



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 in Vila gets tile flooring
- Aaron and Cindy celebrate their 10 year anniversary—Island style
- Events for 2009 outlined
- Kids of Vanuatu team grow up fast!

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Church Building in Vila Gets Upgrade

By Aaron Baker

The church building in Port Vila is completed! Though there are a few finishing touches to the church grounds, the building itself is finished.

This month our team tackled the largest remaining project: tile. We have been using the building in Port Vila for a long time with just a basic cement floor. However, Antony Raine and some Christians in New Zealand decided to give funds for tile and our team volunteered to work to install the new flooring.

Mike, Eric, Aaron and even Aaron's father in law, Dalton Dietz, worked together for a week to lay 1,300 tiles for the church building in Port Vila. This was a tremendous blessing and tool for the Christians in Vila as we not only use the building for worship on Sunday, but also for our ongoing "Truth Bible School" classes throughout the year.

Interestingly, none of our team had previous experience laying tile. Fortunately, Dalton was available to give his handyman advice as he has a wealth of overall experience to draw from.

Here is how our team laid the tile:

1. We scraped every inch of the floor to remove any cement that was not level that would prevent the tile from laying flat. Time: 1 day
2. Adhesive was spread and tile was laid following lines marked on the floor. Time: 3 days

3. Grout was worked in between the tiles to keep dust, dirt and water out. Time: 2 days
4. Sealant was brushed over the dried grout to provide resistance to mold and wear on the grout. Time: 1 day

In roughly one week we had gone from a dirty, dusty floor, to a clean, usable, tiled surface that will last for years to come. This project marked the completion of the building project in Port Vila as it was the last project to be done. Now the Vila congregation will be able to use the building for years to come and enjoy these nice facilities in which to worship and serve the Lord. What a blessing!

(more pictures on next page)



Before



After

Below: Eric and Dalton work together to lay tile. My knees hurt just looking at them!



Below: Christians in Vila love the new tile as they see it for the first time on Sunday!



Below: Aaron, Cindy, Kaela and Melia dressed up, island style!



10 Year Vow Renewal for Bakers By Aaron Baker

January 2nd, 2009 marked mine and Cindy's 10 year anniversary. We wanted to celebrate in a special way and decided to renew our vows but with a twist: island style!

Sam Tabawa, a Christian in Etas village, offered to host the ceremony at his land which has beautiful scenic views of a valley it overlooks. Christians from Vila and Etas came together on this special occasion to witness the blending of two cultures, American and Vanuatuan, in a ceremony that showed the love and strength of a marriage rooted in the Lord.

Far different from 10 years ago when Aaron and Cindy were wed in Edmond, OK in the midst of an ice storm, the weather was overcast, hot and humid. A crowd of people gathered that included family from the US (Cindy parents, Dalton and Mary Beth Dietz), Christian friends from Vanuatu and custom dancers from Tanna Island.

Ushered in by custom dancers, Aaron and Cindy walked slowly to where the ceremony was to take place. The dancers then performed three dances to open the ceremony and involve the crowd. Eric Brandell performed the renewing of the vows ceremony and did a splendid job, explaining how God's plan for marriage is beautiful and meant to be shared for life between a husband and a wife.

Following the ceremony, exchanging of the rings and vows, the custom dancing resumed. Filling the air with their traditional song in the language from Tanna, the dancers stomped to the rhythm of the songs and left a last-

ing impression on the soil, our hearts and our memories.

Truly this was a day not quickly forgotten as the events, decorations, music, custom attire and people made it very special. Being able to share this milestone in our lives with those here in Vanuatu was like icing on the cake of a sweet marriage so far.

Below: Eric performs the vow renewal ceremony for Aaron and Cindy's 10 year anniversary in Etas village.



Below-clockwise: Cindy is all decked out with the island style of wedding makeup. Aaron and Dalton do their best to keep up with the custom dance in the style of Tanna island.



Upcoming Events for 2009

By Aaron Baker

What is our team up to for 2009? Good question! Here is a snapshot of some things we have planned for this new year.

Truth Bible School

This year will see four terms of TBS classes beginning in February, April, August and October. Each class lasts six weeks, held on Tuesday and Thursday to strengthen the brethren and reach out to non-Christians. Eric, Mike and Aaron will teach these classes in the local language, Bislama.

Pacific Islands Bible College

Two different islands will host PIBC classes— Ambae and Efate. Our team will help host teachers

from the states who come each year to teach Bible books and topics. Classes will run in June/July (Efate) and August (Ambae).

Trip to Tanna

Our goal is to plant the church in Tanna very soon. Upon completion of TBS courses, Tom, originally from Tanna, wants to move back home and help plant the church.

Visitors from the USA

March/April will bring with it a group from our overseeing congregation, the Columbine church of Christ. In addition, Eric's family will visit in June and this will be their first visit to Vanuatu.

Please pray for all these events scheduled for 2009!

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

This month Titus finally realized that one of the perks of sleeping in a "big-boy bed" is that you can get up whenever you'd like - 5 minutes after dad puts you down for a nap, or at 5am when you wake up! Titus especially enjoyed swimming and three village trips this month. He also set a new record for the most viewings of the movie *Cars* in one month - 146 (or so it seemed).



Kaela Sue Baker

With Kaela being out of school in January, she was nearly stir crazy! In fact, this picture shows her serious side in trying to bide her time until school starts again in February.

Kaela loves spending her time looking at *Highlights* magazine for kids, reading books, coloring and playing with Titus and Lexi. She has also reached a milestone in that she has memorized all the books of the Bible. Good job Kaela!



Alexis Lynae Brandell

Lexi has three teeth peeking through on top, which brings the total to five. She learned how to walk along the furniture this month, and standing up without assistance is just around the corner. Lexi loves playing in the water, Elmo movies, and watching the big kids laugh and play. It won't be long till she can join in the fun. She also learned the hard way not to touch a hot oven ... ouch!



Melia Madelyn Baker

Lia is fully is truly a toddler. When she walks, she toddles back and forth. She loves to follow Kaela around the house and chase Daddy, too. Climbing is also a must as she has learned how to climb up on the couch all by herself. She even climbed inside this box and I think wants to take a ride inside to visit you all in the States!

She loved Grandma and Grandpa Dietz being around in Dec/Jan and loved the constant attention. Showing off her walking skills, she is sure to capture your heart. And if you want to see her in person, evidently all we need to do is slap on some postage and drop her in the mail. I guess that's what you call pre-packaged goods!



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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)