

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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FUNDRAISING STATUS

Long days, many miles, and weariness. These are phrases that accurately describe our many travels. Our support raising trips have taken us through 7 states in just over 5 months on our quest for support.

It is now our pleasure to announce that our fundraising trips are over. That's right, you guessed it. We have successfully raised all of the necessary funds needed to move, live, and work in Vanuatu. Thanks to so many of you for helping us reach our goal. Of course, we recognize that God has blessed us tremendously through using many of you.

However, the work is not over. While the team will especially focus on evangelizing, edifying and equipping the ni-Vanuatu people, we will also continue to solicit financial support. History has shown that as time passes, some supporters must discontinue their monthly giving for good reasons. With that in mind, we will continue to seek out potential individual and congregational supporters. If you have a lead that the team might follow-up on, please let us know!

FEATURED ARTICLE

-By Aaron Baker

"Far more abundantly beyond all"

An arrow flies through the air silently, heading straight for its target. Upon impact the archer grins, knowing the shot flew true, landing exactly where it was supposed to.

Do you ever feel as if God is the archer, the arrow is the Bible, and our hearts are the targets? I often do. Nearly 6 months ago our team began to "hit the road," to raise our support to go to Vanuatu. Doubts boomed in my mind like fireworks on the 4th of July, as if I knew before I began that the task was too large. I mean, who do I think I am? Can I really raise enough money for my salary, working fund, *and* moving expenses? The mountain seemed too large, the task too great, the goal too lofty, until I realized something.

During my time of personal Bible study, I came across a passage that felt as if it was aimed directly at my heart. Ephesians 3:20, 21 was a passage I had read many times before. This time was different. This time the arrow struck its target, sank in deep, and moved a chord within me that reached the uttermost depths of my soul. The passage reads:

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

It was at this lowest point back in August that I wanted to throw in the towel. I wanted God to send someone else, to find another way, to allow me to give up. I then realized it was not about what I wanted. I was not the star on the front page of the newspaper. I was simply a worker in God's vineyard.

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NEWSLETTER CHANGES

Our newsletter will be undergoing some construction over the next few issues. The main change will be in the formatting of the newsletter. Up to this point, the team has been focused on raising support. Once we arrive in Vanuatu, our focus will shift to the work itself. Our articles will not be based on the fundraising trips any longer, but rather on the progress being made in Vanuatu. And, of course, as the Gospel of Christ is spread across the South Pacific we will communicate about our new brothers and sisters in Christ.

In addition to changes in the content, some changes may also be seen in the layout. As we experiment with the most efficient way to mail, email, and post our newsletter on the web, you may see some changes. If you like some changes better than others, let us know. Our goal is to have an informative, attractive, effective newsletter. Let us know what you think, or if you have any questions about our work.



MOVING TO VANUATU (Part 1)

The million-dollar question is (drum roll please)... When will the Mission Vanuatu Team officially move to Vanuatu? The answer has many parts to it.

First, we do not have a moving date yet. The last step in the process of moving to Vanuatu is to have the government of Vanuatu approve our work permit and Visa. This is the final piece of the puzzle we are waiting to put in place. As soon as we are approved, we move.

Second, in order to apply to the government of Vanuatu for the necessary paperwork, we had to raise all of our funds. Now that we have all our funds, we are simply waiting for the completion of the step mentioned above.

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Next time I doubt or feel weak in faith, I can turn to this time in my life and look at how God blessed our entire team by meeting our fundraising needs. Next time I feel like I need a "pick me up," I will read Ephesians 3:20, 21. Next time I visit the congregation that turned us down initially, I will give thanks to God because they are now one of our supporters. Praise be to God!

WEBSITE UPDATE

If you have not been to our website, you may be missing out. Located at www.missionvanuatu.com are more links than you would expect. You can see pictures of the team and the country, links to Vanuatu's weather, two ni-Vanuatu newspapers, and the current ni-Vanuatu currency exchange rate (called "Vatu"). Of course, there are many more links and lots of information. Just be sure to visit our website and take a look at where we are going.

