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We are excited to report seven baptisms in March and one restoration! We are so grateful that God was able to use our team in some small way in His Kingdom. All praise, glory and honor is to be given to Him!

This month Eric coordinated a Gospel Meeting in Epau village. During this meeting two people were converted to Christ and one was restored.

In addition, other ongoing studies have begun to bear fruit as five others turned their lives over to Christ.

Please pray for these new Christians as they begin to walk each day in the way of the Lord. They will face many obstacles in their lives in the coming months, but they will also be learning and growing in the truth of God's Word!

Read all about it in this month's issue!

Epau Village Gospel Meeting By: Eric Brandell

April 16-23, 2006



Above : Kicking-off the Gospel Meeting in Epau that brought Christians and visitors together to hear the Word of God.

Upon the near-completion of the new church building in Epau, the congregation decided that they would like to hold a Gospel Meeting in an effort to utilize this new tool to evangelize the community.

As a result of a planning session on March 26, the meeting specifics were set. It was agreed that ni-Vanuatu men would do the speaking, and that I would lead a question and answer session after each night's lesson. The members of the congregation committed to hanging posters on every one of the village's notice boards, and to personally pass out 100 invitations to their family, friends and neighbors. I emphasized the best I could the principle of sowing and reaping; the more they put into the preparation for this meeting, the greater the



results would be.

We began singing each evening about 6:45, and the preaching started around 7:15 (nine different local men were designated to lead singing and preach each night of the eight day event). Most of the lessons took between 20 and 40 minutes, after which I took the floor to answer questions. As is customary here in Vanuatu, we had a "question box" into which people could submit their questions in writing. No one had taken the time to write any questions on the first night, but I answered questions that were asked verbally for about two and a half hours. Every night following, I answered questions from the box for one to two hours. I was very pleased with the quality of the questions asked, especially those that came from the box (as people had the time to clearly and completely communicate their inquiries). They each showed a great deal of honesty, and proved that those asking the questions were truly seeking the truth. We have found this question and answer format to be one of the most effective methods of teaching the Bible here in Vanuatu. To close our time together each night, we shared cookies and juice provided by the ladies of the Epau congregation.

The attendance each evening was encouraging, and in turn the singing was wonderful. We had 60+ a few nights, and 10+ non-Christian visitors every night of the meeting. Shawnda and I began picking people up in Vila about 4:30, and by the time we were finished we always had a full load (Christians and non-Christians from Vila, Etas, and Eton were able to travel with us for each study). We usually made it back to our house about midnight. It made for a long week in some respects, but in the end it was well worth the effort.

A total of 380 Bislama tracts were taken during the meeting, which our team has

written on various biblical topics, and many interested locals signed up for a Bible Correspondence Course. God also blessed our efforts through giving increase: two baptisms, one restoration and a number of solid contacts that will be followed up on by the local Christians and myself.



Wallace (above holding towel). A few minutes after the closing song and prayer on Wednesday night, Eddie came over and excitedly exclaimed, "Wallace i wantem baptaes" (Wallace wants to be baptized). I went over and talked to Wallace, who had attended the studies on Sunday and Monday night as well, to make sure that he understood all that this decision meant. I was comfortable that he did understand, and asked Eddie to make the announcement to the whole congregation. Eddie led us all in "What Will Your Answer Be?" and went down to the river and Arthur baptized Wallace into Christ. Wallace is seventy years old and has been a member of some denominational groups in the past, but is grateful that God allowed him time in his life to repent and turn to Him (2 Peter 3:9). Interestingly, Wallace was the builder hired by the congregation to oversee the building project in Epau. We are also glad that Wallace's wife and three of their daughters attended the studies, and seem to be on the road to obedience. What an exciting night!

...Gospel Meeting, cont..



Kalmeier (above R). During the Sunday morning worship service (the last day of the meeting), as a result of his attendance at several of the week's studies, Kalmeier (pronounced "call-mayor") voiced his desire to be restored to the body of Christ. He had been baptized in 1991 by Eddie Karris (from Eton Village), but had since fallen back into the grips of Satan and the world. How wonderful it is that he "saved his soul from death and covered a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). It was an honor to meet and talk with this restored brother.



Morten. Immediately after the closing prayer on the final Sunday of the meeting, Morten approached me saying he wanted to be baptized. We talked about the meaning of that decision for a few minutes, and then we headed to the river, where Max baptized him into Christ. Upon our return to the church building, Morten's wife Rita ran up to me and shook my vigorously, saying "thank you, thank you" with tears in her eyes. Rita has been a Christian for about two years, and has been anxiously awaiting the day that her husband would make that decision. It was wonderful to see that family united in Christ.

In a word, I would describe the Epau Gospel Meeting as a "success." As I consider its affect on the local Christians, visiting Christians, new Christians and non-Christians, I am again reminded of the awesome power of God's word in the lives of men and women. There are truly many seekers in Epau, and I am grateful that God used us to help many of them find.

