

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission,
South Africa,
Dec. 27th, 1941

Dear Highway:

In my last letter I took you on some of my travels. Today we shall take another path and go to Ngenatsheni for Sunday services, a school closing, and a Christmas feast.

Saturday morning, bright and early, the main body of the Transvaal Christians started off on foot, fifteen or more of them, singing and carrying their clothes and lunches on their heads. They were to wait for me at the Pongola or Pevaana river.

I started off on horseback at about seven o'clock. Behind me were tied my blankets and on either side were saddle bags filled with clothes and food. My path led me almost due south from the Altona Mission Station. The first three or four miles was easy riding and over rolling uplands. I then reached the tops of the cliffs or hills running along the Pongola river. As I looked down into the Pongola valley the river looked like a narrow band of baby ribbon silvered by the rays of the early morning sun. Here and there in red patches of garden I could see natives planting and hoeing, so small I wondered if they were not flies or some little insects. Near the ford I could see two persons sitting by the bank of the river waiting, I imagined it might be Johanisi and Daniel waiting to show me the crossing.

The ride down to the river bed is long and steep. In some places the path is only within one or two feet of the edge of the cliff. You can lean over in the saddle and see straight down four or five hundred feet. I could just imagine that more than one old grandmother or enemy had hurtled far below to their death on the tree tops or rocks. The path runs diagonally at an angle of between thirty and sixty degrees. In some places it is so steep and stony it is necessary to get off and lead the horse. It takes thirty to forty minutes to make the descent.

At the river's edge I found Johanisi and Daniel and, following their directions, I was soon across the Pongola and going around the V of land at the junction of the Pongola and Pevaana rivers. About a mile and a half up the Pevaana river we crossed that river, found the rest of our party, had a lunch and a rest, and then set off once more, this time to climb up the higher hills bordering the Pevaana.

Part way up I got ahead of the natives and took a different path from what they planned to take. The path was old and indistinct; in places I lost it altogether, but farther along I would pick up another pass. My horse and I did some real mountain climbing that day. In some places it was so steep that the horse could hardly get along even with me walking ahead.

I saw many pretty birds, wild flowers and a buck about the size of a Canadian deer. I had a good look at it as it stood less than fifty yards away on the other side of a ravine. I was nearly two hours getting to the tops of the hills and the home of Paul Nkosi at Ngenatsheni.

The Transvaal natives did not arrive until about three hours later. They expressed great relief in finding me there ahead of them as they thought I was lost in the hills.

Brother Charles Sanders and Philemon Dhlamini, a Hartland preacher, arrived at dusk.

A supper of porridge and goat meat was prepared and eaten, then at about nine o'clock our first service started. With the preaching, singing and the many long testimonies, it was not until about three o'clock Sunday morning that we got settled down to sleep.

The Sunday day service ran from about eleven o'clock until nearly four. Two children were presented and nearly fifty partook of Communion.

The evening service lasted until about eleven and everybody was tired and sleepy. One boy "chose the Lord" in this service.

Monday mornig was spent killing goats and chickens and cooking the Christmas feast. The Transvaal visitors with Johanisi and Daniel at their head went over the hills to Johanisi's father's kraal and had prayers. They returned shouting and singing as the apostles of old feeling that the spirits were subject to them. Two Hartland workers went in another direction down the path we had climbed up to "cry" with their friends for someone who had died.

About mid-day we watched the drills, exercises, and singing of the school closing exercises. Then we had a short preaching service at which I was privileged to preach to nearly two hundred natives, nearly half of them in heathen dress. Christmas presents were given out, the feast was eaten and the crowds soon melted away into the shadows at night fall.

Brother Charles and I left in the middle of the afternoon, he for Hartland and I for Altona.

The ride home was uneventful as I took the most direct paths and was running from the gathering storm. At the junction of the Pevaana and Pongola my horse nearly stepped on a ringhals snake but when I noticed it, it was several yards away gliding off with head in the air, head expanding and contracting, and its forked tongue darting in and out of its mouth. I thought, how like the devil, silent, stealthy but oh so dangerous.

Night fall, the welcome lights of home, food and sleep followed one after the other as welcome comforts, and so ended another missionary journey.

Yours in Him,
EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

Hartland M. S.,
Natal, South Africa

My Dear Friends:

A much needed rain is falling on the parched ground, with a scattering of hailstones. Though I am alone in the old homestead, the lightning flashing, the thunder crashing, there is no fear nor terror but such a wonderful joy knowing I am in His will and tender keeping. He who lead me out here promised to keep and protect. His promises have been proved true over and over. Just as He is keeping me through this electric storm of wind, rain and fury, so does He keep through every tempest of life I am called to go through—praise His name. I do love Him and mean by His grace to go through with Him.

I think I told you, in my last letter, of the souls who have been finding salvation who come for medicine, or for a few days treatment in the Hospital. The Lord's Spirit is still blessing on this line. Some weeks only one—or for several weeks—only one will find the Lord. But many are dealt with—some professing Christians who need careful instruction. Again others who are passing through deep waters of sorrow or affliction. They also need comforting and encouraging. Many times some

days we have little seasons of prayer with these needy souls. Occasionally we give a Bible lesson to help some earnest soul seeking to know God better. When we are too rushed to help souls we grieve, but try to speak a few words as we are shaking up the bottle of medicine to hand to the waiting one. Maybe the few words are important as having lead a soul to God. Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep." There are some who are following the teaching of false prophets. They need to have their eyes opened. Poor souls—they want to make Heaven but do not know that they have been directed into the "broad road that leadeth to destruction."

The three young mothers who sought the Lord one Sabbath day while in Hospital, really got through and are going on with the Lord. We heard today that the one whose mother is a heathen and whose father, also a heathen, refused permission for her to "believe," makes no objection now and she is really living a Christian life. Oh, our hearts do so rejoice. She stayed here two months and we tried to have prayers with them every night. What a privilege is mine!

Tuesday, Friday and this afternoon I walked down to Kelina and Andelia's home to see a very sick woman. The doctors say there is no hope for her recovery—her kidneys are very badly diseased. Friday she was so sleepy she would not try to pray. Kelina was so distressed over her soul's condition that she wept as we prayed for her. When asked if she had a bright hope, she would almost groaningly say, "My children are my worry." Her concern for her family would seem to envelope her like a cloud, so her faith in God was very weak. I felt to pray that God would dispel this awful cloud and help her to see how He would care for them—yes, far better than she herself could. To my great joy today I found her bright mentally and said her hope was good; she had the witness of sins forgiven and was trusting in Jesus. We had special prayer for her and felt God had undertaken for her. Kelina and Andelia are two of our workers. They have a fine little family, one girl and their fourth little son born in Hospital last month. He is still sick, pneumonia, but better. They are trusting God—her prayer was so sweet. "Lord, you have just loaned this little one to us. Make him well or take him just as you see best." Their Christian influence is telling on the young male teacher who is boarding with them. They have given up all to follow Jesus, are faithful in His service and He is blessing them. It does one good to see the power of God manifested in the lives of those who were once in darkness. They need our prayers for their unsaved relatives.

Yours in Jesus,
GRACE E. M. SANDERS

CORRESPONDENCE

North Head, N. B.

Dear Highway Friends:

Greetings in Jesus' Name:

It doesn't seem possible that we are so far into another year of labor for our Lord, and we regret having been so long in recognizing the goodness of God's people here in caring for our needs through another year.

In spite of a hard year in the fishing industry, one of our deacons came forward during Xmas week with the usual substantial purse for their pastor, besides lovely gifts were given each of us from the different classes and friends, making our Christmas a very happy