



# Mission Vanuatu Minutes

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

## A Fruitful Trip

By Eric Brandell

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### Special points of interest:

- First ever Friends and Family day held in Vila
- 4 conversions in Malekula strengthens church

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The aim was threefold for my most recent two-week trip to Malekula: edify Alsen (the only member of the Lord's church on the island, who has been faithfully worshiping by himself since his conversion in October 2009), conduct nightly evangelistic studies, and take a trip to the south part of Malekula (a 20 minute flight from north to south) to study with a Bible Correspondence Course student who has made numerous requests that we come visit him.

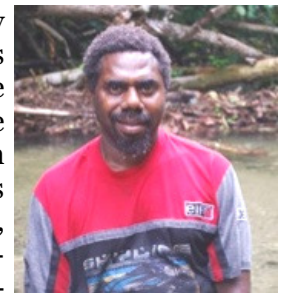
I had previously given Alsen seven lessons to study, suggesting that he be prepared to teach them to me during my next visit. We spent one to two hours per day going over those lessons. We set up a system where I taught lesson 1 the first day, and he taught lesson 1 to me the following day, after which I taught him lesson 2. He taught me lesson 2 the next day, and I taught him lesson 3, and so on until we completed all seven. I was encouraged by Alsen's desire to learn the material and present it effectively. I would often see him reading through the outline during the day, with his Bible open, studying diligently through each passage. By the end of our 12 days together, I really felt like he had a good grasp of these basic lessons, and encouraged him that he was now capable of teaching them to others.

Another highlight of the trip was baptizing three more souls into Christ. **Julie** (below) is the 21-year-old daughter of Alsen's first-born sister, and lives in Wiaru Village. After worship the first Sunday I was there she



asked to be baptized. Alsen and I spent a couple of hours studying with her about the commitment she was making to put Christ as her Lord. She had many "costs" to consider, such as being the only Christian in her village, leaving her parents' religion (with whom she still lives), worshiping in spirit and truth by herself each week, carefully considering whom she will marry, etc. Alsen did a good job encouraging her and providing insight from his own experiences. Julie was undeterred by these obstacles and was baptized into Christ. Alsen and I made the two hour trek up to her village the following Monday, so that we could have one more study session with her before I left, and also so that I could see where she lives. Her parents have shown interest in the truth, and I hope to be able to conduct studies there in August.

I first met **Williamson** (below) during my third trip. He was one of the people who witnessed the Presbyterian Church leaders questioning Alsen, Flexon and I in December. He commented back then on his appreciation of our stand for the truth. My theme for the evening studies was Bible baptism, and after two lessons Williamson approached me and said that he was ready to act out what we had been studying from God's word. He was willing to make a bold step of giving up a very lucrative kava wholesale business, which he knew was not a profession a Christian should be associated with. His wife began attending the studies as well, and I believe she will be converted soon.



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**Below:** Jean Claude is all smiles as he is glad to be a member of Christ's church. He wants to do his best to follow God's Word in his life.



(Continued from page 1)

**Jean Claude** is one of Alsen's uncles, and he has attended almost every study I have conducted in the village. He is quite knowledgeable of Scripture, and served as an elder in the Presbyterian Reformed Church for several years. He is another great example of an honest heart seeking the truth. Though he knew his decision would cause turmoil with his family and his denomination, he did not allow this to prevent him from obeying God's word. He has already had to defend his decision before the PRC "pastor" and "elder". His wife is also a good Bible student, and I expect her to obey the gospel in time.

The only negative to the trip was that my stop in the south was cancelled (the plane could not land because the recent

heavy rains left the grass air strip under water). I was very disappointed to miss out on this opportunity, but Mike was already planning a followup trip in May. You can be praying for Aiel Massing and his family in southwest Malekula.

**Below:** Alsen, Williamson and Jean Claude are working together to establish and grow the church in their remote village of Tulwei, on the island of Malekula.



## Paving the Way

By Aaron Baker

**A** campaign group from the USA will be in Vanuatu for two weeks in April. We will work on both the islands of Efate (where we live) and Tanna.

Unfortunately, in planning work for campaign groups, often one cannot just "call ahead" and arrange everything by phone. Many times there is no cell phone coverage in remote villages in the bush and so this month I had to go and "pave the way" for the campaign group.

In order to preach and teach in villages, we must get permission from the chief of the village. When the chief has no phone, this can be difficult. I went for three days to talk with the chief and discuss our plan of teaching and preaching in the villages of Loun (pronounced Low-oon) and Lorakau (Lor-A-Cow).

When meeting with the chief, I would usually take some sort of gift, like a yam, taro, or manioc root. This is not a bribe, but a "thank you" for his time in listening to my proposal for our studies. Often, this act is foreign to Americans and overseas visitors, but is a necessary part of the custom and culture in Vanuatu. To come preach and teach in a village without the chief's permission would be frowned upon and an insult to the chief.

Sometimes, paving the way for the Gospel takes time, energy and effort before the first Gospel word is spoken. With the Lord's blessings, all will go well with our campaign group from the states next month.

Make sure to stay tuned next month as we outline what happens with the preaching and teaching in Tanna.

**Below:** Friends and Family day in March was well attended. Visitors had a chance to pick up tracts and info about the church at a newly decorated display table.



## Friends and Family Day

By Aaron Baker

In an effort to reach out to the community, the Port Vila congregation held its first ever Friends and Family day. The goal was to encourage members of the church to invite their friends and family to come and see what Christ's church is all about.

Worship services were well attended and an evangelistic lesson was presented by Shem Gabriel on March 7th. Following services we had a fellowship meal as a time to spend time getting to know one another. Kids and adults alike enjoyed friendly competition with a few games of volleyball.

Tracts, Bible Correspondence Courses and bulletin boards were all available to many visitors who truly wanted to know more about the church. It is always interesting to see how well Ni-Vanuatu people know each other or are related to each other. It seemed as if

so many of the visitors had so much in common with the members of the church that talking about God, Jesus, the church or salvation was an easily discussed topic.

In all, we were very pleased to have our first ever Friends and Family day. Many members did a good job of bringing guests and introducing them to the church. We hope that the members will grow more comfortable with inviting others to come to worship that in the future it will be second nature. It was our first outreach of this kind and prayerfully not our last!



# 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

Construction worker Titus conquered two important feats this month: he now goes "number 2" exclusively in the potty (and without a fight), and he gave up sleeping with his "night-night" blanket. He has also succeeded in paring down his afternoon nap to only one hour, but he almost always wakes up happy, so mom and dad aren't complaining. What a big boy!



### Kaela Sue Baker

First grade is a lot of hard work! Kaela's first grade class had a swimming carnival in March and all the kids gathered at the pool to show off their swimming skills and have lots of fun. In one race, Kaela came in 1st! Kaela was so excited to practice her swimming, and even more excited that Mom and Dad were there to see her big accomplishment.



### Alexis Lynae Brandell

Happy Birthday Lexi-girl! Can you be 2 years old already?!? Alexis is a happy little girl. She was in hog-heaven this month since baby Nila and Salome (two of her faaaaavorite people) spent lots of time at the house while dad was in Malekula. She now sits quietly in mom's lap throughout the entirety of worship, and enjoyed going to Pikinini Baebol Klab this month.



### Melia Madelyn Baker

Speaking of swimming, Melia loves to copy her big sister. Melia borrowed Kaela's back bubble (swimming aid) and Daddy's goggles, to practice her swimming around the house. For this girl, no water was needed as her imagination took control!

Melia continues to talk all the time as most two year olds do. She is still working on getting the hang of potty training, but we are improving daily.



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**Check us out on the web!**

[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)