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CHRISTIAN ARRAY

RESTORING THE RESTORATION
IN OUR GENERATION
AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION IN SUPPORT OF STRICT CONSTRUCTIONIST BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 1990

MEET SOUTHERN AFRICA BIBLE SCHOOL

by Al J. Horne
Director, SABS

Twenty miles east of the commercial hub of South Africa, Johannesburg, lies the city of Benoni, the home of Southern Africa Bible School. Benoni is a multi-ethnic melting pot in the midst of what was once a thriving gold mining community. Zulus, Sothos, Xhosas, Swazis, Indians, whites and coloreds (people of mixed origin) are part of the kaleidoscope of peoples in this region. A recent census has shown that the population of the city is over 206,000. There are three congregations of the Lord's people in this rapidly growing area with a combined total of some 800 souls.

As a "bedroom town" to the greater Johannesburg metroplex, Benoni was deemed an ideal location for the establishment of a permanent training center for leadership in the Lord's church. In 1964 when Eldred Echols and Al Horne were relocating with the intention of introducing a preacher training school in the neighboring country of Swaziland, American missionaries, Tex Williams and John Hardin, persuaded them to target Benoni instead. They believed that Benoni was ideally situated to reach and train the multi-ethnic groups that call South Africa "home". It was into this milieu that Southern Africa Bible School (SABS) was born. Subsequent history has shown that the decision to locate there was the correct one.

PHASES OF MISSION WORK: Mission work comes in four stages. The first stage involves missionaries, in response to the Great Commission -- Matthew 28:19-20, selecting a nation for the spread of the Word. With their words and as role models they make several converts.

Stage two is the recognition that the new converts have to be trained for responsible leadership in the embryonic church. The most natural solution was to send them for training in American Christian colleges, but the consequences were less than desirable. The vast majority of the trainees never returned home. The cream of the converts in many a foreign country was thus skimmed off and the church there was left the poorer for it. Others got involved in American secular life. Some developed hobbies (sectarian views). Some fell away. The few who did keep to their commitment to return, were not even sufficient to replace expatriate American missionaries. Overseas training was certainly not a satisfactory solution.

The third stage was the realization that converts need to be trained "at home" on the field. There is no "culture-shock" to experience. There are no dramatic adjustments

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to make. There are no new languages to learn. The new "would be" leaders are trained on the field in the work environment. This means they both learn and serve at the same time.

While their skills are being honed, they "learn by doing". Just as Jesus had a "school" of twelve, and trained them for three years in their work environment, we, too, would follow suite. This was the matrix of "preacher training schools" around the world.

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The fourth stage of mission work strives to make the mission church independent and indigenous. The objective of this stage is to have the mission congregation not only carrying its own financial burden, but also providing its own local leadership (elders, evangelists, deacons, teachers). The ultimate has been reached when the mature, mission congregation sends out its own missionaries to new fields.

Southern Africa Bible School is essentially stage three. Its watchword is "taking Christ to South Africa using South Africans". Without SABS the South African churches would have little hope of reaching the independent, mature status. Also, as American missionaries leave, there would be no replacements and their work would die.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL: The first classes were held at night in a makeshift classroom at the Benoni congregation with a handful of students. In 1966 day classes were held with purely academic studies from the University of South Africa. It soon became obvious that for our purposes in South Africa a practical element had to be added. In 1967 the present program, still used today, was put into operation. The school was moved away from the Benoni congregation property to promote the idea that this was a national project, designed to meet the needs of the church nation-wide. Earlier attempts at preacher-training in local congregations had been short-lived. Acquiring property and buildings was our commitment of permanence to the nation. We were here to stay. Too many "fly-by-night" training projects had come and gone. With the Lord's help this one was here to stay. Needless to say, we are in our twenty-fifth year of operation.

In 1971, a modest school building was erected on the six acres at Cloverdena, Benoni. It housed three classrooms, a library, an office, a kitchen and a set of restrooms. Later, because of ease of conversion, two domestic houses were used to house male and female students from all over Southern Africa. Married students were housed in the two old farm houses on the school building property and in some dwelling units in the area. So year by year, SABS could be filled to the limit of its financial resources and housing facilities. This usually meant between 30 and 40 students per year. With modest buildings and but modest resources, SABS has graduated two hundred students. By the end of 1990 there were seventy-seven workers in twenty-three locations in South Africa, as well as thirteen workers in nine foreign countries. The impact of this tiny school on world evangelism would be impossible to measure.

