

# Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE BRANDELLS IN VANUATU

email: [brandell@missionvanuatu.com](mailto:brandell@missionvanuatu.com)

blog: [www.missionvanuatu.blogspot.com](http://www.missionvanuatu.blogspot.com)

## ✕ “Home” ✕

*We were “back at home” in Malekula this month, enjoying time with our brethren here. At the same time, we’re looking forward to “returning home” to Vila next month to spend Christmas with our teammates. Too, we are beginning to plan for our “trip home” to the States early next year to visit and report. The old saying is very true: “Home is where the heart is.”*



### Team Update

The Bakers report that their followup trip to Yatukun Village in South Tanna went well this month. Not only were they able to encourage the existing three Christians, but they were also able to teach many others. We rejoice that two were added to the body, as Antione and Ruth were baptized into Christ. Please be praying for this young church, that they will continue to be a light in their community.

Mike returned to the States this month to report, visit family, and be recharged. He no doubt has enjoyed the fellowship, preaching in English, the cool weather, and watching football.

We are all looking forward to being together (one last time?) next month in Vila.



### STUDYING, SOCIALIZING AND CELEBRATING

**STUDYING~** Our previous stint in the village proved to be a bit of a marathon for the brethren, with 2 bible classes, a movie night, Bible club and a youth meeting every week for nine weeks straight, with a four-day gospel meeting thrown in for good measure. Some of the brethren walk 20 minutes one-way to all these meetings (one family doing so with six kids under the age of 10). It was determined that we should tone it down a bit this trip, which has been refreshing.

The brethren requested that we continue to have a weekly movie night, and our five week schedule lent itself nicely to viewing the “Searching for Truth” DVD series (produced by the World Video

Bible School). Since those videos are in English, I decided that it would be best to watch the video on Sunday evening, and then study that same topic on the following Wednesday evening to clarify and reinforce. I printed out study questions for the brethren to complete before coming to class, which turned out to be quite beneficial. We have actually studied most of the topics before, so this month’s effort really seemed to reinforce these core teachings.

Our five week stay also lent itself to studying worship with the youth group. We continue to enjoy a core group of 6 youth and 2-3 visitors every week. With the temperature heating up

significantly this month, we opted for indoor games like Farkel and Spoons. I really feel like we are starting to form strong bonds with these young people, and hope that they will continue to focus on God's word for the rest of their lives.

In Bible club this month, we started memorization program based on Glenn Colley's "Kidding." Each week, after singing and reciting the books of the Bible, we add three more "topics" to our list. The goal is to teach the kids (and the adults, too) where to find stories, people and events in the Bible. For instance, when I say "Noah", they all respond with "Genesis 6." I encourage them to quiz each other throughout the week as often as possible. We will have a list of 18 topics by the end of this trip, and everyone is enjoying the challenge.

Separately and not in concert, the three Christian men here all asked me to begin studying the Bible privately with them during the week. Alsen and I continue to meet once a week to talk about how to preach and prepare sermons. Williamson also asked me to work with him on effective preaching, and he did a very effective job preaching yesterday after only two studies. Jean Claude and I meet twice a week to study basic principles (overview of the Bible, 3 dispensations, how God communicates, etc.) - during the first meeting I teach him, and then in the second meeting he teaches it back to me. This scenario has proven to be very effective for better learning of the material.

Since I had a bit less to prepare for this month, I spent a significant amount of time studying the sabbath day and the Lord's supper. Everywhere I go in Vanuatu, I run into people who are confused about the sabbath. Every time I conduct a Q&A session, I receive questions about

sabbath-keeping. Sabbatarians are a very strong group in the islands, and tend to be very vocal about their beliefs. I find myself answering the same questions everywhere I go, and though the Bible is extremely clear on the issue, the false doctrine of modern-day sabbath keeping runs rampant. In an effort to combat this confusion, especially among our brethren, I have set out to produce a booklet that considers every single use of the word "sabbath(s)" in the Bible, to discuss the context and meaning of all 171 occurrences. I will also spend time refuting several of the proof-texts they misuse from the New Testament to support their error, and will close the study with a consideration of the Lord's day and of Lord's supper-keeping. I have really enjoyed the study thus far, and plan to have it complete in time to have it printed and bound while we are in the States next year.

I spent time on an indepth-study of the Lord's supper at the request of brethren in Vila. A missionary from the States recently moved to Vila and is actively promoting false doctrines regarding the Lord's supper (among other things), and thus causing some problems within the congregation there. He passed out some information that several of the brethren subsequently gave to me, asking me to study through it with them. Though it is a difficult situation, I have been proud that the brethren recognized it as error and that they were offended by it. We sincerely request that you will be praying for that situation to be dealt with in a God-honoring way.

