

# Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE BRANDELLS IN VANUATU

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## ✧ Catching Up ✧

*People in the States are always interested in how our furlough trip is going. I usually respond that we are having a great time, "catching up" on all that we've missed over the past 18-20 months. As I looked back at our calendar and photos for April, I was amazed by how much catching up we were able to accomplish in a month. Hope you enjoy this edition...*

## OOOOOOO-OKLAHOMA!

Shortly after our arrival in the States, we were able to attend a High School rendition of the musical, "Oklahoma!" in Denver, where one of our good friends played the lead. This month, we got to experience Oklahoma to its fullest (and several other places as

well). We are blessed in that most of our supporting congregations are in either Colorado or Oklahoma, which means we are able to base our operations with parents. Thus, we enjoyed spending April with my family in Duncan.

### Team Update

The Bakers made a quick trip to California and Denver to pick up some furniture this month. Their family has now temporarily settled in Fort Smith with Cindy's parents. They continue to seek an opportunity to work with a congregation stateside that will allow them to meet their goals and serve the Lord.

We weren't able to hear much from Mike this month, but I did get an email from him stating that he was about to depart Santo for Malekula. This will be his second trip to the island in our absence, and I know the brethren there are very appreciative. They will be studying some Old Testament history topics.

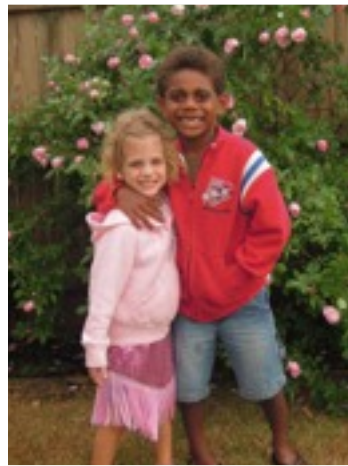
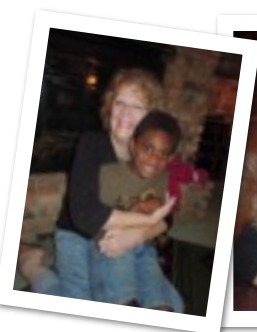
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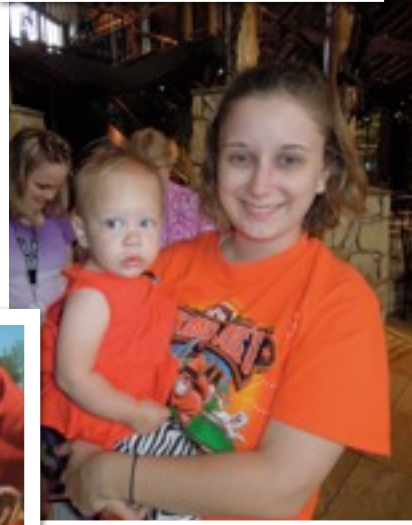
Both Shawnda and I grew up in Duncan, so it is great to be back and see many long-time friends, especially within the church. We visited the Chisholm Trail and Eastside congregations on consecutive Sundays, and had a great response at each. In fact, we had a seven year old see our presentation for the first time who decided to forgo birthday presents at her upcoming birthday party and requested that her guests instead donate gifts to the kids in Tulwei Village - how cool is that! It's a reminder that you never know who's listening, or what impact you will have. The week between those two weekends was travel-filled. I surprised Shawnda with a trip to New York City, primarily to see Disney's new musical, "Newsies" - an adaptation of one of her favorite childhood movies. We had a great time together. From New York we flew to Dallas to meet up with my entire family (mom and dad with Titus and Alexis, sisters, and brother and family). This was the only time the whole family was able to spend together, and it was lots of fun.

After that we spent almost a week in Tulsa, visiting the 29th and Yale congregation and other friends in the area. Tulsa is one of our many "homes" and we had a great time catching up with several there. From Tulsa we traveled to Searcy, Arkansas, where we visited long-time friends, Ben and Tara Bruner. It was great to spend time with them and their kids: Kate and Hudson. I sat in on Ben's anatomy and physiology class at Harding (he's the professor), and boy am I glad I'm not taking the final they were prepping for! We enjoyed lots of outside time with them. We worshiped at the Sylvan Hills congregation in Little Rock that Sunday, where Greg Clark preaches. He was instrumental in our going to Bear Valley Bible Institute, and I interned under him one summer. It was great to see him and Carol, and also their son Zack (Titus and Lexi loved spending the afternoon with him!). Then it was a quick overnight trip through Ft. Smith, AR where we spent the evening with the Bakers, the Dietz' (Cindy's parents), and the Itens. We had a cookout and shared lots of laughs. It was sad to say our final goodbye to the Bakers. We have been either going through school or working with them for the past 10 years. It will be so different to go back to Vanuatu knowing that they are staying here in the States. We'll miss living & working side by side with them.

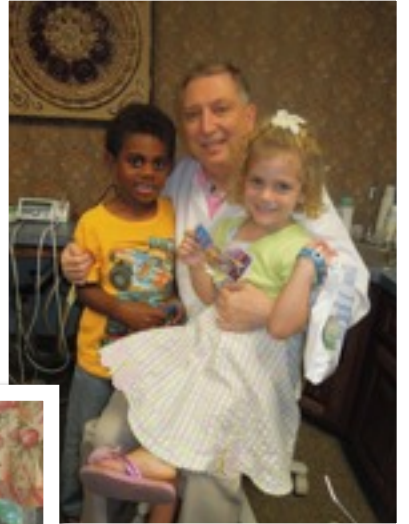
We continue to enjoy our furlough, mostly because of the wonderful people with whom we are able to spend time. We are grateful for your continued interest in and support of our work. We are scheduled to return to Vanuatu on May 20, and will send our next monthly update from there. We have had a great time in the States, but are really looking forward to going back.











LOVED  
spending time  
with our  
family and  
friends in  
Oklahoma &  
Arkansas this  
month.





