

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

April 2021

Former VIA Supported Worker Appointed as President of PNGUM

What a humbling yet joyful experience it is to see VIA-supported workers being given responsible positions in the mission fields. Pr Malachi Yani worked as a layperson in 1998-1999 under the sponsorship of his local churches. He then went on to complete his ministerial studies at Sonoma.



When the West New Britain Province mission was struggling financially, VIA stepped in and provided some double stipends to keep pastors employed, including Pr Yani. Malachi went on to be the President of the Western Highlands Mission and was elected as President of the whole PNG Union Mission in November 2020.

In a recent email to VIA founder Cliff Morgan, Malachi commented, "Those formative years of my ministry were important, and I want to thank our Laities in Australia who invested meaningfully toward Human Resources as well as infrastructure developments in PNG and abroad. VIA has invested much, and we are the products of these investments. I want to salute you all for your unwavering support toward the mission in PNG. To God be the glory."

We congratulate you, Pr Yani, on your new appointment and we wish you God's wisdom, courage and strength for your new role.

"Humble yourselves in the eyes of the Lord and He will lift you up." James 4:10



"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" *Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 143*

Thank you from SPD President

Dear VIA Donors,

I have seen the recent facts and figures of the activities of VIA. To know that on average more than one church a week is roofed and that over 400 volunteers are supported financially in mission work is great news. Thanks for your support—which benefits the local Missions in the SPD.



When I talk with local Mission Presidents, without asking them, they will report on the good work that some of their VIA's are doing in reaching new communities and people for Jesus and His last day message. Your ongoing support is appreciated around the SPD. Thank you.

Blessings as we with God transform the Pacific,
Glenn Townend

Praise God!

Due to COVID restrictions and fewer flights arriving in Australia we are still waiting for reports from five different missions in the South Pacific, however, even just from the reports we have received, VIA's impacts for just the six months from July to December 2020 are wonderful.

Churches being looked after by VIAs 919
Number Baptised (July-Dec 2020) 3,795
Number in Baptismal Classes 7,149

We praise our Father for the working of His Spirit in the lives of so many people. What a joy it will be to meet these precious souls in heaven and hear of how God has used us all to bring them there.

DID YOU KNOW?

VIA only uses 0.5% of total funds for overhead costs—and that all comes from bank interest—so **100% of your gift** goes to the field. ☺ Thank you for trusting us with your hard-earned donations as we invest it for eternity.

God Kept Me Alive So I Could Find His Truth

by Stephen Lenga Jnr, Toge Village,
Solomon Islands Mission

Stephen Lenga doesn't know exactly when he was born. "Sometime between 1920 and 1924", he says, during the time when Christianity was first starting to be introduced into his country. As an infant he was baptized in the Toge Anglican church and later married a woman from his congregation.



He remembers helping the Australian soldiers during World War II, lifting and carrying supplies over rugged terrain. Stephen and his wife went on to have eight children, and he now has 61 grandchildren and 75 great-grand-children! His wife passed away many years ago and he wondered why God had kept him alive so long. Then in 2020 he felt he had discovered the reason. He and one of his sons were contacted by a VIA missionary and on the 3rd of October 2020, they, along with his son's wife and four children, were baptized in Buma village. They are currently the only Adventists in their area and are praying that a small church will be built there in the near future.

God's Spirit Poured Out

"I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh... your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:28

VIA Adrian Butu often gets hassled by leaders from other denominations as he preaches publicly in markets and open-air spaces of the Russel Islands in the Solomon Islands. They claim he preaches heresy, but he calmly speaks with each of them and often prays with them.

At the moment he is doing Bible studies with two members of the local Anglican church. They have had two separate dreams on two different occasions, all which relate to God showing them the truth about His Sabbath. He sees this as a direct fulfilling of the prophecy found in Joel 2:28. Adrian praises God for the way He is working in the communities he is reaching out to.

HE WHO KNOWS NO FAILURE

"When we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavours. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure."

Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 363

Ministry Continues Despite Tragedy

by Jim Wagi, Western Highlands, PNG

Robert Abiya lives in his wife's Yongale village between the borders of Enga and Hela Provinces in the PNG Highlands. It is very isolated, and the little band of members were forcefully scattered abroad by tribal fighting. Robert and his wife were left alone but they were determined to witness.



