

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

November 2004

#7

## Some observations ...

- ▶ Several weeks ago I was leading a class without a Motswana teacher. Fortunately the class had members who could speak English well. We were looking at a New Testament story and I wanted the class to have a sense of what life in Palestine would have been like. I was about to describe a village when I realized that while parts of Botswana are very urbanized and modern, this is a relatively new phenomenon. In some ways it is like a veneer on Setswana society. So I said that the village in the story was similar to ones in Botswana without the cars and cell phones. The students got the parallel and identified a few other things that would have to change. But the list was not long and it did not really change much of life here. At about that time a child entered the church and lit the paraffin (kerosene) lantern. The plot had no power, and so at sundown it gets dark. Just after we had finished talking there was a moment of silence before we moved on and in that silence my comments were reinforced with the sounds of a chicken outside the church.
- ▶ A while ago I was speaking in a church in Moshupa. (A town about an hour south of Gaborone.) I was using the image of a shepherd as someone a Christian could emulate. This was a village and the people knew about shepherds. I asked what a shepherd did when they quite work? These folks knew that a shepherd never really quits but is always looking out for the animals. This was the message I was trying to communicate about Christians. We are never done. We are not Christians for 1 to 5 hours on Sunday. (Depending on how long your worship service is!) We are Christians all day long, all week long, all the time. As I was speaking of shepherds, a cow walked within a couple of metres of the door of the church, stopped, and looked into the church. Another reminder of the culture in which we are living.
- ▶ In preparation for our North American Assignment this August and September, Mennonite Church Canada sent information about what we need to do. (See the sidebar on the next page). We were given a form to complete that indicates what we are prepared to do, from worship to children's groups to youth programmes etc. Part of the form asked about worship and wanted us to indicate the scripture passages and sermon titles. In Botswana as I approach a congregation, I often see the moruti (pastor) sitting outside looking over his Bible to choose the passage, or a huddle of church leaders choosing the passage. In some churches it is not until we are well into the worship time that we find out what scripture is to be used that day. Sometimes this feels like it is a rather fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants approach to planning, but more often it feels more like trusting in God's spirit to provide the scripture and the content to go with it. I heard of one missionary who prepared a written sermon just in case he blanked out. He used it a couple of times but it was seen as a lack of faith that he needed it at all. There is a strong belief in AIC churches that God will provide through the people present what is needed for worship that day; the text, the song selection, perhaps a guest speaker, always a message and all the other parts of worship too.

Glyn



*Worship in Moshupa, instruments and singing*

## North American Assignment

We have been given a North American Assignment for 2 months in 2005 (August and September).

A significant part of a North American Assignment is spending time in congregations. This could be on Sunday participating in worship services or Christian education classes. We would also be available at other times during the week for Bible studies, youth group meetings, women's meetings, mission meetings etc. We want to connect with the churches that are supporting us. We are looking forward to this opportunity to share with you in person the exciting things that God is doing here in Botswana.

If your congregation is interested in having us visit, contact Kathy Fast at Mennonite Church Canada. Kathy will be arranging the details of our time in North America.

---

## Listening to the Spirit

In this newsletter Glyn reflects on the difference between worship planning here and what we experienced as pastors in Canada. Before we came I remember being told about this spirit led way of preaching. In my laughter at the concept of preaching a sermon on the spot I also remember thinking "not I"! What to my amazement over a year later I am actually enjoying this type of preaching. Preaching on the spot forces me to rely on God to send me the words or an image that works for the given passage. It also allows me to see how the spirit is moving to bring everything together. It is also encouraging me to be more forthright in what I say.

At the worship service in Mosupa I also preached. As I was thinking about what I wanted to say my thoughts went to Psalm One. We were there because we wanted to encourage this congregation to begin a Bible Class in their village. What better passage to use to encourage people to study God's word. As I began to talk about this passage the translator looked at me and said "This is what the Bishop was just talking about!" Because my Setswana is limited and things are not translated we don't always know what is being said before us. The Bishop had given a long speech but his Setswana was so fast and the scripture was not read so I had no idea what he had said. I do not believe that it was a coincidence that the Bishop and I choose the same passage. I believe that the Spirit was working in both of us to bring the message that God wanted the people to hear that morning.

In the same service there were at least 20 young people sitting to the left of the pulpit. As I was talking about studying the Bible I felt a strong need to say something to the young people. Often times the youth see the Bible studies as something for the adults only. So I turned to the young people and encouraged them to also study the Bible to help them be strong in the faith to resist the many temptations that are around them. I believe that it was the Spirit who guided me to say these words to those youth.



