



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



In this month's issue...

Work on the building project continues, and we can almost see a light at the end of the tunnel!

Some have communicated some confusion over our adoption situation, so we've taken some time this month to give some details.

I was blessed to once again visit Marou Village on Emao Island,

this month accompanied by a local Christian named Bill [photo]. I also visited Epau Village to study with the Christians there.

We have given an update on our one-on-one Bible studies.

Thanks so much for your continued love and support!

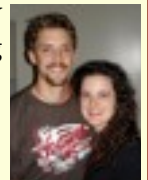
From the home-front...

I have been busy getting ready for the baby. This month we found out that the baby is a boy! So, we are "patiently" awaiting his arrival. I have the room all ready. The clothes, blankets, diapers and bottles are packed and ready to go to the hospital at a moment's notice. Eric and I can hardly wait for our little one to be born. I am reading a lot in my "Your Child's Health" and "What to Expect the First Year" books. Hopefully this time next month I'll be writing this update with a little one in my arms.

The biggest physical change around the house this month was the addition of bars on all of our windows. We felt it was time and the owner agreed. We can now open our windows at night and during the day without worrying about a break-in. This is especially nice now that we are entering our "hot season."

We love you all.

- Shawnda



PROGRESS: PORT VILA BUILDING PROJECT

It really felt like we accomplished a lot this month on the building, probably because most of our work was very visible. We were able to prime the inside and outside of both the main building and the bathrooms, complete the storage room (which means we no longer have to pay rent on a container), and made significant headway on the ceiling. We should complete the ceiling within the first weeks of November, and will then move on the the roof (we are going to put "thatch" on top of the steel to make the building look more Vanuatu-like). Once that's completed we'll begin painting the walls and installing the doors and windows. Won't be too much longer!





ADOPTION UPDATE

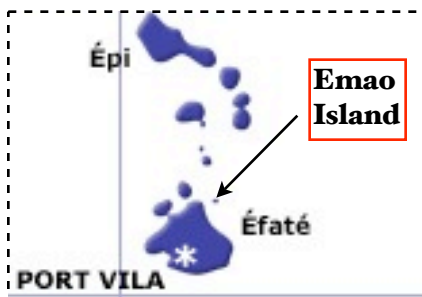


Some have expressed confusion regarding our plans to adopt a local child. That confusion is certainly warranted, and we apologize for keeping you somewhat in the dark. We first announced our desire to adopt late in 2005, noting that we could receive a baby at any time (days, weeks, months, or [gulp] years). We've had a few opportunities that just didn't pan out, and therefore have been rather reluctant to publicize any further apparent opportunities, so as not to sound false alarms. However, we find it quite difficult to contain our present excitement, which means we let clues leak out every once in a while (hence the confusion).

In April we found out that a local Christian was pregnant. At that time she was experiencing various problems that would preclude her from taking on the additional responsibility of raising a child. She was extremely upset by the unwanted pregnancy and the circumstances surrounding it. Thus, she was glad to hear that we were interested in adopting a baby that needed a good Christian home. Since then, we have been in communication with her and her family regarding the possibility of adopting that baby. He (it's a boy!) is due in mid to late November.

In Vanuatu terms, the plans are "definite" and we are waiting on pins and needles for the birth (as are our families). We have gone through lots and lots of prayer, preparation and planning, and believe that we are as ready as we can be. Please be praying for a healthy delivery and a problem-free adoption process (under Vanuatu law, the child will be "ours" within days of his birth, but he will not become a US citizen until two years have passed). If you have any questions or comments, please be sure and communicate them. We will certainly let you know as soon as we find out anything!

MISSION TRIP: MAROU VILLAGE, EMAO ISLAND



In light of a rather lengthy report in last month's scrapbook, I am going to give an abbreviated report on October's trip to Marou. You can read much more and see a few more photos by visiting www.missionvanuatu.com/reports/marou200610.html.

I was accompanied by a Christian from Eton Village named Bill, who has been a Christian for about 8 years. He served as a wonderful coworker - he worked well with the



local Christians (studying, answering questions and leading singing) and served as a great source of companionship during the four day stay.

I was very encouraged by the fact that the local Christians had been faithfully worshipping on their own since our last



visit (they had previously been gathering with a local denomination), as they had committed to do. We had a good number of effective Bible studies with Christians and non-Christians alike during the trip. Most notably, I had the opportunity to conduct a one-on-one study with Edmond. As a result of that time together he was baptized into Christ.

