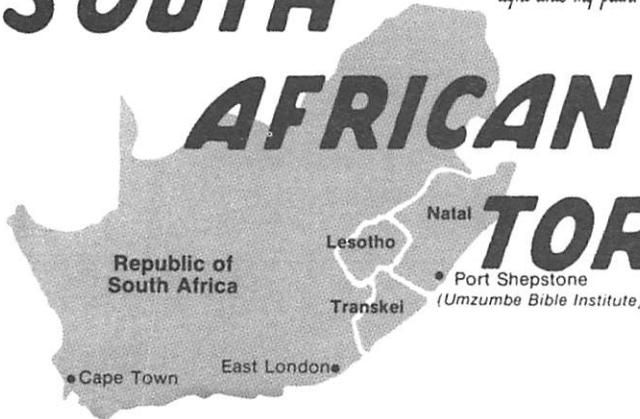


# *SOUTH* *AFRICAN* *TORCH*

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



Vol. 67

Third & Fourth Quarters, 2016

No. 3

*We wish you a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year.*



**Back: John and Diane Evans, JP and Dawn Ferreira, Dina and Sean Thorncroft.  
Front: Gabriella Thorncroft, Chayah Ferreira, Erin Thorncroft, Michael Stanley,  
Caryl Stanley, Matthew Evans, Seanna Ferreira and Rebecca Thorncroft.**

As you move into winter, we are experiencing extended Spring rains and we are moving into Summer. Winter or Summer, it is not the weather nor even the holiday that we celebrate, but rather the birth of Jesus Christ.

# Annual Church Conference by Michael Stanley

## Part One

The annual church conference was held from 02 to 06 October this year. It marked the beginning of a new era as far as travel was concerned. Back in the 1950's the primary mode of transport to the annual church conference was by train. The government allowed a concession to members of registered churches. Over the years the change was made to public transport in the form of buses and then to private vehicles.

Since Cape Town is in the extreme south west of the country there was a lot of discussion about the long distance to Cape Town. For the first time people considered an alternative – they could fly to Cape Town. In the end about 25 people traveled to the conference by air. The congregations in the Western Cape arranged for transport to and from the airport.

“The times they are a changing.”

## Part Two

Caryl ended up in bed for most of the conference. She suffered from extreme back pain. When we were able to get transport we went to the doctor and he booked her off for the week. Ladies from the church visited her and brought her meals.

With Caryl in bed through most of the conference it meant that she missed many of the conference busi-

ness meetings. She even missed part of my report.

I felt that everything about my report went well. The executive committee called me to a special meeting before I presented my report to the business meeting. I addressed their concerns and then gave my report. The finance committee confirmed that my report was in order. The result was that there were very few questions from the delegates.

Caryl arrived part way through my report. But it was not long until the pain brought her back to her bed.

Caryl and I stayed on in Cape Town for three days



*Michael presented his financial report to the business meeting. Fortunately, the finance committee had already approved it, so it went quite smoothly.*



*Pretty Zamisa and S'thembile Mkhungo, representatives of the Umzumbe Church of Christ, travelled to the Conference by air. This was a first for S'thembile. She was afraid at first, but enjoyed the trip.*



*The dining room at Chrysalis Academy was very crowded at every meal as it was barely able to handle the large number of people who attended the conference.*

after the conference was over. As treasurer there were several matters that I needed to take care of. I had to pay for accommodation and for the taxis that provided transport. In the end I did not succeed in wrapping up all of the financial matters and that was a great disappointment to me. The finances were complicated because of the large number of people that handled money.

### Part Three

Once again we ended up with large amounts of cash that had to be handled. I keep trying to reduce the

amount of cash by getting people to deposit cash at home and then just bring their deposit slips to conference. The situation is much better than it was when I took over as treasurer in 2009. Still it meant that my assistant (Thulani Maki) and I put large amounts of cash into cash receiving ATM's. The deposit fees are lower for deposits into machines rather than through tellers. Next year we will again try to convince people to deposit their money at home.

My major work as treasurer is over until next year.

