



# Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

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## Special points of interest:

- A Christian couple holds fast to the Word
- Check out our new team picture on the back page!
- Read about our upcoming plans for 2007
- Shawnda has a full time job...being a mommy!

## Inside this issue:

Patrick and Ruth Kasso	1
Teaching in Tanzania	2
Bakers Return	2
A Welcomed Sight	3
Upcoming Plans	5

## Patrick and Ruth Kasso

By Mike Olson

*"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also **you received**, in which also **you stand**, by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast** the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).*

Certainly the greatest wish for anyone who has taught the gospel to a lost soul is for that person to emulate the verses above. First, to receive (believe and obey) the teaching with a conviction, second to stand (be firm in that conviction), and third to hold fast (continually follow) to the word preached. However, Satan does his best to de-rail every new Christian before they can stand and hold fast. He uses all of the trappings of this world in order to accomplish that goal. It does not matter where you are the "father of

lies" will use whatever he has at his disposal to make the faithful fall. Here in Vanuatu it is not so much television, Internet, and movies but rather custom, culture and the changing norms of modern society conflicting with traditional ways. For this reason it is particularly encouraging to see new Christians hold fast and grow in the face of Satan's onslaught.

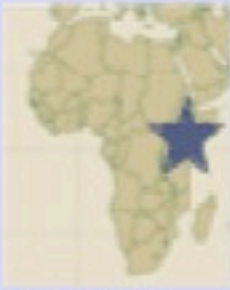


When I first met Patrick he was a man looking for something better. He had spent his young life in sinful pursuits but knew that something better was out there. He was led to hearing the gospel by another Ni-Vanuatu Christian and eventually ended up at my door. The teaching of one church and one

way appealed to him. He was also about to be married and wanted to be a good husband to his bride, Ruth. After the wedding he and Ruth sat down with an older Ni-Vanuatu man and myself and we diligently studied the scriptures and the gos-

pel. This was not the first time we studied, but it would be their last day in the world and also their first day in the church. Patrick and Ruth were baptized into Christ on December 10, 2005 in the Pacific Ocean. I am happy to say that since that time they have contin-

*(Continued on page 4)*



**Eric will be heading to Arusha, Tanzania to teach Bible classes for two weeks, spending 50 hours alone in transit time!**

Like a slap in the face, the heat and humidity hit us hard!



**In 43 days the Bakers drove over 4,000 miles; that's driving about 93 miles per day!**

## Teaching in Tanzania

By Eric Brandell

The Andrew Connally School of Preaching, an extension of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, provides a comprehensive, in-depth program to train gospel preachers and church leaders. The curriculum consists of more than 40 courses. Sixteen courses are taught by Bear Valley staff and qualified teachers from America. Graduates receive the Bachelor of Biblical Studies from BVBID. I have been invited to teach two one-week courses in February and March, just before the close of the

school's term. During the first week I will teach 1 and 2 Timothy, and the second week I will teach 1, 2 and 3 John.

I look forward to being in Arusha to see how a school of this type is conducted, and am excited to meet and get to know the Stafford family, who have been missionaries in the area for several years. Please be praying for a safe and successful journey.



## Bakers Return from Reporting Trip to States

The realization of our return to Vanuatu sank in when we deplaned in Port Vila. Like a slap in the face, the heat and humidity hit us hard!

Being in the states during the winter months was a mixed blessing. We certainly enjoyed the cool temperatures and break from the oppressive heat of Vanuatu, but on the other hand we took quite a risk traveling in winter. Luckily for us, we were not snowed in during any of the snow storms that pummeled Denver.

We were often asked what we missed from the States. Our ready answer was that we missed Wal-Mart and Mexican food. After standing in lines at Wal-mart over the holiday season to buy Christmas gifts for our families and af-

ter getting our fix of pico de gallo, salsa and chile rellenos, we were ready to get back into our routine.

While waiting eagerly in line at the immigration counter in Vila we were giddy with excitement to see our team, especially Titus. With time to think, our senses took in our surroundings. Our eyes discovered the hibiscus flowers we had missed. Our ears took in the familiar sound of the string band playing for all the arriving passengers. Our mouths longed for a drink of cool water while waiting for what seemed like an eternity. Our bodies poured forth sweat and our noses tried not to realize that we were back in Vanuatu, the sweat capital of the world.

What we missed most in Vanuatu was not only the beautiful views

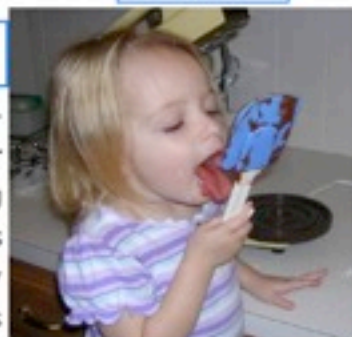
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## Bakers return, *continued from page 2*

of the sunrises, sunsets and blue waters of the ocean, rather we missed the people the most. We missed our team, our friends and those we consider family. We missed our weekly studies in Etas with the Christians there. We missed the monthly trips to the villages on the other side of the island and we missed our fellowship with the Christians in Port Vila.

We're glad to be back to our home in Vanuatu, yet we enjoyed our time in the States. Kaela was lucky enough to have two Christmases: one with Cindy's parents in Ft. Smith, AR and one with Aaron's parents in Anderson, CA. The real challenge was how to get all Kaela's Christmas presents to fit in our luggage!

Once back in Vanuatu, we had to get our house in order. Being gone for a few months the place smelled very musty. Ants, roaches and countless spiders moved in to what they thought was their new home. They were in for a wake up call when we spoiled their plans with bug spray and a handy fly swatter.



