

First Missions – Africa

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Africa

South Africa – Wilson Reid

Revised November 1, 2025

PIONEERING AFRICA

Algeria: Early 1950s by Robert Sterling, Jim Ratcliff; following year: Verna Munro, Glenna Mae Terry

Cameroon & Nigeria (fna British Cameroons): 1958 by Wilson Reid

Egypt: 1931 by Willie Brown, Wilson Reid; year? Amlia Bouzakis

Ghana (fna Gold Coast): 1953 by (unknown)

Kenya: 1927 by Willie Clark, Steve Penniall; year? Bernice Jelliman, Martha Roy

Ethiopia: After 2008 by Andy Robijn

Madagascar: 1964-65 by Ken Paginton

Morocco: 1947 by Ray Bonds, Donald Karnes; year? Anna Neuhaus, Glenna Mae Terry

Nigeria, East: 1954 by (unknown)

Sierra Leone: 1931 by (unknown)

South Africa: 1905 – [see details below](#)

Namibia (fna South West Africa): 1923 by John Bird, Frank Scholtz

Tanzania: 1935 by Arthur Robert, Jack Greene

West Africa: 1947 by (unknown)

Zimbabwe (fna Rhodesia): 1922 by Willie Clark, Tom Bovine, Wilson Reid

Recently added Pioneering Accounts:

Beginning of the Work in S.W.A. (South West Africa)

Lydenburg, South Africa Mission in 1921

NOTE: There are 54 recognized sovereign countries in Africa

Open Doors World Watch List 2025 posts the 50 most dangerous places for Christians (alphabetical order).

These 6 African countries are among the top 15 most dangerous: Eritrea, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan.

These 15 countries are among the following 16-50 most dangerous: Algeria, Burkina, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Comoros, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia.

*<https://www.opendoors.org/>

!! Pioneering Accounts for African countries are welcome. Send to: truth@tellingthetruth.info

SOUTH AFRICA

When did the workers first arrive? In 1905, the FIRST eight Workers went to pioneer the work in South Africa on the SS *Geelong*, departing from London on August 25, 1905 for Cape Town, South Africa..

Who were the first brother workers? 1905: Joseph Kerr age 24, Wilson Reid age 24, J. Cavanagh (John) age 27, A. Pearce (Alex) age 29.

Who were the first sister workers? 1905: Mary Moodie age 38, Barbara Baxter age 24, L. Reid (Lilly) age 26, and M. Skerritt (Martha) age 22.

Departing England for Australia via Cape Town on SS Wakool August 14, 1906: Hugh McKay age 27, Jim Dunlop age 24, Jack Godding age 18, Fred Alder age 19, Jean Allen age 22, Nellie Taylor age 23, Beatrice (Cissie) Maughan age 19 and Edith Easey age 20.

Who were the first converts (*first fruits*), what year and where? George Absalom.

Who were the first native workers to go in the work and When?

First Native Brother Worker: George Absalom, starting in 1908-09; Arthur Arnold started in 1910

First Native Sister Worker: Possibly Gertie Barendilla and Cissie Tregurtha in 1913

When & Where was the first Gospel Meeting?

When & Where was the first Sunday fellowship meeting?

When & Where was the first baptism?

Native Language? Mostly English and Afrikaans

When & Where was the first convention? Claremont, 1906; circa 1911, Prellers home, 64 Otto Street, Krugersdorp.

Where are Conventions currently held in South and East Africa? Gqeberha (fna Port Elizabeth), Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria

(fna Putten), Bloemfontein, Pretoria Zulu in South Africa; in Windhoek, Namibia; Nairobi, Kenya; _____, Tanzania; Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe (2025).

Emblems are served at Conventions. Reportedly, all South African convention ground properties are held in a trust.

Official Name: Christian Church in Africa

Who have the Overseers been?

Alex Pearce, 1905 pioneer from Ireland until he died in 1948

Hugh McKaye

Wilson Reid, Irishman, until 1968

Willie Clarke, a Scotsman with Fred Alder

Jim Johnston from South Africa 1970-1993

Louis van Dyk

Tom Vincent

Currently: Johan Kotze

Combined country Workers Lists:

South Africa & Namibia with Southern, Central & East Africa (includes Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Tanzania)

West & Central Africa: Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast (now Cote d'Ivoire) & Senegal, Cameroon.

Wilson Reid was one of the first workers to go to **Rhodesia** (*present-day Zimbabwe*)

In 1931, Wilson Reid and Paul Scholtz visited Tanganyika (*present-day Tanzania*) and **Kenya**, opening the way for the Work to start in these countries.

In 1946, Wilson was the first elder Worker to visit **West Africa, where the Work had begun in 1931 in Sierra Leone.**

South West Africa (now Namibia)

SOUTH AFRICA WORKERS LIST FOR 1906

Wilson Reid Kimberly

Fred Alder

Alee Pearce East London

Jack Godding

John Cavanagh Port Elizabeth

Hugh McKay

Joe Kerr Capetown

Jim Dunlop

Mary Moodie Durban and District

Lily Reid

Jean Allen Johannesburg & Dist.

Nellie Taylor

Martha Skerritt Cape and District

Cissie Maughn

Barbara Baxter Cape and District

Edith Easy

See photos of Africa in TTT Photo Gallery

View Christian Church in Africa Statement by Louis van Dyk

CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN AFRICA

Durban: P.O. Box 342, Gillitts, 3603 Rep. of South Africa

Pretoria: P.O. Box 175, New lands, 0049 Rep. of South Africa

Cape Town: P.O. Box 4549, Tyger Valley, 7536 Rep. of South Africa

Port Elizabeth: P.O. Box 10283, Liston Grange, 6015 Rep. of South Africa

CHRISTELIKE GEMEENTE IN AFRIKA

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN AFRICA**

1. REGISTRATION OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS: The Non-profit Organisations Act (Act No. 71 of 1997) provides for the voluntary registration of non-profit organisations, which term includes churches. Although the Christian Church in Africa was established in 1905, the General Overseers of the Church opt not to register. The Church is, nevertheless, well-known to many institutions such as the Department of Finance, the Department Home Affairs, the First National Bank and the representatives in South Africa of the government of various foreign countries.

2. NAME OF THE CHURCH: The 'Christian Church' is an international community based entirely on the teachings of the Holy Bible and forms a worldwide association of people without distinction of nationality, race or colour who are united by a common desire to practice Christianity as it was taught by Jesus Himself and His Apostles. The name 'Christian Church' was adopted because it expresses most clearly the Church's identity with the Christian Church*1 as described in the New Testament. As the 'Christian Church' is now established in more than 150 countries in every continent of the globe, including Africa, it can be distinguished on a country basis, e.g. 'The Christian Church in England', 'The Christian Church in France', 'The Christian Church in India', etc. The term 'Christian Church in Africa' relates to the Church branch operating in African countries south of Kenya.

3. CONSTITUTION AND ORGANISATION: The Church is constituted and organised directly on the form in which the Church as described in the New Testament was constituted and organised. Responsible persons of good character who fulfil the conditions laid down in Scripture are ordained as Missionaries (termed 'workers'). The oversight of Church matters rests in the hands of two very senior missionaries who, over and above their functions as missionaries, also act as the so-called General Overseers of the Church. The Church is non-political and concerns itself with the propagation of the Bible and its application to individual lives and circumstances. Its object is to teach right standards of living and an understanding of divine laws as revealed in Scripture. In this way the Church creates a fellowship of people faithful to Christian ideals who can serve as a help and encouragement to their fellow-citizens in setting an example of honesty, industriousness and Christian virtues. The Church does not have any financial investments and owns no fixed property.

4. MISSIONARIES: Missionaries of the Church are ordained by the general overseers and operate in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ*2. They give themselves freely and completely to their work which is both pastoral and evangelical, being governed by strict rules of conduct. Much care is exercised in the choice of suitable candidates. Those who are called to become missionaries of the Church abandon all their possessions and have no source of personal income. They work freely and voluntarily and do not have the right to any financial remuneration, to own property or to make any personal savings. Their expenses in their work are met by personal freewill gifts received from members of the Church. Missionaries in the different countries work and cooperate together, thus ensuring worldwide uniformity of standards.

5. MEMBERSHIP: No one is admitted to the Christian Church without understanding and accepting that an honest, law-abiding conduct is necessary and demonstrating the ability to observe rules of Christian life. Members are taught their duty to their country, to honour and respect the country's leaders and authorities*3), and they are especially forbidden to engage in any activities prohibited by the State. Special importance is attached to the stability of family life, bearing in mind that in certain points the concept of family life may differ from one country to another. There are no membership fees.

6. CHURCH SERVICES: Church members in a particular locality meet regularly – usually three times per week – for church services in the house*4 of a bishop (termed 'elder') or deacon*5 nominated by the general overseers. These gatherings are the local 'churches' and generally the number of members of such a 'church' is not more than 15, not counting children. The services are essentially simple and are normally conducted by the elder or deacon of each such 'church'. Holy Communion is celebrated each Sunday morning. In most countries annual conventions lasting three or four days and annual one-day of special meetings are also held. The venues of such conventions and special meetings are either on the properties of church members or in school or similar halls specially rented for such occasions. In addition to the above-mentioned so-called 'fellowship meetings', public evangelical services are held. These may, for example, take place in a room or hall rented for that purpose, in a tent or in a private house. The Church has no literature apart from the Bible and a book of hymns.

