

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Hartland M. S.,
Paulpietersburg,
Natal, So. Africa,
Dec. 28th, 1929

Dear Friends:

Last time I wrote you it was an appeal for prayer on behalf of our quarterly meeting, held in September. God surely has been answering prayer on many lines, and this has been signally evidenced in our December quarterly, which closed on Christmas Day.

The meetings began Wednesday, Dec. 18th, when three notable weddings took place. Peter Shelemba, who was one of our first workers, and as a young man, very promising, backslid, and for years was a native doctor and a heathen, but six years ago came back to the Lord; for five years has had an unbroken experience of justification, and seems to really have a blessed walk with God. Four years ago he took unto himself a wife, a Christian widow, but their wedding ceremony was only an agreement, which among the natives is customary and satisfactory, but certainly does not stand the test of our standards. Now she, having come from another church, desires membership in ours, and he, feeling the old call of God ringing in his heart, desiring to join the ranks of our native workers, the necessity of a proper Christian wedding was brought home. Apparent difficulties were overcome, the license procured and just before our afternoon class, the happy couple were united in true Christian wedlock. On Sunday, Elisabeta, the wife, was baptized and joined the church. You should have seen the shine on her happy face! Johan Kunene and Lina Nkosi, although married years ago by full heathen rites, were married by Christian rites in our church just before class on Wednesday.

Johan Kunene comes to us from the Swedish Independent Baptists. He is a man of rare character and ability and we all love him. Besides being away above the average native in diligence, providing for his family as few do, he is a mason of no mean skill. When Josefa left us, the section in which Johan lives was without a shepherd and in great danger. At father's request, though shrinkingly conscious of his lack of training and experience, Johan stepped into the breach. He and his good wife Lina hold two and three meetings every Sunday, visit and pray with the flock during the week and have a class for them Thursdays. Johan could not read a year ago, but a young school teacher was supplied by father, who held school at his home for six months. Though over 50 years of age, Johan took his place with the children and now can read his Bible well. He and his wife attend the Wednesday class on the mission station faithfully, though their home is over 10 miles distant and the way rough and mountainous. There is no more earnest student in our Bible Class Wednesday morning than Johan, and it is really touching to see him laboriously find his place, carefully read and mark each verse. He "gets" the lesson too, as his testimonies often reveal later.

Johan has an unusual sense of his responsibility. He has not found the task of shepherd an easy one and comes up against all sorts of hard and unpleasant things with his heathen neighbors who despise and persecute him for his devotion to the Lord. In spite of all this he has faithfully worked for more than a year now, and God has owned and blessed his labours. The work has weathered

the storm of Josefa's leaving and taking some with him. Johan has withstood Josefa's repeated efforts to step in and take it from him. The people have been held loyal, and there is a continuous tide of blessing. New seekers have come forward and old ones led on. Three of the converts baptised Sunday come to us as fruit of his one year's work. They give bright, clean testimonies.

The unusual humility and faithful spirit are really comforting. During the last quarterly arrangements were made for a public ceremony a little like ordination, in which he was to have official recognition of his labours, and to be given regular standing among our native workers. This to take place Sunday, Dec. 23.

As the time drew near, the enemy brought up a misunderstanding which led Johan to believe it inadvisable for him to be appointed, and he brought us his resignation. We felt keenly that his appointment had been marked by Divine approval, and that this misunderstanding was the work of the enemy. After a talk he was sent to pray over the matter and return the next morning. When he came back God had spoken to his heart from Ezekiel 33 (one of his marked passages). He was now willing, no matter how hard and unpleasant the position had been made to appear, to follow faithfully his calling saying: "If I resign now, blood will be required at my hands."

It is beautiful to see God work like this, and I cannot tell you what an encouragement it is to our heart. Sunday Johan came up front and all the workers, black and white, placed their hands on him while prayer was offered on his behalf.

We explained to Johan that at the present time he has no supporter, but he feels that he can do better work with a small salary, so we promised him we would let you know about him. Among those who read these lines I believe God has a faithful steward who wants just such a worker as Johan to represent them in this dark land, for Jesus' sake. Rev. I. F. Kierstead is our Missionary Treasurer, and if you will forward to him \$25 per quarter, he will send it on and Johan will preach for you while you sleep. Perhaps one does not feel able to undertake this, but a group can. Many of our workers are thus supported.

This letter is now so long that we will have to look for some one else to give the full report of the quarterly meetings, the baptism on Sunday and the Christmas feast.

I'll simply mention that the third wedding was that of Aloni's scape-grace son, Jerimia, whose unfortunate little baby was presented to the Lord on Sunday after a serious talk to all, and a promise on the part of the parents to seek the Lord and try to live better.

Yesterday my husband, at Paulpietersburg, saw a fourth couple married, Jesina Mtshali, our worker at Hibberdene, whose heathen husband now desiring to become a Christian, is willing to take this step, thus closing the door to possible polygamy. He is "burning his bridges" behind him, and Dan says he seemed as happy as Jesina when the ceremony was completed. They came over 350 miles for this purpose and to attend the quarterly and Xmas here.

Friends, God is working, prayers are being answered, and our hearts are encouraged to believe for more. Oh, how much more is needed!

Today Paul and Dan have gone over to Altona for "Big Sunday." Monday they have their Xmas feast there. Tuesday night a watch night service has been appointed at "Mbusus,"

and Wednesday they will have a New Year's feast there.

We are looking forward to a New Year of real battles and problems, but thank God the Mighty Victor is our Leader. Let us pray on!

With the wish that each of you may receive his first and best this year.

Yours for all His will,
FAITH MacDONALD

CORRESPONDENCE

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need a boost. We should provoke one another to love and good works. We tell our people the more we try to help others, the more God will bless us. We rejoice in the blessing that comes to any church, especially to those that preach and teach and live the life of perfect love. An evangelist told me that recently he held a meeting in a certain church, that had lost a band of people that had gone out for conscience sake. But they came to that meeting, prayed and paid and helped and showed a wonderfully good spirit. Give me the man or the people who if they have their conflicts and battles can come up smiling without a frown, and live to love and bless; and bless comes from the same root as bleed. When we cease to bleed and sacrifice we cease to bless. If we stand aloof and wait for another church to die, and we too have the joy of attending the obsequies and saying "Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust," God will send that Church a good revival and we will feel that He has made a big mistake as to where he sent the blessing.

I have learned not to get peeved when the Lord has blessed some folks whom I thought he might not bless. I have got increasing joy when I praised God and prayed to God that he would bless them more and more. The Wesleyan revival did as much good in its influence on the Anglican and other churches as it did in organizing eventually the Wesleyan church. When a holiness church gets big and rich it goes the same way as the others have gone, and is just as vigorous in maintaining the status quo as they are. A colored preacher one morning often used these words, status quo. Finally a good brother got up and said: "Excuse me, Mister Preacher, but I hear you talking about a feller named status quo. Now I should like to know who this gemman is?" The preacher scratched his head and replied: "I should have explained that thing as you don't know Latin. Status quo is the Latin for the mess we is in." It is mighty hard to break the status quo if a church is determined to be worldly and carnal.

Pardon this lengthy report and added remarks, I am,

Yours in the Holy War,
W. EDMUND SMITH

February 5th, 1930

PRECEPTS ON THE USE OF TIME

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."—The Lord Jesus.

"Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of."—Benjamin Franklin.

"By the streets of by and by, one arrives at the house of never."—Cervantes.

"It is no use running; to set out in time is the main point."—La Fontaine.