

South Africans baptized in the WCG's early days

By Geoffrey R. Neilson

*Due to a related question someone asked me, I wondered how many people were baptized in South Africa in the early days of The World Tomorrow broadcast.

What I have established so far is:*

First: The reply from Roderick C. Meredith, who with Raymond F. McNair, first baptized South African members in South Africa, cites the original number baptized below.

Second: I don't know when or where the earliest Southern African ministers were baptized: Ernest L. Williams, Michael Bousfield (who lived in both UK & SA), Gordon Terblanche, (Dan Botha and/or Adriaan Botha may fit in the first category. John Sanderson (Rhodesian).

Third: On 28 December 1962, in passing through Johannesburg, Gerald D. Waterhouse baptized at least Steve Serfontein (now in England; and with Alton Billingsley's U.S. Group, "Faithful Flock"). Winnie and Connie Surtees (now Webb)--both with Cogwa in Johannesburg. Steven Franklin, who lost interest about six months later. Mr & Mrs John Nel (deceased parents of Andre).

*Fourth: On 23 March 1963, Mr Waterhouse commenced regular Church services in Johannesburg. 33 people were in attendance. Shortly afterwards

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After becoming the first fulltime employee (on 18 April 1963), whom Mr Waterhouse employed in the Johannesburg Office (Ambassador College Agency), I was given the job of counting how many people attended services. Mr Waterhouse wanted total people counts, so the 33 probably included children. I was baptized 8-8-1963.

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Email to Mr. Geoff Neilson

From: Dr. Roderick C. Meredith

Date: July 18, 2013

Dear Geoff,

Greetings from Charlotte!

Raymond McNair and I were sent from England to South Africa in mid-December, 1960. I was there, with Raymond, to help start the Ambassador College in Bricket Wood. I stayed there the entire first semester and taught Freshman Bible, Epistles of Paul and other courses that helped establish the college. Mr. Armstrong felt it was better that one of the seasoned lecturers would be there to lay the right foundation in Bricket Wood. My wife and I then flew back to Pasadena with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong on January 4, 1961. But, meantime, quite a number of people from South Africa had been writing the office at Bricket Wood requesting baptism and other things. Therefore, since Raymond and I had already gone on a baptizing tour *together* in 1951, he felt it good that we go down there as a “team” to baptize these people. We had an enjoyable but *very busy* trip there. We baptized three people in Northern Rhodesia—as it was then called—including Mr. Joseph Mwambulul. Mr. Mwambulul was the *only* black man baptized at that time. Then we went on to South Africa where we baptized 21 people there—mainly in the Johannesburg area. The names I remember included “Beck” and “Botha” and other rather well-known South African names. However, I cannot remember the exact lineage of some of the later students who came to Ambassador College bearing those names. Interestingly, we stopped by in Rome on the way home and when we got back to Bricket Wood, we found that Gerald Waterhouse had just passed through the previous week on some trip he was taking. As Mr. Waterhouse often did—I think you will remember!—he loudly proclaimed: “Messrs. Meredith and McNair have just laid a *double foundation* for the Work in Africa by baptizing 24 people there—two times twelve!” Raymond and I had not thought of it that way, but Mr. Waterhouse was always “into numbers”—as you are—and it was inspiring to realize that God may have guided it that way—three times seven or 21 in South Africa were baptized and then three—making a total of 24, in Northern Rhodesia. I have never forgotten that tour and definitely do remember the general dates and the numbers as there has been occasion to discuss this matter a number of times over the years. I hope this is helpful.

It is good that we can have “brothers” in the faith all around the world—still carrying on the Work which Christ began through Mr. Armstrong.

With Christian love,

Roderick C. Meredith

Geoffrey Neilson wrote

I received this email this evening.

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Interestingly, I once read on a Jewish website

devoted to listing the modern surnames of people

descended from King David of ancient Israel,

one of the names was Schorr.

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Geoff Neilson.

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From: jubijones <jubi@chillibean.co.za>

Hello Geoff,

I have just read your mail to Lincoln about the baptizing tour McNair and Meredith took to Northern Rhodesia. My Father, Fred Schorr was the other man baptized with Mr Joseph Mwambulu. He was the first white man baptized in Africa.

On 16th March 1964, Mr Waterhouse baptized 21 of us at Wemmer Pan Lake, Johannesburg.

Some of the names were:-

Brian and Jubi Jones,
Fred Schorr Jnr.
Pam and Jimmy Nicolau,
Jonathan Malan,
Mr and Mrs Cox,
Reg and Gertie Barnard,
Lincoln Beck,
Mr and Mrs Murray le Roux,
Mr. Alex Henderson,
Mr and Mrs Bailey,
Merla and Dorrett Westley
and 3 others we can't remember.

Jubi Jones