



# Brandell e-Scr@pbook

*A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu*



We enjoyed celebrating our team's 4th anniversary of arriving in Vanuatu. A nice dinner with no kids is tough to beat! We were reminded of how wonderfully God has blessed us over the past four years, especially with great supporters. Thank you!

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MISSION TRIP TO MAROU VILLAGE

We originally scheduled a four-day mission trip to Marou (Emao Island, just northeast of Efate) to coincide with the campaign group from Colorado's visit. However, due to inclement weather, they were forced to delay their trip by a week. We were "in too deep" to postpone the mission trip, so Titus, Harry (Paunangisu Village),



*From the home-front...*

This month started with Titus and Eric taking a mission trip to Emao Island. It was the first time Titus has been away from home for an extended time. Of course, he was with his daddy and outside, so he was happy. It was mom who had trouble letting her baby go for 4 days! But, it was a great experience for him and it allowed me one on one time with Lexi that I don't usually get. Salome stayed with Lexi and me and we had a marvelous time together.

We thoroughly enjoyed having the campaign group from Colorado. Titus and Lexi loved the constant attention - always having someone to play with! Because the teens were always happy to help with the kids and various chores, I got lots done every day! It was great.

While the group was here, our team had the opportunity to have a week-long class with Wayne, studying the book of Luke. Those classes were the highlight of the campaign for me. I needed the study and encouragement, and have grown as a result of it. It was definitely an uplifting 2 weeks!

Lexi took her first steps this month and Titus is talking up a storm. He says something new every day that makes us laugh!

We love & appreciate you all...

- Shawnda



Aaron, Joshua, Arthur (Epau Village), Mike and I departed for Marou early Thursday morning. Of course everyone was somewhat disappointed that the entire group wasn't able to make it, but we were determined to go ahead with our plans to reach out to the lost.

In the previous weeks I had asked the local Christians to set up some work projects that we could busy ourselves with during the day, since our preaching sessions would be held in the evenings. The New Zealand High Commissioner was scheduled to visit the island a few weeks after us, so the village was busy getting things in order for his visit, and asked us to pitch in. We sat down in the shade overlooking the Pacific and helped the men make 2 meter panels of thatched-roofing, called natangora. They needed about 100 of these panels to replace the roof on the bungalow the dignitary would be sleeping in. The next day we served as mini dump trucks, filling up 80 lb. flour sacks with sand from the beach and dumping them about 60 yards away where it would be used to mix cement for various projects. We enjoyed getting to work side by side with the locals, as it is something we do not normally have the opportunity to do. There is definitely something to be said for spending time together outside the normal times of worship and Bible study. Too, hopefully it showed the entire village that we are interested in them physically as well as spiritually. They seemed appreciative of the work we did, and we all benefited from the fellowship.



The local brethren arranged for us to conduct our Gospel Meeting in the Presbyterian Church building (the Christians meet in a house, which was far too small for these classes). We were grateful for the opportunity to teach the truth! During the first evening session, we all received flower leis (they even tried to give one to Titus, but he was NOT interested), and were officially welcomed to the village by Chief Nobat. Mike led off our teaching by talking about God's plan for the church, emphasizing that God planned the church even prior to creation (Eph 3:9-11). His conclusion was kind, but pointed: God planned for but one church, yet Vanuatu has several. Mike and I have spent many hours in this small village, and we really feel that we have built up enough rapport with the locals there to shoot pretty straight with them. It was evident from the Q&A session that followed the evening lesson that God's word had struck a chord with some. There was a tense moment or two, but Mike handled the situation splendidly, and we came away glad to know that the message had come across. We never take pleasure in convicting people of sin, but know that it is a necessary function of God's word, and we are grateful for every opportunity to present it in love. Before the night was through one questioner, when he had backed himself into a corner with the truth, reacted with a statement that set an unexpected tone for the rest of the weekend, "I wouldn't want to join Christ's church anyway, because the members in this village do not conduct themselves appropriately." It was a stinging rebuke, but one that probably needed to be said.

Aaron taught about "the seed principle" on Friday evening, pointing out various similarities between a seed and the gospel. He concluded by talking about some of the characteristics of Christ's church, which is born out of the pure seed of the gospel. On Saturday, I directed a study focused on the meaning of "unity." Many can see that Christ established His one, true church, but few make the logical conclusions that necessarily follow. While we did not have any conversions during this trip, we believe that several were indeed touched by the lessons, and they are beginning to understand the truth as it relates to the church.



