

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

A Great Start to the New Year!

In This Issue:

Great Start	1
The Tassos	1
Etas Group	3
New Sisters in Christ	4

This month we highlight the outcome of months of personal Bible studies. The end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 has been a very productive time.

In this issue you can read about eight souls turning to Christ. Mike took part in a wedding which led to multiple studies with the Tassos. Aaron and Cindy studied with a group in Etas after meeting

them at our monthly preaching in the park program. Shawnda went for weeks to study with Joana and Fiona and watched them grow in their relationship and commitment to the Lord.

Read all about a great start to this new year in our THIRD edition of Mission Vanuatu Minutes.

The Tassos By: Mike Olson

December 10, 2005 was a wonderful day. A day when two more souls were added to the Lord's body, His church. A day when two more people went from darkness to the Light. A day where two more people stopped their service to Satan and started their service to Jesus Christ. In short, a day when two people were saved by the blood of Jesus from the sin which separates them from their God.

On this very day Patrick and Ruth Tasso were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and to be placed inside the Lord's church. The road to this salvation started with some Bible studies at my house arranged by Paul Vuhu, which



Patrick attended. The road then went through my participation in the marriage ceremony of Patrick and Ruth, and ended with study and more study before their baptism in the ocean.

Neither Patrick nor Ruth had much background in religion or the Bible. They

...The Tassos, cont.

were pawns in the denominational system created by men for some time but never clung to any ideal. Patrick though did want to live a better life and knew God was the way.

We had talked and studied several times before the 10th of December but there was a lot more which needed to be said. On that Saturday morning I had them over to my house and I invited Morris Felix to come and help me with the study. He is a wise old man who has already experienced what Patrick and Ruth were about to experience. They knew about the need for baptism and living a good life, but I really wanted to stress to them the commitment necessary to become a Christian. Anyone can start but the real test is, can you finish? They will be the only members of the church on Tanna and will have to resist all of the denominational pressure around them. I stressed this fact and Morris was able to confirm this because he came out of the Presbyterian church 24 years ago under tremendous pressure to return. He was able to tell them about all of the things in society and culture and custom which will pull at them to compromise truth. I was glad that Morris could explain all of this. Being a member of the Lord's church means holding to one church, one baptism, one gospel, one faith, one hope. The denominations of the world hold to many churches, and many gospels, and many faiths but the Bible tells of just ONE.

Patrick and Ruth had the strength of mind and character to set aside worldly man made ideas and follow the pure word of God. I pray that many more will have the courage to do the same and not just stay in

the religion they have always known since birth. God and His word save men (Romans 1:16) traditions of men do not (Matt 15:1-14). Many people will simply be a blind follower of a blind religious teaching and they will both end up in the pit (hell) (15:14).

After they had made their decision we drove to a beautiful spot in the ocean fitting for the occasion and Eddie Karris baptized them into Christ. While baptism is the end of the old life, it is also the start of a new life in Christ. Please pray for Patrick and Ruth to be strong in their journey.



**Eddie Karris
baptizing
Patrick Tasso
into Christ**

**Ruth
coming
out of the
water to
walk in
newness
of life**



Back in October Cindy and I began a group Bible study out in the village of Etas. Each week we drive 20 minutes out of town to the village of Etas where we conduct a Bible study from 5pm to 9pm. Average attendance is around eight people and we always have good questions fired at us. Morris, a Christian from Eton village, goes with us nearly every week and assists us in our teaching.

From the start I could tell that Sam and Leimawa were special people. Sam was very analytical and thoughtfully digested our studies while Leimawa was always cheerful and glad to hear the Bible teaching. This couple introduced us to Sam's uncle, Pbles (pronounced Bless) and his wife Ruth. We began our studies at first with Sam and Leimawa but not long after it grew to include Pbles and Ruth as well as many visitors from the community.

