



# Mission Vanuatu

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

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## Special points of interest:

- Gospel taken to Malekula island
- Eric's family arrives from the US for a visit
- Correspondence course, radio program update
- Washer breaks, Eric, Aaron to the rescue
- New Team Picture on back page!

## Inside this issue:

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## Mission Trip to Malekula Island

By Eric Brandell

**M**alekula is Vanuatu's second-largest island and is located approximately 80 miles northwest of Efate (where we're stationed). Flexon, a Christian here in Vila, is from Tulwei Village on the northern coast of Malekula. He and his wife, Fiona, have been eager to travel back to this village in order to teach the gospel to their family and other loved ones for several years. The time finally came this month for the three of us to make that journey.

This was my first time to visit Malekula, and to my knowledge the first time the gospel has been taken to the island. That being the case, we looked at this first trip as a time of preparing the fields. Our main focus for the week was to go and teach Flexon's extended family - his mom, three adult sisters and one adult brother, along with their spouses and children. Unfortunately, Flexon's dad died suddenly a few months ago. While we never had the chance to reach his father, Flexon's brother, Alsen, shared with me that his death served as a real wake-up call for him spiritually. As I visited with him, I was reminded that God can use even tragic events to bring about positive change. I hope that Alsen will be a leader in the Lord's church some day soon.

We held two public Bible studies everyday, and as time passed more and more people heard about us being there and attended these studies. I was pleased to learn that several in the village regu-

larly listen to our weekly radio program, and so Christ's church is already known in the area as a church that teaches only the Bible. I also had a few good conversations with an elder from the Reformed Presbyterian Church. I appreciate his group's desire to leave "the mother church" and her man-made doctrines to return to the Bible, and hope that we can study together more in the future about the church of the Bible. I believe he is a prime prospect to obey the gospel.



During the day, I enjoyed seeing a place unlike any other I have seen before, even in Vanuatu. There were acres and acres of coconut plantations, crystal-clear rivers, and of course breath-taking views of the Pacific Ocean. It was neat to see Flexon "at home" and listen to him share stories about his childhood and his late father. He even showed me a piece of ground that was left to him by his dad, where he hopes that there will one day be a building for the church to meet and worship in.

While I was already pleased with the

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Above:** Eric, Flexon and Fiona receive gifts from the village, thanking them for bringing the Gospel.



**Above:** The monthly *Pikinini Baebol Klab* PBK program is always well attended. Alice (from Etas) helps get the kids lined up and registered for the day of learning about the Bible, fun and games too!



**Above:** The kids listen intently to the lesson and are captivated by the puppet skit. This is the first time they have ever seen puppets! Average attendance each month is around 40 kids! What a great program!



**Above:** What's going on?!? Shawnda and Rosemary practice new songs for the monthly children's program.

(Continued from page 1)

spiritual growth and maturity of Fiona and Flexon before this trip, our week together made me so proud of the two of them. Their love for souls and grasp of God's word at such an early stage in their spiritual life is comforting. The only problem is, we need them to live and work in both Vila and Tulwei at the same time!

Flexon and I have already met to begin planning our follow-up trip into the village. Our first trip was successful in that we were able to prepare the field - make contacts, teach some basic principles and doctrines, and generate a lot of interest. In fact, Alsen called me a couple of weeks ago to say that all the tracts we left with him have already been distributed, and more had been requested. He also said that people are

asking when we are going to come back and teach. It looks like Flexon and I will return in October, with the hope of planting the church in Tulwei. If things go according to plan, Flexon will stay a couple of weeks after I leave to make sure that the infant church gets off on the right foot. We will plan to make subsequent trips every few months to strengthen, encourage and further evangelize. Flexon and Fiona will in all likelihood be making periodic mission trips to Tulwei for the rest of their lives, which will cost them much time and money, but is a sacrifice they seem glad to make. Please be praying that our efforts to plant and water will be successful, and that the Lord will soon be glorified by a new congregation of his people worshiping in Tulwei Village! You can read more about our initial trip to Malekula and see photos at [www.missionvanuatu.com](http://www.missionvanuatu.com)

