

# 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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**C**hristians and visitors gather at the Neihala church of Christ in Ambae to study about the church: its founder, worship and work. Read all about it in this month's issue!

## Christian Training Sessions in Ambae By: Aaron Baker October 14 – 23<sup>rd</sup>

**T**he work of strengthening Christians is an unending goal which one must work towards constantly. Consider this, could you grow stronger in your faith, knowledge and love of Christ? I venture to guess that all readers answer with a resounding "YES!" It is for this reason that our work with the Christians in Vanuatu takes us frequently into the mission field to help them grow spiritually in every way possible.

This month I asked Timothy (pictured above, front), a relatively new Christian from Etas village, to go with me to Ambae. The goal was not only to train the Christians in Ambae, but also that Timothy might get "hands on" training as we went teaching and preaching on Ambae. Over the 10 days that I was scheduled to be in Ambae, my time was divided between the congregations of Duviara and Neihala. Here is what we accomplished:

### **Duviara**

This village is the farthest point from the airport to which we traveled, so we went there first. Our goal was to work with Mark Garae, the minister of the congregation that he might be encouraged to continue to stand strong against denominational influences as well as to evangelize his village.



Over the course of five days we not only worshipped with the congregation and fellowshiped together, but we studied with Mark for over 8 hours covering various topics. Timothy and I spent time covering the characteristics of the church, women's roles in the church, worship of the church, as well as personal evangelism outlines and methods.

In our spare time, we cut firewood, planted taro (a root crop) and weeded the garden. Despite the fact that it rained every day in Duviara, we were still excited to work with the Christians there to build them up and strengthen them.

#### Neihala

The village of Neihala is a 30 minute hike uphill from the road that rounds the island. Timothy and I studied with this congregation each day for 3-4 hours per day! We covered the same topics as at Duviara, and these Christians were just as eager to learn.

As we covered the various lessons, eyes were bright and soaking up the teaching. One visitor, named Morris, was especially taking in

the teaching. Morris, not yet a Christian, was nearly persuaded to become a Christian. With a little more study, time and his commitment, we pray that he is soon baptized into Christ.

The congregation at Neihala was so thankful for our visit and that we taught the lessons with love and care. Makenzie Tary opened his heart and adopted Timothy (from Etas) into his family. Makenzie gave Timothy a laplap, chicken and a mat to express his thankfulness that Timothy was willing to leave his family for 10 days to come help teach the Bible. Timothy fought back tears as he said, "that's just what Christians do." Sometimes we learn the best lessons not through words, but through the deeds of others.

To read more about this trip to Ambae, just visit [www.missionvanuatu.com](http://www.missionvanuatu.com) to read Aaron's journal from the trip.



**Above:** Even the ladies of the Duviara congregation showed up to study despite the rainy, muddy conditions outside.



**Above:** Timothy accepts his laplap, being adopted into Makenzie's family.

## Opportunities in Marou Village By: Eric Brandell

**T**hough our efforts were delayed by a week because of rough seas, our trip to Marou Village (Emao Island) this month proved to once again be very effective. I was privileged to be accompanied by Bill from Eton Village. Bill has been a Christian for about eight years, and spent a significant amount of that time studying the word. Though some of his wife's family is from Marou Village, Bill had never before visited Emao. During our four-day trip he could frequently be found answering questions and studying with these young Christians. He was a wonderful coworker and I look forward to working with him again in the future.



**Left:** Bill baptizing Edward into Christ in the Pacific Ocean!



**Above:** Eric and Bill just before taking the boat to Emao Island

We followed a schedule similar to last month's – studies with the Christians during the evenings and a public meeting during the morning. Chief Noubat only requested that we conduct the public meeting on Saturday morning, but the period of study went well. I taught about biblical unity. As in the US, there is much confusion about the biblical meaning of unity. I wanted to communicate that (1) "agreeing to disagree" is not biblical unity, (2) Christ's church and the denominations represented in Marou do not have biblical unity, and (3) we most certainly can gain that unity if we allow the Bible to be our sole source of authority and doctrine. I hoped to accomplish this by focusing on Jesus'

prayer for unity in John 17 (He used the oneness of Himself and the Father as an example of the unity His followers are to have) and 1 Corinthians 1:10 where Paul emphasized that we are to have the "same mind" and "same judgment." The lessons were well received and I believe the locals are beginning to understand the message we are working so hard to convey.

In the evenings I studied with the Christians about the five acts of worship. It is sometimes hard for American Christians to think of an entire congregation that is in the infant stage. None of the Christians have ever led a prayer, led singing or preached before. It is a test of faith just to get through a worship service, since by nature ni-Vanuatu are usually quite shy and unwilling to talk in front of a large group. I broke the study of each of the five acts into two parts: what does the Bible say and how does it apply. During the second half I tried to give some practical suggestions that will help them "worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). These Christians have all had a significant amount of denominational influence as well, which means some "unteaching" has to take place as well. They all seemed to really enjoy our time together, and asked a great number of thoughtful questions. I pray they are now more well-equipped to worship as God intended.

A highlight of the trip was my opportunity to study with and baptize Edmond. I met him during our first trip to Marou, and he showed up early Friday morning to study as we had planned during that former trip. After two hours of talking about sin, salvation and commitment, Bill baptized Edmond into Christ.

You can read more at [www.missionvanuatu.com/reports/marou200610.html](http://www.missionvanuatu.com/reports/marou200610.html)

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

## In This Issue:

- Trip to Emao Island
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