



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



Welcome back to a look into our lives in Vanuatu. October was a successful month on many fronts, and we are grateful for this opportunity to tell you about some of the highlights. Thank you all so much for your continued support of us and the work!

In this month's issue...

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- 🌀 Bible study with Carol
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- 🌀 New Christians in Etas

FURTHER PROGRESS IN PORT VILA

Due to the completion of the water lines at the church building as



Ladies going through the food line getting plates for all the children present at the fellowship meal.

mentioned in last month's update, the congregation meeting in Port Vila was able to have to her first ever fellowship meal at the new building. We meet together for lunch after services

on the first Sunday of every month. We were all blessed with a wonderful time of fellowship, and were also encouraged by the presence of several visitors who agreed to stay around and allow us to get to know them better.

From the home-front...

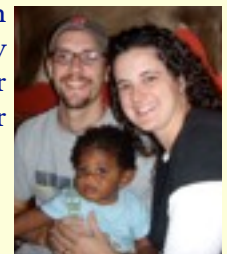
We've had another good month here in the Brandell house. I decided to tackle a "first" in my domestic life and made Eric an apple pie (his favorite). I was always scared to attempt it before, but it turned out quite "yummy."

Titus is constantly changing and growing. He's standing by himself and can walk as long as he is holding on to something. He's getting his back teeth in and eating everything in sight. We are down to just a few bottles a day, and hope to have him completely weaned in a few months. He loves table food, so it shouldn't be a problem!

We've gone to swim at the beach a couple of times this month. It's been really hot and Titus loves the water (and sand). He's a little daredevil and isn't scared to "plunge" into the water face first!

I am feeling great as we eagerly await our new little one. Please pray that things continue to go well with the pregnancy and our preparation for him/her.

We love you-
Shawnda





We were also able to accomplish some more on the physical grounds this month, including a coat of paint on the exterior walls of the main building, installation of the hardwood doors, and some finishing cement work on the bathrooms. Patrick Jacob was once again very helpful in this work.

Attendance during our Sunday assemblies continues to increase each week, especially with visitors. We're also blessed with the presence of 15-20 children (many of them live close to the building and come without their parents). The kids' excitement is evident as they show up early each Sunday morning. Shawnda has taken advantage of these 30-40 minutes by taking the kids aside and teaching them songs and Bible stories...and the attendance has increased each week as a result. Lots of kids without a parent present has proven to be a challenge, but one that we are thankful to have!



A VISIT TO EPAU VILLAGE

My usual monthly trip to Epau Village was delayed by a week due to the death of a chief on the Saturday night before I was scheduled to be there. The new date happened to coincide with the congregation's regular combined worship service with the brethren from Eton Village. I was pleased that Paul Phillips, a medical student from New Zealand who has been staying with us during his hospital internship, was able to accompany me on the trip.

We had a very nice-sized crowd gather for worship, and the singing was especially uplifting. So many voices blending together to praise our God is such a wonderful experience. I was asked to preach during the assembly, and we studied from James 2:14-26, discussing the differences between a dead faith and a living faith. After our time of worship, the ladies put the finishing touches on lunch and we all shared a meal together. There were small groups of Christians scattered throughout the building and the property, enjoying the fellowship and cool breezes.



Our afternoon study focused on Mark 16:14-20, which was requested by one the Christians last month. We especially considered the promise Jesus made just before His ascension into heaven regarding miraculous signs. Though the study took place on a warm afternoon (nap-time for most), the Christians present remained engaged during the

entire study. Several significant statements and questions were voiced, which is always encouraging to me as a teacher.

So often the locals here see and understand what the Bible says about the presence (or lack thereof) of miracles today..but they have a hard time *disbelieving* the fantastic stories they hear regularly

regarding present-day "miracles." We emphasized the importance of placing our trust in God and His word, rather than on the words of men, no matter how appealing their stories might be.

Sundays like these are such an encouragement to us, and we are grateful to God for His wisdom in establishing congregational worship and study.



 PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

Carol (center) lives close to the church building and began visiting our worship services fairly regularly a few months ago.



In our almost three years in Vanuatu, we've learned that people will often say yes to participating in a personal Bible study if we ask, regardless of their true level of interest. This is because most ni-Vanuatu do not want to "turn down" a white person. Therefore, we've tried to modify our approach a bit, in order to provide a less-pressured situation. The last thing we want is for people to "obey" God because they are trying to please us. Thus, Shawnda gently mentioned the possibility of studying to Carol several times, always leaving the clear impression that she would be more than happy to study or answer any questions Carol might have. Carol always showed some interest, but always evidenced some sort of hesitancy.

A few weeks later, a couple of local Christians were talking with Carol before services about the church, and encouraged her to set up a personal Bible study to learn more. Her interest was piqued, and those two Christians talked to Mike about studying with Carol, not knowing that she and Shawnda had talked about that possibility several times in the past. Later that day, Carol mentioned to Shawnda that she was ready to start studying the Bible. So, both Mike and Shawnda began studying with Carol at her house the following Tuesday. This combination has proven very effective. We've learned that locals, even women, tend to prefer to be taught by men, and thus Carol is pleased that Mike is leading the study. But it is also great to have a woman present (Shawnda) for comfort and companionship. Additionally, Carol's sister has been sitting in on the studies, and her husband has shown great interest in the printed material Mike leaves at the house each week. In fact, Carol's sister and husband have been visiting services as a result. Please be praying for Carol and her family as they continue to consider God's saving message.

 CONVERSIONS IN ETAS VILLAGE

Aaron and Cindy have been conducting studies in Etas each Wednesday night since the congregation's inception almost two years ago. While they are in the States, Mike and I have been teaching those studies each week. Following a study in which we talked about the great commission, an older man named Jimmy approached me stating his interest in "believing and being baptized" in order to be saved, as we had just studied from Mark 16:16. We talked for several minutes about repentance and the consequences of such a decision (especially the life-long commitment). He agreed to think about those things, and asked if I would come back the next afternoon. When I arrived in Etas on Thursday, I learned that there were actually four people who were ready to obey the gospel. Each of them were present during our Wednesday night study, and each of them had participated in all of Aaron's evangelistic lessons in months past.

We all piled in the truck and traveled a few minutes down to the ocean, where Tom and Timothy baptized



Jimmy, Kal, Emma and Rebecca into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). The Christians in Etas rejoiced along with the angels in heaven because of the increase. The Etas congregation is now comprised of some 18 Christians. Be praying for their continued spiritual and physical growth. Amen!

