

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Highway Friends: Altona

It is such a beautiful cool, moonlight evening in Africa. Winter is here and the weather is delightful. After feeling uncomfortably warm for so many months of the long hot summer, it's a nice change to be cool again.

We are thinking much of the homeland these days, as you are preparing for Beulah. We are praying that the dear Lord will be with you and richly bless you all at Beulah this year.

This has been our mid-week Class Day. We had a real good morning-class with a goodly number present. We are just about to finish the book of Mark. I believe we have all received help from our study of it.

Just before we closed the morning class, a messenger arrived saying that a child had died, at a kraal some distance away, and asked for workers to come and have a funeral service. So as soon as we closed the service I hurried to get medicine ready to send to two sick people, and quite a number left. Only four, besides those at the Mission, were left for the afternoon service, but the Spirit of the Lord was with us and we enjoyed the fellowship of His children.

We spent some time in united prayer for one of our sick members, Daniel Mtetwa. Before we came here he was a heathen, and he used a native tobacco that affected his mind and at last he had to be sent away. However, he recovered and gave himself to the Lord, and shortly after we reached Altona he came to work for us. Eventually he became baptized, went to our night school and learned to read and felt a call to preach the gospel. Later he became engaged to the girl who taught him in the night school. She was also a member of our church.

Lately Daniel has not been well and at last his people could see that his mind seemed to be again affected. The past week or two he has been doing such crazy things that they were obliged to take him out to the police, who sent him to Cape Town to an Institution for the Insane.

We are all feeling very sorry about it and are praying that the dear Lord will help him. Remember him when you pray, friends. He is also your brother in Christ, even though he is far away.

Last week seemed to be full of small disturbing troubles, but God was also present and again proved himself to be "the help in time of trouble." I am sure I couldn't get along without the help of the dear Lord. When Eugene has to be away I have no one else to depend on and it does help one to learn to trust God more. When night comes and I am all alone with the children, then the devil delights to come along and whisper in my ear all the little disturbing things of the day, etc., etc. Last week the Lord gave me this poetry that was such a blessing to me. Perhaps it will help someone else:

Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
The storms are raging on God's deep—
God's deep, not thine; be still and sleep.

Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's hands shall still the tempest's sweep—
God's hands, not thine; be still and sleep.

Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's love is strong, while night hours
creep—
God's love, not thine; be still and sleep.

Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's heaven will comfort those who weep—
God's heaven, not thine; be still and sleep.

We have so much to be grateful for. We are thankful that the war is over in North Africa now and we trust that it will not return to us. We are praying that we shall have peace on the earth again.

The family join in sending Christian love to all.

Yours in Him,
GLADYS KIERSTEAD

Altona Mission

Dear Highway:

Today is overcast, cool and windy; much like October in Canada. The fields of corn are brown and dry ready for reaping.

I have been under the weather the last two or three days since coming home from Hartland. I am wondering if I have malaria or intestinal flu, but am trusting that it may soon pass.

I spent the best part of three weeks working on the Hospital at Hartland. We raised the old flat roof to a horizontal position, stripped off the corrugated iron, then proceeded to put up new rafters (gable roof style), and put on corrugated iron again. There is now a single roof over the old Hospital and the two rooms we built on a short time ago. The brick we had made last winter was just about sufficient to fill in the spaces left open after the old roof was pushed up to a horizontal position. We now have quite a nice looking building; the change will increase the looks and usefulness and will bring it more in line with approved standards for Mission Hospitals. We still have plastering to do and two cement floors to lay.

On my way home I visited Alfred Metula's outpost and made arrangements to have brick made for building a new church near his home. The old church has very irregular ways, the roof is giving out, and the door and window frames have been almost eaten up by white ants. A new building is needed to satisfy government requirements with respect to receiving government aid for the school.

Alfred Metula and Johanisi Nkosi told me about their scouting trip into Zululand to see what prospects there were of extending our work in that direction. The rains troubled them not a little but they were able to visit scattered church members in two sections, have a few services, and make plans to go again. One boy chose the Lord. They found a number of Church of England and Lutheran churches but many, many heathen. The area is densely populated. The existing churches only touch the fringes of heathenism.

Week before last I had a Big Sunday at Mbucu. One family and two other women seem to have left our church and have gone to the Russelites (Watch Tower) Jehovah's Witnesses, International Bible Students, etc.) From what I can hear, their teaching (by the native preachers) included such ideas as, there is no God, no heaven, no hell, no sin, no resurrection, etc.; it is all right to drink beer, be polygamists, etc.; come out of denominations with European or white overseers, and so on. The anti-climax to it all was that they also had a Big Sunday the same day—a European presided (!) and called them to task for preaching that there was no resurrection. Poor deluded people! Others were stolen from the Swedish Mission, the Lutherans, the Zionists (Pentecostal), and other

churches purely by lies and deceit as the above illustrates. So we have to contend not only with heathenism but worse.

Yesterday we had a visit from our new Native school inspector, Mr. C. A. McDonald. He is not Scotch as his name indicates, but African speaking (Dutch extract). He was very friendly and seemed pleased with our teacher.

I suppose many are already looking forward to Beulah. We trust that you all will enjoy a most blessed time in the Lord. How we would enjoy being present also!

Yours in Him,
EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

Altona Mission Station,

Dear Highway:

I feel as if I have been slow about writing lately. Mail reaches us so irregularly and at such long intervals that we lose the incentive for writing regularly.

We have now been here for four years. Life out here no longer seems strange; it seems as natural and as commonplace as life in Canada was. Even the native language is losing its strangeness. We are settling down to the ways and habits of Africa.

Some people often wonder if Africa changes a person or not. To be sure it does if one is capable of being changed. Every new environment and society exerts its influence for good or evil.

The more noticeable influences are those of climate, language, customs, attitudes, and so on.

We all have become more or less used to the warmer climate. A hot day has lost its first depressing effects; we are beginning to talk of cool days as being cold.

Our English has also been modified. We speak about "petrol" instead of gasoline, "motor" in place of car, "post" instead of mail, and so on.

Customs are slower to change so we do not see much change yet. We have learned to stand up when accepting a cup of tea from a hostess, to remove our hats in greeting instead of nodding or touching them, but it is as strange as ever to pile food on the back of our forks with a knife blade, to go call on neighbors before they call on us, and put on a white dust coat over our clothes when going for a car drive, or rather I should say, motoring.

The country has, however, had more influence upon our attitudes, especially as they relate to our attitude towards other races. Instead of one becoming more tolerant, one becomes more or less intolerant, and race and class conscious. The atmosphere out here is more or less electric, with racial hatreds and discriminations. We first sensed it on shipboard; it was very noticeable in Durban; it is evident almost everywhere. The expressions: Africans (Dutch), English, German, Jew, Poor White, Coloured, Kaffir, Coolie, etc., all begin with capitals and have a significance that we did not know in Canada.

Strange as it may sound we do not go to church as often as we do in Canada as it is difficult to maintain regular services early in the day or in the evening. It is habitual to have one mid-day service lasting for two or three hours instead.

Of course our work is different as we must be jacks-of-all-trades. In addition to the ordinary minister's duties we prescribe for the sick, pull teeth, buy'd, supervise schools, sell