

14 Feb 08

Dear Friends and Family,

“Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life. The person who aligns with me hungers no more and thirsts no more, ever.” John 6:35 “There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.” Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist

We saw Linnet this past week and shared a meal with her and Rahab. I wanted to give you an update on what is happening in her life and ask for your prayers.

As many of you may remember, Linnet is a 24 year old woman, mother of two boys, who on Thurs. 20 Sep 2007 was brought into the hospital by neighbors. She had been found lying in the bush near her home. At around 3am that morning her husband had come to their home, dragged her out and using a panga (machete) had cut her 25 times. He cut off both hands and her right foot was dangling. He cut her back, legs, chest, face, and had left her for dead. After admission to our hospital, our surgeon was able to save her leg. After many surgeries and physical therapy, she was discharged from the hospital in mid-November 2007 and went home to live with her father and step-mother.

Bill and I visited her at her home near Chuka on 5 Sep 08. Her father had died, her step-mother had left (and since then has died) and Linnet was left with her 20 year old and 10 year old brothers, Boniface and Loyd, on their father's land. On that visit we were again amazed at Linnet's sweet spirit and perseverance. She was receiving very little care. Boniface can cook for her but traditionally a Meru man cannot bathe a woman. Linnet's two children were taken to an orphanage after her father died as she cannot care for them.

We had visited Linnet with Rahab, a woman that was originally from Maua but now lives with her husband in Embu. She returns often to Maua and heard about Linnet, visited her in the hospital, and became her “mother”. Rahab has done so much for Linnet. In Dec 08 she took Linnet to a well known orthopedic hospital in Kenya to see if they could put a plate in her leg as she had broken her right leg while home and it would not heal. That surgery is scheduled for 12 Feb 08, next Thursday. Once her leg is healed and she is able to balance herself, either Rahab or Bill and I will take her to Kikuyu Hospital for prosthetics. Please join us in praying for Linnet's surgery, rehabilitation and receiving of her prosthetic arms.

About three weeks ago Rahab started a restaurant in Maua. While setting up the new restaurant and hiring staff she heard that Linnet's husband would be going to trial on 9 Feb 09. She felt it would be good for Linnet to come and be present at the court hearings though no one had contacted Linnet. Thus on Sunday Rahab and Linnet arrived in Maua. When Linnet showed up at the court the Magistrate was very pleased and asked if she would testify. (No charges had been brought against Linnet's husband and thus he could not be kept in jail any longer.) The Magistrate asked that Rahab and Linnet to get a P3 form at Maua Methodist Hospital so Linnet could testify. A P3 form is filled with medical information regarding the type of injuries received, usually done by the doctor who took care of the patient involved. After some time the P3 was filled out and Rahab and Linnet returned to the court. Rahab told us that Linnet did such a wonderful job in her testimony and that the Magistrate and all that were in the court room were very impressed with her intelligence and ability to talk about such a traumatic event with such clarity. She was calm and able to explain exactly what happened. She did say that her husband had said he was going to kill her and then kill himself. She never knew why he had cut her. She told us that he had never hurt her before that time.

Her husband, who stated he was not guilty, was allowed to question Linnet and ask questions like how did she know it was him who attacked her. Rahab said that his questions did not help his case at all. After the session her husband apologized to Linnet and said he was afraid to tell the

truth as he would be in prison so long and the people in the court room were so upset with him. Linnet refused to speak to him since he had lied and then ask such foolish, hurtful questions.

The policeman who had booked Linnet's husband had traveled from his new post in Rift Valley to testify. He explained that after the neighbors had brought Linnet to the hospital, they had returned to their village and forcibly brought the husband to the Maua Police Station where he has stayed for the last 17 months.

The court will meet again to hear testimony from the clinical officer at Maua Methodist Hospital that cared for Linnet on her day of admission. That has been scheduled for 17 Feb 09.

We remain in awe of Linnet. As she talked about the court case and seeing her husband for the first time in 17 months, she was calm, not at all agitated and literally radiates a peace and inner joy that can only come from a close relationship with God. She again said she had long ago forgiven her husband and would accept anything the court decided. There is no anger, hate or bitterness in this young woman. Instead she radiates a joy and complete acceptance of who she is, what has happened and what will happen.