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## Family News

by Caryl Stanley

In June I fell up the steps by our house. I thought the injuries were minor, but in mid-July I was having a lot of pain in my neck I eventually went to a chiropractor and he diagnosed whiplash. After a few treatments I was feeling much better.

Just before we left for Conference, I started having a lot of back problems. I blamed it on stress and spending a lot of time working on financial records for Michael. We arrived in Cape Town for the Conference on Saturday and on Monday morning I could hardly walk. Michael took me to the doctor and he said I had a muscle spasm in my back that pinched a nerve to my leg. He prescribed a muscle relaxant and a very strong pain medication and told me to stay in bed for 3 to 5 days. So I went to Cape Town and laid in bed for most of the week!

Dina and Sean had a car accident in October. They were traveling in the Eastern Cape and had to stop sud-

denly for some sheep in the road. Dina was driving our pickup as they were going to get some tools that Sean inherited from his dad. She hit the car in front of her and did quite a lot of damage to the front left side of the pickup. It looked a lot like it did last year when we hit a horse – except it was on the opposite side. Fortunately no one was injured. The pickup came back to the repair shop on a truck. It took just over a month to get the repairs done. It seems we are getting a new vehicle one quarter at a time!

Diane has made a huge decision. She has decided to resign from Scripture Union after 21 years. She will finish at the end of December. She has enjoyed her job, but she just finds that the travel is too difficult now that she has Matthew. They decided that she will be a stay-at-home mom and be able to be more involved with their business – Jolly Fresh. ([www.jollyfresh.co.za](http://www.jollyfresh.co.za))



*The family gathered one Sunday evening after we got back from Conference to celebrate Michael's birthday. Matthew waits patiently for Grandpa to cut his cake.*



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Seanna took a tumble at day care recently. She fell off the jungle gym and hurt her arm. Dawn checked with Dina and Sean, our family medical people, and they recommended she have xrays. The diagnosis is a broken wrist so she has a plaster cast. They have realized that she probably needs calcium supplements as this is her second broken bone. Since she is allergic to all milk products, she probably isn't getting enough calcium in her diet.

# Provincial Meeting

by Caryl Stanley

Michael attended the first few days of the KwaZulu Natal Youth Camp. It was held at Oribi Bible Camp, which is only about 35 miles from home. Unfortunately, because that was the only time the campsite was available, the camp overlapped with the provincial meeting which is always held in July.

This meeting used to be a women's meeting, but the men usually brought the women so they started to have meetings as well. When the youth are present there are also meetings for them. This year the meeting was held in Jozini, which is about 300 miles away.

We were not sure we were going to attend because of the youth camp, but we were persuaded to go so Michael could present a report on some issues in the national organization. We drove part way on Friday and then went the rest of the way on Saturday. About noon on Saturday I was told that two other ladies were going to have lessons and then I was to give my lesson. That was the first I had heard of it so I spent a couple of hours doing some preparation. I finally taught a short lesson about 7 at night.

Shortly after we arrived, Michael had asked if there was a place for us to stay and they assured us that they would be able to accommodate us. However, about 10 at night they said had not been able to find a place. We finally left at about 1:30 in the morning and started looking for a B & B. Most places were either full or they did not want to open up for us at that time. We finally got to bed at about 3 in the morning. It was a very short sleep!

Michael was asked to lead communion at the Sunday morning service and then we drove home. It was a long day!



*Caryl and Syvion Nxumalo were asked to encourage and pray for Siphon Nhlenyama and his wife as they were welcomed into ministry in KwaZulu Natal.*

# Alvin Nicholson

by the Nicholson family

Alvin Nicholson was born on August 12th 1920 in Holibird, South Dakota. He passed from this life on November 12th 2016. Alvin grew up in South Dakota and graduated from Blunt High School in 1940. He then attended Minnesota Bible College starting in 1940 and graduated in 1944. Lynn Stanley was his room mate and friend at Minnesota Bible College.



*Alvin Nicholson  
12 August, 1920 -  
12 November, 2016*

In September of 1942 he married Vernita Howard. He began his first ministry while in college at Cannon City Church of Christ north of Faribault. From 1941 to 1946 he ministered in Litchfield, Minnesota and from 1946 to 1953 he ministered in Sutherland, Iowa.

