



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:

- Eric returns from Africa
- Gospel Meeting planned in Etas Village
- Aaron gets crabby!
- Vila and Etas congregation status
- Odds and Ends

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Missionary in Vanuatu Teaches in Tanzania, Africa

By Eric Brandell

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Arusha, Tanzania this month. As a team we have been brainstorming as to how we can effectively train the local brethren to be all that they can be as Christians. Naturally, we realize that we need to have some sort of organized program to accomplish this goal. While we realize we will not have anything as "grand" as the school in Arusha, I knew visiting the school would nonetheless help us better understand how we might be successful in Vanuatu.

With that in mind, I mentioned to some at the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver, CO my interest in traveling to Africa to investigate the Andrew Connally School of Preaching, which is an extension program of BVBID. Much to my surprise, I received an email a few weeks later asking me to not only travel to the school in

February and March with Wayne Burger, but also to teach two courses in the school while I was there: 1, 2, & 3 John, and 1, 2 Timothy, & Titus. Each course is allotted 30 hours of instruction over a one-week period.

The students all live on-campus, which is located a few minutes outside of the town of Arusha, in the village of Kisango. The school has a two-year program, and the students graduate with a bachelor's degree from BVBID upon the successful completion of the program. **Eric preaching at the Mbouda church of Christ**



(Continued on page 2)

Tanzania, continued



Eric (pictured here teaching) had 16 students in his classes.

tion of their studies. All of the classes at the school of preaching are taught in English, but there are two "Bible schools" in the area that are conducted in the native Swahili. I was impressed by the students and their abilities, and formed good relationships with many of them.

Another very positive part of my trip was the opportunity to spend time with some of my fellow-foreign missionaries. They shared many experiences, both positive and negative, and I quickly learned that Tanzania and Vanuatu are similar in a large number of ways, especially in relation to

conducting mission work. I gained much wisdom from these men and their families, and am grateful to have made their acquaintance.

Thanks so much for your prayers in regard to my trip to Africa, and a special thanks to those who made private contributions to fund the trip. It was an experience that I will never forget, and one that I hope I can experience again some time in the future. I look forward to sharing the things I learned with the team, and hope that they will serve to help accomplish our goal of teaching and training the local Christians here in Vanuatu.

"Much to my surprise, I received an email a few weeks later asking me to not only travel to the school...but also to teach two courses



Eric pictured with his students

Missionaries are Counselors?!?

By Aaron Baker

A unique situation developed in the village of Etas. A married couple and members of the church, Salome and Peter had been having some marital trouble. Both invited me to come talk with them in an effort to solve the problem.

Peter and Salome have been married for about 8 months and have had their fair share of ups and downs in marriage. This time, however, a Vesuvius sized problem was building.

Evident from the start was the love the couple shared. I urged them not to let a problem drive a wedge between them that could drive them apart. After talking about the problem for a few hours, it was evident that both were sorry for the pain they caused their spouse. Both wanted forgiveness and both were willing to forgive. Tears welled up in my eyes as both shared how they would try hard to be better spouses as they were committed to forgiving each other.

On Sunday, March 24th, Peter asked the congregation in Etas to pray for his strength to be a better husband.

I believe a small victory was won in keeping this couple together by counseling them. I am blessed that in some small way I was able to help them. Though I never imagined that as a missionary in a foreign country I would counsel a couple to stay together, I was blessed with the opportunity to encourage this couple to cultivate a relationship that would last through the storms of life.

I guess a missionary IS also a counselor.



In a "Pinch"

On the menu for dinner recently was fresh crab from the island of Malekula. The delicious crab meat was tender and succulent. Pictured left, a crab makes one last "grab" for freedom and came up with a claw-full. So, if you find yourself in a "pinch" just do what Aaron did: eat the crab! (P.S. the crab in this picture was already cooked when the picture was staged. My nose is just fine.)



Claude (above) and Flexon (below) are helping the Vila congregation grow strong.



Tom (above) and Sam (below) are already instrumental in the growth of the church in Etas.



Port Vila Congregation Status

For several months now, the congregation in Port Vila has been on the mend. Due to the problem that developed last year, we have been working to seek a solution to that problem. While we are still working towards a solution, it has been refreshing to see a few key men step up and be leaders.

Claude and Flexon, Christians for 3 months and 1 year, respectively, have taken that step towards becoming leaders. In a recent men's meeting these two men expressed their interest to become committed leaders dedicated to seeing the Lord's church in Port Vila grow. Through men like these and such

attitudes, the church in Port Vila will continue to grow and move forward despite times of rough sailing.

Recently attendance at the Vila congregation has averaged 19 over the last three Sundays. This, an encouraging step in the right direction of putting the baton in the local's hand.

Etas Congregation Status

The Etas congregation continues to grow and reach out to the community around it. During the months that Aaron was in the States, the Etas congregation had to step up and alternate preaching among the men of the congregation. With much encouragement, the men accepted the challenge and were even eager to

preach and teach.

Weekly Bible studies are held in Etas. We recently finished a survey of the New Testament. Plans are being made for this congregation to host a Gospel Meeting in July. To prepare the congregation for this, refresher classes are in full swing to teach on the work, worship and nature of the church of the Bible.

Planning sessions for this Gospel meeting will be held April 8th where topics, format, location, follow-up procedures and methods will be decided upon. This is very encouraging especially since this congregation had the motivation to suggest such an effort.

Odds AND ENDS

Kaela— has discovered her own secret world of fortresses and princesses. Her fortress is made from cardboard boxes taped together. Each time Kaela goes to sleep her favorite doll to sleep with is named, Princess Mommy. Of course, Cindy was flattered. In addition, Kaela learned this week how to drink from a coconut and then eat the flesh inside. What a big girl!

Titus— Eric writes: Titus turned four months old in March, and weighed in at just under 17lbs. Interestingly, that's the 120th percentile here in Vanuatu, but only the 75th on the United States scale. He is dealing with sore gums a lot these days, but other than that is happy and healthy. We are all excited that the final adoption order is scheduled to be granted on April 18!!

The Bakers—are expecting their second child sometime in October. Please pray that this pregnancy will go well and both mother and child will be healthy.

School in Etas— My school got underway on Monday, March 25 with enrollment. By Tuesday, our first official day of school, there were 37 kids in attendance. On Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:00-10:00am we have school to teach these children how to read and write. 18 of the 23 students I had last year returned plus an additional 19 new students bringing my total to 37! It is a lot of kids and at times it seems like we are packed in like sardines but I love each and every one of them and couldn't bear to



Kaela eating coconut and playing in her fort.



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Address Correction Requested

Check us out on the web!

www.missionvanuatu.com

Mission Vanuatu Team



**Aaron, Cindy and Kaela
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(Right side of picture)

**Eric, Shawnda and Titus
Brandell**

(Left side of picture)

Mike Olson

(Back row, middle)