that some are interested in our work, and have the confidence in us to send." Then about the experience as a whole, "This has been good for me. I had always played second fiddle, being the singer, but here they look to me for the right teaching, and it has helped me in my studying and in my teaching and preaching. These people keep one on his toes for they can ask some real sizzling questions."

John was 44 when we moved to Benoni and was in every way in the prime of life. Physically he was strong and active, looking much younger than his years. Challenged as he was by the Benoni work, he matured beyond measure. Brought up in a good Christian home, a good student and hard worker in high school where he was chosen President of the Senior Class despite his "strict" type of behavior, and willing always to help in any of the activities of the little church in Ponca City, he was the kind of young man who makes a mother proud to call him her son. He graduated from high school in the depth

of the depression of the early 30's and went to work to help support the family – his dad was preaching wherever he could find those who would listen, sometimes for pay and sometimes not. When the U. S. saw World War II about to involve us in the fighting, they began to draft young men for a year's army service. When John's year was nearly up, Pearl Harbor was attacked and all personnel were automatically held for the duration, which turned out to be, in John's case, almost 5 years.

A conscientious objector to combatant service, John was in the medics, serving most of the time in offices, but at times assisting with sick call, working in a dental clinic, and finally in charge of the convalescent ward at the Muroc Air Base Hospital. Always, he made his service to the Lord come first; wherever he was stationed, he worked with the churches, usually as song leader and Bible teacher. None of these activities qualified him for credits toward a degree, but were doubtless invaluable in preparing him for his future in South Africa.

Once when we were discussing a certain one of our sons who was particularly stubborn, John commented, "I wonder where he inherited that stubborn streak of his." I just smiled at him and shook my head slightly. "Stubborn" is what a child is called when he wants his own way. In a mature person, the same trait becomes resolution, tenacity, perseverance, backbone, and "hanging in there." John was resolute, tenacious, perseverant – all of those things. Ian Fair who preached his funeral many years later said of him, "He had a stubborn faith."

**GIVE ME THIS MOUNTAIN**

John had a compulsion to climb to the top of things. Some of the high places he reached were the tops of the Washington Monument, the Eiffel Tower, the Cathedral Tower of Florence, the Campanile in Port Elizabeth, the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, Table Mountain in Cape Town, Sugar Loaf Mountain in Rio, Mt. Vesuvius in Italy. If there was an elevator or cable car, he used it, but if not, he always said, "Stairs are for climbing." The same attitude made him a good song leader. His music director in high school recognized that his musical ear was not quite true, and together they worked hard for improvement, although one is for the most part either born with a good ear or not. On two occasions, John took singing lessons, but it was mainly his desire to serve the Lord by being a good song leader that made him just that. He practiced long hours, and eventually could lead almost any song in the book. He never learned the staff notations, but by using the shaped notes that denote the "do, re, mi," he could work out any new song. He usually spent two or three hours planning a song service he was to direct, and practiced the singing and directing of each song. Pure desire, long hours of practice, and lots of perspiration brought him to his goal. In teaching students of Southern Africa Bible School and others to lead singing, he could say to them, "If I can do it, you can too, unless you are completely tone deaf."

John's lack of formal education was made up for, in part at least, by wide interest in world affairs, sports, and reading of all sorts. He read the newspapers thoroughly, especially the editorial pages. Most important, he had a



good knowledge of the Bible and a retentive memory for the content of the religious books he read. I often called him a "walking concordance" because of his recollection of chapter and verse, and he was always able to give a reason for the things he believed. This then was the man who became affectionately known as "the patriarch."

### BENONI GROWS

Many of the Benoni members were holding conversations with people at their jobs, with their neighbors and friends, and with relatives who were members of other religious bodies or were being approached for teaching purposes by those groups. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons were busy knocking on doors and our people wanted to know what to tell them. There were Pentecostal churches teaching miraculous healing, spiritualists inviting folks to seances, and the usual number of agnostics, atheists, and indifferent people trying to influence Christians to their ways of thinking. John spent a great deal of time studying various denominational doctrines, reading their literature and ours and comparing them with the scriptures. Having a retentive memory and deep interest in such matters, John became knowledgeable and was often called upon by Benoni members to help them in their discussions. Foy Anderson and his brother-in-law, Piet Joubert, were frequently asking such help, but especially Foy, for he loved a religious discussion better than anything.

