

# Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

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So much happened this month, its hard to keep up with it all! You had better get busy reading this issue to learn about all the events in the month of August!

In this issue we discuss PIBC courses that were held in Port Vila and Epau village. In addition, Cindy's students finished their school session and went on break.

Nine men and women came on campaign to

Vanuatu. Read about how they both gave and received encouragement.

Finally, in this issue you won't want to miss out on reading about the value of short term missions. This article should prove to be an eye opener.

Special thanks goes to the Bear Valley, Columbine and Elm and Hudson churches of Christ for loaning us their young people for two short weeks of work on the mission field.

## Vila, Epau Christians go to School By: Aaron Baker

July 25 – August 8



**Above :** Christians from the Epau "Jos blong Kraes" or "Church of Christ" gather for a picture following the last class sessions.

**P**acific Islands Bible College (PIBC) courses were taught in Port Vila and Epau Village from July 25<sup>th</sup> through August 7<sup>th</sup>. Tom Bailey, preacher for the Elm and Hudson church of Christ in Altus, OK and Wayne Burger, preacher at the Columbine church of Christ in Littleton, CO, ran the courses. Tom covered from Joshua to Esther and Wayne taught the book of Acts.

Each day Wayne, Tom and Christians from Eton village would take a bus in the morning to Epau village, located 1 hr from Port Vila. Following the teaching sessions which ran from 8am to 11:30am, Wayne and Tom would then caravan back to Port Vila in a rented bus. At night, the teachers covered the same material they had just presented that morning, but to the



### ...School, cont.

Christians in Port Vila.

Tom had the difficult task of covering 12 books of the Old Testament. Key dates, people and events were highlighted and application from God's Word was brought to the students to bring the lesson home. Students remarked that they especially enjoyed Tom sharing some lessons on leadership from the book of Nehemiah.

Wayne's class on the book of Acts was also well received by the Christians. Wayne brought timely lessons and showed clearly why Acts is called the "book of conversions" and the "hub of the Bible."

The PIBC courses were offered free to Christians and the community alike. While the core of these courses was to build up and encourage the Christians, all were welcome. At the end of the classes each student takes a test on the material covered. Credit is given for passing the tests and the grade is recorded. When a student completes all the course work, they receive a diploma from the Pacific Islands Bible College. What a great way for Christians to build up their knowledge and love for the Word of God!



**Above:** Wayne (L) and Tom (R) are introduced by Eddie Karris (from Eton Village) before beginning their classes in Epau.



### School Break in Etas

**E**arlier issues of the Mission Vanuatu Minutes have reported on the classes Cindy holds in Etas village, working to teach children how to read and write. Since June 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year classes were held twice a week, two hours a day. Many parents in the villages hope their children can receive an education, but few are able to pay the high school fees. Cindy's school is offered at a low charge (she asks \$2 per student for their supplies) to offer parents the option of at least teaching their children how to read and write.

The 23 students in Cindy's class have completed their session and have been given the proper tools, that with practice, will enable them to enjoy a great start in life.

Cindy's next session of classes will not begin until early 2007 as the Bakers will be heading to the States to report to supporting congregations. Thank you all for your words of encouragement regarding these classes. Cindy had almost as much fun as the kids! If these kids are able to read the Bible for themselves and choose to follow God, then this school is a success.



**Above:** Cindy teaches her students the letter, "A."

July 25<sup>th</sup> through August 8<sup>th</sup> a group of 9 men and women came on a campaign to teach and encourage the Christians in Vanuatu. Wayne and Tom (article on page 1) chaperoned 7 young men and women on this two week trip.

Alec Robison, Drew, Mark and Amy Fitzgerald from the Columbine church of Christ (CO), Rachel Wilkie from Bear Valley church of Christ (CO) and Thomas and Becky Bailey from Elm and Hudson church of Christ (OK) all raised funds to come on this campaign.

The young men excelled at our monthly Preaching in the Park, while the ladies met together to sing, pray and lift each other up. In addition to the teaching and preaching, the group worked for nearly a week on a building project in Epau village. Formerly the Christians there had been meeting under a tarp for worship. Through many coordinated efforts, the Christians in Epau now have a nice building in which to meet and use as a tool to spread the Gospel of Christ.

The goal for our mission team was to expose these young men and women to life and work on the mission field. For all it was an eye opening experience.

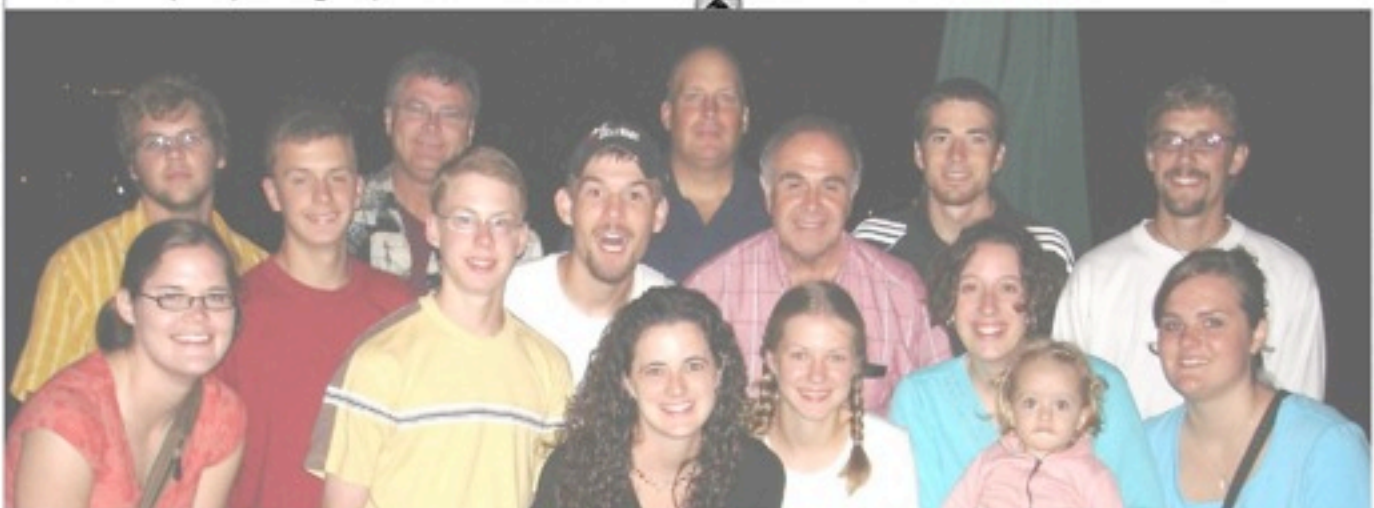
In essence the group came in order to encourage and build up the Christians here. But in reality, the campaigners experienced reciprocal encouragement. They hardly expected to be so encouraged and strengthened themselves by the local Christians.



