

# My South African Saga

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Words do not always reflect what the heart would desire to relate, and this is one such occasion. Only once before in my having been to five continents over a period of 45 years have I seen as much heart ache and poverty. Nicaragua equals the tragedies and remains as a burden on my heart; and as I relate these few thoughts regarding South Africa that small country of Nicaragua is being devastated with more serious weather conditions once again.

In my devotional time this morning it was once again pressed upon me that we need to win the approval of the Christ who has sent us before we can seek to win those to whom He sends us. I fall so short of who I need to be in the light of the astounding needs of this world, which we met face to face while in South Africa. There is a specific way in which South Africa is ever so rich. Her people blossom with kindness even as they are hurting. The rich and the poor had more than wealth that separated them - it seemed as though there were two cultures that seldom met. Only the cross brought all souls together. The country itself is beautiful with many precious souls who are glorifying His name. It is a land of mourning as we were told that there are 1,000 deaths due to aids per day in the Johannesburg area alone. All the above and what I am seeking to share relates the need of God... As one great African soloist and evangelist, Oscar, was sharing – “O! Africa, Repent!!”

I must begin this South African Saga while at home in Canada where folk are as lost as in Africa. The story begins in Pearson Airport, Toronto with Amanda who expressed distinct spiritual needs, which we had the privilege of addressing. Our prayer is that she is now a daughter of the King. Emmanuel Mission, from the Philippines was another man in our travels who had room in his heart for the Lord. Still another was Geraldo from the West Indies with whom I had the privilege of praying. This was unique

in how he responded to my praying for him. As I prayed for his soul he would interrupt and say, "Yes Lord I will take that!"

Over fifty hours of travel through London, England we arrived in Johannesburg. Never had I imagined the cleanliness and wealth that greeted my eyes. The first church where I had the privilege of ministry was a German Lutheran church that was wealthy, stately and had a pastor that is very evangelical. The Sunday evening rally was in a Dutch Reformed church, which was my old church as in the Netherlands. This left me emotional as I recalled many of the days during the Second World War as a little lad. Afrikaans is the language in which I was about 94 % conversant due to its Dutch roots. At the end of the rally the pastor had an altar call to which a number of needy souls responded. This is not the norm, but this is Africa.

In this north east section of South Africa there are no Baptist churches where to minister. We were informed that there are about 500 Baptist churches in the country. Multi-Ministries had the leadership of mainly Baptist men and women even though it is an interdenominational ministry from which we would do well to get some direction in terms of zeal for the Lord. Our ministries took us to schools prisons, senior's home, churches and tent meetings the first week near Lichtenberg. The second week revival was stressed in local churches with good results as the nation is reaching up for God's touch.

In that there will be many reports on the rallies where records indicate well over two thousand responses; I am sharing a few of the personal encounters I had in South Africa as in Canada. The Compound where we resided the better part of the first week brought me into contact with the maid who began to express that she would like to come to pray. The next day there was another lady and the following day there was still an addition. Our study was to be, Victorious and Rejoice in our Depression. It was rewarding to hear them sing as only Africans can sing. As we were going for the next week's assignments, we stopped at a shop, which was not of interest to me, but in entering the shop I had the privilege of engaging one of the proprietors in conversation. His story was heart wrenching in that he shared that he had been in the South African

militia and had ever so much blood on his hands. He consequently considered himself damned and had many sleepless nights... This man came to glorious release through placing his faith in Christ. Following, what may have been one of the more significant meetings in a church in Johannesburg with Dr and Mrs. Pat Godwin, the presence of the Lord was as real as I have ever experienced it, and where God gave such liberty and ever so much fruit for His glory. This sweet couple took Bert Genaille and myself out for a lunch. The waitress, who was a sweet little black girl had run into some disgruntled customers and expressed that we were so different. Again, I had the privilege of leading her in the prayer for salvation. Dr. Godwin knows the area of her home and is making contact with a pastor in that area. A mother came forward with the concern for her daughter who was in the occult, drugs, was tattooed and had a child out of wedlock. The question, "Can you help?" It was arranged that the mother would bring her daughter, who, we discovered was adopted. The young lady earnestly wanted deliverance. We discovered five distinct areas of her willful commitment to Satan's plan for her life, which she was prepared to denounce as the dark work of Satan and that she needed to be cleansed in the blood of our precious Redeemer. In that God washes dirty vessels, He will also fill clean vessels, therefore we prayed with her for the fullness of His Holy Spirit.

The ministry we experienced in the prison was unique in that many of the men said, "We are glad to be here, for this is where we found Jesus and this is a place of safety for us!" Some of the stories were heart wrenching while others were hardened criminals. What can you say when one of the team members is asked if we could get a word out of these walls and tell his parents that he is imprisoned and awaiting his charge and hearing. The last day in prison, the chaplain came to me and said, "You may well never know what you have shared with these men. When can you come back?" I have the highest regard for this man in such a responsible position. When in meetings I sensed that the emotion of the people would always suggest the altar to be crowded, whether in the prisons or the tent meetings or in the various churches, therefore I made repentance all that it really means in Scripture. God knows the decisions, which leads me to leave the final results, which were many, solely with Him.

The pastors and Multi-ministries under whose ministries we labored did a fantastic job in regards to the ministries prepared for us in the different venues. I have the highest accolades to share in regards to those who accommodated us in this effort to compliment the reaching of South Africa with the Gospel message of our soon coming Lord. I have come back with Oscar's challenge, "O! Canada! Repent!" How remiss I would be if I did not express my gratitude to those who prayed and gave ever so sacrificially that I would have the privilege of being part of the team to reach South Africa. Thank You and may the harvest be for His glory and the honor of all who made it possible.

To The Praise and Glory of the Lord of the Harvest:

Jerry Vander Veen