

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission,  
July 13th, 1942

Dear Highway:

One more denominational year has come and gone. We now stand on the threshold of a new year. Much of the success of our work as a denomination will depend upon us, its members, whether we are energetic or indolent, whether we are dead or on fire.

We too, representing our church in Africa, have finished another church year; have gathered for our yearly June session at Hartland, and have returned to our homes and outposts.

Our meetings began on Monday, June 29th, and lasted until Monday, July 5th. Practically all the active native workers of Natal and Transvaal were present as well as a good representative of the church members from the various outposts. The number of those who came and stayed throughout the services was larger than usual. It was a problem to house them all and provide them with blankets as it was quite cold nights, this being our winter season.

Most of Monday was taken up with the Hartland school closing exercises. Our new teacher, Harriet Xulu, had a very nice programme that included hymns and exercises, with a spiritual significance.

Nearly every day and night was full to the overflowing with business meetings, Bible classes, preaching, testimony and prayer meetings.

On Sunday Brother Charles Sanders led five candidates into the waters of baptism and later received them into church membership. Sister Grace "blessed" two children which were "presented" to the church by their parents. One young man, a prospective worker, was set aside from his position and the Lord's table because of his backsliding. Two other young men, Johan Sangweni and Johan Mtabela, were given the equivalent of Exhorter's Licenses and made helper-preachers; Sangweni belongs in the Transvaal; Mtabela in Natal. The offering and tenth was one of the largest I have seen since coming out here for that kind of a service. A good number remained to the Sunday altar service.

The problems and questions discussed in the business sessions were many and varied and we felt that our time was well occupied in the discussions.

Much time and thought were spent on the idea of ordaining native elders in our African church. All felt that it would be a great forward step and might aid in spreading our work over a greater area. It also would make possible a closer supervision over the outposts and the relatively untrained workers. The time for ordination was not set as we did not finish discussing all the pros and cons and making arrangements for the necessary adjustments relating to fields of labour, work, salary, etc. We did decide that the workers needed some training before they could carry on their new duties: some need to learn to write and read better; most of them need to have teaching bearing on our doctrine, church government, and so on.

I have been able to get a site in the Mbuca—Little Mapondleni-Mfene section to place a native preacher and his family so that they will not need to work six months of the year for the farm owner or landlord. The preacher will have about five acres of land to plow and grazing for ten head of cattle and some

goats. We are to pay \$15 a year for these privileges; really only a nominal fee as at another outpost we pay \$30 a year to free the preacher alone. The above agreement is for twenty years but can be terminated with six months notice by either side. In case it is terminated we have a right to remove all buildings and movable improvements. Jimson Ngomezulu has expressed his willingness to move to the new site. Many of you will not realize what his moving means since you are used to preachers moving about, but out here one is breaking with custom and fighting against all sorts of notions when he goes into a new district. Some time I may get a chance to explain what moving involves amongst the natives.

Our meetings were somewhat broken up on Wednesday by a wedding feast at the kraal of our preacher Aloni Mkonza. His son Mosi had been married by Christian rites a few days before and his wife was thus being brought to her new home, but then that is also another story.

Yours in Christian love,  
E. A. M. KIERSTEAD

Altona Mission,  
July 19th, 1942

Dear Highway Friends:

I have just been reading a Highway letter that was written by my mother-in-law nearly thirty-five years ago. She began her letter with these words: "Another month has passed and it is time to write for The Highway. Seems to me time flies faster here than in the homeland. The days are so full there isn't an hour to spare for homesickness." I could begin my letter with her words and it would be very true of us now.

I promised myself that I would write a letter to The Highway once each month, but once, I believe, I reached the very last day before I found time to write.

Mother K. also went on to write about the many who came to the mission asking for salt, sugar, etc. She said, "It is wearisome to the flesh to attend to the needs of so many, but amid it all we praise the Lord that He blesses our efforts and the Holy Spirit teaches us many sweet lessons along the way."

I smile as I think of how like many of my days here at Altona. I may need to get mending done and just sit down and take up my needle when my girl comes saying, "Abantu ba yo funa wena." "People want you." I come out and find perhaps some women and children asking for salt. On each head is a piece of wood to thank for it. I look at their wood, give them salt, talk with them, asking the children if they go to Sunday school, etc. Then I hurry back to my work only to be called again. "A sick baby has come." Again I go out, send my own little ones away and try to find out what is the trouble; give some medicine, etc., and so my days go by.

Yesterday a young woman came with the dearest baby girl. The child had a sore mouth and a cold. It was interesting to watch the old heathen grandmother help the mother with the baby and she listened so carefully to all the details of the medicine. Young Zulu mothers cannot do always as they wish, about their babies, but they usually must follow the instructions of the older women of the kraal.

Mother K. wrote too about so many who would not listen too well when spoken to

about salvation, but would constantly interrupt with such words, "we have a famine at our home," or "our baby is sick." I was reminded of a woman who came to us one day for salt. We gave her some and then she said that she had a ticky (about six cents) and she wanted to buy salt for her mother.

Eugene was at home and he told her that we were not allowed to sell things, but we would give her a cup full to take to her mother. That didn't please her; she wanted to buy salt—rarely you find one so determined.

At last Eugene asked her when she was going to give herself to the Lord. She said she liked snuff too much to give it up to become a Christian. We asked if she drank beer and she said she did drink beer but she didn't like it as she did snuff. Then as soon as she got a chance she began to tell us again that her mother was old and needed salt. We suggested that she go to the store and buy it and that she should consider giving herself to the Lord before it was too late, but all she could think about was buying salt here. After a while she left and I gave her a cup of salt for her mother and we told her that when she used her own salt to think about what we told her and we would pray that God would open her heart to receive Him. So many others also are so bound by snuff and beer that they feel they can never give it up. It's a real delight to see those who have trusted the Lord and been delivered of these snares of the devil.

I am enclosing a letter that was written to my mother by one of our Hartland girls, the daughter of our workers, John and Elizabeth Maseko. She attended the Hartland Mission school. She has worked for me at three different times and is the best Zulu girl I have ever had. She calls me mama, so of course, according to their custom, she should address my mother as Grandmother. She was very grateful for her gifts and says she has thanked here on earth and has also thanked the Lord for them—that is what she means by thanked in the earth and in the heaven. Her name is Gadelina or Katherine in English. I thought our people would enjoy seeing how well our young people here are learning English. Pray for our young people, friends. There are so many snares laid for their young feet. May God guide them aright, is my prayer.

We are now enjoying our winter holidays but school will open the 3rd of August. We are having, and expecting, very busy days through the remainder of the winter and spring. Pray for us, dear ones, that our strength may not fail and that we may not become weary in well doing.

Now the Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

Yours in Christian love,

GLADYS M. KIERSTEAD

Altona Mission,  
3-7-42

My Dear Grandmother:

How are you? I am quite well here at Altona with Nkosikazi. You will surprise to receive a letter from Gadelina whom you don't know by eyes, and I too, I don't know you, but I know you by hearing, and seeing from the pictures.

Oh my grandmother, I thank you. My first thing is to say I thanked a handkerchief that