



# Brandell e-Scr@pbook

*A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu*



Titus has teeth! It's been a topsy-turvy month on the adoption front, but we are hoping that everything will be finalized by the first week of May. We were also excited that Mike returned to Vanuatu this month after his furlough in the States. We hope you all enjoy getting caught up on our life and work!

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## PORT VILA CONGREGATION

Our newly-appointed fellowship chairman, Claude, asked us to host the congregation's first-Sunday-of-the-month fellowship meal in April. It is the first one we have had in a long time, and we are excited that its reinstatement was sparked entirely by the locals. It is always a pleasure to get to know our brethren and visitors in such a casual atmosphere.

### *From the home-front...*

Titus was sick for about a week (cough, runny nose, etc) this month and wouldn't sleep in his bed. So, Eric and I took turns sleeping in the rocking chair with him. Thankfully after a few days of antibiotics, he was feeling much better.

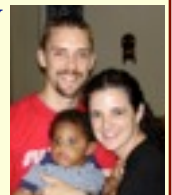
We had a few frustrating weeks dealing with some "hiccups" in the adoption paperwork. But, thankfully things are looking up in that department. We meet with the judge again in early May. Thank you for the prayers!

For one of the ladies fellowships this month we met at the ocean by Fiona's house and sang, prayed, ate and got in the water. It was Titus' first time in the ocean and he loved it!

The team went out and ate a couple of times this month. We've found a Chinese restaurant that has good food and reasonable prices. Cindy and I enjoy not having to cook and clean.

We are really looking forward to being with family and friends soon.

We love you all.  
- Shawnda





We are also considering the possibility of starting to meet together one night every couple of weeks for fellowship and worship.

Things continue to progress well here in the capital city. We are especially excited by the progress and maturity of two new Christians: Claude and Flexon. Flexon has taken over the the responsibility of assigning leaders for worship each Sunday, and Claude has been asked to facilitate fellowship gatherings. It is especially exciting that the congregation decided to support Flexon to travel with Aaron on his three week mission trip to Santo and Ambae Islands. They left on April 29 and will return May 21. We will give an update on that trip next month.

We are averaging just under 20 adults each Sunday morning, with 1 or 2 visitors every week, which is exciting. Flexon continues to share preaching responsibilities along with Aaron, Mike and me. He shows improvement each month, and we are very excited about his potential. The ladies also continue to meet twice a month for fellowship and Bible study.

Our storage room at the church building was broken into late this month - a lawnmower and wheelbarrow were stolen. We continue to deal with the difficulties that we've mentioned in the past, which is why the building project has not yet been completed and the building is not as secure as it should be. Please continue praying that these issues can be resolved soon. The building's completion will allow us to aggressively approach the work in Port Vila.



UPDATE ON TITUS



As of April 24, Titus was 5 months old. His third tooth poked through just before the end of the month. You can see photos, movies and updates by visiting his website at [www.missionvanuatu.com/brandell/titus](http://www.missionvanuatu.com/brandell/titus). If you have any problems with the site, please be sure and email us.

On the adoption front, our conference with the judge on April 18 didn't go quite as well as we would have liked. He surprised us by making an additional requirement on the application, and scheduled another meeting for the following week. We were able to get that taken care of in time, however, when we showed up at 8am that morning, we were

informed that all the week's cases had been postponed due to a week-long training session. Oh, Vanuatu! After several calls, a personal visit and a letter, we were able to get another conference for May 3. We are hoping and praying that the final adoption order will be granted as a result of that meeting. Such would mean that we would be able to begin finalizing our plans for our furlough trip back to the States (birth certificate name change, passport, non-immigrant visa) for June/July. Please join us in praying for the success of that meeting!

The delays have meant that we've had to change our furlough dates somewhat, but we still hope to be in the States in June and July to report to our supporters and visit friends and family.





## MISSION TRIP TO EMAO ISLAND

I was glad to be accompanied by Morgan on this month's trip to Marou Village. Morgan was converted in December of last year, and worships with the congregation in Etas. George, who is from Marou but works in Eton Village, also traveled with us.

We got a late start on Friday afternoon because George ended up having to work late. We arrived at Takara Landing about an hour late, and the boat I had arranged to transport us has given up on us and returned to Emao. We called them as soon as we arrived, and they headed our way. After an hour waiting, they still hadn't shown up, so we arranged for another boat (I later found out that our boat's engine had failed half way between the two islands, and had drifted all the way to another island...glad we weren't on there).

All this meant that we traveled from Efate to Emao in the dark, but our skipper had chartered these waters hundreds of times before, and knew exactly where he was going (thankfully there was a full moon that evening).



Even though we arrived in Marou two hours late, the Christians had things prepared for the evening's studies. Once I arrived, the other Christians came and joined us for the study. There were 6 Christians and 7 visitors present, and 20 or so children. I taught on the hot-topic in Vanuatu: The Cessation of Miracles. The study went well, and I received two questions afterwards: "When was the writing of the New Testament completed?" and "What would you say to someone who says 'Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, and therefore if He performed miracles yesterday He will perform them forever?'" Even though we got a late start and the lesson itself was over

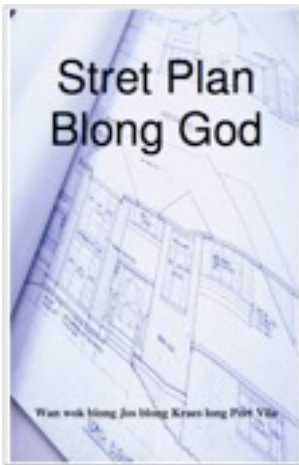
an hour long, everyone was well-engaged.

