

From our street to yours ...  
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#4.3



## Looking at the World Two Ways

There is more than one way to view the world. In North America and Europe we have a reasonably similar way to look at things. Here in Africa many people look at things very differently. In the West we tend to see things from a mechanical/analytical perspective. Everything has a cause and we can explain the cause using science - or if we cannot, then it is because science is not advanced enough and in time we will be able to. So if someone gets sick it is because they were exposed to a virus and became infected and sick. Here in Botswana many people might accept that as the explanation of the symptoms of being sick but not the underlying cause - why did you get sick, why now and not another time, why you and not someone else? Some people might not accept that some tiny invisible thing hardly alive could really make a person sick and even kill them.

People here tend to look for a spiritual cause for things that happen. The traditional belief is that when a person dies they really do not leave but are present as an ancestor - one of the "living-dead". These "living dead" have the task of protecting the people and their customs. They are understood to exert influence to maintain the customs and traditions that have preserved the people since time began. Traditionally a good Motswana will try to please the ancestors so that they will bless him and his actions. Conversely, it is believed that the ancestors will either withhold their blessing from someone who is going against the traditions, or will actively try to thwart that person's plans. It is possible through a variety of means to influence the ancestors and the related spirits. Some people who are jealous will try together with a sorcerer (traditional doctor) to place a curse on a person. Other people will through certain actions try to protect themselves and their family from such evil.

A while ago I was in a Bible class that was studying Exodus 12:22 where God was giving instructions to the Israelites to prepare for the first Passover. I asked the class what people would think if they were to put blood on their door frames. I said in Canada we would have the police visiting, and people would think you were seriously crazy. They said that in Botswana people would think you had been to a traditional doctor (sorcerer) and were doing this for protection against some evil and it really would not be a big deal. The traditional world view is very close to the surface.

One reason often given for the foundation of the African Independent Churches (AICs) is that the mission churches were not interested in healing. Clearly this is not true as mission churches established a hospital or clinic in every place they went. The issue was they were not providing the healing and protection desired by the Africans they were ministering to. They were not treating what people felt were the spiritual root causes that they were faced with. The mission churches were not dealing with the evil forces that many Africans felt they were living with on a daily basis.

Today in the churches in Botswana much of the praying is for protection and healing, though now they are praying to God the creator and not the ancestors. A while ago I was in a village and a woman said that there were people who wished evil on me and would try to cause problems



## Upcoming Events

**April 10-24** Philip Cutmore - Glyn's nephew is visiting us after being in South Africa for an "Out of Town" course from CMU.

**April 21 - May 18** Friends Shirley and David Froese visit.

**April 21 - May 21** Girls school break

**April 22- May 6** R & R in South Africa

**May 15-28** Bluffton College student trip.

**July 24-26** AIMM meetings in South Africa including input from former Botswana Mennonite mission worker Bryan Born

**Nov 16 - Jan 16** North American assignment.

## Blog

We have had a blog for about six months. We are aiming for weekly updates. There is a link to the blog from our website. Or follow: <http://thegatheringsite.ca/botswana/> Sometimes you may get an old page. Try pushing the reload button on your browser or the general button on the blog to get the most current posts.

with my car. So she filled a bottle with water and prayed over it and sprinkled it over the outside and inside for protection. She gave me the bottle and asked me to sprinkle in a similar way every time I go on a trip. Protection from evil is seen as important, and something you actively seek.

It is easy to dismiss this world view out of hand as pre-modern and unscientific. And yet some of the issues we face in the West do have spiritual causes. Many people can point to stress as a leading contributor to heart attack and stroke. Stress is a life style issue often with spiritual unhealthiness. Similarly other significant illnesses in the West can be connected to spiritual unhealthiness in a person's life. I am not saying that we should adopt this world view, but that there are some things that we can learn.

One of the sad consequences of the African world view is that people who are sick with HIV/AIDS do the same treatment as anyone else who is ill, and seek prayers (Which are not in themselves wrong - we all need the support and power from prayer.) When the church prayers do not seem to work, many people seek out traditional healers (sorcerers) who often prescribe "medicine" which is toxic. When this "healing" regime does not lead to health the people then seek medical help, sometimes when it is too late. Even when medical personnel can help, people will stop taking ARV medicine on the advice of a "healer" (sorcerer) who claims that he knows who is causing the illness.

People here are in many ways closer to the Biblical world view than we are and can therefore understand the Bible in a way that we often miss. The seeking of spiritual causes to problems makes people here more aware of the spiritual battle that according to the Bible is part of our current reality. But as you can imagine this different world view also causes issues as we work at trying to help Christians mature in their faith.

