

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

September 2020

PNG's 'Harvest 2020' Postponed but God is Certainly Still at Work

The COVID-19 postponing of PNG's massive Harvest 2020 events brought sadness to many people across the nation, and abroad, but God is still working mightily during this difficult period.

437 Precious Souls Baptised

On an exciting Sabbath in May 2020, 437 candidates were baptised in the Komako District of Eastern Highlands Mission, PNG. Praise God for a bountiful harvest!



During the lockdown, VIA worker John Philip has been faithfully preparing souls for baptism in Mbu, Morobe Province. He shares God's truth in small house groups as well as in large open-air meetings. He has encouraged the members of the four churches he is responsible for to also get involved in his passion for sharing the love of Jesus.

The challenges of COVID-19 caused many community people to look to his churches for help and his church members had many opportunities to provide for peoples' spiritual and physical needs. Through the power of the Holy Spirit working through him and his faithful congregations, on the 16th of May, 56 people were baptized, and 200 more are in baptismal classes.

John Philip is so very grateful for the support VIA provides: "Your prayers and the financial support given to me and my family will be greatly honoured in the sight of God."

COVID-19 Passports?

For many years Volunteers In Action has highlighted the fact that the most effective missionaries are often those who are witnessing amongst their own people. They know the local culture, the languages and the way to their own people's hearts. COVID-19 has made VIA's grassroots model of evangelism even more important. In a locked down COVID-19 world the best missionaries don't need passports.

Thank you again for your ongoing financial and prayer support for the grassroots, front-line VIA lay workers in the island fields. May God continue to give you an expanding vision of the harvest that truly is ripe, though the workers are few.

Solomon Islands say 'Thank You'

We recently received this kind letter from Pastor Silent Tovosia, President of the Solomon Islands Mission.



"On behalf of the Solomon Islands Mission, I want to express our heartfelt and sincere gratitude once again to VIA Australia for the generous support given to our VIA program. And also for the support of the 18 additional VIAs. The VIA work is a big blessing to our Mission.

We thank God for the kind-hearted supporters. Please can you pass on my sincere appreciation as President of the mission. I pray that God will bless the supporters who sacrifice to help spread the gospel to many new areas in this mission. Our total baptisms for 2020 has already exceeded two thousand precious souls.

God bless, Pr. Silent Tovosia"

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Matthew 24:14

Discovery Bible Reading for Youth

by Wilfred Nangu, Sepik Mission, PNG

VIA missionary Micah David organized Discovery Bible Readings (DBR) with a group of youth who attended for six months and were all baptised in July at an evangelistic meeting. They are very excited about their new faith in Jesus. (photo below)



The DBR program is working well and is helpful to both old and new members of the church. The VIA's in Sepik Mission have found it so easy to have in-depth bible studies on church fundamental bible doctrines. We really appreciate the DBR program in seeing church plants increasing in our local mission. Praise be to God, Amen.



Thank You for Resources

Charles Dimu from Solomon Islands Mission is one of hundreds of VIA lay workers across the Pacific who are regularly blessed with resources that help them to be more effective in their outreach into very isolated communities.

Whether it be a bicycle, a lantern, a raincoat, Bibles, study books or other items, they are all used to win souls for the kingdom.

Charles, holding onto his two new books, could have been speaking on behalf of all the VIA's when he said, "I just want to show my appreciation to the sponsors for their commitment to helping me with these great resources." With a smile on his face he added, "Despite the long distances that I walk for visitation and Bible studies, I build my confidence and courage in the Lord."



"I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people." 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

Eastern Highlands Updates

by Stanley Aurika, Eastern Highlands, PNG

Many VIA's are faithfully serving as Bible workers in the Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission (EHSM) of PNG. This energetic VIA soul-winner and church planter is carrying roofing iron on his shoulder along a treacherous mountain path in order to complete the new church that has been built in the non-Adventist village where he has been working.



