

## Shawnda's journal (November 15<sup>th</sup> - December 14<sup>th</sup>)

### Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> -

I spent most of the morning cleaning & organizing the extra bathroom in the office and organizing storage areas. I've been wanting to get this done for a while, but just haven't made the time. It's always good to get things like that done.

This afternoon we went to the market and several places in town. We saw Lissie and Susan (from Paunangisu) at the market and visited with them a little. They are the daughters of Harry and Chris. We haven't seen them in a while and it was good to see them again. When we got home, I spent the rest of the afternoon finishing up my Bible studies for the week.

Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> - Study with Fiona and Joanna and it went well. I think they have already heard some of it before, but it never hurts to review. We studied Old Covenant/New Covenant. It's such an important thing. If more people understood that the old covenant is finished and that it was always God's plan for it to come to an end and for Him to establish a new covenant through Christ, there wouldn't be so many misunderstandings about the scriptures. Fiona and Joanna both agreed. I have asked them to memorize the NT books. Today Joanna could say all of them, Fiona could only say to Ephesians, but I told her next week to be able to say up to Titus. Hopefully she will continue to learn them. It's so important for being able to study more efficiently.

Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> - This morning at 5:30 Flexon came to tell us Fiona was in the hospital and he asked if we could bring some things for her that she needed (towel, plate, spoon, cup, etc) so Eric went and took her those things. We then went back to see her later this morning but she had gone to be examined. They found out that it was her appendix that was causing the problem and that it needed to come out. She was going into surgery right away.

Cindy and I went to RoseHanna's for Ladies Bible study and we prayed for Fiona's surgery and recovery. They ladies are so sweet. We always have a wonderful time together. They told us that usually during the school break (from the end of November until January) they don't have Ladies Bible study. That's fine - we'll just rest. Although I know I will miss the extra time with these ladies every week, I know that it is extra burden on them when their kids are home and they have to figure out what to do with them while they are at the Bible study. When we got home from RoseHanna's, Eric asked me if I would go stay at the hospital with Fiona so Flexon could go shower and sleep. I was happy to. Cindy wanted to go see her too, so we went to the hospital, but she was sleeping soundly, so Cindy went back home. Flexon left and I stayed with her for about 3 \_ hours. She slept soundly for about the first 30 minutes I was there and then woke up and was in lots of pain. Her dad came about an hour after I got there and stayed the rest of the time. We talked a little, but mostly comforted Fiona and let her rest. I hate that she's in so much pain, but know that it will only get better from here. Hopefully them taking out the appendix will help her stomach pains she's been having for so long.

Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> - Yoland and I studied Revelation today. We just did a brief overview of the book with the "7 Keys to Unlock the book of Revelation" from Stafford North's material on the book of Revelation. Yoland seemed to really enjoy this study and I did too. It

will be our last one for a while since we decided to take a break. We have been studying every week since May. She is a precious friend and a growing Christian. She seems to be back on the right track and wanting to follow Christ whole-heartedly. She had a time of struggle, but seems to have come out stronger because of it. My prayer for her is that she will continue to grow, continue to learn and continue to follow the word of God with her whole heart. I will keep her in my prayers and continue to encourage her along the way.

I spent some time with Fiona this afternoon. Not long, just a little time so I could encourage her and show her that I care. She is a sweet young lady and I'm glad to have her as a friend. She and I have been studying and I hope we will continue to do so. I know that some day she will see the truth and want to obey the gospel.

This evening we had fajitas with the team. I love fajita night and team night. After dinner we played a game of Farkel. Since it is a dice game, and Kaela can roll the dice, we let her play. She beat us! No kidding, a one year old beat us! We didn't even cheat for her (except that we didn't make her get 500 points to "get on the board" like we did). Anyway, it was one of the few game nights where we haven't had to constantly try to make Kaela happy b/c she was bored with our card playing, etc. She loved getting to be a part and it was hilarious that she beat us! Mike's mom sent him a new DVD so after we played Farkel and they put Kaela to bed we watched the DVD. It's always nice to have some new entertainment. :o)

**Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>** - Spent the entire morning doing a deep cleaning of the house and organizing. Antony and his son and brother come today, so I wanted to make sure the guest bedroom was nice for them. I also did a little laundry.

Antony, Barry and Kevin arrived at the house after being greeted at the airport by our guys and the Mesas (Ure and Akisa made them salusalus - it was so nice of them to take the time and energy to meet them at the airport). I know the men from NZ appreciated it.

We spent the afternoon settling in and talking. This evening we had a fellowship at Aaron and Cindy's. Almost everyone came (although rather late). We had a nice time visiting and the men enjoyed talking with Antony and Barry about the building.

**Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>** - It was a nice day today. There was a "full house" at church this morning and we had a wonderful time of worship and fellowship. We stayed around after worship and the men met about the plans for the church building. The women and kids just sat around and talked and made plans for our Christmas party.