In 1989, an additional six acres was acquired next to the present campus. A six-foot pre-stressed concrete wall has been erected on three sides of the campus. This land has been geologically surveyed and professionally levelled. It is to serve as the future expansion of Southern Africa Bible School. The government is now re-zoning the campus

from farming to educational purposes. The total cost of this part of the project is now paid in full with the help of the White's Ferry Road congregation in West Monroe, LA. The mechanism for future growth and additional expansion is now in operation.

SUPERVISION OF THE SCHOOL: The Elders of the Memorial church of Christ (900 Echo Lane), Houston, Texas, have the oversight of this work. They have been involved and deeply committed to this school for a quarter of a century. They regularly visit the campus to ensure proper supervision. They also meet with the SABS board of Trustees to encourage deeper involvement and participation in the school. Some of the elders have participated in the SABS Annual Lectureship. The founding-director, Al Horne, and the State-side fund-raiser, Jerry Hogg, are supported by the Memorial congregation. In addition the major share of the operational costs of the school are borne by Memorial.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL: This is adequately summed up in the words of Paul: "The things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). In order to keep the school properly focused the following things are done. The students assist local and neighboring countries' congregations with regular gospel campaigns and vacation Bible schools. An annual Bible lectureship with internationally known brotherhood speakers provides a forum for discussion and spiritual growth. The multi-racial student body makes for cross-cultural appreciation. The establishment of new congregations in unevangelized cities is strongly encouraged. Two towns are targeted for establishing new congregations in 1991 -- Germiston, near Johannesburg, and Port Shepstone, near Durban.

PERSONNEL OF THE SCHOOL: The teachers at the school are primarily SABS graduates. Mel Sheasby not only serves as the annual SABS lectureship director, he also teaches Biblical languages and New Testament. He is an elder at the Benoni congregation. Along with his wife, Lois, he conducts marriage enrichment seminars. Lois teaches ladies' classes in the school and serves as the librarian. Their children are all faithful Christians. Mel and Lois both have Masters degrees from ACU.

Des Steyn teaches Bible text and introduction courses. He specializes in the Book of Revelation. His wife, Lisa (the daughter of Al and Donna Horne), instructs on teaching methodology to SABS' ladies. Both Lisa and Des hold degrees from ACU and are very hospitable. Des is a deacon in the Benoni congregation and conducts a large evangelistic Bible study class at his home every week. They have three minor children.

Derrick Bam is the school counsellor and teaches courses in marriage and family life. He serves the Benoni congregation as a family minister and offers community therapy. He is

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a member of the Benoni child welfare society, a consultant for Lifeline (crisis counselling service) and a guest lecturer to graduate students at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is married and has two children.

Part-time lecturers at SABS are Theo Rappard and Harry Simpson. They usually keep the SABS print shop operating. Theo serves as the minister of the Springs congregation and Harry does monthly work at Middelberg.

Rex and Debbie Dutton, the newest arrivals at SABS, hail from Jasper, Alabama. Rex both lectures at SABS and is establishing the new Germiston congregation. Rex has his degree from Alabama Christian and is an outstanding speaker. His wife, Debbie, is the daughter of Mel and Lois Sheasby. They have two children. He joined the SABS staff in 1990.

Al and Donna Horne have been with the school from the first day! Al was converted by Eldred Echols in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Donna hails from Houston. They met at ACU. They have been married for over thirty-four years. Al is the pulpit preacher at Benoni and has served as an elder there since 1975. The Hornes were missionaries in Tanzania from 1959-1964. They helped conduct the "Safari for Souls" there. Donna is a lecturer for SABS' ladies and is the school secretary. She has written a book on her life in Tanzania called, Meanwhile, back in the Jungle (J. C. Choate, publisher). Their children are all active Christian workers.