John was not the only one with a retentive memory. Not long before we left Benoni in 1959, he preached a certain sermon. Nineteen years later, after having lived a second time in Benoni, we were preparing to return

permanently to the states. John was called upon to preach for the Benoni congregation, now numbering over 200, and decided to use the same topic, thinking that nobody would remember a 1959 sermon in 1978. After the service, Joey, Foy's wife, told us that all during the sermon, Foy was whispering to her, telling her what the next point was going to be.

In recent years, camps, seminars, retreats, and lecture-ships have become part and parcel of the works of the churches, but in the 50's in South Africa, we had been too small to make use of these means. We had, however, enjoyed good success with a Vacation Bible School in Port Elizabeth and saw that avenue as a means of reaching our neighborhood. We had no building to use on week days so we planned to use our small home for classes. There were many children in our area of town, so we distributed leaflets in the immediate vicinity and had about 50 youngsters packed into our home each morning for a week. Several teachers from the Turffontein congregation came to help us.

After the VBS was over, several of the boys and girls continued to attend our Sunday school which, for a while, was held in our home. Later, when we got permission to use class rooms adjoining the school hall, transportation became our biggest problem. The municipal bus system closed down on Sundays and very few of our members had cars, so our '55 Chev began to make a shuttle service between Northmead Extension and the Verkenner school hall. With all the rides we had to provide for people who had no cars, the Chev became affectionately known as "The Gospel Chariot." There was a legal limit to the number of people

to be carried in a car of a particular size, which limit was strained somewhat at times, as were the springs in the Chariot. We became so attached to that vehicle that we felt sad when we had to sell it at the end of our time in Benoni.

The Vacation Bible School and the activities of the Gospel Chariot were good public relations and we and the church had a good name in the neighborhood. Sometimes we may fail to recognize how important it is to be good neighbors, keep a tidy home and a neat yard and a well-behaved family.

Among the people needing rides regularly were several older ladies from Springs, some 12 miles from Benoni. Two were elderly sisters who lived together on meager pensions. The younger sister, Poppie, had been converted during a gospel meeting held by Ray Votaw in Rhodesia, and when she returned to Springs to live with her sister Mary, the two began to attend our services. Mary soon responded to the gospel, and it was on a cold winter night that we took her to Johannesburg where she was baptized in unheated water. She was frail, but she suffered no ill effects from being immersed in the chilly baptistry. Poppie and Mary had been heavy drinkers for many years, so one of our main concerns was to help them so that they would not return to their old ways. Once or twice they backslid, and Mary had a particular problem in the form of a grand-daughter who would bring brandy and drink with her.

Several years later, the two sisters moved into a home for old people in Pretoria, operated by Catholics. Poppie had been a Catholic, and she returned to that faith, but Mary not only remained a faithful Christian but she

converted another old lady whom John eventually baptized at about 83 years of age.

Somehow during our stay in Benoni, John became known as "brother John," perhaps because people were reluctant to call their preacher by his first name, and yet not formal enough to say "brother Hardin." So "brother John" it was. Once when visiting the two old sisters at the Catholic home, Mary introduced us to a cute little Irish nun, as perky and freckle-faced as could be. Mary said, "I want you to meet 'brother John'." The little nun, in her broad Irish brogue said, "Ohhhhh, I want to shake the hand of this 'holy man' I've heard so much about from Mary here."

Late one winter night, John and I returned to Benoni from Springs, tired from a long day. The servant girl and Kent had taken down an urgent telephone message from someone in Springs. Someone was dead or dying, and we needed to get to Poppie and Mary. Back to Springs we went. Another sister had died a pauper in a mental institution. The funeral was to be in Pietermaritzburg at 10:00 a. m. the very next day, and it was likely that there would be nobody there except an appointed minister and a witness or two. John was tired, but he gathered a tooth brush and razor, a clean shirt and a suit, picked up Poppie and Mary, and headed down the road. Several times he stopped for a brief nap. Driving through mountains, they encountered mist which froze on the windshield so that John had to drive with his head out of the window. Towns are few and far between, and there are even fewer all-night cafes or coffee shops, but he did know of one at Colenso where he could get coffee. With only a few miles to go to get that "cuppa," he woke up going off the road, a concrete

marker coming right at him. He hit the marker which flew up over the car and caused considerable damage. The Lord was riding in the Gospel Chariot that night. The countryside was rocky, with thousands of boulders in the ditches, but where they left the road, there was only grass, so after driving a short distance along the ditch, they were able to regain the road and resume the journey. Since that time, we have made many trips along that stretch of road and searched for a place where a car could run off the road without being smashed by large rocks, but we have never found it. One almost wonders if the hand of God prepared that spot for just that time.

