

# From our street to yours ... Glyn, Susan, Maeyken, Adriaena December 2006 #3.8

## Where has the time gone...

2006 has basically come and gone. Never in all my life do I remember a year going by so quickly. One could reflect whether this is indicative of my age and the age of our children or whether it is reflective of the many events that have made 2006 a year of challenge and growth through the everyday experiences in life or the surprises along the way. Usually our newsletter contains stories of a specific experience that we have had. This time I would like to do what most of us do at this time of year... reflect on the year that has gone by!



## Sharing our Lives and Space

When Mennonite Central Committee decided to leave Botswana we were able to rethink the vision of the ministry of Mennonites. One of the things that we did was give up the Office/Guesthouse space and turn the AIMM owned house which is beside us into an office space and much smaller guesthouse. In January we did not envision the number of people who have lived there for a day or two or three months. We've had mission workers from other parts of Botswana who just wanted a comfortable place to lay their head at night to newly arrived mission workers needing a place to stay while they find their own accommodation to students who are here for short term educational assignments to our colleagues from South Africa and visitors from North America.



We've been particularly blessed to have some young adults come and spend time with us. While Glyn and I have always enjoyed the company of those younger than us (and they are getting younger all the time) our girls have really enjoyed these visitors as well. They have gone out of their way to connect with both Maeyken and Adriaena and have helped to fill some of the void that our girls feel without family and friends that were so much a part of their lives in Canada.



## Tears and Fears

Tears have also been a part of this year as well. Some of those tears came as we walked along side our friends as they grieved the loss of a husband and a father. We are never prepared for death especially when it comes as an unexpected and unwelcome way. We continue to be thankful that Zhark was a believer but the journey has been difficult for the family.



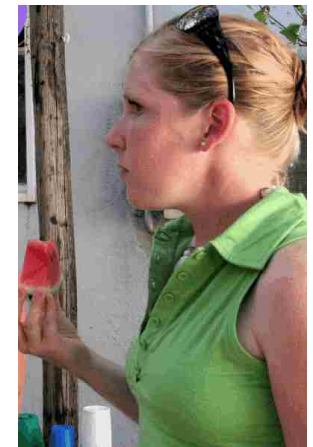
We have also had our own tears. Sometimes life just makes you cry. The injustices that are present especially as we walk along side people who are impacted by the deadly impact of the HIV virus. We also cry for our friends who are from Zimbabwe who only want to live in their own country but cannot. For our white Zimbabwean friends it often means searching for a new country to call home. For the others it means living in a country that makes it difficult for them to get legal permits and they live in fear of deportation and harassment from the legal authorities.



We've also had to say good bye to many good friends this year who have gone home to their countries of birth to live. While all will be missed by us the biggest hole was created by the departure of our Finnish friends, Pekka, Kartri, Elena and Anne Härkönen. Glyn and I will miss friendship and conversation with Pekka and Katri. The girls will miss hanging out with Elena and Anne. We often "kid swapped" with them - youngest for an oldest or via versa. It was a win win situation for all!

## Joy and Laughter

We been particularly blessed this year with the arrival of new colleagues both here and in South Africa. As you know we are thrilled to have Steen and Christina Søvnal here with us. It is so cool to have friends living on the next street. (Kind of brings us back to New Hamburg days...) Their four children have also brought more laughter and life into our lives. I love hearing the voices of young children approaching the gate way before the bell is rung! And then there are our Mennonite colleagues in South Africa as well as our administrators from North America! How wonderful it is to have colleagues and administrators who you enjoy being with. We are so looking forward to spending five days over New Years with our Southern Africa team at our annual retreat!

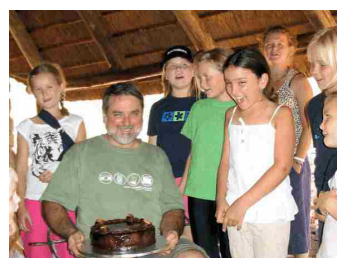


We are also grateful for good friendship with Jonathan and Mary Kay Larson. The Larson's are former AIMMer's from the '80s and '90s who have returned to Botswana for a few years with the US government. They understand first hand some of our joys and struggles. We are particularly grateful for Jonathan's unassuming way of supporting us and giving advice in the ministry here.



And as you all know (thanks so much for all the emails) we celebrated Glyn's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in November. We had great fun with friends in a variety of settings. Kira Friesen and Trisha Enns (two of our young adult friends) had us rolling in laughter as they did a rendition of "Crazy" by Gnarl Barkley. (They graciously pointed out that Glyn was old enough to be their father!) The girls and I let our friends here in on some of the secrets of Glyn's past and as always our other friends came up with humorous anecdotes as well. It was a great evening under neath the Botswana stars with lots of good friends topped off with what else but a chocolate fondue!