In addition to all the information on the website, you can read this newsletter online. If you would prefer to review this newsletter online rather than through the mail, simply email us at: baker@missionvanuatu.com and give us your email address. We will be sure you are on the email update list.

GOD AND THE RIGHTEOUS (Part 1) -by Mike Olson

Maybe it is just human nature, but we tend to see the bad in things more easily than the good. The recent elections are a good example of this. While the glorious process of freedom and government of the people, by the people and for the people was taking place, what stood out the most were those awful campaign commercials. Even in our spiritual lives the struggles seem to cloud the victories. The unfortunate state of the church today overwhelms the magnificent beauty that is the Lord's body. With this in mind, the Christian needs to know what God really is doing for the righteous person.

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Third, in order to have the funds in place for our work we had to travel frequently. Our travels could not begin until our graduation from Bear Valley in June of 2004. It still amazes us that we have raised our funds in just under 6 months. We recognize that God has blessed us tremendously and we have been humbled by the generosity of many.

MOVING TO VANUATU ***(Part 2)***

Moving to Vanuatu is unlike moving to a city in the USA. In order to move, we have to locate a moving company willing to ship our household goods. Not every company is willing to move these items half way around the world. After selecting a moving company, we pack our stuff into a crate. Each box we pack must be numbered and inventoried so the shipping company knows what is in each box in case of an accident or box breakage.

After packing our boxes into the crate, it is taken by the shipping company, weighed, and sent on its way to the rail station. From there, the crate will make its way to Los Angeles where it will be placed on a Cargo Ship headed for Vanuatu. This ship will arrive in Vanuatu in about 2 months, after making several stops to various countries along the way. We just hope we have enough toiletries to last the 2 months.

One can begin to see with all these 'red-tape' procedures we have to go through that not many people move to Vanuatu. In fact the Johnson moving company has NEVER moved anyone to Vanuatu. They could only guess at how much to quote us to ship our crate.

My personal advice on moving to a foreign county, especially one not well known: become independently wealthy first. That is, one would be wise to own a shipping company, or a cargo ship, or a plane large enough to get their crate there without so many steps along the way. For those of us not independently wealthy, just be prepared for more steps than the Empire State Building.

The stories of two men in scripture give us the perfect antidote to negative thought. The men are Noah and Lot. The apostle Peter tells their story in 2 Peter 2:4-9.

The context of this section of scripture is the three examples of judgment given by Peter to prove to the readers that Jesus will indeed return and judge the world. False teachers have denied the coming and judgment of the Lord, 1:16; 2:1, 3; 3:3-10. Peter uses the angels who sinned (vs. 4), the ancient world (vs. 5), and Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 6) to establish his point. However, in the midst of this affirmation of the judgment, Peter reassures his readers that God both **preserves** and **rescues** the righteous in times of trial and in the day of judgment.

A discussion about righteousness is akin to speaking about salvation. The righteous are the saved and the saved are the righteous. This righteousness however is not of our own doing. To be right in the eyes of God is to be so by His divine standard. The Jews had a righteousness of their own but it was not God's, and therefore invalid (Rom 10:3). Only that which God has set forth as righteousness can truly save.

There is comfort in knowing that the Lord Himself operates by His own standard of righteousness. Peter tells us in 1:1 that our faith is by the righteousness of Jesus. He does not deal with us out of pride or vengeance, but His own standard. Often God is accused of being two different Gods. One God in the Old Testament, cruel and harsh, and one God in the New Testament, kind and loving. This is not correct however as God's righteousness sometimes requires judgment and sometimes mercy.

Next month we will look specifically at God's preservation and rescue of the righteous.

SPECIAL REPORT: TSUNAMI

Thanks to all those who have inquired as to the recent tsunami's affect on Vanuatu. We are happy to report that the country is located over 5,000 miles east of the earthquake center, and therefore was not directly affected. Our prayers are with those who continue to be affected by these tragic events, especially those who have experienced the loss of loved ones.

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Check us out on the web at: www.missionvanuatu.com

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