

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

February 2005

#2.1

Unexpected Blessings

Last week I went to visit a woman in Old Naladi. Mma Ousupeng is the leader of the Tuesday evening class. She is a delightful older woman who always welcomes me warmly. Our biggest road block is language. However, she has very clear enunciation and tries in a patient and polite way to communicate with this foreigner who can't seem to get her mind and tongue around this language. Intending after leaving Mma Ousupeng to visit another woman who recently lost her daughter I had Romans 8:35, 37-39 on a piece of paper in Setswana. I asked Mma Ousupeng to read the scripture so I could hear her intonation. She did this but also started explaining what the words meant. At first I was frustrated. I thought it should be obvious that I didn't need the translation as my English Bible was open in front of us. But I quickly realized that this was not just translation. Mma Ousupeng started telling me of a time of deep distress in her life when God was present with her. She talked of the importance of prayer and how she prays every day to receive strength and encouragement from God. Mma Ousupeng and I had unintentionally entered into a sacred time of sharing between two believers, looking at the scriptures and rejoicing at how God is present in our lives. I went looking for help in language learning and received so much more!

Botswana is a country that has many needs. It is rich in material resources but there are many who live in poverty and who have many hardships. We believe that faith in God is the key to happiness and survival especially when life is difficult. Faith is developed and nurtured as we fellowship with other believers, pray and be prayed for and as we read and study the Bible. One of the things that attracted us to the



Mennonite Church years ago was the sense of community. Here we see that same sense of community among our AIC brothers and sisters as they rally around each other in prayer and support.

As people study the Bible they will discover God's love and truth. That's why we are so excited about the Bible study programme that has been developed here. We have over 100 people studying in 15 locations. And we keep getting new requests for more classes. The possibilities are limitless as God's people respond as leaders and as students.

Susan



North American Assignment

We have reserved flights and are working at arranging other details for our time in North America.

Most Sunday mornings have been spoken for. However, we are interested in connecting with congregations and smaller groups in a variety of settings. We are available during the week for mission committee meetings, Bible study groups, youth groups, women's meetings, etc. If you are looking for a creative Southern African way of gathering a brai is perfect! All you need is lots of meat, bread and salads and a few barbeque's!

We want to connect with churches and individuals who are supporting us. We are looking forward to this opportunity to share 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 is arranging the details of our time in North America.

Sermon Preparation and church visits

Recently I was in Francistown. I visited the Bopaganang youth centre, worked out some details with them and attended their weekly Bible study. There was also an executive meeting of Inter Church Ministries Botswana (ICMB) - the board of the Bible teaching programme. And Philemon, the Bible class leader in Francistown, had lined up some churches for us to visit.

The churches were in a village called Marobelle. It is about 50km from Francistown on the road to Nata. We worshipped at three churches. We were going to start at the new Morian Church of Christ, but as there was no one there yet at 11am, we went to the Holy Christian Church. This is the church of Rra and Mma Khaisa, the couple who host me on my visits to Francistown. The Bishop was at the home of someone who had just died, but his wife was present. Mma Khaisa, introduced Mma Bishopo to me as her husband's mother. Many of the people in the room were also family. As the worship service progressed we were introduced and were given the opportunity to give words of greeting. After a few hymns I was asked to speak. This was not difficult as no text had yet been read. I was able to choose the text and had given thought to what I could do the previous night.

