

# From our street to yours ... Glyn, Susan, Maeyken, Adriaena

October 2004

#6

## Partnership Africa

A month ago I sat around a table in a village called Orodara in Burkina Faso. Sitting around this table were Mennonite mission colleagues from Burkina Faso and southern Africa, staff from North American Mennonite mission agencies and representatives from Mennonite denominations in the Congo and Burkina Faso. This was the first meeting of the newly formed African Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) International Central Council. AIMM's restructuring process had finally moved from the board rooms in North America to African soil! But as we went through the organizational part of the agenda I kept wondering what would I, a mission worker working with African Initiated Churches (AIC), find in common with those who are not only working with Mennonites but who are Mennonites! AIMM has had a rich history in both Burkina Faso and Congo spreading the news of the gospel and through that establishing Mennonite churches. AIMM's history in Southern Africa has had a much different focus with a desire to strengthen the faith of our AIC sisters and brothers.

The second day was an "aha day" for me. All of the regions took turns talking about their history and their work. Brian Dyck (from South Africa) and I shared about our work with the AIC's. At the end of our presentation the question was asked, "Why work with AIC's? Why not start our own churches?" Church planting is a good thing. And as I got to know the representatives from the Congo and Burkina Faso I found myself wondering what it would be like to nurture Mennonite Christians in this context. But I also believe in the importance of the larger community of believers and that God also calls us to strengthen the faith of believers no matter what church they call home. Unknown to me there had just been a situation in Burkina where one of the Mennonite pastors had struggled with this ecumenical sharing of the gospel. Through our sharing he was encouraged to see that Mennonites can and should reach out beyond the Mennonite world.

When Steve Wiebe-Johnson (MC USA), Peter Rempel (MC Canada) and Dave Dyck (AIMM) were here in Botswana for our first Partnership Council meetings we brought together some of our enthusiastic leaders for an evening of conversation. Once again, we heard affirmation for our Bible Study Programme. People's lives have been changed because they have encountered the risen Christ through these studies. But they are also committed to passing on what they have learned to others. They have discovered something exciting and they want others to discover it too! They talked about some of their issues as they work in churches that are not fully recognized by the government and whose members for the most part are from the poorer social economical group. These are people who are taking the gospel seriously. These are also people who have been influenced by our Mennonite theology of compassion, justice and community.

So the commonality around that table in Burkina Faso was our common desire to bring people to Christ and help them to live lives which are true to our understanding of God's teachings in the Bible. While we may not be working with Mennonite Christians our Anabaptist theology keeps sneaking in, in amazing and wonderful ways! What we do here in Botswana is a very Mennonite way of spreading the gospel and I am honoured that God has chosen us for this particular ministry.

Susan



*Members of the International Central Council of AIMM from Burkina Faso and Congo.*

## Partners

Every mission worker or mission worker family sent by Mennonite Church Canada Witness is connected to people and congregations in North America called partners. It is impossible to do the work that God has called us to do, and the church has sent us to do without the support of people and congregations who have sent us.

Congregational Partners are congregations who take an interest in our work, and in our lives. Congregational partners are congregations that make our letters available, who encourage their members to check out our web site, to pray intelligently for us and our work and who support us through Mennonite Church US Network, and let us know of their interest through mail or email. If you would like to check out the possibilities of your congregation being a partner with us in this ministry with African Initiated Churches in Botswana let us know and we will help make the connections or contact Ingrid Miller at the MC Canada offices.

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*Jackson (in white), a friend and helper, standing on his street in Old Naledi, part of Gaborone.*

## Our street and your street ...

The Mennonite Church has been talking about mission in a new way recently. There has been an attempt to involve congregations in all sorts of new mission initiatives, both locally and internationally. The way this has been described is that mission is “*across the street and around the world.*” This makes sense when you live in one place, lets say in Canada, and you know the churches that are working with this logo are all reasonably close. However, when we moved here, it struck me that our street is around the world for most of the people reading this newsletter. And your street which you think of as local is around the world from us. It is interesting when you think about it that there are Christians, even Mennonites, spread all around the world, so for someone (you) your street is local, and for someone else your street is around the world. An interesting idea when you think of missions. Somehow we are all in this together, supporting one another as we reach out locally, and as we support others who are reaching out a long ways from where we live. We have friends in America who are active in an inner city church involving people who are just getting by, and we have friends in Canada who are involved in planting a church among people who have little or no experience of church, nor of God. As we connect with them we are connecting with the around the world part , and well ... our work is the across the street part, at least from our perspective. Anyways, that is where the title for this newsletter comes from.

Glyn



*Our street In Gaborone, outside our house, around the world from you.*

## In the Future

**Oct. 29-Nov 2** Glyn will travel to Francistown to connect with the Bible teaching work there.

**Nov. 6** Susan will travel to Moshupa for the first Bible Class in this village.

**Nov. 13-16** Susan or Glyn will travel to Selebi-Phikwe to connect with the Bible teaching work there.

**Nov. 27** MMBots Garage Sale to begin the process of selling the MCC property.

**Every Week** there are Bible classes in the following places. Please pray for the leaders and the participants.

**Monday:** Classes in Francistown, Selebi-Phikwe, Old Naledi, Bontleng and Broadhurst in Gaborone,

**Tuesday:** Class in Old Naledi in Gaborone

**Wednesday:** Class at the Spiritual Healing church in Gaborone

**Saturday:** Classes in Mogoditshane and Kumakwane

## From our family...

As Susan wrote above, she was gone for 9 days to Burkina Faso. During that time things were different around the house. The girls complained that they got too much meat when Daddy cooked. But what they do not realize is that they got to school and got picked up on time, and their schedules were followed! Some days this is not a casual thing! On Wednesdays, the worst day logistically, they are in school all morning. Maeyken stays at school for choir over lunch, and then attends afternoon activities at the school. Adriaena has a standard (grade) two swim and then is picked up for lunch followed by a Piano lesson, then back to school for afternoon activities. Maeyken has to be picked up in the mid afternoon and taken to piano, and returned to school for a swim team practice. Adriaena is then ready to be picked up but we waited together at the school for Maeyken. Maeyken is done at 5:15, I have a class to be at that starts at 5:30. And the girls complained that they only got meat and potatoes that night. (When in reality Deanna, an MCC friend came and cooked and made salad!)