One day Robert went looking for bush materials for the church. His wife, carrying their three-month old son, later followed her husband. As she crossed Wake River alone, she used one hand to hold her baby, and the other to support herself. While in the middle of the river, she stepped over a slippery stone and lost hold of her sleeping baby causing it to fall into the fast-flowing river, never to be seen again in this life.

There the helpless mother wept alone. Some boys discovered the weeping mother and delivered the heart-rending news Robert who was shocked. The news spread to Robert's relatives and the whole tribe, armed with fighting gear, headed to Robert and his wife demanding compensation because they had paid bride-price to the woman's relatives knowing she would bear children for their tribe. Their claim wasn't accepted, and it triggered massive destruction of houses and food gardens.

Robert and his wife, knowing that God still cares for them, continued their ministry and completed the church. Many people from the area have responded positively to an evangelistic series, and three other denominations freely provided food and firewood during the outreach programs. Many have been baptized.

This year Robert was recommended for VIA sponsorship and the local Mission happily agreed. Thank you, VIA donors, for your support which makes all of this beautiful ministry possible.

"For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'"

Romans 10:13-15

Congregations United After 14 Years Apart

by Wilfred Nangu, Sepik Mission, PNG



Greetings from Sepik Mission. This picture shows the much-celebrated reopening or reorganization of the closed down Numboku Mama Church. It was closed in 2005 due to a group called Save Ministry who rose up in that church and divided the entire church into two separate groups, one group remained Adventists and the other worshipped on Sabbath but in a different location.

Praise be to God because He recently raised up some VIA missionaries who united with each other and with both church families and brought the congregations back together!

The VIA missionaries Kembol Yawisaho, Ismael Warasima and John Homboku have also increased the membership. In all these many unhealthy challenges, God paved divine ways to bring his purpose-filled church to triumph. Where He directs none can oppose.

The Power of Small Groups

by Jim Wagi, Western Highlands, PNG



Reuben Waso started his VIA ministry in July 2020 at Paudaka, north-east of Magarima District in the Western Highlands Mission. Adventists are very new to this United Church dominated area and the local people are very loyal to their denomination regardless of its teachings.

Reuben introduced small groups on weekdays. They were scattered all over, but Reuben persisted. Members invited their friends and they all met in the church only on Sabbaths for fellowship.

As they continued, many children flooded into Sabbath School, but frustrated parents dragged them out. However, many stayed and some of the children were among the 17 people baptized last December from the combined efforts exerted by Reuben, his sponsor and their God.

Timely Church for Truth Seeker

by Jim Wagi, Western Highlands, PNG

Elijah (at right) was a dedicated deacon of the United Church for 23 years and served as the Circuit's Chairman for the next 14 years. He enjoyed his ministry, but his conscience was troubled by the question of why Christians worshipped the same God but on two different days? So, he started praying for an answer.



While he was praying, Paul Wak (at left), one of his tribesmen, began to build an SDA Church in his village. Villagers of other denominations did not want the church, but Paul continued, so his tribesmen beat him severely.

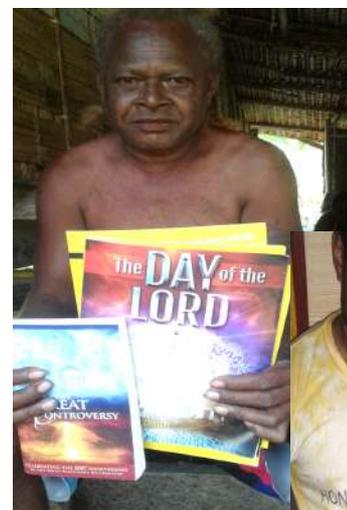
Meanwhile, Elijah heard a voice in a dream that said, "Discard what you have and get the other." Elijah unmistakably interpreted his own dream and changed from Sunday keeping to Sabbath keeping.



Realizing his prayer was answered, Elijah walked straight into the Church Paul Wak was building under

steep opposition. Elijah's former pastor shouted disturbance on Elijah's first Sabbath worship, but the Sabbath keepers did not say a word and the pastor walked away at his own will. Finally, Elijah was baptized in late 2020. He now enjoys worshipping God as instructed by the Bible.

Solomon Island's Literature Sharing



VIA Steve Lenga sent in photos of some of his recent contacts with their new present truth literature.



We can praise God for the work of the last days publishing ministry.