In the early 1950's he met a missionary from Southern Africa by the name of Max Ward Randall. After being introduced to the mission work in South Africa, Alvin felt God's calling for him to leave the ministry in the US. He along with his family arrived in South Africa in December of 1953. Ironically his room-mate from college, Lynn Stanley, arrived in South Africa in November, one month earlier.

Alvin ministered in South Africa from 1953 until 1989. During that time he taught at Umzumbe Bible Institute, was the superintendent of the Church of Christ mission for many years and worked tirelessly obtaining property and the necessary governmental paper work to build churches and the ministers homes and actively participated in many building projects as well as providing leadership for the South African Churches of Christ mission. He returned to the United States in 1989 and began his final ministry at the Brandon Church of Christ in Brandon, Iowa from 1990 to 2001. Alvin and Vernita then lived 5 years with their daughter Sandra and her husband Richard and then moved to Augustana Villa and Care Center.

## National Executive Committee by Michael Stanley

Elijah Gontsana, the president of the Church of Christ Mission, called a meeting of the National Executive Committee in Kimberley. I would prefer not be involved in the planning, but in the end a lot of responsibility falls on me as treasurer. Sometimes it can be more work sorting out finances when someone else makes the arrangements than if I do it myself. I arranged for a B&B that we had used before. Thanks to a miscommunication we ended up not getting the booking for Thursday night. I had to make last minute arrangements for an alternative venue. Those who stayed at the lodge were not impressed but they did have an acceptable place to stay. They were far more impressed with the Hadida Guest Cottage. They even had their own swimming pool but it was cold in Kimberley and I never heard that anyone went swimming.

Caryl and I arranged to sleep over in Bloemfontein on Thursday evening. The reason was that Bro Stemela's bus came into Bloemfontein at 1:00 a.m. I picked him up at the bus station and he could get a few hours of sleep before we had to leave for Kimberley.

Ladies from the Kimberley congregation did the catering for us and the food was good. (I did not have to do any of the buying this time.)

The meeting was the usual long discussions. I managed to get a financial matter onto the agenda and it generated a brief discussion.

By Saturday afternoon everyone was loaded up ready to return home. Caryl and I stayed on with Steve and Brenda Caulley and attended church in Kimberley where they asked me to preach. We enjoyed a relaxing day and then returned home on Monday.



*The National Executive Committee met in the church building in Kimberley in November to discuss some issues that had not been dealt with in previous meetings.*

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## Youth Camp 2016 by Michael Stanley



*Small groups met in various places on the Oribi Bible Camp grounds for their discussions.*

Planning for youth camp is handled by a different group each year. This year it was the turn of the Umzumbe congregation to prepare for camp. This was a big event for a relatively small congregation. The ladies from Umzumbe made arrangements to take care of all the cooking. I helped with food purchases and transport. The youth organized the program.

The venue was the Oribi Bible Camp and this was a familiar camp site as we have used it many times before. July can be very cold and so we always encourage the people to bring warm clothes. This year the weather

*continued on bottom, next page*

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**Michael and Caryl Stanley**

**P.O. Box 13**

**4225 UMZUMBE**

**Republic of South Africa**

**Tel: +27-39-684-6517**

**E-mail: stanleys@zamission.org**

**Webpage: www.zamission.org**

*Forwarding Agent:*

Duane Stanley

P.O. Box 18531

Minneapolis, MN 55418-0531

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## Youth Camp

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seemed to be milder than some years and we were thankful for that. As usual the ministers who were most consistently available for preaching and teaching were Ezra Mbali (from Mvutshini) and me. Later we were joined by Syvion Nxumalo. The spirit at the camp was good and a result of this was that a brother and sister from Umzumbe made the decision to commit their lives to the Lord.

We owe a big thank you to the ladies who prepared the food. They worked hard and the result was good food that was ready on schedule. The campers were challenged and encouraged and I trust they went home renewed in zeal for the Lord.



*Thokoza and his sister, Khulile Mhlongo, were baptized in the pool at the Umzumbe beach (Indian Ocean) after attending youth camp this year. They are members at the Umzumbe Church of Christ.*