The travelers arrived in Pietermaritzburg about half an hour before the funeral and found that a niece was there with the minister, and one or two people from the institution. They were happy to turn the funeral service over to John. Later they went to the home of the niece, had some lunch and napped for a couple of hours before returning to Benoni. On the return trip, John sang every song he could think of, religious and secular, partly to assure the ladies that he was awake, and partly to keep himself that way. If he stopped for breath or to think of another song, they would look at him to make certain that his eyes were open.

Whenever a person reads missionary reports that sound as if everything is rosy, it is quite certain that the whole story is not being told, for there will always be hardships, heartaches, and set-backs as well as success stories and progress. Part of the strength of the Benoni congregation was in the family relationships, but at the same time, it was some family ties between our group and those now

calling themselves "Christian church" that caused some difficulty. Feelings ran high with some, people were hurting, and there were some untruths being spread. When one of the Christian church preachers died of coronary thrombosis, there were some in that group who intimated that John Hardin was the cause. We never did hear an explanation of their reasoning, but perhaps they thought that the man's blood pressure was elevated by the emotional strain of church division, and John was the natural scape goat.

Some of our members were concerned about the doctrinal weaknesses of their old friends in the Christian church group. The first obvious difference is in the use or nonuse of instrumental music, but the greatest concern was the difference in belief about baptism. We believe that one must be immersed for the remission of sins, and when this is done, the Lord Himself adds the obedient one to His church. The Christian church in Benoni believed that any mode of baptism was acceptable, and that it was even optional whether one was baptized at all. It was arranged, then, that John and one of their ministers would hold two evenings of discussions: one evening on the subject of instrumental music and one on baptism. I hate to use the word "debate," for the winning or losing of debates accomplishes little in the furtherance of the gospel. The discussions were well attended. John's teachings on baptism went over strongly, and even though there were no Christian church members who changed greatly as a result, the faith of the members of the church of Christ was greatly strengthened.

Prior to these discussions, our children had come

home from school, disturbed because the children of the Christian church members were singing a parody of the old song, "Hang down your head, Tom Dooley," but substituting the name John Hardin. We assured the boys that there was no harm done but only that the parents of those children had been talking about the upcoming discussions. The children, in their childishness, carried the matter to the school playground. Obviously it was expected that John Hardin would be soundly defeated in the discussions.

The sum total of "results" is never assessable, but John said that if it did nothing else, it strengthened his own faith in what he believed. He had developed a concise presentation of the church as the family of God, the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, etc. with baptism being the act of obedience by which a person enters into each of those relationships. The only answer the other man had was to the effect that God surely isn't going to condemn certain famous religious leaders, whom he named, merely because they had not been baptized.

Missionaries are noted for much speaking and teaching, but one of the most effective lessons John ever taught was the time he said nothing at all. It was a mid-week Bible study and the home of Foy Anderson was filled with Benoni church members. At the close of the study, a certain man asked permission to speak. He then launched into a tirade of criticism of John's work: his methods, his sermons, just about everything. We were thunderstruck, and before the man finished, all eyes were riveted upon John to see how he was reacting. There he stood, his expression revealing nothing at all, appearing to be calm. But every bit of color left his usually ruddy complexion.

There was nothing for his critic to do except quietly disappear. He later became a good friend, and a great many good things can be said about his life in later years. The silent treatment was what the man needed at the moment, but more than that, the group who witnessed the incident were deeply impressed by someone who did nothing to retaliate.

The gospel meeting as a means of contacting people and teaching them the gospel has had a long and varied history. In the early history of the restoration movement, "protracted meetings" and outdoor "brush arbor" meetings were popular and successful in America. Before the era of radio and TV, meetings of two weeks were common and were often the high point of the year. In the pell-mell rush of life in recent years, gospel meetings have been reduced to 3-day affairs. The first effort to hold gospel meetings in South Africa were not resounding successes, first because our total numbers were small, and then because South Africans were not accustomed to that method or to the idea of "going to church" every night for a week or two.

