



the CHALLENGE

MOVING EARTH TO SHARE HEAVEN **OCTOBER 2026**

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Blessing of the Wait**
VANUATU

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MORE THAN GIVERS

Walking with Donors as Partners in the Work



"We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth."

— 3 John 1:8 (KJV)

BY CHRIS WENDEN, DIRECTOR OF PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

At Friends in Action International, we often talk about drilling wells, building houses and aircraft hangars, and equipping Gospel workers across West Africa, Bolivia, Central America, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu. But behind every well drilled and every worker sent is a partner who said yes before the work ever began.

It's easy for ministries to slip into thinking of donors as a funding source, a line item that keeps programs running. But Scripture gives us a better picture. In Philippians 1:5, Paul thanks God for the church's "partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." Partnership, not patronage. Paul didn't see the Philippians as people who wrote checks; he saw them as fellow laborers, bound together in the same mission, carrying the same burden.

That's the posture we want to take with every person who gives to FIA. When someone supports a well-drilling project, they aren't purchasing clean water for a village; they're joining the work of bringing both water and the Gospel to people who still thirst for both. When someone funds a missionary's outfitting, they're not covering a line item; they're standing shoulder to shoulder with someone stepping into hard, holy ground.

When someone supports a well-drilling project, they aren't purchasing clean water for a village; they're joining the work of bringing both water and the Gospel to people who still thirst for both.

Walking with our donors spiritually means more than sending a thank-you letter after a gift arrives. It means praying for them by name. It means sharing not just outcomes, but the spiritual weight of ministry work. The dry holes, the buried drill bits, the broken-down equipment are always things at the top of our list. Let's also celebrate the baptisms, the changed villages, the darkness lifted, and the moments God showed up in ways no budget could have predicted.

It means asking how we can pray for them, not only how they can give again.

When we treat giving as partnership rather than transaction, something shifts. Donors stop being an audience for our impact reports and become co-laborers in a shared calling. And in a mission where water and the Gospel flow together, that kind of partnership is exactly the kind of ground where both take root.

So to each of you who makes a financial sacrifice of any kind, thank you for being a co-laborer in the Lord's work. ■



DELAY! THE SPIRITUAL BLESSING OF THE WAIT

CHRIS WENDEN, DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

— Habakkuk 2:3 (KJV)

If we're honest, none of us like the word *delay*. Delays frustrate us. A delayed package, a delay at the drive-thru (my personal breaking point), or having to wait one more week for the next episode of your favorite show.

Delays and waiting frustrate me too. I'm still learning that God's timing is always perfect, and nothing has shown me that more clearly than the delays in the Vanuatu Water Project.

It's no secret: ten years in, still no water flowing in Vanuatu. But with the delay came blessings we never could have seen with our own eyes at the start.



The original plan centered on a single spring, feeding all 30 communities through 16 miles of high-pressure pipe. It looked good on paper... until Vanuatu's shifting, seismic ground did what it does, and that very spring split and re-emerged elsewhere. If we'd broken ground on the original design sooner, we would have built something beautiful yet unreliable. The years of setbacks forced a full redesign before seriously investing and committing to the wrong approach.

What emerged instead is better in every way. Instead of one complicated (but fragile) system, we're taking the approach of drilling multiple wells, each serving a localized community. This approach is sturdier, cheaper, and simple enough for each community to maintain on their own systems. When I visited with our Field Leader (Levi Pitman), he pointed out something I hadn't considered: the old single-source design carried a real relational risk. Tensions between communities could manifest in disruption to the shared water source, potentially even weaponizing it to be used against each other. Drilled wells in separate communities remove that risk entirely. The delay has produced a wiser, more culturally sensitive design in every sense.

The Blessing of the Wait

But while we've been tracking the engineering and the setbacks from our North American mindset, Pastor Gabby, leader of the Vanuatu Big Bay Bible School and our lead partner on the ground, has been tracking something else: the spiritual blessing of the wait.