Linnet, left, with Rahab enjoying our meal dinner



Jerri and Linnet, with her typical smile, after

The last few weeks have been rather devastating. On Thursday 29 Jan a fire started in a Nakumatt, the largest chain of supermarkets in Kenya, and 29 died. It was in an old building in down town Nairobi with only once entrance and exit. On Saturday 31 Jan a fuel tanker overturned near the town of Molo and exploded killing 113 people with 176 survivors 46 of whom were airlifted to Nairobi while Over 100 was admitted to the local hospitals. People in the village were told that there was an overturned tanker and the villagers ran to see if they could get some of the fuel to sell and then have money to buy food. (Molo is an extremely poor area of the country).

The number of people who are starving in Kenya seems to increase daily. Our pediatric ward continues to have so many starving, emaciated children admitted. A few weeks ago I met a nine year old boy, Felix. He was admitted with severe TB. At 9 years old he weighs 20 pounds and is about 3 feet in length. He is mentally challenged. As I watched him struggle to breath, I couldn't imagine what his 9 years had been like. How hungry, alone and desperate he must have always been. I reached out and touched him and smiled at him. His eyes looked up and met mine and then his little face broke into a smile. He gained weight and seemed to be doing much better but died 4 days ago. I never took a picture of Felix but recently when I visited the ward I took pictures of two children, Martin and Joseph.

Joseph is 8 years old and weighs about 33 pounds. He is also mentally challenged and like Felix has never walked or talked. Both of them have legs about the size of a broom handle. Joseph was brought by his uncle, who went to visit his sister, who is mentally challenged and found Joseph in such critical condition he brought him to the hospital. He states that all three of his sister's children are malnourished but none look like Joseph. Joseph is still vomiting after his 3-hourly feeds as he can only tolerate a small amount of nourishment. He also smiled at me but

that day I didn't have the camera. I am amazed these two children would ever learn how to smile as I imagine their lives have been so full of sorrow, hunger, pain and loneliness.



Joseph with his uncles hand on his head



Martin lying in bed

Martin is 4 years old. As you can see he is quite tall for 4 years old which means he has received food in the past but now the family has nothing and he was admitted with malaria, pneumonia, severe anemia and starvation. We can help these children recover from their illnesses and even gain weight but then we have to send them home to the same situation. The hospital has started a program to send food home with families of children like this.

Eve is a 30 year old woman who was admitted to our medical ward. Her two sons carried her to the hospital, both of whom are extremely thin. Eve was in excruciating pain and even the slightest touch of her skin caused her to groan loudly. She died before any tests were completed to help with her diagnosis.



Eve shortly after her admission

I have found knowing these four patients helpful in my efforts to lose weight. If you are still dieting after Christmas and like me are never too hungry but love the taste of good food, you might use their pictures to give up a meal daily or every other day and during the time you would normally eat you can pray for people who are starving to death and you can send the money you saved to some program in your neighborhood or city, state or country, or around the world that feeds starving people.

A recent Nation (the major Kenyan newspaper) stated that it will be at least October 2009 before Kenya has the possibility of having a good rainy season and a good crop (our next rainy season should be mid-March through May. So many around us will not make it to the end of Feb much less Oct.

I'm not sure if I told you about our rainy season. It was slow in starting but then we had good rain. However, it stopped about 3 weeks too early. Some farmers that live in the hills surrounding Maua had a pretty good crop but most of the people in our area lost all of their maize and beans. They are presently allowing the stunted maize stalks to dry in the field to feed to

cows. Their lack of food, of course, makes them unable to pay their hospital bills. Thus these last months have seen the hospital struggling to meet our payroll and expenses.

Bill and I were in Nairobi this last weekend and saw many Maasai herds of cattle walking through the streets headed for the wealthy areas where there is large compounds with green grass. Already their cattle are dying and they are migrating.

We need your help. Please pray for us and please remember the hungry everywhere. You may not see them for often they are invisible, but they are there, standing quietly pleading with God to help them. I know God hears them, do you?

In His grip,

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"If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one." Mother Teresa

"The fact is that this generation -- yours, my generation ... we're the first generation that can look at poverty and disease, look across the ocean to Africa and say with a straight face, we can be the first to end this sort of stupid extreme poverty, where in the world of plenty, a child can die for lack of food in its belly." Bono 2004