Robert Onkefa is another faithful Bible worker in the EHSM. Over many months he has been studying the Bible with contacts in his area and prepared ten precious souls for baptism.

When the District Director visited, he was able to baptize these eager souls for the kingdom of God. God is really blessing Robert's efforts as he continues to win souls and plant new churches.



VIA David Iyomena is described by those who know him as "a great warrior for God". His energetic yet humble manner draws people to the truth that he shares, and he has been blessed to prepare twenty-three people for baptism in this most recent reporting period. (photo below)



God's Lighthouse Brings New Members

The building of this new church in the Eastern Highlands brought a lot of interest from the non-Adventists in this remote community. They were curious about the beliefs of the faithful Adventists who volunteered their time, day after day, to do this important work for their Heavenly Father.



As they continued to build, the church members prayed that this would be a 'Lighthouse for God' and bring many souls to His Kingdom. God rewarded their dedication. When the church was completed—with roofing iron provided by VIA—two local ministers from other denominations felt the Holy Spirit prompting them to join in worshipping there. The first Sabbath it was opened, they brought all their family members along and requested to join the baptismal classes. At the end of the Total Member Involvement (TMI) outreach program in May they were all baptised. A VIA Bible worker is now the pastor in God's Lighthouse on the hill.

COVID Can't Stop Building or Baptisms



The way that Seventh-day Adventist church building programs continue to progress, even during the difficulties that COVID-19 has caused, is a great witness to people in PNG's Eastern Highlands. VIA provided the roofing iron for two large churches in areas dominated by other denominations. Seeing the roofing go on showed people in the community how committed the VIA volunteers are to bringing God's truth to every person in these isolated areas.



The lock-down period, with its associated social distancing restrictions, has also seen many lonely people hungrily seeking God's Word. More small groups have been formed and more churches have been planted in these areas.

Pathfinder programs for young people have continued to operate carefully even under difficult circumstances. Through small group Bible studies and Pathfinders, 14 people have given their hearts to Jesus and been baptized in the last few months.



These new church plants and small groups will be needing their own church buildings and more VIA missionaries soon. Please continue to pray for these new believers, that their hunger for truth will be met.

Skin Health Leads to Spiritual Health

by Wesley Siru, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands

Lovelyn Otarii is a Seventh-day Adventist living in the South Sea evangelical community of Kwareasi. She is married to a non-Adventist and has eight children. Even though her husband doesn't believe the Adventist truth, he still allows her to attend Sabbath worship at Burianiasi, a nearby village. However, without spiritual support in her community, Lovelyn found it very hard to share her faith.



Then one of the VIA lay ministers at Burianiasi gave her a World Changers Bible and some medicinal creams for treating 'Bakua', a common skin disease in poorer regions of the Solomon Islands. The medicines had been made available by the Solomon Island Mission. She loved reading her new Bible and found it much easier to share her faith when she could offer better health to people too. After one of the church leaders began using the Bakua medicine, she started to experience much better health. She asked Lovelyn if the VIA layman could provide some Bibles and skin cream to other people, especially the younger people in the village, so that they could feel the same health and happiness that she was experiencing. Please pray for the community of Kwareasi and for Lovelyn as she practically shares her faith and God's truth with her neighbours and friends.

Heathen Cult Worshipers. Really?

by Nathan Kaisifa, Santa Ana Island, Solomon Islands Mission

On my island of 2,400 souls, but only 22 Seventh-day Adventists, anyone who converts to the Adventist movement is labelled a heathen cult follower. Despite the hardships we face, God is working mightily for us.

I invited the chief to be part of our Visitor's Day program and he is the first chief of our village to ever attend our worship. He said he knows why the Adventists are hated, because we teach true Christian values and uphold them. He now allows visitation and Bible study in his own home!

A retired school teacher named John (pictured holding his new Audio Bible), has now started attending Sabbath worship and is faithfully paying his tithe and offerings.