After weeks of study a key lesson on the topic of baptism began to open their eyes. Pbles in particular, who was sprinkled as a baby into the Catholic church, began asking about baptism. After a few more studies on baptism and the church, Pbles, Ruth, Sam and Leimawa all indicated that they wanted to be baptized.

January 4th was the day that, after weeks of studying, the conclusive decision was made that these four souls wanted to be joined with Christ through the waters of baptism. On this Wednesday afternoon we headed out to the village to hold our study as usual. This time, however, was going to be different as four souls were ready to commit to Christ.

We all piled into the truck and drove 15 minutes to the ocean. Morris changed clothes and individually took the confession

of Sam, Leimawa, Pbles and Ruth as they proclaimed their belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who died on the cross for their sins. Morris then waded down into the ocean and proceeded to baptize each of them for the forgiveness of their sins. Truly the angels in heaven were rejoicing four-fold on this great and glorious day (Luke 15:7, 10).

To date, We are continuing our studies to help this group grow spiritually. For now, I pick up this group each Sunday morning for Bible class and worship. In the future, they do want to build a shelter in Etas where they can meet to worship on Sunday and hold Bible studies throughout the week. For now, they are content to travel to Vila as they are learning how to worship and become involved in serving the Lord.

Pictured Below:

TOP: Aaron talks with Sam (center) and Pbles (R) about baptism

BOTTOM: Pbles (L), Ruth, Cindy and Leimawa (R) after a custom dance to celebrate their baptism.





Fiona (L), Shawnda and Joana (R)

In August 2005 Flexon, a newly-converted member of the church here in Vila, set up a study with his "cousin-brother" Kolkot. When I showed up for our first study, his wife Joana was also present. I studied with the two of them (plus an occasional family member) for about six weeks. Kolkot and Joana are wonderful people, but were very shy and didn't talk much. At the end of the six weeks, I wasn't really sure where to go. They continued to show mild interest in studying, but hadn't made any changes in relation to what we had been studying. At the same time, they indicated they understood and agreed with what we had been studying (so I knew it wasn't an issue of unanswered questions). To the best of my ability, I explained to them that I had done all that I could until they were ready to make a commitment to follow Christ. I told them I wanted them to think about the importance and implications of such a decision for a week or so, and assured them that I was always ready to study further or answer any questions they might have. I went back to their house a few times just to visit, but each time they just shyly smiled in response to my inquiries. Again, I just didn't know what to do.

A few weeks later, Flexon asked that Shawnda begin studying with his girlfriend, Fiona. Interestingly, the selected venue was Kolkot and Joana's house, which meant Joana joined Fiona and Shawnda for their study each week. Joana really seemed to flourish under a female teacher (which was no surprise given the Melanesian culture). About that same time, Kolkot went back to work on a cruise ship, which means he is out of the country for six months (he is able to visit when the ship docks in Vila, usually for a day at a time once a month). Shawnda studied with Joana and Fiona for about a month, and each showed positive growth and interest. During one of his trips home, Joana talked at length to Kolkot about her thoughts and the decision she felt she needed to make. He encouraged her and promised to begin studying with me (one-on-one, hopefully) when he returns to Vila in June.

After a fairly difficult period of "counting the cost," both Joana and Fiona were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins on January 5, 2006. Each of them had to make some significant changes in their lives in response to the repentance that couples Bible baptism. To date, each of them continue to study with Shawnda once a week, and though Satan is trying hard to win them back through temptation, they are growing and maturing with each new day. Please be praying for Joana and Fiona as they continue this new life, and also for Kolkot's future interest in learning and obeying the truth.

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

A ministry of the

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

Please send address changes to:

Shane Moore,
sampam@msn.com

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

In This Issue:

- Great start to the New Year
- The Tassos
- Etas Group
- New Sisters in Christ

The Mission Vanuatu Team:

Eric and Shawnda Brandell (L), Mike Olson (center),
Aaron, Cindy and Kaela Baker (R)