Lastly, I enjoyed spending some time in the books of John and Romans this month. I am excited to begin taking some Master's level courses from the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver. I will be attended two "blitz week" sessions there during our trip back, the first of which will cover these two books.



**SOCIALIZING~** One of the reasons we love village life is the community-aspect of everyday living. Not a single day goes by where we are not both hosting someone at our house and visiting someone else's house. In fact, most days our yard could be confused for a day care center, as we are rarely without at least a few neighborhood visitors. Everyone greets one another as they pass on the dirt road, usually headed to or from the garden. People are always ready and willing to give a helping hand to one in need. It just seems like this is the way things "ought" to be.

As a "payment" for my assistance in setting up a solar panel system for a man in a neighboring village, we received a very large yam and a chicken. And in Malekula, yam and chicken means laplap sorsor (Malekula's own special style of preparing laplap, which involves cooking a whole chicken along with the laplap). We don't have the facilities for laplap preparation at our place, and we would never be able to eat a whole one with just our family anyway. So, we set up a time to partake with members of our village family, Jean Claude and Leisande (whom Titus and Alexis refer to as Abu Daddy and Abu Mommy). I helped Abu Daddy mix and pour concrete while the ladies prepared the feast (it's a fairly labor-intensive meal). We all enjoyed sitting cross-legged on the floor surrounding the laplap, digging in with both hands (no forks or napkins here!).

Several of the local ladies have inquired about learning some new ways of how to cook their local produce ("like the 'white man' Shawnda does"). So, all the ladies gathered at our house one morning for Shawnda to teach them how to make fried rice and pumpkin cake. There was lots of laughing involved, and thus it seemed that everyone had a good time together.

Lastly, we enjoyed taking part in two celebrations surrounding the end of the school year (we are on a calendar-year system in Vanuatu). First was the kindy picnic at the beach. The kids played and ate and played and played. As the only male "sponsor" present, I just acted as lifeguard, and Shawnda got to spend time with several of the local ladies. A few days later, we took part in the official school closing, which was like our "end-of-school assembly" in the States. Our hearts beat proudly as Titus and Alexis were called up to receive their "reports" for the year. I don't know what it is about seeing your child accomplish something, but there's just something about having your children acknowledged for hard work. A village-wide picnic followed the closing ceremony.



*Lexi and friends playing cards under the table*



*Receiving payment, pouring concrete, and plucking a chicken - all in a day's work!*



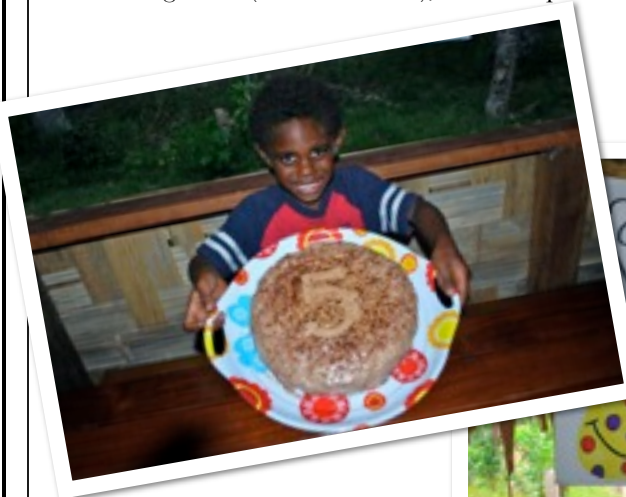
*Shawnda teaching the ladies how to make fried rice and pumpkin cake in the village*



**CELEBRATING~** Last but not least, we all enjoyed celebrating Titus' 5th birthday. Per his (long-time) request, we invited his friend Rensly to spend the night with us. Titus appreciated presents first thing in the morning, which included two matchbox cars, a keychain flashlight, and a blinking magnet.

We celebrated with chicken wings, rice and pineapple for the evening meal (Titus' favorite), and completed the day

with a chocolate cake which Shawnda incredibly made from scratch and cooked over an open fire. As one of her friends remarked on Facebook in response, she is quite the "rock-star" in the village kitchen. Abu Daddy, Abu Mommy, and their two sons also joined us for the meal. After dinner and cake, we enjoyed watching some videos on my laptop of Titus' first 5 years. He also received a celebratory ice cream cone during our trip to town a few days later.



**NOVEMBER BLOG-POSTS**

**Houston, we have a problem**

*Vomit and a missing ship - sounds intriguing, eh?*  
[10/6/11]

**Problem solved**

*An update on our attempt to retrieve our shipment from The Big Sista.*  
[11/17/11]

**It's laplap time**

*Shawnda tells about our laplap sorsor, and includes our favorite village pic ever!*  
[11/29/11]

**Paid in full**

*Read more about my receipt of a chicken and a yam as payment for services rendered.*  
[11/30/11]