

God Answers Prayers! Read below what happened in the SIAR!!! Greg & Hannah

Lane writes:

A church is born...

Well it's official; the new body of believers, the church here in Siar was established yesterday here in Siar land! On Thursday we taught on the death and burial of Jesus, and then we culminated the teaching yesterday with His resurrection and ascension. After completing the lesson, I simply asked the Siar if they had any questions or comments and then I sat down.

To be honest I knew where many of the Siar were at in their faith and that many were believing already, but I still felt nervous with a flood of questions running through my mind, "Would any testify to their belief in the gospel? Would they be clear on the true issues of their personal salvation?" Well after a few quiet moments, my uncertainty was put to rest.

The first to stand was Jon, my translation helper. He was emotional from the beginning which is not normal for him or any Siar for that matter. He started by telling the people that he wanted to share with them what God had done for him. He said that he could share a lot but he wanted to clearly state three main things. He started by explaining how he used to call himself a pastor and teacher of God's Word, but he never understand the true God. He shared how God's Word in the creation account revealed to Jon the true God who is perfect, all-powerful, and the creator of all things. He was just amazed at encountering the one true God through His Word. Jon's second point was that God's Word showed him that no matter what he thought about himself, the truth of the matter was that he was a sinner separated from God and the punishment for his sins was ready for him to bear. Finally he culminated his talk by touching the promise of God that started back in the Garden of Eden and found its fulfillment in the person of Christ and His work on Jon's behalf. The previous day as we taught on the death of Christ, we nailed large nails into a cross that we had made and had laid on the ground in the teaching house. Jon referenced that cross and shared that as he heard the sound of the hammer hitting the nails, he knew that the death on the cross was meant for him and he deserved it but Christ took his place and suffered his punishment for his sin. He said he firmly believed it, and was confident that God bought him back and that he was now in God's clan forever. Jon's talk ended with a challenge to the others as he said, "You guys, this is the truth - the only truth. And this is the time for us to decide whether we will believe this or not! All other issues, ideas, paths to God, are all lies. But you all need to decide what you will do with this gospel; this was for you and you must decide!"

Next an older man named Tomulai stood and shared how he been up all night "crying in his heart" over the suffering that Jesus experienced for him. He storied about the severity of the beating that Jesus received and the cruelty of his death on the cross and how that was for him. He was very emotional and moved by the suffering of Christ on his account.

Another influential village leader named Ogen stood and gave a simple clear testimony that the death of Christ was indeed the only way, the only truth, and the only way to eternal life. He shared how there have been so many lies they have believed, but that finally now the truth was here and that he believed it.

After that another good friend named Sali stood and was very emotional as he thanked us for leaving our homes and coming here to give them the truth. He was thankful for that and thankful for the truth of Christ's death that he now understood and believed in.

There were also a number of ladies who gave clear testimonies after we ended the meeting. Sakman and Redi sat together and encouraged each other by simply stating, "This is IT. This is the only truth and only Jesus' work for me is the truth that can save me. This talk is SO good, there is no other talk that is bigger than this. We are believing this truth and we will never leave it for anything else!"

Tinamidil is a quiet little lady who has faithfully come to the teaching from the beginning. When asked what she thought of all this, she answered in simple faith, "This is the only truth, that is for sure, and I believe it."

Another man, Stiven, as we finished the teaching, showed his excitement by pumping his fist and saying over and over, "This is IT! This is IT!" He also shared that Jesus' work was complete and the only way to eternal life. He shared his total confidence that this message of Christ's death was the only truth and that he believed it.

These are only but a few of the testimonies and there will be many more to come. A number of individuals, husbands and wives, older men, and older women have believed. The main point is this - the truth of the Gospel has shown its bright light into the Siar's minds and hearts, and many have responded in faith. Have they arrived yet to the full measure of what God has for them? Certainly not yet, but have they understood the message of Christ's salvation for them? Absolutely! And with that, the church was born here in Siar land and God has begun the long journey of maturing these believers and unifying them together as a body of believers established on the truth of His Word.

### **What now?**

As exciting and thrilling as it is to see people go from darkness to light and see the salvation of a number of our Siar friends, we know that this is just the beginning of what God wants to do here. The ultimate desire of God for the Siar is a mature and thriving church comprised of Siar men and women who are grounded, growing, and dependant on the Word of God alone. What that means is that we are not standing at the *end* of this work with the Siar, but we are at the very *beginning*.

What does that mean for us? It means that tons of work lies ahead: Bible translation, lesson writing, equipping and discipleship, and further outreach. It means beginning the long journey of walking through life with these new Siar believers, and see them mature as individuals and as a group. We plan to take one week off from teaching, and we will visit the Siar and talk with them to get a better idea of their understanding of the gospel and their personal application of that truth. On Thursday of next week we will meet again with the group to review and encourage them in the Gospel, share testimonies, and also to plan with them for our next phase of teaching and instruction in God's Word. We will be sure to update you at that time.

What does that mean for you? Prayer. Our team has been amazed and very thankful for all of you who have prayed faithfully for the Siar's salvation, but if you were entertaining thoughts that your job was over now, think again! Salvation is not the ultimate goal of God for mankind, it is only the beginning of what He wants to do. If we understand the goal of God for the Siar is their maturity as a body of believers united and growing in truth and reaching out to those who have yet to hear, then your intercession of behalf of the Siar has just begun.

May the testimony of the Siar be a challenge to all of us to commit to whatever is necessary to build them up and present them complete in Christ. We are so thankful for all of you that have prayed faithfully for

the Siar. As is the case with God, those prayers weren't in vain, and the new Siar church is evidence to that fact. Rejoice with us and with the angels as the celebration in Heaven is still going strong for the new names written in the Book of Life!

Thanks for your part and please keep praying for the Siar!

Lane and Karrie, Landon, Kade and Luke Sanford

Jonathan and Melissa, Zoe, Caleb, Eve, Olivia and Levi Jackson

Chris and Erin, Ethan and Madison Lujan