FUTURE EXPANSION: Because of the present inadequate housing, SABS has reached the zenith of its capacity. Further growth in terms of students is impossible. Students have had to be turned away due to lack of accommodation. New dormitories to house fifty-two single men and forty single women must now be built. The women's dorm will also have provision for a cafeteria/mess hall. The total costs for the newly awaited dorms will be only \$450,000 for both structures. It will mean we will never have to turn a student away again!

With these facilities SABS will also be able to offer a "Bible Chair" in the University of South Africa. Because there are no campus ministries at present in South African universities, South African university students who are Christians, are often lost to the church. The educational philosophy of the universities is secular humanism. Students from the church are lost to Christ in this environment. By inviting this type of student to enroll at the nearby University of South Africa while resident on our campus, we will offer mandatory Bible courses. This will help offset the humanistic teachings and provide a means to keep our young people saved. This will be the best form of Christian education we can offer. It also suggests that when these young people leave our campus and take their positions as leaders in the community and as leaders in the church, we will be able to look to them for on going support for the Bible school. This is one of the desperate needs in South Africa at the present time.

We need YOU to help us. We need some substantial givers. We need some smaller gifts. Perhaps someone could underwrite this entire work! Perhaps someone has come to the kingdom for just such a time as this. Provide us with the means. We have the men. We have the message. We have the Master. We just need the money. It will buy us the time we need. These facilities will help us get more South Africans involved. Modern technology and travel has made the world a neighborhood, help us make it a brotherhood.

Please make donations payable to the "Memorial Church of Christ -- SABS Building Fund".

Mailing Address:
 Memorial Church of Christ,
 P. O. Box 19263
 Houston, Texas, 77224
 Phone: 713-464-0271
 Fax No: 713-464-0812

SABS REPLY COUPON

YES, I want to join you in training men and women for life and service through the SOUTHERN AFRICA BIBLE SCHOOL.

Enclosed is our gift of:

[] \$10.00 [] \$25.00 [] \$50.00 [] \$100.00 Other \$ _____ .

NAME _____ PHONE (____) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE _____ ZIP _____

Make checks payable to MEMORIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
 Please return this card with your gift. Thank you for your support.

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FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DAY A SUCCESS!

The first Houston Area Christian College Day was held on November 18, 1990 with a great feeling of fellowship and mutual benefit. A total of 170 Christians gathered together with inspirational education, encouragement, singing, and dreams shared.

Eight Christian Colleges attended and made outstanding presentations. These were:

Abilene Christian University

David Lipscomb University

Faulkner University

Freed-Hardeman University

Harding Christian University

Lubbock Christian College

Oklahoma Christian University

Pepperdine University

The format used for 1990 was to have presentations from each school made in the large auditorium, and then for everyone to move to the Family Center. Refreshments were served in the center of the Family Center and the schools each had a room around the perimeter of the Family Center for individual meetings and counseling.

The best measure of success seen was that during the individual counseling periods, no representative from any of the schools ever ran out of prospects to talk to. All of the representatives indicated that they planned to be back next year.

We are suggesting two changes to the event, and would like to hear feedback from any school representative, youth minister, or student on these ideas:

1. Establishing the Sunday before Thanksgiving as the standard date for this annual event. As Houston is a good market area for the schools, it will give the one fixed date to work with when they schedule their other events.
2. Changing the format to slightly improve the event next year. The presentations by the schools would be in the Family Center, but only half of them to start. The kids would then break for refreshments and individual talks with the school representatives. Probably 45 minutes later the other half of the presentations would be made. After that, more individual sessions.

Short of suggestions otherwise, these changes will be implemented, and plans for next year will take place. We appreciate your support for this event, and look forward to seeing you at the Second Annual Houston Area Christian College Day.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION

Darwin, himself, conceded in Origin of Species that the formation of the eye - a part of the nervous system over which the brain is in charge - by natural selection "seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree." (Charles Darwin, Origin of Species, New York, Avenel Books, 1979, p. 217)

EVENTS CALENDAR:

AREA WIDE YOUTH EVENTS:

BIG THREE BIBLE BOWL AT HARDING
April 27, 1991

SECOND ANNUAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DAY
Presentations of Christian education by
Christian colleges
11-24-91 @ 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Memorial, 900 Echo Lane, 464-0271

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Published by
BCE Publications
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Houston, Texas 77079
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Subscriptions: \$5.00/year