



Mission Vanuatu

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

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Special points of interest:

- Vanuatu celebrates it's 28th year of Independence
- TBS term 3 ends
- Etas land update
- Bible studies continue in Etas
- Kaela turns 4

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Independence

By Aaron Baker

July 30th marked the 28th anniversary of Vanuatu's independence. Formerly known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu gained independence from the British and French condominium rule in 1980. Each year, Vanuatu celebrates their independence with a full week of events.

Growing up in the USA, we are accustomed to celebrating independence for a full day on July 4th. Typical fanfare consists of hot dogs, hamburgers, apple pie and for entertainment: fireworks. Here in Vanuatu, they celebrate differently. Grilled hamburgers and hotdogs give way to chicken wings and laplap, while apple pie is replaced with popcorn and more laplap! For entertainment, our beloved fireworks were replaced with island music that was blasted through the community until sunrise. While in the States celebrations last for one day, here in Vanuatu they last for a whole week.

One unique way Vanuatu celebrates its independence is through constructing food stalls throughout town. These stalls are constructed from bamboo poles and palm leaves, which serve as the walls. People from all over Port Vila gather at the closest area where food stalls have been built in order to buy laplap, listen to music and visit with friends. These events are a social mainstay in the Vanuatu culture and very interesting to see. Unfortunately, kava is also served at these stalls and many people go to the celebrations for



Flag of Vanuatu

less-than-wholesome reasons. However, the celebrations are enjoyed by all Ni-Vanuatu as they share a common bond together.

Having an entire country "on break" for an entire week is interesting, to say the least. While most businesses are open, few key people whom you need to reach are available as they are out enjoying the celebrations. Trying to get things done can be very difficult as people view the independence week as "time to rest."

In July we were teaching our Truth Bible School classes, of which two sessions were during the week of independence. Unfortunately, a few students were bit by the independence bug and missed a class or two. While we cannot let this quench our enthusiasm, we Americans must learn that people just get wrapped up in the celebrations and tend to focus their attention on the independence week over other events.

In all, celebrations were fairly calm (not that we expected otherwise). It was a good time to celebrate a country's independence, Vanuatu style.

TRUTOK

BAEBOL SKUL

- Port Vila, Vanuatu -

By Aaron Baker



Above: Patrick preaches his sermon in front of the other TBS students. Great job Patrick!

The third term of Truth Bible School came to an end on July 31st. Beginning on June 24th our classes to train the brethren here in Vanuatu in God's Word is progressing very well.

Eric Brandell taught "Lesson preparation and presentation" and my class was "Survey of the New Testament." In all, we amassed 12 hours of instruction for each class, spread over 6 weeks.

While it is difficult for us to measure how much information the students learn and retain, we are getting positive feedback from the lessons delivered. Students have told us that they feel more equipped to give an answer about their faith while at the same time more able to detect teachings which are not genuine and do

not follow sound, Biblical teaching. Of course, this is our goal!

While courses like these are tremendously beneficial for the brethren here, it may be years before we fully understand the fruit born from these studies. We simply pray that in all things, God is glorified through these efforts and that the Christians in Vanuatu are strengthened through these efforts.

Pictured below, Bob from Epau village, preaches in front of the class to fulfill a requirement for the "Lessons preparation and presentation" class taught by Eric. All of the students did a great job in our classes and we pray they have learned much.



Bible Study Updates

By Aaron Baker

A missionary must balance their time between developing young Christians in their faith, caring for those who are in need (spiritually or physically), as well as reaching out to the lost. I was able to get in contact with a Andrew and Meri Iata through a family member, and Christian, Sam Tabawa. For over a year I have been working to study the Bible with Andrew and Meri, but they were just not ready to commit. Honestly, they felt "just fine" where they were in their lives, spiritually. Just recently, Andrew and Meri saw the need for change.

Andrew sat in on a few studies I was running in Etas village over the past few months. In June, he was part of the group that went with me to Tanna, so he sat in on several studies held on Tanna island as well. I knew God's Word was working on him and he was thinking heavily of the things he was hearing, but he just wasn't ready to study...yet.

I leapt for joy in July when Andrew and Meri finally agreed to study! We study together every Sunday afternoon and we are working through the Word slowly. Please pray for Andrew and Meri as I study with them, that they may fully commit their lives to God.

Below: Studying with Andrew and Meri always draws a crowd in Etas. Family members crowd in to get in the picture. Notice the bare feet and muddy ground. Nothing slows down these kids from playing!



Etas Congregation

By Aaron Baker

We knew the time would come when the Etas congregation would have to move out of its current worship location. That time is at hand.

The Etas congregation has been meeting under a small shelter adjacent to Pbles' house (a Christian in Etas). Unfortunately, Pbles' health has rapidly decreased and he has moved back to his home island of Tanna. The result is that the church has been asked, by Pbles' next-of-kin to move out of our current meeting location.

For several weeks now, the Christians in Etas have been working together each Saturday to clear the land that was purchased for the church in Etas. This land will be used to

construct a shelter and for general use by the church. Work is already under way for such a shelter, but is far from completion (as you can see below). We hope and pray that in the near future we can complete the shelter and begin worshipping at this land. Until then, we will keep working together each week to prepare the land for use for the church.



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

Every kid has his favorite movie, and Titus has officially found his...he watched "Cars" at least 30 times this month! His favorite toy is his "Lightning McQueen" car, which he has had for months but previously it was just another truck. Now it's "vrooom-vrooom." Titus is definitely all-boy. He loves diggers (car rides consist of several waiting periods in between construction machinery sightings), climbing/standing on the furniture, throwing rocks and riding his truck.

Alexis Lynae Brandell

As any newborn, Lexi continues to grow and mature on a daily basis. She has started cooing and turns from front-to-back and back-to-front whenever the desire moves her. She sleeps relatively well at night, usually 7-8 hours before being ready to eat again. She likes the taste of baby cereal, but hates waiting for 2-3 seconds in between bites. And she can certainly let you know when she is unhappy about something! But her smiles and coos make it all worth it.



Kaela Sue Baker

July 12 marked a very important day for Kaela. It was her 4th birthday! She was so excited to be turning four that 15 minutes after she woke up that morning she declared, "I LOVE being 4!" I guess those were just an exceptional 15 minutes! We celebrated with a trip to the beach, team dinner, presents and a pink Disney princess cake. We can hardly believe that our little girl is already four years old!



Melia Madelyn Baker

Melia has finally hit the nine month mark and we have seen a lot of changes in her in the last month. She has become less interested in baby food and very interested in eating "real" food. She has started mobilizing herself and it's up for debate whether she will turn out to be a crawler or a scooter! This month also marked a big day for Melia, as she looked right at Cindy and said, "Mama" for the first time!



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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)