

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Homeland Friends:

Altona Mission

This is Thursday evening and we have finished our classes for today. Eugene is away this week so Johanisi kindly took charge of the morning class while Trifina Msibi preached this afternoon. Trifina's husband has recently died and it seems to be the custom for a widow to dress all in black, even to black aprons—not even a touch of white. Trifina is very fond of bright colors and it seems so strange to see her in black.

Trifina has not lived with her husband for some time, for after he took a second wife she felt it was not right to remain, so she went to the home of her brother. If many others had similar convictions along that line, we would have less problems to solve. That of having many wives is a problem indeed, and old customs are hard to destroy, and it will be a long time yet before it disappears among the Zulu people.

Cattle and wives are considered a man's wealth and I am sure the reason why many more men do not become Christians is because they want many wives.

The older men are very hard to reach, and our greatest hope is in the boys and young men for our male church members.

We had a very good service here at Altona on Sunday in which two young men stood and declared their determination to follow the Lord and gave themselves to Him as seekers. This was indeed very encouraging, and we pray that the dear Lord will make them bright lights for Him in this dark land.

A week ago last Sunday four young people gave themselves to the Lord at one of our nearer outposts—Jimson's section. Eugene said they had a very nice service and a large crowd present. Oh, friends, it rejoices our hearts to see our young people taking this step towards God and how pleased He must be to see these dark souls who are breaking away from their superstitions, etc.

Many of the Bantu are sick with colds now. Johanisi's wife, Trifina, has been in bed for several days and I have had many others to tend this past week. Among them were two badly burned children. One was the dearest baby girl who is just learning to walk, and in walking about the hut she fell and tumbled into the open fire. Fortunately she only burned an arm from the elbow to the wrist and it doesn't appear to be deep so I hope it will soon heal. I dressed it and gave the mother the necessary articles and instructions to continue caring for it at home. Another child—a boy about Harold's age—got very badly burned with boiling water. Poor boy, it will be some time before he is well.

On Wednesday Losaya arrived telling about one of our neighbors, a worker in one of the native churches, who is very ill. He had a bad chest cold and pain in his side, difficulty in breathing, etc. Eugene was not here to go and see him but I made mustard plasters and sent other medicines that I thought would help and last night I received word that he was better. It makes one happy to be able to relieve physical pain but there is a greater joy in our hearts when we see people growing spiritually.

Daniel Mtetwa, one of our young members, has recently returned from Johannesburg, where he has been working for the past ten months. He preached for us on Sunday and

it was so good to hear him say that he had returned with the blessing of God upon him. It's very interesting to hear him tell his experience. He was a wicked boy but God has done a wonderful work for him and we do praise the Lord for it. He feels a call to the ministry and we pray that the Lord will keep him true and help him to be a good worker.

Friday morning, I was unable to finish my letter last night, but will do so now. This is a very cold day with a strong wind blowing. I cannot get the living room warm with a fire in the fireplace so I hope the wind will soon go down.

I have promised to help one of the girls to cut out an apron so I must close. My school for the boys will start on Monday so I have tried to do a few extras through the holidays. When I am teaching I get up very early mornings so as to get as much done as possible before prayers and breakfast. Then I usually teach until noon. There are often many interruptions but I do the best I can and I think the boys are getting along fairly well.

May the Lord bless and be with you all.

Yours in Him,

G. M. KEIRSTEAD

Hartland M. S.,
Natal, So. Africa

Dear Homeland Friends:

What I have to tell you this lovely Sunny Sabbath morning will, I think, especially interest the children. It is about the Sunday school. The children seemed to have lost interest and only a few were coming for several Sundays. I put a test and found out that they really did not want Sunday school closed but that soon there would be many free to come because the reaping was about finished. They have been turning up better and we had an interesting time last Sunday, with the review and test. Four prizes were offered—some got two but Daniel got all four. Some of the youngest put the older ones to shame when it came to repeating their memory verses.

I have a young married woman helping me in the hospital. She got saved over a year ago when sick in the hospital here. Miss Moe led her to Jesus. She takes a great interest in the children of her kraal and teaches them Scripture verses and hymns. One day last week she asked off to attend a funeral of a boy who had died that morning—her husband's nephew. He had not been sick many days—just his leg swollen and he had a convulsion and was many hours unconscious, then revived and then suddenly died. I wondered whether he had not, possibly, been buried alive—where he came to life after the first time he "died." It troubled me so that I took the native nurse woman with me and went to find out the particulars at the kraal. It is quite a long walk. We found four men—all brothers—at the kraal. They were sitting in the morning sunshine (this was the following day the thought came to me) by the cattle kraal, looking so sad and troubled. We spoke words of sympathy and tried to point the father to Jesus. I never saw him so tender—sorrow had ploughed up his heart. The words he spoke were very sensible indeed. One of the men got up and went away when I spoke of salvation. His heart is very hard. Then we enquired into the particulars and came to the conclusion that the boy had really died and the cause of death was blood poison from a scratch, from a piece of wire, above the knee. The father sadly said, "Death rushed us

so. I was just thinking of taking him to you—as you have saved all my children when they were so sick—and to our amazement death got ahead of us. I was away."

I explained to him the cause of the boy's death. Then asked if we might have prayers before leaving. He seemed pleased and eager and pointed out a hut. There we found about ten women—they had been eating. Little bowls were still full of food. They set these aside, though we said we would wait, swept the floor, spread down mats and invited us inside. The men followed. They seemed very glad we came. The bereaved father said, "You are welcome to come anytime to have prayers here." This made me glad for they have not been anxious for us to have prayers there before this. So I then told him about the Sunday school and invited him to send his children. The following Sabbath day a whole string of new children came from that kraal and a neighbouring one. I counted fourteen. It was quite worth our while.

Over a fortnight has passed since I started this letter but it would not be complete without the story of little Black Samuel.

The man reminded me that he was Samuel's father. Then I saw my opportunity to speak again to his soul. But first the story:

About two years ago a young woman came to me—very sad because she had been married some time and had had no baby. As I was talking with her she asked me about the picture of a little boy saying his prayers by his bedside—a calendar picture. I told her the story of Hanna and how God answered her prayer and gave her a little boy. Then I told her God could do the same for her if she would trust Him, and especially should she give Him her heart. She was deeply moved and eagerly knelt down with me to ask God for "a man child" but was not ready to take Jesus as her Saviour. I gave her a bottle of medicine. Some time later I was called to her kraal. When I got there I found she did not need me any longer. Her little son had arrived and all was well. I gave him his first bath and dressed him in one of the little shirts sent me from "Home" and wrapped him in a little blanket. Then the mother told me that I had told her she would have a boy and had named him for her but she did not remember the name. I had forgotten the instance so she reminded me about the picture on the wall—like a flash it all came back to me, "Then his name is Samuel?" I asked. "Yes, yes! That is the name—Samuel!" They were so very pleased with the shirt and blanket! I told the father about this instance and how graciously God had answered his wife's prayer and told him I felt that God had a special "mark" on that little boy of his. That he should forsake sin and his evil ways of darkness, follow God and walk in the light and lead his child in the right way, and with Paul be able to say, "Be ye followers of me even as I am of God." He agreed very heartily with me and seemed greatly impressed. I felt that he was not far from the Kingdom. Let us pray that God will soon be invited into those peoples' hearts!

Over and over I praise God for the blessed privilege that is mine to work for Him in this dark land, and covet your earnest prayers that God will help me to "keep on the firing line."

Yours for souls,

GRACE E. M. SANDERS

Wherever you see persecution, there is more than a probability that truth is on the persecuted side.—Bishop Latimer.