I spend much of my time visiting with the sick, the lonely and people in real need. Please pray for my work in this difficult but rewarding place.



Cursed but Safe

by James Maelihato, Bekapoa, Solomon Islands

Thomas Dawea is a young man from Poa Village on Santa Cruz. He was first introduced to the Three Angels Messages when attending Afutara Rural Training Centre in 2017. After graduating he returned home and began attending church on Sabbaths at Luemimi Adventist Church, and did full Bible studies.



Thomas's cousin brother, an Anglican Priest at Poa Village, is not happy with him so he cursed him, but nothing happened to him. He made his decision to follow the Biblical Sabbath of the Lord and join in baptism. Praise God that he is now the Youth Leader for Luemimi SDA church!

Dear Friends of VIA

If your heart is being touched by the Holy Spirit as you read of these faithful men and women who are working on the front lines of God's work, we invite you to consider increasing your support for them, in prayer or financially, or by sharing this newsletter with others who may also be prompted to give.

Thank you for your ongoing faithfulness.

Persecuted but Strong

by James Maelihato, Bekapoa, Solomon Islands

I am working in an area where the Anglican Church is very popular and people who join us are persecuted strongly.

An Anglican couple, John Deky and his wife Susan (photo)



are one of many examples. John Deky was a committed and faithful catechist for the Anglican church for 11 years. Though John was a catechist, he was also a drug addict. He was heavy on marijuana and other drugs like alcohol and betel nut.

In the past he was always in strong opposition to the Adventist Church and rebuked members of his church for attending the evangelistic meetings I conducted at Mei SDA Church. In 2019, I conducted a series of meetings at his village which he attended, and the Holy Spirit worked on his heart. When I made the appeal, he and his wife came forward, signed up for Bible studies and then decided to be baptized.

John and Susan have been persecuted by family and former church members for taking their stand on the side of truth. Susan's father told her not to call him her father anymore, and not even to work on his land. The whole Anglican community attacks both of them now. Though going through challenges with their family both have now discovered truth and their testimony is that they will not turn back, but will keep following Jesus until death no matter what comes their way. Please pray for them, and for many others in similar situations.

Baptised Amidst Adversity

by James Maelihato, Bekapoa, Solomon Islands

We were somewhat surprised that we were asked to hold another series of meetings at Mei/Maleu in August 2020. Last time we worked there many charges were labelled against us by the leaders of the community. The series included health talks by Dr Chester Kuma and it really impacted the lives of the people, but their leaders were always interrupting each individual's decision. Although convinced by the messages, still the leaders were blocking the people from coming to the meetings. Praise God that the meetings ended with a baptism of six people!



Pr. Kovo (L) and James Maelihato (R) with new believers

Kiribati Celebrates Baptisms

by Luther Taniveke, Mission President, Kiribati



We are very happy to report that we had three baptismal programs in Tarawa in August. They were at Betio Beach, Buota and Bonriki. As the result of the work of our hard working VIA's twenty-two people were baptised. Praise God!

God is moving in a mighty way in Kiribati Mission. So far this year we have already baptized 84 people, as the results of our VIA and ministers' efforts in leading people to Jesus Christ. There are some more baptisms that will take place this month in the outer islands.



The Lord is blessing his church here in Kiribati, even though we have lots of challenges. We look forward to the second coming to meet our Lord Jesus Christ soon.



God's Miracle Healing

by Toksy Benson, EHSM, Goroka, PNG

I give thanks to God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for my sponsors. I am very excited to express my heart to you. Let me tell you a testimony of something very fantastic that happened in my ministry. Acts chapter 3 really happened here!

A woman was sick on her bed for nine months. She was unable to walk or leave her bed. I met her while preaching nearby. I asked her if she wanted to get well and she said she was willing. I prayed for her three times and in the last prayer I quoted Acts 3 and told her to rise up and walk. She rose up and received instant healing! I told her Christ helped her and she now needs to change her old life and follow Christ. Praise God! Thank you sponsors. I hope to see you all when the Lord returns.