**Kaela loved helping prepare Christmas dinner. She's enjoying the fruits of her labor by licking the spatula.**

## A Welcomed Sight

By Aaron Baker

The Bakers were in the US updating their supporters regarding their work in Vanuatu from mid-November through January. Needless to say, they were eager to get back to Vanuatu. Though we were glad to see our friends, family

and supporters, we were also eager not to be living out of suitcases and sleeping in different beds all the time.

Our return from Vanuatu was a reunion as well as an introduc-

tion. We not only were reunited with our team, but we were also introduced to Titus Taylor Brandell, born November 24th, 2006.

As one would guess, we all took to Titus immediately, especially Kaela.



**Kaela and Titus bond like old friends.**

**Brandells spending some quality time together.**



**Kaela with her first taste (literally) of snow.**



**Kaela Playing with Uncle Mike.**



**Baptized in December of 2005, Patrick Kasso has made great strides in his faith and abilities to serve the Lord.**

*"They have not spiritually sat idly by but have engaged in the work of the Lord."*



**Ruth, Patrick's wife, has been a blessing to her husband and an encouraging person to talk with.**

## **Patrick and Ruth Kasso, *continued from page 1***

ued to stand and hold fast to the word preached.

To *stand* is to have a solid conviction to what has been preached. In Vanuatu, to worship or to be a "Christian" is culturally correct. Therefore many approach their spiritual lives with little conviction (passion). But Patrick and Ruth have shown that they have the conviction to work and to continue. They have not spiritually sat idly by, but have engaged in the work of the Lord.

Part of *holding fast* is to continue to learn the Bible. Patrick is not a well-educated man but he is eager to learn the truths contained in scripture. His lack of learning is not used as an excuse to under-achieve but rather he presses on to learn more. I remember a time talking to him shortly after his baptism when he had been reading in the book of 2 Peter. He had read the third chapter and was commenting on verses nine through fourteen (admittedly a difficult context). Many "scholars", to create and support various false teachings regarding the last day and end time's events, use this context. Patrick however stated that Christians must live properly because of the impending return of Christ and the destruction of all things. He hit the nail on the head! I was laughing to myself that this guy from the bush had just left about 95% of the denominational "scholars" in the dust.

Like most people in Vanuatu Patrick and Ruth have been indoctrinated in the teachings and ways of various denominations. Putting aside these old ways and putting on the new is a constant challenge. To that end we have continued to study and prepare for the time when I will be gone. Patrick will be the teacher and others will be the students. This past week I had him teach his first Bible class. I sat and listened and asked questions along with a group of his family members who were present for the study. It was not a perfect study but he spoke loud and clear and with resolve. Most Ni-Vanuatu by nature are timid and shy and would have great difficulty their first time. But Patrick surprised me this day and I critiqued his effort afterward with an aim to growing him in the faith.

Evangelistically, what I like about Patrick and Ruth is that they do what they can. Even if it is just a little, they still do it. They are convinced of their "lostness" in their former ways and are now convinced of their salvation in Christ. They have not avoided the reality of the lost condition of their friends and relatives. Patrick has brought many a friend to study with me after he had taught all that he could. Many times this involved coming to town from the bush but this was not a hindrance. He preaches the message of one church and one true doctrine by which to live out lives

*(Continued on page 5)*

before God. God has simply asked each of us to do what we can do at whatever stage of learning we are. Patrick and Ruth are fulfilling God's desire for their lives.

The future is wide open at this point for the Kassos. They may eventually move back to their

home island of Tanna and begin the work amongst their own people. Or, they may stay put here on Efate and work with all of their friends and family members, trying to reach them with the gospel. Either way the near future is honoring God and the ultimate future is heaven. Amen.

## Upcoming Plans

Our team has many plans for 2007. Here is a look at some of the upcoming events:

### Mike to Travel to States

On February 8th Mike Olson will head to the States for reporting purposes. While state-side, Mike will be reporting on his work here in Vanuatu. His travels will take him to Denver, Montrose and possibly Grand Junction, Colorado. Mike is scheduled to return March 15th. While in the states, Mike is eager to eat Mexican food and drink cola. Vanuatu is not a proponent of "free refills."

### Eric to Tanzania, Africa

The article on page 2 tells of Eric's upcoming trip to Africa. Eric will leave February 18th.

### Aaron to Ambae

As part of our team's continual effort to strengthen and encourage Christians in Vanuatu, Aaron will go to Ambae from February 23rd through March 5th. Bible studies will be held each night to encourage the Duviara and Neihala congregations.

### Cindy's School in Etas

Many have asked about Cindy's school conducted in Etas village which helps children learn how to read and write. During the Baker's reporting trip to the States, no classes were held in Etas. However, the



school will start again near the end of March. Sam, from Etas village jokingly said, "There have already been 100 students sign up for the school."

### Shawnda's Full Time Job

Besides fellowship activities with the ladies in Vanuatu, Shawnda has a full time job, Titus! Since we wrote about everyone else on the team, we felt a hearty kudos was in store for not only Shawnda, but for all ladies who take care of their children. Certainly a full time job, Shawnda stays busy with feedings, diaper changes and general wants and needs of a two month old.



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

**Mission Vanuatu  
Minutes**

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**Address Correction Requested**

**Check us out on the web!**

[www.missionvanuatu.com](http://www.missionvanuatu.com)

**Mission Vanuatu Team**



**Aaron, Cindy and Kaela  
Baker**

(Right side of picture)

**Eric, Shawnda and Titus  
Brandell**

(Left side of picture)

**Mike Olson**

(Back row, middle)