## A Family Affair

By Eric Brandell

We all enjoyed a visit from my parents (John and Lisa Brandell) and sisters (Katie and Cori) in June/July. This was their first trip to Vanuatu, and they seemed to have enjoyed it thoroughly. Of course, it helped that they were with their grandkids/nephew/niece 24 hours a day. I thought we had a good mix of showing them our Pacific lifestyle and seeing much of the beauty Vanuatu has to offer. We worshiped with brethren in Vila, Etas, Epau and Marou Village (which included a very exciting boat ride), where everyone enjoyed meeting one another. Mom and the girls enjoyed a day trip to Epau Village where they learned how to make laplap and weave a local mat. We were all in awe of our visit to the Yasur Volcano, which is billed as the most accessible live volcano in the world, and enjoyed a couple of other trips to local resorts as well. We

were sad to say goodbye, but grateful that we were able to spend so much time together! They say that having family members visit you on the field is very important for the overall long-term health of the missionary, and we are grateful that our families have been able to come and share the experience with us. We are already looking forward to visits from Cindy's sister and brother-in-law, and Shawnda's parents later this year!

**Below L to R:** Cori, John, Katie, Lexi, Shawnda, Lisa, Titus and Eric all pose for a Brandell family picture. What a great visit!





## What's Happening?

A lot! Our team has been very busy recently, here are some event updates:

### Bible Correspondence Courses

The local newspaper *The Daily Post* just began a Bislama edition of their newspaper to be distributed to the outer islands of Vanuatu. We advertized our Bible courses to the outer islands and in one week received over 50 requests from people wishing to study the Bible. What a blessing and opportunity!

### Radio

The radio program, *Word of Life* produced by our team continues to air each week throughout Vanuatu. Lessons are taught in the local language, Bislama, and people can call or write with any questions and request to study the Bible.

On Eric's trip to Tulwei, Malekula, one group of people were using our radio program, aired on Sunday afternoons at 3:30 as a way for them to learn and study God's Word. The radio program helps to give credibility, understanding, learning and the Gospel to people in Tulwei, Malekula. There may be many other groups like this in Vanuatu listening to the Truth of the Gospel being taught by radio.

### That's Life...

A washing machine in Vanuatu is about twice the price and half the size of a typical washing machine in the U.S. Since ours recently broke down, Eric and I worked diligently to tear down and put the washer back together. Fortunately, we had ordered parts ahead of time from the U.S. Only 4 years old and already showing severe signs of rust. Well...that's life in Vanuatu.

# 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

"What's he eating!" you ask? Sand, of course. Titus' favorite sense is definitely taste! If something looks interesting he has to put it in his mouth, much to the dismay of the rest of us. It does make for a lot of laughs, though. This month he started "answering" and singing along with his videos - Diego, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse and Handy Manny are new favorites. One morning this month we left the kids in the care of their aunts, during which Titus got two bags of fruit snacks and four Oreos - no wonder they're his new favorite babysitters!



## Alexis Lynae Brandell

Aunt KK and Aunt Coco slept on mattresses in the living room during their visit to Vanuatu, which meant Lexi had a nice place to enjoy her fruit smoothie every morning. She had lots of fun with Oklahoma Brandells this month - blowing bubbles, reading books and getting carried everywhere (it's a wonder she didn't forget how to walk). She learned to say night-night this month, and loves giving kisses (dad says, "hopefully she'll grow out of that!").



## Kaela Sue Baker

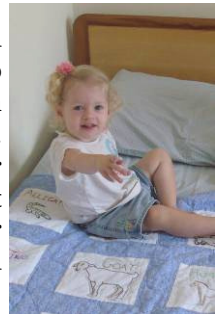
Kaela turned 5 this month! She could hardly wait for her birthday, as few kids can stand to wait. Kaela had several friends over for a "Princess Party" to celebrate being five. All the girls dressed up in princess dresses or ballerina outfits. They got to go on a Princess treasure hunt, decorate cupcakes, and have a great time wearing way too much pink. Kaela's favorite gift was being signed up to take ballet classes, but she says, "all the other presents were good, too."



## Melia Madelyn Baker

Two big events in Melia's life happened this month. First, she traded in her crib for a "big girl bed" (twin bed). As you can see in the picture, she loves the change. Not being enclosed in a crib is new to her and she loves the freedom of getting out of bed and crawling in bed with her sister or coming to check on mommy and daddy in the night.

Second, Melia is working on using a "big girl potty", as we are trying to potty train her. This means lots of messes to clean up, but she is doing a great job of figuring this potty "business" out.



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**Address Correction Requested**

**Check us out on the web!**

[www.missionvanuatu.com](http://www.missionvanuatu.com)

### **Mission Vanuatu Team**



**New Team Picture**

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

(Left side of picture)

**Mike Olson**

(Middle of picture)

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

(Right side of picture)