



In more ways than one  
Susan Vinton, November 30, 2007

There in the corner of his eye was a tear. Kristian, at age 26, is one of the many young husbands in the villages around our home who are hit by the AIDS virus. Life is precious to those looking at its untimely loss. Swollen with fluid, and exhausted, that is the only way to describe my dear friend Kristian. We have tried without success the different avenues available to us to help him. I recognize that it is a privilege to be entrusted with this opportunity to serve those with AIDS. An opportunity we would never want to miss. Still, it is for me a struggle not to lose heart when I see such fear. I want somehow to “make it all better” for Kristian and his lovely wife Sauda. But I can’t. We visit, chat, encourage and pray. Praying for that miracle of peace within this storm. A peace that I know only God Himself can give them. It’s horrible enough for any wife to watch her husband die, but the horribleness of AIDS, is that while the wife is watching her husband die, she’s glimpsing into her own future. A woman like Sauda who can push on with cheerfulness is truly a woman with a peace in her heart that can only be a gift from the Lord Himself.

Just a mile away there is tiny Lustika. Over a year ago, Lustika came to my house for “advice.” The first words out of her mouth were: “I am so afraid.” I had at that point yet to ever meet such a thin human being who could still walk. A young and determined mother of four children, her youngest with the HIV/AIDS virus as well, she was indeed very ill. But we got her on the bus to the hospital, she got started on the ARVs, we all rejoiced as she got better and as she enjoyed her baby, who is today a healthy, happy, three-year old full of life. Lustika, however, took a turn for the worse three weeks ago. Our attempts seemed to fail as she returned each time from her

hospitalizations in worse shape than the time before. Physically she no longer seemed alive, except that her bright eyes acknowledged me when I came to visit. I talked to her about God and about His peace and I was shocked when she responded – I want to be saved! I didn’t know that she had any breath left in her! We prayed and I arranged for the closest church to visit her the following morning and those people have faithfully made the long trek to her house every day to pray and to teach her from God’s Word. The trek that they make to her house follows a hard day in the fields but I am so thankful that they do so with joy and determination. The transformation in this woman’s life is overwhelming. This afternoon, Lustika and I laughed and laughed and talked about raising pigs, re-roofing her house, planting crops ... and we talked about her children! What happened? Last week, her home was encircled by people – customary before an anticipated death. We are now seven days after we thought her precious life was gone. The crowd has left her home. Death for her is no longer anticipated by everyone. Today, she is a new person smiling and at peace. There is hope. She is a new creation. She has a new life. In more ways than one.

When I think of the blessing it is to be involved in the lives of my friends here, I cannot help but think of the blessing of having Fennet to drive my friends to the hospital. Certainly I’m thankful that we have a car, and I long for the day when we have a bus to take everyone. But even more than any vehicle, I’m thankful for Fennet. How he joined our team is an answer to prayer. His hours are long. His patience with some not-so-nice patients is admirable. His kindness towards the really sick is remarkable. Fennet not only drives to the Lugoda hospital two and sometimes three

times a day (his day starts at 7:00 am and often he doesn't get home until 8 in the evening), but Fennet also follows up on the patients we put into Kibao hospital for extra care (like IVs). My friend Lustika was one of those Fennet drove repeatedly to the Kibao hospital for extra care. When she didn't get better at Kibao, she was referred to go onto the Mafinga hospital. When Lustika was telling me about it she shared with me her anguish over Sostery, her three year old, because she "knew" she wasn't going to recover at the Mafinga Hospital either and she knew she had to send her child back from the hospital to the village. And there was Sostery,

trustfully taking Fennet's hand, being driven all the way by Fennet back to the village, and then walking the child hand-in-hand to his home.

Fennet is far more than a driver. He's an answer to my prayers for my friends. He is indeed a blessing!

As I head for bed tonight with thoughts of Kristian and Sauda and Lustika and Sostery and Fennet, my thoughts are also of all of you who pray for my friends and who help us as we serve these lovely people in their time of need.

Thank you so very much.