

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S.

Dear Homeland Friends:

This New Year greeting will be late in reaching you, but we do send all best wishes, and trust it will be a year of fruitful harvest in the salvation of souls. This is our hearts' desire.

We have much to praise God for and our expectation is from Him for a good 1935. He knows what it holds for us all and we can rest in Him.

After the stir and commotion of our New Year festivities, we are having a few days quietness. School is closed until January 22, when the usual routine of duties will begin. Just now we are alone except for our three native children, and we hope to get somewhat rested during these days, for we do feel rather the worse of wear. Of course we know not what may come up any day, and this quietness comes from the great change after the crowd of Christmas season activities.

The river was so full no one from here got over to Hartland for the quarterly and Christmas feast, which was held on December 26th. Many were disappointed, but "all things work together for good," and it seemed we were needed here and were very grateful many times that He had overruled to make it so. A young man died the day after Christmas and the workers also were needed to bury him. We trust that he went to be with Jesus. He was a seeker but had not been baptized; had just returned from his whiteman's up in the high veldt, and we had had no conversation with him since his return. He attended meeting one Sunday and was expecting to come to class the following week, but was suddenly stricken and never regained consciousness. His home was about five miles from Altona. He may have been poisoned.

December 25th was a quiet day. The Independent Church had a feast, but a terrible storm—rain, hail and a gale of wind—arose just about the time to serve the people and many had to leave. People were just soaked. It was the worst storm of the season. All day it had been almost too hot to breathe.

We were really about exhausted here, and were certainly grateful for the change in the atmosphere. The rain poured in the doorways and at the windows, the wind beating it in mercilessly, but we rejoiced in it all for how it refreshed us, and the cool weather continued for several days. Thank the dear Lord!

Our people contributed money to buy a young ox or cow for the feast here, also there were six goats and thirty hens promised. Although there are hundreds of cattle in all these farms no one seem disposed to sell any at this time, and we were about ready to think it was not the Lord's will for us to have much of a feast this year, when we heard of two for sale and got one just in time to have it slaughtered late Saturday afternoon.

Three young men of the church and Isaya's heathen brother with Mosi, our own boy, all worked cheerfully and diligently, and two goats came also that afternoon which were dressed in quick time. This greatly lightened the work for Monday morning (January 31 being our feast day) and the weather being cool, the meat kept nicely over Sunday in the store-room, which is also used for an eating room for natives. This is part of the building which some of you have so kindly

contributed towards, and could you have seen the usefulness of that building at this Christmas season, you would rejoice with us that it is on the Mission Station, dear friends. It is always in use and we really could not do without it. We do thank you so much for your help.

About 8 o'clock Saturday evening the MacDonald family arrived by car with Philemon Nkosi, Befu Kunene and also their native girl. Our native workers (Christian women) came and a dear old woman from Kipa Nyawo, who was to be baptized. Her name was changed from "Nomapezulu" to "Rebecca," and she was very pleased with her new one. The roads were bad and it had rained keenly Saturday morning, but we were very grateful that the Lord had overruled and made it possible for them to get here from Hartland. Sunday was a fine day and the people came for Big Sunday meeting. It was a splendid service all through, and a general altar service followed. A good spirit of prayer was on the people and hearts were refreshed by the presence of the Lord. Mrs. MacDonald brought a fitting New Year's message from Joshua, 3rd Chapter. A goodly number partook of the Communion service. A baby was presented to the Lord and the new member was taken into the church. Many remained, or a good number, for the next day, but the crowd went home to come back early next morning.

We missed our faithful Isaya in preparation for the feast Monday. He was a wonder on that job always and his little widow felt the responsibility very greatly. She really filled the place of a man nobly that day in superintending affairs, and the others willingly helped, until at 12.30 p. m. all was well looked after and they could get themselves ready for the service. Crowds of people were coming from all directions and by 1.30 the church was packed. How it does gladden our hearts when we see heathen people gathering where the Word of God is to be preached. Philemon Nkosi conducted an outside meeting for many who could not even get in the church, though they did want to so much. We think there were about 650 people present—Christian and heathen.

The service in the church was beautiful indeed. Mr. MacDonald spoke from Matt. 1. 21-23, after which the other missionaries and native workers took part and the presence of God was very blessedly felt. Others went out also to speak in the outdoor service, so all who were within hearing distance were given the message of salvation. This is the joy of having a Christmas feast, for some hear the gospel that day who never have heard and who may never hear again. It is a precious hour, dear friends, and we praise Him for the opportunity given.

Meeting was dismissed about 4.30 and Mr. MacDonald gave out 575 boxes of matches at the close. This was eagerly looked for by the whole crowd and those who did not receive were promised one in the future and their names taken.

Then came the big work of feeding the multitude. I always think of Jesus breaking the loaves and fishes as they sit down in companies on the grass, but there are no fragments to gather up here, dear friends—when it is over nothing but bones scraped clean and white are to be seen. It is astonishing to see how quickly they dispose of it and how they do enjoy the meat and crushed corn and broth

and not one goes away without his share, which makes us very happy. Heathen people speak well of this church because they appreciate the fact that they are not overlooked. It is often spoken about among the heathen, and also by the other churches who always come at this time. They say everyone is regarded—there is no respect of persons and all like to come here. They also see that our members are liberal in contributing to the feast and that is why all are able to receive a share. This despised church of the "white people" receives a good deal of praise when there is a feast. Does not that also remind you of Jesus and the loaves and fishes?

Well praise the Lord, hearts are touched and some who are heathen today will be among the Christian people next year. We do believe this and pray that there may be many. We thank Him for those who have taken their stand this year. Four have just recently given themselves here and one of these gave a goat to the feast. A heathen man at Emtungeni where the young man died, sent a goat. He remembered the help of the church in a sad bereavement he had last year and sent his thank offering.

Chief Msih, who is also a heathen, sent a goat and one from his wife. He came to the feast after he could leave some duties his landlord had asked of him that day. We were sorry he missed the meeting.

The sweet memories of the day linger with us yet and soothes our weary bodies. Yes, it was worth while. To Him be all the glory! Continue to pray for us.

The dear Grey's Mills friends again sent their love offering. How we do appreciate this in such hard times, only He knows.

This letter is very long so I will close now. The heat yesterday was terrible. We were wilted indeed. It is bad today but a trifle cooler. We hope for more showers soon.

With Christian love and prayer that there may be a wonderful year for us all in Him.

I am yours in His service,

ALICE F. STERRITT

BE HONEST

Don't neglect your secret prayer and Bible study, and then wonder why you have no power with God or souls.

Don't call jealousy WATCHFULNESS.

Don't call quarreling EARNESTNESS.

Don't call covetousness ECONOMY.

Don't call stubbornness FIRMNESS.

Don't call fretfulness NERVOUSNESS.

Don't say you are humble when you are determined to have your own way.

Don't say you are meek when you are conceited.

Don't say you are filled with the Spirit unless you have the fruits of the Spirit.

Don't say you are all for Jesus when you seldom give a dollar to His cause.

Don't say you will bear anything for Jesus when you fly into a passion over trifles.

Don't profess to be a Christian unless you walk and talk with God.

Don't profess to be sanctified when you fail to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

—Selected—By A. I. J. Ward, of Vancouver.

Impossibilities recede as experience advances.
—Arthur Helps.