(Signed by) Louis van Dyk
General Overseer (no date–circa 2007 possibly)

1* Acts 11 vs. 26: 'And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.'

2* Math. 10 vs. 7-14 and Luke 10 vs. 1-10: re. Mission of the apostles.

3* 1 Tim 2 vs. 1 and 2: re. Prayer for 'kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

4* 1 Cor. 16 vs. 19, Col. 4 vs. 15 and Philem, vs. 2: re. Churches in houses.

5* 1 Tim. 3 vs. 1-12: re. Qualifications for bishops and deacons.

In 1905 eight young workers, four sisters and four brothers, left UK for Africa. (Eight, also went to Australia and New Zealand). **Wilson Reid, Joe Kerr, Martha Skerritt and Barbara Baxter** were met at Cape Town by Mr and Mrs Walter McClung (Irish), not professing at the time.

Three of these started in Cape Town, one going north. Uncle Wilson had meetings in the open air at first in Claremont, where Mr Muller and Johnny Abrahams stood and listened. The former knew this is IT. They had been earnestly praying for help. Uncle Wilson in the course of his visiting came across Mrs Muller, who invited him in, and that was the start and the first acceptance of Christ — Johnny Abrahams later on and others soon enough afterwards. Nummy [aka Nunnie] Muller, the only child of Mr and Mrs Muller is now over 90 years, and she was about 4 years old then. She is the only one alive who can tell of the beginning (and Mary Abrahams from hearsay).

Alec Pearce and John Cavanagh proceeded to PE [Port Elizabeth] where Mr and Mrs George Round were the first to accept the truth. They were then living in Happy Valley or The Valley [PE now officially known as Gqeberha].

Mary Moodie and Lily Reid continued on ship to Durban where God led them to the home where Mrs Hutton accepted them and then their message and consequently Jesus and God who was the "sender". An interesting story of how God undertook and led. Barbara Bartlett could tell.

The following year, 1906, **Hugh McKay and Fred Alder** came to S A (Fred Alder not even 20 years old). Also **Jean Allen and Nellie Taylor** (22 years old).

Later Wilson went to Kimberley where such as Mr and Mrs Stevenson yielded — Maggie and Mary's parents (deceased) and Mrs Alexander, sister to Mrs Stevenson. They stood faithfully to the end. Also Mr Mike Williams and many others (Heloise Williams is of that family).

Windsorton and Warrington (diamond fields) were given a chance and in those parts a few decided, such as Eddie and Gertie Barandilla and Mrs Barandilla, also Dora and Ethel McKenzie and their mother.

In 1908 Wilson met George Absolom and his mother and also Sarel du Toit. Wilson worked, helping the people to dig and had evening meetings. He found those few precious diamonds.

Everyone's diet was mealie-meal porridge, which was cooked in different ways. One day Martha Skerritt and her companion invited the hopefuls to supper, which consisted of sheep's head and dumplings. The dumplings became porridge because it was made with mealie meal, so no one complained.

One day Uncle Wilson read Romans 6, but felt that it was not good for the meeting that p m. However he did not seem to find anything else ... and Sarel du Toit said if they speak on baptism then this is it!! After that he told Uncle Wilson that was IT because that chapter speaks on baptism. He also asked Uncle Wilson to see some of his relatives in Potchefstroom, Transvaal, and embrace them with the truth. Uncle Wilson said if you accompany me first to Special Meetings in Durban, which he did. This is how Sarel launched out. He died in Braamfontein, 7 4 1918 [April 7, 1918] at the age of 42.

On arrival in Potchefstroom the contact was duly made and Sarel attended a prayer meeting where he met Mr and Mrs Schabort. The workers found a Mr Jooter in Potchefstroom who gave them a little shack to live in and no meals. However, in a few days of enquiries Uncle Wilson met Mr Loxton who opened his home for services where Mr and Mrs Roy, her sister, Hilda Visser and a Mr Bosman made their choice in the third meeting, 28 6 1908 [June 28, 1908]. On 30 6 1908, [June 20, 1908] Mr and Mrs Schabort came into Potchefstroom by horse and cart to make their decision known. Six souls in all were added to the Lord.

Mr and Mrs Roy were newly married, had recently moved into the house he had built and by the Sunday the workers met there and Mr Roy went to fetch them to stay in the home. As yet he had no work after building the house (with others) but said "Tomorrow I will go to get work in my line—horticulture—and will not return without it". He was obliged to get an ordinary gardener's work, but they all lived and had vegetables in the garden. Hilda worked and could also help. These were the first converts in the Transvaal.

The Loxtons decided later on and the following year in Krugersdorp the Arnoldi family, the Leach family, Mr and Mrs Prellar and others yielded. Dan Arnoldi is still alive, well over 90, and the Preller's grand-daughter, Mrs Dippenaar is in Kempton Park.

Conventions were held in Krugersdorp for many years, the first ones being in a home. There are children and grand-children of all these souls mentioned who are serving God today, some in the work rejoicing in God's salvation, having had dealings in their lives being won through the glorious Gospel.

Memories of the first days in South Africa
Briefly, from memory, conversations with Wilson Reid, etc.
(As told by Martha Roy, 1995)

The Geelong sailed from U. K. in 1905, with about sixteen workers bound for South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, calling at Cape Town in September 1905. Met by Mr. & Mrs. Walter McClung to see **Wilson and Annie McClung**, workers, on their way to New Zealand. The former were not then professing. She was fashionable dressed, ostrich feather in her hat—he in long coat tails and top hat!

Those who disembarked at Cape Town were **Wilson Reid, Joe Kerr, Martha Skerritt and Barbara Baxter**. At Port Elizabeth, **Alec Pearce and John Cavanagh**; and at Durban, **Mary Moody and either Lily Reid or Edith Easy**.

Evidently Joe did not stay in Cape Town but went farther north; but Martha and Barbara found lodgings in Salt River. They did not see Wilson for two months. He, Wilson, was in the Claremont area—meeting people by offering to prune trees and help in gardens and having meetings on the main street (or nearly) in Claremont.

Mr. Muller (a Hollander) passed by, heard Wilson, went home rejoicing, saying to his wife, "Maria! Maria! It's on the way!!!" "What's on the way, Dad?" "What I've been looking for and praying for—for years!" Their only child, Nunny, was then three years old. Mrs. Muller was from St. Helena Island. Not long afterwards Wilson called at the home and Mrs. Muller, at first reticent, eventually had him in their home where they heard the word more perfectly and where Wilson now had a lodging place and an open home for meetings.

Among those who listened on the street were Johnny Abrahams, then a lad in his late teens, and from over the road at the gate of her home, Mrs. Carelse, mother of Dan who went into the work later (Hettie Roodt's grandmother). There were others there and by 1906 **when Hugh McKay, Fred Alder, Jean Allan and Nellie Taylor** arrived in South Africa, **there was a little "convention" held in a home in Claremont**, though not in the Carelse's home in Newlands. Fred about 19 or 20 years of age, Jean and Nellie 21 and 22 respectively! They must have proceeded up north.

At Port Elizabeth, Alec and John met and helped Mr. & Mrs. George Round, and at Durban Mary and companion were not long in having a welcome at the home of the Huttons (grandparents of Marge Shaw and Harold Bartlett).

In about 1907 (or 1908) Wilson laboured in Kimberley (companion ?) when Mr. & Mrs. Stevenson, and her two sisters decided (Mrs. Alexander and ?) and also Mike Williams. Then on to the diamond diggings Windsorton or Warrenton. Martha Skerritt and companion also had meetings in either of these places, where Mrs. Barendilla, Gertie and Eddie decided and Mrs. McKenzie and Dora and Ethel, twins.

Wilson helped to dig for diamonds or whatever came to his hand to do, having meetings in the evenings. (**George Absalom** must have met Wilson Reid in Kimberley because he wished he could push Wilson over into the Big Hole!) He was mad, then sad, then glad!! One night he walked the streets praying, "Oh God, soften my heart!" Over and over and he broke and God could help him.

At the diggings a young man attended meetings. One day he prayed that if the speaker would talk about baptism he would know, "This is the Truth and he will be willing". Wilson had struggled all day to push Romans 6 out of his mind, but failing to get anything else he had to use Romans 6! **Sarel du Toit** then approached him and said he is willing to serve God in His only way!

Not very long afterwards (1908), Sarel asked Wilson to go to Potchefstroom where his family would grasp this with open arms. Wilson said, "Yes, if you will come as my companion!" They first had to go to Durban for a little Special Meeting, then off to Potchefstroom and Wilson often joked about going into Potch, "on a ticky". Sarel went to the farm and to a couple of prayer meetings with his folk who did not accept the Truth, but after a short while the Schaborts were willing. Mr. Schabort had been a prisoner of war on St. Helena Island (after the Anglo Boer War), and he prayed that if God would send him back to South Africa and his people and show him how to serve Him, he would do so.

