

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

October 2005

#2.4



Water and trees ... unlike Botswana!

Which side is the steering wheel on anyways?

We had a wonderful time reuniting with family and friends over the last couple of months. This included time at a cottage with Glyn's family, time with Susan's family and visiting with many friends. We were involved in worship in 12 congregations, a number of activities at Conrad Grebel College, participated in 6 classes at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and met with various conference leaders.

We were asked a number of times how we were adjusting to Canadian culture. In many ways it did not seem like a huge adjustment though there were reminders that we were no longer in Africa. Grocery stores with overwhelming choice, satellite TV, high speed internet, sidewalks, nicely paved roads and all the green! (And Susan would add "Tim Horton's coffee!")

Just days before our return to Botswana I walked to the wrong side of the car to drive. I thought after two months I had readjusted my driving to the right side of the road and car. I thought I had readjusted to the rules of driving in North America. Yet here I was after two months of consciously checking to see where the steering wheel was reverting to old habits. Not a huge thing in itself. However I do thank the brave friends and family (and rental agencies) who let us drive their cars. To walk to the wrong side of the car is one thing but to drive on the wrong side of the road is a much more serious nature!

Later I thought about this slip. How a small thing such as getting the drivers side of the car mixed up was not as straight forward as one might think. What one grows up with is the familiar, the expected thing. When we move between cultures there are adjustments that need to be made. No matter how well we think we are fitting in, there is a cultural gap. (From the side the steering wheel is on to much more complex things). Cultural shifts can happen in other settings as well. You can, I am sure, think of people around you who are dealing with cultural shifts: new Canadians, new Christians, people new to the Mennonite church. All these things can create the "which side is the steering wheel on" sort of feeling. Those of us for whom the culture is a given need to remember the struggles of those who are experiencing new things and not assume that the side that our steering wheel is on is necessarily the right side!

Glyn



Children at First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth OH.



Children's time during worship at Wellesley Mennonite Church.

Prayer, Participation and Posture

AICs are not inherently more spiritual than churches in North America. However, they do have different expressions and styles of worship that may help us think through what we are doing and why. While we were in North America we tried to help people experience components of AIC worship and challenge them to think about worship in their setting.

The following is what we dubbed “the three P’s” of worship in the African Initiated churches (AIC).

People *pray* for each other. This is true both inside and outside worship. When people come to our home, or we visit other’s homes it is common that we pray before parting. Praying for one another is an important task of the church. There is time each Sunday for

prayer for who ever desires it. The people come forward or into the centre of the circle and are surrounded by the community. Some leaders lay hands on the person desiring prayer and either one at a time or several together, pray for the person. They are not praying in the abstract for people who are ill, or who are travelling but they surround the person with the community of faith and lift up specific prayers. Some worship times go for 4 or 5 hours, and up to half of this could be spent praying specifically for individuals.

AIC congregations expect people to *participate* in worship. Some congregations do not have people assigned to specific tasks, so it becomes the responsibility of many people to help in the flow of worship. Without being asked people share how God has blessed them, worship lead, lead hymns and songs and preach God’s word. This can include younger children and new Christians as well as those who have been around for a long time.

Worshippers in an AIC church are in an alert and focussed *posture*. (At least when they have not been worshipping all night). This may in part be a result of sitting on a cement floor or knowing they may be called upon to speak at any moment. People also come to worship with an anticipation that God is going to do something. Regardless of the reason, this alertness results in a type of keenness as people participate.



Susan with a number of Friends from Wilmot Mennonite Church.

In the Future

Oct. 24 First class for Women at the Spiritual Healing Church in Gaborone.

Oct. Trip to Francistown to reconnect with classes and Bopaganang Basha youth centre.

Oct. Trip to Lobotse to encourage the new class there.

16-19 Nov. AIMM meetings near Mulhouse, France.

Every Week

We attend classes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday in Gaborone.

The Family

The girls have been busy catching up the school work they missed while in Canada. They are also busy catching up with friends. We were greeted by friends when we arrived to our house and it took only one hour for the phone to start ringing for Maeyken. Both of them have already enjoyed a couple of sleep overs.



Adriaena with friends at the New Hamburg Fall Fair

A big thanks to all who provided housing, food, vehicles and friendship to us when we were in North America. We are so blessed with people who love and care for us. We slept in 13 different beds in as many locations. Enjoyed a visit (often with a meal) with 28 different friends/families. (This does not include people that we stayed with or relatives!) The girls enjoyed a visit back to Forest Glen Public School. We enjoyed a wonderful celebration of Susan's parents 50th Wedding Anniversary. We have lots of good memories and look forward to our next North American Assignment in a couple of years!!

Maeyken is busy with sports again. Softball season is on and she joined the team on Monday for practice. The first swimming gala is set for next week.

Adriaena is also busy in the pool. However, the big focus for her is a discovery when we were in Canada that she has an issue processing what she is hearing. The official term is Central Auditory Processing Deficiency. This explains a lot of her struggles at school and her tiredness at home. Her teacher and the special education teachers are really eager to make provisions to help her. We also have special computer programme on the way that will provide an intensive treatment. We are so thankful that we have a diagnosis and can move forward from here.



Fall colours in Ontario

Contact us

Mail us at:

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(just remember that we are 6
hours earlier than Ontario, 7
after daylight savings ends)

Our web site:

which includes pictures and
previous newsletters:

<http://www.thegatheringsite.ca/susanglyn/>

Please Pray for...

... the **Bible teaching ministry**. All seems well with this programme but we need to catch up with people and the ministry. Susan is meeting soon with the women at the Spiritual Healing Church to organize a class for women and the new class in Lobotse has finished their first book and is anxiously awaiting Glyn to bring the next book! For this we are very thankful. Behind all our current work there lurks the question “what next?”. How can we improve on the ways we are helping the African Independent churches faithfully live out their call from God?

... the **people of Botswana** as they continue to live with the daily reality of HIV and AIDS. We want to consciously work at ways to help African Independent churches help their members face HIV/AIDS and work at both prevention strategies and ways to be caring communities. This epidemic hits all aspects of society as people are constantly facing sickness and death. Pray that the people will be able to keep their spirits up in the midst of difficult times. Pray specifically for the family of Lesego and the staff at Tshepong Counselling Centre. Lesego was a counsellor there and died two weeks ago. She was also an important leader in the Inter Church Ministry here and we will miss her friendship and wisdom.

... the people who we connected with during our **North American Assignment** and how they too connected with us.. Congregational members, students at a number of schools, family, friends, and supervisors. It was good and we were refreshed. We are also glad to be back home in our own beds with our own closets. Pray for ongoing reflection on the church both in Botswana and North America. We are incredibly thankful for those congregations who have or are in the process of agreeing to join us in a more formal partnership. Pray for us as together we figure out what these partnerships can look like.

... **rain**. The need for rain is on everyone’s minds. It is dry and hot here. We have entered the season where rains are expected. Pray that this parched land will receive some nourishment that it badly needs. The Gaborone Dam is now below the level where it can be used so all water for the city is being brought in from other places. The city is on a strict water restrictions. Pray for government leaders for wisdom as they deal with this crisis.

...the people of our neighbouring country of **Zimbabwe**. Last time we wrote we said that the “situation there continues to get worse with fuel and food shortages.” From all accounts it has continued to go from really bad to worse yet. Pray especially for our brothers and sisters in the Brethren In Christ Church (Part of the world wide Mennonite fellowship).



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