

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission Station,
July 1, 1940

Dear Highway Friends:

These cool days we are feeling especially grateful to the dear homeland friends who made it possible for us to have ceilings in our rooms. It is so much more comfortable in our house this winter, and we thank the people and also the dear Lord who knew and supplied our need.

So many times since I came here the Lord has so wonderfully met my needs and many times I didn't even ask—before I had asked He answered. It makes one feel more certain than ever that God surely loves and cares for His own. In my heart, this morning, there is a great love for the One who has done so much for me.

Recently our days have become much cooler. We also had two days of heavy rains which is quite unusual for this time of the year.

We are feeling the effects of the war in many ways. Just now we feel a bit lonely, for Mr. Hanes, the supervisor for this area, has been called to the front and also Dr. Peskin, who comes to Altona every few months to care for any natives who may be sick. Both of these men have been friendly toward our work and we shall miss their visits. We pray that God will protect them and bring them back to their families. Our hearts ache for the many who are suffering because of this terrible war and we are praying that God will help the nations. May the rulers of the land ask God's help to solve their problems.

The work is going along as usual. I expect the Mbucu church is nearly completed and a week from Sunday is to be the dedicating service. I do pray that the work there will prosper and that the church will be a great blessing to the people.

The house we are making here to house our Quarterly Meeting guests is going up very slowly. At present Eugene is busy getting ready to make brick to finish it. Everything here seems to move slowly and one has to have patience in abundance.

Then one needs lots of patience for the spiritual side of the work too. It's not so hard to get the young people to say they want to become Christians and give themselves as seekers but so many times it seems that they do not seek very hard. It is hard work to get them to the place where they really know that their sins are forgiven. If I did not remember their past and the condition of many of their homes now, their customs and their ways, etc., I fear sometimes I should feel nearly discouraged. But when one remembers the pit of heathenism that they have been taken from, it helps one to better understand their problems. Then too when we see those who have come through great trials and still have stood true to God it gives us greater encouragement and we feel like pressing on as never before, and with God's help continue to fight the battle for Him.

We are to have two weddings very soon. The girls are daughters of two of our women workers. One girl is marrying one of our seekers, but the other one is marrying a boy from another church. These are our first weddings and we are quite interested and pray that God will bless these unions. None of these young people are really Christians but we hope that they may soon get to that place where they will confess their sins and take

an out and out stand for God and righteousness.

The young people in this land especially need our prayers. The older ones have many testings and trials but it seems to me that the young people have the harder time. In the heathen way of thinking sin is not sin as we consider it. A girl from a heathen kraal has a hard job to be a Christian. Her parents see no harm in many things that the church forbids and they encourage her to do those things and unless she has had much light she will, no doubt, side in with her parents and take the way of least resistance. After all, we know that we who have had light all our lives often have not always followed that light as carefully as we should have—surely that thought should give us much love and patience with these who have sat in darkness for so long.

May God keep all His dear children true to Him and to holiness so we may not become weary in well doing for we know that if we are true to our calling we shall reap if we faint not.

Yours in His service,

GLADYS KEIRSTEAD

Altona Mission,
July 1st, 1940

Dear Highway Friends:

You might be interested to follow the work of the mission during one of our busiest weeks.

A week ago today a second native man arrived to help us in the work around the mission. I had promised him the standard local wage of twenty-five cents a day. Most of the day was spent in uncovering a supply of brick clay, making cement blocks, and spading the garden. Tuesday and Wednesday the men did much the same work, except that they scalped the grass off a large square of ground on which the "green" or soft bricks were to be put to dry.

On Wednesday I went by car to Sulphur Springs to see the visiting magistrate about having banns published for a Christian (native) wedding. On my return I got the post and then went on to Entungwini for the school closing. The teacher and pupils had quite a nice program of drills, exercises and singing. The parents and others had two goats and several chickens killed for a feast for the teacher, pupils and visitors.

Brother George Sanders arrived by horseback from Mbucu, where he had gone after our Sunday service at Entungwini to see how our new church in the process of building was getting along. As our share of the feast, we were given a whole chicken, white potatoes and tea.

I could not help noticing the contrast between this June closing and the one we had had just before Christmas. Here were 27 pupils as compared with 6 or 7. This time there was a feast; before none. School fees were already collected; previously they were paid with much grumbling. I thought what a difference a new, energetic and well-liked teacher made!

Thursday morning I got my men to work digging a shallow trench across the front of the mud floor of the church in which I put cement blocks 6 inches thick and 9 inches high end to end to make the front edge of a platform of the church. One of the men and I filled the cracks between the blocks with cement mortar while the other fellow began

digging earth and rock shale just behind the church to make the filling for the platform. We stopped work about eleven o'clock and went in to the Bible class which was conducted by Brother George that day. After dinner George and I and most of our people and workers went to visit the Ethiopian school which was having its closing. I have been working to get the schools in the vicinity to unite and form a public school. Ours was a friendly move in that direction. Those who could not or those who did not care to go, stayed at the mission and had a class or prayer meeting. Our crippled worker, Samuel Mavimbela, was present to conduct the service.

Friday, George and I went by bicycle to be present at a second school closing at Kipenyawo; the working men were left to continue with the work on the new church platform. This school closing was a very mild and uninteresting one as there was no program, and we merely collected the school fees. The teacher there did not like her place and was not too energetic a teacher. Our trip was not altogether without value as we had a long talk with our preacher, Daniel Sukazi, about several important matters.

Saturday the men finished their share of the work on the church platform, while George, Glendon and I went to take the two native teachers to the train at Moolman and then went on to Piet Retief to talk with the native commissioner about several matters concerning the mission and various natives, and to see if our money had come through from Canada. We didn't get any money. On my way home I telephoned the farm owner of the farm on which our Mozane church is, in an effort to get permission to rebuild, enlarge or repair that church. I again got very little satisfaction, although he did say we could replace the roof which had fallen in. That was little consolation as the walls are so bad they would hardly support the roof.

Yesterday, Sunday, we went again by bicycle to our Klipvaal outpost for a service. We had preaching, testimonies and Communion. About 40 were present. Two married women gave themselves to our church as seekers.

Besides these activities of the week, in-between, we had several interviews (one about a second Christian wedding), took reports from six or more native workers, pulled a few teeth, and did a few other odd jobs. And so another week ended.

Today a woman began to pound and smooth the new mud floor of the church platform; the men and I began making brick—over four hundred were turned out; George went on an errand to Sulphur Springs.

Pray that we may have strength, grace and fore-sight to carry on.

Yours in Africa,
EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

Hartland M. S.,
Natal, So. Africa,
June 21, 1940

Our Dear Praying Friends:

This is the confidence that we have in Him, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us, and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. How sweet is His promise to our heart. The very next verse connects this promise with the