"If we had received it immediately," Pastor Gabby said, "we would not have learned about God, about learning from our friends in the US... just working together, all workers in the ministry of God."

He also shared that more villages are now included in the project than the original plan ever reached. When the water finally flows

to all of them, Pastor Gabby says he'll be able to look every village chief and every witch doctor in the eye and tell them: nothing is impossible with God. He and the NiVan believers already know it. What God started, He will finish.

Scripture never treats waiting as wasted time. Isaiah 40:31 promises that "those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," not despite the waiting, but through it. It's often taught that the Hebrew word for wait there, "qavah," carries a related sense of being bound together, like strands twisted into a cord. Waiting isn't passive. It's an active tethering of ourselves to God while He works on a timeline, and a plan, we can't yet see.

The Psalms return to this theme again and again: "I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:1). The waiting isn't the obstacle to the answer; it's part of how the answer is shaped, and how we're shaped to receive it. James goes further, calling us to "count it all joy" when we face trials, because the testing of our faith produces endurance, and endurance, once it has finished its work, leaves us lacking nothing (James 1:2-4). Nothing is wasted.

Abraham waited twenty-five years for a promised son. Joseph waited in a pit, then a prison, before he ever saw a palace. Israel wandered forty years before entering a land already promised to them. In every case, the delay wasn't evidence that God had forgotten; it was the very process by which He was preparing a people, a leader, a land, for something sturdier than what impatience would have built.

That's the pattern worth holding onto: God's delays are rarely denials. They're often the mechanism by which He removes a fragile plan and replaces it with one built to last, the same way a single spring gave way to many wells, each one stronger for having waited.

You Are Part of This Story

And that includes you. For ten years, you've prayed for this project and given toward it without seeing the water flow... and your patience has been part of this story too. The wells being established, in more villages than we originally planned to reach, are only possible because you didn't give up waiting alongside us.

The water project was never the whole point. It's a means to a deeper end, earning the invitation to share the gospel's "why" behind the gift. Years of prayerful waiting, including our team praying on-site with NiVan pastors before ever breaking ground, mean this project now moves forward on a foundation strong enough to bear the weight of that deeper purpose. ■



WHATEVER THAT LOOKS LIKE

INTERVIEW WITH BRAD KULP, SHIPPING & WAREHOUSE MANAGER

You came to FIA with experience in international shipping, construction, and welding. What drew you into those fields, and to FIA?

"I got into welding right out of college because I needed a job and discovered I enjoyed it. International shipping was something I took on while serving at another ministry to help fill a void. I got into construction during COVID because I lost my job at that ministry and needed to provide for my family. I've often said I don't specialize in anything; we've always been willing to serve, whatever that looks like. It's interesting how God lays out these things for His purposes. When I saw the job description and skill sets on LinkedIn. I had never heard of FIA before, but I saw the skills FIA was looking for with warehousing and shipping and then having the ability to use my construction and welding background to serve missionaries in the field; it was a no-brainer."



What makes shipping and warehouse work ministry to you? Did a particular experience lead you here?

"I'm contributing to getting supplies to missionaries in the field so that they can continue to do their work. I'm not concerned with being visible or in the spotlight. I'm just meant to serve. Monique and I went on our first mission trip when we were in junior high, and I knew that was the kind of work I was meant to be doing. I didn't know what that looked like or where, but I knew I was called to serve in whatever capacity that might be."

As you step into FIA's shipping ministry, what are you hoping to learn, and how will you approach the containers already in progress?

"I know we have a bunch of containers coming up, and I want to get up to speed on what the process looks like with FIA versus what I did before. It's been almost ten years since I've shipped a container. I'm sure there will be a lot to catch up on. I'm planning to lean on the experience of the people at FIA to start. I also still have some contacts in this industry that I may reach out to if needed. Once I'm acclimated, I'll see what we can do to improve the process and make it more efficient."

How will thinking about the people and places receiving those containers shape how you approach the work?

"I think about all of that. We need to know what type of environment it's going into so we can package it accordingly. I want to take care of whatever we're shipping the way I'd want to receive it, as if I were the one on the other end waiting for it."