*Susan speaking to the Bishop of the church in Moshupa*

Now those of you who spend hours preparing sermons or who want to hear solid thought through sermons on a Sunday morning are no doubt forming an argument against this type of preparation. My purpose in writing this to you is not to say that one method is better than another. It is to say, however, that the Spirit moves in both situations.

I am learning much from our brothers and sisters in the African Independent Churches and my faith is being stretched and strengthened. Ke itumetse. (I am thankful).

Susan

## In the Future

**Dec. 3** last day of classes and the end of the school year for Adriaena and Maeyken.

**Dec. 3-5** Glyn will go to Francistown to connect with the Bible programme and the Bopaganang Basha youth centre.

**Dec. 4** National ICMB (Inter Church Ministries Botswana, the administrators of the Bible teaching programme) meeting in Francistown.

**Dec. 13-17** MM Bots annual retreat in South Africa.

**Dec. 18-28** Vacation in South Africa with friends and colleagues from South Africa.

**Jan. 17** New school year begins for our girls.

Every week there are classes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. Please remember these classes and particularly their teachers in your prayers.

## The Family

The countdown is on to the end of the school year! The girls have had a really exciting term. Highlights would include:

- ▶ Adriaena's smashing performance in her end of year ballet concert "A mini nutcracker". She loves the performance part! Maeyken helped back stage and was given the responsibility of having all the props together and ready for the performers.
- ▶ Swimming continues to be a non-negotiable. Maeyken is improving her strokes and apparently did her house proud during the inter-house swimming gala held this week! Adriaena has enjoyed extra swimming this term on Wednesday afternoons and has joined the Junior Swim Squad at the school competing in her first official swim meets!
- ▶ Maeyken wrote her Grade One exam for the Recorder and passed with distinction!
- ▶ Both girls will be part of an annual Nativity play that Thornhill school presents the last week of school. It is inspiring to hear them singing a variety of Christmas song from traditional carols to fun songs and even one in Setswana.

We are all looking forward to the Christmas season. This year we will be spending it with Brian, Lynell, Samuel and Marcus Bergen Dyck. (They are MC Canada workers in Umtata, South Africa.) After retreat we plan to travel with them to the Cape Town area and then on to the Garden Route area (George and Knysna) for Christmas Day. We will be home to celebrate New Years with friends here.

## North American Ministry

As we have written above, we will be on North American assignment in August and September 2005. We are all quite excited about this. It is a year earlier than originally scheduled. However for a variety of reasons we decided it was important to come home next year to reconnect with family, friends and churches. Our itineration in churches will be booked through Mennonite church Canada (see side bar above). So if you think that your congregation might want us to be part of a programme, talk to us, or the Winnipeg office soon.



*Adriaena and her friend Rebecah all dressed up, made up and ready to dance.*

## 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  
North American assignment.  
Please make sure that your  
address books are current.

---

### Our web site:

which includes pictures and  
previous newsletters:  
<http://www.thegatheringsite.ca/susanglyn/>  
Our web site changed location  
over a month ago. Please check  
that your book marks to point to  
this new location.



Mennonite  
Church  
Canada

Witness

*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



*Moruti Lebakeng one of the  
leaders in the Bible study  
programme.*

## Please Pray for...

We want to thank God for the **Bible teaching ministry** among the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) and for wonderful people who 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.

Mennonite Ministries are having our **annual retreat** December 13-17 in the Magalisberg area of South Africa. We will be taking time away from the details of life here. We will have worship times together, and the adults will have input from Jens Lomborg, a Danish missionary with the Lutheran Church, while the children will also have a programme coordinated by Heidi Lomborg. We will also have recreational time, and lots of just plain relaxing time. Pray that this is a good team time, and gives us ideas and energy for continued ministry.

A while ago I wrote about the **Behaviour Change Programme**. While we believe that something like this sort of challenge to life style and faithful living is needed in the churches, both as a response to a rapidly changing culture and to the AIDS epidemic, we are having problems finding an active programme. We want some key Batswana to experience this programme and help us evaluate how it could be adapted for Botswana and for the African Indigenous Churches we are working with. Pray with us that a way can be found for some Batswana to experience this programme.

While Botswana is a semi arid country, there has been **no significant rain** in at least 3 years. Gaborone dam (our water supply) is at 27% capacity, and water restriction are being applied. There should have been some rains by now in the year, yet we have only had a few drops of water. Please pray with us, and the people of Botswana that there will be good rains yet this year.