

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S.

Dear Highway Friends:

We have been so pleased to receive lots of home letters and two Highways during the past week, and such a pleasure to receive an airgraph from Miss Alice Sterritt, written while at Beulah. Usually we have to wait until September or later, so it was indeed nice to hear so soon that you had a good camp meeting. We were very glad to hear about Rockdale Hotel, the summer Bible School, etc. Also we greatly rejoice with Rev. H. C. and Mrs. Mullen over the safe return of their son, Vernon, from prison camp. Surely God graciously answered the many prayers that ascended in his behalf. What a happy reunion it will be when he reaches home, as no doubt he has long before this.

Summer is approaching. The weather has been very dry. No rain in months and everything is so parched and brown around us, except the mulberry trees. In spite of the great need of rain they are covered with lovely green leaves to remind us that spring is here.

Winter holidays are over and our three older boys are all away at boarding school. Our native school has opened with an enrollment of eighty-eight so far. We have a new head teacher this year. I have started my Friday-Sunday school with over ninety present the first day.

The school of the prophets is also being carried on at Altona at this time. I have several school children staying here and we are also boarding one teacher—the second only rooms here and gets her food at Johanesi's. I am helping with the fancy work in the school this year, and with the work of the clinic I am kept quite busy in spite of the fact that I have only small Kenneth at home to care for.

I've had forty-five people to look after for medicines, etc., the past week. One poor woman cut the top right off of her thumb when cutting wood. A very sad thing happened at Klipvaal last Sunday, when the baby son of the Swedish Missions worker, who is stationed there, died. This young man is the nephew of our worker, Talida, and only quite recently moved to Klipvaal. I have several times tended the baby for colds, etc., and it was a lovely little child. A week ago Sunday the mother took the babe to church and he was well and happy but shortly after reaching home he became sick and she became alarmed and brought the child to me. I am no doctor, as you all know, but I examined it and couldn't understand why it seemed to be breathing in such a labored way and why the heart was so very rapid, and still no sign of cold, etc. I did what I could for it and it improved a bit but died the following Sunday. I cannot but think that there was foul play carried on. We do pray that God will comfort the sorrowing parents.

The 26th of July we had a most interesting time at Johanesi's home. During our December meeting I spoke about the donations that we have for our pastors in Canada and how nice to help our preachers. That evening Paul Nkosi was talking about it and he said: "That's a new thought—we have thought little about helping our preachers, rather we have expected them to help us." I told him that I was not asking the people to have a donation for us but I did feel that they should be thoughtful of their own ordained preachers especially:

I have spoken of it several times since and the 22nd I asked all the women to remain after the service and again I talked and asked if they wouldn't go with me the following Thursday to visit Johanesi and take a little gift along with us to let him know that we appreciate his services, etc. At first they didn't understand too well but after a bit they began to see it would be very nice and agreed to co-operate with me. They all met at the mission house and at two o'clock we formed a line, with all the women and girls with their gifts on their heads, and when we went out the gate we began to sing.

Johanesi was hoping Zebuloni build a house and he told us later that when he saw this army leave the mission he said to Zebuloni: "Do you know where they are going?" And he answered: "Perhaps to your house." Johanesi started to wash but we reached his home before he was ready, so we stood at the door still singing until he came to greet us and we entered. No one knew what they should do so I stood up and explained why we had come. I also read a few verses of Scripture about giving and thanked the people for the way that they had given—so much more than I expected. Then I read the names of all and what each one had brought. Johanesi then thanked the people. He said he had heard from us about what was done overseas but this was just like a lesson for now they were seeing for themselves. His wife spoke a few words, also several of the women. They said that at first they did not understand about it all but now they had really seen what a nice thing it was and they thanked me for starting it. We all stood then and Johanesi pronounced the benediction, as several were in a hurry to return to their homes. The girls helped Trifina to carry the food to the store-house and they made coffee for those who stayed.

