

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

August 2008

#5.3



*Glyn and the pastor from Selebi Phikwe*

## Please Come and Join Us...

“Please come and join us. Perhaps you will be able to offer us some help.” These were the words of Rra Noge, Chairperson of Revelation Blessed Peace Church. Rra Noge was interested in participating in a Bible Study but as he talked it was clear he had other agenda in mind.

Revelation Blessed Peace is a growing Independent Church. On July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> the leaders of the church (members of the executive, pastors, Bishops etc) met at their headquarters in Kgagodi to talk about the future of the church. The critical question for the leaders of the church was “How can we maintain our traditional understandings of leadership and

accountability yet be open to the change that is needed to meet the needs of the younger people in the church and the issues that are becoming evident in our more urban centres?”

A spirit of oneness and openness to each other’s comments and questions was very evident at the meetings in Kgagodi. All participants wanted a church that would meet the needs of their people. Much time was spent talking about their structures. When pressed to describe the church structure two lists were made. On one side of the room a list was made of the accountability of the “pastoral leadership” of the church listing the Pastors, Regional Pastors, Bishops and Arch Bishop. On the other side a list was compiled of the various elected administrative groups in the church (Executive, Youth, Women’s etc). It became clear that while complete respect was given for the ultimate authority of the Arch Bishop there were areas where clarification was needed in order to make the work of these committees more effective to meet the needs of the younger people in the church.

Much time was spent talking about Biblical knowledge and training for the pastors and other leaders. If one has a congregation of educated young people how do you provide biblical teaching that nourishes and challenges them if your leaders do not have formal biblical training?



*Susan and the pastor from Lethlakane*



*In the parking lot having tea*



Yet the uniqueness of the Independent Churches has been that leaders come from within and that God's spirit enables and equips them for ministry.

We learned a lot as we sat and listened to the conversations around us. Once again we were reminded of the important yet careful work that needs to be done to help churches grapple with the changes that modernization brings to them. Some of the struggles these people named reflected conversations that I have had with my father about church and change. Echos of our youth ministry days as we helped churches to be more inclusive of youth in their structures and in the gathering times of the church were there as well. When a society makes a shift from being primarily rural and agrarian to an urban, more educated one, the church also needs to make a shift if it is to survive. The Revelation Blessed Peace Church clearly wants to survive and thrive. There was no feeling of resistance to change in the conversations in Kgagodi that weekend. Instead there was an atmosphere of openness and a desire to understand the issues that the church is facing and be proactive on a response.

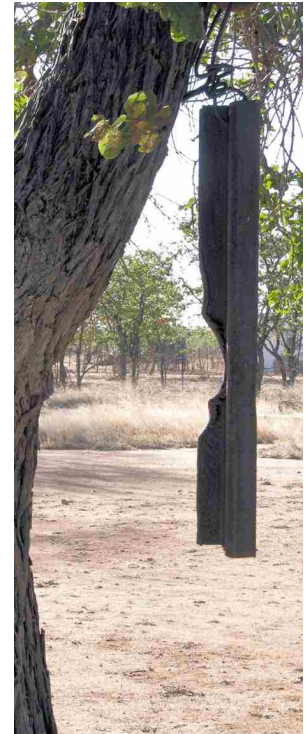
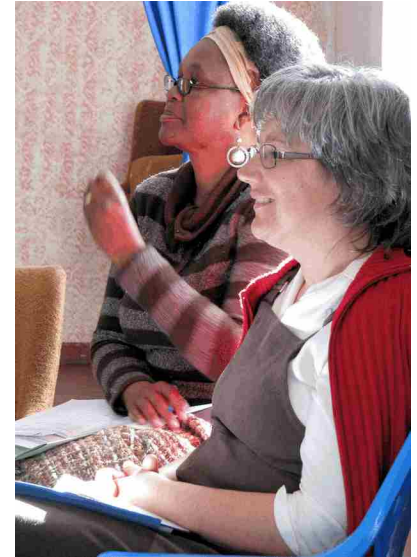
We were also asked to contribute our insights. We were able to share that the struggles of leadership - traditional vs modern, appointed vs elected - were not unique to them, but a struggle for all African Independent Churches and to some extent all churches in Botswana. Responding to the voice of people in the church is important, but so is listening and responding to the voice of God's spirit in discerning direction.

There was also much excitement to begin Bible Studies. We will be working with the youth and young adults of the Gaborone branch to begin a study there. Over 13 people want to gather on Sunday morning before Church to study the Bible! Leaders from Selebi Phikwe want us to come and minister in their churches and look at resurrecting the Bible Study programme in that area. The Lead Minister from the Kanye area wants us to come visit his congregations. We also talked with the leaders of the Youth Organization and requests were made for help with Children's Sunday school both in training teachers and providing resources. Earlier we also talked with Rra Noge about the need for premarital counselling.



