

MISSION VANUATU MINUTES

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A newsletter published by: Aaron, Cindy and Kaela Baker • Eric and Shawnda Brandell • Mike Olson

PROGRESS IN VANUATU

-By Aaron Baker

IN THIS ISSUE:

Progress in Vanuatu	1
Progress Continued	2
Meet Morris	3
Visiting Vanuatu	3

Difficult decisions are part of mission work. In fact, you cannot have one without the other. Our mission team banded together over this last month and decided to do what we could to speed up the Visa and Work permit process to enter Vanuatu. Through many prayers, much patience, and incredible blessings, we have made progress!

Background Events

In our last monthly report, our team was awaiting approval from the FBI in the form of a background check. This consisted of going down to the local police station, paying \$10 and having our fingerprints taken by a fingerprint technician. We then filled out the top of the fingerprint form and sent the fingerprint card to the FBI-Criminal Justice Investigation Service in West Virginia. Upon receipt of our fingerprint cards, the FBI would run our fingerprints through their computer system and determine if any of us have a criminal record. This process was begun by our team back on December 9th. Usually the process takes 6-8 weeks. After **10** weeks of waiting...and waiting...and waiting, we finally received our long awaited fingerprint cards in the mail with a stamp on the back that said "No Record."

"What?!? Is that it?" Disbelief was as thick as smoke in the house as we read the results on the back of the fingerprint card. Anticipation built over the long 10 weeks and we imagined some elaborate letter that would clearly prove that: Aaron Baker, Cindy Baker, Eric Brandell, Shawnda Brandell, and Mike Olson were not criminals nor had any record on file with the FBI. Instead of the anticipated letter, all we received was a simple stamp. Oh well, we'll take what we can get. Better a simple stamp saying, "No record," than a letter saying, "We need to talk."

Recent Events

The FBI background clearance was the final item needed to send with our Work permit and Visa application to the Immigration Dept. of Vanuatu. Once we had received the FBI paperwork, we

were then ready to send our applications. The problems with just sending our paperwork by mail to Vanuatu were many. Some of the problems are 1) there was no guarantee that our information would arrive in one piece, 2) there was no guarantee that they would even process our paperwork in a reasonable time, 3) there was no guarantee that our fees for the applications would be the correct amounts since there was a conversion rate to contend with which fluctuates continuously.

In order to solve these problems, our team decided that Eric Brandell was going to fly to Vanuatu and hand-deliver our paperwork. On March 6th, Eric left from Denver with paperwork in hand for Vanuatu to obtain our Work permits and Visas. Our plan was for Eric to be in Vanuatu for two weeks primarily to obtain our necessary paperwork.

Eric's Arrival

Upon arrival in Vanuatu, Eric first noticed that it was incredibly hot as compared to Denver. The sweltering heat was quite a change from the balmy temperatures in Denver. Despite the heat, Eric started right to work.

The first matter of business was to locate key people in Vanuatu. One of our contacts was a man named Stephen Felix. Stephen is a law student at the University of South Pacific and works in the Supreme Court. He is critical to our application process because he is able to clarify many questions on our applications and provide a letter from the church in Port Vila requesting us to come to Vanuatu.

Stephen's father, Morris, is also an influential man in Vanuatu. Eric promptly found Morris and went to the Immigration office to take care of business. They walked into the office and Morris' influence was immediately evident. He motioned that he was hot and the secretary turned on the air conditioner at his suggestion. Eric later learned that the secretary was Morris' niece.

At first, Eric was informed that the applications would take three weeks before they could be approved. At this news, our team was disappointed with the delay. Later we learned that Morris' niece, the secretary, was going to try her hardest to get our applications approved by Eric's departure date on the 22nd of March. This would ensure that our team would certainly be moving to Vanuatu in April.

Indeed, all our progress has been a true blessing. As we finalize our paperwork and move to Vanuatu, we ask that you pray for us. It will not only take time to ship our belongings, but it will take time to get set up in Vanuatu with housing. In addition, there is much work to do in Vanuatu strengthening Christians that are there and studying with local prospects.



MEET MORRIS

-By Aaron Baker

Each month in this publication we will try to highlight individuals who are making a tremendous impact for the Lord. We begin with a man named Morris Felix.

Morris Felix has been a Christian for over 20 years. He was one of the first converts in the country of Vanuatu and has proved to be an asset. Morris is influential not only in his village, community and country, but also in the church.

Morris is the type of man who is very quiet. He would not be the first to speak out in a social gathering, but he is not the type to let important matters go unsaid. Morris communicates very well in English, French, and the trade language Bislama.



Upon Eric's trip to Vanuatu to secure our needed documents, Eric was extremely impressed with Morris. His desire to see the Lord's church flourish and grow is unparalleled. Morris encourages others not only to study the Bible, but to completely obey it. His dedication to the Lord's body is seen through endless hours of studying with others to gain Christian brothers and sisters. Our team is grateful to have a man that can give us guidance and insight into the culture of Vanuatu.

VISITING VANUATU

-By Aaron Baker

Working as efficiently and effectively while on the mission field is critical for maximum success. For this reason Randy English, a missionary in Pago Pago, American Samoa, will be traveling to Vanuatu to follow up on work that was started years prior.

Before our team decided to live and work in Vanuatu, Randy was already traveling in and out of Vanuatu at every opportunity to teach and preach the Word. Though he is primarily focused on the mission field of American Samoa, Randy is willing to travel to other places in the South Pacific to teach truth. Because of Randy's experience and knowledge of mission work, island culture, and his relationships established with some already in Vanuatu, he will be invaluable to our team. Randy plans to be in Vanuatu from April 8th through the 14th to teach, preach, and encourage our team. Please pray for Randy's safe travels as we look forward to seeing him soon.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

IN THIS ISSUE:

- † Progress in Vanuatu
- † Meet Morris
- † Visiting Vanuatu



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