

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S.,  
Dec. 8th, 1941

Dear Highway Friends:

Three months seems to go by rapidly and again I have another Quarterly Meeting to report. This one was held at Altona and I felt it was an unusually good quarterly. The children were all well and I was able to attend the services more regularly and I got a real blessing and much help from them.

The meetings would have started on Thursday afternoon, but due to our school closing in the afternoon we had our first service in the evening. Friday and Saturday were full days, starting with early morning prayers in the church and usually ending with late business meetings.

Saturday afternoon a lovely heavy rain started and I enjoyed seeing and hearing the people rejoice. I certainly rejoiced with them too for we do need the rain.

Sunday was a nice day after the heavy rains of the night before. We started the day as usual, with early prayers. Brother George took charge of the Sunday school after which we started to the river for the baptism. It was a beautiful service, seven were baptized and the people sang all the way down and back again. One of the seven was a young man who has worked for us at several different times. I do hope and pray that he will go on with the Lord and be a real help and blessing to his people. He expected to become publicly engaged to the daughter of our old worker Samuel, but she was sick and unable to attend, so the public engagement had to wait. Four married women were also baptized and two school girls. We thank God for these and pray that they may be faithful to the end.

Absolom Sibiya, who has proved himself to be a very faithful worker on trial was made a worker, and his wife, who by the way, used to belong to one of the native churches but joined our church after her marriage and has been helping her husband, was made an Ijoini or prayer woman.

Those who were baptized were given the right hand of fellowship and three dear little baby girls were presented to the church—the parents made a vow before the church that they would care for them and teach them the things of God. The daughter of Trifina Msibi was engaged to a boy who belongs to one of the native churches.

After the preaching, etc., was over a large number partook of communion. This service was conducted by Brother Charles.

The Pongola River was reported to be full of water but as soon as the service was over the people from the Natal side decided to go down and if possible cross the river. One of the preachers was walking, two other men workers, one woman worker and Brother Charles were on horse back. They crossed the river safely and reached Hartland that night, I believe.

It rained all night but Monday was a nice day, and after dinner we took our little family missionaries except Sister Grace in all that and started for Hartland. I had not been over for over a year. I had not seen all the other time, and now that our teachers have left for the summer vacation, I was free to go.

Just before reaching Hartland we ran into a storm, the like of which I had never seen before. The lightning flashed, the rain poured down until I could hardly see the road, and how the wind blew! The Lord was with us and

we soon reached our destination and had just nicely parked the car under a big mulberry tree when the hail started. Eugene said it would have ruined the top of the car if we had not have had the protection of the tree.

At Altona the storm was even worse, I believe. Our boy said that the hail stones were as large as his fist, while a white man told Eugene they were as large as tennis balls. At any rate the hail killed seven of our half grown chickens and the wind lifted the iron roof right off of a small native building, carried it up over the store-house and the whole length of the church and as it fell a corner hit one of the church windows, completely breaking it to bits.

We stayed two days at Hartland. It was nice to see the friends again and I was able to attend the class on Wednesday. The school children sang a beautiful hymn in English. I told them afterwards that I could close my eyes and imagine that I was at home hearing the Canadian children sing, but when I opened them I could see the Zulu children singing so nicely. These dear little black children do appeal to me very much.

I was also able to visit the hospital several times. Sister Grace is very busy with that work. The wife of Paul Nkosi (he is one of our preachers) was in the hospital with her first baby boy. They have four little daughters, so I can imagine what a time of rejoicing it will be when Joana takes this wee laddie home. I was able, one night, to have evening prayers with the hospital patients. I thank God for any little opportunity to be of service to Him.

On our way home we went to Piet Retief where I had some dentistry work done, and we had Baby vaccinated. His arm is making him feel quite sick today.

Eugene went to Mbcu yesterday. He went by horse this time—twenty or more miles over mountainous country, streams to ford, etc. He left before five in the morning and returned at eight o'clock in the evening. He had had quite a good service. The services at Altona were also good. I have no interpreter now so I can only read and talk a little and let Losaya preach. She cannot read very well so she is glad to have me help her in that way.

Christmas will be past by the time this reaches you. I hope that you have had a blessed Christmas season and that the New Year will hold rich blessings for you all.

Yours in His service,

G. M. KEIRSTEAD

Altona Mission, P. O. Delfkom,  
Via Piet Retief, Dec. 17th, 1941

Dear Highway:

Come with me on some of my recent travels from outpost to outpost.

Sunday before last I rode to Mbcu on horseback and returned the same day. Forty miles on horseback is a long trip and is enough to make you remember it for several days.

The Church building was well filled; about sixty natives being present. The Lord blessed us in the preaching service and at the Lord's Table.

I had to hurry home as it had clouded up and was thundering and lightning. In one place the horse stumbled and fell down flat on the ground, I following over its head. Just as my chin got down near the horse's head, it jerked its head up and banged me on the chin. For a moment I thought I was knocked out,

but I soon recovered and climbed back on the saddle again.

The ride up the "Insholobe" stream was quite eerie and awe-inspiring as the path crosses and re-crosses the stream six or more times, winds through trees, aloes and other semi-tropical growth, and has high rugged mountains towering above it on each side. Alone, in such surroundings, and with the snapping of lightning and the crashing of thunder about you, you can imagine how small and dependent one feels upon God.

Farther on I had to pass through a barbed-wire fence. I was fortunate to find a place where I could unfasten the wires and let my horse through. Just as I took my hand off the second wire I was re-tying, there was a blinding flash of lightning and a crash of thunder that seemed to break simultaneously. My first feeling was that either the horse or I had been struck but I felt no shock and my horse looked all right. The lightning must have struck the fence near by as fire leaped and snapped from the end of the wire I had just dropped. And so for the second time on the homeward journey I thanked God for protecting me from danger.

Wednesday I took the car and went to a combined school closing of the Grootspuit and Mkupane schools at Mkupane.

The school children carried out a programme of drills, singing, recitations and repeating scripture verses. The parents provided "eats" consisting of goat and chicken meat and samp besides tea and biscuits for Brother George Sanders and I.

When we were able to leave we tied George's bicycle on the side of the car, packed the two teachers and their luggage into the back seat, and off we started for Hartland. We did not get very far as we ran into a very heavy mist and mud. We were fortunate in getting to George's temporary home where the Ham-brok's kindly put us up for the night.

The next morning, Thursday, we started off for Hartland once more and left one teacher as we passed through Paulpietersburg. We arrived at Hartland in good time for the school closing there. The programme was similar to what we had witnessed at Mkupane but of a higher order as the Hartland school is Government Aided and has a qualified teacher. Here again the natives provided their children and visitors with a feast.

I was able to get home on Friday afternoon and stay for the night. Saturday morning I left again, this time for Ngenatsheni for Big Sunday, school closing, and a Christmas feast. I may tell you about that trip in my next letter.

May the Lord give you all special joy and blessing during the new year.

Yours in Him,

EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

Hartland M. S., So. Africa,  
December 20th, 1941

Dear Soldiers of the Cross:

Quite typical of our age has been the quick succession of events with regard to the war. Time has moved deliberately on its age-worn path, as the fighting engines of the world have been kept up to high speed. The sudden, drastic and terrifying changes that have taken place have caused many to lose hope. And we who have lived our quiet lives, with little change, can not appreciate the source of anxiety that besets our fellows. But in these hours of black darkness, there have stood out those men