

SOUTH AFRICAN TORCH

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



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Annual Conference in Kimberley - Watershed Meeting by Michael Stanley

We expected the annual conference in Kimberley to be a significant one. It was an election year and many of the current officers had served two terms so they were not eligible for re-election. There were also a number of important issues that needed attention.

The conference took place in the Northern Cape (Kimberley) which is an area where we have a large number of congregations. We expected this to have an impact on the elections. In the end of five new executive committee members, four of them were connected to the Northern Cape. A significant workload awaits this committee. In the past the committee has not always kept to the budget and this has meant that some budgeted items have not been funded. Much of the failure has been the result of legal expenses that were not in the budget. Our expectation is that the new committee will exhibit discipline in managing the resources of the church and that they will have the will to bring about change.

I gave my final financial report and it was accepted with a minimum of question and comment. I had met with the finance committee in Sada (Eastern Cape) before the Conference and they had reviewed the report and its supporting documents at that time. We have not yet had the handover to the new treasurer. That will have to wait until I have returned to South Africa.



The newly elected committee consists of President Mpompo, Deputy President Booysen, Secretary Mosette, Deputy Secretary Kokwe, Treasurer Blaauw, Director of Buildings Lewis and Director of Evangelism Mgzulwa.



The women wear black skirts and black jackets with white collars for special occasions. These uniforms identify them as members of the Church of Christ.

How My Plans Did Change by Michael Stanley

Before I arrived in Kimberley I had heard that Heather Kernan had passed away. When I was in Kimberley someone told me that John Kernan had passed away. At first I thought the person made a mistake and that he was simply reporting on Heather. Later it was confirmed. Heather (88) passed away on Wednesday and John (96) passed away on Saturday. Heather and John were missionary colleagues of my parents. I decided that I could not go to Heather's funeral because of conference. When John passed away that decision was changed. Some months ago John contacted me and said he wanted me to be at his funeral. I thought that was an unusual request, but I said if it were possible I would be at his funeral. I did not realize that a few months later I would be making plans to go to East London for their combined funeral.



Michael celebrated his 70th birthday during the Annual Conference. There was cake and goodies for all of the people present that day!



Michael and Anne Kernan Kenyon enjoyed reminiscing about their years as missionary children.

The travel arrangements were difficult. I had to fly to Johannesburg on Monday where I would stay overnight. In the morning I would fly to East London. There I would attend the funeral and stay overnight. On Wednesday morning I could fly back to Johannesburg and in the afternoon I could fly back to Kimberley. The trip was both expensive and difficult.

A missed flight.

I missed my flight on Tuesday morning and that caused serious problems. I was approximately 3 minutes late for my flight. They told me that boarding had closed and would not let me onto the plane. Even the fact that I had only hand luggage did not help. I checked several airlines, but in the end the only airline that had a seat available was South African Airways and the ticket was expensive. The plus side was that the flight got me to East London so I could attend the funeral. While I was arranging for my SAA ticket the information board showed that the flight I had missed was "boarding".

Travel arrangements were unbelievably complicated, but I did make it to the funeral so that I could honor my commitment to be at John's funeral.

Praise and Prayer

Praise the Lord for safe travels internationally and locally.

Praise the Lord for the hospitality of Richard Eckman.

Pray for the newly elected National Executive Committee in South Africa.

Pray for God's protection over Umzumbe Bible Institute and our house in our absence.

Reunited in the USA by Michael Stanley

People often say that we are coming “home” when we return to the USA on furlough. This is not really true. The house that we own is in South Africa. Our children all live in South Africa as do our grandchildren. That said, there were a series of incidents that made me change my perceptions when I prepared to return to the States in October.

1. Caryl was already in the States. My trip would reunite us as a couple. That sounds like home to me.
2. For twelve days before I left South Africa I had no water at home. After a week without water I had used up our reserve supply. I bought drinking water and filled 5 liter (5 quart) containers from the community tank to wash hands and dishes. I was forced to go to one of my daughters to shower. That situation did not make me feel at home. To return to the States where I could turn on a faucet and get clean water felt much more like home.
3. Before I left South Africa my cell phone was stolen. I lost my means of communicating with family, friends, and colleagues. That made me feel isolated even when I was at home. Because this happened so near the time I returned to the States I was not able to resolve the communication issue before I left.

These circumstances did not make me feel like I was “leaving home” when I returned to the States. When I was reunited with Caryl it felt like I was “coming home.” For the first time in many many years when I returned to the States I felt like I was “coming home” even though it was to a house that belonged to someone else. Caryl’s sister, Sharon, and my brother, Larry, welcomed us into their homes. Richard Eckman made us feel at home when we moved in with him in Kimball. As we have traveled to visit supporting churches and individuals others have also made us feel “at home.”

I am regaining my communication capability as I recover lost phone numbers and get my name back on the lists of family and friends with whom I communicate regularly.

Thank you to all who have made us feel at home. But I will be honest; I look forward to the time when we are back in South Africa and everything returns to “normal.”



Brother Metsing and Michael pose in front of the now empty building site.



Corless Road sign pointing to the site of the original church building in Kimberley.



Site of the Corless Road church site. Moments after this picture was taken Michael's cell phone was stolen.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS from the Stanley family to you and your family! **Family News by Caryl Stanley**

Sean and Dina flew to Johannesburg for a business conference in mid-October. Sean received recognition for meeting a personal goal. Rebecca, Gabriella, and Erin stayed with John, Diane, and Matthew. Diane was not feeling well so the big girls were able to provide some help for her. We are very excited to announce that Diane and John are expecting our seventh grandchild in April.

John and Diane keep busy with their Jolly Fresh on-line business. They have two ladies who come to help pack the hampers each Tuesday evening. They get "paid" with extra produce and supper!

JP and Dawn were able to enjoy some family time when JP took two weeks of vacation while Dawn and the girls had a school break. Chayah will begin grade 4 in January at a different school. Port Shepstone Junior Primary School, where she and Seanna attend and where Dawn teaches, only goes through grade 3.

Michael returned to the U.S. on October 12. We stayed with Sharon and Dave, my sister and brother-in-law, for a few days. The memorial service for my sister, Juanita, was delayed to October 16 to accommodate people who came from distances. Both of my step-sisters, both of my step-brothers, Juanita's granddaughter from Texas, many cousins and lots of friends were able to join us for the service.

We have now settled on a farm in Kimball, MN, with our friend, Richard Eckman. His late wife, Janet, was our forwarding agent for many years. We got acquainted with them when we were at college and attended church in Kimball in the mid-60's.



Caryl stands next to the table with pictures and floral tributes at the memorial service for her sister, Juanita. Many family and friends gathered to celebrate her life.