A man by name Jooste, gave the brothers a shack of sorts in his back yard in Potchefstroom on arrival. Wilson started open air meetings. Bob Roy, an Irishman, passing heard this Irish voice, stopped and listened, and after that both Bob, his wife and sister-in-law, Hilda Visser went to listen. Bob and wife, newly married and now settled in their newly-built house, and they and a Mr. Bosman yielded before the week was out! Bob Roy went to see where the workers were living. The result was they were taken there and then to the Roy's home. The bride and groom (Roys) decided on 28 June 1908, and the Schaborts came to Potch on 30 June to break the news of their decision for God!

The following year, Wilson and Sarel met the Prellers, Leaches, and the Arnoldies and others in Krugersdorp. In the Transkei, **Alec Pearce and Fred Alder** later on met several people who valued salvation—Webbs, Matthews and others.

It was not without many privations, hardships and difficulties that people were reached. People were more hungry for meetings and needy. In 1911, the Ratzeburgs were helped. They had seven daughters, Erica Gerretsen being the youngest. **George Humphries** was then already in the work. **Nellie Taylor** and companion put an advert in the local paper to which he responded.

Little conventions were first held in the Preller's home, perhaps even earlier than 1911 —64 Otto Street!!! Sam Bird and family were among the earliest ones. George Brauel was also from Potchefstroom. **Tom and Martha Kilpatrick, Bernice Jelliman, Len Hartshorne and Laura Lund? went into the work in 1916.** It was after that the George Absalom wrote to Bernice saying, "Yielding to circumstances is yielding to God". A few years after deciding for God, the Schaborts moved to the Cape, the farm, "Bethanie".

HOW THE WORK BEGAN IN SOUTH AFRICA

As told by Martha Roy, April 2022

During April of 2002, Martha Roy and her companion, Gretta Harmse, began a mission at the Pretoria Convention Grounds. At one of the first meetings, Aunty Martha told us how the work began in South Africa. The great sacrifice and labour of love in bringing the gospel to this country inspired us to do a little more research, and write down this precious message, not only for ourselves but for generations to come.

In 1905 some friends in England and Ireland sold their possessions in order to pay the fare for a few workers to go and preach the gospel in countries like South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, where the gospel had not been preached yet. About 16 young workers set sail on the Geelong in 1905. They arrived in Cape Town on 17 September 1905.

As **Wilson and Annie Mc Clung** were also on board the vessel, they were met by his brother and his wife, Mr. & Mrs. Walter and Chrissie Mc Clung, then residing in the Cape, but not as yet professing to serve the Lord. They were dressed in the latest fashion, she with an ostrich feather in her hat and a long flowing dress and he in coat tails and top hat. (Later on, they both decided and were in the work for a while, and if remembered correctly, the Bartholomews and others decided at Koffiefontein at that time through **Walter and Chrissie Mc Clung**).

Four workers disembarked at Cape Town—**Wilson Reid, Joe Kerr, Martha Skerritt and Barbara Baxter**. The others continued on the voyage and **Alec Pearce and John Cavanagh** got off at Port Elizabeth and **Mary Moodie and Lily Reid** at Durban.

Martha and Barbara found lodgings in a building near Salt River along the railway line to Cape Town. Wilson Reid went to Claremont, a suburb of Cape Town and Joe decided to go further North.

To make contacts Wilson called at homes to invite people and at the same time offered to prune their trees or help with other garden work. He started open air meetings in Claremont (quite scriptural Acts 16 & 17) and people passing by stopped to listen. Johnny Abrahams, (the father of **Mary Abrahams** who is in the work) heard him singing. Wilson was very false, and Johnny decided to help him with the singing. A Mrs. Carelse listened from her gate and later she and her sisters, Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Roodt (Hettie's mother) and her brother Dan decided.

One evening, a Mr. Muller passed by on his way home from work and heard Wilson preaching. He did not stay to listen then, but on reaching home said excitedly to his wife, "Maria, Maria, it's on the way!" "What is on the way, Dad?" "What I've been praying for and waiting for all these years. The Truth is on the street tonight." Mr. Muller was from Holland and his wife from St. Helena.

Shortly afterwards, whilst visiting, Wilson came across their home, the result being that he was invited to a meal. (There was always an extra place set at their table for the stranger or a visitor). They opened their home to Wilson and there was a room for him and a room for meetings. They both attended meetings and his wife soon yielded to God and her husband a little while later, and their faith was spoken of in many lands.

Johnny also made a start to follow Jesus and **Dan Carelse and Hettie Roodt** went into the work. The Goatham family also did what the Lord required, and some of that family are still alive and professing today (1988).

In 1906, another eight workers came to South Africa. They all landed at Cape Town—**Hugh MacKay, Fred Alder (not yet 20), Jim Dunlop, Jack Godding, Jean Allan, Nellie Taylor, Edith Easy and Cisse Maughn**. Nellie was only 20 at the time and Jean Allan 21. There was a little convention held in a home in Claremont after their arrival.

Around 1907, Wilson Reid went up country to Kimberly (on a bicycle) where a Mr. & Mrs. Stevenson and her two sisters decided, one being Mrs. Alexander. **Mary Stevenson** was in the work and died at the age of 50, and Mr. A. Stevenson died in the 1918 flu. During this time Mike Williams (who has a granddaughter in Calgary, Canada) was reached and maybe Albert van Lingen.

At Kimberly, **George Absalom** heard the truth, but he was a hard-headed and proud man who did not like hearing about this 'terrible truth'. He even contemplated throwing Wilson down the Big Hole at Kimberly. One night he paced up and down praying 'Lord, soften my heart. Soften my heart.' Repentance is the beginning of eternal life. God softened his heart; he professed and later went into the work.

Two towns where there were diggings near Kimberley were tried, Warrenton and Windsorton, one town by Wilson and the other by the sisters Martha Skerritt & Co, where the sisters could help Mrs. Barendilla. By 1911, **Eddie and Gertie Barendilla** were in the work. During this time Mrs. Mc Kenzie also professed and Dora & Ethel (twins) went into the work. (Ethel married later and her daughter Ruth Conradie professes in Zululand.)

This was just after the 'Boere Oorlog,' [2nd Boer War] and things had not settled down yet. Wilson held meetings in the evenings, but during the day he helped on the diggings, sometimes sorting stones, sometimes digging, making it easier for himself to partake of the hospitality of those poor people. Porridge was the staple diet.

A man of 32 years old, attending those meetings, prayed one day that if Wilson spoke of a certain thing that evening, he would be assured that "This is the Way," and he would be willing to walk in it. Wilson had struggled all day to put away from his thoughts the 6th chapter of Romans. He felt that baptism was not something that was spoken of in gospel meetings (and especially as the Dutch Reformed Church don't believe in adult baptism), but he found nothing else. That night Sarel du Toit approached him and said, "Now I know this is the truth."

Sarel told Wilson about some relatives of his living at Potchefstroom who he felt would be interested in hearing the truth, and Wilson said, "I will go if you will go with me as my companion." The very next day **Sarel du Toit** went into the work as Wilson's companion.

Before they went to Potchefstroom, they first attended a little special gathering in Durban during June. (This was the first Special Meeting to be held in S.A.) By that time a few had been helped through **Mary Moodie & Co**. Mrs. Hutton was the first fruits of Durban, amongst others, and her husband professed much later.

Alec Pearce and John Cavanagh had been labouring in the Port Elizabeth area and Mr. and Mrs. Round were the first to profess. George Round (snr) was the Customs Officer when the workers arrived, and he asked them, "What is your address and what are you going to do in South Africa?" They had no address and told him that they were going to preach the gospel. He opened his home to them, and he and his wife were the first to profess at Port Elizabeth. Some relatives of those first ones are still alive today, Milly Round and Georgie Round in Durban.

After the meetings in Durban, Wilson and Sarel proceeded to Potchefstroom. They travelled third class on a train, and Wilson often joked that they went into Potchefstroom 'on a ticky' (three pence!).

Wilson was offered a little shelter (lean-to) in the backyard of a Mr. Jooste and Sarel went on to tell the good news to his family. They were not very interested, seemingly satisfied, but there Sarel met a Mr. & Mrs. Scharbott at a prayer meeting held in a church.

Mr. Scharbott had been sent to St. Helena Island as a prisoner of war after the Boer War, and while he was there, he promised God that if He would let him go home to his land and his people, and show him how to serve Him, he would be willing. Over 150 people never got back to their homes, but Mr. Scharbott did, and he was given the opportunity to pay his vow.

Meanwhile, Wilson had started open air meetings in Potchefstroom. Mr. Bob Roy heard this "Irish voice" and hastened his steps to listen. Going home, he said to his bride, "We must go tomorrow night, there's something here." (At that time Mr. and Mrs. Roy (Martha Roy's parents) had just married and moved into their first home.

During the war Robert (Bob) Roy (also Irish) was in the cavalry, and after the war ended, he helped people with their animals, for which he was paid in kind. He dealt in horses, and people paid him with cattle, a few sheep, etc. He sold these animals, and in that way earned enough to build a house for his new bride. It was a new house, and being a horticulturist, he was busy planning and planting vegetable gardens and flower gardens. It was during this time that he heard Wilson's voice at an open air meeting).

