

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

...ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS...

-By Eric Brandell

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While attending the Bear Valley Bible Institute, I came to understand the import of 2 Timothy 2:2, which says, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these things to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This past weekend, during my monthly trip to Epau Village, I was accompanied by Flexon. Some of you may recall that I met Flexon this past May, when I took our truck into the garage where he works. I inquired as to whether he might be interested in studying the Bible together, and he was very excited. Since then, we have studied every Tuesday night (almost 7 months now). Flexon was baptized into Christ June 21, and since has grown by leaps and bounds. He makes "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:20) an easy commission to fulfill because he is so interested in learning, living and teaching the Bible.

The brethren in Epau asked me to speak on the Holy Spirit and miracles during our November time together. Flexon and I had already studied a lesson on the three manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power, and he seemed to readily grasp the study. He had also shown great interest in teaching the Bible. So, I asked him if he would be willing to travel to Epau with me for the weekend, and teach that lesson...he immediately committed. I gave him a four-week notice, and he began preparing immediately. He rewrote the study to fit his teaching style, fine-tuned and timed the lesson while walking along the beach near his house, and practiced on his family...all within the first week! In the subsequent weeks he would come by the house or catch me after worship services to clear a point or two, or to have me help him with the meaning of a passage of Scripture.

When we arrived in Epau on Saturday afternoon, a man named Bob stated that he was ready to be baptized. We have been working with him for a few months, and he has completed the first three lessons of the Bible Correspondence Course we are offering. Flexon actually new Bob from a prior job, and was grateful for the opportunity to perform his first ever baptism.

When his time came on Saturday night, Flexon was ready and very excited. There were nine locals present for his study (one of whom was not a Christian), and he presented his lesson superbly. While I don't yet have

Bob (L) having been baptized by Flexon at Epau Village



any children, I certainly felt like a “proud papa” that evening. After the study there were a few questions, and he handled them well. As we were coming back to town late Sunday night, he said he was looking forward to coming back next month. Guess we have a new missionary in Vanuatu!

Opportunity Knocks

-By Mike Olson

“He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah.’ He brought him to Jesus...” (John 1:40-41)

Being that we are outsiders in a foreign culture, there are some opportunities which we would not be able to have without the help of the local brethren. One such opportunity came this month with the help of our brother from Ambae, Paul Vuhu.

Paul lived with me for two weeks while he was part of a cultural preservation program here in Vila. He is zealous for the Lord and wanted to use his time in Vila for the benefit of the Lord’s kingdom. For three nights he gathered about 20 men, who were involved with the cultural preservation program, at my house for Bible studies. These men came from about six different islands of Vanuatu and we were able to use this opportunity to teach them. Four of these men were village chiefs, including one man who was the high chief of the island of Maewo. Over three nights we taught three different topics: 1) The inspiration of the Bible taught by Aaron 2) The old and new laws, taught by Mike, and 3) The organization and characteristics of the New Testament church, taught by Eric.

Also important was the chance to answer numerous Bible questions asked by the men sharing in the studies. There were plans for more studies but schedules did not allow for further meetings. These three nights were important because these men, even though they are churchgoers, have never heard the pure truth of the gospel. We were able to show from the Bible what is true and what is not true. The seed has now been sown in places where the church does not exist. All of the teaching was received with favor and we were able to give the men English Bibles which were collected and donated by a supporting congregation in the States. The studies ended each night with tea, bread and conversation. The men were appreciative of the hospitality and the opportunity to learn about the Bible and its teachings.

This is truly a case of sowing the seed and letting the power of God and His Word take effect. In the future we will know what fruit these studies have yielded. Right now, we are appreciative of Paul and his help in spreading the gospel. *“...and he brought him to Jesus.”*

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Campaign Central

-By Aaron Baker

Beginning on Monday, November 14th and running through Thursday, November 17th our team held a campaign out in the village of Eton. This village is located not far from Port Vila and we were able to drive to and from the village each night. Aaron, Eric and Mike each spoke on different nights of the week during this evangelistic campaign. The topics that were covered were: How we got the Bible, The old and new law, Sin, Salvation, The importance of the church, and The characteristics of the church. These were well prepared lessons all taught in Bislama by the team.

Each night attendance ranged from a low of 12 to a high of 25 with both Christians and non Christians attending the classes. Our classes were evangelistic in nature, but also helped to strengthen the faith of those Christians who came.

Though some people may judge the success of a campaign on the number of baptisms produced, we view this campaign as successful even though there were no baptisms. Our work as missionaries is not to just report about baptisms, but also to report about the seed that is being sown into the minds, hearts and lives of those in Vanuatu. While there were no baptisms during our campaign, the results surfaced later.

One visitor to the Eton studies was a man named Bob, who lives in the village of Epau. On the 26th and 27th Eric traveled to Epau as he does every month. Knowing that Bob attended the classes we held in Eton, Eric asked Bob if he was ready to be baptized. Bob was finally ready to commit to Christ and have his sins washed away. What great news!

Even though we were in Eton almost a week teaching and preaching evangelistic lessons, the fruits of our labors were not shown to us until over a week later. This just goes to show, a missionary's work is not to sit around and count baptisms, but to actively sow the seed of the Word of God. God will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6)!

KALJA KONA

-By Aaron Baker

The "Kalja Kona" or, "cultural corner," will introduce you to some of the cultural aspects of Vanuatu which must be considered while doing mission work. For the next few months, we will show some aspects of culture that we come in contact with, especially as it relates to studying the Bible with people here in Vanuatu.

The culture of Vanuatu cannot be stereotyped or pigeon-holed. What is true for some people may not be for all. That said, I have seen an interesting lifestyle develop here in the South Pacific, one which did not develop since my arrival in Vanuatu, but one which I simply have noticed since arriving.

Many island people take a "laid back" attitude reflecting an "I'll get to it when I get to it" attitude. At times this attitude can be frustrating – especially when you schedule a Bible study and they don't show up. What can be viewed from an American perspective as lazy or uncaring, is simply no more than a culture that works differently from our own.

For example, I recently went to meet a man named Bital for a study at 11:30 at the local park. I showed up and when he was not there after 15 minutes, I went to his work. I did find Bital sitting down outside of work talking to some friends. Bital was discussing his running in the municipal election for the position of secretary. He did not originally have a meeting, but since these men came by to talk, he had to postpone our Bible study. This was a case where Bital was not overly "laid back" but rather decided to postpone our study until after the municipal elections were completed and he could "get to it."

Now, while I continue to pray for Bital, I do not wait around for him to call. This is just one example of the Melanesian culture and its "slower pace of life."

MISSION VANUATU MINUTES

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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