Glyn

I have purposefully called traditional doctors "sorcerers." Other people would call them "witch doctors." These are not the same thing as we know of as herbalists. Their specialty is combing the spirit world for the root of a problem and offering a cure or solution based on their insight. There are many stories of these cures containing kerosene or other lethal substances, as well as the "doctors" performing slight of hand to convince people that they have been cured. GJ



## North American Assignment

We will be in North America from Nov 16 through Jan 16. During that time we will be visiting with our supporting congregations and connecting with friends and family. We hope to enjoy some snow too!

Right now we are working with Mennonite Church Canada to set up the schedule. We will keep this column for updates on our schedule and will also post dates on our web site.

If you have an event you would like us to be part of or you want us to connect with your church you can contact us directly or you can contact:

Hinke Loewen-Rudgers  
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or Rebecca Yoder Neufeld  
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## Helping Churches



In our budget each year we have a bit of money to help churches finish their buildings. We often call this our roof fund, but in the case of the Abanezer Association branch in Kanye it was windows. William, the pastor in this congregation has been part of the Bible study programme for years, weekly driving one hour each way to be part of a class. He is hoping to establish classes now in Kanye.

The official opening of the church was March 25 with dignitaries and representatives from many local churches and other branches of the Abanezer Association church. After there was a significant feast to celebrate the event.



## Pasaka

This year we had a mix of Botswana and foreign elements to our Easter Celebrations. On Thursday Dan and Yvonne Nighswander - colleagues from Pietermaritzburg came by bus. Friday during the day we went to the picnic site beside the Gaborone dam with a number of friends from Canada and Denmark.

Friday night we went to a worship service at the African Holy Church in Zion just north of Gaborone. The four of us were joined by Dorthe Gundersen, Steen Søvndal and his parents. The picture of foot washing on page one is from that service. Worship began around 11 pm, we left at 4 am- they were not yet done for the night.

Sunday Morning we went to a sunrise service at the yacht club at the Gaborone Dam with the English church we attend. We were up at 5 am for worship at 6.

Monday Glyn drove Dan and Yvonne to the bus station in Johannesburg and then joined the Canadian Mennonite University Outatown programme for their final 24 hours in South Africa. Dana Honderich, a member of the church that Glyn pastored in Ontario, was a leader on this year's programme. Philip Cutmore, Glyn's nephew, was a participant in the programme. Glyn brought Philip back to Gaborone to spend two weeks with us.



*Poul and Dorthe Gundersen with Yvonne Nighswander on the Good Friday Picnic*



*Philip Cutmore, Dana Honderich and Glyn*

## Contact us

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### Our web site:

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



Witness

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

Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd  
Winnipeg MB

## Please Pray for...

**... Mission Worker for Francistown.** We continue to be excited about the possibility of a person coming to Francistown. This person's Ministry Support Team (MST) is now working to get together financial support. (Mennonite Mission Network personnel must have their cost of being on the field in pledges or cash before they come.) Please pray that churches and individuals will come forward to support this person. If you wish to support the work in this way please contact Barbara Eichorn (secretary to Africa Network Administrator Steve Wiebe Johnson).

**... Bluffton University learning trip.** Bluffton, a Mennonite Church USA related university is sending 11 students here in May. They will be living in the village of Pitseng for much of that time. Pray that their time here will be meaningful, and they can keep their eyes open to learn much. We will be connecting with them at various times, and are currently involved in planning their time.

**... Emerging classes.** We have several locations interested in starting classes. Glyn's trip to Lerala encouraged an existing group and invited others to attend. The trip to Francistown and Sechele last weekend laid similar ground work. Please pray for us and for the Batswana leaders who want to begin classes in their villages and churches.

**...Our North American assignment.** We will be in North America for two months - mid November through mid January. We are squeezing the time into a slightly stretched school break. Pray for those who are planning our schedule that we might have a good balance between visits with churches, friends and family.

## Give Thanks for...

**...Safety with lots of driving.** Glyn has been to Lerala, Johannesburg and Francistown all 4 to 5 hours from here. Susan has been out into villages near Gaborone. The combination of roads with potholes, poor drivers, many pedestrians and animals on the road and a lot of drinking leads to many accidents. Thank God for safety.

**...A Chicken.** Susan was recently in Lotlhakane - the village we lived in. There were lots of little chicks running around and she commented on this to the grandmother. Next thing she knew people started chasing a chicken around the yard and she was being given a chicken. She could not turn it down after all that we have done to help that family, but she was not sure what to do with a live chicken. She and Philip brought it back to Gaborone. In the end we gave it to Mavis (our household helper) whose daughters had no idea what to do with it either, but Mavis did.