



Mission Vanuatu

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

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Special points of interest:

- 2 souls converted in Epau village
- 12 students gather to study the Bible in Epau village
- TBS in Vila ends 19-March with 15 students

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Conversions in Epau Village

By Eric Brandell

Willy Kalsef's [right] parents are Christians in Epau Village, and thus he has been attending worship services with them for several years. Paul Iala [left] is originally from the island of Tanna, but now lives with Willy and his family in Epau, and also visits worship services regularly. These two young men are students in the TBS classes that I recently began teaching in Epau. We are studying the church, which is of course a very timely study for both of them.

I saw Willy's dad in town one Tuesday afternoon, and he was very excited to inform me that these two members of his household had been baptized. I was pleasantly surprised to learn the news as well. I had preached a sermon on Bible Baptism the Sunday before, and a lesson on the The Purpose of the Church the day before they made their decision. They both told Arthur that with the knowledge they'd gained from these and other studies, they were ready to make a commitment to follow Christ. Several Christians went down to the ocean where Arthur baptized them both into Christ for the remission of their sins.

This news came as a surprise to me for a couple of reasons: [1] I wasn't even "trying" to convert these young men with these lessons - I was simply

teaching God's word - which shows the true power of the gospel message when it is proclaimed. [2] Local Christians tend to shrink back from any leadership role, hoping that instead one of the missionaries will take charge. Often times in this situation a conclusion of "let's wait until Eric comes next Saturday" would have been the consensus. I was so proud of Arthur for baptizing these two men



Above: Both Paul (L) and Willy (R) are excited about their new lives in Christ. What a positive step for these two young men as well as for the Epau congregation!

into Christ when he heard that they were ready to make that decision. To my knowledge, these are the first conversions to take place in Epau without direct assistance from outside Christians. Very encouraging indeed!!

Truth Bible School Begins in Epau Village

By Eric Brandell

As we began announcing the dates for our second year of TBS in Vila, the Christians in Epau Village approached me after services one Sunday morning inquiring as to the possibility of conducting classes in the village on Saturday mornings. They appealed that such an arrangement would enable many more to attend the classes due to transportation (bus trip to Vila is 1.5 hours), finance (round trip to Vila is approx. \$10 p/p), and work schedules (some work during the week and are thus not able to travel to Vila on week-nights). I was eager to take them up on their offer, but did emphasize that a level of commitment needed to be present before we moved ahead with those plans. After a couple more planning meetings, we had agreed to begin classes February 21.

I am teaching a class entitled *The Church*, in which we have been studying the plan, prophecy, establishment, uniqueness, importance, purpose, character and worship of the church of Christ. We begin our first session at 8:30 each Saturday morning, and after

a short break, we start our second session about 10:15. We will follow this schedule for 6 weeks, followed by a break, and will begin a new course April 25. We have enjoyed a steady attendance of 12 students, including 3 Christians from Eton Village, 8 Christians from Epau, and 1 non-Christian from Epau. We cover two lessons each morning, and start off each day with a quiz covering the previous week's lessons. An educational setting such as this is something that most of the students have not been accustomed to since their days of primary school, and thus it has taken some time for them to adjust. I am so proud of all of them, and their desire to learn and apply God's word in their lives. Please be praying that this effort will be fruitful.

Below: Epau students are all smiles after class on a fine Saturday morning—even after taking Eric's quiz.



Students in Epau TBS classes listen intently to Eric's lessons on *The Church*.



The idea behind Truth Bible School classes is simple: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim 2:2 ESV)

TBS Vila Update

By Mike Olson

Mission Vanuatu's most productive work for training the local brethren has been Truth Bible School (TBS). The month of March will see the completion of the fifth, of eight terms in the program. The two courses offered in this term have significant value for the Christians here in Port Vila. First, Mike Olson taught the Book of Acts, with

special emphasis on the church and its growth. This is important because the Christians in Vanuatu are embarking on the same road as the first century Christians with the start, growth, and continuance of the Lord's body. The book of Acts is the biblical guide to all Christians. Second, Eric Brandell taught a class on Moral and Cultural

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Issues. For Vanuatu Christians, the biggest struggle is the pull to conform to the culture in all respects. Often times what culture says and what the Bible says are vastly different and the local brethren need to know what God and His word say in these matters. The class has been an educational and practical, “eye-opener” for all those blessed to attend.

This term also saw more people attend every class than any other term. We finished with nine who had perfect attendance topping last term’s five, and we also had four who missed but one class. In all, we had twenty-six attend at least one class and a core group of fourteen who will be eligible to receive credit. As a team we are looking forward to the final terms of the school which will equip them for their Christian walk!

Kids Korner

*This section of the newsletter is dedicated to the children on the Mission Vanuatu Team.
We hope you enjoy these updates.*

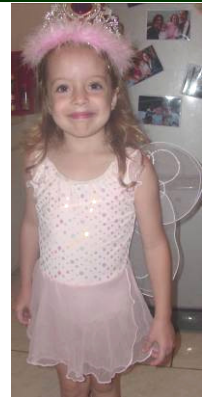
Titus Taylor Brandell

Titus made us smile this month when, after trying a new snack for the first time, he said “yummy-good.” Since then, it’s become a regularly used adjective at our house. Titus continues to talk more and more every month, stringing together words into sentences. He knows all the tricks to get Lexi to stop crying, and will often bring her his blanket or a pacifier to try and soothe her. Titus loves going to playgroup every week, and especially enjoys trips to the village - both places he can run, yell and throw!



Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela loves school. This month her class is learning how to swim. Several students are very good swimmers, but Kaela is still working on putting her face under the water. As you can tell by the picture, Kaela loves to dress up—especially like a ballerina-fairy. According to Kaela, fairies don’t put their faces in the water. Her best friend at school is Juliette. She is from New Zealand and came over one afternoon for a play date. Both girls had a great time!



Alexis Lynae Brandell

Happy 1st Birthday to Alexis!! We all enjoyed sand, swimming, lunch, cake and presents in celebration of Lexi’s birthday on March 9. We got some great pics and video of Lexi plowing into her birthday cake, which will be up on her website soon. Lexi moved into her big brother’s room this month, and did so without a hitch! The only downside is that while she would prefer to sleep till 7:00, Titus insists that she get up with him at 6:00.



Melia Madelyn Baker

Melia is in the “discovery” stage. She is learning that there are great places to put fingers, even all over your body. Eyes and ears and mouths are fun, but Lia likes her nose best of all! Melia is now walking very well and can move pretty fast, making it very challenging for Mommy and Daddy. More teeth are coming in quickly and this may account for her being a picky eater. She is still afraid of strangers and doesn’t want to go visit with new people, but once she warms up to you, she won’t leave your side.



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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)