Records for 1958 indicate that, by then, progress had been made and in that year a good number of meetings were held. Ray Votaw preached every night for a week in Benoni and we had a total of 57 outside visitors. John held such a meeting in Harrismith and baptized six. Abe Lincoln did so well in Pretoria's meeting that they had a record attendance of 113, and Leonard Gray held a meeting in Durban where they also broke all previous records for numbers in attendance. Later in 1958, Andy deKlerk held a special series of meetings for the Benoni congregation with the idea of getting acquainted. It had been decided



that Andy would very likely replace John in Benoni when we returned to America. Andy had built up a fair-sized congregation in Harrismith, especially considering that it was a small town, and he was expecting to leave it in the hands of Johannes Potgieter who planned to move there from Durban.

Late 1958 reports indicate Benoni's regular attendances numbering in the 60's. Some of this growth was due to outreach among the "Old Church of Christ" group in Boksburg. Leonard Gray had held a series of lessons particularly for their benefit, and some of them decided to join with us, especially the Hartman family, relatives of the Andersons.

With our time in Benoni drawing toward its close, we decided to take the four older boys to see Kruger Park. Perhaps we would never have another chance, we thought, for it could be that we would not return to South Africa after 1959. We left Dale with the McCulloughs in Pretoria — they had taken a liking for each other, and Dale was one of the few non-McCulloughs who could maul the fierce Alsatian watch dog and get away with it. Gary stayed with the Beyers Andersons. He'd had a bad winter for a young baby, having had bronchitis several times, so Irene promised to take good care of him rather than have us risk taking him on a long trip.

We had a good time viewing the wild animals, preparing our own meals in the rest camps, and getting lots of sleep in the peaceful atmosphere. Then, typical tourists, we undid all the restfulness in a one-day trip over the mountains of Swaziland, mostly on unpaved roads, to Pietermaritzburg. The Tex Williams family had recently

moved there from Port Elizabeth and were teaching their neighbors the gospel — among them Ian and June Fair. We worshipped with them that Sunday morning and then visited the Durban church in the evening. Durban had 85 present that night, a gratifying number representing two and a half years' work.

From Durban we made a fast trip south to East London for a visit with the Grays, to Grahamstown where the Roy Lothians were attempting to start a work (our boys contracted chicken pox there), and on to our old "stomping grounds" in Port Elizabeth. Abe Lincoln had been busy and there were quite a few new faces in the congregation. We also visited Bentley Nofemela who was carrying on the black work, and the colored van der Bergs. John wrote in his report of this visit, "If I had baptized none other than sister van der Berg in Port Elizabeth, her faith and zeal for the Lord would have made our efforts worthwhile."

The ladies class in Benoni aroused a great deal of interest and was well attended. We spent some time each week doing sewing and knitting for the needy, and we would have a short period of Bible study and spiritual fellowship followed by a cup of tea. We met from house to house and became a close-knit, loving group.

Another class met at my house each week — a group of little girls. The church had been helping a large needy family with food and clothing for some time, and we observed that they did not know how to care for their possessions, not even to the simplest repairs of clothing. Together, Irene Anderson and I worked with these girls and several others from the neighborhood, teaching them to

mend tears, replace buttons, and sew up broken seams. Then we had story reading time, memory verse time, and a time to make and serve a cup of tea and some simple bite to eat such as cinnamon toast. After the tea, which was served in the accepted South African style, the girls washed the dishes correctly and tidied up the kitchen. The girls loved those afternoons and no doubt there was lasting good accomplished, but sad to say, the poor family for whom we started the effort dropped out of the church. After the Hardin family left Benoni, the alcoholic father created much trouble, the church members grew weary of their well-doing, and the distraught mother and children went to another church. Eventually the mother, undergoing long-needed surgery, died on the operating table.

1958 was a year of many activities. We had a successful Sunday school picnic, the highlight of it being that it was the birthday of one of the members who said that it was the first time in many years that he had been sober on his birthday. We had a teacher training course in December, conducted by Tex Williams. We returned the favor that the Johannesburg members had done by helping us with our VBS – we helped them with theirs. Then, to end the year in a grand fashion, we invited everyone in the Benoni church to be at our home for “Old Year’s Night,” or “New Year’s Eve.” We had games, movies, lots of good things to eat, and just before midnight we had songs and prayers. In good South African custom, there were kisses all around, and good wishes for the new year.

