



# The view from *This Little Row in the Lord's Vineyard*

The Dohn Family ~ SAMS Missionaries in Health Ministries

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Michael, Elizabeth & Anita

## Horizontal and Vertical Integration

Horizontal and vertical integration of services here is not always perfect. For example, the HIV Unit at the public health hospital used to refer AIDS patients with suspected tuberculosis to us at the Clinic to make the referral to the Tuberculosis Control Unit at the same hospital. For whatever reasons, the integration of services within the hospital was not working.

The integration of services can be particularly important in domestic violence ministry. The "victims' unit" here has counselors & case workers. Those personnel coordinate with the police, health services, legal services, social services, and the courts. They all work together as a team. There is a system. Well, at least that is the idea.

An experience in one rural community runs something like this: A woman had a baby about nine months after her husband was sent to prison. Sometime after he was released from jail and moved back home, he found out that the baby was probably not his. He began abusing his wife and threatening to kill the baby as well as the other man. The baby was secreted at a neighbor's home until a move to a relative's house was arranged. The husband moved out, but returned frequently to beat-up his wife and make threats. He was a dangerous guy by all accounts and the neighbors faced similar threats when they tried to get involved.

Neighbors called the police. When the policemen came, the mother hid and would not meet with them. The neighborhood had expected that the police would call the victim's unit to send more appropriate personnel: women, not in uniform, sensitive counselors, and skilled at finding alternatives in these situations. As of this point, no one from the victim's unit has appeared.

As we accompany communities in developing their local plans to respond to violence in their midst, our hope was that a single call from the community would activate the whole victims' system. That hope has yet to be realized.

Meanwhile, the community is deciding who should call the victims' unit. They are also praying for God's presence in the situation – the ultimate vertical integration.

Keep praying, Anita and Michael

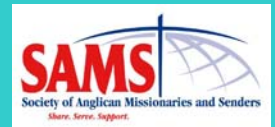
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