



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:

- Over 100 gather in Vila for fellowship
- Meet the first TBS graduate
- TBS begins in Epau village

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Milestones

By Aaron Baker

Milestones are important in life. They can mark a stepping stone in a career, an achievement, or shift in direction in one's life. Milestones are to be recognized and remembered. They are found along the roads of life to show us where we once were and how far we have come, whether good or bad.

February 21st marked a huge milestone for the church in Vanuatu. Over 100 Christians gathered in Port Vila for the first ever (to our knowledge) Efate island fellowship. Christians from Etas, Eton, Epau, and Paunangisu gathered in Port Vila to witness three events: the fellowshipping of Christians, a reconciliation, and Truth Bible School graduation.

Fellowshipping of Christians

Any time Christians gather together for worship is truly a wonderful time. Often in Vanuatu, congregations are small (averaging 10-15 Christians), which can lead to apathy and a "woe is me" mindset. To prevent this, all congregations of the Lord's church on Efate island gathered together in Vila to be strengthened, encouraged and built up through fellowship. It is amazing how much good it does to see such a large gathering of Christians in one location.

It reminds one that they are not alone in their walk with Christ.

A Reconciliation

Last month, our team was able to meet with three families and resolve some long-standing differences and problems. These problems were serious in that they were preventing the body of Christ from being truly united in Port Vila.

Having all the churches of Efate gathered together was the perfect platform to present a united front and show everyone that our team and these three families are committed to working together for the cause of Christ.

TBS Graduation

More about this is written on the next page...but it was wonderful for over 100 people to witness Patrick Kassou graduating from the 2 year TBS program. Many in attendance had taken classes with Patrick and it was wonderful for them to witness Patrick being charged with working to share the Gospel with the lost souls in Vanuatu.

We hope to have more of these all-Efate island gatherings in the future as it is a wonderful time to see one's brothers and sisters in Christ.



Below: A visitor to Pikinini Bible Klab (PBK), Lilly shows off her craft. Learning about Noah's ark is fun! The kids have songs, crafts and games to reinforce the lessons learned from the Bible.



Below: Salome leads the kids in songs at this month's PBK program. What a crowd!



Below: Having fun is great, but the kids sure get hungry! Taking a break for snack time are Dagivu, Kaela, Selina and Kidwel.



First TBS Graduate

Matthew 28:19, 20a *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*

It may take days, weeks, months and even years to teach someone the Gospel of Christ. However, it takes a lifetime to learn how to "observe all" that Jesus had commanded. It was to fulfill Jesus' words that our mission team decided to begin the Truth Bible School (TBS) in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

TBS began in 2008 with Eric, Mike and I rotating as teachers to students matriculating from Port Vila and Etas. Our plan was to conduct two TBS classes each Tuesday and Thursday evening from 6-8pm. Each class would last for six weeks, with there being four quarters of classes in one year. If a student attended all available classes, they would have received 192 hours worth of Bible instruction. Patrick Kassou is one such student.

Living and working on a farm 40 minutes outside of Port Vila, Patrick would have to commute each Tuesday and Thursday evening into Port Vila to attend classes. At nearly every class session, Patrick would bring his wife, Ruth, as well as his daughter, Marie. If one were to add up all the time Patrick spent taking TBS classes, commuting, doing homework, in addition to his work schedule, the hours invested by Patrick to learn the

Bible would be impressive.

For the two years over which TBS classes were offered, Patrick attended and passed all classes. In light of how many "preacher students" graduate yearly in the U.S.A., this may seem like a small drop in the bucket. However, Patrick was the only student in Vanuatu that committed himself to this level of work and achievement over 2008-9.

On February 21st, 2009 the Port Vila congregation recognized Patrick's efforts as he graduated from the Truth Bible School program. With nearly 100 people present from over 6 different congregations of the Lord's church, Patrick's hard work and commitment to learning the Word of God was applauded.

Patrick currently has a full time job working on a farm, but will put his knowledge of the Word to use in studying with others. Able to speak French, Bislama, as well as, Tanna's White Sands language, Patrick is going to do his best for the Lord in trying to teach the lost about Christ, and teach Christians to "observe all" that Christ commanded.



Truth Bible School – Epau Village

By Mike Olson

Our two year school, Trutok Baebol Skul (TBS), finished in Port Vila at the end of last year, but we continue to run the classes in Epau village. This has proven to be beneficial for the members since coming to Port Vila for the classes was too costly and too difficult. The current format is to pick up members on Saturday mornings in Eton village on the way to Epau and use the Epau building for the classes. Classes run on Saturdays for six weeks a term and two hours a session. There are 13-15 students per week. The present course is a study of the Old and New Covenants. Church leaders like Arthur Kalokul and Eddie Karris have help TBS grow in the villages.

The mission of TBS from the beginning was to educate and strengthen the brethren in Vanuatu to a degree that they had not received before. There have been bi-annual visits to Vanuatu by missionaries and

teachers in the past, but no continual process has been available for many years before our arrival. God has given us the opportunity to teach these classes and build up the brethren because of the generosity of many Christians. Transporting all the students for every class is costly, and when you add in notebooks, paper, copies, and pens, the price goes even higher. No matter what the monetary cost, TBS classes have been the most effective method for giving the brethren and even non Christians the truth of God's word. On top of all this, TBS has given the missionaries a chance to expand their own studies and knowledge of the Scriptures. Please continue to pray for the school.



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 learned to sing his ABC's this month, and continues to work on counting and colors too. After memorizing Ephesians 6:1 in January, Titus started learning to put it into practice in February. He has begun helping mommy around the house with dishes and laundry, and enjoys going to town with dad to pay bills and run errands (especially if we get to ride a bus home).



Alexis Lynae Brandell

Alexis' vocabulary really blossomed this month, and it seems she says new words every day. Lexi especially enjoys visiting Christian women, so much so that she cries every time they depart. Her favorite songs during our family Bible time are "Soon and Very Soon" and "Jesus Gave Us PawPaw." One of mom and dad's focuses for February with Lexi was proper conduct during worship, and she is performing spectacularly.



Kaela Sue Baker

Kaela was thrilled this month for school to begin. Kaela is now in 1st grade! She will assure you that only BIG girls get to go to 1st grade, that's why Melia still stays home—she's still little. Kaela loves practicing her reading, playing with friends and continuing to take ballet lessons.

Kaela has also done a great job inviting lots of friends to come to our monthly PBK lessons in Vila for the kids.



Melia Madelyn Baker

Trying to stay cool in the hot season is a chore. Melia was happy when Dad inflated a swimming pool and filled it with water. Melia practiced "going under", which in her book means, "putting my mouth and nose in the water".

Melia loves to copy Kaela and insists each night that we say prayers for Kaela. She really looks up to her big sis!

Melia also loves to sit by mommy at the table and open the Bible and pretend to read and tell stories. Off to a great start!



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Address Correction Requested

Check us out on the web!

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)