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

You're also raising support. What's that experience been like?

"Support raising has been quite the journey. I'd say it has stretched our faith and taught us to rely on God and trust His timing. We've gotten to have awesome conversations with people, sharing what we're called to do and what FIA does as an organization. People from our church who don't know us very well, since we've only been there a couple of months, have been willing to support us. Friends and family who probably don't have too much extra, but know our heart, have willingly supported us. It's been awesome."

What do you want people to understand about what it takes to get a box from a Pennsylvania warehouse to a missionary on the other side of the world?

"It can take many hands to make these things happen. Items we take for granted here in the USA are hard to get ahold of in other parts of the world. We need to be good stewards of that and get the items they need to them as efficiently as possible." ■



Brad and Monique are currently raising their financial support to serve full-time with FIA in this critical role.

You can find out more about the Kulp's here:

FIAintl.org/support/brad-monique-kulp

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

— 2 Timothy 2:2, (KJV)

ROOM TO GROW

Building the Next Generation of Missionaries in West Africa

JEREMY EFFLER, WEST AFRICA FIELD LEADER

A Bare Piece of Land, a Bigger Purpose

When we started building our base of operations here, I had a philosophy in mind: create a place that opens as many doors as possible to support future mission work. We call it Shiloh, and today it's divided into three sections that each serve that purpose.

There's the agricultural section, built around practical farming skills rooted in Christian principles of stewardship. With hopes to develop this project we've sent our guys to one of our partners who is teaching, "Farming God's Way". Providing the opportunity here to practice what they learned we are now just starting one of our large garden projects. Down the road, we're hoping to host that training here ourselves, possibly as soon as May. We've also got coconut trees producing for the first time this year. When they're ready to harvest, women from the community will come gather them to sell, which circulates real income back into our neighbors' hands.

There's the work section: metal and wood workshops, a mechanics bay, equipment storage. That's where we fabricate parts for our well-drilling rigs and keep our vehicle fleet running, along with construction fabrication for anything from roof trusses to doors and cabinets. And there's housing: two missionary houses, a large group building that doubles as a church space once a month for our mission community, and the newest piece, an intern apartment.

The goal behind all of it is simple. I want future FIA missionaries to have as many opportunities as possible to support gospel work here, whatever their gifting looks like.

What the First Intern Taught Us

Readers may remember Jacob Sutton's dispatch in these pages back in March 2024, "God's Ways Are Certainly

Not Ours." Jacob was our first intern at Shiloh, and if you read that piece, you already know it didn't go the way either of us planned. He arrived expecting to ride into the countryside and knock out a tidy list of construction projects. Instead, he spent his first days fighting a stubborn compound well that refused to cooperate, then pivoted to clearing brush, installing pumps and solar panels, and holding down a hundred jobs nobody had written on a schedule.

That's the honest picture of what it looks like to serve here. And it taught us something important: the kind of person who thrives at Shiloh isn't the one who needs a fixed plan. It's the one who's flexible, faithful in whatever is in front of them, and willing to be helpful when the job changes without warning, because here, it often does.

It also taught us something about hospitality. Jacob didn't have his own space. He lived alongside our family, which worked, but it wasn't ideal for him or for us. That gap is what put the intern house on our list.

Building a Place of Their Own

Separate housing matters because it gives an intern real autonomy: the chance to experience life here in a safe but genuinely independent way. They'll cook their own meals, do their own cleaning, manage the basics of daily life, but with us right here if they need a hand getting set up.

The apartment itself is simple and purposeful: one bedroom that can be arranged with a queen bed or bunk beds depending on who's staying, a full bathroom, a studio-style kitchen and living room, a covered front porch with seating, a small covered back porch, and a laundry room accessed off that back porch. It's fully furnished, appliances included, and built to serve someone well whether they're here for a few weeks or several months.

We broke ground in December, and as of this writing it's about 95 percent finished. I'm currently building and installing the cabinets and counter tops myself, and I'm hoping to have everything done except the cabinet doors by the time I travel to the States in October.