I returned to Epau on the following Tuesday morning to retrieve the generator, sound system, tables and other items we used during the meeting. I had hoped to study with some of the contacts made through the meeting that day, but none were available. As is custom, the Christians who were available came to greet me as soon as they heard my truck come through the village. It was wonderful to, for the first time, greet Morten as my brother in Christ. The smile on his face, which had appeared on Sunday evening, was still going strong. I was able to converse with a number of the Christians in Epau, and their continued excitement was evident; their faces were still glowing. I heard from a number of them that the gospel meeting was the "talk of the town" on Monday, with many of the visitors saying that one week wasn't enough time (they wanted at least two). I guess it's good to leave them wanting more! I was pleasantly surprised to hear that the overall perception of the village regarding the meeting was that Christ's church teaches the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Many members of the Presbyterian Church (the largest and most influential denomination in Vanuatu) were especially influenced by the teaching of the truth. Great things are in store for the church in Epau Village!

Woi – April 20

Woi (pictured center, 18 years old) approached her friend, Mabel (right, a Christian in Vila), about a sin she had committed in her life that was significantly bothering her. She knew Mabel was a Christian, and wanted to know what she should do to receive forgiveness from God. Mabel explained that the Bible taught that one is "baptized for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38). Woi immediately stated her desire to be baptized. Mabel said she should probably study a few things first, to ensure that she properly understood all that decision entailed. Mabel then introduced Woi to Shawnda, so that the two of them could study the Bible together.



After a couple of weeks of attending worship services, studying with Shawnda, and attending two nights of the Gospel Meeting in Epau, Woi expressed her readiness to be baptized into the body of Christ. We all went down to the lagoon near our house, and I baptized her.

Woi is such a sweet young lady. We all really enjoy being around her, and look forward to helping her mature in Christ. We are especially excited that Mabel played such an important role in this conversion as well. She will no doubt continue to do her part to help the kingdom of God flourish here in Vanuatu.

Selina – April 23

For those who have read about our Group Bible Study in Mele-Maat Village, you may recall our meeting Selina during our January edition of Preaching in the Park. She, in turn, invited us to her village (about 15 minutes out of town by truck) to teach. I taught each Wednesday night for just over two months, and it appeared evident as we neared the end of those studies that Selina was very interested in learning and obeying God's word.



L to R: Fiona, Rema, Selina and Shawnda

On Sunday morning (23rd), she visited services and afterwards visited with Shawnda. She had a few last-minute questions to talk about. She was especially concerned about the backlash that would inevitably come from her leaving the denomination she was apart of to join the church Christ built. After a few minutes of study, Selina stated her readiness to be baptized. We drove to the lagoon, where Shem baptized Selina into Christ. She and Shawnda continue studying every Wednesday evening, and Selina will be a welcomed part of the ladies' ministry, and our spiritual family here in Vila.

Please be praying that more people from the village of Mele-Maat will be obedient to the gospel, and that ultimately a new congregation of the Lord's people can be established there.

Patrick and Leisava – April 25

Leisava is the daughter of Harry Archie, one of only two Christians in Paunangisu Village, and we were introduced to her and her husband through him. One day while I was working out in the yard, Harry came by and said that Patrick and Leisava wanted me to come and talk to them.

That afternoon, Shawnda and I went to their house here in Vila. They had recently had a baby girl and wanted to talk to us about "blessing" her.

The false doctrine of infant baptism was brought to the country by the Presbyterians back in the late 1800s. As time passed most denominations realized the error of this teaching, but still felt the need to have a religious ceremony. Thus, they invented the "blessing of children." Unfortunately, the custom in Vanuatu is that mothers and fathers are not allowed to attend a church function until the baby has been so "blessed" (sometimes weeks pass before this done). Patrick and Leisava were concerned because the pastor of their denomination (NTM, Neil Thomas Ministries) was unwilling to bless their baby because of some sins he (erroneously) thought they were involved in. They were concerned because they were afraid that their baby was in a lost condition without this blessing, and didn't know what to do since their pastor refused.

I began by talking about the fact that children are clean in God's eyes - they are incapable of sinning, and unable to inherit the sins of their parents (Ezek 18:20). I assured them that, biblically, they had nothing to worry about as their daughter was indeed clean in God's sight...they were relieved. We also spent a few minutes talking about the NTM pastor's objection. I told them that if they would come to our worship services the next day, the congregation would pray for their new daughter, that God would protect her and use her to glorify him. As a result, we began studying together each Tuesday evening. Patrick and Leisava also came with us to the Gospel Meeting in Epau for two nights. Following one of those Tuesday night studies, they stated their desire to be baptized.

Patrick and Leisava are VERY excited about their new lives in Christ, and show great potential in serving their Master together. They have one of the greatest characteristics a person can have: a sincere thirst for knowledge of God's word, and a desire to put it into practice. Please be praying for them as they begin this new journey of faith.



Eric and Shawnda pictured with Patrick and Leisava

By: Aaron Baker

More Growth in Etas

Since the congregation in Etas was started, there has been much growth, spiritually as well as numerically. I studied with Timothy for three months and on April 5th, he wanted to be baptized into Christ. The day Timothy was baptized was a truly special day. Upon coming up out of the water, he just stood there with his eyes closed, hands over his mouth and took a deep breath. It had finally sunk in...his sins were wiped away and he arose from the water a new man, one ready to work for the Lord. It has been my privilege to study with Timothy and I will never forget how he "took it all in" as we stood in the water after he was baptized. He seemed to just be soaking up the grace of God. May we all remember this heart-touching example in our daily spiritual walk.



Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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Please send address changes to:

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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- Epau Village Gospel Meeting
- April Conversions
- More Growth in Etas

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