



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



In this month's issue...

Work on the building project continues, but we are excited that we were able to begin worshipping in the building this month.

We were richly blessed by a visit from two of our favorite people, Ben and Tara Bruner [photo]. We

worked and played hard during their 10-day stay.

Mike and I were able to visit Marou Village on Emao Island for days to close out the month.

Thanks so much for your continued love and support!

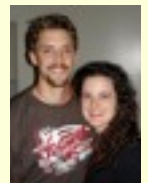
From the home-front...

We had special visitors this month at the Brandell house. We had a wonderful time with Ben and Tara. Their visit brought some fun changes around the house. Ben and Eric practiced their carpentry skills and built a bed frame (which I am so glad to have - it looks great with the quilt Tara brought for it too!) They also built a table for our front porch which is absolutely beautiful. We also got to eat out a few times (nice treat for Tara and me to not have to cook). And a good time was had by all...

I am busy getting things ready at our house for our new arrival. Please pray that the adoption will go smoothly. It's getting close! Sadly we found out that my grandpa passed away this month. He was an amazing man who I will greatly miss. Please say a prayer for my family as we deal with our loss.

We love you all.

- Shawnda



PROGRESS: PORT VILA BUILDING PROJECT

It seems as though the closer we get to completion, the more we have to do. This month saw the completion of the roof on the main building, work on the windows, and lots and lots of plastering (a smooth, thin layer of cement put onto the blocks). The congregation here is deeply indebted to Patrick and Tom, two local Christians who have devoted lots of time and effort to the building project over the past few months. Patrick lives here in Vila and was converted last March, while Tom and his wife (who live in the nearby village of Etas) were converted in August. The two men have shown tireless dedication to the task at hand. When this project is finished, they will be given the honor that is due to them. They indeed have "a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6).





VISITORS FROM THE STATES: BEN AND TARA BRUNER

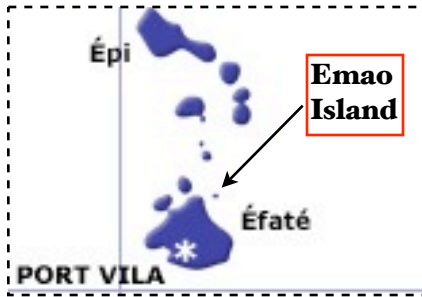
Some of our most generous supporters and best friends arrived in Vanuatu on Tuesday the 5th and departed on Thursday the 14th...a very busy 10 days! They hit the ground running with Ben helping me with the building project on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tara accompanied Shawnda on two Bible studies and a ladies' day during the first few days. On Friday, the four of us headed to the Mele Cascade Waterfalls here in Vila. Ben and Tara are the "outdoorsy" type, so we thought they would enjoy experiencing some of the natural beauty Vanuatu has to offer. We ate lunch about half way up the 45 minute walk, on an open space overlooking Vila and the ocean. While we weren't working on the building, Ben and I stayed busy utilizing his carpentry skills. Much to Shawnda's delight, we were able to complete a bed frame and a table. We had recently purchased a second-hand mattress from a local hotel, but had been using it on the floor (previous to that we'd been sleeping on an air mattress). We look forward to using the table for outdoor dining on our front veranda.

On Saturday afternoon we headed for Epau for a night in the village. Ben preached for the congregation there on Sunday morning, and after lunch we completed the circuit by driving back to Vila "the other way." We had a special treat in store for us Monday through Wednesday (actually it was Thursday, since our flight was canceled), as we traveled to Tanna Island for two nights at the Friendly Bungalows (special thanks to our friend Dusty Davis for paying our part of this getaway). We had an absolutely spectacular time relaxing, walking, and viewing the Yasur Volcano, which is billed as the most accessible active volcano in the world. It was truly awe-inspiring to see, hear and feel the power of God's earth (and it also reminded me that I REALLY don't want anyone to experience hell). We kept looking at each other and saying, "they would never let us get this close in America." It was an experience of a lifetime, and one that we will not soon forget.





