

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

April 2025



Choosing God's Way Over Weapons

Dickson Taipe, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

The Linapini Tribe of Tari are notorious for their violence. They recently made the news by killing a policeman. People live in fear of them and no one chooses to visit their territory of their own free will ... except the Adventists.



A large delegation of church members, wanting to bring peace to the hearts of this tribe, attended the WHM's Adventist Community Service Congress held in Tari. Hundreds of them, dressed in their recognisable yellow shirts (photo above), shone the brightness of God's peace into the township. Their presence and message had a positive impact and VIA missionary Dickson Taipe was asked to continue the work with the people of this area.

With much prayer for God's protection and wisdom, Dickson started his ministry with friendship evangelism. He visited people in their homes, gave Bible studies, asked about their needs and prayed with them. As he continued his work, people gradually changed. They laid down their weapons, attended church and some were baptized.

Today, three years later, there are 35 members in this area. With another church under construction. Dickson freely admits that his new converts live in a constant state of uneasy peace. Waves of violence and tribal fighting often tempt them to rearm, sometimes just in self-defence. They find it hard to keep out of the fighting, and some are struggling to maintain their Christianity and choose the way of peace. Dickson requests that we keep his church members in our prayers.

We Will Go!

Eddy Mogory, Morobe Mission, PNG

In Australia and New Zealand, we sometimes forget how easy our travel is. Very often our households have two or three cars. If we need to go somewhere we just grab the keys and walk to our garage. And yet, when our church leaders put out a request for members to drive with them to visit an isolated congregation, most of us find reasons why we can't be there. What if we were asked to walk there?!

The members of minister Eddy Mogory's church, in Morobe Mission in PNG don't have cars, and yet, when he requested his congregation in Hobu to accompany him to visit an isolated group in Mt Sukuza Village, many happily volunteered.



Enroute to Mt Sukuza Village

The village was only nine kilometres away. In Australia this distance could be covered in less than ten minutes by car, but it took Eddy and his church members eight hours to reach their destination on foot. The tracks were rough, steep and made extra treacherous by the torrential rain. And yet they went willingly and arrived joyfully, ready to support and encourage their brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Kindness Remembered and Treasured

Jim Wagi, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

February 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of Nemong Church in the Western Highlands Mission of PNG. It was completed in 2005, with construction funded by two associations: South QLD Retirees Association and VIA.



Paulus Enga shared the history of Nemong Church. He said two Australian men were instrumental in transitioning the church from a little, temporary, bush materials building to the beautiful building it is today. Pr David Lawson and Cliff Morgan were the leaders of the associations who provided the funding for construction. Both men were passionate supporters of mission and evangelism in PNG.



Today, the congregation remembers these men, and their presence at the church's opening in 2005, with much gratefulness. Today the church is led by VIA volunteer, Moses Kuri.

Pr David Lawson passed to his rest on the 2nd of April this year. His memorial service was held on the 10th of April at the Victoria Point Retirement Village Church.



Cliff Morgan & Pr David Lawson at Nemong Church in 2005

God's Blessings Sustain Us

Clyde Laloi, Sepik Mission, PNG

Volunteer Clyde Laloi and his family live and work under very difficult circumstances. Most homes in rural PNG are surrounded by vegetable gardens to sustain the occupants, but the landowners where Clyde lives will allow no gardens to be planted, so his family cannot sustain themselves. Yet he faithfully continues to serve, sustained by God's providences and the gifts that new contacts bring them.

He reports: "We continue to do the ministry of God, to run the meetings, and witness God's people coming to repent and be baptised. We depend entirely on God's blessings. Despite the difficulties we face, 38 people have been baptised."

Praise God for Clyde's family's faithfulness!

God Has a Thousand Ways

John Foster, Kevu, Solomon Islands Mission

I am a volunteer in the remote area of Kevu in the Solomon Islands Mission where sharing God's truth is difficult due to local constraints. God has enabled me to gather a small group of believers together and we are building strong connections through friendship evangelism.

