

Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

In This Issue:

- PIBC -1, 2
- A New Church- 3
- Traveling the
Globe - 4
- Added To The
Body - 4
- Small Boxes, Big
Help - 5
- Odds and Ends-5

The month of May came and went...quickly! The Brandells headed to the USA for reporting and Eric's brother's wedding, Mike jumped on a boat and went to the island of Espiritu Santo, and Aaron went to Ambae island to encourage the Christians there. What a jam-packed month!

The majority of this month's newsletter is devoted to reporting on the various

events of Aaron's trip to Ambae. It was a time for learning, a time for growth, and a time for fellowship and great encouragement!

In addition the trip to Ambae, read all about the new things happening from a "new" truck for the Baker's to a new Christian in Etas – May was a month that kept our schedule full.

Read all about it in this month's issue!

Pacific Islands Bible College By: Aaron Baker

May 5-19, 2006



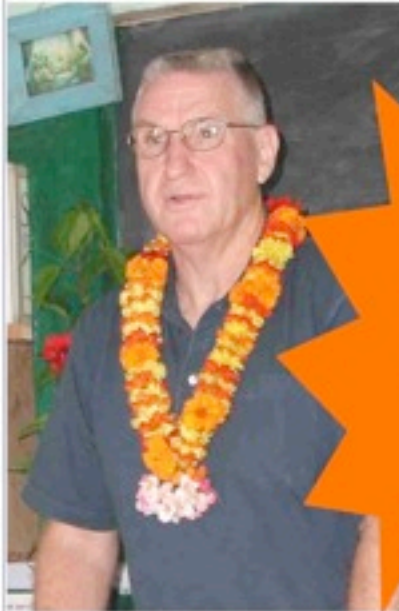
PIBC began in 1976 and has grown today to include campuses in Guam and Chuuk. Instructors also travel to several locations throughout the Pacific, building servant leaders for Christ.

PIBC stands for "Pacific Islands Bible College." Robert Martin is the director of PIBC that teaches various courses throughout the Pacific Islands to strengthen, educate and encourage churches of Christ. Courses are typically 2 – 3 weeks in length and a test is given at the end of the courses. Students advance through the program up until graduation where they can then teach the classes in their own country.

In Vanuatu, Paul Vuhu, of Ambae, is the only person to have graduated from the PIBC program. In May, Aaron went with Robert Martin and Ken Forrest to Ambae to



conduct the PIBC courses to ultimately increase the number of students who have grown in Biblical knowledge and graduated from this program.



Left: Robert teaches PIBC courses to students eager to learn

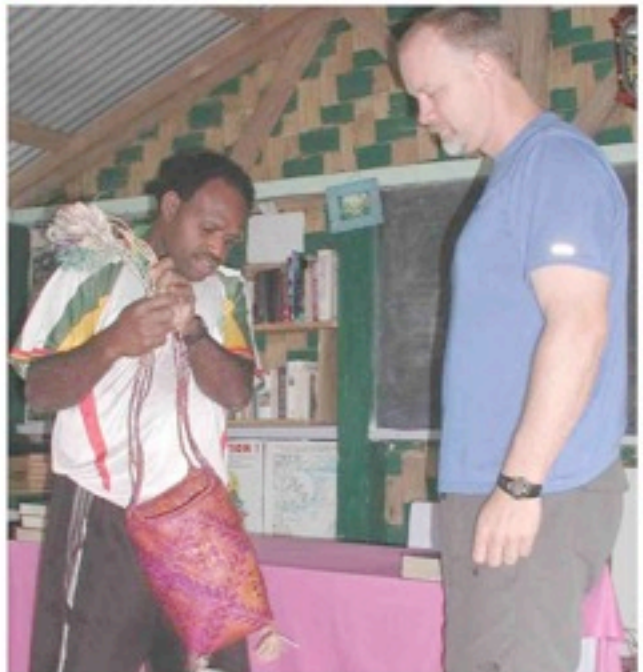
We conducted the PIBC courses from the 5th through the 18th. Robert taught a class on Isaiah through Daniel while Ken taught two classes: one on Galatians/Hebrews and one on John. Members of the church attended these classes as well as visitors from the community who wanted to learn the Bible. In all we had 17 students and most of which took the classes for credit, which means that they studied, took and passed the tests with great marks.

What impressed us most were men like Joseph who walked 1.5 hours every day just to come to these classes despite it raining nearly the entire two weeks we were in Ambae.

The Christians at Duviara were so thankful for our coming to teach the Bible on Ambae island. The congregation gave each of us a woven basket to show their thanks for our coming (pictured below).

Going to Ambae is quite a trip! We ride in the back of a truck nearly 2 hours bouncing and sliding into the ruts in the dirt road. When the road ends, we then walk the remaining 25 minutes uphill. Finally at the top of the hill we reach Duviara, which means "last stop," and is aptly named. Despite the effort it takes to get to Duviara, we are generously rewarded by the kindness and love we are shown by the brethren there. The smiles and hugs we get are certainly payment enough.

Below: Ken receives a basket for surviving two weeks in Ambae!



