



Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

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Special points of interest:

- Donated toothbrushes put to work.
- Meet 2 new sisters in Christ
- PBK was a hit for 2009
- Visitors from OK are OK.
- Titus turns 3!

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How's Your Smile?

By Aaron Baker

Let's see those pearly whites! Kids in Etas village are learning how to get and stay healthy with a lesson on brushing their teeth.

Each week we run a Bible Hour program in Etas village. Kids range from 3 to 14 years old and we have an average attendance of 20.

Our team had received several child sized toothbrushes from members of the church in the USA. A great way to put these toothbrushes to work was to teach a very practical lesson to the kids attending Bible Hour in Etas on how to brush teeth.

Typical families in Vanuatu have means to buy toothbrushes for their families, however, few see the importance. The mindset of many is, "they are kids and their teeth will fall out anyway."

While this is true, we are doing our best to educate the kids on the fact that if you take care of your teeth, they will serve you better for longer.

While the event was focused on brushing teeth, we talked at great length about the general principle that God created us and our bodies. We need to take care of our bodies (even though our lesson focused on the teeth) because we can use our bodies to glorify God. Even though brushing our teeth is such a small thing to do, it is still a step in the right direction of taking care of our bodies. In general, brushing teeth promotes one's overall health and well being. While those in a more modernized

country recognize this easily, many of these kids were hearing this for the first time.

To teach the lesson on a level to which the kids could easily grasp and relate, I needed the help of a friend. A dear friend, Tommie, came to visit the kids in Etas. In case you can't tell in the picture, Tommie is a puppet.

Tommie helped me tell the kids all about brushing their teeth and how to take care of yourself. Tommie nearly came to tears as he told the kids how he didn't have any teeth and wished he had beautiful teeth to take care of like all the wonderful kids in Etas village.

Following the singing, teaching (with Tommie's help of course), and praying, we practiced brushing. All of the kids were working on polishing those teeth with new toothbrushes. They chose their favorite color of brush and set to the task of beautifying those smiles.

Practicing brushing in circles, up and down, and side-to-side is hard work, but the kids did a great job. Fresh breath and clean teeth, what a great day. The kids loved the program and the kids enjoyed flashing their beautiful smiles to one another.

Thanks to those who donated the toothbrushes. The kids loved them and the program was a hit.



Above: Tommie co-taught with Aaron at Etas Bible hour. Thanks for your help Tommie!



Above: Steve is showing off his smile for the camera. Say cheese.



Above: Angela shows how she can brush. Great job!

Below: Hiding under his hat is Abel, from Etas. He is brushing his teeth and learning how to take care of himself.



Below: L to R—Salome, Rachel and Shawnda are all smiles after Rachel was immersed into Christ. Meeting people like Rachel who want to fully turn their lives over to Christ is so refreshing.



Below: L to R—Leimawa, Noella and Salome are pictured here after Noella was baptized into Christ. What a great start for this young woman!



PBK Ends for the Year

By Aaron Baker

There is a saying in Vanuatu that goes like this, "Work with the cement when it is wet. Once it is hardened, it is much harder to shape and form and you often have to break it and start over." I really like this saying because it illustrates the importance of working with the young boys and girls of any congregation to engrain in them positive, Biblical teachings while they are still young. Learning Biblical truths now, at a young age, is far easier than trying to "unteach" many errors of denominationalism to a person who is already grown. Teaching the children when they are small enables them to build a positive foundation, "before the cement sets."

To this end, we have been running a monthly program developed for the kids called, "Kids Bible Club", or "Pikinini Baebol Klab (PBK)" in Bislama. We used this kids club as a way not only teach the

kids solid Bible teachings, but secondarily to teach the women in Vanuatu how to conduct programs like this themselves.

Because most schools are closed for the months of December and January for school break, this was our last month to conduct PBK for 2009. We will begin again in 2010 with more lessons and pray for continued success with this program (monthly attendance is about 40+) as the Lord blesses it.

Below: Kids enjoy the Bible lessons, but LOVE the activities and games. Kaela is pictured here with lots of her friends from PBK.



