



## *Mary Herman ~ Missionary Teacher*

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**April 21, 2012**

Greetings from Vanuatu!

The people of Vanuatu are very proud people and make the best of the situation in which they find themselves, but life is hard for most. There is little stability in the government, justice and equity are foreign concepts - like many 3rd world countries. It is an education in itself to be here and learn their customs.

Tomorrow, I finish up a Christian School Seminar for Grace Baptist School in Vanuatu. This is a blessing to me as I get to do something so close to my heart - Christian Education. One of the men in the church teaches at that college and brought 30 students on Wednesday AM. They have a free AM tomorrow, so 28 of the 30 signed up to return. We are going to work with them on how to teach reading and the language arts. I wanted to empower the teachers here more, so they are participating. I will teach a section and they will demonstrate how they do sight words or phonics in their classrooms. Then they will take groups to their classrooms to show them materials and share with them more. We are praying that some will then choose to return in free time to observe.

Two reasons for wanting them to return, most do not know the Lord. Second, the teaching here is primarily done by people who have no clue. They never are taught how to teach. Yesterday, they were flabbergasted to learn some practical things they could use. They said, "We have never been taught these things before and in this way before." Then other students went to their prof and asked why they were not invited. So, we are unsure how many will show up tomorrow. If there are more than the extra 28, we will simply print more materials and include them.

The public schools are the poorest excuse for education one can imagine. Many have only a roof held up by 4 poles. Some are concrete block building shells with crude tables and maybe no chairs. Few if any text books are furnished. There is no place to store books to keep them dry or from molding. A few years back, basically all the prepared teachers were fired because of a political change and anyone who wanted to was put into the classrooms. Some are very abusive and most have little of an idea how to teach and have few materials to use. If work is to be done, it must be written on the chalkboard and copied - if there is chalk and if the kids have paper to copy it down. So, only self-motivated children learn anything. Few people under the age of 30 can read well enough to be called literate. Only those whose parents worked with them or who were smart enough to figure it out on their own. Pretty sad.

The Spores came here as missionaries with a determination to never start a school. Some church members came to them to ask for help in learning to read so they could read their Bibles. Lynn taught them to read. Then a committee came to them saying, "Pastor, what about our children? Do not they need to read God's Word as well?" A small Christian school budded and has grown to 167 students through level 8. They are adding one grade each year. Through personally doing much of the labor,

there is a beautiful facility that serves as a church and a school. There are enough classrooms now to accommodate 13 levels - K-12. The Spores were trained as master teachers prior to being called into missions service. Their son-in-law is a graduate of computer science and can do anything with computers, their daughter is a math person, Steve has science and social studies training and they have trained every teacher in the school. No one comes prepared to teach, they must be trained and then they help another teacher for a time before getting a class as they are ready.

Just some thoughts on the journey.

The views are wonderful, the rain is frequent and hard, the sun is hot, and I am enjoying my time in the tropics and with the Spores. :-) I must admit that the heat here is really sapping me. It is so humid. It had rained over 40 CM in the last week. That is over 1 meter of water falling from the sky. Cyclone time coming very late. As you can imagine, roads are washed out, mud and puddles are everywhere. Some puddles go far beyond the norm - maybe a water buffalo could be buried in them. :-) Fortunately, the Toyota just keeps trudging along. It takes a 4X4 to just make it up the rutted hills.

I began teaching today. In addition to the faculty of the Christian school, there were 30 students from the local college in the seminars today. The lessons were on motivation to teach, being a godly example to children, and making a difference in lives.. They really soaked it up and when the van came to take them back, many were not ready to leave. Some refused to go in the first van and waited for the second. 28 of the 30 have signed up to come again Friday as they have no morning class. So, we are planning a time of teaching them how to teach reading - the teachers are going to do some demonstrations. Tonight at church, the college prof's wife told others were unhappy they did not get to come as they were not in Antone's class, so who knows how many will show up Friday. Good problem!

The public schools here are very poorly equipped and the teachers are not really taught how to teach foundational subject matter. They seemed very excited to have the opportunity to be instructed in methods of teaching reading.

I am here until April 25 then back to New Zealand - a Sunday school seminar the next weekend and the next week the ladies' conference. I am pretty excited about that one as I am teaching on joy from the book of Philippians. My favorite book.

I have 2 prayer requests: Please pray for 2 dear ladies who are fighting breast cancer - Amy and Colleen. Both are going through chemo and Amy still has surgery to come.

Blessings to all of you,

Mary