

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

Volume 2, Issue 8

August 2005

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

"I JUST WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN"

-By Eric Brandell

IN THIS ISSUE:

"I Just Want To Be A Christian	1
Preaching in the Park	2
Teaching in the Villages	3
How Sweet is the Fellowship	3

Just before our recent Good News Meeting here in Port Vila, we set out on a hunt for sound equipment as we were renting a large public hall for the Good News Meeting in July. We quickly found that there were no stores to rent from, so we decided to try and find a local band that might rent us their mixer and two microphones. One of the new Christians, Flexon, mentioned that his cousins had a band and that they often rented out their equipment. Sure enough, NTN Brothers Band was willing to rent us their equipment. We agreed on a price and a time to come and pick them up each evening.

Not only did we get the equipment, we also got two or three of the band members each to come run the system for us each night. This meant that they heard a lot of Bible teaching. On Thursday night, the last night of the meeting, I went to pick up the equipment as usual. When I arrived, Alsen (17 year old member of the band) met me immediately with a look of distress. He stated that he had some things to take care of and was going to be unable to come to the meeting that night. He quickly asked if I might be willing to meet him some time the next day to study one-on-one. Of course, I immediately accepted his offer! Beginning that Friday, Alsen and I met in the park to study the Bible every Tuesday and Friday, and he came to our worship services each Sunday. Our seventh study together, on the topic of biblical baptism (its means and purpose), fell on a Friday. At first, Alsen was ready to be baptized, but after "counting the cost" (Luke 14:25-33) and realizing what an awesome decision he was about to make, he decided he needed a few days to think things out (I assured him that I stood ready to assist him as soon as he made that decision, be it day or night).

Thankfully, that Sunday morning he approached me and simply stated, "I am ready." We again talked about the importance of his decision, and he assured me that he was ready to make the necessary sacrifices. So, some Christians went down to a nearby beach and Gomon, a local Christian, baptized him in the Pacific Ocean. Alsen was very excited to be added to the Lord's church, having his sins taken away. He and I continue to study every Tuesday and Friday morning.

After my initial study with Alsen, I asked him if he knew anyone else from his family who might want to study. He said that he would find out. The next week, he said that his cousin was very interested. That next Monday morning, I met Donald (29 years old) in the park to study. I could immediately tell that Donald was going to be a special guy. After our first study, he stated some things I had previously only heard in preacher's stories. I asked him what denomination he was affiliated with (unlike America, practically everyone goes to church somewhere), and said, "none." He didn't

Alsen, left, being baptized into Christ



“and they both went down into the water” –Acts 8:38



Gomon (R) going into the water to baptize Donnal (L).



mean that he didn't go to church, but that he "doesn't consider himself part of a denomination because I just want to be a Christian." As if that weren't enough, he followed that up by saying that he "had been praying that God would send someone to teach him the Bible." Isn't God great!!! I was immediately reminded of Jesus' promise in Matthew 7:7, "seek and you will find." What an honor that He decided to use you and me to help Donnal find the truth!

After a few weeks of studying every Monday and Thursday morning, Donnal got a new job. So, we changed our studies to Sunday afternoons. One Sunday afternoon (the same Sunday on which Alsen had been baptized), Donnal and I studied baptism. He, like Alsen, was ready immediately. But, we studied Luke 14 just to make sure he understood the commitment that he was about to make. I assumed that he would be like the many others I had studied with; that he would need a few days to think about it. However, he stated "I do not want to wait...I asked you to teach the Bible and you have...now I am ready to obey it." So, at his request, we went back down to the ocean and Gomon baptized him too. He and I continue to study each Sunday afternoon.

Editor's note: Because of Eric's study with Alsen and Donnal, this has opened many doors for study with their family. Cindy is now studying with Aline, Alsen's sister, and Natasha, Alsen and Donnal's cousin. In addition, Shawnda is studying with Jennifer who is Donnal's sister. These two newborn Christians are to be commended not only for their search for truth, but also for their willingness to bring others to the truth, so that others may also be free (John 8:32).

PREACHING IN THE PARK

Each month we are reaching out to the community with public preaching in a local park. Last month we kicked off this public preaching and this month we followed up with another round of preaching. Not only does this method of evangelism prove effective here, but it is also a great way to inform the community of the presence of Christ's church here in Port Vila.

This month our goal was to encourage the men in the local congregation here to be heavily involved in this type of preaching. For many, this was the first time they have ever preached in such a public setting. Gomon in particular, pictured above left with Donnal, expressed the joy he felt in being a part of this type of preaching. Preaching out in public not only challenges the locals here to create well prepared, logical and Biblical lessons, but it also strengthens their faith within them. Gomon stood ready, willing, and able to "give an account of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). The men who spoke from Port Vila were Gomon, Shem, and Aaron. In addition, Morris and Eddie were scheduled speakers for this event. Eddie ended up not speaking due to a sickness he had been fighting for two weeks.

Pictured right is part of the crowd that gathered for the preaching in the park. The preaching takes place from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm which coincides with the lunch break that is a standard two hours. Many who pause to listen to the topics discussed are usually very interested in seeking the truth of God's Word. This in turn leads to several Bible studies set up by our team.



TEACHING IN THE VILLAGES

-By Aaron Baker

A majority of our work is spent not only encouraging Christians in Vanuatu, but also in evangelizing the lost. We can “kill two birds with one stone” by holding meetings in villages to teach on topics which interest the locals as well as strengthen the faith of Christians. This month Eric and Shawnda went to the village of Epau, while Aaron went to the village of Pounagisu. Since these two villages are only 30 minutes driving time apart, we coordinated one trip which in which we could teach and preach in these two villages.

Our stay in these villages was from August 20 through the 22nd. In Epau, Eric taught on the topic of the Judgment Day, which was well received by many in the village. Despite a “bone chilling” temperature of around 60 degrees at night, there were about 11 in attendance on the 20th (Saturday night), and about 19 on the 21st (Sunday). These were well prepared lessons that really answered many questions regarding Judgment Day for brethren and visitors alike.

While Eric was busy teaching in Epau, Aaron was at a nearby village, named Pounagisu. Aaron taught on Saturday and Sunday nights on the topic of the Church: its characteristics, nature, and history. There were about 6 in attendance on Saturday and 9 on Sunday. Though the numbers were lower than we would have liked for reaching out to the community, we were pleased with those who came. Even though the weather, which by local standards was absolutely freezing, there were people present interested in hearing God’s Word. Regardless of how many people show up to hear our teaching and preaching, our work is to sow the seed. We move forward knowing that God will give the increase in Vanuatu.



Harry and his family enjoyed the lessons taught in Paunagisu

To read detailed accounts of these two trips into the villages, just visit our website: www.missionvanuatu.com !

HOW SWEET IS THE FELLOWSHIP

This month our team hosted a fellowship meal. We shared some marshmallows that were sent to us from the USA and taught the kids how to make S’mores. Needless to say the kids loved the new desert and were glad to try a special dish from our home country. The kids especially liked roasting the marshmallows over the fire.

Pictured here are Stephen Felix with his two kids, Alfonia and Tamata, enjoying this sweet snack.



MISSION VANUATU MINUTES

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

IN THIS ISSUE:

- † “I Just Want To Be A Christian
- † Teaching in the Villages
- † Preaching in the Park
- † How Sweet is the Fellowship

Aaron, Cindy and Kaela Baker

Mike Olson



Eric and Shawnda Brandell

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