In the third meeting, Mrs. Roy, her sister Hilda Visser and a Mr. Bosman all stood to their feet to tell of their desire to walk in God's way, and by the weekend Mr. Roy had decided, on 28 June 1908. And on 30 June 1908, the Scharbotts came to town by horse and trap to make known their decision.

Mr. Roy went to see where the workers were staying and said, "I will go and talk to the Missus, and see if we can't come and fetch you to stay at our home." The workers then went to stay with this young couple and thus had a home to stay in and for meetings. It gave them the opportunity to finish the mission that year. (In the Western Cape, the Scharbotts later on went back to their farm near Durbanville, where the present conventions are still being held since 1965. That area has since all been built up, a beautiful suburb, and the conventions are held over two weekends, with approximately 600 people at each convention on Sundays.) The Scharbotts have three granddaughters professing. The Roys, also deceased, had 2 daughters (**Nellie and Martha**) and a son (**Wilson**) in the work and presently 2 of their granddaughters are professing and their children.

Aunty Martha [Roy] is still in the work, now the oldest sister in South Africa at nearly 93 years old. So, the mission in Potchefstroom continued and the Loxtons professed. The next year in Krugersdorp, the Prellers, Arnoldis and the Leach family decided, amongst others. Soon afterwards the Prellers had little conventions in their home, but some years later the conventions were held in tents on the Arnoldis' property. Young people also decided, and all are now in Eternity. Some of the grandchildren are still serving the Lord.

Nellie Taylor & Co. put an advert about their meetings in the newspaper. **George Humphries**, then a widower, responded and later went into the work.

In about 1911, he met the Ratzeburg couple who had seven daughters, three of whom are still alive and professing (1997). The sister of Mrs. _____ [line missing here]

By that time **George Absalom, May Lund**, and some other workers had gone into the work and in several places, heeding the call of Jesus, "Go ye into all the world...and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Mr. and Mrs. Bird of Germiston had several children—Leslie, Gladys, James, Hilda, Dolly, Joe and Wilfred. Most of them decided and went on to the end. They had a useful home in many ways.

In about 1914, **Nellie Taylor and Cissie Trugertha** worked a mission in De Aar, where Mr. and Mrs. Rossouw, Isobel, Tom and Martha Kilpatrick accepted the gospel. In 1916 **Tom and Martha Kilpatrick and Bernice Jelliman, Len Hartshorne and Laura Lund** went into the work. **Elna Kilpatrick, then 4 years old, was brought up by her Granny, Mrs. Rossouw.** She decided before Martha's death and has also since passed away.

The first fruits of Benoni were Frank van der Merwe, **Granny Lewis**, a widow who spent several years in the work, and a Mrs. Hislop. About 1918, **George Humphries & Co.** were in Cradock where Mr. Tom Wise and Mrs. Wise and Margery Wise (then 13 years old) began to serve the Lord. Mr. Wise was once heard to say, "We learn by doing and we teach by being."

In 1922/23, **Hugh MacKay and Hugh Blade, also Bernice Jelliman and Eunice Jelliman were pioneers for the truth in Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe).** Mr. and Mrs. Archer had returned from a visit to Natal, having received new life in Christ, so they were the first friends there. Then later on the sisters met Mrs. Kirk and family in Umtali (now Mutare) and also Henry Swanepoel and others. Soon afterwards, the Jelliman sisters left for Holland where Frank van der Merwe was the overseer for many years.

In April of 1918, **Sarel du Toit** was the first worker to pass away in South Africa, aged 42. He passed away in Braamfontein, in the home of Mrs. Kamp, where he was having treatment for TB. At his funeral service the hymn was sung, "There's a hand held out in pity..."

Mrs. Roy died in Benoni at the age of 31, while two sister workers were in her home working a mission. She died of the 1918 flu on 19 November, ten days after Armistice was signed (1st World War). Several friends died then, Mr. Stevenson, Mrs. Ulliat (Tienie Roy's mother), a Mrs. Hen and others.

Now many are waiting for the great Resurrection when the Bridegroom will come for His Bride—those in the grave rising first to meet their Lord in the air.

Another Memory

The above gives dates of those who arrived on the Geelong and where they disembarked. The following is from memory and hearsay. Mr and Mrs Walter and Annie Mc Clung met them at Cape Town – not professing as yet—he dressed in “coat tails” and tophat, and she very fashionable with a beautiful ostrich feather in her hat! Maybe they were not residents in the Cape at that time. Professed later and were even in the work for a time in the Koffiefontein area.

Martha and Barbara found a batch in Salt River—and Wilson went to Claremont, alone, and daily did what garden work he could find to contact people; who also gave him a meal. He held open air meetings in Claremont, singing alone, until a youth Johnny Abrahams went to stand by him and help with the hymns. Mr Muller (Dad), a Hollander, walked past and heard just enough to rush home and say to his wife, “Maria, Maria – it’s on the way!” “What’s on the way Dad?” “What I’ve been praying for a long time.” He then told her what he heard on the street.

A few days later when Wilson was visiting from house to house to invite people, he came across the Mullers’ home. Being shy, Mrs Muller did not just invite him in immediately, but they had a visit with him and a meal—later an invitation to stay. She “saw it” before he did, but was regular at her church (English) but they both decided. Nunnie was then three years old (now she is 92!! – still alive – Mrs Vernard Karstadt) A lady, Mrs Carelse is said to have listened from her gate—probably in the new year, she and her family were helped, Dan Carelse her son and Hettie Roodt her granddaughter being in the work later on—Johnny Abrahams decided, got married and has a daughter Mary in the work and a son professing. Both Johnny and his wife have passed on.

The following year, a few more workers came to South Africa; **Hugh McKay, Fred Alder, Jean Allan, Nellie Taylor**. In Port Elizabeth, Alec Pearce and John Cavanagh met Mr and Mrs George Round—the first fruits of P.E., and in Durban, Mary Moodie and Lily Reid soon met the senior Huttons who opened their home. Grandchildren are still alive, Marge Shaw in Pietermaritzburg and Harold Bartlett in Harare, Zimbabwe. Great grandchildren professing.

Wilson went up to Kimberley later on—some decided there. George Absalom, Mr and Mrs Stevenson, Mrs Alexander and another sister? Also Mike Williams—maybe others. Then to the diggings Windsorton and Warrenton, where Wilson helped people to dig in the daytime, eating with them mealie porridge and having open air meetings in the evenings. Martha Skerritt in the diggings area met the Barendillas and McKenzies—the mothers decided and Eddie and Gertie Barendilla, also Dora and Ethel McKenzie. These four went into the work.

A young man attending Wilson’s meetings, prayed one day saying to God that if Wilson speaks of baptism that evening he would know this is “the Way”. Wilson had Romans 6 in mind all day and tried to push it away and get something else, but when he did not succeed, Sarel du Toit told him, “Now I know and I want to start to serve God right now.” A while after, he spoke about relatives on a farm near Potchefstroom who he thought, would be ripe for the gospel. Wilson was ready to go to Durban for a small convention so said to Sarel that if he could join him as his companion they could go after being in Durban. Wilson sometimes spoke of entering Potchefstroom “on a ticky”! A Mr Jooste gave them a shed in his backyard. Sarel went to the farm, met his people, attended prayer meetings to meet people. Among whom were Mr and Mrs Schabert. At first Mr Schabert was opposed or confused, but then remembered his vow on St. Helena Island as a prisoner after the Anglo-Boer War that if God would let him return to South Africa and his family, he would serve God if He showed him “how”.

Bob Roy was returning to his house one evening, the house he had built just before his marriage, and heard this Irish voice preaching at a street corner. Went home to his wife in glee, (being Irish too) and next evening they both went to listen. The wife was a ripe fruit, so was her sister and Bob later also expressed his readiness. So then there was a home for the workers and meetings in the home. They met Wilson in June, decided on June 28th, 1908. The mission continued. Loxtons professed and the following year Krugersdorp produced Prellers, Arnolds and Leaches. In 1910 the Ratzenburgs met **Joe Kerr and George Humphries** in (Rust)? First Transvaal convention in a home – Krugersdorp.

Read book on TTT: **Secret Mormonism and Christian Science**

By Amelia A. Atmore, 1927

A Christian mother’s deep concern, investigation and grief after the Two by Two workers came to their area of Rhodesia, Africa, in 1927 and recruited her 21 year old daughter to become a worker into an unfamiliar sect. Alarmed, she studied the sect and its beliefs and mistakenly concluded that the the worker were secretly Mormons (who were reportedly human trafficking girls) or Christian Science.

Book Dedication: “*DEDICATED to the many lives blighted and the many homes broken up by these SECRET MORMON AGENTS, who say they are only just Christians come to preach the true Gospel of Jesus. They are best known as the Gospel Readers, the Evangelists, the Cooneyites, the Go-Preachers, or the Disciples.*”

In April, 1927, we were living in a small town in Southern Rhodesia...(current day Zimbabwe)

NOTE: The workers who pioneered Rhodesia in 1922 were: Willie Clark, Tom Bovine, and Wilson Reid.