The McKissicks had returned to South Africa, this time to start a new congregation in the new gold-mining city of Welkom in the Free State. A young couple from

Johannesburg, Doug and Theresa Pullinger, had moved to Welkom and for 3 years were the only members of the church there, so they set aside their contribution each week and saved it toward the purchase of ground for a church building.

It was in 1958 that the Earl Ross family entered South Africa with the Grays. Gene Tope was holding men's training classes on Saturday afternoons in Johannesburg. Arthur Lovett moved to Primrose and started a small church there. Conrad Steyn was having a successful church developing in Cape Town. Alex Claassen, the young Rhodesian who had graduated from ACC and spent some time at Doonside, south of Durban and then worked in Johannesburg for a while, moved to Nhowe Mission in Rhodesia. Gene Tope accompanied John on a trip to visit the two congregations then existing in Vendaland. Baptisms all over the country were not occurring at the rate that they did on the day of Pentecost, but a few here and a few there, and the church was certainly being built up.

John and I had sometimes come close to wearing ourselves out, but our efforts in Benoni had been well rewarded. In the short time that we lived there, we had found friendships such as we had never known before. We loved those people, and we knew that they returned our love. Our five-year tour of duty which had begun in 1954 was nearly up, and we were due to return to America. By this time, Africa was most assuredly "in our blood," and it was our earnest desire to return, though just where, we did not know. Andy deKlerk was to replace John in Benoni. So once again, just as when we left Port Elizabeth in 1953, we packed some things to ship with us, some to be

sent to us in case we did not return, and other things to be sold in our behalf in the same situation. The deKlerks moved into the house we had occupied, and even inherited Scamp.

Parting brought floods of tears, especially from myself and the ladies of the church, and for a time I wasn't even looking forward to the exciting trip we had planned up the east coast of Africa, through the Suez, across the Mediterranean, and across Europe. That trip is described in the chapter about furloughs and other journeys.

## **Furlough — '59-'60**

Air travel and changing times have in recent years brought about a change in furlough arrangements for missionaries. Today, most missionaries travel home every second or third year. When travel time by ship was about three weeks each way, it seemed more plausible to stay overseas for longer periods and have longer furloughs. We went for 5-year periods, and sometimes when that seemed long, we just needed to remember our Rhodesian friends who had gone for 10 years and more without a break, or some Catholic missionaries we read about who were allowed only one furlough at the end of the first five years, and when they returned to their field, it was for life.

There is much to be said for shorter terms of service and furloughs of two or three months. Twice we stayed in the states for just under a year, putting school children into classes for parts of the school year. This was difficult for them, both when they were placed in the American schools and when we returned to South Africa. The school systems are very different, the subjects different, and even the school year itself is not the same, the new school year in South Africa beginning in January, and in America in September. Whichever way we went, the boys were always getting into the middle of whatever courses they were studying. Three-month furloughs could be difficult in that way as well, and we always ended up keeping the boys out of school altogether and their having a hard time catching up with the work, especially maths.

When we arrived in the U. S. in May 1959, we made our headquarters with John's mother in Ponca City. She had sold her big house and bought a very small one, so we had wall-to-wall children sleeping on the living room floor. For the long summer, we sent Kent and Don to Kentucky to stay with relatives — Kent on the farm with Paul and Ella Gerald, and Don in Tompkinsville with Eva Kirkpatrick. When they returned to Ponca City to go to school, we hardly recognized Kent — cousin Ella had fed him so much of her delicious pie and other farm cooking that I immediately put him on a diet. He didn't lose weight but went into a growth spurt in which width was transformed into height.