On our trip to Ambae in May we had the chance to be a part of the planting of a new congregation of the Lord's church. On May 13th Robert, Ken, myself and the Christians from the Duviara church of Christ walked one hour to the village of Saramaewo. Makenzie Tary, who worships with the Duviara congregation, had for months planned and thought about starting a congregation in his own village. Now it was to become a reality!

In the past there was only one congregation of the Lord's church in the last village of Duviara, located near the top of the mountain in Ambae. To arrive on time for worship, many people who lived down the hill would walk every week one to one and a half hours uphill to arrive on time. Having gone to Ambae and stayed for a few weeks, I witnessed first hand how dedicated some of the Christians were to do this every week! Especially, if it rains walking can be quite a chore!



Friends, family and the community turned out for the opening of the Neihala church of Christ on Ambae

For several months Makenzie decided that he would build a small shelter where the Christians from Saramaewo could meet on his property. Makenzie wanted to start a congregation in his own village that would make worshipping for his family and others nearby much more accessible. Makenzie (pictured below) worked for over a week to personally construct a place where the Christians could meet and on Saturday, May 13th we opened the meeting place for the Neihala church of Christ. In the local language, "Neihala" means, "all welcome." This fitting name highlighted a new meeting place where Christians could come worship together where all truly are



welcome.

This new congregation has much potential; not only in the Saramaewo village, but throughout East Ambae. Just at the opening ceremony there were about 60 people present, from young children to wise old chiefs who had come to the dedication. As the Neihala church of Christ starts off small, we must pray for their growth: both numerically and spiritually that the church may be a light in its community. We must also pray for Makenzie as he will do most of the preaching at Neihala and for the Christians to be faithfully dedicated in their attendance as well as service to Christ.

Traveling the Globe

By: Aaron Baker

May and even into June is a time when our team will do much traveling. Eric and Shawnda Brandell left May 11th for the USA. They returned to the States for Eric's brother's wedding and are also reporting and fundraising. They will be reporting to several congregations in the Oklahoma and Colorado areas through June 15th when they will return to Vanuatu. Please visit: www.missionvanuatu.com/schedule.htm to see if they will be near you.

Mike Olson also left for the island of Espiritu Santo to follow up on several Bible Correspondence Course students. Santo is the largest island of the 73 that make up the chain of islands that are Vanuatu. Mike has already conducted several Bible studies and reports that the contacts he is making look promising. Mike is scheduled to return to Vila on June 12th. Please pray for our team as we travel the globe sharing the message of Christ.



By: Aaron Baker

Added To The Body

I met Phillip at Etas back in January of this year. Phillip and I began studying as he had a great interest in God's Word and he wanted to learn the Bible. Several Sundays he would come worship with us in Port Vila and on April 9th when the congregation in Etas first started to meet, he was there to visit. We studied once a week for several months and since I was getting ready to go to Ambae for two weeks I wanted to bring these studies to an end. Several times we met every night in an effort to complete our studies before I left town. Every night Phillip would come, as would Timothy who was baptized last month, but Phillip just wasn't ready to commit.

You see in Phillip's past there was a lot of confusion. He was a member of the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) for a few years and then he became disinterested in their teachings. They were trying to show him that he needed to be married in order to really enjoy heaven. With Phillip being single this made it very hard for him and so he eventually quit going to the Mormon church and that is when we began our studies. After a few weeks of contemplating a life outside of Christ and His true church, Phillip was ready to be baptized into Christ and on May 3rd he was added to the Lord's church. He has already begun take charge of his spiritual life and obey Christ. Imagine my surprise and joy when I came back from Ambae and Phillip was leading singing that next Sunday. What beautiful, natural growth he has already experienced in the body of Christ. Please pray for Phillip and his new life in Christ.



While on Ambae the three Amigos (Robert, Ken and Aaron) visited the Lolowai hospital that treats patients from all areas of East Ambae. Mary Martin, wife of Robert Martin, had previously sent two boxes of medical supplies to Vanuatu. Upon our arrival in Lolowai we presented the provincial hospital with much needed supplies that will be used to treat patients.

Hospital care found in a third world country such as Vanuatu is drastically different from what one would expect in the States. Here, clinics around Vanuatu await the shipment of supplies from the head dispensary in Port Vila. Unfortunately, if a clinic needs supplies that the dispensary cannot send right away, the clinic must do without. Here, there is no such thing as a "private room." As we presented these supplies to the head nurse at Lolowai hospital, she began to tear up as she knew how badly these supplies were needed in her hospital. Our team gives a huge "thank you" to Mary Martin whose generosity made this possible. We, and all patients at the Lolowai hospital thank you greatly.



Left: Makenzie and Robert at the Lolowai Hospital



Above: The hospital rooms in Lolowai are anything but "private."

Odds and Ends

During my trip to Ambae Cindy was busy at home. We had just sold our small, four door car and were in search of a four-wheel drive truck that is better suited to the island roads of Vanuatu.

Imagine my surprise when Cindy picked me up from the airport in a truck...that wasn't ours, or so I thought. While I was busy in Ambae, Cindy was busy in Port Vila. She, with Eric's help, had bought a second-hand truck that was exactly what

we needed. Cindy did a great job in that "...she considers a field and buys it," (Prov. 31:16) or in our case, she considered a truck and bought it.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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The Mission Vanuatu Team:

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