



Mission Vanuatu

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

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Special points of interest:

- TBS for 2009 under way with 15 students!
- 10 women gather in Etas for Fellowship
- Vila men's meeting brings maturity, encouragement
- Titus preaches, Lexi chews, Kaela starts school, Melia paints

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Truth Bible School Kicks Off for 2009

By Aaron Baker

2009 marks the second year of Truth Bible School classes and the second year of strong, Biblical courses being taught to strengthen and encourage brethren throughout Vanuatu. Four terms each year, with two classes each term and each term lasting six weeks are like a high-dose shot in the arm for students wanting to study the Bible.

Mike Olson and Eric Brandell kick off the 2009 year of Truth Bible School with classes held in the capital city of Port Vila. Mike is teaching the Book of Acts and Eric is teaching on Moral and Cultural Issues. On average, we have 15 students representing congregations from Vila, Etas and even as far away as Ambae Island (4 day boat ride or 1 hour flight-time away). These students are high caliber and desire to learn more about God's Word, which we are doing our best to provide to them, free of charge.

A typical class of TBS will see Mike starting off by driving one-and-a-half hours to pick up seven students located in remote areas. Mike's class runs from 6-7 pm allowing for those who work to attend after hours. Eric then takes his turn at teaching the 7-8 pm class and also drops off some of the same students Mike picked up.

In all, we would like to highlight students like Makitney (Duviara church of Christ, age 17), who has come from his home island of Ambae to attend classes. We are also encouraged by Miswel (Etas church of Christ, age 22) who

consistently brings two or three friends with him to each class.

On the weekends, we are trying our best to take the TBS school where it cannot go during the week—into the more distant villages outside of Port Vila. With a request from the Epau church of Christ, we have been asked to teach TBS classes on Saturday mornings. To get the most out of this opportunity, we make a quick stop off in Eton village to pick up Christians who also want to come to these classes.



Above: TBS students pose for a picture before diving into their studies of God's Word.

Truth Bible school classes are open to Christians and non-Christians alike. In each class we have seen several visitors attend, wanting to build up their Bible knowledge. Several Christians are bringing their friends and inviting co-workers and the result has been an excellent way to teach the Bible as well as to evangelize the lost. Our team was even thrilled to learn that two students from Epau village were baptized into Christ after attending classes on "The Church" (you can read their story next month).

Below: Mike teaching his TBS class, the Book of Acts, to eager students.



Women's Fellowship in Etas Village By Aaron Baker

Women are an integral part of the health and vitality of any church, Vanuatu being no exception. Thus it is important for Christian women from different areas to be able to grow close together—emotionally and spiritually. With this in mind, each month the women in Vila and Etas gather together for a women's fellowship.

Below: (L to R) Salome, Leimawa and Cindy having a great time at the Etas women's fellowship.



On February 7th women from Vila took a bus to Etas village to join with the Christian women to strengthen each other. Salome, from Etas, lead the devotional time and Cindy lead the ladies in discussing a recent article entitled, "Trusting God With Our Future." This article was taken from Cindy and Shawnda's Bislama newsletter, *Yumi Ol Mama*, translated as "For the Mothers", or "For the Women." Reading and talking about topics like these helps draw the women together and unite them with a common purpose of serving God each day and knowing that they have others with which they can share their victories and failures of life.

Following their time of discussion, the ladies enjoyed time to sing together and, of course, ate together. Each brought some food previously prepared and all enjoyed sampling whatever food was available.

In all, there were about 5 women from Vila and 5 women from Etas present. However, spirits were high for the occasion and all came away from the fellowship happy and well nourished—emotionally and spiritually.

Below: (L to R) Fiona, Carol and Marina talk about how they can trust God with their future at the women's fellowship in Etas



Below: Even a 'young lady' like Melia has a great time fellowshiping with the ladies in Etas village. What fun!



Notable News

By Aaron Baker

Some events on the mission field are ordinary and a part of our daily routine. To not bore our supporters, friends and families, we try to weed out the newsworthy information from the routine. However, there are some events that pop up which are not captured by camera, but which are positive aspects to our work. Here are just a few examples:

Men's Meeting in Vila

Each month we do our best to have a men's meeting to discuss church business in Vila. This month we had great feedback concerning benevolence, reaching out to Christians who are struggling, and an outreach effort to be held in April. Of note, we were very impressed when Claude saw a brother

struggling in his faith, then visited that brother. The following week, the same brother came to worship and repented of his sins and asked for forgiveness. All this was done by the local brethren, which is a huge step in the right direction as previously the visiting and encouraging would have been left to the 'missionary'.

Benevolence

A widowed Christian in Vila who was living with her daughter was asked to find a new home. Unsure where she was to live, a Christian couple opened up their home and welcomed her in. All of this is so encouraging since the brethren in Vila are showing such positive signs of Christian growth and maturity in their lives. We pray for more maturity like this!

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 surprised us all this month by "preaching." When he first started using his preacher voice we weren't sure what he was doing, but when he passed out the Lord's Supper and closed with an "Amen" we figured it out. You can see a video of his new talent on his website. We also learned that Titus has what appears to be viral illness-induced asthma. He had lots of fun going to his first birthday party, and adores utilizing his new phrase, "why not?" Mom and Dad aren't so amused.



Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela started Kindergarten this month. As you can see by the picture, she was all smiles and thrilled to be back to school and to see her friends. Last year Kaela went to school on M-W-F. This year is a big step in that she will go to kindergarten five days a week from 7:30 to 11:30 am. Favorite activities at school include painting, coloring, playing with friends and going to the library.



Alexis Lynae Brandell

Lexi now has 6 teeth (4 top & 2 bottom), and loves sinking them into anything and everything. She has officially been weened off of baby formula, drinking several glasses of milk each day and eating lots of table food. She has tried standing up without aid a couple of times, loves being tickled, and now says "ta-ta" (bye bye) at the appropriate times. It's hard to believe we're only a week away from her first birthday!



Melia Madelyn Baker

Doing her best to be a modern day Picasso, Melia is trying her hand at watercolors and is creating a masterpiece. Melia had only two teeth on the bottom...until this month when 5 new teeth sprouted out! Favorite activities include going for walks (as she is now officially a 'toddler'), unloading Mom and Dad's books off the bookshelf, playing with our dog, Rex, but does not like to try new foods at all (especially green ones). Yuck!



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Mission Vanuatu Minutes
A ministry of the
Columbine church of Christ
7453 S. Zephyr Ct
Littleton, CO 80128

Please send address changes and
inquiries to:
Kevin Fennelly
kfenn10987@msn.com

**Spreading the Gospel in
the South Pacific**

Columbine church of Christ
7453 S. Zephyr Ct.
Littleton, CO 80128

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)