



Mission Vanuatu

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

February 2008
Volume 5,
Issue 2

Special points of interest:

- School starts in Port Vila with 15 students from 3 different congregations
- Etas Christians receive help to buy land for the church
- Titus enjoying attention from the family.
- Kaela starts pre-school
- Mella: cute as ever

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School in Full Swing

By Aaron Baker

A longstanding dream for our team has been to start a school in Port Vila. But, we had some specific goals in mind for this school. Our dream was to start a school to train, educate and motivate Christians to become leaders for the Lord.

On February 5th, our dream became a reality. 15 Students are in regular attendance at the "Trutok Baebol Skul" or "Truth Bible School," located in the capital city of Port Vila. These students represent the congregations of Port Vila, Etas and Epau and are attending these classes to learn how to teach, preach and become better Christians.

Mike and I teach each week for six weeks. I am teaching "Hao blong stadi long Baebol" or, "How to study the Bible." Mike is teaching "Plan blong God blong sevem man" or, "Scheme of Redemption."

Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday nights to accommodate students who must work during the day. We teach one hour each with a small break in between the classes. Thus our school schedule looks like this:

Tuesday and Thursday

Class 1: How to study the Bible

Teacher: Aaron Baker

Time: 6—7 pm

Class 2: Scheme of Redemption

Teacher: Mike Olson

Time: 7:15—8:15pm

These 15 dedicated students are doing their best to learn the Word of God, and being dedicated is not always easy. Case-in-point: two me, Bob and Max from the Epau congregation, ride a bus 1 1/2 hours into town each week on Tuesday. They attend the classes on Tuesday night and again on Thursday night before finally returning home to Epau village on Friday



Students of the Truth Bible School gather for orientation, eagerly awaiting the first day of classes. This is the first Bible school of its kind within the brotherhood in Vanuatu!

School in Full Swing, continued...

morning. This means that each week Max and Bob ride a bus for a total of 3 hours and are away from their families nearly 4 days. What a sacrifice to learn God's Word! Surely these two men, and the Epau congregation, will be blessed by their commitment.

Maybe even more amazing than the story of Bob and Max is the story of the three ladies taking the classes. In Vanuatu culture, a woman is viewed as the one who takes care of the house, the meals and the children. Nothing more. However, we are trying our best to encourage both men and women alike to study God's Word through these classes. Our goal is to equip both men AND women with the sword of the Spirit so they can correctly and effectively teach the Word to others (2 Tim 2:2).

Leimawa, Salome and Martha have each been doing very well in the classes and are earning very good grades. Our hope is that as they use this knowledge to teach, the Lord's body will be built up and produce well equipped Christian women.

Classes are going well, but are still a challenge. We have not mentioned prior to this point, but these classes are NOT taught in English, but in the local language of Bislama. That's right! In addition to working hard to produce good, Biblical material, Mike and I have to work just a bit harder to produce curriculum for these classes in the Bislama language. This, in and of itself, is a challenge.

Despite these hurdles that we must overcome, the outcome is still worth the cost of time, energy and money. The end result is that Christians are being fed on the Word of God and for that, there is no substitute!

We would like to thank the Wellington church of Christ in Wellington, New Zealand for donating the tables (pictured below) we use in our classes. In addition, the 29th and Yale congregation in Tulsa, OK. has been instrumental in helping establish a library for which the students have access.



Above: Epau congregation gathers to say a huge "thank you" to congregations and individuals who helped them purchase much needed land.



Above: Local lobster and red fish, called "poulet." Salt water fish and crustaceans are served when nationals are able to catch them by speckling at night. Dangerous and delicious. Yum!



Pictured right: Students in the Truth Bible School listen attentively as Mike reviews the course requirements. We believe this will be a golden opportunity for Christians to learn God's Word and in turn, take what they have learned back to the villages to teach and preach.



Land Need in Etas Village

By Aaron Baker

The Etas congregation has been growing rapidly since being planted in January of 2006. Currently there are upwards of 20 Christians meeting in Etas village. Growth in this congregation has been both spiritual and numerical in nature. As a result of numerical growth, the congregation has grown too large for its current location.

At its inception, one Christian, named Pbles, said that the church could meet on his land. For the last two years the church has been meeting faithfully on Pbles' land. However, Pbles will be moving back to his home island of Tanna and his land will go to his son, who is not a Christian and does not want the church to meet on his soon-to-be-inherited land.

Despite this challenge, the church has remained strong, yet needed to move forward with plans for the future. The church began seeking a place to call its own where it could meet, unhindered.

I began talking with land owners in the area and found one that was willing to sell land for 1/3rd of its market value if we could raise the funds. The

problem was that the land owner gave us a deadline for our fundraising.

In January, I began raising funds for the \$10,000 needed to purchase land in Etas village for the church. Two key congregations stepped up to the plate and took special collections to help the cause: the 29th and Yale church of Christ in Tulsa, OK, and the Anderson church of Christ in Anderson, CA.

As of the end of February, enough funds were raised to meet our goal and inform the land owner we were now ready to buy the land. Many thanks go to the 29th and Yale, Anderson, College Hill, Skiatook and Valley View churches of Christ for giving funds towards this land project. We couldn't have done it without your help.

Pictured below: Sam Tabawa, local Christian from Etas village. Land will help ensure a bright future for Christians like Sam, where they can worship, worry free.



Kids' Korner

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to the children on the Mission Vanuatu Team. We hope you enjoy these updates.

Titus Taylor Brandell

It took a few weeks, but Titus has adjusted well to all the changes he's experienced since we arrived in the US on February 3rd. In fact, it seems that as soon as he gets accustomed to a new place, we move to another! However, we will be settled in Duncan, OK for all of March and most of April, with Titus' new baby brother/sister due March 26. Titus has enjoyed getting "reacquainted" with all our friends and family, and is enjoying lots and lots of positive attention.

Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela started preschool this month at Port Vila International School (PVIS). She is so excited to be in the Starfish class at what she calls "pretty school." Her school is very diverse. There are kids in school from the USA, China, Fiji, Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand.

Melia Madelyn Baker

Melia is growing like a weed! She is starting to get in more of a routine now, and Mom and Dad are sure glad for that! Most nights, she even sleeps all night, which is a huge blessing! She is just now starting to try baby rice cereal.



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Mission Vanuatu Minutes
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Address Correction Requested

Check us out on the web!

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)