

# What's Up With the Widups?

April 2020



## Covid-19 + Cyclone Harold = Big Trouble in Vanuatu

While Vanuatu has been one of the few countries to maintain ZERO confirmed cases of the Covid-19 virus, it is currently a place of chaos and widespread need. The lock-down protocols which went into effect by mid-March in the entire Pacific region restricted travel in Vanuatu and neighboring countries like Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. Bill and our two younger boys were thankfully able to fly back to the USA on March 5th to join Christina after the death of her father, Al Unander. Soon thereafter, Vanuatu shut down airports and shipping ports, which not only kept out unwanted disease but also stopped the flow of imported goods such as food, medicine, and paper products. Our teammates reported running out of diesel fuel and propane gas. As in the USA, schools were closed — but unlike developed countries, continuing classes online was NOT an option. Officials imposed restrictions on interpersonal interactions, similar to what we've all been told. Social distancing does not at all mesh with Vanuatu culture, in which people shake hands, kiss cheeks, cram as many as possible into the back of a truck, and share cups and utensils. Soap is a luxury for many people. Hand sanitizer, not even in the vocabulary until this crisis.

Then came Harold, the second most severe tropical cyclone to hit Vanuatu. It pummeled our island of Espiritu Santo on April 6 with up to 150mph winds for half a day before moving to make landfall on Vanuatu islands to the south and east. So far there are reports of up to 15 possible deaths. Harold ripped roofs off of buildings, caused heavy flooding, and cut communication lines on the country's largest two islands. In some villages almost every house was destroyed or badly damaged, and the jungle garden plots demolished. The country, which was already under a state of emergency due to the Covid-19 pandemic, had to forego social-distancing and restrictions on public gatherings to allow people to group together in caves and other safe shelters. However, humanitarian aid efforts have been slowed down by restrictions on international travel. Much-needed supplies have been delayed due to fears over coronavirus contamination, and charitable donations are only trickling in compared to the global response to previous disasters, probably also due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Friends living in a rural area of Santo, who lost their home to the storm, wrote, *"The devastation is surreal. Almost everyone has lost their houses and their gardens. Some of the livestock were killed as well. Right now our immediate concerns are for shelter, clean water, and food for the people. We are cut off from town and currently have no way of getting in supplies. People are eating fallen fruit and anything they can salvage from their gardens but food will run out soon. Please pray for the people in Vanuatu, it is going to be a difficult recovery."*

If you feel led to give toward restoring basic necessities for those who have lost homes, gardens, and livelihood, go to [www.upandupministries.org](http://www.upandupministries.org) & click on the link for **Cyclone Harold Relief Fund**, or use the QR code at right. Thank you!



# Prayer Points

## Bible TRANSLATION

Praise God that the missionaries and local translators on Ambrym and Mota Lava (plus small Rah) Islands weathered Cyclone Harold with little damage; praise for increased community support of translation and literacy.

Pray for:

- Villages on Santo, Malo, Aore, Pentecost & Malekula in which majority of houses and food sources were wiped out by cyclone to get food & rebuild
- Language groups to have even greater desire for seeing God's Word translated; progress in existing projects & more languages to be reached



A cargo boat beached by the cyclone

Pray for:

- Covid-19 quarantine restrictions to end, & infrastructure (power, roads, telecoms, shipping) to rebuild so remote areas can be reached & helped
- Nabanga teachers & employees to see God provide for their needs
- Our home fellowship group to be a light of hope & love in this time

## PERSONAL

We are *thankful* to be able to share a home with Christina's mom as she grieves; we *rejoice* that Sierra is halfway through her pregnancy with our grandchild!

Pray for:

- Bill to be able to make a trip back to our island once travel opens up again, and peace to trust God's timing & His plan while we have to wait
- Marcus & Sierra to raise their monthly & one-time funding needs
- Provision for our own \$1800/month shortfall, & project goals; that we can still meet with potential/current supporters, even if not face-to-face



Bill, Christina, Marcus, Sierra, Mikaela, Maxwell, Malachi last Dec.

## Team MINISTRY

Praise God for only minor cyclone damage to our team homes & base  
Praise that although our family is unable to be there helping, Liliords & Nacisses are on the ground assessing how best to respond to the post-cyclone service opportunities.



A local school classroom after the cyclone

Working to finish the roof on a new local-style building



## WE WANT TO CONNECT WITH YOU!

Although we flew back from Vanuatu much earlier than planned (for Christina's dad's passing & then Covid-19) our family will be staying in the USA for the next five months. One reason is to support Marcus & Sierra as they raise funds to begin long-term ministry with us, specifically with Nabanga School—after their baby is born in mid-September! Another reason is to strengthen our own vital network of financial partners for ongoing ministry as well as projects and outreach.

Contact us to set up a get-together, either in person, online or over the phone. Hosting a group meeting (even online) would be a great way to help us get back to Vanuatu!

Send us a note at [wrw@usa.com](mailto:wrw@usa.com) to **receive monthly email updates**, or for any changes in postal/email address.

Email [wrw@usa.com](mailto:wrw@usa.com) for a link to **online financial giving**.

Mail checks (note "for Widups") to: Bethel Church & Ministries, 10202 Broadway, Crown Point, IN 46307 USA.

*Thank you!*



Wreckage of a house

*For His glory,  
the Widups*



Web: [www.upandupministries.org](http://www.upandupministries.org) Email: [wrw@usa.com](mailto:wrw@usa.com) fb: [William-Christina Widup](https://www.facebook.com/William-Christina-Widup)  
NEW p: (518)upandup (518-872-6387) Address: 137 S. 725 W. Hebron, IN 46341

See more photos in our gallery @ [www.upandupministries.org](http://www.upandupministries.org)