



# 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:

- 3 families re-join the Port Vila congregation
- 2 souls added to the kingdom
- PBK 2010 kicks off in

## Inside this issue:

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## The Power of Forgiveness

By Aaron Baker

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Christ's Church in Port Vila witnessed an historical event. Three families which were previously worshipping at a different location in Port Vila because of differences with the mission team have returned.

Every mission work has ups and downs, times of success and failure. Our mission team in Vanuatu is no different. In 2006 three families decided to worship apart from the Christians meeting at the Tagabe area and felt it best to meet in the Black Sands area. There were many reasons for this decision, but tensions between the mission team as well as problems regarding the building project at Tagabe (built in 2005/2006) were the chief ones. An attempt at reconciliation was made in 2007, but was unsuccessful.

Fast forward to the end of 2009 and Morris Felix, from Eton Village, worked hard to push for a resolution to previous problems and to reunite the church in Port Vila.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup> Christians in Port Vila, Tagabe area (including our team) met with the Christians from the Black Sands area to discover if a resolution was possible. After several hours of meeting together and discussing the past problems and difficulties we all faced, we put a plan into action to pave the way for a bright future.

Over the span of an entire week, our team met with these three families to talk face to face and discuss the points of contention that plagued us in the past. Tears flowed and hearts were heavy as we talked about the past to make way for the future. Both sides admitted mistakes, repented of sins, and forgave each other as we rejoiced together in how God was able to reunite these two groups.

Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 saw the church building in Tagabe area, Port Vila, packed full of people. It was a joyous time of worship as we were able to be united together for the first time in years – the mission team with these families that previously met at Black Sands. We give thanks to our Lord and Savior who made all this possible through the power of His forgiveness and His Word.

Now that the Christ's church in Port Vila is reunited, we can put the past behind us and look to the future. We all plan to work hard to bring glory and honor to God through the church.

There is no time to waste. The Lord's church must grow in Vanuatu and souls need to be saved. We hope you will rejoice with us in this wonderful news highlighting the forgiveness that is possible through Christ.



**Below:** Kids line up to register for Pikinini Baebol Klab which kicked off at the end of January. 40–50 kids from 3 locations (Vila, Etas and Eton) gathered for a morning full of fun and learning about Jesus. The topic was Jesus' calling of the 12 disciples and learning about how to follow Jesus.



**Below:** Salome and Ellen sing songs with the kids and review the lesson and memory verse.



**Below:** Playing "follow the leader" is a fun way to learn how to follow Jesus.



## Conversions to Christ

By Eric Brandell, Aaron Baker

**John Dean** is the first-born son of Eddie Karris, one of the first Christians in Vanuatu who lives in Eton Village. In early 2009, John began visiting our worship services in Vila and showed interest in personal Bible study. He attended a Gospel Meeting in March, and had several one-on-one studies with Wayne Burger during that week, who was conducting the meeting. John then took several of our TBS classes during the remainder of the year, all the while visiting services fairly regularly.

Following studies with Wayne, I (and others) would often touch base with John to see "where he was" in his decision making process. He knew what needed to be done in order to be right with God, but wanted to make sure that he was prepared to carry out the commitment to Christ as His Master. John is a very popular person in Vila, being a teacher at the technical school in town as well as being the former owner of a saw mill. He has a great sense of humor, and is very likeable.

Much to my surprise, John showed up at my house on Monday morning and said that he was ready to be baptized. I studied with him for a couple of hours, during which he asked some of the most thoughtful questions I have ever fielded. Though she hasn't had much interaction with the church, I was glad that John's wife was also able to sit in on this study. He desperately wants her to obey the gospel, and invited her to come with him that morning so that she could better understand what he was doing. As a



result, she has now begun taking our Bible Correspondence Courses and we are supposed to study further upon her completion of those lessons.

After we had studied through all of his questions, we drove down to the Port where I baptized John into Christ. When we came out of the water and I handed him a towel, John buried his face and cried for several minutes. I was so touched by the humility of this man, and am honored to call him my brother in Christ.

John brought family members with him to church the following Sunday, and told me that he was "starting his evangelism now." He also did a superb job leading the closing prayer that morning. Join me in praying that John's desire to serve the Lord will continue to grow.

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**Iaru** (pronounced yar-oo) lives in Etas village and had visited worship several times. Iaru was in search of the church that he read about in the Bible.

Originally from Tanna island and now living in Etas village, Iaru is 20 years old

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and is helping his dad with construction in Port Vila. While Iaru is used to building houses, he was looking to build his own spiritual house.

Iaru was formerly a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. After his talking with several members of the church in Etas village, he was interested in studying the Bible. I met with Iaru several times each week to study. Iaru always showed up to the studies with a sharp mind and quick smile. As we began to search the scriptures in depth, Iaru began to realize that he had been baptized unscripturally as a baby. Upon understanding that adults were the ones who could make decisions to follow Christ, repent of sins and count the costs of becoming a Christian, Iaru eagerly wanted to be immersed into Christ.

Iaru was careful in counting the cost to become a Christian. He knew that it was not a decision to be taken lightly and that he must change some things in his life before becoming a Christian. For several weeks Iaru struggled with the decision that he knew he must make. He finally yielded to Christ and put his trust in Him and was immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of his sins.

Please pray for Iaru as he embarks on this life-long Christian journey. Trials to his faith will come, but join us in praying for his faith to stand firm.



## 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 often insists that we refer to him as "construction worker Titus." He recently got a new DVD on lumberjacks, and loves to use dad's level as his chainsaw. He mastered his second memory verse this month (Ephesians 6:1) and enjoys reciting it. Titus' HUGE accomplishment this month was that he began using the big-boy potty on a regular basis. He is wearing underwear while he's awake and has had only a few accidents - yeah Titus!



### Alexis Lynae Brandell

Alexis loves babies - especially when she gets to hold *real* ones like baby Nila in Etas. You will be hard pressed to find a time when Lexi isn't holding one of her babies. Her vocabulary has really grown this month, and now includes important words like apple, cookie and ice cream. Alexis has also become quite the little water bug now that the temperatures have risen. She is happy to go underwater and knows to keep her eyes and mouth shut in the process.



### Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela had the full month of January off of school. Eager to get back to school, Kaela has to bide her time until school begins again.

Kaela enjoys putting a 100 piece puzzle together that she got from her aunt Jill. It's not just any puzzle, though. It's a *Fancy Nancy* puzzle, and that makes all the difference!

Kaela's big accomplishment this month has been to put her face in the water when swimming. With the help of some swim goggles, (pink of course!) she has really taken to swimming.

### Melia Madelyn Baker

Melia loves to spend her time with her friends—Kaela, Alexis and Titus. She is definitely a ham, making funny faces at mealtimes, playing silly games and just doing anything she can for a laugh.

Melia loves to pretend. As of late she has a doll she named, "baby Daddy". She loves to play with her dolls and push them in the stroller around the house and on the veranda. She is happy to play with friends or just by herself.



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

### **Mission Vanuatu Team**



**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)