Susan



## Upcoming Events

Dec 29 - Jan 3 Southern Africa Mennonite mission workers retreat south of Durban

Jan 3 - 10 Vacation in Durban and the Drakensberg Mountains

Jan. 17 Maeyken begins Grade 9 at Westwood International School

Jan. 17 Adriaena begins Standard 5 at Thornhill

Jan 25 - Feb 27 Glyn at Selly Oaks, Birmingham England

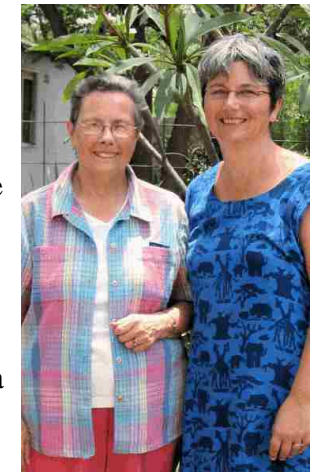
## Blog

Since mid October we have been keeping a blog. We are trying to keep the blog less formal and more current than a newsletter can be. We cannot guarantee weekly updates, but it is what we are aiming for. There is a link to the blog from our website.

## Family

We expect 2007 to be another year of joy, laughter, tears and challenges. It will come in many forms we are sure.

- ▶ **Glyn** will spend the month of February in England at Selly Oaks College reading up on African Initiated Churches (AICs). Many of our colleagues have done this on their way to their assignment. Since this wasn't possible for us Glyn is going now. We feel this reading will be important as we try to understand the AICs we work with even better.
- ▶ **Maeyken** will begin Grade 9 at Westwood International School. This is her transition year into high school. After much prayer and thought we have decided to "skip" her ahead a grade to catch up with the Canadian system. (She has been a half year behind because of the January start to the school year.)
- ▶ We look forward to hosting a visiting **group from Canada** in March who are coming to learn more about life and ministry in Botswana and South Africa. There will also be a group of **young adults from Goshen College** here in May for three weeks.
- ▶ Glyn's nephew **Philip Cutmore** will be in South Africa for a few months with the *Out of Town* programme from Canadian Mennonite University. Glyn will visit him and **Dana Hondrich** (a young adult from Wilmot Mennonite Church who is a leader of this team) on site in Pietermaritzburg and then Philip will come and visit us for a couple of weeks after Easter.
- ▶ We anticipate **the beginning of more Bible Classes** and are especially excited about the beginning of a Women's class at the Spiritual Healing Church here in Gaborone. Glyn is also working with the Lerala class (village about 4 hours from here) to expand their existing class and possibly look at beginning a class in another village near there.
- ▶ **North American Assignment.** We anticipate being back in Canada from mid November through mid January next year. We look forward to reconnecting with our supporting churches, our friends and family.



## Contact us

### Mail us at:

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Box 33, Gaborone,  
Botswana

### Phone us at:

267-390-5554  
(Just remember that we are 7  
hours earlier than Ontario!)

## Please Pray for...

... **Christina Søvndal's work permit** to teach in Botswana has been denied because the government does not consider her degrees suitable for teaching. Pray that another way may be found to allow her to get a work permit. (She can volunteer but the income from the school is an important piece of allowing them to stay since Steen is here as a volunteer)

... **Rebekka Søvndal** (9 year old) has been experiencing headaches. After a CT scan and consultation with a paediatrician no obvious source of the headaches can be found. (For this we are grateful.) Coming to Botswana has been a difficult adjustment for Rebekka. Pray that she may enjoy her new teacher and grade and be able to find more joy in being here.

... **Maeyken and Adriaena** and the Søvndal children as they begin new grades in mid January. Pray especially for Maeyken as she adjusts to a new school and high school expectations.

... **Glyn's trip to the UK.** Pray that he will learn a lot and that his time away will also renew and refresh his spirit.

... **the Southern Africa team** retreat (December 29<sup>th</sup> to January 3<sup>rd</sup>). Pray for all of us that this may be a time of laughter and joy as we spend time together. Also pray for safety us and the Søvndals as we travel long distances and as we spend about a week together with Kira in Durban and the Drakensbergs on our way home.

... **yourself!** We thank all of you for the various ways that you have supported us during the past year. You have no idea how encouraging your emails have been to us. We also should not underestimate the power of God when God's people pray so thank you for your prayers as well. We wish all of you God's blessings, presence and power as you too enter a new year. May you experience the fullness of God's love during 2007!



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