

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

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Dear Highway Friends,

Greetings. There has been a long time since I have written to you but you are not forgotten. I trust this has been a Victorious summer for you all. Your Summer is over and ours properly beginning with all its possibilities wrapped up for our utilization. We have had victories here in spite of all the wiles of the enemy and trust our summer will see more and greater victories. Winter time is the best season for our work owing to the fact that there is no planting and little or no rain, which affords an opportunity to the natives to attend the meetings better and us to get around without the fear of high water, storms, etc.

We have three native churches about completed and one yet to build this season. We are very grateful to see this phase of our work going on. In addition to the Native churches the Sisters have their new church at Altona almost completed which supplants the one built by Isaiah Sangweni about five years ago which has served its day and now gives place to a larger and better one.

A short time ago we had a service for the laying of the corner stone of this new church, of which you will probably hear from the Sterritt Sisters. God blessed this service to our own hearts as well as to the Natives present. While enquiring into the history of the Transvaal work it occurred to me that you at home would like to get a glimpse of this work and so I am passing on to you the information I received. The source of my information is Samuel Mavimbelo who was with the work here from its first days.

About the time of the close of the Boer War his people lived in Swaziland, Samuel was sick and a Native preacher first prayed with him, and later gained permission to hold services in their kraal. After three months they moved over into Natal, close to the Pongolo river. There were no Christians or Missionaries here then, and Samuel held family worship and Sunday service for the family faithfully, just going over what they could remember of what they had heard from this Native preacher. His folk asked, "Will you not forget and go astray?" his answer was, "God will send us some one to teach us." After about eighteen months Samuel met a Native preacher, asked him if he were a Christian, told of his hunger and need, and was invited to his home where he (Samuel) and his people constituted almost the entire congregation, as the rest in the district were too hard and indifferent to attend. After four months a child of this Native preacher's died and he moved away. When he was going Samuel asked, "What will we do now?" and was told that a new "Umfundisi" a white man was coming to live near by. Upon inquiry Samuel learned that the new Umfundisi was coming to occupy the desolate and lonely dwelling of the only European resident of this district who had fled to Paulpietersburg for refuge from the Natives who had threatened his life.

A few days after their arrival he visited these new Missionaries, Dr. Sanders and wife. He greeted the Missionary, who returned his salutation and shook hands with him (Probably his first handshake from a white man) and was asked his name and business. "Somkanda" (We will catch him) or (We will stone him) is my name, and we want to believe. "Where do you live?" "Over by the Pongolo." How many of you are there?" "My two sisters and the wives of my

two brothers." So after some conversation he agreed to come with them on Sunday to meeting. Sunday morning the Missionaries heart was gladdened by the arrival of these five, who continued faithfully to attend until Samuel, his two sisters and two sisters-in-law found the joy of salvation. All but his younger sister were baptized New Year's Day, 1905, with fifteen other Natives and Paul Sanders. These Converts were bright in their experience and came regularly to the weekly class as well as Sunday. They were taught to read, memorize scripture, and each week gave an account of the number they had spoken with regarding their soul's salvation, the Umfundisi continually reminding them of their responsibility, though they had but heard, to tell others. This, I believe is one of the secrets of the rapid and healthy growth of the work in its early years. The remarkable success of the work is shown by the fact that of the First two baptismal services (Jan. 3, 1904, four Natives; Jan. 1, 1905, 19 Natives) five became Native workers, four of whom are with us today, the other, (Lydia) now working in another church.

In the mean time the Dr. held several services in Samuel's home including a few days with his family who visited them in their kraal. Very soon Samuel started holding services through the week among his neighbours in what is now Filita's section, and saw several make a start. In common with others of these new converts, such as Lydia and Peter Selemba, Samuel visited and prayed with many Kraals, and helped to interest a number of new seekers, all of whom were visited by the Umfundisi who made a thorough pastoral survey of the whole district, visiting every kraal, interviewing every head-man, and taking down the names of every member of the family.