Thankfully cooler temperatures have come, so the entire weekend was nice in that regard. However, the mosquitoes were as ferocious as ever. Morgan and I shared a room in the house we normally stay in. The owner lives and works in Vila, and we pay him \$20 per weekend to stay there (it is also the meeting place for the church). We sat around for an hour or so drinking tea with the Christians that night, and then went to bed and slept well.

I learned on Friday night that Saturday was going to be a busy day in Marou Village. A community meeting had been called, and all Marou-natives were encouraged to attend (even those who live in Vila). Boat-loads of people started arriving that morning, and the meeting began about 11:00. The three items on the agenda were: [1] general religious disunity in the village (i.e. the Lord's church, the Presbyterian Church, the Church of the Bible, and the most-recent denomination known as "Evangelicals"), [2] discord over the fact that the Church of the Bible recently installed a female deacon, [3] a discussion as to whether prophecy exists today. These agenda items further prove that the line between culture/custom and religion in Marou village is practically non-existent. I did not attend the meeting, but the Christians were very happy about the outcome, stating that it would now be easier for them to separate themselves as they should. Morgan and I spent the day exploring, reading, resting and swimming, since the villagers were all preoccupied.

We had some generator problems on Saturday night, which delayed us 30 minutes or so, but such is to be expected. I taught a lesson on Biblical Unity, emphasizing primarily that "agreeing to disagree" (i.e. "I won't say you are wrong if you won't say I am wrong and we can all worship together") is not unity in the biblical sense. There were 8 Chris-





tians present. Saturday evenings are always difficult, since people have had a long day. I believe the lesson was good, but people were dosing off.

Worship went well on Sunday morning, with 8 Christians and 4 visitors present, along with a dozen children. I preached a sermon on God's Plan, which is the title of the book our team recently wrote in Bislama. After services, I passed out 6 of those books to the members. The good news is they are starting to get the hang of how to conduct a worship service...things run much smoother than they did a few months ago, which is encouraging! After lunch, we loaded up our things on the boat and headed for Efate. Aaron came early and worshiped with Harry in Paunangisu, and then picked us up on his way back to Vila.

As I have said many times before, the potential is most certainly there, but is not yet being fully realized. Our patience and persistence will pay off! Please continue praying for the church in Marou Village.

UPDATE ON EPAU VILLAGE

I traveled to Epau twice this month, and forgot the camera both times (I went ahead and threw in some old photos, just to keep things interesting). There was an outbreak of mumps in the village, so Shawnda opted to stay in Vila with Titus rather than traveling with me. I doubled-up because there were 5 Sundays in April, and because I knew I would miss a couple of months due to our upcoming furlough trip. One of the things the congregation asked me to teach on this year was how to lead worship. There are several young men who are newer converts that have not been taking an active role in leading the congregational worship.



I made my first trip on April 1 (no joking). As usual, they asked me to preach that Sunday morning. I chose to present my lesson on "How the Holy Spirit Works Today." We studied John 16:7-13, and noticed the Holy Spirit's work is to teach the whole world, and that He did that specifically through the apostles. Even today, the Holy Spirit continues that work through the inspired Scriptures, His "sword" (Ephesians 6:17). Attendance was down a bit from the norm, with folks out of town or ill. There were nine local Christians there that morning, and two visitors.

We had a congregational lunch following services. In the two years I have been attending these lunches in Epau we have always eaten together at Arthur's house (which is next door to the church building). However,



today we all walked across the street and ate at Bob and Leisong's house. I am not exactly sure why the change was made, but I am glad it was. Bob is a relatively new Christian and it was nice to see him and his wife taking a lead in the fellowship.

After lunch and about an hour's rest, we once again gathered at the church building for our afternoon study. Our focus was song leading. First, we went over a "Song Leader's Checklist" that I had put together, emphasizing the practical side of song leading, such as speaking loudly and leading confidently. After that, it was time to put what we had learned into action...I asked each of the men to choose a song to lead. There were six men in attendance that after-



noon, three of whom had lead singing before, and three of whom hadn't (the latter three were newer converts). I was happy that all but one of the men agreed to lead a song. Each man got up and went through the checklist. It was especially exciting to have Bob and Kolin each lead a song. It was their first time to lead anything publicly. They were quite nervous, but did a good job. I assured them that the second time would be easier, and the third even easier. I also encouraged the older men to be sure and include these younger ones as much as possible each Sunday. These two men were excited by their accomplishment, and I think the whole church was encouraged as well.



I went back to Epau on April 29th and preached during the worship service. It was exciting to have Bob, one of the newer converts there, lead the opening prayer (I also found out that he preached Sunday before last!). I preached about the Bible being God's plan, and passed out 8 of our books to the members. I also gave them 8 new songbooks that were donated by congregations in the States. There are a few members that have not attended worship in quite some time, and Arthur said that he would go and visit them sometime in the next week. A man also asked us to come and visit with his wife who hasn't been coming lately. It started with her staying home from church to get lunch prepared, and just became a habit (the story of Mary and Martha is much more real to us now). Lunch is a major undertaking in the village (open fires, produce from the garden, no running water), so there's always the temptation to skip worship in order to have lunch prepared on time.



After lunch, we talked about how to lead prayers. There were nine members and one visitor in attendance, and the study went well. I again emphasized the importance of the younger Christians stepping up and taking on a leading role in the worship services. I hope that they are being equipped to do so by the courses. I should have time to make one more trip to Epau before our furlough, and will probably cover how to lead the collection that afternoon. That will leave the Lord's Supper and Preaching for after I get back. Our next series will focus on how to do evangelism, which was requested by some of the local Christians during our 2007 planning session.