Encouragement from Home

By Aaron Baker

Two great friends of ours from Tulsa, Oklahoma came for a visit this month. Jack and Earline Lierly paid our team a visit for a week doting on the kids, encouraging our team, and strengthening the brethren.

The 29th and Yale church of Christ has been supporting our mission team for nearly 5 years now and Jack, who is an elder there, and his wife Earline, took an opportunity of low airfares to come for a visit.

It was our pleasure to show Jack and Earline a glimpse into our work and lives here in Vanuatu. Being good friends of all of ours, we shared many laughs, lots of love, and several scoops of ice cream with the kids.

Seeing the mission work first hand

gave a new perspective to the work here in Vanuatu and they were more clearly able to comprehend the joys, sorrows, successes and frustrations of our team. It was a truly encouraging time to host Jack and Earline during their visit to Vanuatu? Who wants to come next to visit Vanuatu? Just let us know!



Two New Sisters in Christ

By Aaron Baker

We are thrilled to introduce to you two new sisters in Christ: Rachel and Noella (pic on page 2). Here are their stories:

Rachel

Rachel is Salome's (Etas) sister. Salome is an outgoing type of person who will talk to anyone and everyone who will listen about Christ and His church. So, when Salome set up a study with her sister, Rachel, Shawnda was thrilled to help conduct the studies. Salome and Shawnda both studied with Rachel and helped her see the simple teachings of the Bible and how we do not have to be burdened with many man-made rules. Rachel had previously been disheartened by the fact that she had been a member of several different denominations, but still felt like she wasn't

practicing the type of Christianity she read about in the New Testament. After weeks of study, she was ready to fully turn her life over to Christ.

Noella

Noella has been attending almost every program the church offered. Being 17 years old, it is encouraging to see a young woman who was wanting desperately to put Christ first in her life. She knew she was outside of Christ and was lost, which is exactly why she wanted to study and be baptized into Christ to completely wash away her sins and be added to the church. Coming up out of the water after baptism, Noella had a big grin and was thrilled to be a new person in Christ and be forgiven of her sins. Now we are working hard to continue studying with Noella on how to live a new life dedicated to Christ.

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

Happy 3rd Birthday to Titus! We celebrated Titus' birthday, appropriately, three times - once just before Mema and Papa left, once with friends, and once with the team. Needless to say, we had lots of fun, cake, and presents this month. And we're happy to say that Titus is a different child after we found out about a medical issue and got the appropriate medicine - cranky, whiney Titus is gone (after a 5-6 month stay)! As Titus says, "thank you God for medicine, and thank you for Dr. Dermot." He also learned his very first memory verse this month, Genesis 1:1, and he loves quoting it.



Alexis Lynae Brandell

"Lexi-girl" (as she is affectionately known around our house) enjoyed all the partying this month as well - especially the cake. Of course, the icing is her favorite part! She was sad to see Mema and Papa leave, but enjoyed having Papa Jack and Grannie Earline, (friends from the States) visit. Lexi enjoys playing with her baby dolls, swinging, and watching Kids' Songs DVDs. She also loves shoes, purses, and sunglasses. Thanks to her big brother, Lexi is one of the toughest little girls you will ever meet - she takes a lickin' and keeps on tickin'.



Kaela Sue Baker

What better way to beat the heat than with some nice, cool pudding? Kaela was all smiles when we received a box this month from the US with pudding inside.

Kaela has been practicing at reading and has memorized many basic words like, "if...and...we...you...he...she". This means that she is getting better each day at reading. It won't be long before she can pick up books and read on her own.



Melia Madelyn Baker

So what is the big 2 year old up to now? Well, Melia also enjoyed eating a lollipop which was from the US. Before, Melia wouldn't touch lollies, now she is head-over-heals for them. Delicious!

Melia loves to catch and kick toy balls, eat lollies, swing on the swingset, eat lollies, play in the water when it's hot outside, and yes, eat lollies.

Melia loves to go with Mom and Dad on Bible studies. Her favorite thing to do is to play with other kids, like Dalton from Etas village, while Mom and Dad are studying.



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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



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)