

with them, over a period of months in a number of different cities that they were very helpful and on a number of occasions bent the rules for us when we really needed them bent! For example, some of us carried up to 30k of 'cabin luggage' with no questions asked, and on another occasion they checked through over 60k of overweight for free!

So it seems to us that if you have a choice, try to fly SAA, as you will be giving your new mission field the business, and we are sure that you will find them very helpful, as compared to some other major airlines who really couldn't care about you, especially if you are flying excursion. So flying SAA is a good way to get introduced to SA. One last point in their favour is that on the flight they have some beautiful Christian devotional music on the headphone music channels. Dad just loved it, as we all did, as it was so relaxing and inspiring to listen to after the inevitably hectic departure. Such music is probably unique to SAA.

VISAS Once you have your tickets you are ready to apply for your visas. It would be wise to get ahead of time as many copies of the application form as you will require, so that you can fill them out in the peace and quiet of your home. We found, as did some SA Family members, that SA officials go very much by what you put on paper, and that if your replies and you look ok, they don't tend to doubt it. So its important to put down the right thing and not to be flustered by all the questions on the form. Most of the questions are probably to weed out any troublemakers who might be going down to SA to stir things up.

A few words of advice concerning the appropriate replies. For 'profession', avoid anything along the line of writer, journalist, missionary, teacher etc., anything that seems remotely 'liberal'. They are very suspicious of such people, and rightly so, as many who have gone in the past have returned to publicly denounce SA. You would be much better to put down something inoffensive, such as secretary, or businessman, etc. Of course, if you plan on applying for residency later, be sure that what you put down more or less corresponds with your 'real' trade. For 'length of stay' put down '90 days', (the maximum), and for your 'reason for visit' put down 'holiday'. For 'employer' put down 'self-employed' (unless you are employed), and for 'address in SA' you can put down a big hotel chain there, such as Holiday Inn or Southern Sun Hotels. For 'country of residence' we just put down the countries of which we are nationals. Really pray over your answers, as they will determine what kind of visa they will issue you with, a 3, 6, or 12 month multiple re-entry visa. In general it is best to make your answers as brief and normal as possible.

Once you have your forms filled out, the necessary photos and your air tickets, you are ready to go to the embassy or consulate. One interesting point to note is that for some reason the SA embassies tend to give longer visas than their consulates. Some of us applied for visas at the local consulate, and received 6 month visas, while those who applied at the Embassy were given 12 month visas. So it seems that if you apply through the Embassy, you stand a better chance of getting a longer visa. 1 year seems to be the maximum.

When you go to the embassy, be sure to dress nicely, and look as system and well off as possible. It's a good chance to take the family along and create a good impression. In our case, as we had the forms properly filled out etc., it was only a matter of waiting about 20 minutes, TTLi we never actually saw the consular official, just the receptionist.

One thing that you might want to consider is that having a SA visa stamp in your passport can hinder or exclude the possibility of you subsequently going to some black African, Arab or Muslim countries. Americans and some other nationalities might want to enquire about getting detachable pages in their passports for their SA visa stamp, so that they can be taken out once you leave SA.

LUGGAGE AND PACKING Once you have got your visa you can start making your actual preparations. In planning this you should, no matter what, always try to carry the heaviest, most fragile and most delicate material as 'carry on luggage'. We had so much material that qualified in this category that the men were carrying up to 30k of 'carry-on'! Just be sure that if this is the case with you that when you register your check-in luggage you keep your carry-on luggage out of sight, so that the airline official won't see it and freak out. Generally they don't care as long as you are not too obvious about it, and one airline official said that as long as it

was well packed they didn't mind, but it was the bursting shopping bags that they objected to.

For some of you, the 20 k free baggage allowance will not be sufficient, and there are a number of ways to get around this. First of all, you can show up and try to provision your overweight when you check in. Dad always has us take the children when we do this, explaining that the overweight is their things, and the Lord really uses them to touch the people's hearts. The only drawback to this is that if they won't do it you are in a bind as it will be too late to send it air-freight, and overweight is astronomically expensive. 1% of the first class fare per kilo!

If you still have overweight, there are 2 ways to ship it. First of all, there is 'accompanied baggage' which is essentially the same as air freight, except that you get a preferential rate as you have a ticket to the destination. From a European capital to Cape Town, this cost about 6-\$ per kilo, and usually arrived about a day or 2 after we did. Be sure when filling out the customs declaration in SA for these when you pick them up to mark 'personal effects' and DV they will not even open them. We did this with each person going down (we went in stages), and not one suitcase was opened. TTLi

Unless you have a residency permit, we suggest that you ship your things in suitcases, and not trunks, as suitcases look a lot more touristy and inconspicuous. Be sure that they are securely locked, with a rope or luggage strap around them, and clearly labelled in 2 or 3 places outside, as well as on the inside. If you don't want to put the address of where you will actually be staying, you can always put c/o a well-known hotel, and if it gets lost you can go to the hotel. Be sure to line the interior of your suitcases with plastic garbage bags or the like, as once some of our suitcases had evidently been left sitting in the rain, or water, and the water seeped through, soaking the contents. Avoid shipping fragile things, as we shipped some robust suitcases and they arrived with a few big dents in them.

