



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:

- Seven souls turn to Christ
- PIBC courses held in Ambae
- Studies amidst political instability
- Mike teaches exegesis to eager Christians

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Hearts Turning Home

By Aaron Baker

Oh how the angels must be rejoicing (Luke 15:7)! My latest trip to Ambae was very successful and was a direct result of the sowing and watering the seed, which is the Word of God, a subsequent increase given by the Lord.

May 5—23rd, I went with Rocco Pierce (missionary in American Samoa) to Ambae. As a result of several studies in the past, many members of the Duviara church of Christ really examined their baptism. Several of the members questioned their own salvation and had doubts about their baptism. The root problem was that many of them had been baptized to join a denominational body and not the body of Christ, hence their concern.

On Sunday, May 13th the congregation hiked through the jungle to a small creek where seven souls turned their hearts towards home. The seven people decided to throw off their denominational bonds and be, "just Christians." These seven precious souls were baptized into Christ and into His body, which is the church (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 5:23).

Paul and Miriam Vuhu, Makenzie and Ellanson Taryhile, Mark and Mary Garae and Daisy Garae were baptized into Christ on May 13th. Nearly the entire congregation decided to remove any doubts about their salvation and turn their hearts towards their heavenly home.

(Continued on page 2)



Hearts, continued

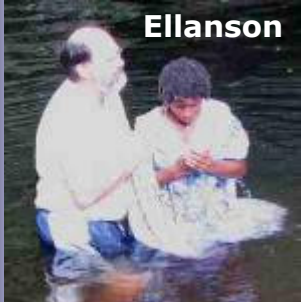
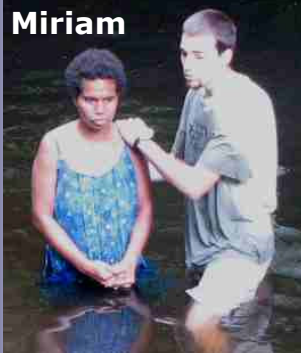
In February I taught several classes in Ambae specifically on the topic of baptism. Makenzie asked questions regarding how one becomes part of the Lord's church. The response was simple, one becomes a member of the church the same way they did in the first century. When one is baptized into Christ, the Lord adds that person to the church (Acts 2:47). The way people were added to Christ and His church is the same way people are added to the church today, through baptism.

Through many question and answer sessions and through much teaching on the topic of baptism, the seed was planted in February. By our trip in May, the seed had sprouted. Several people began wondering if their baptism was to please men or to please God. To remove doubts and to gain assurance of their salvation, these seven souls decided to put on Christ in baptism once and for all.

There are two congregations on the island of Ambae: Duviara and Neihala. Duviara is located at the top of the moun-

tain and Neihala is located an hour walk downhill, near the coast. The heart of these congregations is clear in that they desire to follow God rather than men.

When these congregations began, the first Christians had to go through an inquisition of sorts. A panel of denominational leaders questioned them at length as to the reasons they were separating themselves from the established denomination on the island. The answer was simple. Paul said, "We wanted to follow God and His Word, not man." Though the Christians faced many troubles and hard times, they have persevered and have grown stronger for it. Our prayer is that they always remain strong in the Lord and in their resolve to do what is right in His eyes.

**Daisy**

Pacific Islands Bible College Held in Ambae

Every year Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC) teaches courses throughout the South Pacific in an effort to train the brethren in the Word of God. Preachers throughout the world donate their time and money to teach these valuable courses.

In May, two one-week courses were held in Vanuatu in an effort to educate and train the locals. Rocco Pierce, a missionary in American Samoa, was scheduled to teach Job through Song of Solomon and 1st and 2nd Corinthians. This was not Rocco's first trip to Ambae and he was welcomed openly by those who know him.

May 7th—18th courses were taught with roughly 23 people in attendance each day for the two week session of courses. At the end of the courses an exam was given in which all of the students did very well showing a good grasp of the materials covered. Every student passed the exams and most with very high marks.



Pictured Above: Rocco grading tests.

Classes were taught from 9—noon Monday through Friday. After lunch, we gathered again for preaching on various topics or to answer questions that we were simply not able to cover in

class due to time constraints. Students were free after 2:30pm and many would go work in the gardens and be busy about their daily routines. This also allowed time to review materials taught in class, time to study for the exam, and time for Aaron and Rocco to visit people in the community.