Solomon Islands Church Roofing

In 2020, VIA and Solomon Islands Mission (SIM) undertook the roofing of 15 churches under the guidance of Pastor David Filo, Assistant General Secretary of SIM. One of the churches was Judea Church and their report highlights how God worked through the local members, VIA Bible worker Dickson Olofa and evangelist Mauta Kemuel, and how a whole community bonded together around the church building project and saw many conversions.

An added gift was that after the evangelistic campaigns, the whole village changed their United Church into a Seventh-day Adventist Church!

The other interests who are yet to be baptised are undergoing Bible studies. The difficulty that they face is the challenge to stop farming pigs (main income), betelnut chewing and smoking of safusafu (home tobacco). However, we see that God is working in their lives and a change in their lifestyle is evident.

Today, 70 precious souls worship under their new roof each Sabbath and many more are in baptismal classes. We hope you enjoy these progress photos.



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.

Singing to Save

VIA John Tori of Darione Church, Solomon Islands Mission, has a passion for reaching young people, especially 'missing members', those who used to be members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the Solomon Islands, people love to sing and so John has set up a singing ministry especially for young people. They meet regularly to sing and study and socialize. Towards the end of 2020 he ran a Singing Camp for the young people who had been attending, and at the conclusion nine requested baptism. Of these, five were 'missing members'. John praises God for his goodness in bringing His children home!



"I Choose God, No Matter What"

During an evangelistic series run by VIA Joe Mahit in Vanuatu, it came to his attention that a young woman was attending against her father's wishes. Twenty-one-year-old Mothy Belcim had been forbidden to go to the Adventist meetings, but she was so hungry for this message that she came anyway, hiding as best she could in the crowd, night after night. But when Joe made his first appeal at the conclusion of a meeting, Mothy knew she couldn't hide anymore and she bravely stood up, knowing this news would quickly get back to her father. She knew there was a beating waiting at home for her.

At the conclusion of the meeting Joe and several church members prayed with Mothy and it was decided that the village chief, who was sympathetic to her situation, would accompany her home. He informed her father that he had no right to beat her up, but he wouldn't listen. After the chief left, he grabbed Mothy and beat her badly. Hearing her cries, the chief returned, breaking into the house to rescue her. She was taken to hospital with injuries to her head. Her father was taken to the police station.

In spite of everything that had happened to her, this brave young woman was determined to follow Jesus, and stood again when Joe Mahit made his next appeal at the evening meetings. She was recently baptized in a beautiful Sabbath morning service and has been faithfully attending her local church since then.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Devil Priest's Daughter Requests Baptism

VIA Volunteer Jack Mutu led his small group to conduct a branch Sabbath School Program in the small village of Felafauru, Solomon Islands, where a devil priest was known to be active. After the program someone called for their help as the devil priest's daughter (3rd from left), was in a fit and couldn't walk.



Jack and his group carried her to their church nearby and prayed with her. He then inquired with her father about what had happened. The devil priest informed him that she had disobeyed the devil's rules and that was why she was so unwell. The young woman was taken to the local clinic and after much prayer, she recovered from her illness.

A few weeks later Pr William Akomne conducted a one-week campaign at Felafauru village and when he made his appeal for people to give their hearts to Jesus, this young woman came forward to join baptism classes. She is now waiting for a time when

a pastor will be available to come and baptize her.



Jack and his church members recently completed this church building in the nearby village of Toleefou.

Great Harvest Amidst Tribal Fighting

The dedication program of VIA Isaiah Otingau's 'hand church' at Andafuka, East Sepik Province, PNG, was disrupted by a tribal fight between two clans. During the clash two men were killed and one was admitted to hospital with gunshot wounds, but even this didn't stop the dedication program going forward so that ground for God could be claimed in that troubled village. During the program four people were baptized. Isaiah hopes that he and the new members of the Otingau church will be able to reach out to the warring clans with a message of God's love and peace.

Isaiah held a weeklong evangelistic series in a nearby village, Yambimbot. He had recently planted another hand church in the area and prayed that God would bring many 'missing members' and new believers into the new church. His prayers were answered in a mighty way. Hundreds of people attended the meetings and at the conclusion when he made the appeal, 105 precious individuals gave their lives to Jesus. Twenty-five were 'missing members' and 58 asked to be baptized. Praise God for His goodness and for Isaiah's faithfulness!

My New Friend Saved my Dad!

