

# Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE BRANDELLS IN VANUATU

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## Team Update

The Bakers returned to the South Tanna village of Yatekun this month, and it proved to be a fruitful trip. The church was planted in this village as three souls obeyed the gospel by being baptized into Christ. Please be praying for these new Christians, that their faith would be strong and that their lights will shine brightly in their community.

Mike continued to reach out to the locals in Santo this month, and came back into contact with a Christian that was baptized back in 2003. He and his family are now worshipping with the church in Luganville. Mike spent much of his time this month preparing to teach a two-week course in Ambae next month on 1 and 2 Thessalonians.



## ✧ Home Away From Home ✧

*Malekula really has become a home to our family. We were all looking forward to returning to Tulwei this month, and we settled in quickly for this, our third stint in the village. We continue to enjoy both living and working amongst our brethren.*

### BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS

After the “olbaot” month we reported in our last edition, it was nice to get back into the swing of things in Malekula this month.

#### AROUND THE HOUSE

We’re never quite sure what to expect when we return to our house in the village. Spider webs, dust and chicken poo are a given, but we always have to wonder if there will be water damage, rats, squatters ... who knows what! Getting things back in running order always takes us a few days. Thankfully, the kids feel so at home in the village now that they can go and visit friends while mom and dad unpack our lives.

Each time we leave the village for our time in Vila, we have to remove the solar panels from the roof, nail up the long-drop toilet door, move all my tool boxes into the house, stack all our mattresses and wrap them in a tarp, and put all our clothing, towels and bedsheets into Rubbermaid containers. All that has to be



undone as soon as possible upon our arrival. We also have to unpack our bags and food cartons, and start filtering water.

New to the home scene this month are two exciting additions: a permanent outdoor shower and a (drum-roll, please)... gas-powered refrigerator - those of you who keep up with us through our blog already knew about the latter. Shawnda's dad helped me prep the shower (hardwood posts and treated plywood panels) in Vila, and I then assembled it here over a couple of days. I poured two small slabs of concrete for the flooring (with a gap in between for the water to run off). The shower replaces our old one that was made of branches and black plastic (installed hurriedly to accommodate all of our June visitors). We really like taking showers under the stars in our new setup. And of course, the refrigerator has drastically changed our standard of living. Most notably, we are able to have fresh meat on a daily basis (which not only tastes much better and is healthier, but is also significantly cheaper than tinned meat). Cold drinks are also a blessing!

Last but not least, we added a cat to our family. Titus and Alexis love the companionship, while mom and dad love the built-in security feature (no more mice!).

#### WITH THE CHURCH

The best part about our village life is definitely the people! We love our brethren and friends here, and feel like we've known them forever. It's amazing how quickly camaraderie is built up when you live in a communal setting.

Our new Bible courses have gone well this month, and we continue to enjoy "perfect attendance" at practically every gathering. I'm teaching a course on marriage on Sunday evenings, and another on recognizing sin on Wednesdays. We picked up where we left off last time with the youth group meetings, now considering the unique attributes of the New Covenant. We enjoyed a good amount of visiting youth to these meetings this month.

New for this visit, we started a "movie night" with a view towards community outreach. We are watching the Gospel of John every Friday night, wherein the biblical text is acted out with no additional commentary. After watching three chapters worth of video, I teach on the

main points from those chapters. We haven't had as many visitors as I had hoped (average 1 or 2 adults), but the Christians seem to be enjoying the study and the additional time together. It is a neat way to study through the book.

I was also very encouraged this month when Alsen requested that he and I begin studying the Bible together each Monday and Saturday night. His requested topics were "how to preach" and "leadership." I very much appreciate his diligence and desire!

The brethren and I also spent a day prepping the ground under our new meeting place for concrete. The majority of our time was spent digging out a huge coconut tree stump. It was quite an undertaking, but in the end man conquered wood. We also removed a decent amount of earth in order to level out the ground. Hopefully we'll get the slab poured next month, but at the "Vanuatu-pace" we are currently invoking, by the end of the year might be a better estimate :o).

#### THE FAMILY

We continue to appreciate the amount of time our schedule allows us to spend together as a family. Almost everything we do, we do together.

Titus' big "first" this month was losing his first tooth ... AND his second a week later! He was very excited to receive some money under his pillow, as it was the first time he had really ever had money of his own (at least that he remembers). It was a Sunday morning, and he exclaimed, "Dad, I can put this in the collection plate at worship today!" Which is just what he did.

Alexis' big "first" this month was her first ring worm! Unfortunately all three of her pairs of shoes were giving her blisters, so she spent most of the month walking around bare foot. We're armed with anti-fungal cream that should do the trick.

Both kids really blossomed this month in regard to Bislama. Neither of them had really shown much interest in the past, but both have started using it exclusively with the locals. They certainly haven't mastered it, but they are trying hard. We are so proud of them, and hope that perhaps they will even venture out into the regional "Big Nambas" language as well.



***New shower***

*Sometimes utilized with a bucket of water and a cup, or with a camp-shower hung from the wall. Nothing refreshes like a cool shower under the open sky.*



***Movie night advert***



***Above:***

*Working on the ground under the church building*

***Left:***

*Explaining kick-ball to the youth*



***Enjoying nangaes season***

*The nangaes is encased in a hard shell and then a thick skin. It has to be pounded with a rock to open. It's hard work, but the almond-like nut tastes great.*



**AUGUST BLOG-POSTS**

**Looking forward**

*Geared up and ready to go, read about our plans for our upcoming return to Malekula.*

*[8/2/11]*

**Technical difficulties**

*Why aren't we blogging?!? Internet's been out in town for a month.*

*[8/17/11]*

**Fridays still fun**

*Friday is usually a favorite day of the week for everyone. See why it still is for us.*

*[8/19/11]*

**Unexpected blessings**

*Read about ways God is helping providentially.*

*[8/24/11]*

**Groove or rut?**

*What's the difference? Are you in one? ... or the other?*

*[8/30/11]*