Beginning of the Work in S.W.A. (South West Africa) (now known as Namibia)

As Told by Aunt Lovie Havemann, February 1990

A Mr. and Mrs. W. Heathcote, (later known as Oom Willie and Aunt Lenie) and family, were transferred from Standerton (Tvl) to Keetmanshoop in S.W.A. where he was to work (as an engine-driver), in early 1923.

In May 1923, two workers, **John Bird and Frank Scholtz**, came to S.W.A. as pioneers, bringing the Gospel of Salvation. They stayed a week or so with the Heathcote family, who had professed sometime before while still in Standerton. Then Uncle John and Frank took a train to Windhoek, with their kitchen box and all. In Windhoek they managed to get a room from a Mr. and Mrs. Biella, who owned a boarding house. The workers soon made friends, and set out looking for a place for meetings.

My mother's great-grandparents, the Bassingthwaites, were the first white people to set foot in S.W.A. in the early 1800's. My parents were married in 1903 in the Transvaal; most of us children were born in S.W.A., and when war broke out in 1914, we were interned. After the war, our family returned to the Transvaal, where my father worked in the gold mines.

My father's name was **Franz Johan Krügel**, son of a German doctor, who was married to Paul Kruger's youngest sister, (who was my Ouma). In 1921 my Dad was put off work having contracted Miner's Phthisis, and doctors told him to go to a dry climate. So then in 1921 the whole Krügel family moved back to S.W.A., and my father bought a small farm at Avis, right behind Klein Windhoek, where the big dam is now built; 7½ miles out of Windhoek.

Here we lived happily together for the next 2 years, and my parents were God-fearing people, honest, upright, well respected and loved. They taught us to read our Bible, went to a Methodist church, as often as there was a service. After supper every night, my father read out of the Bible, and a prayer out of a prayer-book. They were very strict and made us very aware of right and wrong. However, my mother was a seeking soul, she went from church to church, except the Roman Catholics, (there were no Apostolics there then!).

At the time when Uncle John and Frank [**John Bird and Frank Scholtz**] came to Windhoek, my father took seriously ill, and on the evening of 17 May 1923, he was taken to Windhoek hospital, and the Biella family, where the workers were staying, heard this news, and told Uncle John and Frank about my father.

So after some days, (Wed. 23rd May), the 2 workers went to the hospital to visit my father, and in this way make friends with him, but were not allowed to see him, as he was too ill. That night my father died, and my mother walked back home the 7½ miles, and late that night, she still wrote 2 letters; the one to her parents, and the other to relatives on the farms far from Windhoek, which she sent away by two farm boys on horse-back, very early the next morning.

My mother, Mabel Grace Bassingthwaite, was from one of many large Bassingthwaite families. My grandparents came down post haste by cart and horses, and my father was duly buried by the Methodist minister, a Mr. Wood. My grandparents stayed on for a while until my mother's brother, Victor, could come and take over as executor of my father's estate.

In the meantime, the 2 workers were anxious to start with meetings. They were told of someone out on the road to Kapp's farm, which passed our property, on the way to Gobabis. On Thursday 31st May 1923, the two workers set out from Windhoek early in the morning, to look up this person. They cycled on through Klein Windhoek, through 2 rivers each with a foot deep of sand, and somewhere near Avis they took a wrong road, and for a few hours they just rode on; the road became narrower, less distinct, and steeper. The country became mountainous and rough, the sun became hot, and they became tired and thirsty!

They decided to turn back, and while resting, Uncle John tried to take his bearings (no binoculars!), and saw in the distance a farmhouse and windmill! Keeping the windmill in view, they pushed, carried and struggled on downwards, until they came to a high railway bridge, where they found a road, which a mile further on brought to them our house!

Exhausted and sunburnt they knocked on the front door; my sister invited them in, and mother gave them water, tea and later food. My mother, grandparents and we children all listened attentively, as Uncle John spoke of their work, of the Gospel, the Bible, of God and Jesus, and the meetings, where they came from, etc.

They arrived at 3:30 p.m., and after they had spoken for an hour or so, my mother, without being asked just said, "Well, Mr. Bird, I am a widow now with 7 children, but for the Lord and the Gospel's sake, you are welcome to use my home! That was the 31st May 1923, a week after my father was buried.

Uncle John thanked my mother, and said we would have a Gospel meeting there on Sunday 3rd June. This meeting was the very first Gospel meeting ever held in S.W.A.. My Grandfather, Ted Bassingthwaite, was the very first Person to profess in S.W.A., after attending only 6 meetings. After this mission he returned to his farm, the workers visiting him there too, and kept faithful until he died a few years later. In the following year in May my sister and I began to serve the Lord, and then my mother, also an Aunt.

From Windhoek, the workers went to Swakopmund, where Uncle Hermaans and Aunt Gertie Mitton professed. Then they came to Omaruru, where Frank developed sinus trouble and had to return to South Africa. Len Hartshorn came in his place, and at Omaruru, friends of the Mittons, the jailer, his wife and her sister professed, and another very nice family, Mr. and Mrs. Nieman and a daughter professed. The Nels professed at the same time, so before the end of 1923 they had 9 converts in those parts.

Uncle John arranged for my sister and I to attend the convention at Krugersdorp, where a number of us were baptized. We were also allowed to attend Kimberley convention that same year, 1924. At Kimberley station, Uncles Chris Havemann, Hugh MacKay and Aunt Isabel Rossouw met us, and told us that **Adam Hutchinson had just died of smallpox in India. Uncle George Walker** was at that convention too, and I still remember some of the things he said. I can picture him on the platform medium built, pale complexion, large dark deep-set eyes and a strong voice. Uncle John was a wonderful worker; he really cared for us, and introduced us to all the workers and Christians, young and old.

In 1925 Uncle John came back to S.W.A. with **George Brauel**, and the Mitton family came to live in Windhoek. We had our first Sunday a.m. meeting in their home, also in the afternoon at 2:30, and then we walked the 7½ miles back home to Avis.

In 1926 **Eddie Duckitt** came with Uncle John. In 1927 Uncle John came back with **Wallie Havemann** and worked in Keetmanshoop. In April of that year, Wallie left the work and came to Windhoek. Our family left the farm to my uncle Victor, and moved to a big place in Klein Windhoek, called "Wittesheim" and my mother got work as a matron of the boys hostel at Windhoek High School.

It was during this time that the Government was making plans to bring Afrikaner families from Angola to S.W.A. Wallie and I got married on the 30th Dec. 1927. We returned to Natal for a short while, but in June 1928 we returned to the farm at Avis and Wallie started a dairy.

It was then that we heard that the Angola farmers were on their way to S.W.A. In 1929 we were notified by the Government needed our farm as there was a great water shortage in Windhoek. Our ground fell in the center of the proposed dam, and 7 other farmers were also forced out.

In 1929 Wallie's mother passed away, and in 1930 Uncle **Alec Pearce** wrote and asked us to consider taking over his mother's farm, as his 2 elderly sisters were too old to manage anything there.

In 1930 Uncle **George Brauel and Paul Scholtz** went to S.W.A. and were greatly blessed, and my mother wrote to us of the many lovely people who professed in those missions. The Nel family later moved to Gibeon, and later to Rhodesia. The Mittons moved to Port Elizabeth, we moved to Natal, but can't remember where the Nieman family moved to.

Geography: South West Africa bordered Angola (a Portuguese colony before 1975), Botswana (Bechuanaland before 1966), South Africa, and Zambia (Northern Rhodesia before 1964).

South West Africa was a territory under South African administration from 1915 to 1990. **Renamed Namibia** by the United Nations in 1968, it became independent under this name on 21 March 1990. A German colony known as German South West Africa from 1884 to 1915, it was made a League of Nations mandate of the Union of South Africa following Germany's defeat in the First World War. Although the mandate was repealed by the United Nations on 27 October 1966, South African control over the territory continued. The territory was administered directly by the South African government from 1915 to 1978, when the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference laid the groundwork for semi-autonomous rule. During an interim period between 1978 and 1985, South Africa gradually granted South West Africa a limited form of home rule, culminating in the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity.

The Transvaal was one of the provinces of South Africa from 1910 until 1994. The province no longer exists, and its territory now forms all, or part of, the provinces of Gauteng, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Lydenburg, South Africa Mission in 1921

We lived on a farm belonging to my grandfather, Jan Coetser, about four kilometres from Lydenburg, a little country town in the North-Eastern Transvaal. We were 3 families who lived on this farm, and they all belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, my grandfather being the senior elder of the church. At the time, my father was 32 years old and my mother 27 years. They had 4 sons, the eldest was about 6½ years old and the youngest was 1½ years.

My father was working as a warden in the Lydenburg Prison and earned a very small salary and my poor mother found it very hard to make ends meet and supply all the needs of her children. In spite of the little money, my father was a very heavy drinker and quite a share of his salary went to the public bar in the local hotel. My uncle, Flip Coetser and my father were great drinking partners and very regular visitors to the public bar. We were yet too small to realise or to understand the daily cares and responsibilities of my dear mother to put something on the table for her children to eat and drink. Many days it was just a little bit of porridge made out of mealie-meal with a pinch of sugar next to it and a mug of black sugarless coffee.