One day God gave Samuel a vision in which he told him that the people across the Pongolo wanted to believe and were hungry for the gospel, having told the "Umfundisi and gotten his approval, he started work in the Transvaal, under the supervision of and with the help of Dr. Sanders. Among their first converts in this section were Johanisi Sukazi and Simone Msibi, both of whom became Native workers, and both of whom have passed to their reward. The work which began at Etungwini and Engokweni soon spread till it reached Emfeni, Enhlahlandhlela, Welcome, and Emozane, about 1906. Not long before this Samuel was appointed as a regular worker and was holding Sunday as well as week day services, the people from these distant outposts coming to the Mission Station only on Communion Sundays and a number of earnest ones to Wednesday's class. Soon after this Samuel became sick and recommended Johannes Sukazi as a helper and in 1906 he was appointed by the Dr. as a helper at Emozane, some of these services being held in the Kraal of the local chief, Mtshegula. While Mr. Kierstead was here in charge during the absence of the Dr. who was home on furlough for four years, he visited this work and held services in different parts. After Dr. Sanders return Mr. Kierstead devoted more of his time to that work, and for a time thought of moving over on that side of the river, he and his family actually spent a few weeks over there with this in mind, but owing to Mrs. Kierstead's being seriously ill they had to abandon this idea.

Although the Transvaal work started in 1904 the candidates were all baptized and received into the Natal church at the Mission Station until 1914 when the Transvaal church was organized by Dr. Sanders and Rev. I. F. Kierstead at Etungwini. This first baptismal service in the Transvaal there were twenty-one candidates.

I hope in a later article to give you the History of the next sixteen years, drawing again from the Native workers and church books.

Yours, grateful for the record made by his predecessors both Sanders and Kiersteads now both in the homeland.

D. M. MacDONALD.

WHEN A PREACHER WAS DISCOURAGED

There was once an English preacher on his way to a little country church to fulfil an engagement to preach, and he stopped and tied his pony by a little country inn on the way. He went in and lay down to rest. He was much discouraged. He was a target for abuse and misrepresentation. He was unpopular and the gospel he was preaching was despised.

As he lay down he felt so weary that he wished his work was ended. He fell asleep and dreamed that he had been going to a little village church to preach and had stopped at a little inn to rest, and had lain down upon a couch in his chamber, wishing that he might die, and that he did die.

In his dream he was borne up by the angels in the air, to the land of glory, and as they lifted him up he was borne in and seated in a waiting room resplendent like a palace, where he was told to wait a few moments until the Master Himself should come to meet him.

As he waited for his Lord to appear he began looking around the temple upon the tapestries that so richly hung upon the walls, and as he gazed upon them he thought he recognized in the beautiful surrounds a picture of his own life.

He could see his birth, his infancy, his childhood, his early manhood, his failings and restorations, his toils and services to Christ, the souls he had won, the sermons he had preached, all the places he had visited and all the wonderful outcomings of these things reaching away into issues that he had never dreamed of. And as the meaning of his life opened out in all this glorious blessing, his heart was thrilled with wonder, until at last he came to the close, and he saw the room in which he was lying, dead, and the little pony by the door, and longed to be back again on the way to the little village church for the preacher; and then the great unfinished work; and the wonderful possibilities that might have been.

Then his heart became filled with sorrow and he wished that he had not died, and longed to be back again on the little pony, on the way to the little country church, and as he wept, he suddenly awoke. And lo! he was lying on the little sofa and the little pony was standing at the door. He got down on his knees and thanked God that he was still alive. He went on to labor and to wait with new courage and new hope until the work was all finished, and the hour at last came when he, the blessed Richard Baxter, entered into "the saint's everlasting rest," of which he had so often spoken.

Beloved, the pages are going up every day with the record of our life. We are setting the type ourselves by every moment's action. Hands unseen are stereotyping the plates, and soon the record will be registered and read before the audience of the universe, and amid the issues of eternity.—Alliance Weekly.

"Kindness—a language which the dumb can speak and the deaf understand."—Herald of Holiness.