Tonga Updates

by Saia Vea, Tonga Mission

Asa Kivalu is taking care of Fahefa SDA Church and is currently in preparation for a youth evangelism program coming up in October. As part of the preparation they are doing witnessing programs on Sabbath afternoons with church youth around the villages of Fahefa and Houma.



Asa and the youth team ready for street witnessing

Siuela Peleketi is taking care of a new group in the island of Ha'afeva and is busy running public programs, doing Bible studies with young people and even joining the men of the island in preparing and planting a community farm.



Siuela preparing for an open-air program on Ha'afeva

Daughter Steps Out in Faith

by James Maelihato, Bekapoa, Solomon Islands

Naelyn Tahe, being young, accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour in her life. Though both her parents are still doing Bible studies, she made her decision to go first into the waters of baptism. May God bless you Naelyn as you continue to serve Him faithfully.



Naelyn being congratulated by her sisters and auntie.

Vic & Marilyn Say Farewell

What an inspiration it is to see people giving their time, talents and treasures to the Lord's work in these last days. Vic and Marilyn Trosky have faithfully served God in the VIA ministry for 15 years, from May 2005 to April 2020.



It is with sadness, but great appreciation, that we say farewell to Vic and Marilyn as they retire from VIA's service. We know that VIA will always be in their hearts, as they are in ours. Thank you Vic and Marilyn!

VIA Committee Meets in True COVID-style

What a blessing it is to have the technology to meet 'face to face' while thousands of kilometres apart. While some lengthy online meetings can put the most energetic people to sleep, VIA's 'virtual' meetings are a time of inspirational reports and strategic planning to take the everlasting gospel to people across the Pacific as effectively as we can. What an exciting time to be alive!

Dear sponsors, we thank you for the privilege of serving you through VIA's ministry. As fellow, mission-minded, followers of Jesus, we would also like to sincerely thank every one of you for your ongoing sacrifice and generosity. May God continue to bless you as you invest in front-line soul winning through VIA's committed lay workers.

It will be a glorious day when we are all standing together on the sea of glass looking up at our beautiful Saviour, along with thousands of people who are there because the VIA lay workers that you support have shared with them about God's love and His plan for their lives. What a day that will be!



September's VIA Board meeting online (L to R) Neil Watts, Julian Archer, Greg Walker, Terry McHugh, Jenni & Derek Rippingale.

52 Baptised During Tribal Fighting!

by Abel Ken, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

The photos may look like they're from the 1930's but they're freshly taken in the very remote Engan District of the Western Highlands of PNG, just a few kilometres from the Porgera Gold Mine. Notorious for its tribal fighting, the area has long been one of the most difficult yet rewarding mission fields of the nation.



VIA layman Abel Ken reported the following to us in June this year, "All the houses were burned and people were killed and dead during the tribal fighting. We have not good enough rest during that time and people and the church members scaring all over the places, but we thank God that we run two evangelistic meetings in the middle of the tribal fighting. At last we all feel happy and baptize 52 candidates and the Suyan hand church became a fully organised church on 7th of June, 2020."



Dear sponsors, let's again praise God together as we continue to support these dedicated soul winners on the front lines of the battle. They truly deserve our utmost support.

EASY PAYMENT METHODS

Post Cheques to: VIA, c/- Val Friend, 20 Wehmeier Ave, Frenchville, QLD 4701

Direct Deposit: Westpac, BSB 034002, Account 482352 (Please use your ID number or name as the reference).

Credit Card: Monthly, quarterly or half-yearly scheduled credit card payments. Please contact Val at the details below for a Payment Authorisation Form. **THANK YOU!**

To all our wonderful, dedicated, generous sponsors! THANK YOU! We hope you've been blessed while reading about the amazing ministry that your support makes possible. God is working through YOU!

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