



Mission Vanuatu

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

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Special points of interest:

- Building progress at Port Vila Congregation
- Two week PIBC classes held in Eton and Port Vila
- Team visits Emao Island to encourage the brethren

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Port Vila Progress

By Aaron Baker

We have, for quite some time, been in the process of trying to complete some projects at the Port Vila church of Christ church building that have needed attention. However, with our team's time wrapped up in our Truth Bible School classes each week, we found it difficult to work on outstanding projects. With a two week window to work and get projects crossed off our "to do" list, our team got to work.

With all projects, we enjoy and encourage close participation of people from Vanuatu. In this case, the Vila congregation had decided that we needed to install chain-link fence along one side of the church's property to dissuade people randomly walking through. Working side by side, Makitney and Tom helped to install the fence (pictured below).

In addition to the chain-link fence, the other corner of the church's prop-



erty needed attention. There is a block wall built, but not completed. Our goal was to lay block and complete the wall that surrounds the church's property. To complete this chore, we had to lay each block, level it, building row on top of row. Then, we could pour cement in the blocks to solidify it all in place. The end product will be a nice looking wall that will keep people from just 'walking through' the church's property (as this previously lead to 2 break-ins and theft of some tools).

Of course, we all know that the church is not the building. However, the Melanesian mindset views the church building as giving credibility to the Bible that is being taught. Our finishing some outstanding projects will help to attract visitors and let the community know about the church of Christ in their area.

Pacific Islands Bible College Underway on Efate By Mike Olson

Each year the Christians in Vanuatu are blessed to receive a visit from the teachers of the Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC). This traveling school overseen by the Forest Park congregation in Georgia, works on the premise that the school can be brought to the students instead of the students brought to the school. This works particularly well for the islanders who do not possess the financial means to travel great distances to attend a school. The classes were taught here in Port Vila and also in Eton village.

This year the school's founder and teacher, Robert Martin, came to Vanuatu with Steve Lusk, a preacher from the Red Bank congregation in Chattanooga, TN. Robert conducted classes on the Old Testament books of Job through Song of Solomon, and Steve taught the books of Galatians and Hebrews from the New Testament. Since we are here locally, we translate the workbooks and tests into the local Bislama language to help the students better grasp the teachings. It is good not only for the brethren to receive this kind of teaching but also it is beneficial for them to hear another voice. They may teach the same truth, but the words of older men in the faith strengthen what they have already heard from

the mission team.

Our preparation for the classes started with invitations mailed to all of our Bible correspondence students and an ad in the local paper promoting the classes. Because of this advertising, we had four non-Christians from the community attend and complete the courses for credit as well as a few others who took part in some of the courses. The brethren also did a good job bringing eight of their friends to some or all of the courses. In all, PIBC in Port Vila saw thirty-two different students pass through the doors with an average of 19 each night.

Classes at Eton village included brethren from Eton and Epau villages. The classes were not as well attended as in past years, but seven completed the courses for credit. In true village style, the folks in the classes honored the teachers with a big "kaikai" (feast) on the final day and gave gifts to show their appreciation. Many of these brethren have been taking the courses for 7 years now and are much appreciative of the school and its teachers.

PIBC for 2008 left the mission team with evangelistic contacts to follow up on in the month of September and in particular it gave us a chance to talk with Robert about mission work and how we can improve. Robert spent 20+ years in the Pacific before returning to the States and beginning the school. His wisdom and fellowship are invaluable for our work. Please pray for PIBC and the contacts we are evangelizing.



Above: Installing the chain-link fence was completed once we welded and put up a gate.



Below: In addition to putting up the fence, we also constructed a sign to welcome the community to worship services.



Below: Utilizing the facilities of the congregation in Port Vila, PIBC classes were a success! Students listened intently and worked hard to attend every class.



Visiting Emao Island

By Eric Brandell

The congregation in Marou Village, located on the western coastline of Emao Island, was started when Robert Martin studied with and baptized three men from that village back in 2003. The congregation has had a difficult road to travel since the village is somewhat secluded. Our team has made several trips to the village to encourage and edify the saints there.

When the local Christians heard that Robert would be returning to Vanuatu in August, they showed great interest in having him visit them. Robert, Steve, Mike and I left Port Vila early Saturday morning, making it to Takara Landing in about 2 hours. Jethro, a Christian from Marou, was waiting there for us with the small boat. The seas were a bit rough due to some storms in the area, but we had no trouble during the 45 minute voyage across the ocean.

Communicating plans effectively with the brethren in Marou ahead of time is sometimes difficult, and so several of the Christians were unavailable that day. However, we were very glad to be able to visit and study with Jethro and

Daniel during our visit. These two men are capable of leading the church in Marou, and good leadership is greatly needed for any congregation to flourish. Robert did a splendid job encouraging and challenging these brethren. I know that they were uplifted by our visit, and I also benefited greatly from seeing Robert, a long-time South Pacific missionary, in action.

After a lunch of "island kaikai," we headed back to the mainland. Please join us in praying for the brethren in Marou Village. We plan to return there in mid-September to establish a new course of action with the brethren.



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 loves being outside! Helping dad wash the truck and mow the yard are lots of fun. Perhaps the highlight of his month was a trip to Epau Village, where he got to play with the kids, chase chickens, throw rocks and eat bananas... what more could a little boy want? Titus is especially fond of his new "Elmo" shoes. What's better than having Elmo with you wherever you go???



Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela is still loving school and can hardly wait to be a "Dolphin" next year (Kindergarten)! She loves playing "Shark" with her friends at school and socializing until her little heart is content! This month she discovered all the fun she could have playing with a weed eater box, knocking over her "tower" and even cutting a hole in the side, crawling inside it and calling it her store. We bought all kinds of yummy things at her store...chocolate, roast beef, cheese balls...



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.



Melia Madelyn Baker

This was also a big month for Melia! She finally worked up the courage to begin crawling! She had been rocking on her hands and knees for several weeks and finally made that first step! We were so proud. She may be new to crawling but she has already learned to quickly find her way to everything she isn't supposed to be getting into, like my bookcase and the trash can! Time to baby proof the house!



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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



Mike Olson

(Left side of picture)

**Aaron, Cindy, Kaela and
Melia Baker**

(Middle of picture)

**Eric, Shawnda, Titus and Lexi
Brandell**

(Right side of picture)

New Team Picture!