

THE HAVEMAN FAMILY

YOUR MISSIONARIES IN THE KINGDOM OF

TONGA



Sent By:
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Ministry Goals:

- Church Planting
- Tract Distribution
- Bible Institute
- Remote Island Evangelism
- Radio Station

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Beliefs:

- AV Bible
- Pre-millennial
- Baptist
- Fundamental
- Soul-winning

Dear Praying Friends

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I know this is a "prayer letter", but I try to keep the requests to a minimum. We attempt to inform and report in a manner that will allow you to pray more intelligently for us, and because some of you take a particular interest in our ministry, I want you to know what really goes on here. I wish every one of you could share in the uniqueness of our experience here, but most of us will only fellowship around the throne of grace alone this side of Heaven. The young man I'm about to describe to you merits your prayers and intercessions, and I hope there are some back home that will take him to heart.

When we first moved here our intentions were to take at least a year in study prior to starting any type of ministry. Before we even landed in Vava'u we met a saved young couple just returning from the States who were desiring to start a youth ministry in a neighboring village. Not being united in doctrine, we wished each other luck and moved on. A few months later I ran into the man "Osi" in town, and he asked me how the ministry was progressing. When I said, "Not much." his exact words were, "Come on man, start a Bible study and we'll join." I didn't want to, assuming the worst would happen. However, I caved, and we started a Bible study. Osi would round up young men and bring them to our house on Sunday nights, and we'd sing, pray and study. We saw some limited results, culminating in two baptisms and a full house on Sunday evenings. One young man, named Sione ("John") was especially interested in the Bible teaching - he ate everything up. Tall, straight, and proud, he's a young Tongan man in the traditional sense, with all the manners, respect, and deference. Raised Wesleyan Methodist, he trusted Christ alone last year and attended a Pentecostal church, but it didn't "jive" with him, so he latched on to Baptist (dispensational) teaching with relish. (I once had a Tongan ask me if Romans was the favorite Baptist book.) Not long after, Osi and his wife moved back to the States, but Sione stayed. Through our ups and downs of this last year, he's been faithful and consistent. Recently we had some Chick tracts printed in Tongan, and Sione passed them out to everyone at his college. I watched him walk up to a white man and offer him a tract (Tongans are very shy to approach foreigners.) When the man refused, Sione held his gaze and his hand out until the man took it. He told me later he wanted to punch the guy for "disrespecting the Bible." (More on acceptable punching next prayer letter.) He kept a running list of everyone he gave a tract to, and prayed for them. Recently he "got into it" with a Mormon missionary, and the teacher suspended class and let them debate for two hours. He stood his ground and has since garnered more interest in, but also challenges to, his faith. He comes home with us every Sunday afternoon after church, and we eat, talk Bible, and watch BBC nature movies. He devours Chick tracts and little booklets, and his questions are getting tougher, proving he's studying and also fighting with the religionists here. Sione is twenty years old and lives on his own, but still receives a lot of pressure. He had to move out of his house because of his faith, and still argues every Sunday with his mother, who calls him the curse of the family for leaving the High church. He moved into his deceased father's empty house, but is in danger of being expelled from it when his older brother (the heir) returns from New Zealand this December. It is common in Tonga for young people to be disowned for their faith in Christ, and you can only realize the implications of being an outcast when you understand the inter-dependent network that is a Tongan village. He is, however, standing tall, as they say here. Last week he had questions in James, Corinthians, and Timothy, concerning church dynamics and the offices of a pastor and deacon. The church structures here are all centrally-controlled conferences, so an independent local church is a new doctrine. I explained to him about bishops and elders, self-government, gifts, and what a deacon was. I told him a deacon was a servant, had minimal if any authority, and was to assist the Pastor in any way that would help the pastor fulfill his spiritual duties. I didn't paint a glamorous picture. He replied to me, "I would like to be a deacon someday." I wanted to shout. My philosophy of ministry here is to throw the net often but focus on training fishermen. Sione has responded the best to instruction. I have privately considered sending him to Bible college in the US or New Zealand, or possibly some sort of internship at a local church. He needs to spread his wings a little and get some life- experience under his belt. This is a small island. I hope you will pray for his growth as well as patience in his tribulations. It's young men like this that makes it all worth it.

Yours in Christ, the Havemans

"THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS, THAT DO BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS; THESE SEE THE WORKS OF THE LORD, AND HIS WONDERS IN THE DEEP"