

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

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After such a fast start to the new year, our team sure had our hands full. Christianity doesn't end when one is baptized, it simply begins. This month we focused on building up these new Christians we reported about in January.

Our team was blessed to have visitors from the States come for a one week visit. In addition to having visitors, we also took some of the new Christians from Etas to meet

the members of the church of Christ in Eton village.

This month also marks the ground-breaking of the building project in Port Vila. We plan to finish the foundation for the building, pavilion and toilet structures in March.

Read all about it in this month's issue!

The Heinens By: Aaron Baker

Our team is always thrilled when people from the States are able to visit. It is an encouragement to our team and to those whose lives they touch. This month Steve and Samantha Heinen from Tulsa, Oklahoma came for a visit. A deacon of missions at the 29th and Yale church of Christ in Tulsa, Steve came not only to see our work, but to be a part of it!

The Heinen's arrived late on the 16th of February and returned to the states on the 23rd. On the Friday after their arrival they went right to work; Steve gave a devotional thought to the Port Vila congregation's weekly fellowship and Samantha helped Shawnda and Cindy with all of the preparations.



Above: Steve and Samantha Heinen posing for a picture with Kaela Sue.

...The Heinens, cont.



On Saturday and Sunday, the Heinens wanted the "full Vanuatu experience" and boy they got it! They went with Eric and Shawnda to Epau village and stayed the weekend. On Saturday night Eric held his monthly studies to encourage and strengthen the Christians. On Sunday Steve gave the lesson while Eric translated it into Bislama.

During their stay in the village they were able to experience everything from Lap-lap, island cabbage and fresh coconut to sleeping under mosquito nets. While they intended to go to the village and convey the message that congregations in the States love the Christians in Vanuatu and are praying for them, the Heinens themselves heard the message of how loved they are loud and clear.

On Monday the 20th the team took the 4 hour trip around the island to introduce the Heinens to the other villages into which our work takes us. After meeting the Christians in Puanangisu, Epau, and Eton we stopped off to swim and cool off at Eton Beach.

Tuesday the 21st Samantha joined the ladies of the congregation at Rose Hannah's house for a devotional in which she offered an encouraging message to the ladies. The ladies were especially glad to have the presence of a woman since mostly men tend to visit the mission field.

On Wednesday the 22nd, the Heinens accompanied Aaron and Cindy to a weekly Bible study in Etas. Samantha went with Cindy and studied with a lady named Alice who is currently a member of the SDA church.

Due to bad weather a few days prior to this study we were unable to have our group study since many couldn't come. Rain had made the roads nearly impassible – the only

reason we made it to the study was by four-wheeling it through the mud bog. With as much rain as we had, even walking without slipping was a challenge.

Wednesday the 22nd was our monthly Preaching in the Park session, the seventh one since our arrival. Steve was glad to be involved in the preaching as our team worked to pass out nearly 200 tracts to the audience. It was great to see local men such as Eddie, Morris and Bob-Saul standing next to Steve, their brother in Christ from the States. We know well that it makes no difference your skin color, education level or language you speak, for we are all one in Christ Jesus!

As all good things must come to an end, Steve and Samantha Heinen departed from us on Thursday the 23rd of February to head back home. Our team was truly blessed to have this couple come work with us to spread the Word of God. We were glad to share with Steve and Samantha a "typical" week of our work in Vanuatu.



Above: Steve with the group from Etas

Special contributions from brethren throughout the United States allowed the congregation in Port Vila to purchase land in 2003. During a visit to Vanuatu from New Zealand the next year, Antony Raine saw a need and had a desire to fulfill it. He set out to raise the necessary funds and manpower to construct a building on that land. Fast forward two years, and things are moving right along. Funding has now been secured for the completion of the building, and phase one of the construction project is scheduled to begin in early March, with phase two scheduled to be completed in July. The land, which is near the international airport on the north side of town, is prepped and ready to go.

To date, the congregation in Vila has met at two different member's houses (both of which were "outgrown") and currently rents a public hall near the center of town every Sunday morning for Bible study and worship. This rented facility is acceptable, but a major drawback is the fact that there are denominational churches meeting in the same area. We find it very difficult to concentrate on our study and worship while surrounded by sound-systems blasting and the occasional "speaking-in-tongues" session. What a blessing it will be to have a building of our own dedicated to serving and worshipping God. Another bonus is the fact that there is currently a small congregation (made up mostly of a Christian man and his extended family) that meets at their farmhouse near the airport. Once the new building is completed, the Christians there will be within walking distance, and will thus be able to begin worshipping with

us on a weekly basis. Please be praying that the construction process goes smoothly, and that the building will function as intended: a tool used to strengthen and increase the kingdom of our Lord.



