

January 22, 2004

Dear friends:

Last week the girls started school, we started with a new Setswana tutor and we began to shadow Brian and Teresa Born (AIMM colleagues). All of these things are good as we are ready to step into our next phase of life here in Botswana. We thank you for your emails, letters and prayers during the past number of months as we have made this transition to a new country and to new ministry positions. Settling into a new culture is a challenge and we are very grateful for all of the support you have given to us.

We have been sending a group email out to a list that includes friends, relatives and our supporting conference and congregations. Since you have received this email you are obviously on our list! If you know of others who would like to receive these mailings either by mail or email please let us know and we will include them on our list. Eventually we will design a newsletter that you will be able to anticipate receiving on a regular basis. Meanwhile we decided it might be important to send a message clarifying who we are with, how we are supported and what the ministry to AIC churches in Botswana has been. Some of you will already be aware of this information. However, we thought it might be helpful to all to put it in a letter.

We have been sent out as mission workers with Mennonite Church Canada Witness (www.mennonitechurch.ca) the mission arm of Mennonite Church Canada. (The congregations we pastored are part of Mennonite Church Canada). Mennonite Church Canada works with a variety of partnerships throughout the world. In Africa they have partnered with Africa Inter Mennonite Missions (AIMM). In Botswana, AIMM works together with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) through Mennonite Ministries Botswana (MMBots). Thus in Botswana, AIMM (a mission board) and MCC (a development agency) work both together and in parallel.

AIMM mission workers in Botswana have primarily worked with African Initiated Churches (AIC). Historically that has focussed around Bible teaching and leadership development. While the vast majority of Christians in Botswana are connected to an AIC, most congregations and most denominations are poor and do not have the resources to provide training to their leaders. Mennonites have been involved in setting up Bible study programmes in a variety of communities that have helped provide leaders in these churches with a foundation. Courses have evolved over the years, and other ministries have grown out of this ministry. Recently a counselling centre was established in Gaborone. This centre primarily works with people affected by HIV/AIDS. A youth centre has been established in Francistown with an emphasis on helping youth live an alternative lifestyle than the one that often ends in HIV/AIDS infection. There has also been an increasing interest to help in the area of family life and strengthening the institution of marriage. This is also seen as critical in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Over the past many years there have been 3 couples working here through AIMM. We have replaced one of those couples. Last week, Tim and Laura Bertsche left for America, and will not be replaced. In March Bryan and Teresa Born will leave, and will not be replaced for the foreseeable future. That means that there have been and will be changes to the ministry here in Botswana. We do not know yet where our gifts and skills and God's call will lead us. We will be involved in some way with the Bible teaching programme. We have already been visiting people with Bryan, and been into several congregations that he has had contact with. It is obvious that Mennonite involvement goes back a long time, and we are the recipients of a great deal of positive feelings towards that work.

In the midst of all of this there are several ways that you can support us.

1. **Pray for us.** Our experience in Canada, in Egypt, and already here tells us that prayer makes a difference. Some people regularly pray for us and for this we are grateful. However we are aware that this is not everyone's gift. But keep in mind that short one or two sentence prayers are also heard!

Currently we ask for 3 areas of prayer. First pray for Maeyken and Adriaena as they adapt to a new school and a new system. Secondly pray for us as we continue to learn Setswana. Third, pray for us

as we listen to the needs and hopes of the church here and discern God's call for us here.

- 2 **Keep connected with us.** We have really appreciated the emails that we have received. We now have an account here in Botswana, _____) and would be glad to receive letters and pictures that tell of what you are doing, and what you are experiencing. (Just remember that while we have a good internet connection, it is a dial up connection.) The postal service is also quite reliable. (Box 33, Gabarone, Botswana, Africa) All of us (but especially the girls) have appreciated the cards and parcels that we have received. There is also a web site set up by a friend that has some pictures we have taken (_____). We will enlarge this in the near future.
3. **Support us financially.** We are here because individuals and congregations across Canada support the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada of which we are a part. If you wish to support our specific ministry you may do this by sending money directly to Mennonite Church Canada Witness. (600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4). If you choose to do this please make sure that you clearly identify the donation to our ministry. Otherwise your donation will go into the general budget and only a portion will go towards our support. People who attend a Mennonite Congregation affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada may make these donations through your treasurer or your local conference. Please make sure that your treasurer is aware that the donation must be earmarked to our ministry. We welcome and appreciate any financial support that you can give. (Please note that all donations will receive a tax receipt.) For our friends from the United States, please note that donations may be sent to Mennonite Mission Network who also support our ministry (500 S Main, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370).

Please be assured that even as you are supporting us in a variety of ways we want to offer that same support to you. All of us are called to make a difference in the corner of the world that God has given to us. May you feel God's incredible blessings and love as you live out that which you have been called to do.

Blessings,

Susan Allison-Jones & Glyn Jones
Box 33, Gabarone,
Botswana



Witness

We welcome your contributions for our support and invite you to send these to:

Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS
600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4