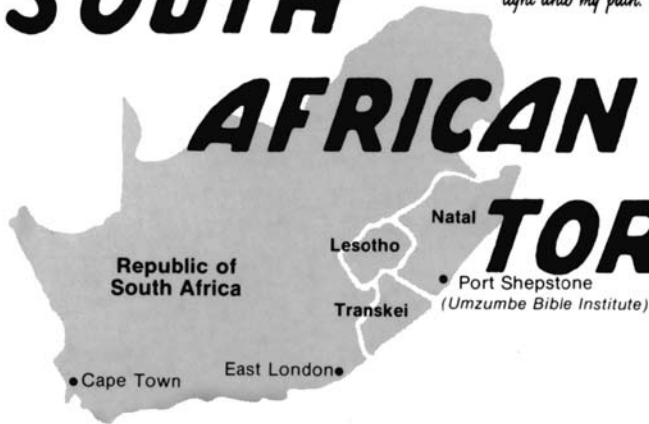


SOUTH

AFRICAN

TORCH



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." --Psalms 119:105



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Easter By Michael Stanley

In South Africa the most important religious event of the year is the Easter weekend. One church gathering in the northern part of South Africa attracts over one million people each year.

The churches in KwaZuluNatal gathered at Umzumbe and the crowd was big, about 500 people. A tent was set up for the main sessions and the facilities of Magog Primary School were used for small meetings, dining and sleeping. The tent could not accommodate all of the people, but the weather was good so the tent sides were removed and people sat in the sun. As usual the attitude

was positive and everyone welcomed the opportunity for fellowship, preaching, and lots of singing. People came from far and wide with more than fifty people making the 500 kilometer (300 mile) trip from Ingwavuma.

Preparing food for such a large crowd was a major challenge, but volunteers from several congregations worked together to see that no one was hungry. They also managed to keep to the time schedule.

Friday was devoted to sermons on the Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross. Michael spoke on Saturday morning, emphasizing the need to focus on the Lamb



Michael had Israel Mfeka to interpret for him when he preached on Saturday morning. The stage was very small so Michael had to remember not to step backward -- off the stage.



The tent was large, but the crowd was larger. The tent sides were removed and people sat outside.

of God, i.e. the God-given sacrifice for sin. Sunday was an exhausting day. We attended a sunrise service on the beach at St. Michaels which was followed by a baptismal service. We caught the tail end of an early service at Umzumbe after which a big dinner was served. Caryl and

I helped stack the chairs and clean up the grounds. That proved to be a very big job, but lots of church members and friends made sure the grounds and classrooms were clean when we left.

Ministers' Week 2011

The annual Ministers' Week was held this year at Gecilima in Southern KwaZuluNatal. Jethro Zobolo was the host minister and he and his congregation had prepared well. Ladies from the KwaZuluNatal churches did the cooking and the food was tasty and they always had it ready on time.

Ministers and their wives came from all over South Africa to attend the meetings. On Sunday there was a worship service and after lunch Larry and Judy Neimeyer, who are missionaries in Kenya, presented a class for everyone. It was good to get acquainted with the Neimeyers. When they left here they went to Kimberley to teach at the South African Bible Institute for a few weeks. Then they will go to the US for furlough.

Michael was asked to present a series of lessons each morning on the Faithfulness of God. He illustrated God's faithfulness by looking at well-known as well as not so well-known Bible characters. There were also separate meetings and lessons for the ministers and their wives. The women decided to do a project this year. They learned to make Bible covers. The idea is that they will be able to take their knowledge home and earn some extra money by making them to sell.



The ministers' wives (and widows) attended Ministers' Week and this year they had a project which helped them to gain a marketable skill. They made covers for Bibles. Virtually all of the Zulu and Xhosa Bibles are a hard cover, and a cloth cover can extend the useable life of the Bible considerably. Monica Erasmus and Atoria Ntswane were making good progress.

Worship services were held each morning and evening. There were a lot of opportunities for fellowship during meals and free time. One minor event caused distress. A tent used for small group meetings was blown down. Fortunately this only happened near the end of the week. I think everyone who attended was blessed.



During Ministers' Week Michael presented his lessons on the Faithfulness of God in an elaborately decorated church building. Attention was good and later he learned that the format of his lessons was used again during the Easter services.



As usual there were endless meetings, but the program went well. A tent that was used for business meetings was blown down near the end of the week, but it did not have a significant impact on the spirit of the meetings.

Family News by Caryl Stanley

There is no new news about Mom Stanley. She remains much the same. We visit her and try to get her to talk, but she is very quiet.

Dina is putting in long hours in the maternity ward and looks forward to her days off so she can spend time with Erin. Sean is doing well and takes a lot of responsibility for the children when Dina is working. Rebecca came to Michael shortly before Easter and asked him if he would baptize her at the sunrise service on St. Michael's Beach. Then Gabriella announced that she also wanted to be baptized. Michael spent a bit of time talking to the girls about

the decision they had made. We attended the combined churches' service and then went to the ocean pool for the baptisms. Several people were baptized. Michael baptized Rebecca, and Chad Broom, a minister from Norwegian Settlers Church, baptized Gabriella. We are very pleased that they have taken this step.

Diane and John continue in their jobs and are doing well. Diane has been in discussions with the leadership of Scripture Union in Cape Town about her options for the future. The job she now has involves a lot of traveling and that will not be possible with a baby. They have given her some options and she is considering what to do. Pray that she makes the right decision. She needs to decide if she wants to continue with Scripture Union in a new position or change jobs completely.

Dawn and JP are looking forward to the arrival of their baby in mid-July. Dawn is just hoping that the baby won't come as early as Chayah did (about three weeks) as she wants to complete the school term on June 24th. Chayah has had some illnesses over the past few weeks. She probably picked up something from someone at the day care center. Unfortunately, she also passed it on to Dawn – and the unborn baby didn't like Mommy being sick!

April and May have been full of holidays, so school ministry was very haphazard. There was a school term break, Easter, Workers' Day, Freedom Day and then election day. The teachers commented that they have hardly had a full week of school all term.

Michael and I are doing well. Age is taking its toll so we don't have a lot of energy, but for the most part we are healthy and able to continue our activities.



The Relay for Life was a significant family event. Because of our experience of cancer Caryl organized a team called Joy of Life that consisted mostly of family members. Although Relay for Life has been held in other parts of South Africa, this was the first time it had been held in our area.



Left: The little red wagon may be "low tech" but it is still popular. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that it gets Grandpa's full attention.



Right: Gabriella could not drive the tractor until she was ten years old. After her tenth birthday she would gladly have monopolized the tractor.

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Insurance Update

Again we have been reminded that there are people who really care. We continue to receive gifts to help us pay medical expenses and as a result we have made significant progress in paying the bills. We still have a large loan from a family member but we are paying that off as money is available.

We have cancelled the health insurance policy we had and have taken out a policy with a South

African insurance company. This insurance is more expensive than what we had before, but South African law makes it difficult for companies to refuse payment.

Thank you to all who have helped us meet these expenses. We have been amazed and encouraged as new gifts have come in each month. Thank you for your generosity.