**Left:** Mark Fitzgerald passing out tracts at Preaching in the Park.



**Above:** Becky, Amy and Rachel are hard at work painting the building in Epau.



**Our team pictured with the campaign group from the States. What a great group of workers! Over 14 hours on the plane to get to Vanuatu, but it was worth it, right?**

**D**uring the summer break from school most young men and women in the States spend their time either relaxing or working to earn some money before the next school term begins. However, for this group of seven special young men and women, their break was spent selflessly helping others (group mentioned in article above).

From July 25<sup>th</sup> through August 8<sup>th</sup> this group spent two weeks ministering to their brothers and sisters in Christ half-way around the world. Activities included: joining the mission team for the monthly preaching in the park, passing out tracts, going on Bible studies, helping with the school in Etas, working on a building project and encouraging local men and women to attend PIBC courses.

Over the years many people have been skeptical of the value of short term missions. However, as a missionary having hosted a group of campaigners, I can readily say that it was well worth the time and money spent for this group to come. Locals continually spoke with me about the faith, love and dedication they saw in action and even now still talk about how great it was that this group could come. Short term trips to the mission field are of value to the following groups:

### **The Campaigners**

Going to a mission field will stretch, pull and plunge you out of your comfort zone. You are in a new place, eating new food, hearing a new language and may even experience a new climate. In short, it's NEW! Nothing will help open your eyes to the needs of others and enable you to grow less egocentric than going to a mission field.

Think of how much you learn by just preparing to go to the mission field – even if only for a few weeks. You must 1) raise the funds 2) research the climate, culture, country, etc. 3) prepare material to teach or preach 4) be ready to present the material you have prepared and on and on. Just getting ready to go visit the mission field will broaden your horizons and help you relate better to others so that you might be able to echo "I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some" 1 Corinthians 9:22.

In addition, campaigners tend to get the congregation they represent more involved in mission work. As you return to the States and report to the congregation about your trip (what you saw, ate and did) people will be interested and more eager to support the mission work. The phrase "out of sight, out of mind" rings true too often with mission work. Short term missions help curb this and make the challenges and successes of mission work a reality.

### **The Missionary**

If you are a missionary living in a foreign country, most likely the language you speak daily is not your native tongue. Here in Vanuatu, we speak the local language, Bislama, 90% of the time. The remaining 10% is English spoken amongst ourselves. As campaigners come to work, it is a blessing just to converse in English. You may think, "How trivial. How boring." It's nice just to have

**Alec, aren't you supposed to paint standing up?**



time to talk and "think" in your native language.

The missionary is encouraged also through simply conversing with the campaigners. How often do guys just need "guy time" and girls need "girl time?" In a mixed group in the States you will see that guys sit down and talk with guys and the girls do likewise. It is nice to talk to people with which you have similar interests.

Seeing brothers and sisters in Christ working together is always encouraging. Add to the mix the fact that the campaigners have often sacrificed much to come work and build up local Christians and you have a recipe for success. To watch people from different races, backgrounds and cultures work together as one, it is a true source of strength and blessing for the missionary.

### **The Local Members and Congregation**

The bottom line is that souls are taught. It may be that the teaching is to save the soul, or that the soul is taught to remain of the saved. When people come for short term missions, they teach. Some of it is verbally, most is through action. Local Christians and the local congregation are encouraged when they learn through the words and examples of others. Hearing a lesson and seeing one are powerful teaching tools.

Local Christians grow spiritually when they see others who they perceive to be of stronger spiritual character exhibit love, exemplify dedication and epitomize solid faith. The value of a stronger Christian selflessly helping to strengthen another is purely priceless.

Imagine that you have been taught for months about a difficult topic. You did not understand the teaching at first, and then slowly it made sense as the preacher continued to teach and clear the fog. Now, you "test" what you now believe about this topic and find out that someone (other than the teacher) holds the same belief as you. How do you feel? You feel great, excited, alive. This is how a new convert feels when learning some of the basic doctrines found in the Bible. Learning about the Godhead is a tough task. Learning that someone else also holds a like-minded faith makes understanding this topic incredibly easier. The value of having campaigners come and share a like-minded faith with other, perhaps younger, Christians is priceless. Fears subside. Faith is strengthened.

### **Conclusion**

Short term mission trips are of significant value, not only to the campaigners and missionaries alike, but they are also of value to the Christians and congregations which are visited. Let's support short term mission trips more enthusiastically than before!



**Left:** Ladies encouraging one another at the fellowship in the park. A great time of singing, praying and fun as the women joined together to build each other up. The bond of unity was strong across the diverse backgrounds of all the women present.

# Mission Vanuatu Minutes

A ministry of the

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

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- School Break
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