

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission,
Nov. 23rd, 1941

Dear Highway:

Somebody has said, "Variety is the spice of life." If that is true, life must be very kind to me these days.

The first Sunday after the Hartland meeting the whole family went with me by car to our new outpost at Ntuyane, about twenty miles away on the Altona-Moolman road. The second Sunday I went to Mfene on horse-back; a round trip of about twenty-five miles. I had little trouble in remembering that trip for nearly a week! The third Sunday I spent at Alfred Metula's outpost out beyond Paulpietersburg; this meant a round trip by horse-back to Hartland (thirty miles or so) and a bicycle trip from Hartland on (over sixty miles there and back) Last Sunday I went by car to Little Mapondleni which is over forty miles away and out beyond Moolman. Today's trip was fairly easy as it only meant a bicycle trip of about fifteen miles to Nkokweni. Next Sunday I hope to be at home as we are planning on having our Transvaal Quarterly this week-end.

Much of my time at home during the week has lately been spent in putting in a garden and nursing fruit trees and some other trees I am trying to grow from seed. If the heat and drought keep on very much longer my work may be in vain. People say it is drier than it has been for years. People are getting quite concerned over the drought and have begun to pray for rain. Many natives went to the top of hills to pray today.

Some days ago I built a nice little pulpit for the Mozane Church from boxes and ceiling boards (matched lumber). Mrs. Duplissey, of Bristol, made this financially possible. If lumber prices continue to rise I am afraid we shall be obliged to stop such undertakings in the future. Matched lumber (six-inch) is already twelve cents a running foot. Think of that!

Recently Daniel Sukazi reported that a young man had come to his kraal in his absence and had tried to get one of the small school girls to take two bottles of medicine that he had brought and give it to another girl whom he had courted and who had spurned him. One medicine was supposed to bewitch the girl and make her run over the hills making strange noises; the other was poison.

The little girl, one of our seekers, would not take the medicines and administer them for him; instead she told her class leader (Umkokeli), and the young man was brought before the native chief, who tried the case, made the young man pay a fine, and told him he would have to leave the district. Daniel was quite concerned about the affair because it might frighten parents from sending their children to our school.

Our school at Daniel's home, Kipenyawo, will close for the Christmas holidays on Wednesday; the Altona school on Thursday. I had hoped to attend the Kipenyawo school closing but I just received word that the native schools Inspector wants me to go with him to inspect one of our schools in Alfred Metula's section. For some months or even years, your missionaries have tried to have this school inspected so that we might have it accepted by the government as a Government Aided School. Pray that we may have success along this line as the result of this inspection.

We are glad to be able to report that the Hospital at Hartland is now fully self-supporting even to paying the missionary nurse's salary. The Government is granting us nearly \$1,000 per year to buy medicines and equipment and for running expenses. Local collections have more than trebled the last year due to Sister Grace Sander's efforts so that they cover the remaining expenditures and pay the nurse's salary. Pray that Sister Grace may continue to have the necessary health to carry on. The Hospital work is growing to such an extent that an additional nurse would be a great asset. If both nurses could not be kept busy at Hartland, one might come to Altona part of the time and find plenty to keep her busy here. Now with a small Government grant available for medicines at Altona also, there is every reason to believe that Altona could become just as busy a Hospital centre as Hartland is—it might even surpass it due to its geographic location and a denser and more stable population.

I believe I wrote you about getting an additional acre of land at Altona from the government for our own use. I probably also told you about the Government granting a separate school site at Altona of two more acres. We have applied for a building grant from the government but it is doubtful if we will get it now on account of the war.

Saturday I heard that the Native Affairs Department had agreed to give us sufficient fencing (iron posts and wire) to fence in the school site. We are thankful for even that much help.

Our faithful workers are ever busy preaching and teaching in their outposts. They often see little visible results for a long time but they continue to trust that the Lord of the Harvest will some day gather in the wheat.

The strain and anxiety of wars and rumors of wars are making themselves felt even among the natives. Many wonder how white people, like these who bring us the gospel, can fight wars, and continue to fight them when they call themselves Christians. Some are losing faith in the white people and their civilization and religion and are wondering if they would not be better off living as their grandfathers lived. It is getting harder than ever to reach the young people for this and other reasons. We need to be much in prayer for the world situation and for the souls who are being led astray and blinded because of it.

Yours in Him,

EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

Altona M. S.,

Nov. 12th, 1941

Dear Highway:

Life in this country is full of numerous and strange problems.

Daniel Sukazi is one of our younger preachers. Being the oldest son, he is the heir and head of his deceased father's kraal. He has charge of the kraal property and is the guardian of his mother or mothers, brothers and sisters.

Some time ago one of Daniel's brothers became engaged and asked Daniel to pay for his girl with part of the family cattle. This was done. Later the brother became engaged again and wanted the second girl paid for. This Daniel refused to do.

Now after some months the brother wants to be married by Zulu (heathen) rites. Many national customs come into play at such an event. There must be plenty of native beer,

feasts and dancing. Lewd talk and opportunities for immorality are common as the result of the visitors' state of undress, abandon and suggestiveness in dancing and drunkenness.

According to native custom the bride should be initiated and feasted in the family kraal (in this instance Daniel's). The beer, the feast and dancing should all take place there. To refuse this would be insulting and belittling to the new bride and her people.

Now Daniel is a Christian and a preacher in our church and could hardly consent to such goings on in his kraal; yet custom and public opinion is strong and against him. What would you do if you were in his place?

Daniel first went to his chief and laid his problem before him. He explained that he was a Christian and a preacher and that these ceremonies ran counter to Christian principles and his church's rules. He felt that he could not allow these ceremonies to take place in his kraal—if they must take place they would take place in a heathen relative's kraal. Fortunately the chief agreed with him.

Daniel then went to the prospective bride's people and explained the matter to them. At first they were most beside themselves with rage and feigned mortification. Daniel was berated, so was the church... they had never heard of the like before... it was an insult to the bride's people... they wouldn't allow their girl to go to such a kraal... and so on!

Daniel explained that churches differed in the rules they set up and enforced; that he was subject to the church; that if he allowed such ceremonies in his kraal he would be disobeyed and disciplined or cut off. Would they force him to such straits?

Righteousness and reason finally triumphed and they finally agreed that they would bow to the inevitable—but what a church! The satiric point of the whole matter is that the girl's guardian is a native preacher and a few months ago was keen on joining our Church!

We who know the strength of custom and public opinion out here, honour Daniel for the strong stand he has taken. Few in the homeland are called upon to pay such prices as our Christians out here. Pray for them that they may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Yours in Him,

EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE

Often the preacher's lack of prayerfulness in private is the reason for his shallowness and weakness in the exercise of public devotions. J. W. Jowett declared:

"Men never learn to pray in public; they learn in private. We can not put off our private habits and assume public ones with our pulpit robes. If we are never in Gethsemane when alone, we shall not find our way there in the crowd. If men are unmoved by our prayers, they are not likely to be profoundly stirred by our preaching. I would therefore urge you, when you are in the pulpit, to regard the prayers as the essentials, and not the 'preliminaries' of the service; and to regard your sermon as a lamp whose arresting beams are to be fed with a holy oil which flows from the olive tree of sacred communion with God."—The King's Business.

Aggressive fighting for the right is the greatest sport the world knows.—Theodore Roosevelt.