Since our support during the period in Benoni had been on a temporary basis, much of it discontinued when we reached the states. John now had 5 years' worth of slides of the South African work, and he was able to work up a good itinerary for showing them across a number of states. Many congregations took up special contributions at the time of the showings, and it always turned out that there was sufficient for our family's needs. During the summer months, the younger children and I traveled with John, including a trip to see my relatives in Minnesota. From the time we left South Africa by ship to make our tour in Europe until we settled down to put the boys in school, we lived out of suitcases, a total of 5 months. We were fortunate in finding a furnished house for rent from September through December. It was an old house, plainly furnished with just the essentials, but when I was able to unpack the suitcases and put them away in a store room, I sat down on the porch swing on the old-fashioned screened

porch and felt I had reached heaven on earth. The heat of summer had passed, autumn was beautiful, and I wouldn't have to pack suitcases for four months!

In January we moved back to John's mom's little house, but the John Sudburys and the Jim Bays took some of the boys part of the time. The Bays had some cattle on a piece of land where their boys and Kent did some rabbit hunting. On a very cold February day, Kent dropped the rifle he was carrying — his hand was numb and he couldn't feel it properly — and a bullet neatly removed a piece of thumb, leaving a groove that had to be pulled together and stitched. It could have been worse — the bullet narrowly missed his face.

Whenever we returned to South Africa after furloughs, people there invariably asked us if we had had a nice vacation. We would wearily assure them that it had really not been a vacation at all even though we had enjoyed good visits with friends and loved ones. Records indicate that between May and September of 1959, John had visited 45 congregations and shown slides of Africa 36 times. From September until we left the states, John traveled much of the time, as far away as California. Thirty-four churches and 57 individuals or groups of individuals had made contributions to our travel fund and a fund for teaching materials and office equipment.

The ideal support situation is to have one's entire salary coming from one church, but often this is not possible. For our coming 5-year term in Pretoria, seven congregations pooled their resources to support us, some more, some less. These churches were: Gateway in Borger, Texas; College Street in Waxahachie, Texas; West University in



Houston, Texas; Shamrock Shores and Peak and East Side in Dallas, Texas; 12th and Peter Streets church in Edinburg, Texas; and the church in Bandana, Kentucky.

It is only now that I have grandchildren of my own that I can fully appreciate the sacrifice that our children's grandparents made by our going away for 5 years at a time. An article written by John's mother in the "Christian Woman" magazine for February, 1960, tells how she felt. I can do no better than to quote the entire article at this time.

#### MOM AND HER MILLION - by Eva L. Hardin

"I can hardly remember the time in my adult life when I wasn't wishing for a million dollars. If my wish were granted I would be very happy, for then I would preach the gospel to a world lost in sin. 'Mom and her million' became a household expression in our family.

"I always had thought that if my ship were to come in I would reach out and grasp my million, and how wisely I would spend it. I would wisely invest the capital. The interest would provide a perpetual source of income, to be used in preaching the gospel long after this tabernacle in which I dwell had crumbled into dust.

"Often in the dark and silent watches of the night, I would spend my money. It crossed high and rugged mountains. It sailed over deep and stormy seas. It crossed vast plains and scorching desert sands. It went into all the world preaching the gospel. I prayed that soft and gentle winds would bring the good ship into port bringing my million dollars to me.

"Time passed. The war came and ended. My sons

returned home and to their former jobs. One son, John, was not happy. During the time he had spent in the service of the U. S. Government, he saw the great need for workers in the Lord's vineyard. After a while, he resigned his work with an oil company and moved to a Texas town, with his wife and small son, as song director for the church. He thought perhaps it would be a stepping stone to a more concentrated effort in the mission field, preferably in the northwestern part of the United States. The urge grew, but he did not find a sponsoring church. The Lord had other plans for him.

"When opportunity opened its doors, it was in far-away Africa. When the letter informing me of his acceptance of the challenge came, it struck deep within the inner recesses of my heart. But how could I object to such an important and vital decision? This was a decision that I would have made for myself in my younger years had I received proper encouragement. On the other hand, the advancing years were taking their toll in the lives of his father and me. The snows of many years had whitened our hair, and the years had wrinkled our brows. The thought of the mighty Atlantic Ocean that would lie between us was hard to bear.

"It was overwhelming. The year was 1949. The last goodbyes were said in Fort Worth, Texas, a few weeks before they sailed. In 1953, I sent a cablegram to Port Elizabeth, South Africa, saying: 'John, come home. Dad is going away.' They came with their four small sons. In February 1954, we buried his father.

"They were soon to set sail for Africa again. I needed my son more than ever! Why did he have to go? If I had

my million dollars, I would send six or a dozen preachers to Africa, China, India and Japan. 'Lord, send me the million, so I can keep my son with me.'