Almost every evening after work, my father and uncle would take the road to the bar, drinking and enjoying themselves whilst my poor mother and aunt would be left alone with their little children, in agony and fear because there were many black people living around us, and many nights you could hear them drinking beer, and shouting and screaming, and we were terribly afraid of them.

Eventually we went to bed, and after a while we were sleeping and my mother was left alone with her anguish and thoughts of fear. My mother often asked Saartjie, a black woman, to sleep in the kitchen when my father was out drinking. This then was the prevailing condition in the home of Flip Coetser and our home at the time when the Gospel came to Lydenburg by the servants of God, and this state of affairs was a great grief to my dear mother, although she always hid it from her children because of her deep love for her husband and her children.

One night my father was out drinking again and in sorrow and dejection my mother went into her bedroom, fell on her knees and in her despair cried out to God: "God, if there is a better way of living show it to me; if not, I will take my own life!"

One evening my father and Uncle Flip were on their way to the hotel again for their usual drinking; when they passed the old bioscope hall, they heard a man singing. They were attracted by the beautiful singing and went closer to investigate and listen more intently. They met a man at the door of the hall, who introduced himself as **Frank van der Merwe** and invited them to go inside. In the hall was a young man singing Gospel Hymns. They went in and seated themselves in the back row of chairs. After completing the singing, the young man introduced himself to them as **Willie Brown**, and inviting them to a meeting the following night in the same hall. My father did not attend the meeting and did not mention anything to my mother.

Sometime later, my Aunt Hester visited my mother and told her about two men having meetings in the bioscope hall. They have been to a couple and the two men speak so wonderfully out of the Bible and invited mother to come and listen. That evening when my

father came home from work she mentioned to him what my aunt told her, and asked him if they cannot go and listen. When my aunt told mother about the meetings, a voice in her heart said, "This is what you prayed for," and she was very eager to go and listen, and anxiously she waited for my father's response. He answered her that he knew about the meetings, but the two men appeared wanderers preaching a strange religion, and he himself was tired and did not feel like going.

He then went outside to the garden and my mother went to the room where she fell on her knees and cried out to God to open the way for her to go to the meeting. A little later, father came in and asked her if they did go what would happen to the children. My mother answered that she would get Saartjie to stay with us. He answered her that she knew he did not like black people to care for his children, but when he saw the pleadings in her eyes, he agreed and that night they attended their first Gospel Meeting, Flip and his wife, Hester, accompanied by my grandmother.

Uncle Frank van der Merwe and Willie Brown – in his second year in the ministry and his first year in South Africa – were the two workers who took the meeting and were already busy with the mission for almost 3 months. There were a number of people in the meeting when my people entered the hall and seated themselves in one of the back rows of seats. At the close of the meeting, they all were invited to attend further meetings, which my parents did. Frank and Willie occupied a small room they rented in Lydenburg. Later on, the meetings were moved to a private home of Mr. and Mrs. Coetser, quite a number of people attended the meetings.

The minister of the NG Church, Ds Worst, heard about the meetings and that some of the members of his church were attending them, and he was very much upset about it. He announced from his pulpit to his congregation that he will announce the names of all people attending the meetings to the congregation, and if they persist, he will remove their names from the church register and they will cease to be members of the church.

One evening he himself and a few of his elders, uninvited, attended one of the meetings to see for themselves what was going on. It was soon obviously shown in what kind of spirit he was present with in the meeting. The meeting had hardly commenced when he confronted Frank van der Merwe and Willie Brown. He accused Frank that he was a married man with wife and children and that he should go and see their needs. Willie, he called the Scotchman, and said that the two of them were intruding in his field and they were misleading his sheep with false doctrine. This is his field, and he is the shepherd thereof.

Frank answered him that they were sent out by God, and the whole world is their field to preach the Gospel to all people and nations. Worst accused them of living on alms and gifts received from his congregation. One woman jumped to her feet and said that she gave them a dressed chicken. Willie answered Worst, but Frank asked Willie to remain silent because a wolf howls and a sheep is silent. Worst approached Frank in an aggressive manner threatening him, but a big man who had a few drinks warned Worst that if he touched Frank that he would take care of him.

Worst then asked those present in the meeting: "Those of you who are for the Van der Merwe and the Scotchman, Brown stand to your feet" but Frank replied: "No, not those who are for Van der Merwe or Brown, but those who are for God!" Then quite a few people stood to their feet. Worst shouted: "Sit down! I did not ask all of you to stand!" They all sat down, and Worst told them that all persons attending future meetings of these two men, their names will be removed from the church register, and they will cease to be members of the church. My grandmother, Maria Coetser then stood to her feet and addressed Worst as follows: "You can take my church certificate and destroy it and remove my name from the church register because I will never set a foot in your church again." This was a very embarrassing situation to my grandfather, Jan Coetser, who was the senior elder in this church and was greatly respected by everyone in the church. In many cases when the minister was not available, he conducted the church gathering.

Worst wanted to close the meeting with prayer but Frank said it could not be done because the Spirit of God was disturbed. The meeting was adjourned to the future date because the mission was continued and possibly Worst only separated the goats from the sheep. The next morning, Frank gave some money to Hester Coetser to pay the woman for the chicken that she gave to Frank and Willie. The woman felt bad and did not want to take the money, but my aunt left it with her.

Frank tested the meeting on a later date and 8 people decided: Maria Coetser, Flip and Hester Coetser, Jan and Miemie de Beer (my parents), and I think the other three were Aunt Corrie Coetser, Annie Joubert and Aunt Mynie Chapman. (I am however not so certain about the last three people but anyway they did profess during this mission.) A Sunday morning meeting was started in the home of Uncle "Still" Flip and Aunt Corrie Coetser. During this mission 21 people decided but they did not all finish in the course.

One Sunday morning, my mother was ill and could not go to the morning meeting which was about three kilometres from our home, and they had to walk the distance. My father told my mother, he did not feel like going to the meeting, and that he was going to the sermon in his old church. He left home and walked along in the company of my grandmother and Flip and Hester to the point of separation where he would take the road to the church and the others the road to the meeting.

My mother, conscious of the conflict in the heart of my father, anxiously watched the four of them through the window in the bedroom, most probably with a prayer in her heart as they slowly approached the place of separation. "What was my father going to do?" was the question dominating her heart "Was he going to take the road to the church or to the Sunday morning meeting and life." When they reached the crossroads, the four of them stood still and conversed for a while and then they separated – my father took the church road and the other three took the road to the meeting. My father walked a few steps, he stopped and turned back to the point of separation and converse again with the others. After a couple of minutes, he again walked in the direction of the church, and when he had walked a dozen or so steps, he turned back and went with the others to the Sunday morning meeting. He never wavered again but kept true until his death in 1972.

Before the mission ended, the workers baptised 8 people who were desirous to take the step. On a farm about 15 miles from Lydenburg, there lived a couple, Okkie and Kollie van der Merwe who both professed, and it was decided to have the Baptism

ceremony on this farm. One Saturday morning very early, Albert Coetser took all the interested professing people, the two workers, Frank van der Merwe and Willie Brown and the 8 people who desired to be baptised to this farm, Doornkop, where the Baptism ceremony was performed by Frank van der Merwe.

The 8 people were grandmother, Maria Coetser, Jan and Miemmie de Beer, Flip and Hester Coetser. The other three I am not sure about, but they might have been Mesdames Mynie Chapman, Annie Joubert and Corrie Coetser. Some others who professed in this mission were baptised at Convention in Krugersdorp.

In the year 1924, my grandfather sold his farm and bought another farm at Badfontien about 28 miles (45 kilometers) north of Lydenburg where his family and Flip Coetser and family moved to live, about 800 yards apart. The meetings were taken by Flip Coetser in his home. We moved into town and later on we had a Sunday morning meeting in our home.

In 1926 my grandfather, who was then 64 years old, took ill and was in bed at home. One afternoon he sent for his son Flip and asked him: "Flip, where are your workers these days?" Frank van der Merwe and Joe Hogan were busy at Machadodorp, about 20 kilometers from his farm, and Flip told my grandfather this. He then asked Flip if he could contact them and ask them if they could come and see him. Flip contacted them and they came to see him the next morning, on bicycles.

They had a long discussion with him, and my grandfather told them he yielded his life to God and wanted to be baptized. He had watched my grandmother all these years and was convinced that **this Way is the true and only Way to serve God**. They agreed to baptise him. He did not sit through a mission, but they knew him well enough to know that he was serious in his decision. One morning as soon as he was well enough to be baptized, my grandfather, the two workers, my grandmother and Flip and Hester walked down to the pool of water in the "spruit" on his farm where he was baptised by Joe Hogan. Shortly afterwards, my grandfather sold his farm and moved to Lydenburg where he built a house next to our house. He was given a Sunday evening meeting which he was responsible for till his death in 1936.

My grandfather lived for only 10 years after he yielded his life to God, but he left a wonderful testimony and was known for his integrity, faithfulness, wisdom and humility. He was a very soft person with a humble childlike spirit. The older workers, Alec Pearce and others enjoyed his fellowship many evenings listening to his experiences and having godly conversations. He had a deep understanding and a clear vision of the book of Revelations and very often he spoke out of this book in the meetings.

