



Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A monthly report on our life in Vanuatu



Happy Birthday, Alexis! We all enjoyed cake, ice cream and presents this month as we celebrated Lexi's 2nd birthday. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share more about our month with you in this edition. Enjoy...

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FRIENDS & FAMILY DAY

Near the end of 2009 our team had a brainstorming session during which we considered ways that we could evangelize and edify in Port Vila. One of my suggestions was that we conduct a "Friends & Family Day" similar to what congregations in the States do. The aim would be to focus both on our spiritually lost friends and family members as well as fallen-away members of the church.

During our January men's meeting in Vila, we chose March 7th as the date. We printed up invitations to pass out, made personal visits to fallen-away members, installed bulletin boards, set up a visitor welcome center, and planned several activities for the day.

We were glad to have two families visit and two fallen away Christians attend. Claude preached a good sermon, and after worship everyone enjoyed a fellowship lunch. We were glad that all of our visitors stayed

From the home-front...

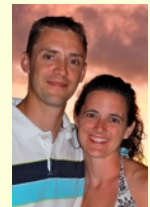
Can't believe our baby, Alexis, is a big 2 year old!!! I have really enjoyed making the kids' birthday cakes for the past couple of years. I chose to make a flip flop cake for Lexi this year because of her love for shoes. She comes by that honestly, I must say. She was so cute when it was time to blow out her candles and hilarious opening presents. Everything was just so exciting. And Titus enjoyed it as much as Lexi did.

Things are still going well around the Brandell house with the kids learning to obey. They are not perfect by any means, but they are both doing really well. The changes we have seen have really transformed our family life. It's exciting to see our kids enjoying life, us enjoying them more each day, and us all being happier in general.

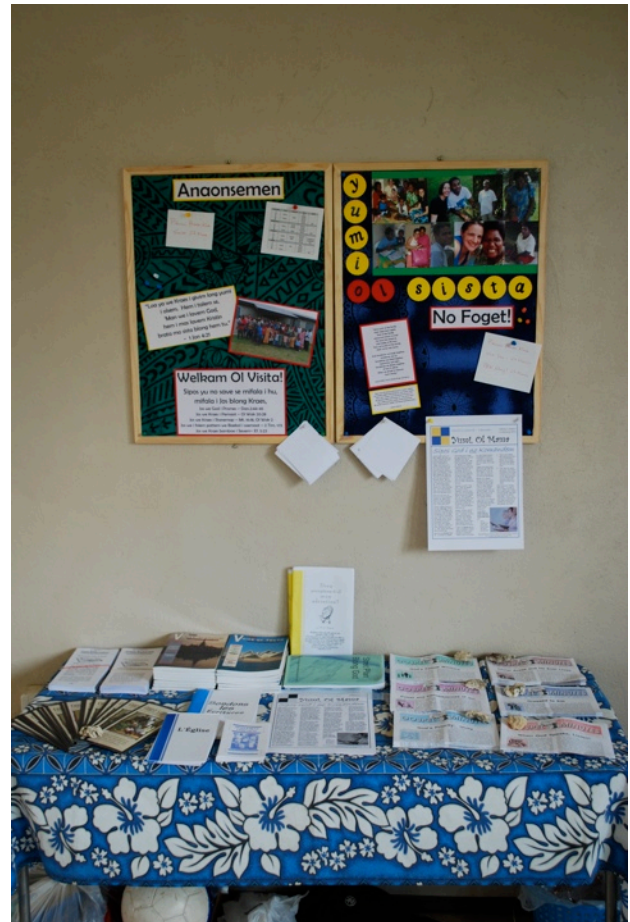
With Eric gone for two weeks to Malekula, it was a challenge for me at times by myself...but we managed to stay on track. I kept them busy with lots of fun activities and "projects," and the usual helping around the house. We also had a friend over most mornings till naptime, which was a huge help for me. It was nice to not have to do it all alone for the entire two weeks. We definitely miss "Daddy" when he's gone on these trips...but we know it's important and are excited about the growth of the church in Malekula.

Our family has been taking walks most evenings. Titus walks the whole way and I've been carrying Lexi in a "wrap" on my back in preparation for our travels and airport maneuvering (easier to manage the kids in a crowd like LAX if one is tied to my back!)

