



Borghild and Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen.

The life and work of Borghild Gudrun (Mathiesen) and Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen

Borghild Gudrun (3-1-1-7), the daughter of Gudrun Katrine (Oftebro) (3-1-1) , and Alf Mathiesen, was born in Eshowe in 1914. The family subsequently moved to Durban.

Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen, the eldest son of Paul Hansen and Magda Langeland, was born in Drammen, Norway in 1914. The family came to South Africa in about 1926 as missionaries. They worked in various cities in South Africa, but spent most of their time working amongst the Zulus in Zululand. They eventually moved to Durban, where they established a church in Warwick Avenue which became a landmark.

In 1936 Borghild and Fridtjof attended the same series of meetings at the Central Baptist Church in Durban. At this stage they had never met and did not know one another. On the last evening the evangelist invited people to commit their lives to service in the church, to do and go wherever God told them. They both responded to this appeal. They met some months after this memorable evening, and only later discovered that they had both responded to the appeal on that night. It seemed that they were destined to build their lives together.

They became engaged to be married in March 1937 and Fridtjof left two days later, working his passage to England on a tanker, where he enrolled in a Bible College to prepare for the ministry. He returned to South Africa two years later, and they were married in August 1939.

Fridtjof's father asked them to take over the youth and Sunday School work at his church, which they did. However after a while they discovered that some of the children who had been very faithful were missing. On making enquiries, they discovered that the children had moved out of the area, and being very poor, could not afford the bus fare. Borghild and Fridtjof visited them and as a result, started a Sunday School in their home. It wasn't



long before their home became too small as all the neighborhood children started attending. The parents were also asking them to start meetings for the adults as well.

They looked around for suitable premises and found a vacant butcher shop. The rental was 30 shillings per month. It must be noted that Fridtjof and Borghild had no financial support, and the little congregation was extremely poor. However, Fridtjof's sister, Astri, offered to pay the rent, and so they started their first church.

They wanted to be close to their congregation, and found a little garden flat in Overport, Durban. Having no income, Fridtjof worked one day a week in a chemist shop and Borghild wrote up the chemist's accounts. This paid their monthly rent. They trusted God for food and clothing which very often arrived in miraculous ways. They had no means of transport and walked many miles to visit their congregation and to attend church meetings.

After the funeral of an old lady in their congregation, they were told that she had left the sum of 60 pounds for the purchase of a motor car. They found an old Ford which became a treasured possession.

In 1943 two major things happened to our couple. Borghild fell pregnant and became extremely ill. At the same time a complete stranger knocked on their door. He turned out to be the secretary for the American Assemblies of God Church, who explained that money had arrived in the country from the U.S.A., specifically for Norwegian missionaries who had no support from overseas. Enquiries had been made throughout South Africa and it was discovered that Fridtjof and Borghild were the only ones with no financial support. He handed over a cheque for 25 pounds. They never ever discovered who the donor was, but the money arrived for several years until one day they received information that he had died. By this time their congregation was able to support them in a small way. The other major event was the birth of their first child, Moira Gudrun (3-1-1-7-1) in December 1943.

At the same time as their church was growing, they both felt a desperate need to start a Children's Home for girls. They expressed this desire to everyone who would listen to them, with no results. One afternoon when Moira was two years old, an elderly lady visited them and introduced herself as Miss Mc Cormack from Cape Town. She said that she was selling her home in Cape Town to return overseas, and would donate the money and all her furniture to start a girls home. Another miracle! A property was acquired in 70 South Road, Overport, and the Bethshan Children's Home opened its doors on 15 May 1945. It eventually housed 20 girls from age 3 to 18. Some years later, they were forced to leave these premises and developed bigger premises at 155 Brickfield Road. This home accommodated 30 girls.

Their second child, Colin Paul (3-1-1-7-2) was born in March 1947.

The church in Sparks Road became too small and a large piece of land was acquired in Alpine Road. A large church building was opened on 3 July 1954. Some years later a youth centre and hall were built alongside the church making it quite a large complex to service the needs of the congregation



Bethshan Tabernacle with extension and Youth Centre.

and the community. It must be remembered that the congregation was 90% Indian and 10% mixed races. As the congregants became more affluent they moved away to the more modern suburbs. They did not want to leave Bethshan Church, but found traveling long distances to attend services a problem. The result was that over subsequent years, three more branches of Bethshan Church have been built. They are pastored by men who grew up in the “mother” church. The Church, founded by Borghild and Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen now has several thousand members and has resulted in many thousands of people being converted to Christianity.

The Children’s Home was a home of safety, love and security to many hundreds of young girls whose families were unable to care for them.

Borghild passed away in 1992 aged 78 and Fridtjof died in 1994 aged 80. He died doing what he loved and what he knew he was called to do. He had just finished conducting a funeral service, and was walking in front of the coffin to the hearse, when he collapsed and died of a stroke.

The church and its branches continue to flourish. The Children’s Home was closed two years ago and is now part of Mc Cords Hospital. It is a special “step-down” facility caring for aids patients where they are stabilized until they are strong enough to start anti-retroviral treatment. The building has been named HANSEN HOUSE in memory of the founders, Borghild and Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen.



Sitting in front: (3-1-1-7) Fridtjof Langeland-Hansen og 3-1-1-7 Borghild Gudrun (Mathiesen) Langeland-Hansen.

Standing, from left: 3-1-1-7-2-3 Janine Langeland-Hansen, (3-1-1-7-2) Barbara (Green) Langeland-Hansen, 3-1-1-7-2-1 Craig Langeland-Hansen, 3-1-1-7-2 Colin Paul Langeland-Hansen, 3-1-1-7-1-2 Carryn van Rensburg, 3-1-1-7-1 Moira Gudrun (Langeland-Hansen) van Rensburg, 3-1-1-7-2-2 Roland Langeland-Hansen.