To the people in Lydenburg, it was a great shock that the once famous man left his church and became a follower of this strange religion with no church and no name. One day one of his old friends from the Anglo-Boer War met him in town and asked him for a drink in the hotel. My grandfather declined his invitation and said he had left those things, and he was living for better things.

The man asked my grandfather: "General, (he was a general in the Anglo-Boer War) how is it possible that you left your church to follow after these strangers? You were a man of tradition!" My grandfather answered him: "Koos, tell me, for what will you sell your tradition one day in Eternity? I have met with God and His Way and Truth, and I have peace in my heart." Koos could not reply to this question and turned away to have his drink alone.

One morning my grandfather discovered his old pipe in a place he put it after he decided and said: "Oh, my old enemy have you found me again?" He took the hammer and broke the pipe into pieces and made a deep hole in his garden and buried the old pipe. My grandmother who saw him digging the hole and burying something asked him what he was doing in the garden. Very solemnly he replied: "I had a funeral. I discovered my old enemy and killed and buried it."

One morning he came to his wife and told her: "You know, this morning I saw Satan face to face and he talked to me. I was reading my Bible, and he came to me and asked me what book I was reading. So I told him it was my Bible, and he said to me, "No man, you must put away that book, it is not good to read that book because you have been serving me for such a long time and that book is not mine."

I answered him, "Yes I served you for 60 years but I am now finished with you. Leave me alone now and depart from me so that I can serve God for the rest of my life because I now have rest and peace in my heart." He then left me alone and went his way. People always describe him as a person with a fork in his hand with a long crooked tail and ugly looking too, but they are wrong. He is a good looking person neatly dressed in a well fitting suit.

In 1936 my grandfather passed away peacefully with rest in his heart a lowly and meek man. He was not that famous and important person as the former days anymore—not the famous general of war or member of parliament for Lydenburg, but he died as a true follower of the Lowly Man of Sorrows who gave His Life for him also on the cross. His last wish was to have a quiet and simple funeral with no flowers, and he encouraged his wife and children, also serving God, to keep faithful and to continue in the way they have chosen to the end. His favourite Hymn was 41 in the Afrikaans "Oh, how perplexing life would be if Christ had never lived for me."

Pioneer of Africa

By and About Wilson Reid
A Few Biographical Notes

Pastoral Letter by Reid re: Ed Cooney

[View Photo of Wilson Reid](#)

A Few Biographical Notes .

Introduction: As years pass and the number of those who knew Wilson well becomes steadily smaller, I feel the desire to put on record some little account of the life of this great pioneer: For this purpose I am drawing chiefly on what he related during the three times when I was his companion for some months in West Africa. I have included a few typical anecdotes, while seeking to avoid anything controversial or strictly personal.

Wilson Reid was born in 1881 and grew up at Carnteel ([County Tyrone, Ireland](#)). He often spoke well of the schoolmaster, who gave him a good grounding in the 3 R's – reading, writing and arithmetic. This no doubt contributed to his interest in languages, especially in grammar. He attended the Church of Ireland (Anglican) and was duly confirmed, but did not feel any the better for this. He became a regular pipe smoker. In the autumn of **1903, Adam Hutchison** had a mission in the school. Wilson and others of his family attended. **Wilson often repeated how Adam gave his testimony, telling of when he decided to serve God 10 years previously.** ([TTT Editor's Note: This would have been in 1893, before Adam could have professed through Wm. Irvine or one of his workers](#)). He was on his way home from work one day when his sister met him and told him to hurry home if he wanted to see his other sister alive. He arrived shortly before she passed away. Afterwards he went away down the garden and knelt among the trees and yielded his life to God. Wilson felt what a happy man he must be to be already serving God for 10 years.

After a number of meetings, Adam asked any to stand up who wished to yield their life to God, and Wilson's sister, **Bella**, was one who then stood up. Some nights later another opportunity was given and this time Wilson himself stood up. Shortly afterwards, Adam had to go away for a while, but said there would be a meeting each Sunday evening. When Wilson asked him who would lead the meeting, he said, "You can do so!" The first meeting after Adam left, a number were present and Wilson guided the meeting. Afterwards, someone asked him how he did it. Wilson replied, *"I don't know, except that I've been praying all the week."*

Wilson continued to go to church on Sunday mornings until Easter, when he felt he had had enough of it. Afterwards, a Sunday morning meeting was started and then they were also invited to convention. Wilson spoke of the earnest spirit prevailing there, and how, on taking a walk in the countryside one would see a person here and there praying behind a tree. Subsequently, Wilson went in the Work and had a year or two in England in Hants, and Wilts. ([abbreviations for the counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire in the south part of England](#).)

Towards the end of 1905, a number of workers set sail from these shores for South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. **Wilson was among the group of 4 brothers and 4 sisters who were to work in South Africa.** He landed at Cape Town and stayed at first in a Salvation Army Hostel. His companion soon moved on and Wilson was left alone. His resources being limited, his diet consisted mainly of porridge, and to economize, he went without sugar on it, and later without salt.

Wilson was having open-air meeting in a suburb of Cape Town called Claremont, a Mr. Muller, on his way home from work, passed by and heard Wilson preaching. He did not stay to listen then, but on reaching home, Mr. Muller said to his wife, "The Truth is on the street to-night." Next day, Wilson was visiting and the last house he came to was the Mullers'. Mr. Muller recognized him and invited him in. Within about 3 weeks, **Mrs. Muller yielded to God and her husband a little while later.** A young man, **Jonny Abrahams**, stood with Wilson. His daughter, Mary, is in the Work. An old lady used to stand at her gate listening. When Wilson moved on, he asked the sister workers to continue the mission and the old lady decided. (I obtained this information when in South Africa and visiting Mrs. Muller's daughter, **Nunnie**, and her husband).

In 1906, another batch of workers arrived among whom was Fred Alder, who then joined Wilson. They moved up to Kimberley to the area of the diamond fields and found lodgings with one of the diggers. To pay their board and lodgings, they used to dig each morning until midday. In the afternoons they would go visiting and have meetings in the evenings. One of the **FIRST** to become interested was **George Absalom**. For a while he resisted the Gospel. He was also digging for diamonds and Wilson would talk with him while at work, but Wilson would take care to keep above him on the slope, lest George, irritated by the Truth, would push him down the hill. George eventually surrendered and vowed to serve God, becoming one of the **FIRST** South Africans to go into the Work. In those days Wilson only had one pair of trousers, which he used to wash out at 4 a.m. on Sunday mornings and hang up with his pickhead tied in them. Within a couple of hours they were dry and pressed, and some wondered where he got his new trousers from!

Later, Wilson was one of the first workers to go to **Rhodesia** ([present-day Zimbabwe](#)). The evening before he left, he gave **Martha Skeritt** and her companion his last shilling, but the next day he received a letter from Willie Hughes from New Zealand enclosing 100 pounds.

There was a period in Wilson's experience when he was not so well, being unable to sleep. One evening as he went to bed, he heard it begin to rain on the iron roof of the house and he thought he would never sleep with that noise, but the steady patter of the rain

actually lulled him into a sound sleep, which helped his recovery. When he left for South Africa, he never expected to see Ireland again, but in fact, he was invited home for a visit after some years, and thus saw his parents again, who had meanwhile decided to serve God.

When Ben Boles lost his leg in an accident in 1916, Wilson was asked to take the oversight in **Scotland**, but he was not too happy to be away from his beloved Africa. **In the early 1920's, he went to Holland and studied Dutch, but did not stay long, as he could leave things in the hands of Frank van de Merwe and Willie Smeenk.**

While in South Africa, Wilson said he felt as though he was staying in one room of a large house, without exploring the other rooms. **So in 1931, he and Paul Scholtz visited Tanganyika** (*present-day Tanzania*) and **Kenya**, thus opening the way for the Work to start in these countries. He then proceeded to **Egypt**, where, with **Willie Brown and Eddie Lowe**, he began studying French, which was widely known there at that time. Subsequently, **Fred Quick came to Egypt and started the Work among the Greeks there.** Wilson moved on to **Lebanon**, where he left Willie and Eddie.

Sometime later Wilson was asked to take the **oversight of the Work in Ireland**, but agreed to this only on the condition that he share it with some other. In fact, Wilson was not in favour of the principle of one worker alone being responsible for a country. He said he would like to live in such a way that when he came to die, he would not be missed. I believe he meant that he would delegate sufficient authority that there would be someone fitted and experienced enough to take his place.

In 1946, Wilson was the first elder worker to visit **West Africa, where the Work had begun in 1931 in Sierra Leone**, and he found the situation there unsatisfactory. From that time Wilson took an interest in **West Africa**, and began to get other workers out there. I heard Wilson in 1938, but it was in 1951 that I first met him, as it had been arranged for me to go to **Nigeria**. I asked Wilson whether I would need to take anything particularly with me, and he replied, "Just a shirt and a pair of trousers!" Subsequently, the Work was extended to **Gold Coast(now Ghana) in 1953; East Nigeria in 1954 and later to British Cameroons** (*now parts of Cameroon and Nigeria*) **in 1958**, where Wilson was one of the first to make a start.