I am wondering if you would be interested to know what was given in our first donation here. In case you would be, I think I will tell you. Quite a number brought large dishes of dried corn which filled a 100-lb. flour bag, about a peck of amabele, a grain that when ground makes very nice porridge; 5 nice large pumpkins, 8 melons, loaf of bread, plate of cakes, pound of coffee, two small pkgs. of sugar, 3 boxes of matches, ½ pk. peanuts, dish of sweet potatoes, small bowl of ground beans, five different ones brought 32 each or about 6c, and Eugene was away and was a bit late but he added 2s or 50c to the list. I cannot begin to tell you how pleased I was. I know it won't seem much to you, but the people had a very poor harvest and I didn't expect them to give so much, so it seemed a nice amount to me. Johanesi's gardens were very poor this year and this extra unexpected help was so much appreciated.

Still I was surprised for among those who could have brought more some of them said: "Our eyes are opened, and when we do this again we'll bring a lot more than we did today." So we thank God for the first attempt at having a donation for our native pastors and we trust that they will do even better as time goes on.

Words fail to express our feeling of appreciation about the Mission car. We cannot write to all who have so generously given to that fund but we do want to thank you all and pray that God will richly bless and be with you all. It will certainly be a comfort to have a new car. Our old one goes, but usually needs a lot of coaxing, etc. Everything is such a long way from us too. The Klipvaal

mine has closed so we only have a bus once a week now and it may be taken off altogether. I do hope this will not happen, as it is a great help to us.

I must close, praying that God's rich blessing may abide with you all,

Yours in His love,

G. M. KIERSTEAD

Hartland Mission Station,
August 12th, 1945

Dear Friends:

Greetings from Africa this lovely sunny day. Had you been here a few minutes ago you would have seen what looked like a huge beetle moving down the road and across the fields. It was a group of natives moving a house. When they all get under it, and it starts to move, it really seems that some huge beetle has come out of his hole and started off for a walk. It is a very easy way to move, I think.

Charles is away to Grootspuit this weekend—a trip of about 30 miles—and George is at Lembe, about 60 miles from here. We expect them both home tomorrow if all goes well. I would like to go to Grootspuit sometime but everyone tells me it is too far on horseback for one who is not a seasoned rider, so I think I will take their advice and put it off until I can manage a horse better.

We were very happy to have Brother Keirstead with us for two days this week. We always look forward to seeing the missionaries from across the river. We hope that Mrs. Keirstead will get over for a visit soon. And I hope to get over to Altona too sometime, but it is very difficult to get away.

Grace was out to Piet Retief one day and I was in the Hospital by myself. I had a good time with my limited vocabulary trying to find out what was wrong with the people. The ones I couldn't understand I sent to Charles with a note and he wrote back the complaint or I rushed them to the nearest person I could see who could speak a few words of English. One old lady had me puzzled but I was bound to find out and it turned out to be sore eyes of a child at home. There were about a dozen that day and I was glad to be able to help them as much as I did. The Lord surely helps us when we trust in Him, and have to depend on Him. I am glad for all these experiences that come.

We have had several babies brought in lately with a form of dysentery. The poor little things look so ill and emaciated when they come and it is so nice to see them pick up and go home well. One baby was very ill and the woman who came with the mother said the baby would die, and they had better go home. But the mother stayed and the baby was discharged well a few days ago. And best of all, the mother found the Lord as did the little girl who was with her.

Two days ago another mother brought a thirteen day old baby to us. It is so small that she had not even named it, so we had to put it in our books as Baby (boy) Nkosi. Perhaps she will let us name it if it recovers. There are four other wives in the home. We certainly have much to praise God for when we think of the suffering of some of these poor women, and of the jealousy that exist in the homes where there are so many wives. We may think it is hard not to have certain things that we feel would make our homes more comfortable but we can certainly lift up our hearts and rejoice that we were born in a Christian land and reared in Christian homes. These dear souls need all the help and prayer