It would seem that the statement made by that visitor on Thursday night really stuck some of the Christians. They called a special meeting and discussed the importance of their influence on the community. Though we have preached and visited about this importance many times, it helped to hear it from an “outsider.” So, not only were the lost taught during this campaign effort, the Christians were convicted as well. God’s word is powerful! Please be praying for Christians and non-Christians alike in Marou Village. We look forward to continued monthly trips to this village to evangelize, edify and equip.

CAMPAIGN GROUP FROM COLORADO

“Better late than never!” Storms in the northeast United States prevented the group from arriving as originally scheduled. We were able to shift things around a bit, and kept busy during their two week stay. They hit the ground running quite literally, as we were out distributing invitations to our Gospel Meeting only hours after their plane landed. I was really encouraged by the fact that seven local Christians showed up to help canvass the neighborhood well. We also advertised the meeting in the newspaper, sent out letters to our Bible Correspondence Course students, and conducted a “Preaching in the Park.”

We had a good number of Christians each night from Vila and Etas for the nightly meetings, and 4-10 visitors each session (Wednesday through Saturday). We had several visitors to worship services the following Sundays, and began holding personal Bible studies with two prospects.

The Gospel Meeting was the main event for the group while in Vanuatu, but they also spent time with Christians in Etas, Epau, Paunangisu and Marou Villages, as well as some much-deserved sight-seeing and recreation. Campaign groups such as this one are always beneficial on a number of different levels. Those who come always seem to grow tremendously, local Christians are edified and strengthened, local non-Christians are taught the truth, and our mission team gets a much-appreciated zap of energy.



***Branson Hartsborn, Wayne Burger, Matt Borgelt, Wes Aspey, Bethany Aspey and Kevin Fennelly on their way from Colorado to Vanuatu.***



***Celebrating 4 years in Vanuatu***



***Preaching and Teaching***



***Making laplap in Epau Village***



***Bible study with Andre***



***Evening Luke study with Wayne***



***Kevin visiting during PITP***

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 TRUTH BIBLE SCHOOL
 

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We were excited to begin a new term of the Bible School here in **Port Vila** this month, our 6th term overall. I am teaching in the first time slot (6 - 7pm), a course on *The Holy Spirit and Miracles*, in which we are investigating what the Holy Spirit does and does not do today. Aaron then teaches from 7:15 - 8:15, a course on *Personal Evangelism*, in which he is providing them with a method we believe they will be able to implement successfully to win souls to Christ.

We have enjoyed good attendance thus far, averaging about 16 students each class period. We were encouraged by the attendance of several new students: Patrick, Roslyne, Josephine and John.

## TRUTOK BAEBOL SKUL

- Port Vila, Vanuatu -

I leave the house each Tuesday and Thursday about 4pm to pick up Patrick, Ruth and Salome at the farm where they live and work. We arrive back in Vila about 5:15, and get the room set

up for class. Aaron leaves the house about 5pm to pick up the students in Vila, drops them off, has a few minutes at home, and then heads back to the building for his class. We arranged for a bus to transport the Etas students to and from classes.

We are quickly nearing the end of this two-year program, and are beginning to brain storm about what will be an effective successor to this ministry. Please be praying for the students and teachers of Truth Bible School.

With the start of the new TBS term, we also started a new course in **Epau Village**. Aaron is teaching a course on *How to Study the Bible* from 8 - 11am every Saturday morning at the church building. We are happy to have four students from Eton Village attending these classes as well.

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 FAMILY UPDATE
 

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It's hard to believe we have been living and working in Vanuatu for 4 years now (as of April 14). In many ways it seems like we've been here forever, but at the same time it seems like we only just arrived. We were glad to have the campaign group here with us to help us celebrate. Wayne and Kevin took us to a nice restaurant in town, and they both talked about the last four years and all the progress they have seen. It was such an encouraging evening. With four years of our initial five year commitment behind us, we are in the midst of planning for the future of the Vanuatu work. We will be contacting all of our supporters soon to let you know more about our thoughts and plans. Lord willing, we will plan to stay an additional couple of years to ensure that our goal for the work is accomplished - that the church is poised to remain strong long after our departure. Your prayers in this regard are much appreciated.

Lexi took her first steps this month, but still hasn't mustered up the courage to really take off yet. We know



it won't be long till she joins the ranks of the fully-mobile ... how crazy the Baker/Brandell house will be four little ones *running* around!

Would you believe that we only watched the movie *Cars 2-3* times this month?!? That's right, Titus has a new favorite. In fact, every morning he walks into our room and wakes us up saying, "watch digger please." He is referring to his new road construction and demolition video. He could literally watch it all day long. Following suit, his new favorite activity is playing in the sandbox with his digger and dumper.

Love and blessings to your family from ours!

