



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



Can it really be 2010?!? We are excited about the new year and look forward to all that God has in store for us. Thank you all for your continued interest in and support of our work! We hope you enjoy getting caught up on all that happened in January...

In this month's issue:

- 📌 Reconciliation in Port Vila
- 📌 PBK Resumes
- 📌 Conversion Update
- 📌 Family Happenings
- 📌 Fun with Visitors

RECONCILIATION IN PORT VILA

Those of you who have been following our work for some time are at least somewhat familiar with the challenges the church in the capital city of Port Vila has faced over the past several years. At the time we moved into our new facilities back in 2006, three families were unwilling to make that move for various reasons. This physical separation had numerous and far reaching repercussions for the church throughout the country. Several attempts at reconciliation in the past had failed, the rift seemed to grow ever larger. However, we are glad that these families have now been restored to our fellowship.

Our first official Sunday together was January 10, which was preceded by a public meeting and several one-one private meetings. With the benefit of hindsight, it became evident the problems ultimately

From the home-front...

Wow! What an amazing month! Enjoy reading about the reconciliation of the Vila congregation. God has proven His ability to bind the hearts of His children together despite the hurt of the past. While it will be a while for things to "feel normal," we are well on our way to a brighter future for the church in Vila and in Vanuatu as a whole.

The big news around our house is that Titus is finally getting the hang of the big boy potty. He hasn't mastered it yet, but he is doing really well so far. Such a relief for Mom and Dad, that's for sure!

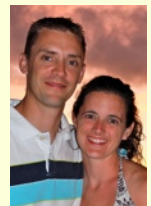
Lexi's always been vocal, but just this month has really started talking with words instead of grunting and pointing. She's also learning to obey and not tell mommy and daddy, "no." Hard stuff...but she's doing well.

We had some of our friends from New Zealand here for a visit. We enjoyed lots of meals together and fun outings too.

We started back to PBK this month. We had a very productive workday and planned out the rest of the year's themes so we can all be thinking about ideas for them. The actual day of PBK was well attended too. We had a great group of kids from Etas and Port Vila. It was also neat to have about 10 children and a few women from Eton village! Titus has been going with me to PBK the last couple of months. A full morning of full-on activity is still a bit much for him (and all the other 3 year olds as well), but he seems to enjoy it overall.

Can't believe that 2010 is here! We pray that you will all have a blessed year committed to serving our Lord.

Love to you all...
Shawnda <<>





stemmed from a lack of adequate communication. Sinful actions were repented of, past statements were clarified, forgiveness was granted, and commitments to move ahead unfettered were made by all involved. We look forward to learning from the mistakes of the past and pray God's blessings upon the congregation of His people in Vila.

Since the reconciliation took place, we held a men's meeting in an effort to get everyone on the same page. We talked about current plans, ongoing ministries, logistics and opportunities. Personally, I came away from that meeting very excited about the prospects for the future, and pray that some of the things we discussed will indeed come to fruition. Shawnda and I also enjoyed being accompanied by one of these families on this month's trip to Epau Village on the last Sunday of the month. We are all dedicated to renewing our relationships with one another, and again, to focusing on effective communication. Thank you all for your prayers for this situation over the past several years, and we ask that you please pray for us during this transition period. May God be glorified by His church!

CONVERSION UPDATE

We are excited to introduce you to our newest ni-Vanuatu brother in Christ, John Dean. He is the first born son of Eddie Karris, who was one of the first Christians in Vanuatu. Eddie told me that he had been praying for this day to come for many years, and that he rejoiced that his son was now also his Christian brother.

John has been visiting worship and TBS classes since March 2009, at which time he attended a gospel meeting in Vila. Wayne Burger and I studied with John several times during that week-long meeting. John is a well-educated man, and was able to quickly grasp his spiritual condition and what he needed to do to be right with God. However, at that time he was simply not ready to make the commitment. Whenever I would see John, I would always try to turn our conversation to focus on spiritual things, and he would always shy away and try to change the subject. However, on January 4 John showed up at my house early in the morning and told me that he could not stand to spend another day outside of Christ. We studied for a couple of hours that morning, answering his questions and talking about the importance of a life long commitment. After baptizing John, he came out of the water crying tears of joy. He said they were also tears of sadness because he understood that members of his immediate family were lost, and vowed to do his best to win them for Christ. Amen!



FUN TIMES WITH VISITORS

We always thoroughly enjoy having visitors come and spend time with us. Antony and Jeanette Raine, Christians from New Zealand, have spent many hours ministering to the needs of the church in Vanuatu, and were instrumental in raising the funds necessary to construct the building in Port Vila a few years ago. They are some of the most generous people we have ever known.

We were excited to hear that they had decided to spend their vacation time in Vanuatu with us, as this couple is such an encouragement to our team. We had lots of fun spending time together while they were here. All the kids loved the extra attention (and the presents!). We adults had a great time eating out, playing golf, visiting, playing games, enjoying Vanuatu's natural beauty, and spending time with local Christians. We are already looking forward to our next opportunity to be with this good family. "Thanks heaps!!"



PBK RESUMES

After a month off for the holidays, we were glad to have Pikinini Baebol Klab resume here in Vila. Once again, the ladies did a great job preparing for this month's club meeting. "Follow Jesus" was the theme, and 40-50 kids enjoyed learning about the calling of the 12 apostles, playing follow the leader, making crafts, singing songs, learning a memory verse, and having snacks. We were especially glad to have several new kids join us this month, and pray that these relationships will be fruitful and far-reaching.



FAMILY HAPPENINGS

Though January is traditionally one of the hottest months of the year, we have enjoyed unseasonably cool (though still plenty-warm) temperatures this month. That has allowed us to spend lots of time outdoors, which the kids really enjoy. Titus' big splash (pardon the pun) was that he officially started using the "big-boy potty" and wearing "big-boy pants" this month. We are all very excited about this accomplishment, and look forward to having the transition stage behind us (hopefully by the time of our furlough trip in May!). Alexis' big splash (ditto the pardon) was that she is officially a water bug. She "swims" (with floaties) with no fear and even lets dad throw her into the water (into mom's arms, of course), and isn't a bit afraid of going under. She also loves to sit in a tub of water on the front porch to cool off just before her afternoon nap.



Nice undies!!



Titus and Uncle Aaron exploring the Valeva Cave



Construction worker Titus and his trusty assistant, Alexis