If for some reason you can't send things 'accompanied baggage' then you can send them air freight. The only difference is that the rates are a little more expensive and that you are not obligated to have a ticket. This is the way that many items of a commercial nature are shipped. We have had no experience with sea freight, but it probably takes a long time, and in general Dad is against sending freight by sea unless it is accompanied by someone, due to the risk of theft. So we hope that this helps you in deciding what to do with your excess baggage.

Of course the best solution, if possible is not to take anything with you that is not absolutely essential. SA has a very advanced economy and with a few exceptions everything that you will need is freely available at moderate prices, so it is not as if you are going to some underdeveloped country. On the contrary, SA is booming and we were very surprised at the affluence there, the luxurious shops, restaurants, cars etc. So you might be better off to leave behind all but the irreplaceables and spend what you would have spent on air freight on buying the items there, or provisioning them.

FINANCES Before you leave, you will want to plan how to transport your funds. Like most countries, SA does not have any restrictions regarding the importing of foreign currency, but 'once in forever in!', unless, that is, you don't declare it upon arrival, or you keep the bank slips when you exchange it to Rand, so that you can reconvert it upon leaving. The currency exchange laws are very strict and stiff with very serious punishments for offenders. It is illegal for SA nationals or residents to have foreign bank accounts, and it is illegal for anyone to export more than a couple of hundred Rand in cash. As one American resident there told us, in matters such as these 'the walls have ears', and anyone caught breaking the law along these lines can expect '5 years in jail with an Afrikaans Bible'!

However, this mostly concerns residents. Tourists, upon entry are supposed to declare how much foreign currency they are bringing in. We found that the best way to carry our money was in Travellers Cheques of a major bank, in a major strong currency such as Swiss Francs. None of us bothered to declare how much we were bringing in and upon departure we were never asked how much we were taking out.

We discovered that a good way to carry funds, valuable papers etc. while travelling is in a thin cloth money belt that is worn next to your skin under your

clothes. We found some very good ones made out of a thin towel-like material: very simple with the zip pouch fitting snugly in the small of your back. They are very comfortable, with no buckles, and can carry a surprising amount without being noticeable. So if you can find these, they are a good bargain and invaluable when travelling. Some of us forgot that we were wearing them, they were so snug!

THE TRIP Due to the distance involved in getting to SA most flights leave in the evening and arrive in Johannesburg at noon the next day. There are also weekly flights from London-Cape Town, and Buenos Aires-Cape Town.

Once you have landed you go through immigration who usually only ask you the reason of your visit (tourist) and how long you intend to stay (3 months). He might also ask if you have a return ticket. WE WOULD LIKE TO MENTION THAT AT NO TIME, WHETHER APPLYING FOR A VISA, AT IMMIGRATION UPON ARRIVAL, APPLYING FOR A RENEWAL OF OUR VISA, OR UPON LEAVING WERE ANY OF US EVER ASKED TO SHOW ANY MONEY. The main criteria seems to be that you look respectable and have a return ticket. Hopefully the immigration officer will give you a 3 month entry stamp, giving you the right to stay for that long. This is the maximum that they give you at this point, and if you want to stay longer you must apply at a later date.

Once you have cleared immigration, you pick up your bags and go through customs. We went through the 'nothing to declare' door, although we probably had things that they would have liked us to declare, such as VCR's etc., but again TTLi we waved through with no inspection. Once through, you'll probably feel as we did, happy and elated to be in this special and unique country which the Lord has spoken so much about.

DAILY LIFE IN SA: SA is the subject of a partial economic and total military embargo by the rest of the world. Due to this, and the geographical isolation from the industrialised world, and plenty of hard work, SA has developed a very strong economy which manufactures most of its needs domestically, as well as exporting food-stuffs to the surrounding countries. So in general you will be able to find just about anything you need at reasonable prices. You will also find that there is a large market for second hand goods, and that they are very good at repairing just about anything. There are many pawn shops which can have real bargains.