Above: The ground before construction



Above: The ground during construction



Above, from L to R: Our team pitching in to complete the foundation – Danny Rader (US), Antony Raine (NZ), Eric, Morris, Aaron, Mike and Todd (NZ).

The joke used to be: How many people can you fit into a Volkswagen? Well, forget the Volkswagen, how many people do you think are in Eric's truck? The answer: 11 inside and 17 outside for a grand total of **28!**



We are all aware that growth can come in two forms – numerical and spiritual. Numerical growth is based on reaching out to the lost and helping them to grow spiritually into a relationship with Christ. Last month we reported on the group of four people from Etas who were baptized. This month our focus was to help them become grounded in the Word. One way we did this was by taking the group from Etas and introducing them to other Christians. Aaron took the group of four Christians to Eton village where the most well established congregation in the country is located. Fortunately, Etas is only 40 minutes from Eton village and so a day trip was easy to do.

On February 12th our plan was for Aaron, Cindy and Kaela to use Eric's truck and take the two families to Etas to meet the Christians from Eton village. At least...that was the plan.

As we tried to leave the morning of the twelfth, the battery in the truck was dead. We pushed the truck down the driveway towards the hill that goes to the hospital. The truck wanted to start, but didn't. Aaron was

supposed to leave at 7:30 that morning for Etas, but by the time we were able to get the truck started it was well past 9:00 am.

When we finally made it to Etas we started loading people up. At first it was supposed to be the 4 new Christians going to Etas. However, as we started loading people up, more and more people wanted to come. As it turned out we squeezed 11 people in the front of the double cab pickup and then shoe-horned another 17 people in the back of the truck. We looked like a clown car (or truck) at the circus as we kept piling in and out of the truck trying to get everyone to fit. All four of the new Christians who were baptized back in January brought a few family members with them for worship in Eton.

We drove 40 minutes down the road, stuffed like sardines into Eric's truck. Upon arriving in Eton we were warmly welcomed by the brethren in the village. We were thrilled that some of the new Christians were able to meet and talk with some of the Christians in Eton that have been in the church for many years. Our goal was not only to show them that the church which Christ built is not just for white missionaries, but for all people of any color and nationality. In addition, we wanted to show them that the church in Etas has potential to grow someday to become the size of that which is in Eton.

This was truly a great day of fellowship and encouragement for these new Christians! Not only were they able to meet other brothers and sisters in Christ, but they were also able to see the more mature members of the church in action, learning from their example.

We are often asked the question, "We know you are missionaries, but what do you guys do over there?" Apart from a general knowledge of us being missionaries here in Vanuatu, few people know how a missionary spends his/her time. Hopefully this will get you up to speed:

Daily

Every day for us is new and different from the previous day. The men spend most of their time preparing lessons to preach and teach. Cindy spends most of her time looking after Kaela. On the side she takes care of the house, Bible Correspondence courses and prepares her studies with Alice in Etas. Shawnda juggles housework, preparing Bible studies and Sunday School lessons, visiting Christians and volunteering at the maternity ward at the hospital once a week.

Lessons the men teach are both to the congregation and in evangelistic studies with individuals or groups. We also prepare sermons for the Radio (Word of Life program) and Preaching in the Park.

Besides preparing lessons, our time is also spent in many other areas. We write tracts, articles to keep the website update, and we are currently working on a booklet designed to strengthen a new Christian's faith, entitled "The Pattern of Christianity." In this booklet we explain the pattern principle, discuss the pattern of the church, of worship, of living, and of sharing the message of the Gospel.

Weekly

Each week the congregation here in Port Vila has a fellowship night. You might think of it as our "Wednesday night

services," except the night in which we meet changes every week. We found that a set fellowship night such as Wednesday excluded some people who would love to come, but unable to because they had other commitments. So, the congregation decided that each week a family would take turns hosting the fellowship. The family would then choose the day, place and time the fellowship would be. For example, one week the fellowship might be on Saturday at Mike's house and the next week it might be on Thursday night in the Park at dusk to sing songs and pray. It has been a nice change that has seen good involvement.

In addition, each week we have various Bible studies going on. Currently, Aaron holds a weekly group study in Etas village and Eric holds a group study in Malapoa. Each week Mike holds a group study in the local prison, teaching a "captive audience" of men eager to learn.

Monthly

Each month our team holds a public Preaching in the Park at the local Sea Front stage the last Wednesday of the month. We consistently pass out about 200 tracts and make many good contacts through this outreach. We always try to schedule local men to speak and spread the news about the church of Christ in Port Vila.

Our team also goes every month into the villages for a weekend. Mike goes to Eton village, Eric to Epau and Aaron to Paunangisu. Our goal in these trips is two-fold: to encourage and evangelize.

Now you know, "How we spend our time."

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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