I was recently approached by one of my new friends in the local community, asking for help. Although this man was affiliated with a different denomination, the Adventists were the group he reached out to when he needed help in constructing a home for his family. After visiting the project site, I realised that the construction was beyond the abilities of our small congregation, so I reached out to other SDA pastors in the surrounding areas.

The request was considered and approved and as a united body of believers, Seventh-day Adventist church members from several congregations began working on the construction of my friend's home. We have been unable to complete it due to lack of materials, but we are eagerly waiting to hear when our help is required again.

This is how God is helping and blessing in our ministry. Even though we are not allowed to preach the Word, we are allowed to show God's love and compassion through this building project.

Dear VIA Sponsors

Let us again praise God together as we continue to support these dedicated soul winners on the front lines of the battle. They certainly deserve our utmost, sacrificial support as they continue to work faithfully.

Only Our Bible Survived

Diki Tipi, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

The unexpected smell of smoke woke her out of a deep sleep. With her husband, Diki, away studying at Ombura, Mrs Tipi was alone in their little home made out of bush materials. The flames were spreading fast, and heavily pregnant, she found it difficult to move fast. She only had enough time to grab a couple of items and crawl outside.

Without Diki there, she watched helplessly as everything they owned was destroyed: clothing, donated evangelism materials, a data projector, a laptop computer and, most tragic of all, a gift of K2000.00 cash which had been given to them to help pay for Diki's fees at Ombura.

VIA Diki Tipi had hoped that his wife could accompany him to Ombura, but due to a lack of accommodation for married students, she had to remain in their work location, alone. As Lydia searched through the ashes of their precious possessions the next morning, she found that their World Changers Bible had only sustained a little scorching to the spine, but their other losses were devastating.



The cause of the fire is unknown, but Diki is praising God that his precious wife and child and their Bible were saved from the flames.

Kidney Stones Offer Witnessing Opportunity

Edson Ritu, Kevu, Solomon Islands Mission

After a serious bout of kidney stones landed him in hospital for over a week, Edson Ritu of the Solomon Island Mission area, wondered how this could be part of God's plan. He realised his ministry was going to be badly interrupted due to the hospitalisation required after the surgical intervention.



He now knows that God can use us anywhere, if we are willing. Edson praised God for the opportunity to come in contact with people in hospital that he wouldn't otherwise have met. He was inspired to offer a small morning and evening worship and prayer time for fellow patients, which they eagerly participated in.

As he wrote his story, Edson was convalescing at home, thankful to God for the medical intervention he received and God's powerful healing hand that had guided him through this difficult experience. Edson was also so grateful for the many prayers that had been offered up to God for him by fellow pastors and believers.

Witchcraft Stones Traded for Rock of Ages

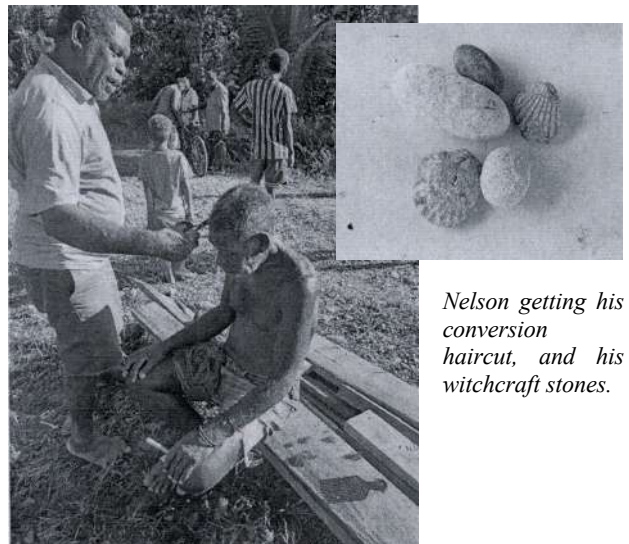
Jerry Manedeta, Solomon Islands Mission

It is always a blessing to see lives changed through the moving of the Holy Spirit. VIA Jerry Manedeta recently had this privilege during a Sabbath School testimony time at the end of an evangelistic series he had been running. An elderly man stepped forward and shared his story.