It is exciting how God is moving in the Revelation Blessed Peace Church and many other AIC's here in Botswana. We are humbled that we can be part of God's plan for these churches to grow and change in order to be more effective in their ministries among their people. We recognize that our ministry does not sit in isolation. All previous Mennonite workers have contributed to a feeling of openness and trust. The name Mennonite is a good thing in the minds of AIC leaders. We are also aware that it takes time to build up your own trust and ministry. This month we complete 5 years in Botswana. We've had many times when we have wondered about the contribution we have been able to make given the language barrier and our own limited understanding of the culture. But as time has gone on we stand in awe of how God has and is using our gifts to further the Kingdom here in Botswana!

Susan



*An old style Church bell*

## Upcoming Events

**Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>** Dessert Party for Marriage Course Participants and other guests

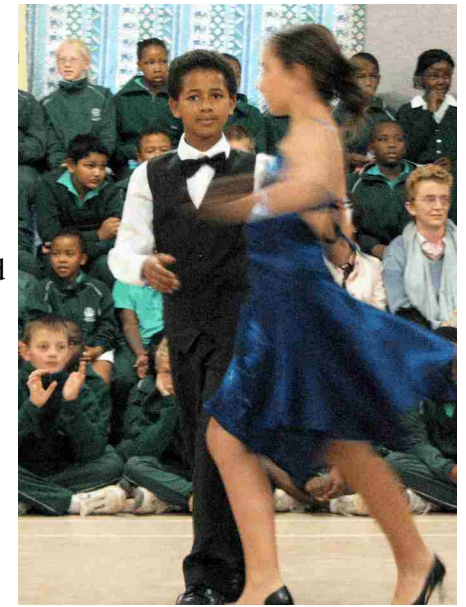
**Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>** The Wedding of Bishop and Mma Bishopo Kokoro's daughter in Serowe (Spiritual Healing Church)



## Family:

Perhaps this could be described as the best term yet! Maeyken has eased into the IGCE programme and has relaxed into a balanced schedule of school, study and spending time with her friends! (The later being by far the most important in her mind!) We have problems keeping up with her social life on the weekends.

Adriaena gets the prize for being the busiest member of the family this term. The school part of life has gone well. But even better a wide range of afternoon activities: ballroom dancing, girl guides, school play, netball and marimba band! Wow! Last week we were all at a morning assembly for a final performance by the ballroom dancers. It was amazing to see how much they have learned and improved during the term. Then last night and tonight we take turns going to see the school musical production entitled "Gel..."



*Adriaena and partner ballroom dancing*

Friday is the last day of term and we are all looking forward to heading off to Namibia on Saturday. It will be a long drive but we're told the drive will be worth it all. We'll be staying at the coast for a week and a half before doing some camping at a couple of game reserves. Then we'll go to Windhoek for a couple of days and visit friends in D'Kar (Ghantzi) on our way back. We are all looking forward to this holiday break and being able to be near water again!

Amy Susanna our volunteer young adult from Ontario leaves today (Wednesday - well actually her flight was delayed and she leaves Thursday) for Canada. She's had an amazing six months here and we will miss having her around. Maeyken and Adriaena have both enjoyed having an "older" sister. As with all of our volunteers she's etched a place in our list of extended family members!



*Amy Susanna on a final trip to a lion park with Susan and Maeyken*



*Adriaena at a Girl Guide camping night*

## Contact us

### Mail us at:

Box 33, Gaborone,  
Botswana

### Phone us at:

**Botswana:** 267-390-5554  
(Just remember that we are 6 hours  
earlier than Ontario!)

**Skype at:** susanglyn

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

We have actually been posting to our  
blog at  
<http://thegatheringsite.ca/botswana/index.html>



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

Witness

Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS  
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## Please Thank God for...

... **Amy Susanna** and her willingness to be used by God here in Botswana. During her time with Face the Nation she led several young women to Christ and around 200 students at the school she volunteered at signed the True Love Waits Abstinence Cards!

... **the couples that participated in the Marriage Course** who all responded enthusiastically on the last night to the question "Has this made a difference in your marriage?"!

... **the great term of school** and activities that both the girls had.

## We ask you to pray for...

...**Melanie** as she gets her house set up, studies language and begins to work with the Youth Centre in Francistown.

...**the dessert party for participants in the Marriage Course** and for others who are interested in participating in a course. Pray for us as we also discern with the Batswana participants the feasibility of this English speaking course with British based assumptions in an AIC setting.

...**the new classes that are emerging.** Pray for us that we may be able to respond to all of the locations interested in starting classes in a timely fashion.

...**the unrest in the countries around Botswana.** Continue to pray for the needs of the various countries that make up Southern Africa. The Botswana government is pushing for resolution of the political issues of Zimbabwe. They do not recognize Mugabe as the president and will boycott the upcoming SADAC meetings if Mugabe is invited.

...**rest, relaxation, fun and safety** as we go on our annual vacation.