Emmuel Kavu, a Simbu Mission VIA missionary, likes to spend time in his community, meeting new people and finding out where the greatest needs are. One day he befriended a four-year-old boy who seemed to need care. The boy took him home to meet his father who was suffering with severe drug addiction.



Over a period of many weeks, Emmuel ministered to the boy and his father, bringing them food and praying with them. The man was able to overcome his addiction through the power of the Holy Spirit and Emmuel had the thrill of seeing his new friend baptized just a few months ago! All because he took the time to be a friend to a lonely little boy.

Live Broadcasting Sees 17 Baptised



VIA missionary, Edsen Rintu has facilitated a Live Broadcast Evangelistic series in the small Sunlight Community, with a population of about 200 people. At the conclusion of the three-week program in the King George Market, 17 people decided to give their lives to Jesus and were baptized. Many more stood up during the meeting to show their request for further Bible study and visitation.

Edsen is confident there will be more baptisms soon. He says that the greatest challenge their small church faces is the nurturing and training of newly baptized members so they can learn to disciple others to follow Jesus.

65 x 'Please Help'!

Due to a number of changes, including rapidly increasing demand for VIA workers in the field, by the end of 2021 we expect to have 65 dedicated VIA workers without sponsors. Please share this need for more funding with your mission-minded friends, local churches and Sabbath School classes.

We would love you to also prayerfully consider whether you might be able to increase your sponsorships in 2021/2022.

Thank you!

Shiloh Centre Shows God's Love in Action

The Seghe Hand Church in the Solomon Islands, set up by VIA missionary Graham Varane, has become a community care centre. People know that they can seek help at 'Shiloh', the name Graham gave to God's building. Here he oversees the distribution of care to the homeless, to the hungry, to widows and even offers his services to help settle differences between village members. Clothes, food, gardening services and shelter are offered to anyone who needs them. Graham says that he just wants to "comfort those who are in sorrow, sad and whose lives are incomplete."



Shiloh is indeed a light of God's love and care in this part of the Solomon Islands, and 23 people have been baptized as a result of the love they have felt.

Even Stoning Can't stop this VIA Preacher!

Hela Province of PNG is a rather volatile place to be a missionary. The constant tribal fighting is often punctuated with gunshots, and many people are injured and killed every month. VIA volunteer Ben Luke describes it as "a very difficult place" yet he quickly adds, "But my God has blessed me richly and I thank Him always!" Ben preaches in public places and he has brought many souls to baptism.

Ben finds it particularly difficult to share in areas where other church denominations have a stronghold, but he preaches anyway. Twice he has been stoned and once they grabbed his microphone and broke it. God has blessed his boldness and in the last half of 2020, six people were baptized as a direct result of his preaching. At the moment Ben praises God that he also has 30 people in baptismal classes.

429!

In 2021 we have the highest number of sponsored VIAs (429) since 2011. That's a record for the last decade. Thank YOU!

No-One Could Stop the Preaching

For two weeks in late October 2020, VIA missionary Clifton Bakale Luda conducted an evangelistic campaign at Takawa Catholic Station in the Solomon Islands. The Takawa Catholic parish priest forbade his congregation and their families from attending, claiming that it was "Satanic and heretical", but when the evening meetings started the seats were filled with children and young people. The adults stood in the dark and listened.

On the second week when Clifton started to preach on the Three Angel's Messages, interest soared. People were hearing new things that cut straight to their hearts.

In desperation the parish priest called the parish council together for an urgent meeting. They could find no valid reason to stop the Adventist campaign, so decided to use force, threatening that if the Adventist meetings didn't stop then the stage would be damaged and harm might come to the presenters.

When the landlord of the building in which the campaign was being held heard about these threats, he confronted the parish priest and the council, informing them that they had no right to stop the preaching of God's word. The Landlord declared that it was better for the people to listen to the word of God than to be partying, getting drunk and abusing drugs—their usual Friday night activities.

At the end of the campaign, 21 people came forward to be baptized, including the Youth Leader of the Catholic Church. Praise God that there are now three branch Sabbath Schools in the Takawa Catholic Community, and 18 more people have requested Bible studies. What a God we serve!

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 DONATION METHODS

Post Cheques to: Volunteers In Action, c/- Val Friend, 3 Friends Court, Yeppoon, QLD 4703

Direct Deposit: Westpac, BSB 034002, Account 482352 (Please use your VIA Sponsor ID number or your 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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