Goodwill is always felt in the community and this trip was no different. Rocco got down and dirty and made some laplap while Aaron planted a garden and studied the Bible with a local family. This is all a way of showing that preaching the Bible and practicing the Bible are two different things. We work hard to create a positive atmosphere not only in the classes, but after classes end for the day. Working along side the locals bonds us together as true brothers and sisters in Christ.



Aaron working in the Taro garden.

This trip we were invited to a wedding and even asked to join their custom dance at the wedding. Few things can make locals laugh more than seeing two white folks ("Tuturani" as they refer to us) dance to an unknown tune as we attempt to stomp and clap our hands on the right beat. Boy what a sight!





The logo of Jimmy Stevens' political party remains on the door of his house even to-day.

Flags of the Nagriamel political party still flying 27 years after the rebellion was squashed.



Bow and Arrow Rebellion of Santo

By Aaron Baker

As Vanuatu was set to gain its independence from French and British rule in 1980, a political party emerged from the dark bush on the island of Santo. This group felt that it had the knowledge, plans and economic stability to be its own country apart from Vanuatu, though it was within Vanuatu. This group wanted to establish its own country apart from Vanuatu, complete with its own flag, currency and leadership.

Jimmy Stevens was the leader of this rebel political party (Nagriamel) and led a rebellion in 1979 upon the eve of Vanuatu's independence. This rebellion is known as the "Bow and Arrow Rebellion" as Jimmy's army was equipped only with bows and arrows. To defeat the rebellion, Vanuatu brought troops from Papua New Guinea and arrested the leaders of the rebel party. Since 1980 there have been remnants of the Stevens family living in the dark bush in Santo, longing for the day of their political freedom.

An interesting request came to our team in the

form of a request to bring the Good News to this dark bush of Santo, where few people knew the Bible.

I accepted this call to preach and from April 29th through May 5th went to Santo to locate and preach to this group.

Upon making my way to this dark bush village of Fanafo (pronounced Fan—ah—foe), it became evident that the "Good News" they were looking for was not the Good News of Jesus Christ. This group was looking to make an appeal for financial support in a effort to resurrect their political independence. This was not, however, the Good News that I had come to Santo to talk about.

Disappointed, yet always wanting to leave a door opened for the Word, I departed the dark bush with the prayer of wanting to plant the seed. Even if political aspirations were at the forefront of their minds, one day they would have to meet their Maker. My goal was to help prepare them for that day. Pray with me that the Lord will take the seed that was planted and give the increase!

As part of our mission principles we wanted to evangelize, strengthen, and eventually train the locals to do the work themselves. We of course are encouraging them all along to teach friends and family and interest them in the true church. Two people who have done a great job of this are Patrick and Ruth Kasso.



As I have continued to study with Patrick he has surprised me with his constant devotion to learning. The other day he pointed at his Bible and said, "This is like a job." I asked what was like a job and he said studying and learning the Bible. I said, "How right you are!" I also encouraged him by telling him that this was his true work already, he does his farming so that he can do the real work. He must do this work without something you and I take for granted, electricity. He only has so much daylight after working and only so much kerosene for a lantern. Despite these obstacles, he is really progressing.

Teaching Bible studies has its benefit, but the reality is that I will not be here forever and Patrick needs to begin to do the learning on his own. For the past month I have been making and giving worksheets to Patrick and Ruth with exercises to help with reading and understanding. Reading comprehension is not a strength of most people here due to a limited education growing up. Therefore the exercises are designed to help them read the Bible so as to see what it is saying and is not saying. I have also used this opportunity to show Patrick that the Bible divides itself and that making Bible lessons is not a matter of much schooling, but that careful reading of the text can make a lesson for you. The following week he had made a two point lesson from Acts 2:38. As far as the exercises go, I have begun to focus them on single topics like baptism or prayer, using all of the Scriptures in the New Testament and asking questions in different ways so as to give as much understanding as possible. So far they have done great and are learning much.

For Christians, the learning never stops. Just like young children eventually learn to stand on their own, young Christians must learn to do for likewise. I can vividly recall the help and training which I received growing up in the Lord and I hope to do just as well for Patrick and Ruth.

Mike's weekly study group laying out the mats as they prepare for their afternoon session.



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Check us out on the web!

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