Two short-term teams made this possible. The first set the wooden roof trusses. The second ran the electrical and installed the wooden ceiling panels. Neither team probably realized how much they were building toward: not just a structure, but a launching pad for the next missionary God calls here.

A Vision Still Taking Shape

We're still in the early stages of building out a full internship program. The dream is to host two to four interns at a time, for stretches of up to three months, teaching missiology alongside practical, hands-on skills that serve kingdom work on the field. I'd also love to open that door to couples, whether they're exploring a future in missions or retired and looking for a season to serve.

Here's why this matters to me: right now, we need a way to produce new missionaries and mobilizers. Almost every long-term missionary I know served short-term first. I believe we need to be looking for our own replacements today, not years from now. That's the only way what we're doing here outlasts us.

I don't have every detail nailed down yet: length of stay, exact schedule, whether we'll host men, women, or couples in a given season. We're still working through that. But the foundation, literally and otherwise, is in place.

What It Costs, What It's Worth

I won't pretend hosting interns is free. In the beginning, it creates extra work: training, oversight, a learning curve on both sides. That's taxing on a team that's already stretched thin for what's in front of us. But we're trusting that the extra help in day-to-day tasks, and the future missionaries this produces, will be worth the price. I believe there's both a payoff and a cost to the things we do for the kingdom, and this is one I'm glad to pay.

As for what I hope an intern takes away, I love watching the Lord teach perspective to people who come and serve. I hope their worldview grows, their understanding of the global church deepens, and their relationship with God stretches in ways a short-term trip alone can't reach. God is willing to teach anyone who's willing to learn.



Scan to learn more.

If This Is Stirring Something in You

If reading this stirs something in you, here's where I'd start: pray, and seek the Lord first. Then talk to your pastor or a spiritual mentor you trust. After that, reach out by scanning the QR code above. We'd love to hear from you.

One honest word before you do: not every Christian is called to go, and that's alright. But if you feel that pull, ask yourself and the Lord some honest questions about why. If the answer is more about you than about Him, that's worth sitting with before you go further. But if you're looking to know Him deeper, willing to do hard things in His service, flexible enough to let Him reshape your life, and eager to use whatever gifts He's given you, you might be exactly who we're building this room for. ■

2027 TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

LOCATION	PROJECT	MONTH(S)
Mexico	Mexico Medical Mission Septic Project	January, February
Mexico	Water Supply Project (Well Drilling)	April, November
USA (Ethnos360)	Renovations & Repair (Construction)	May, November
Uganda	Construction / Infrastructure Development	May
Uganda	Hospitality, Medical	May
West Africa	Welding and Metal Fabrication	April
Vanuatu	Water Distribution	June, July, August
Vanuatu	Hospitality & Missionary Care	June, July, August

Seeking a Communications Manager



We are looking for a full-time, faith-driven Communications Manager at our Pennsylvania headquarters to share powerful stories from global mission fields across their podcast, website, and print updates. Reporting to the COO, you'll manage the brand and work closely with leadership, requiring about two years of communications experience and a true heart for ministry. If you love storytelling and missions, the team would love to hear from you!

For more information, contact Andy Bachert, U.S. Chief Operating Officer, at andybachert@fiaintl.org



SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRIPS:
[FIAintl.org/get-involved](https://fiaintl.org/get-involved)



Step into The Prayer Collective and help carry FIA's global ministry through faithful prayer. Each month, you'll receive specific prayer requests for mission workers, key projects, emerging opportunities, and unreached communities.



SCAN TO JOIN US IN PRAYER

Contact us at FIAprayercollective@fiaintl.org to join us in what God is doing around the world—shaping Kingdom impact through prayer.

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, November 20, **ALL IN Give** is coming back. Twenty-four hours, one focus: being ALL IN for the Great Commission.

This year we are rallying around clean water for West Africa and Vanuatu, two places where a well does not just meet a physical need. It opens a door for the gospel that would not open any other way. Keep watching our social media for more information.



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