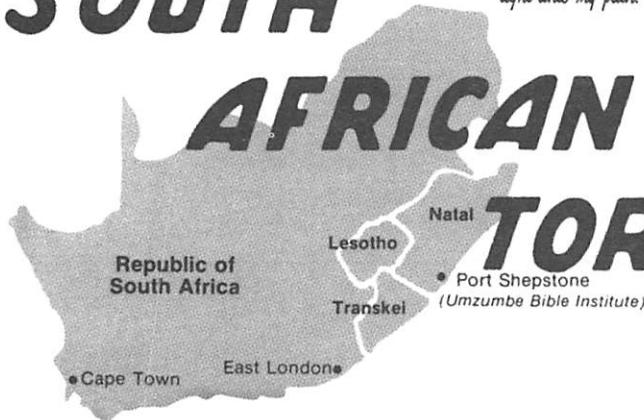


SOUTH

AFRICAN

TORCH



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



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National Youth Seminar 2016

When the elected committee failed to hold a Seminar in 2015 we wondered if the Seminar could be revived. Preparing for the Seminar is a big task. In 2014 the Seminar was held at the Oribi Bible Camp which is near Port Shepstone. Almost all of those who attended were from the Northern Cape. Could the seminar survive when it seemed support for it was dwindling?

As we began planning for 2016 we were not very optimistic. A significant revival of interest was needed. We knew that we could not rely on the elected committee and it was difficult to put together a group to see the task to completion. Then we were contacted by Sizwe Bottoman. She said that a group from the Johannesburg area was prepared to organize the 2016 NYS. They knew how much work it would be but still they were excited about hosting the Seminar in their area. This looked like the revival that could carry the Seminar forward.

Caryl and I wanted to give them all the help and encouragement possible. In May we drove to Johannesburg to meet with Sizwe and her team. They had a lot of enthusiasm and had already put into place some of the planning. After meeting with Sizwe, Vicky, Luzuko, and Sibusiso we went to see a possible venue for the Seminar. Alteleker Camp site had all of the facilities we needed and they could provide housing for more than 100 campers. The venue was confirmed.

Sizwe and her team continued with planning. Unfortunately not all of the planning progressed smoothly. There was interference from past leaders, but God granted grace

and the planning progressed.

Steve Caulley and I were the two missionaries present. Steve drove up from Kimberley and I flew in from Margate. I did not want to make the trip by car on my own and flying was a good alternative.

Steve provided several good lessons and sermons. Some were done on short notice when leaders who were on the program failed to arrive. I taught a scheduled class and also picked up one unscheduled one. A couple of South African ministers also participated in the program. The level of enthusiasm among the campers was good and I think that everyone went home encouraged.

The Seminar was successful in spite of some hiccups. I believe we have built up some momentum for the next seminar (scheduled for December this year).



Each evening Luzuko Labatala led the worship service with enthusiasm.



Cassandra and her daughter, Pegasus, picked me up at the airport when I arrived and returned me to the airport when the Seminar ended. Her friendly smile and clockwork-like efficiency were very encouraging.

The Fire by Michael Stanley

While we were in Cape Town finalizing all of the paperwork that is part of the annual conference, we made arrangements to visit one of the congregations east of Cape Town. That set of plans fell through and as a last minute change it was suggested that we should go to Hout Bay. I know the man who serves as an elder for this young congregation. It took several phone calls to get directions to the building where the congregation met. It was located in an informal settlement and was squeezed in among other buildings. It had the luxury of providing parking for 3 or 4 cars (or 5 or 6 according to the local standard).

The congregation was young (the average age was probably in the low 30's). We were encouraged by the enthusiasm shown in the worship service. I stood next to the pulpit when I preached because Moffatt Gqoboka, the local elder who interpreted for me, was at least 6 inches taller than I am. Attention during the sermon was good and the local youth sang for us which made us feel welcome. When we left that day it was with prayers that God would bless the congregation and grant growth in that young community.

Fast forward 5 months. We were shocked to hear the news on Sunday, 12 March. A fire had started in the Imizama Yethu informal settlement (near Hout Bay) during the previous night and had destroyed about 650 homes and left nearly 10000 people without shelter. Later we learned that

10 families from the church, including Moffatt Gqoboka, had lost their homes.

The Church of Christ Mission has a budget for emergencies which we had never used. I contacted all of the members of the Executive Committee to see if we could provide assistance for those who had lost everything. They agreed and so we sent R10000 (about \$750) to help meet this urgent need. Congregations and individuals also contributed which brought the total donated to R26500 (nearly \$2000). This has far more significance than the actual amount of money that was given. It is a practical demonstration of Christians responding quickly to an urgent need. Now that we have used the emergency fund it will be easier to use it in the future.