Nelson was a 'custom man' of His tribe, a recognised leader in witchcraft. He had in his possession witchcraft stones which he used to wield dark powers. During his testimony he stretched out his arm, opening his hand to reveal the witchcraft stones he had been carrying with him.

Nelson joyfully testified that he had discovered a greater power in Jesus and had decided to follow Him from then on, depending only on Jesus for strength.

As a sign of his desire to be a new, clean person, he asked that his beard and hair be shaved off. His testimony is a beautiful reminder that Jesus, our Rock of Ages, continues to be in the business of rescuing hearts.



Nelson getting his conversion haircut, and his witchcraft stones.

No Bus Fare? God says 'No Problem!'

Rudi Mark, Solomon Islands Mission

Rudi felt the heat of the tropical sun burning from above and the heat from the black tar road burning under his feet as he walked towards his destination: a planning meeting for the upcoming district camp meeting.

Having no money for the bus fare, he had decided to leave home in the mid-afternoon heat in order to reach the meeting in time. Not surprisingly he found himself a lone pedestrian, so he prayed for God's protection as he walked.

Rudi noticed a white car drive past and then stop. A man and a woman stepped out and approached him. Their mouths were stained red from their betel nut habit. He felt unsure about their intentions but nervously answered their query about where he was headed. "I'm going to a very important meeting at the Maranatha Hall" he said. They invited him to join them as they were passing that way and could drop him off.

As they travelled together, Rudi shared that he was a VIA for the Seventh-day Adventist church, and that he loved to conduct Bible studies for anyone who was interested in discovering Bible truth.

The couple shared that they had been married for some time and had children. He was a back-slidden Adventist, and she was the daughter of a local Anglican Bishop. Her name was Jimmah. For a while after they had married, she had attended his church, but when he lost interest, it became hard for her to keep going with their children, so she stopped going too. "Would you come and do Bible studies with us Rudi?", she requested. Rudi was overjoyed and quickly booked them in for a weekly study every Monday night.

Within a few weeks, Rudi recognised that Jimmah was serious about her search for Bible truth. She was enjoying discovering God's will for her life as they dug deeper and deeper into God's Word. Rudi feels confident that she will give her heart fully to God at the conclusion of the Bible study series, and request baptism.

Rudi reported, "I am really thankful to God that He is always faithful and true. He directs us to people like Jimmah so that she can know the Bible truth, not only for herself, but in order to strengthen her husband to come back to Jesus; to bring him and their beautiful children to worship together."

***"Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples!"***

1 Chronicles 16:24

The Power of God's Word

Jim Wagi, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

Four years ago, on August 26th 2021, an audio Bible was placed in the hands of Alfie Wanalugo, in the remote village of Muluma, near Mt Bosavi. A VIA was passing through the little settlement and felt impressed to gift one of these powerful little devices to Alfie. In a country where many still struggle to read, audio Bibles are an invaluable resource for evangelism.



For several years Alfie listened to God's Word with his family. Their hearts were touched by the truths they learned. During the 2024 PNG for Christ campaign, Alfie and his wife and daughter stepped forward for baptism. Praise God!



Use Me as a Vessel of Your Love

Williekai Tarakemu, Solomon Island Mission

To say the circumstances in which most of the VIA ministers work are difficult, would be a gross understatement. Their fields are some of the most challenging and remote areas in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Their feet are often their main mode of transport and not all the love and kindness they offer is reciprocated.