We then returned to the other church. They had been underway for a while so the scripture lesson (1 Peter 2:4-10) had already been chosen and read. I am developing a skill of creating sermon outlines on the spot. With one songs notice I can come up with an outline. If there is more time, a couple of songs or others preaching first, I develop it more and add an appropriate illustration. Because I am never sure how much time I will have I always start with quickly deciding what could be said and then develop it further if there is time. Only once have I not had any preparation time. I was in a church in Francistown that typically schedules who is preaching in advance. I was invited to come forward for a few words of greetings. However once in the pulpit something made me wonder what I was really being asked to do. So I asked the person who introduced me and he said I was to give the message. The text had been read but there was not even a song to buy time to think through what I was to say. Fortunately being translated provides thinking time. However this experience taught me to first get together something that will work and then think through the details if there is more time! On Sunday I had plenty of time, and a wonderful passage to work with. 1 Peter talks about living stones, and ends in verse nine with a statement of our high calling concluding that as a result of our calling we can tell of God's mighty works. Part of the reason for visiting churches is to encourage people to consider joining Bible classes and to test out interest. This passage says we are to tell of God's mighty works which while not limited to the Bible certainly includes the stories in the Bible. So it became a great connection to the Bible study programme.

We ended our time in the Head Mountain of God in Zion church. I have been in several others of this denomination. This was by far the smallest church I have been in, though not the least populated. It met in a rondavel and was packed. I was assured that later they would find a way to circle dance, though I have no idea how anyone had room to twirl let alone move.



Glyn

In the Future

Feb 28 - 4 March Maeyken goes on a school field trip to a camp in the Tuli Block

25-27 March Easter Weekend. We will be participating with a church at their headquarters.

16 April - 16 May Fall school break.

23 April MCC celebration to mark the work that has been done in Botswana.

21 May Annual Meeting of Inter Church Ministries Botswana

Every week there are classes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday in 15 locations around Botswana. Please remember these classes and particularly their leaders in your prayers.

The Family

Another school year has begun! Both the girls are settled into new standards with new teachers. Life is a good balance of school work, swimming, practising piano and recorder and of course time to play. The girls are particularly enjoying learning the art of *découpage* on Friday afternoons.

We went to school one day with our camera. Here Adriaena is working hard. I'm sure she would be this focused even if we weren't in the room with a camera!



In this picture Maeyken is surrounded by friends from school. To the right of her are her friends Shamilla and Isabel. On the other side is Kyla. The rest... bring out a camera in Botswana and you will be instantly surrounded by people begging to be part of the picture!



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 8
hours earlier than Ontario time)

Our web site:

which includes pictures and
previous newsletters:
<http://www.thegatheringsite.ca/susanglyn/>

Please Pray for...

... the **Bible teaching ministry** among the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) and for wonderful people who are dedicated to leading classes in a variety of locations. Pray for us as we discern ways that we can be most helpful in nurturing these leaders. Pray for the leaders, 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.

... us as we continue to find ways to help people make **decisions about their lives**. A while ago we wrote about the Behaviour Change Programme that Glyn heard about in Zambia. We have now come across some more local resources that we are investigating. Pray with us that a way can be found for some Batswana to help us adapt this to the African Independent Churches (AICs) we are working with.

... a couple who is working on **strengthening relationships**. A couple of weeks ago we had supper with a Batswana family who worship at one of the AICs we connect with. The husband and wife are trying to start workshops in their church to teach about and strengthen relationships, particularly marriage relationships. Please pray for this couple as they work on this concept which is somewhat outside the church culture here.

... **rain**. While Botswana is a semi-arid country, we still need rain at the right time of year (now would be nice). Gaborone dam (our water supply) is at 22% capacity. Bishop Kokoro who is an agricultural researcher, told us that because of the lack of rain much of the maize crop in this part of the country has been lost.

... for **David and Sandra (Rehana, Daniel) Franklin, Nathan Penner and Deanna Neustaedtler** as they bring closure to their assignments and the MCC work here in Botswana. Pray that the gathering in April will be a time of celebration of the many wonderful things that God has done in this country through the ministry of MCC and MCCer's.

... us as we make plans for our **North American Assignment**. We need to find some capable people to house sit for us. There are also many logistical details that need to be worked out for our time in Canada. Pray also that God would direct and guide our thoughts and planning so we are able to communicate effectively the work here in Botswana.



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Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS
600 Shaftesbury Blvd
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