"In August 1954, they said goodbye and sailed across the ocean for another five years. In May of 1959 they returned home. I was afraid to ask them if this was their final return.

"One day John and I were in conversation with some friends regarding the African work. They asked him if he was returning. He replied, 'I am.' I covered my face with my hands to hide my emotions. John told them how that for so many years I had wished for a million dollars to use in preaching the gospel and then added, 'I'm her million dollars.'

"In my heart I cried out, 'Lord, how selfish and shortsighted I have been. You answered my prayer — not in dollars and cents but with a precious son and daughter-in-law.' I know 'my million,' like the pebble that is cast into the pool which sends its waves to the farthest shore, will send its influence through time and on to the shores of eternity.

"When John, Bessie and six sons leave around the first of this year for another five years in Africa, I shall say through my tears: 'Goodbye, God bless you, and bon voyage, my *precious million dollars*'."

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Oftentimes, parents and grandparents and other family members have hindered would-be missionaries, holding them back with such persuasive statements as, "There

are plenty of unsaved right here. You don't need to go so far away to preach the gospel." Mothers and Dads, brothers and sisters and friends, if you have someone near and dear to you who wants to go into the mission field, encourage them, help them to go, and rejoice and be proud of them. Be thankful that your loved ones are so willing to serve the Lord. Never hinder them, for in so doing, you may be preventing many from ever hearing the gospel. You don't want that on your conscience.

With our support and travel fund assured, we were able to complete our plans to return to South Africa. Our target date was the last week of February. We had bought a 9-passenger station wagon to take with us to accommodate our large family. At that time there were no comparable cars available in South Africa. John's mom stood watching as John loaded the suitcases into the specially made canvas case on the roof carrier, doubting that they would all go in – but they did! Brother Dale Pearson, the minister, was there beside her as she waved goodbye to her "Million Dollars."

We were heading for New York City where we would sail on the "Queen Mary" to Southampton. Our spirits lifted as we anticipated our return to South Africa, and by the time we were driving across Kansas, we were singing, "We are marching to Pretoria." We ran into some snow and ice on the highways, but made the trip safely to the home of Burney Bawcom in Westfield, New Jersey. We'd known the Bawcoms in San Francisco during the war, and Burney had baptized me there in 1944. After we sailed on the "Queen Mary," Burney saw to the shipment of our car direct to Cape Town via freighter.

Our voyage from France to New York on the Queen in early May of the previous year had been smooth and easy, but not so the north Atlantic in February. From Southampton to Cape Town, we sailed on the Carnarvon Castle, one of the famous mail and passenger ships that served South Africa for many years. It was either the last or next-to-last voyage of the Carnarvon, and we could see why — she rattled and creaked with each movement of the sea. Within a few short years, the Castle liners were all to be withdrawn from service, yet another victim of the jet age, and surface mail had to go by freighter.

The voyage on the Carnarvon and the landing at Cape Town were uneventful, but the vagaries of freighter service and a delay of paper work at the docks caused us to wait longer than expected for the car to be landed and cleared through customs. We were staying with the Conrad Steyns, our large family and theirs crowded into one medium-sized house. Finally when the car was made available, John and Conrad went in to settle up the customs account while Pietra and I waited outside. Presently John reappeared with the longest face he had ever worn. Customs regulations had changed, rates had doubled, and we had to fork over every cent we had brought for the purpose, plus every cent we had brought for the purchase of office equipment. We were so stricken that we even considered shipping the car back to the states and selling it, but decided we would lose even more by doing that. We were over the proverbial barrel, so we paid.

We made the trip to Pretoria by going the long way round via the garden route for a visit to friends in Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban where we were pleased

to find that the churches had been growing. All the way, we had fun watching the filling station attendants as they serviced this huge car we were driving. They had never seen a rear window raised and lowered by remote control from the driver's seat, and they would jump back and exclaim, "Hau!" Driving after dark, we wondered why oncoming cars kept blinking lights at us even after our own had been dimmed. Then it occurred to us that we were driving a "right-handed" car on the left-hand side of the road so that the dimmer flipped the lights directly into the eyes of the oncoming drivers. We had to have new seal-beams installed that would flip the dim light to the left.