It takes spiritual stamina and personal resilience to continue to work in the field of the Lord where they have been called, and yet their hearts are full of praise and gratefulness for the opportunities God places in their hands. Let's listen as Williekai Tarakemu from Solomon Island Mission lifts up his heart to God:

"I am overwhelmed by the countless ways God has blessed my work and ministry. Each day has been a journey filled with Divine encounters, growth and the unmistakable presence of His grace. In the last six months I have had the opportunity to connect with various individuals and communities. Each meeting brought an opportunity to share God's love and serve those around me. As I look to the future my heart is filled with gratitude for the blessings of the past six months. I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and plans that God has for us. I trust that He will continue to guide my work and ministry. I am committed to continue being a vessel of His love and compassion."

Arise Little Girl!

Peter Jesod Wagi, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

My most difficult experience during this time was seeing my daughter killed by sorcery (sanguma), but then being raised back to life, a great miracle by God! The devil was not happy when we entered a new area but God raised her back to life, an amazing demonstration of God's power.

A Riot, A Prayer and an Offer of Land

Wheatley Vazu, Kevu, Solomon Islands Mission

Minister Wheatley Vazu has been working in a new area to plant a church. While he and a few fellow believers were seeking to make new connections in the community and running a simple Bible study class, they inadvertently started a riot!

Disgruntled locals loudly interrupted and began arguing with them, demanding that they leave. The Bible study came to an abrupt halt. Wheatley reports that even though he and those present felt very afraid, they immediately took each other's hands and began to pray. As they prayed aloud, they claimed the promises of Jesus. After prayer, they quietly returned to their homes, feeling somewhat ashamed that they had not been able to complete the Bible study program as planned.

But God always has a plan and Wheatley was shocked to receive very unexpected news from this small town a little while later. The presence of the Adventists had been noticed and appreciated. Hearts had been touched by the Godly way these followers of Jesus behaved in the face of fearful difficulty. Someone offered them a piece of land on which to build a church in this new area, a place where they were requested to run future programs.

Wheatley's own words are a powerful reminder to all of us: "Praise God! He is in control and allows us to face troubles. He is in control of the ways people react to each other. I thank God that He has allowed us to prepare Him a people there, no matter what we have encountered!"

Friendship turns a Critic into a Convert

Dennis Tawa, Solomon Islands Mission

"You watch out for those SDA people!" Chief William Asia often warned as he addressed the villagers of Lauagu. "You can't trust them."

As a paramount chief, William's warnings were dutifully followed, and his opposition to the Seventh-day Adventist church meant that no welcome had ever been extended to them in his hometown.

Decades passed, and eventually a small Adventist church was established close to his area. The VIA missionary, Dennis Tawa, who was appointed there,

heard about Chief William's attitude to all Adventists. In spite of the warnings, he decided to try to befriend him anyway. He visited the chief's home regularly. Gently and with much patience, Dennis built a strong friendship with the elderly chief. They often shared their thoughts on the Bible's teachings.

Dennis could see that his new friend was hungry to learn more about what the Bible really had to say on many topics, and finally the VIA missionary offered to do intensive Bible studies with Chief William. The offer was accepted and as William learned about Bible truth, he had great regret about his previous criticisms of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He could see that they had only ever taught what the Bible taught.

At the conclusion of the studies, he requested to be baptised at the next opportunity. An opportunity soon came. At the conclusion of an Evangelistic series held in the chief's own home-village of Lauagu, Chief William entered the waters of baptism and became the newest joyful member of the church he had once criticised so strongly.



God Sent an Ambulance

Daren Kai, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

During times of tribal fighting in the deep Western Highlands of PNG, it becomes increasingly dangerous for anyone to travel on the roads. VIA Missionary, Daren Kai, desperately needed to bring his reports into the mission headquarters in Mt Hagen. Being unable to afford transport, his only option was to walk in with the reports, but due to the unrest between warlords in his area, it was impossible for him to go. What could he do?

