

MISSION VANUATU MINUTES

Volume 2, Issue 4

April 2005

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

STATE OF THE UNION

-By Aaron Baker

IN THIS ISSUE:

State of the Union	1
State of the Union, Continued	2
Biblical Terminology	3

As an update on our work so far, it is necessary to discover the state of the union. A benchmark for our work will give us direction for our work later down the road. Here is the current information for the congregations in Vanuatu.

Port Vila

The congregation that meets in Port Vila has been struggling for some time now. There are three men who have been in a preaching rotation at Port Vila. Stephen Felix, Goman a;lsdkjf and Shem Nakon have been members at Port Vila for a few years and are excited about seeing this congregation grow. Currently they meet at Shem's house in the Black Sands area just outside of Port Vila. This meeting place is not ideal as it is far from town and hard for locals to get a taxi to take them there.

One of our first priorities will be to locate a meeting place for the Port Vila congregation in town. We will look for a location that is easy for visitors to locate, and one in which they feel comfortable meeting in.

Our second priority is to work with them in the peaching rotation. The schedule currently places one man in the role of preaching for one month. We will gladly take part in this rotation while emphasizing that we are not to be relied on to do this all of the time. Our goal is not to make them dependant, but to train them so they might be better equipped.

Our third priority is to evangelize in Port Vila and to preach the Word. Obviously we want to increase the numbers of those Christians in town. However, we must recognize that God is the one to give the increase and our part is to continually preach the Word.

STATE OF THE UNION...CONTINUED

Eton Village

The congregation at Eton Village is the most established in all of Vanuatu. Morris Felix and Eddie Karis were converted through the use of Bible correspondence courses over 20 years ago. As a result of them living in the same village they were able to stay faithful and many were converted. Morris donated some of his land in the Village and a building was built in the village. This was a tremendous step in establishing the Lord's church in Vanuatu. Many now recognize the church of Christ in Vanuatu because they simply travel by the building and see the sign.

The eton village being established first has the most Christians in attendance. On Sunday mornings there are about 35 adults and numerous children. The men are on a similar rotation as in Port Vila in that they teach and preach for a month at a time. Eddie and Morris are capable teachers and fill this capacity when they can. Morris is especially busy with visiting a son in port Vila and will soon be busy with traveling with our team to preach, teach, and encourage Christians on other islands in Vanuatu.

Epuia

Driving 45 minutes out of Port Vila one would come to Eton Village. Another 10 minutes would bring you to an Australian owned Coconut farm upon which there are a few Christians. These Christians work for the Australian farm owner and meet together when they can. Unfortunately, they do not meet as regularly as they should and this will be an area of focus for us.

Espiritu Santo

From the island of Efate (where our mission team lives) is the largest island of all those in Vanuatu. Espiritu Santo is not as industrialized as Port Vila, but is growing rapidly. About 45 minutes outside of town is a local swimming hole and tourist spot, called the Blue Hole. Across the road from this tourist attraction live a couple named Joel and Robina. Wayne Burger, an instructor at Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver and a preacher at the Columbine church of Christ, first converted them about 6 years ago. In addition to Joel and Robina, their daughter Primrose and her husband Steve were also converted. Though they live in the town of Luganville, we want to work with them and encourage them also. They have been going through many difficulties in their marriage and need your prayers.

Conclusion

Though there are a few congregations in Vanuatu, the total number of Christians here is liberally estimated at about 100. Also, there is a group of Christians on the island of Emau which we do not know much about. We have briefly heard of their existence, but want to go visit and determine their current status. As you can see with the different locations of Christians that exist, we will have much work to do in many areas. Please pray for us as we work to bring glory to God through the church (Ephesians 3:22).

Different issues of the Mission Vanuatu Minutes will highlight topics which hope to speak to the heart of some problems within the Church today. Often, many issues can be overcome simply by a correct use of terms found in the Bible and applying them accurately in our usage. In this issue we will look at Biblical terminology in an effort to use a particular term more appropriately.

The term Christian is used in today's society to apply to a wide variety of people. Often we generically call people who believe in God by the term, "Christian." You often hear someone say, "You ought to read this book, it is written by a good Christian writer." We will briefly look at this term and see how we ought to apply it today.

There are only three places in the New Testament where the term "Christian" is found: Acts 11:26; 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16. A brief look at these passages will show us the correct application of the term.

Acts 11:26 "and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

The context surrounding this passage helps explain the meaning of the term "Christian." The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabus to look for Paul while he was staying in Tarsus. Barnabus found Paul and brought him to Antioch where they stayed for a year. While in Antioch considerable numbers were taught and as a result disciples were made according to Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19. In this passage in Matthew it is important to note that disciples were made through the baptism process. This thought is in harmony with Acts 2:47 where those who were baptized were added to the church. To clarify, a Christian is shown to be a disciple. A disciple is a person who has listened to the message of truth, believed and been baptized for the forgiveness of sins. In this passage in Acts 11:26 the disciples take on a new name. Antioch is the very first place that the disciples were called Christians and the term is still used today.

Acts 26:28 "Agrippa replied to Paul, 'In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.'"

In this passage it is important to note that a Christian was something Agrippa could become. That is, both Paul and Agrippa knew what it meant to be a Christian. Paul was trying to persuade him to become one as well (verse 29). Therefore a Christian is a person with specific beliefs, actions, and practices.

1 Peter 4:16 "but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name."

The name Christian is one through which God can be glorified. The name was known by the time of Peter's writing this passage and was a name for which people would suffer. The name stood for a definite set of beliefs, ones which could bring shame or persecution.

How should we use the term "Christian?" From these passages we should clearly see that a Christian is the same as a disciple. A disciple is a member of Christ's church (Acts 2:47), being added to that church upon baptism specifically for forgiveness of sins. When using the term "Christian," we should reserve it for people within the blood bought church which Christ built.

MISSION VANUATU MINUTES

Columbine church of Christ
7453 S. Zephyr Ct.
Littleton, CO. 80128

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

IN THIS ISSUE:

- † State of the Union
- † Biblical Terminology



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