



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



What a difference a month makes! We feel that we are finally settled back into our Vanuatu-life, and Titus is maturing by leaps and bounds, with everyday bringing new and exciting surprises. We hope you enjoy reading and seeing how we spent our time in September.

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PROGRESS IS VISIBLE IN PORT VILA

After a 10 month hiatus, we're back at work on the grounds of the church in the capital city. And as Mike said to me one day in early September, "it sure is nice to see progress again." It was agreed by the men of the congregation that it was indeed time to move ahead. We all felt as though we had done all that was possible, and believed we could no longer allow problems to hinder the church and her work.



The toilet, seen through the iron security gate.

Our first priority has been to complete the bathrooms, which are a separate building measuring approximately 12x15 feet, and encompass two toilet rooms, a wash room and a general storage area. Work included painting interior walls & floor, building and hanging two doors, the construction of three security-gates, running water to the building, the

From the home-front...

It's been another nice month in the Brandell home. Titus is growing and changing so much. He's really getting into everything and keeps me on my toes. He loves his Baby Einstein videos and reading books. He's saying a few words now and standing for a few seconds at a time on his own. Won't be long now till he's walking...then running!

I am still feeling really well. I am so thankful for a smooth pregnancy. We went for our first ultrasound...it was amazing. I'm also thankful to find a doctor whom we both like.

This month we have had nice weather. The mornings and evenings have been so cool that I've needed lightweight pants at times! We've really enjoyed it.

I have several women who come visit fairly regularly. I enjoy the time I get to spend visiting with them and encouraging them in their Christian faith.

I finally started keeping a journal again this month, so that will be available on the website soon.



We love you-
Shawnda



completion of the septic tanks, and installation of toilets & sinks. And the good news is, we were able to complete it all in September! All that remains is painting the exterior walls, which should be completed in October.

We were proud of Claude, who took it upon himself to oversee the construction and installation of the security gates (necessary because the storage and wash room have already been broken into). The job was bigger than any of our personal abilities, and we were pleased that Claude took care of this process from start to finish, without really even being asked. He continues to show great potential for leadership in the church.



Patrick Jacob, currently helping out in a big way with the building project.



The Vila congregation enjoying the monthly fellowship meal, this month hosted by Mike at his house.

Another positive note was the fact that Patrick, a builder/carpenter by trade, was able to lend us his expertise on his days off. His assistance has been invaluable, and we are grateful for his assistance. Patrick and his wife were converted in early 2006, but have only sporadically attended worship this year. We hope that this opportunity to become reacquainted as we work together will bring him and his family back into the fold. Unfortunately, they have also been negatively-pressured by some, and thus discouraged from worshipping regularly. Please be praying for Patrick and his family, as well as the success of the building project in Port Vila. We continue to believe that a completed building will be a very valuable tool as we continue to seek to spread the word of God in Port Vila.

SUNDAY IN EPAU VILLAGE

Our family made the 1 hour 15 minute trip to Epau on the third Sunday of the month. The trip itself proved to be eventful, with very rough roads (not too good on the ol' pregnant belly) and the depletion of our fuel on the way back home (our gas gauge doesn't function). Besides those minor setbacks, the day was enjoyable. The Christians there have asked me to come and preach once a month. This month I preached a sermon on The Rich Young Ruler, emphasizing the importance of making Jesus number one in our lives. This is a very important concept to be discussed in Vanuatu, because religion is such a part of the culture, which means that everyone is at least a little religious. It's important to remember that "a little religion" is not Christianity - instead, Jesus seeks 100% devotion to Him. I also tried to

emphasize that the young ruler of the narrative possessed several positive characteristics, and yet allowed money to retain the most prominent position in his heart. I discussed how even "good" things (family, work, money) can become a hindrance.



After worship, we enjoyed a time of food and fellowship together. I was prepared to present a lesson on leading the Lord's supper in the afternoon, but due to some miscommunications we will wait and study that topic together next month. I was glad to get back into a routine of visiting the brethren in Epau, as several things had hindered

those visits in the recent past. The congregation there has a strong core membership, and I look forward to continuing to work together with them.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

As we near the end of another calendar year, we wanted to take the time to communicate some things on the financial side of our work. First of all, we want to express our heart-felt thanks for the continued financial support so many brethren and friends are providing. We know that many of you are giving sacrificially because you believe in us and the work we are committed to. It's almost cliché, but true nonetheless: we simply couldn't do it without you! Please know that we appreciate your generosity, and (more importantly) know that the Lord does as well. In return for your continued generous support, we hope that you feel appreciated and well-informed. As always, never hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments!

*...what you have sent,
a fragrant aroma, an
acceptable sacrifice,
well-pleasing to God*
(Philippians 4:18)



Many of you, both individuals and congregations, will be re-evaluating your budgets for 2008 in the coming weeks, and we would like to request that you keep us informed regarding your plans to continue support next year. As we mentioned in our presentation during our most recent furlough trip, we are in need of some additional monthly financial support as well. This is due to several factors, including a growing family, the natural growth of our work, general inflation of prices (especially insurance), and a fairly significant decrease in the value of the US dollar in relation to the Vanuatu vatu this year (a drop of about 10% since our arrival 2+ years ago). Several new congregations and individuals have expressed interest in supporting the work. We are in need of approximately \$400 per month. If we can assist you in making an informed decision regarding financially supporting our family in this work, please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Lastly, some have inquired about our plan to purchase a more-reliable vehicle, which was also mentioned during our presentation. A special thanks to those who have contributed funds specifically for this need. Our truck has been on the market for about three weeks now. There have several interested parties, but no takers yet. Vanuatu is a unique market, and we know that we are going to have to find just the right purchaser. We are doing our best to be patient! Please be praying that the truck will sell soon. Once sold, we will actively begin looking for another vehicle to purchase. Ideally, we would like to raise another \$3,000-\$4,000 for this upgrade. If you are able to help us in this, please let us know as soon as possible.



TITUS: THE ACTIVE ONE

Titus continues to bring more joy into our lives each day. He is pulling up on the furniture and walls now without any problem, and even stands up on his own for a few seconds, but quickly decides that he is too frightened to stay up for long. He enjoys watching videos such as Baby Einstein and Disney Sing-A-Longs. We are grateful that Titus is sleeping through the night regularly now, usually for 10 hours...what a blessing!! One of his favorite activities is to pull all of the books off of his bookshelf, and then sit down and read them all. It is so cute to see him turning the pages, "talking," and laughing with each one.



Titus has also become interested in other kids. He literally laughs out loud whenever he sees bigger kids playing, and loves the opportunity to play with friends his size. This month, Dalton and his mom Alice came to town from Etas Village, and visited us for a few hours. Shawnda and Alice seemed to enjoy their conversation, as well as watching Titus and Dalton play together.





UPDATE ON NEWBIE

We were thrilled by the ultrasound video we were able to see this month. How awesome it is to have a little person growing and active inside of his mother! We are grateful to have the service of a private doctor who has the expertise and equipment to assist us with the pregnancy while we are here in Vanuatu. "Newbie" was very active, perhaps suffering from a small case of the hiccups. Amazingly, he was able to point out the heart beating, as well as a bladder full of urine.

Dr. Tulimanu confirmed that the baby is healthy and growing according schedule. He also confirmed the due date of March 26. Please remember Shawnda and Newbie in your prayers!

