

## I have a true friend in Heaven

One of my true friends is now home with her Savior. We received news yesterday that Eneida (aye-NAY-dah) passed away Sunday afternoon. Thank you for praying and please continue to do so for her family and the other Kuna (COO-nah) believers.

## Eneida was not a "special" friend

I remember the first time I heard the concept of a "special" friend. A few months after arriving in Panama, our whole family was given the opportunity to visit three different tribal works. One village was actually the home of Edelfonso and Eneida. Another location was the very place where a few years later three of our fellow missionaries would be kidnapped by Colombian guerillas.

During our visit to this second village, our two daughters were asked to be "special" friends with two of the tribal girls. Leann and Nellie each received some jewelry from these girls as a sign of their request. As a "special" friend our girls would be culturally obligated to give gifts in return. Not exactly, my concept of friendship, how about you?

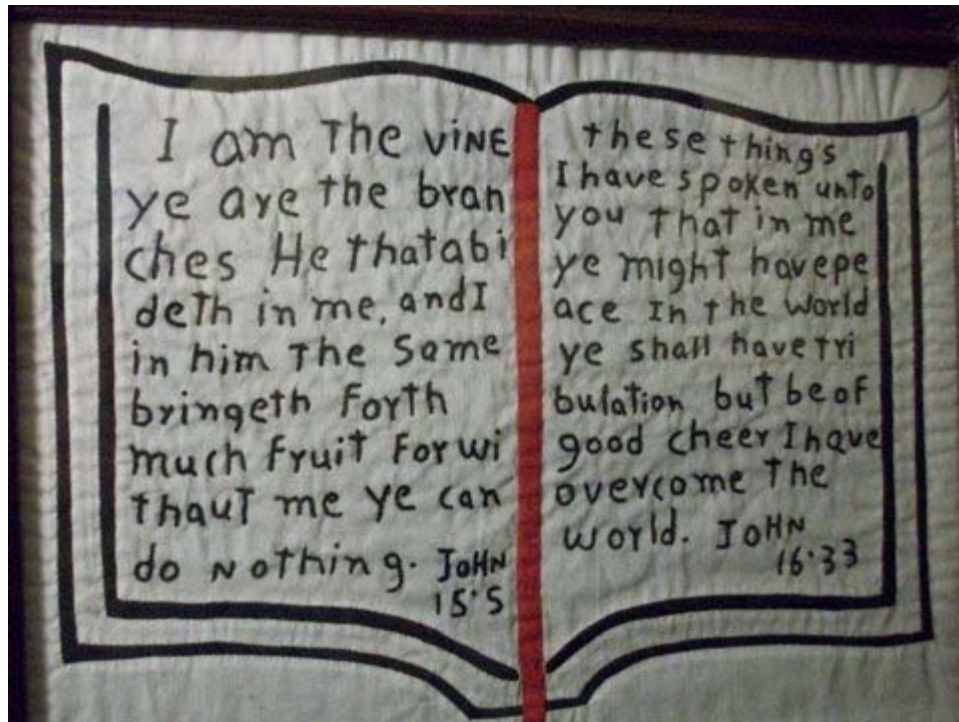
## Did I wanted to be friends?

Some months later, we lived near another tribal group as we finished our Spanish study. I was quite thrilled when one of the tribal ladies brought me some vegetables. "Oh wow", I thought to myself, "My efforts of trying to mimic sounds must at least be communicating that I care about this woman."

But within a few minutes she was asking if I had any garlic. Or onions. Or...? Then I realized she wanted to be my "special" friend. It tends to make one quite cynical when you as the perceived rich American is sought out "specially".

## Eneida: an example of a true friend

Years passed, and Edelfonso and Eneida were living for a few weeks near our mission headquarters. Their little toddler had suffered severe burns and needed time to heal before returning to their village home. I asked Eneida if she would be willing to sew a Kuna blouse for me. I agreed to pay her so much in exchange. But do you know what my true friend did? She sewed that blouse, and she also gave me this gift that now hangs on the wall of our bedroom.



## Jesus is not a "special" friend

Jesus, likewise came and gave His life willingly for me and for Eneida. And for you as well. What was His motivation? Is he my "special" friend? Did He die on the cross so that I would be obligated to try and pay back the debt?

No, I believe His motivation was pure love. A desire to have a relationship with each of us. Isn't it absolutely absurd to think that my limited human efforts could be equal to this life-giving act of Almighty God? In reality, it is a debt that can never be paid.

## Eneida's death to be a living testimony

Paperwork will need to be completed and then Eneida's body will be transported (with the help of some of our missionaries) back to her interior home, probably on Wednesday. There is so much superstition and wrong beliefs among this tribal group concerning death. Please pray for Edelfonso and the other believers to be a strong example especially to unsaved family members. Pray also for our fellow missionaries who love Edelfonso and his family. That their hearts will be comforted and encouraged.

Rejoicing Because Eneida is God's True Friend,

Genise for the Andersons



Serving with New Tribes Mission (Regional Member Care)