One day an ambulance arrived in his village and offered him a lift to Mt Hagen. It was a simple offer, but Daren knew it was a gift from God. Ambulances travelled without fear of being attacked on any of the roads the warlords controlled. And so, Daren Kai and his VIA reports made their way to the Mission headquarters by ambulance. God has His ways, and another sponsor now has their report!

Marijuana Cut & Burned

Jethro Yaka, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

I was doing visitation for one of my church members. He was a fourth-grade student. His parents were not Adventist. His father was a community leader, a warlord and also he was the one who plants marijuana and supplies the Kompiam District.

As I arrived at their home, the father of the boy said, "God visited me today". I was surprised to see that without any words he went out and cut down all the marijuana plants in his garden and he burnt the ones that were already dried.

He told me, "I wanted to change but couldn't for so long. Now salvation has come to my home so I will never squander this precious opportunity". Last quarter's lesson eleven he was baptised along with his second born son. Next year we have nominated him to be the deacon of the company church in which he was baptised.

Faithful in the Face of Tragedy

Himson Selegewo & Aaron Henry, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

Mt Bosavi dominates the landscape of the area where VIA missionary, Himson Selegewo works. Some 50,000 people live on the huge Bosavi plain, in the mountain's shadow. Himson is focusing on Haiso village in this area. There are only three SDAs in this town: Himson, his wife and one of their daughters.

This faithful volunteer, who has only been a Seventh-day Adventist for a few years, has experienced a lot of tragedy since his conversion. His youngest daughter died after being bitten by a snake, and a short while later, his little grandson drowned in a deep ditch. Broken-hearted, he struggled to continue his important work.



His wife's faith wavered as local villagers spread rumours that these tragedies were due to the couple forsaking their former faith. Yet, Himson's faith remained strong, and his strength helped her to remain faithful with him.

Part of the challenge was that along with friendship evangelism and Bible studies, Himson was trying to erect a simple church building. No one in the town would give him any assistance in the construction. Day after day he continued to work on the church alone.

In March this year, as he was fixing sago palm thatch to the roof, a large group of community

members arrived and offered to help. He was surprised to later learn that the town had voted to help the lone Adventist finish his work. With many hands to help, the little church was soon completed.

In the nearby village of Mobike, a similar thing happened. VIA missionary, Aaron Henry received support from his community in the completion of the church he was building. How wonderful that the quietly faithful work of these men inspired others around them to give assistance in finishing God's work in their areas.



Named in Tribute

Diki Tipi, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

Many of the VIA volunteers have developed strong relationships with the families who provided their sponsorship. With gratefulness, the volunteers even named their children after their sponsors, and now many of these namesakes are reaching adulthood.



Delphine Teldi and Val Wagi are two young ladies who proudly carry the names of women who touched the lives of their families: Delphine Archer and Val Morgan. Similarly, Pr Danny Yakare and his wife named their son Malt, after their sponsor Paul Malt and his family.

So many children have been named in honour of their beautiful sponsors. Many go unreported. With much gratefulness the sacrifices made to continue your sponsorship will always be remembered. Thank you all.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, and
His praise from the ends of the
earth. You who go down to the sea,
and all that is in it, you coastlands
and you inhabitants of them! Let
them give glory to the Lord and
declare His praise in the
coastlands."

Isaiah 42:10,12

Finally... a Church in Waro

Enox Kalan, Western Highlands Mission, PNG

The township of Waro has proved to be 'a tough nut to crack' for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The challenging local environment proved too difficult for a VIA volunteer sent there in 2023. It is recognised as 'belonging to' the Evangelical Church of Papua, and the townspeople seemed reluctant to consider another denominational option.



In 2024 VIA missionary Enox Kalan was appointed to Piti, a town about 60kms from Waro. Waro was part of his designated area, and Enox was determined to reach out to the people. He walked to Waro from Piti as often as he could, endeavouring to make friends.