Clothing: Good quality clothes are manufactured domestically at European prices. There are lots of Woolworths for you Brits! You will probably need clothes for all seasons, as it can get cold in the winter. Food: Very little is imported and there is an abundance of fruit, vegetables and meat at good prices the year round. There is a thriving health food industry, so all health foods are easily available, such as brown bread, yeast, herbal teas, honey, apple cider vinegar etc. Camera equipment: We found a surprisingly large selection of photo supplies available at European prices. Photography is a popular hobby. Many chemists offer same-day developing services, and offer a free roll of colour film for every roll developed. Black and white film tends to be more expensive than in Europe. Video Equipment: The video industry is just getting off the ground, and there are lots of places where you can rent pre-recorded cassettes: all pirated! If you are planning on buying portable video equipment, we would suggest that you do so before you go. We carried ours as hand luggage and were never questioned. ONE ITEM THAT IS QUITE EXPENSIVE IN SA AND WORTH BRINGING AS MANY AS YOU CAN ARE BLANK VIDEO CASSETTES, as our luggage was never opened, we didn't have any problems. The colour system of the TV there is PAL, but the sound there is different, so to hook up your VCR to a SA TV, follow Dad and Peter's advice in the INFA of Page 41 and 42.

Mail Services: We found the post to be very efficient and quite cheap. An internal letter only costs 5 cents! Mail to Europe takes about 5 days. We received a lot of our mail c/o Poste Restante at a number of PO's with no problems. We didn't even have to show our passports, but just gave our names, and some of us even phoned the PO to enquire if anything had come in for us that day! They were on the whole very friendly, and none of our mail was opened. Once or twice an official asked a few of us how long we intended to receive mail at PR, but we explained that we were tourists here for a few months, and they were very apologetic. So it might be a good idea to change your PO every few months. Medical Services: There are an abundance of doctors, well qualified, and no shortage of pharmacies, so these

services seem to be on a par with most western countries. Transport: Cape Town has a very good public transport system, which we used a lot. Other major cities are probably the same, and there is a very good intercity train network. South Africans are notoriously bad drivers so be careful if you have to drive.

SECURITY: Dad said that the greatest danger in Cape Town was the 'normal violence', the muggings, rapes and robberies that occurred daily, often in downtown areas in broad daylight, and which most people seemed to take for granted, although it was reported occasionally in the local press. TTLi that none of us were ever victims of these black gangs, but Dad made sure that we gave the Lord a lot of co-operation by obeying a number of basic security rules.

None of the girls ever went out without a boy after 6pm, and the boys got in the habit of carrying a walking stick or umbrella when out, and keeping their eyes constantly open for any kind of weird characters, of which there were plenty, even though we lived in a supposedly 'nice' part of town. We gave any groups of blacks in the street a wide berth, especially the mobs that congregated around the liquor stores. The main thing that we learnt was to stay really alert and aware as to what was going on around us when out, and not to let anybody that was the slightest bit weird get close to us. We tried to make it impossible for muggings and the like to occur, by avoiding all the conditions and circumstances that are conducive to such crimes. At home Dad cautioned us not to let any blacks into the house, under any circumstances, including delivery boys, and that girls should never answer the door unless a boy is with her. We kept the doors locked always.

Another aspect of our security was our contact with the local population, who on the whole were very friendly and hospitable towards us. However, on a number of occasions our conversations with individuals would turn to the current political situation in SA, a subject which everyone there has a very deep underlying concern about. As we more or less lived in the stronghold of opposition to the Afrikaans dominated government, some of our neighbours would criticize the government, expecting us, as 'enlightened' westerners to join in.

It was a very clear policy with us that we never got involved in these kinds of discussions, and we limited ourselves to saying how much we liked SA and were enjoying our stay here. If anything, we supported the government, but where we were living, the people who agreed with us were in the minority! So to avoid a lot of hassles we would strongly suggest that family members keep right out of any discussions of a political or otherwise controversial nature. SA is a country at war: under attack by virtually the whole world, not to mention her largely communist neighbours, and disparaging remarks by foreign guests are not likely to be well received. Lets talk about Jesus!

HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS 'Cleanliness is Godliness!' This certainly became more real to us in SA. At the outset, Dad reminded us that we were in Africa, surrounded by natives who more often than not could be carrying any number of horrible diseases, and that we had to be extra diligent in our health habits and stay very clean. We continued our policy of taking off our street shoes at the door and wearing slippers indoors. Not only does this avoid tracking the filth of the city onto the carpet, where the children play, but they are also much more comfortable and quieter.

We also extended this practice to include our clothes. We more or less had our street clothes and our houseclothes, and upon returning from town we would immediately change and disinfect our town clothes. Whenever we were taking public transport we wore gloves so that we would not have to touch anything with our bare hands, including money. We also carried small flasks of cheap cologne or toilettes to wash our hands with when out. These were some of the habits that we got into, and we would like to emphasize that anyone going to SA should keep a very high standard of cleanliness, especially in your dealings with the public, so that you can avoid these 'plagues of the Egyptians' which are so prevalent in Africa. VISA RENEWAL: After 3 months in SA, if you have not applied for a residency permit and want to stay on, you must apply for an extension to your tourist visa. We all did this with no problems at all. The main thing is that you must have an ongoing ticket, as if you arrived in SA on the 21-90 day excursion ticket, the return portion will no longer be valid. So get your ongoing ticket before applying for