



Mission Vanuatu

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

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Special points of interest:

- Christians fellowship together
- Aaron turned 30 this month
- Etas land title transferred
- How to pack for a trip to the islands
- 57 Correspondence course students enrolled

Inside this issue:

Sweet Fellowship of Christians	1
Etas Land Purchase	2
What to Pack???	2
Correspondence Courses	3
Kids Korner	3

Sweet Fellowship of Christians

By Aaron Baker

Often it is difficult to gather the congregation together for a fellowship meal once each month. Though we try our best, it just seems that at times our fellowshiping together is not well attended.

This month we decided to try a different approach to fellowshiping together. Instead of the entire congregation meeting together for a fellowship meal, we are attempting to work in small groups to see if this will improve attendance. Rather than offering a blanket invitation to the congregation, we began with a smaller, more personal approach.

On April 28th, Cindy and I invited several Christians to our house for a smaller-scale fellowship. We hoped that by personally inviting people to our home they would be more inclined to attend and spend time visiting. Much to our delight, the first fellowship was a complete success.

Instead of struggling to have decent attendance at our fellowships, we had 100% turnout of the people we invited. Typically we would have only about 25% of the congregation would actually come. This shows us clearly that people can be distracted, intimidated by crowds, and too preoccupied to attend an "all church fellowship." However, when a personal invitation is offered, they feel that this is something easily managed.

Culture does indeed influence people. Often, Ni-Vanuatu are shy and

reserved in a large group of people, but open and conversational in smaller groups. Thus our goal was to make a smaller group setting where people would feel more comfortable eating, talking and spending time together.

In all, it was a complete success. One we hope to repeat again next month. Every two weeks we will have a fellowship at our house to give a more personal touch to the fellowships. This means that in one month's time, we will have hosted the entire congregation in our house at one time or another. All of this is an effort to cultivate and enjoy the sweet fellowship that Christians can and should enjoy with one another.

Below: Ann, with her son, Jonathan, enjoying the fellowship meal.



Below: Rosemary pictured with her sons, Randy and Tari, enjoys chatting with the women during the fellowship.





Above: Eddie Karris, from Eton village, joined us at our fellowship. He got tickled when he held "the white baby" (Melia).

Below: Aaron turned 30 this month. This special day was just perfect as Cindy planned a day at the beach for the both of us. Kaela also gave the best gift ever...a sweet hug to the birthday boy.



Etas Land Purchase

By Aaron Baker

For three months now, we have been updating you about the land now purchased for Christians in Etas village. While we do not plan to buy land for every congregation, this particular congregation had a special need. In fact, without the ability to buy land where the church could meet, the church would effectively be evicted from their current location in the not-too-distant future.

However, we were able to secure funds from several congregations and individuals that made the purchase of a piece of land possible. On April 28th of this month, the church of Christ in Etas village was able to sign the legal papers effectively transferring the ownership of land into the possession of the church. We had previously entered into an agreement

with the land owner that enabled us to buy the land for 1/3rd of the current market value. We then began the slow process of submitting paperwork to the government of Vanuatu to approve the purchase of the land in the name of the church. This was completed on April 28th.

Though we are not yet finished with documents needed from the government, we are well on our way. Now the government will register the land in the name of the church in Etas and create a new land title for the church, which is the last step in the process. Once we receive the new title, all work will be complete. Please pray with me that the government will process this paperwork quickly and that the church in Etas village will have all necessary documents in a timely manner.

What to Pack?!?

By Aaron Baker

Very soon, (May 2nd) I will be heading to the remote island of Ambae, as I do every year, to help run Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC) courses. In preparation for such a trip, one might ask, "What would you even take for a two week trip like that?" Well, good question.

Some of my standard "island gear" is (pictured right) as follows: insect repellent (can never have too much of this), mosquito net under which to sleep, towel, flashlight, first aid kit, toiletries, water filter, matches, hiking backpack, 3-in-one coffee packets, Bible materials in Bislama to hand

out, and lessons to teach. In addition to all this stuff, I will take a few gifts as a "thank you" to give to the people I stay with. These gifts can be as small as a box of matches or big as a blanket. Whatever I give, I can always know that it is much appreciated by those who receive.



Correspondence Courses

By Aaron Baker

Our team is trying to utilize the diversity of Vanuatu to our benefit. There are three national languages in Vanuatu: English, French and Bislama. We have Bible correspondence courses in two out of those three national languages: English and Bislama.

Our goal is to use every avenue available to reach souls with the saving message of Christ. In order to accomplish this we advertise these courses weekly in the local newspaper, the Daily Post. We began a strong push towards the end of 2007 and into 2008. To date we have 57 students currently enrolled and actively taking these courses. Of these 57 students only 25% request English materials! There is a great need for good materials to be produced in the most common language of the country, Bislama.

Due to a tremendous lack of solid, Biblical teaching in the country, there are many who hunger for

God's Word. We are doing our best to target these courses towards the needs of the people here in Vanuatu: to teach the Bible in a clear, understandable and Biblical manner. Now that our team has been in Vanuatu three years and we have a good, working grasp of the language, we are working hard to meet the needs of souls in Vanuatu.

Our team checks the post office box in town frequently. As courses are completed by students, they are graded and the next course is prepared for mailing. **Pictured right**, Aaron is on his way out the door to mail correspondence courses to students nearby in town, as well as on outer islands who can study the Bible through these courses.



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

Titus is having fun and growing like a weed. He really enjoys being a big brother and will do a good job protecting his little sister. But first, he has to continue to learn how to be gentle with Lexi.



Alexis Lynae Brandell

Just over one month old, Lexi is really looking forward to heading to Vanuatu on May 9th. She is ready to visit her friends in Vanuatu and see where her house is. Being such a sweet girl, however, she will certainly break hearts when it is time to go. Please pray for my grandparents.



Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela has completed her first of four terms in pre-school at Port Vila International School (PVIS). Her class is pictured here performing the "Good Morning Boogey" for the opening ceremony at her school. Notice that Kaela is the only one not wearing the hat???



Melia Madelyn Baker

Melia is now 6 months old and is eating many kinds of baby food. She now enjoys squash, pumpkin and sweet potato. Mommy works hard to cook and puree what food she can at home, but sometimes we have to buy jars of baby food at the store. See how big I am? Almost as big as this grapefruit.



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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)