Enox met a woman, Elsie, who told him that a few non-Waro Adventists would sometimes meet on Sabbaths under a house in Waro with their children. Non-Waro lay people were also trying to reach the town with the Adventist message and somehow no one at the Mission Office was aware of it! Enox was thrilled to hear this news, and prayed all week for the small group, hoping he would be able to locate their unreported house church's gathering place.

Early the next Sabbath morning, dressed in his church clothes, he set off towards Waro. On the outskirts of town, he met a group of young men. He could tell from their red eyes that they were struggling with drug addiction. His white shirt and black tie and pants intrigued them.

One of the boys, Omex, stepped forward and shook Enox's hand. He surprised the VIA missionary by exclaiming, "I know where your Sabbath keepers are." Omex offered to take Enox to see them as they were meeting under his older brother's house!

What a beautiful surprise for the little group of Sabbath keepers when a VIA missionary joined them in worship. They spent a beautiful day worshipping together, discussing how they could build an official church and share with Waro's citizens to the truth of God's Word.

In answer to their hopes and prayers, a piece of land was donated by Waro couple, Joyce and Nato, but they were reluctant to join baptismal Bible studies themselves. Omex, the struggling young man who had first led Enox to meet the Sabbath-keeping group, joined Bible studies and was baptised during the PNG for Christ evangelistic campaign, making him the first official Waro convert. Praise God!



Joyce & Nato donated land for the church.

The small group, worked together to build a simple church on the donated land. Most of the church members walk long distances to worship in Waro, and continue to pray they can bring more Waro locals to Jesus and the truth of His Word.



New converts working to build the Waro bush-materials church.

Almost Home Adventist Ministry has provided extra help by sponsoring two volunteers to assist Enox. Together they are doing well. God sees this small groups' needs and is blessing and providing, in answer to their prayers.

Want to Visit VIAs in the Field?

Are you looking for a 'holiday' with a difference? What about a mission-focused travel experience?

Just like a real holiday, your airfares, accommodation and other expenses need to be covered by yourself, but this trip will be a kingdom investment as you take time to visit and encourage VIAs on their frontlines of mission.

Register your interest by email and we will let you know well ahead of the next opportunity to visit PNG, the Solomon Islands or Vanuatu with VIA's Field Coordinator, Dr Neil Watts.

Email Neil at:

nwatts48@outlook.com

Mission to the Border Proves Fruitful

Siro Waida & Sei Ubre, Western Highlands Mission

Cross-border evangelism between PNG and West Papua, Indonesia, has always been difficult, but this hasn't stopped efforts from VIA volunteers to reach these needy communities with the love of God. In 2022 the request was made and granted for VIA Australia to provide two new sponsorships specifically for this area.



At a recent North Fly District camp meeting, the need for a special cross-border mission was presented to the church members. Jacklyn and Rony Nomi provided their truck for the journey and a large band of church members joined them.

When the group reached the Alice River border crossing, they climbed on board a banana boat to reach the village of Dome. Jacklyn Nomi had brought several bags of donated clothing with her, which were gratefully received by the people of the village. They felt the love of God flowing through the gifts from people who were willing to make the difficult journey to reach their remote village.



The mission team's arrival in Dome attracted the interest of many young people.

The cross-border mission trip was fruitful, and VIA Siro Waida was appointed to continue the work in Dome. Even though poor health forced him to leave

within a year of his arrival, sixteen young people were baptised due to his efforts. The current VIA, Sei Ubre, continues to nurture these young converts and grow the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist church in their village.



Sei Ubre

Are your friends looking for ways to support VIA volunteers on the front lines of mission?

Please invite them to donate at
volunteersinaction.com.au/donate/

OTHER EASY DONATION METHODS

Post Cheques to: VIA, 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.

Need a Receipt? Please contact Jenni or Val.

THANK YOU!

Online Again

After an unscheduled issue with our internet service provider we are happy to announce that the VIA website and emails are working again.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience that this issue may have caused.

www.volunteersinaction.com.au

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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