This is what is left of Moffatt Gqoboka's house.

Ministers' Week by Michael Stanley

Ministers Week was held in Pondoland (Eastern Cape). The venue was the church building at Puff Adder a rural area. The plus side for me was that I had a minimal amount of travel (less than 100 miles). There was also a negative side. There was a lot of rain and this made the roads a quagmire with mud holes. At times driving was very difficult. Ministers and their wives were housed in the area and this meant they were close to the church. Meals were good and they were generally on time.

Chief Nonkonyane, the local chief, featured prominently in the event. He was the keynote speaker for the reception. Later in the week the ministers went for an "outing." The "outing" for this year was to visit the chief for a prayer meeting and then have tea with one of his wives.

In the end I made 3 trips to Kokstad to collect people from the bus terminal or to return them to Kokstad so they could catch the bus for their return journey. Fortunately the road was reason-

ably good tar so it was not difficult driving.

Caryl showed the movie, War Room, to the ministers' wives (and some of the ministers watched as well).

The program for Ministers Week went well. The biggest challenge was the weather. By the end of the week I was accustomed to walking to the long-drop toilet and my shoes were constantly wet.



Michael taught a lesson on cooperation and used a Bible quiz as an illustration. There was great enthusiasm for the lesson.

Future Plans

We have decided that it is time to scale back on some of our activities as missionaries. Michael turns 70 in October so it is time to make some changes. The annual conference will be in late September and he is no longer eligible for (or interested in) being re-elected as treasurer. We feel it is time to hand over some of our responsibilities to others.

We will transfer ownership of the Umzumbe Bible Institute property to someone who will use it for God's purposes. We have already begun that process and are confident

that the family who is taking over will do that. The church, day care center and seniors' club will all continue to use the buildings.

We will return to the United States in October. In mid-November we will meet with our advisory board and seek their advice on the way forward. Then we will report to our churches. We have not decided how long we will stay in the US this time.

Pray for us as we seek advice and make decisions.

Ministers' Wives by Caryl Stanley

When I reported on last year's Ministers' Week, I mentioned the encouraging meetings that the ministers' wives had and also the handwork they did. Our supporting church in Litchfield, Minnesota, wrote to us later in the year and said that they wanted to support that program. They sent money with which I could purchase study books and handwork materials.

I went to a local bookstore a few months ago and looked at books. They had 15 copies of one that I thought would be good so I bought them. They assured me they could get more if I needed them. I sent a message out to the ministers' wives to see how many would be coming. In the end only three responded and I wondered if I was going to be bringing the books home again. When the ministers and their wives started arriving I started counting to see whether I had enough or too many books. God is amazing. I had used one book to read and make notes in and I handed out the books to the 14 ladies who were there. God had provided the exact number I needed.

I also bought yarn and some knitting needles and crochet hooks. I had enough yarn, but I was short some needles and crochet hooks. However, I had my knitting needles and crochet hook with me so everyone was able to do



Caryl and two of the ladies were getting ready for our study to begin. They all said they enjoyed the book we skimmed through and said they were excited to get home and read it thoroughly.

handwork. They sat around during their free time knitting, crocheting and sharing with one another. It was a blessed time! What a joy to hear them laughing and sharing together in Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans and English!

It was a really successful program and we were all blessed!



Whenever there was any free time, the ministers' wives could be found sitting around doing their knitting and crocheting while they talked and laughed.

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UMZUMBE BIBLE INSTITUTE

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

Mission Services

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Knoxville, TN 37917

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Family News by Caryl Stanley

Michael and I were able to have a couple of short holidays in the past few weeks. We spent a few days in Kimberly with our friends Roy and Jenny Murray. Unfortunately, it wasn't the best time for them as Jenny fell and broke her wrist the day we arrived so she was in the hospital. The day she came home Roy went into hospital for a hernia operation. However, we were glad to be able to be there to help Jenny with transport and some things around the house. Then the weekend after Ministers' Week, we went to the Drakensberg Mountains to spend a few days with Diane,

John and Matthew at a beautiful chalet. That was a very restful and enjoyable time.

The family is all doing well. The children are settled in school. We were with Matthew on a school holiday and I asked him if he was glad to be at home, but he assured me he loves school! That warms a grandmother's heart!

Rebecca celebrated her 18th birthday in February. She is still finishing up her exams. Erin celebrated her 7th birthday in March with a party with Uncle JP. April is the big month when Sean, Dawn, John and Gabriella all have birthdays. Three of those are milestone birthdays so we will have a big party for all of them together.



Diane, John, and Matthew waded in the cold mountain stream at Drakensberg Gardens.



When we celebrated the March birthdays of JP and Erin, we played games. We call this one Ladder Golf.