

Dear Friends,

Jan 23, 2018



A young mother like "Lucy"

Everyone likes a happy ending! It was baby dedication Sunday at Sims Chapel. From the front of the church, Pastor Fideline took a baby in her arms and turning to show it off to the congregation said, "*This* is a historic baby!" Looking at the baby's young mother she asked "What's the baby's name?" Lucy (not her real name) whispered shyly, "Her name is Fideline". "Ah bon!", Pastor Fideline blushed and smiled, kissed the infant, prayed over her, and admonished this young mother to bring little Fideline to church regularly. God would be her father, and

those gathered here, her extended family.

Fideline is a "historic" baby for the believers at Sim's because through them, her mother found hope in a world of despair. Lucy was discovered during a campaign initiated by Pastor Fideline, in which the faithful went door to door, two-by-two, sharing Jesus, and extending invitations to church. In one shanty, Pastor Fideline met two women caring for Lucy, a completely distraught, 15 year old girl. These neighbors found pregnant, suicidal, Lucy on the street when her mother put her out and ran away. They told a story of being drugged, raped, discovering a pregnancy, and now devastated family. They knew Lucy's father earned pennies a day at a manioc mill and struggled to provide for Lucy and four siblings. Pastor Fideline shared with Lucy, Jesus love, and a mother's love. Over the next nine months, Jesus reclaimed Lucy's life through the Sim's believers. Pastor Fideline brought Lucy to church, took her to prenatal care, mothered her understanding of her changing body, fashioned loose clothes for her expanding tummy, and with others at Sims, ministered Jesus to this hopeless family in the shanty they called home.

Lucy started coming to church regularly. Her sullen expression changed. Her father soon came, bringing two scrawny siblings. Lucy's pregnancy progressed, and she delivered without fear, at a health center, her bills paid by the Sim's benevolence fund. When she returned to church several weeks after delivery, her swaddled infant got passed from arm to dotting arm. On a Sunday when the baby was three months old, with great rejoicing, "historic" Fideline was dedicated in God's house, a ewe with her lamb, now in God's fold. Happy – but not the ending, it's really only the beginning of little Fideline's story, a story of an impact which will last for eternity.

So many stories don't end happily. Hopelessness looks the same the world over, whatever the color of your skin. Jesus's love and forgiveness replaces despair with hope for eternity. Your neighbourhood, and ours, are burgeoning with "Lucys," and we are blessed to have a message providing hope for a "happy" ending. Thank you for your prayers and generous financial support which makes Congo our "neighborhood".

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