In the early 1950's Wilson became interested in **Madagascar** and tried to get workers in there, but visas were refused. The Workers he had destined for there were then diverted to West Africa. Wilson also visited **The Gambia**, but the way did not open there. **Wilson was the first worker to go to Ethiopia**, where he stayed with a Canadian family and held some meetings in their home. This start was short-lived, as the authorities later cancelled the Canadian's contract. Nevertheless, one man professed there, and later emigrated to America. Wilson was not a fluent linguist, but studied languages in order to encourage younger workers to do so, as they would be able to put them to good use. He sometimes said that everyone had the right to hear the Gospel in his own language, but, faced with the multiplicity of languages in Africa, he seemed to come to the conclusion that this would only be possible in the Millennium.

I last saw Wilson at a convention in Kenya in 1966. He was very fond of that country and even said it was where he would like to die. In 1968, Wilson attended convention at Lusaka (**Zambia**) and Salisbury (**S. Rhodesia**) (*now Harare, capital of Zimbabwe*) but was not feeling so well. He went on to attend convention at Cape Town (2), Pretoria and Umtwalumi,* but was taken ill and stayed at Chris Aller's home, tended by an old friend of his, Mrs. Hope Middleton. As he got worse, he was taken to hospital in Durban. He had an operation, which was not successful and he passed away soon afterwards** in December. The inscription on his grave reads, "A Pioneer of God."

Author unknown

P.S. *where he spoke on the 65th anniversary of the night he decided

**during the last afternoon of Durban convention

Letter 5 – History of South Africa

A brief account by Peter Rousseau concerning our two brothers:

Stephanus (Stephen) Koekemoer and Cornelius Appelgryn, who ended their days in Westfort Leper Asylum, near Pretoria , South Africa .

It was in the early 1930s that a brother worker first observed unmistakable signs of the disease in Stephanus. This worker, who had gained considerable knowledge of leprosy during his ministry in the Far East, where the malady is perhaps more prevalent than in other parts of the world, called Fanie (the name which this brother was more commonly known amongst the friends) aside, and suggested that in fairness to the rest of his own family he subjected himself to a medical examination. The result proved positive and Fanie became the first brother to be admitted to the Asylum. Willie Brown and a good many friends paid frequent visits to Westfort and had regular meetings with Fanie. On more than one occasion, Willie remarked, "I went there in an endeavour to encourage our brother, but it was rather he who encouraged me," and that was true indeed. Never once was there one word of complaining.

A whole year went by. One Sunday morning another inmate, Cornelius Appelgryn, on his way back from his church, stopped at the shelter where the few friends were having a meeting with Fanie. This man confessed having more than once taken note of what he

saw in Fanie, Willie, and others, and wanted to know more. The outcome was a brother added and sweet fellowship for Fanie. Almost incredibly, the two of them suffered reproach and untold contempt, for Christ's sake, at the hands of their fellow-lepers.

During the years that followed, through the faithful example of Fanie and Cornelius, no fewer than seven were added. These all died in the Faith. Meanwhile, the disease had begun to take its toll. First of all, total blindness, then loss of limbs; hands, feet and legs were being eaten away.

It is worth mentioning here that approximately the year 1948 a potent tablet was imported from America which had, in a number of cases, proved effective. The medical authorities were warned that it was a matter of "kill or cure," and it was decided to put it to the test at Westfort.

Cornelius being one of five, chosen for the purpose. The other four died, but it seemed as though our brother was improving. When the prospect of at least a temporary discharge was placed before him, he refused. He said he would rather remain a physical leper, and retain the peace of God in his heart, than risk losing everything.

I should like to mention that letters were regularly exchanged between us, and our brother often used rather strong language for the benefit (as I thought) of the person who did the writing for him. On one memorable occasion, I ventured to suggest, "You certainly rubbed it into your scribe the other day." The answer I got was, "That wasn't intended for him at all – I meant it for you."

On my first visit to Westfort, in January, 1943, Cornelius' parting words were, "Hold fast," and these were the same words he used when I visited for the last time, one Saturday in April 1950. That day he felt his end was near, and I myself realized he couldn't last much longer. As we were saying, "Good-bye," he added, "We won't be seeing each other again in this life, but if we keep true we will be together on the other side. Hold fast!" He went to his reward early the following Thursday morning.

Cornelius, in giving his testimony, used to tell of the beautiful white horse he rode – "and if I saw a poor man walking on the left hand side of the road, I would turn my head to the right." Then he would exclaim, "God had to break me down to build me up." One day, when he was riding along a country road, he heard a man singing hymns and when he saw this man, walking behind a pair of oxen holding a plow, he stopped his horse and waited for him and said, "Friend, what makes you so happy when you have to work so hard?" The man told him he had found God's Way on the earth and was walking in it, but he was too proud at that time to show more interest.

The day Fanie was buried, after the service, Pieter and I saw Cornelius separate himself and slowly make his own way back to his room. We followed him. He was sitting alone, tears streaming from his blinded eyes, and he said, "The love Fanie and I had for one another was greater than that of a man for a woman." I believe Cornelius' wife, Bettie, often gave out the hymn, "How, strange it seem and wondrous what Thou hast done for me." And in-deed, it was strange and wondrous!

If anyone reading this account can add to it or make corrections, I should be glad to receive same. One feels this is part of South Africa's heritage and we should tell these things to our children and children's children, to the third and fourth generation.

Mr. and Mrs. Pieter van Vuuren, 360 Highland Road, KENSINGTON, Johannesburg. 2094. Rep. of South Africa.

(Both have passed on now.)

*Translated from Afrikaans

Letter 6 – History of South Africa

Burgersdorp, Cape Province, South Africa – November 7, 1977

Dear Pieter and Ivy,

Just a little letter from me, seeing Joey asked me to write to you of what I can still remember of the mission at Koppies, 43 years ago.

Arie Blomerus and myself started the mission in 1934. From the beginning of the mission, the Appelgryn family were very friendly and attended the meetings regularly. Mrs. Appelgryn and her daughter made a start, also the son, but he didn't go on. Mrs. Appelgryn's brother, Jan Badenhorst and his wife also professed and went on faithfully. She passed away a few years ago and he went to his eternal home this year. Their youngest daughter, Margrietha, married to John du Toit, also serve God.

Amongst those who attended the meetings, was a certain Mr. Swanepoel, an old elder in the Dutch Reform Church, whom the minister requested to attend the meetings to find out where we were wrong. He professed and said in his testimony that he did not attend many meetings before he discovered where he was wrong and that he was glad that he could now see what is right. His wife was a very hard woman and sometimes tore his clothes from his body, so he could not go to meetings. Through it all, he remained faithful to the end. Also, a Mrs. Els made her choice and when the minister visited her, she gave him her testimony. He then said to her, "Sister, you are the type of person we need in the church, to be an example and to let your light shine." She then replied, "Sir, a lamp cannot give light very long unless it is regularly filled with oil. I'm convinced that where God showed me the light, there He will also supply the oil." She went on faithfully and died two years later in His Way.

There was also a Mrs. Lewis who gave her life to God. She suffered from her heart, and died just three months later. Her husband had been transferred to another village. She wrote us a letter in which she mentioned how glad and thankful she was that God had opened her eyes and set her free, and the joy she now experienced. Little did we know that as we read her letter, she had already passed away. I posted her letter back to her husband but he was not very interested in the living message.

Mr. and Mrs. Kleinhans made a start and went on for many years.

In May 1934, Arie went to Java and Japie Danielson came to join me. He remained with me until the end of that year. We had up to five meetings a week and every night a full house. Mr. and Mrs. van Sul also made a start.

Later, we held meetings at Peter and Alice Smith's place, seven miles out of Koppies. They also professed and went on faithfully. There are three settlements around Koppies and we were privileged to invite most of the people to the meetings. Some attended and then turned away from the threshold of His Kingdom.

The fellowship and brotherly love of my two companions during that mission at Koppies as we laboured together was lovely – something supernatural. I shall surely remember it through all eternity.

We had problems with the "long bearded" apostolics and the "holy rollers" who also held meetings there at that time. The people called us the "bicycle sect" (because we used bicycles).

The Dutch Reform minister was a rugby player. One day when he ran after the ball at the edge of the field, one of his elders said to him, "You run after the ball here, while the bicycle sect goes off with your congregation."

Mr. Appelgryn became a leper as a result of standing for long periods in icy water. He was employed cleaning out irrigation canals, by shoveling out the excessive mud. They paid by the square yard and he overdid it, working such long hours. The doctors believed that the blood congealed in his veins, causing him to become a leper. So, some people have to pay a very high price to bring salvation to others.

Well, Ivy and Pieter, if I had to write about everything that happened, it would perhaps fill a book. I've just written a little and I hope it will help you. Remember, 43 years is a long time and a person forgets. I am now 74 years old, so life is also drawing to an end.

Greetings to you both,

Your brother in His Way,

Johannes Hoffman

**A letter from the worker who had the mission at Koppies, Orange Free State when Cornelius Appelgryn's wife and children professed.
