



Brandell e-Scr@pbook



We were blessed with many great experiences in the month of December. We welcome you to share in our holiday joy..

WORK UPDATE

December and January are traditionally a little slower on the work front because of the holidays (students' summer break also falls during this time). People are busy getting ready to spend the holidays with their families, with many traveling back to their home villages.

I began what will prove to be a big undertaking this month. One of the dilemmas we experience here involves congregational singing. Every congregation has a healthy supply of hymn books from the States, but many locals have little or no knowledge of the English language. There are a few copies of a songbook that contains Bislama words a former missionary put together, but they are worn out and occasionally inaccurate. So, I have set out to compile a songbook that will enable the locals to sing songs (tunes) they are familiar with, in their local language. I plan to have around 150 songs, and each one takes about 2 hours to complete (each song has shape-notes and English & Bislama lyrics). I will save it electronically, which means future generations will be able to reproduce it when needed.

I was able to visit the Epau congregation again this month as well. It worked out that the Sunday I was there was the combined worship Sunday with the Eton congregation. In honor of the Christmas holiday, we all had lunch together after our worship. It was great to sit in the cool breeze and share a meal together.

From the home-front...

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We hope you all had a wonderful holiday time with your family and friends. We sure were glad to welcome the Bakers back to Vanuatu this month. Titus has enjoyed playing with Kaela and "talking to" Melia. It's also been nice having our friends from New Zealand here to celebrate the holidays with.

I had a good time decorating the house for Christmas. It's always a little strange decorating with snowmen and mittens and listening to "White Christmas" and "Let it Snow" when it's so terribly hot here! Titus loved the stockings and the lights on the tree.

I went to the doctor again this month and all is well. I gained a lot of weight this last month...but I guess that's to be expected. The baby is growing like he or she should be, so that's all that matters. I'm still feeling great. We're so thankful for a smooth pregnancy thus far. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

We love you
- Shawnda





WARM WISHES



Each time a year ends and a new one begins, it is only natural to consider the prior 12 months and make plans for the coming year. We are most grateful for the many brothers and sisters who have generously supported us and our work in Vanuatu this year. As the work has become more challenging, you have lifted us higher with prayers and encouragement.

2007 was indeed a tumultuous year for us, with lofty highs and a few not-so-wonderful lows. May 23 will forever be a memorable day for our family, as it was the day Titus “officially” became a Brandell. You may recall how difficult a situation the adoption process was, which only made its completion that much sweeter. Titus brought us so much joy that we knew we would be content if we never had another child. But God has already surprised us with another little one (due March 26). We prayed for children for so long, and now those prayers are being answered two-fold!

Those of you who receive, read and reply to our monthly e-Scrapbook regularly are among the most wonderful people in the world. It’s our greatest hope that you and yours will be blessed in the coming year. Please continue to pray for our work together here in Vanuatu. Thanks for letting God use you in this way!

WELCOME HOME

The first “holiday” we celebrated this month was the much-anticipated return of the Bakers. After a three month visit to the States for the birth of their second daughter, they arrived in Vanuatu just in time for the hot season. We were all so excited to finally meet Melia Madelyn in person. She took a little time to get adjusted to the time change and the warm (HOT!) temperatures, but is a wonderful little girl. Titus and Kaela picked up where they left off, and are the best of friends. It was a blessing to have our team back together again!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Holiday number two for December was Mike’s birthday. We celebrated with a meal and apple pie. Kaela was delighted to help Uncle Mike open his birthday presents, and Titus enjoyed playing with the wrapping paper afterwards. We appreciate Mike and all that he brings to our team’s dynamic. Happy Birthday, Mike!





MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

We were delighted that some Christians from New Zealand chose to share the holiday season with us in Vanuatu! Antony and Jeanette Raine, along with their two teenage boys, Kevin and Jeremiah, were a welcomed addition to our holiday celebrations. We originally met them shortly after our arrival in 2005, when Antony volunteered to assist the Port Vila congregation raise funds and construct a building for worship and Bible study.