The church continues to grow spiritually, and there are still numerous opportunities to teach and preach in Marou Village. Please continue to pray for these young Christians and our continued efforts there and throughout Vanuatu.

MISSION TRIP: EPAU VILLAGE

I once again traveled to Epau Village for a monthly visit with the Christians there. You will recall that it is about a one and a half hour drive from Vila (depending on the road conditions) and I normally plan to be there the last weekend of every month. Because of various circumstances (our trip to the States, Pacific Islands Bible College courses, and the building project and Vila) I had not been there since April! Of course, I



had been there since then, but my monthly routine was severely out of whack. I was glad to get back into the groove in October. The small house that I normally stay in is now occupied, so I enjoyed having the chance to sleep in my new tent (thanks Coach!).

I decided that the topic for the weekend would be acceptable worship. In conjunction with the topic, Shawnda and I made posters that give some biblical principles relating to each act of worship specified in the New Testament, and hung them in the church building. I was very pleased by the interest and attendance for Saturday's study, during which we talked about giving and singing. I was especially pleased with the questions that were asked after the study (good questions always show that the person was actively listening and is interested). I used the Sunday morning "sermon time" to teach on the Lord's Supper. I was quite surprised on Sunday morning by the collection, which was the equivalent of \$63. My surprise came because the average contribution in Epau is between \$8 and \$10. As it turns out, one of the newer Christians had never been taught about faithful giving and was impacted by our study of that topic the previous evening. He recently began a transport business (taking people and their produce to and from the market in town), and had just received his week's earnings. He very generously shared of those proceeds with the Lord's church. I was so proud of him! Plus, even if you were to subtract out his special offering, the collection was substantially higher than normal. There is no more encouraging act for me and our work than to see a Christian let God's word cause a change in his life.



On Sunday afternoon we studied about preaching and prayer. Throughout each of these studies I emphasized the importance of engaging the heart and mind when worshipping God. Sometimes we forget that going through the motions is not what's pleasing to God. While He certainly expects us to worship "in truth" He also desires that we worship "in spirit" (John 4:24).



I was greatly encouraged by my time in Epau, and am looking forward to November's trip. During that visit, we are scheduled to begin planning for 2007. I have asked the local Christians to be thinking about what they would like to accomplish next year as a congregation. Please be praying for this time of planning and preparation.

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDIES: COMPLETION



Eric and I have been studying with Patrick and Leisava for a few months. Shortly after their conversion they asked Eric to prepare lessons on marriage and family. They weren't happy with this area of their life and wanted God's advice. They have been tremendous students and have applied many of the principles we discussed over the past few months. Their marriage is stronger than ever before and they are teaching their children to respect and obey. It's so encouraging to see how God's word can truly change people lives!

I recently began tutoring Joshua (their oldest son) in reading. He is such a great kid, very smart and good natured. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting back to my "roots" (teaching). Joshua is learning so much and is showing great improvement. As the study with Patrick and Leisava, two of my other weekly studies came to a



natural end this month.

I have been having weekly studies with Leikavei since May. She was baptized in July and we have continued studying since then to help her grow in her faith and have the tools to study on her own. I have enjoyed these studies with Leikavei and will miss the one-on-one time I have had with her. But, I believe that the studies we went through will be beneficial to her future growth as a Christian.

The week after our return from the States this past summer, I went out to see Maybel and Rema. They expressed their desire to study "How to Study the Bible" and wanted to begin studying as soon as possible. We studied "How to study the Bible" for about 6 weeks, after which we began a short series on "The Church." Rema and Maybel are excellent students and their desire to learn and grow as Christians is inspiring. I am sad to see this study come to a close, but we will have other opportunities to study together in the future.



After the last study I told them that if they have any specific questions or topics they wanted to study in the future, that we could do that. Maybel has asked that after a break we study the book of Revelation. I've got lots of studying to do for that one!



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Flexon and Fiona invited us over to eat a special "kaka" (meal/food). Fiona made laplap: Malekula style. We have to admit it is one of the best varieties. Kaela is not too keen on laplap (which is a little surprising since she loved it when she was younger). But, the rest of us enjoyed the meal and ate our fair share. Flexon and Fiona are a special Christian couple. They have grown so much over the past year and are such an important part of the church here in Vila. We enjoyed this evening of fellowship at their home.