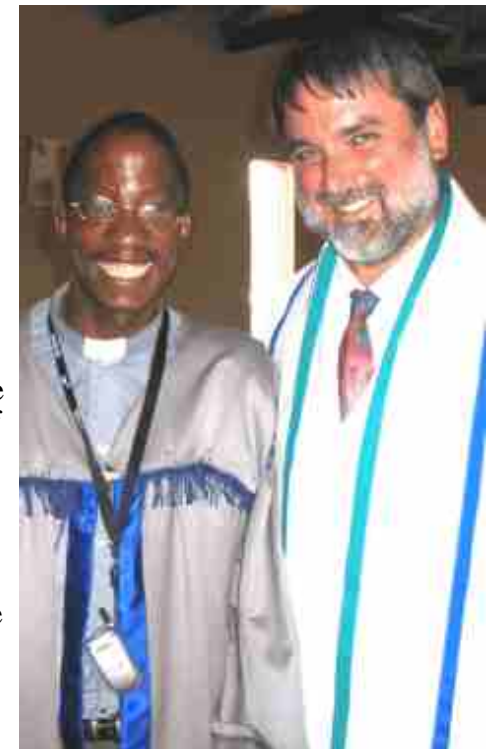
(PS from Susan It always feels nice to know you are missed! Just in case you think our lives are crazy no other day is like Wednesday. Most days it's just one additional pick up from school. We are forever grateful that we live close to the school and the piano teacher!)



*Drumming accompanying singing.*

## Answers to Prayer<sub>s</sub>

Yesterday, Glyn and I visited the Abanaeza Association Church in Moshupa. (About 60 kilometers from Gaborone.) The Mennonites have had a long term relationship with the Bishop and others from this church. Two of the pastors are graduates of the Bible School programme. Years ago these pastors made a promise to the “BoMennonites” that they would start a class in Moshupa. Yesterday the worship service focused on the importance of studying God’s word. After the worship service the congregation made a decision that the class will begin on Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>! There was a lot of enthusiasm to begin this class but we will only know if people are serious about studying if they show up for the class!



*Moruti Englishman and Glyn at the Abanaeza Association Church*

## Contact us

### Mail us at:

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

### Phone us at:

267-390-5554  
(just remember that we are 7 or  
8 hours earlier than Ontario  
time)

### Email us at:

Note, we have a new permanent  
email address. This address we  
can use here and also while on  
home assignment. Please  
change your address books.

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### Our web site:

which includes pictures and  
previous newsletters:  
<http://www.thegatheringsite.ca/susanglyn/>  
This is the same site, but in a  
new location. Please change  
any book marks that you may  
have in your browser to point to  
this new location.



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

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

## Please Pray for...

**AIC Bible teaching ministry.** Thank God for wonderful people that are dedicated to teaching classes in a variety of locations. Pray for us as we discern ways that we can be most helpful in nurturing these teachers. Pray for the teachers, none of whom receive anything financial for their efforts, as many of them explore ways to reach more people with the classes often involving even more time on their behalf.

**A New class** is being tested out in the village of Lerala, about 4 hours north of Gaborone. Rra Gaborone, the teacher of the Bontleng class in Gaborone wants to try a class in his home village. A local pastor will lead it with help from Rra Gaborone. This is an experiment. Pray that we can find a way to make classes at a distance work.

**Moshupa Class.** Pray for this new class in the village of Moshupa. Pray that the people will follow through on their desire to study the Bible and that people from other AIC congregations in the village will join them. Pray also for the leaders of this class, Rra Englishman and Rra Monaka.

**African Inter-Mennonite Mission** (AIMM) has changed. While we are sent by Mennonite Church Canada Witness, we are sent through African Inter-Mennonite Mission. Susan has just returned from the first annual International Central Council of AIMM in Burkina Faso (West Africa). There is a genuine attempt in the restructuring to involve Africans more in the planning and direction setting of AIMM, and also to allow for a great involvement of North American churches. Pray for wisdom and insight among the various leaders while they work out a new relationship between mission workers, mission churches and sending churches.

**Planning.** We had productive planning days looking at what we are doing in Botswana. Later in September we had a day of planning with Mennonite Ministries Botswana, that includes our Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) colleagues. These sessions also were helpful and positive. Please pray with us as we try to intelligently put these various plans into practice.

**Mennonite Ministries Botswana** (MMBots) Continue to pray for all of us during this year of change. Pray for our partners who are struggling with understanding why MCC is leaving Botswana. Pray for the AIC's who we work with who are wondering why "the Mennonites" are pulling back at a time when their country is suffering so much because of economic disparities and the HIV-AIDS crisis. Pray for MCC workers (Nathan, Deanna, David and Sandra) as they work at closure of their own assignments. Pray for all of us as we work at sorting through material possessions and selling three households of furniture and other items. July 2005 is still 9 months away but we are all aware of how quickly the time will go.