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A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



Woohoo!! That's the best way to describe our family's vacation to New Zealand this month. We had lots of fun, and owe a big "thank you" to Antony and Jeanette Raine. Enjoy reading about our month...

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 ENJOYING THE BEAUTY OF NEW ZEALAND

Thanks to a special rate on airfares and an invitation from the Raine family, we were able to go and spend a pleasurable 11 days in New Zealand. We enjoyed cool temperatures, fun times, beautiful sights, great food, and wonderful fellowship with Christians in Auckland, Palmerston North, and Wellington.



We had a bit of a "whirlwind tour." Traveling from Auckland in the north to Christchurch in the south, we drove a total of some 14 hours and ferried 3 hours over the 11 day period.

We especially enjoyed opportunities to meet and worship with brethren, some we had met before and several we were meeting for the first time. It was great to get caught up with Trevor

From the home-front...

What a wonderful month for us! We had a fun-filled trip to New Zealand, where we got to spend lots of quality time with some friends there and meet lots of new ones too. We were also able to see some amazing scenery. God's creation is magnificent, and there is no other place on this earth that evidences that like New Zealand. It's such an untouched, natural beauty. We are so thankful that we had the opportunity to go.

Titus' birthday was this month too! I really can't believe that he is 2 years old! I was excited to make his birthday cake...and while it didn't turn out like I had hoped, it was still good. Titus loved the construction theme and it tasted good. We enjoyed celebrating our big boy Titus. We feel so amazingly blessed to have him as our son.

We celebrated Thanksgiving for the first time since moving here. We enjoyed chicken, stuffing, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, rolls, and pumpkin pie. It was delicious. We have **much** to be thankful for!

And, it's official ... Lexi is crawling. Look out mama, the fun has just begun!

We love you all.
 - Shawnda



and Rani as well as the O'Donnell family, whom we first met when they came over to help with the building project in Vila. I was pleased to have the opportunity to preach during the morning assembly in Wellington. The Wellington congregation played a significant role in the construction of the Vila building, as well as having made several one-time contributions to various aspects of the Vanuatu work.

We certainly came back to Vanuatu refreshed, and ready to hit the ground running. December is traditionally a slow month work-wise, but we are looking forward with great anticipation to 2009. Our family's short holiday has certainly been a blessing! Here are a few of the 1,000+ photos from our trip...



MAROU VILLAGE UPDATE

Our team continues to travel to Marou Village every Sunday to encourage the young Christians there. I was able to be there twice this month, accompanied each time by Flexon from Vila. Flexon delivered two great messages, and was a source of encouragement for the Marou brethren.

It was also fun to have the entire family join me on the 23rd of the month. This was the first time for Shawnda, Titus and Lexi to travel to Emao Island. Though the waters

were relatively calm, there was a strong wind which blew enough sea-spray onto us to get us soaked by the time we arrived in Marou. Titus always enjoys trips to the village, because it is such a relaxed atmosphere. He has become well known everywhere we go for being a great hand-shaker. As is Vanuatu's custom, he is quick to shake everyone's hand when they arrive, and again as we all depart.



The Marou congregation continues to progress slowly but surely. One of the Christians is working in New Zealand for

six months, and another has stopped attending worship services to pursue other interests. This means that there are six Christians left in the village who are meeting regularly, in addition to several visitors each week. Some Christians and visitors have begun taking our Bislama Bible Correspondence Courses, which is encouraging. Please continue praying for the church in Marou Village, especially as we near the end of the year, at which time we will reassess the work there and how we can be most beneficial in assisting the brethren there.



LADIES IN ETAS VILLAGE

The ladies in Vila always enjoy visiting with the ladies in Etas. So this month we got to go twice and do just that. The first visit was just four of us from Vila (one of whom was a visitor Cindy is studying the Bible with). We had a great time together laughing, sharing, singing, and of course eating. Some of the ladies suggested we get together again later in the month and go swimming at a place in the bush near Etas. So just a couple of weeks later we headed back to Etas with some food and swimming gear. We hiked about an hour to get to these spectacular waterfalls where we were to swim. I wasn't expecting such a long hike...I literally felt like I was on a backpacking trip, but we were all in skirts and flip flops! We were tired once we reached the waterfalls, so the water felt great. We swam for over an hour and then ate lunch and started

our trek back to the village. It was fun to be with the women in such a laid back environment. We all felt encouraged and tired after a fun day together. - SB



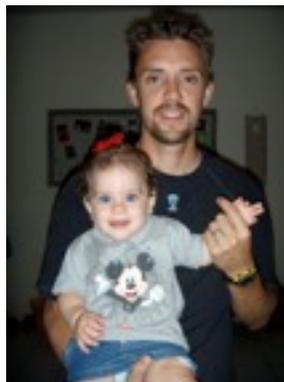
FAMILY UPDATE

Our family enjoyed spending lots of time together this month. One of the highlights was celebrating Titus' 2nd birthday. Our family and team-mates went to a small resort here in town for lunch and playtime. Everyone had fun.

Lexi changed things up significantly at the end of the month, when she took her first official crawl. No doubt that our lives will forever be changed. Titus is already beginning to learn what the future holds in store for him, as Lexi can now get to him and his trucks no matter how far away he goes. Lexi is also able to boast two bottom teeth and a big appetite. She has especially enjoyed her first taste of ice cream, french fries, banana, and birthday cake. Her favorite breakfast is oatmeal with fruit smoothie mixed in. She still takes 3-4 bottles per day, but is no longer nursing. She sleeps like a champ - 10-11 hours per night.

Titus continues to grow by leaps and bounds. He loves saying "look at that" and really seems to enjoy the ability to communicate with others. Titus continues to learn obedience, and we're hoping to make some headway in the potty-training department in the coming months - it's definitely time!! He still loves all things related to construction equipment and the movie *Cars*, which were obvious themes at his birthday party. Even though we're having to endure some hot weather, Titus is grateful that this season brings with it lots of fresh pineapples and raspberries - he thinks he's getting candy!

For the first time since we moved to Vanuatu, our team celebrated Thanksgiving by sharing a (somewhat typical meal together. As we took time to consider all that we have to be thankful for, our many wonderful and generous supporters quickly came to mind. Please know that we are truly grateful for your continued support. We will never know, this side of heaven, what good we've accomplished together for the Lord's kingdom here in Vanuatu. Thanks for caring about the ni-Vanuatu!



A funny story:

While we were taking in some fresh air and a stretch at a rest stop during our trip through New Zealand, a bus of Asian tourists pulled up. As they exited the bus, they all immediately noticed Titus and Lexi nearby.

You would have thought they were world famous child actors, as they all ran over and began asking if they could have their pictures made with the kids. One by one they took turns snapping photos and videos of themselves with the kids. It was hilarious! I guess we can call it our "15 minutes of fame," even if it was in a different language.

