

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S., Dec 10th, 1944

Dear Highway Friends:

It has been a hot African day. Summer is nearly at its height. Many places have been troubled because of lack of rain but Altona has been most favored along that line, and for several weeks the long lines of oxen have been plowing the fields. The corn has begun, for some people planted some very early. We have had a little at two different times.

Several interesting things have taken place lately. I had my Christmas Sunday School exercises the last day of November. I had it early so that our teacher could be present.

The most interesting part for me was the singing and a stiff quizz of the Book of Acts. We opened the service by singing in English: "We're marching to Zion." The children sang beautifully. There had been much excitement as to who was to receive the large Bible picture book that I believe Vesta Dunlop made. I had told them, some time ago, that it was to go to the one who knew the best the review lessons in Acts. We decided to choose the best Bible scholars from each class and question them and then we would decide. So after the opening exercises, six children—two from each class—were called forward and the teacher questioned them very carefully. After we finished we were all of the same mind that Monacia, the eldest daughter of Johannesi and Trifina Nkosi, had won it fairly and she was much delighted. To the others, who had also done well, I gave very nice books that came from Moncton.

I next had the teacher call the names of all who had had perfect attendance and to each I gave a pretty picture with ribbons to hang them up, in their homes. Over fifty had had perfect attendance and about twenty had missed one day, mostly all because of sickness, so to these I gave a lesson sheet with a very pretty picture on the front. These were sent from North Head by Mrs. DeLong. Some I have made into books to use later too.

I fixed the prettiest Christmas cards that had been sent me from different ones, and had enough very lovely ones for each child. As I passed the cards the teacher came along with a large tin of spiced drop cakes and I guess the children liked this part the best as cakes and candies are not often seen in their homes. I also had a gift for the three S. S. teachers.

We did not invite the public as it was a very busy time, but my helper, Losaya Nkosi, was present and seemed to enjoy it. I gave her a picture and card and she had several cakes. These little things mean a lot to them, as they are not used to even having bread regularly in their homes.

Some of the children live six miles away and walk both ways each day, so we hurried to close with a prayer and another closing song in English.

I feel it has been a profitable Sunday School year. I have had the largest attendance of any year. The head teacher has been a wonderful help to me and has greatly encouraged the children. So I feel very grateful indeed for his help. Through the holidays I shall carry on alone but will have S. S. on Sunday mornings.

I had not intended to have my S. S. Christmas quite so early but we received word that Harold was sick so I hurried to have it on

Thursday as we planned to leave Altona very early Friday morning, but that very night Kenneth broke out with chicken-pox. However Eugene and Reginald went part way and telephoned and found that Harold was letter and in the midst of examinations. Kenneth also was not very sick as it was a mild form. The others had it in Canada, for which I am very grateful. Kenneth has also been in danger of whooping cough. I am praying that it will not interfere too much with our Christmas Quarterly Meeting, and that he will not be as sick as the other boys were, four years ago. Of course he may not have it at all.

Our native school closed on the 7th—that is the public closing. Such crowds! We all had a headache by the time night came. As nearly as we could judge, there were about seven hundred present, perhaps more. The program started at noon, by drills. The girls did very well indeed but the boys were even better. I did enjoy the drills very much. I did not go to the church for the singing, etc., as it was a very hot day and I had heard it all before so many times, but I believe everything went along very nicely. The sewing was not as much as usual but there were some very nice articles.

The children had brought a sack and a half of dried corn and seventy-two chickens, so for once they had a real feast. I believe most everyone present had some food also. It was surely a great time for the children.

There was some money left in the School Feeding System Account so we bought twenty-five pounds of raisins. I am not sure of the exact amount, as our bills are not all in yet, but if the money is short I want to finish it, as I always plan to have some little treat for them at that time. I wish you could have been here when those raisins arrived. I made them make a long line but, dear me, would they stay in line! Old men and women pressed in between, holding out their hands, saying: "Give me some too, mother." I had a hard time for awhile but I was determined that the children should have their share and in the end I guess everyone was quite happy about it.

The Piet Retief school closes the 13th and if the car will go, we hope to go out that day and bring our boys home.

We are praying much for the special services and trust it will be a real time of blessing. Sister Grace Sanders wrote that she hopes to come over by horse-back. If only our car was in better condition, we would go for her, but I fear it is not in condition to climb those high hills.

The services will begin the Thursday before Christmas and the feast will be the following day. A nice fat cow has been bought for \$35. Last Sunday the people from this section came with their offering that amounted to about \$20, and enough has come from other near outposts to pay for the cow. We would also like to buy a goat or two and some fowl also. We may also need to buy dried corn as very little has come in as yet.

Christmas cards have started to arrive. It brings back memories of home. Christmas is so different here when celebrated in hot weather, but I am so glad that Jesus is the same also. Thanks to all who have remembered us. May God bless you all and give you peace.

Yours in Him,

GLADYS KIERSTEAD

Hartland M. S., Dec. 31st, 1944

Dear Highway Friends:

Today is the last day of the old year, the records will soon be closed on 1944. We have announced a watch-night service: to wait upon the Lord and seek new grace and wisdom for 1945. We hope there will be some present who will find pardon and others who will surrender their saved lives to the Lord so that He may give them His Holy Spirit. Our local Sunday afternoon service has just closed. There were not very many present, but there was a good spirit and in the closing prayer we all gathered to pray particularly for two members who are not very well physically.

For the first time since my arrival out here I have had the privilege of attending the Altona Christmas, which came on the second day of the Quarterly there. Other years, one thing or another has prevented me from being there for their Christmas celebrations. There was a large crowd present, some think there were a thousand natives present. A thunderstorm came up and one flash of lightning came so close that the open air gathering became uneasy, the rain followed close after this so we tried to accommodate the people in the church and other buildings. The rain did not last long so those who had not gathered in the church returned to our former place in front of the Altona Mission house and two services were carried on at the same time. The blessing of the Lord was evident.

As usual we had much to be cared for in our business meetings, and here too the blessing of the Lord was very evident. It seems that many had been praying for the success of the Altona Quarterly. The big day was Sunday. Brother Kierstead baptized eleven candidates who later joined the church. We had the great privilege of ordaining two new elders to the ministry, my brother, George, and a fine young Zulu man, Paul Nkosi. These two being added to the group of ordained elders brings our staff up to the strength the work seems to be calling for. It supplies the immediate need and also makes room for some expansion, which is increasingly calling upon our attention.

It would have been good for you to hear the testimonies of these two, as they were being questioned previous to the ordination service. We are glad for the experience, vision and consecration of these two young men. We are praying, and I know that many at home are with us in this part of the work: "Pray without ceasing."

We already have our plans drafted for the year which is about to begin. "Man proposes but God disposes." We have made our plans as to the quarterly visiting of almost every one of our many outposts. Besides these we trust to put in some time in our new field of Zululand and possibly some other points which seem inviting. May the Lord give us some great victories in 1945. Some of us will not see this new year to its close, but what portion of it we do spend here upon earth, may we spend it for our glorious King Eternal.

Yours happy in Him,

C. D. M. SANDERS

Altona M. S., Dec. 27th, 1944

Dear Highway:

We wish to greet you with best wishes for a glorious New Year.

Christmas was celebrated out here at Al-