MISSION TRIP: MAROU VILLAGE, EMAO ISLAND



Our team has been praying for an opportunity to visit Emao Island for quite some time. There are six villages on this small island, one of which is named Marou Village. A number of the villagers have been converted in the past few years as a result of short-term mission efforts. Unfortunately, the necessary follow-up work has been hindered by an island-wide “ban” on missionaries. Thank-

fully, that ban was lifted just a few weeks ago, which in turn allowed Mike and me to travel to Marou along with Eddie Karris (a Christian from Eton Village) to visit our brothers and sisters there.



Shawnda and two of her friends drove us to Takara Landing, about 2 hours north of Vila, to catch our boat. This was my first and Mike’s second opportunity to travel by boat (I now feel like I have more in common with Jesus, Paul and others). We loaded our luggage, including a small gas-powered generator and lights for evening Bible studies, onto the small boat and took to sea for the 45-minute journey. Thankfully, it was a rather uneventful voyage. We arrived on the shore of Marou Village and were immediately welcomed by a number of locals. We were then shown to the house where we were to lodge during our four day stay.



First, Eddie took us to visit Kalfao. He was converted a couple of years ago, but recently became paralyzed and is no longer able to leave his house. We took him a small gift of rice and cookies, and Mike shared some encouraging words from Scripture with our brother, pleading with him to pray for the work of the church in Vanuatu as often as he could, and I led a prayer. Next, Eddie took us to meet the village chief. Chief Nobat welcomed us to his house and invited us to take a seat. Eddie had already received permission from him for us to come, but he again explained our desire for coming. As custom would have it, we gave the chief some small gifts of thanks as well, including rice, socks, a calculator and a Bible and again expressed our appreciation for his gracious recep-

tion. The chief thanked us for the gifts and for coming to his village to preach. He is a member of a denomination called “The Church of the Bible” and explained to us that they already had a meeting planned during the time we were to teach (each evening around 7:00), but asked if we would be willing to run additional studies the following morning in their church building. What an opportunity! This new schedule actually worked out quite well, as it enabled us to have time with just the Christians in the evening, and then Christians and visitors during the mornings.

One of our specific goals in traveling to Marou was to encourage the Christians to begin worshiping on their own, according to the Bible’s plan. Since the time of their conversions, these young Christians had continued meeting each Sunday with the local denomination simply because they did not know what else to do. During our three nights together, I taught lessons on 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, worship, and the uniqueness of the church. Each of these lessons was well-received, with a question-and-answer session following each one. These Christians desperately want to follow the Bible, and seemed to truly enjoy the spiritual nourishment they received. On Sunday morning we met together as the body of Christ, and some of the local men took a part in leading the worship. Afterwards, we met with the men to plan for the following Sunday. Three men excitedly yet nervously volunteered to serve as leaders the following Sunday. Please be praying especially for



them: Jacob, Alic and Jethro. There were also some local visitors there on Sunday morning, and I scheduled a time to study with them during my next trip.

During our two morning sessions we had 18 and 19 in attendance. This included the chief and an elder of the denominational group both mornings. Mike taught two lessons on church history: pre-creation to the establishment, and the establishment to present day. These lessons were very well received, and seemed to be very enlightening. We also passed out tracts (over 100) during these sessions, and had a "question box" through which people could ask us Bible questions. Ni-Vanuatu love to learn by asking questions, but are sometimes too shy to ask them verbally. Therefore, we have found it most effective to offer such a box. Following Mike's lesson on the second morning, I answered about 15 questions for a little over an hour. The questions indicated a true desire on the part of the questioner to learn the Bible's teaching. We and the local Christians were all greatly encouraged by the interest shown by these villagers.



There is indeed much work to be done in Marou Village: Christians in great need of edification and encouragement, as well as truth-seekers looking for answers. I am scheduled to return to Marou in October for another four day stay. The chief has requested that I plan to spend three to four hours with them each morning, rather than the 1 hour he allotted us during this trip. The Christian ladies also asked that Shawnda accompany me on that trip so that they can have some time to study with her as well. A few of the Christian men have also asked that Shawnda study with their wives. Morris Felix, a Christian from Eton Village, will also travel with us. We will be back in Marou from October 12-15...Please be praying for our safety and success.