Love to you all...
 Shawnda <>>



for lunch. After lunch, we visited, played volleyball, and the kids had a treasure hunt. Both Selina and Carole (Christians) have been back to worship several times since then, for which we are grateful. Please be praying for this and other evangelistic efforts in Port Vila and throughout Vanuatu.



RETURN TO MALEKULA ISLAND

Note: The following is a reprint from this month's Mission Vanuatu Minutes - to learn more about the trip, visit www.missionvanuatu.com and read my 23-page journal

The aim was threefold for my most recent two-week trip to Malekula: edify Alsen (the only member of the Lord's church on the island, who has been faithfully worshiping by himself since his conversion in October 2009), conduct nightly evangelistic studies, and take a trip to the south part of Malekula (a 20 minute flight from north to south) to study with a Bible Correspondence Course student who has made numerous requests that we come visit him.

I had previously given Alsen seven lessons to study, suggesting that he be prepared to teach them to me during my next visit. We spent one to two hours per day going over those lessons. We set up a system where I taught lesson 1 the first day, and he taught lesson 1 to me the following day, after which I taught him lesson 2. He taught me lesson 2 the next day, and I taught him lesson 3, and so on until we completed all seven. I was encouraged by Alsen's desire to learn the material and present it effectively. I would often see him reading through the outline during the day, with his Bible open, studying diligently through each passage. By the end of our 12 days together, I really felt like he had a good grasp of these basic lessons, and encouraged him that he was now capable of teaching them to others.

Another highlight of the trip was baptizing three more souls into Christ. **Julie** is the 21-year-old daughter of Alsen's first-born sister, and lives in Wiaru Village. After worship the first Sunday I was there she asked to be baptized. Alsen and I spent a couple of hours studying with her about the commitment she was making to put Christ as her Lord. She had many "costs" to consider, such as being the only Christian in her village, leaving her parents' religion (with whom she still lives), worshiping in spirit and truth by herself each week, carefully considering whom she will marry, etc. Alsen did a good job encouraging her and providing insight from his own experiences. Julie was undeterred by these obstacles and was baptized into Christ. Alsen and I made the two hour trek up to her village the following Monday, so that we could have one more study session with her before I left, and also so that I could see where she lives. Her parents have shown interest in the truth, and I hope to be able to conduct studies there in August.



I first met **Williamson** during my third trip. He was one of the people who witnessed the Presbyterian Church leaders questioning Alsen, Flexon and I in December. He commented back then on his appreciation of our stand for the truth. My theme for the evening studies was Bible baptism, and after two lessons Williamson approached me and said that he was ready to act out what we had been studying from God's word. He was willing to make a bold step of giving up a very lucrative kava wholesale business, which he knew was not a profession a Christian should be associated with. His wife attended the studies as well, and I believe she will be converted soon.

Jean Claude is one of Alsen's uncles, and he has attended almost every study I have conducted in the village. He is quite knowledgeable of Scripture, and served as an elder in the Presbyterian Reformed Church for several years. He is another great example of an honest heart seeking the truth. Though he knew his decision would cause turmoil with his family and his denomination, he did not allow this to prevent him from obeying God's word. He has already had to defend his decision before the PRC "pastor" and "elder". His wife is also a good Bible student, and I expect her to obey the gospel in time.



The only negative to the trip was that my stop in the south was cancelled (the plane could not land because the recent heavy rains left the grass air strip under water). I was very disappointed to miss out on this opportunity, but Mike was already planning a followup trip in May. You can be praying for Aiel Massing and his family in southwest Malekula.

FAMILY HAPPENINGS

It's hard to believe our baby's 2 years old! We all enjoyed celebrating Lexi's birthday with family friends at a nearby restaurant. Lexi has brought lots of joy to our lives over the past couple of years, and we are grateful for the blessing that she is. Let the "terrible-tuos" commence!

Titus had two exciting accomplishments this month: he is officially potty-trained and gave up sleeping with his "night-night" blanket. What a big boy!

Both of our kids continue to progress in our effort for first-time, every time obedience, and we are all working hard to fulfill the roles God has given us as a family. We enjoy family Bible time each evening, playing out in the front yard (now that it's cooling off a bit), and reading books.

We'll close with some of our favorite kid-photos from the month...