This afternoon we all headed out to Eton. Eric and Mike each taught a lesson and did a good job. There were lots of Christians there - several visitors too. It was a nice time of fellowship. I really like going to Eton and Epau b/c I feel comfortable in those two villages since we have been there so much. Although it was a nice trip I was tired by the time we got back to town. We went to the takeaway place because we hadn't really eaten a real meal all day - it was all "snack" type food. So we talked to Yolanda a little and ate our dinner and then went home.

**Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>** - This morning Leimawa (from Etas) came to visit Cindy and me. She is a sweet lady and fun to be with. She also needed to go see her sister (in the Tagabe area of town) so Cindy and I drove her. It was interesting. We had never been to the Tagabe area. It was like a little village in itself. We met her family there, talked for a while and then left her there and went home.

Did our weekly shopping trip but this time Mike went with us since he'd never been out to Rainbow Gardens and the butcher.

We ate BBQ beef sandwiches for dinner and then watched a movie (Batman Begins) and enjoyed that a lot.

**Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>** - This morning was Ladies Bible class - we went and picked up Rose so that she could come. We enjoyed some time of singing and fellowship and of course eating. We then drew names for our Ladies gift exchange. I talked with Rebecca some and I enjoy her so much. She is so motherly and just a wise woman to look up to. She is a blessing to us. After Ladies Bible class we took Rose back home and then Ure to her house. We stopped at Ure's and got her sewing machine and looked at some puppies. We are getting a dog (or two). We want some "security" without having to have a security guard, so we are going to get a dog or two. Anyway, the puppies were cute and their mother big, so that's good.

This evening Daniel and Flexon came over for their Bible study and we all ate together at Aaron and Cindy's and then just relaxed while Flexon taught his Bible study to Daniel and Eric. Eric said he did a really good job and that he was really proud of him.

**Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>** - I went out to study with Fiona and Joanna. It was a good study and I actually noticed that Fiona was paying better attention this time than she had in the past. That was encouraging. But I also get discouraged too b/c they won't ask questions, they just agree with everything. I want them to think! I do always enjoy my time with those two though. Fiona is so sweet and fun and Joanna is a sweet young lady too.

This afternoon Cindy and I worked together to sew several projects for Christmas, etc. I am not confident with the sewing machine, so I made the patterns, cut them out and pinned them and then she would sew them. It was good teamwork and we were so proud of our finished products! We actually kind of shocked ourselves that we were able to do it.

This evening we went into town to meet for mid-week fellowship. Rose and Shem were in charge of it but were about half an hour late...so goes Vanuatu time. It is kind of frustrating though. They were waiting on a taxi - which can't really be helped in their situation b/c they don't have their own vehicle. Once everyone got there we had a devotional and then ate and talked. It was a good time of fellowship. I just wish more people in the congregation would take advantage of the mid-week fellowships. It's always such a good time and I know everyone enjoys it when they get a chance to come, it's just getting people to come that is the hard part.

**Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>** - Antony, Barry, Kevin, Eric and I left this morning to make a trip around the island. It was a good day. The road is a little bumpy when you're just starting off, but the views are well worth it! I just can't get enough of those views - they are gorgeous. We stopped in Paunangisu for a few minutes to make sure Harry and Chris remembered that Aaron is coming this weekend. When we got past Paunangisu Eric let Kevin drive for a little while and then I drove for a little while. Kevin had actually never driven a standard and did pretty well. I did well too. I didn't kill it once, but I keep telling everyone...I know how to drive a standard, I am just not comfortable with it yet. I don't like all of the stopping and starting in town - that's what bothers me. Anyway, it was a good experience.

Next we stopped in Epau for a while, talked with Ata and Rosie. The men talked about the building that they are building there in Epau and us ladies just talked. I was surprised when we drove up b/c Collin had built some "overhangs" from the hut where we stay and the kitchen. It looks good and keeps the hot sun off of your back while you're working. The ladies can wash the dishes right outside the kitchen now b/c they built the overhang shelter thing to shield the sun. I was impressed. We then went on our way to Eton.

We stopped at Eton beach to eat lunch and enjoy the beautiful view. We spent about an hour there and then headed into Eton. We stopped at Eddie's house so that Antony could ask him some questions about building costs, etc. I visited with Nettie while they went down to the church building to look at some things (construction wise).

On the way home I was so tired I tried to sleep a little (which isn't real easy with the bumpy roads) but I tried to rest at least.

**Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup>** – Antony took us all out to eat at the Waterfront Grill tonight. It was delicious. Eric and I split the Beef ribs and Grilled Chicken. We enjoyed a time of fellowship with them. They leave in the morning.

**Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup>** – Got up this morning at 4:45 to get the guys to the airport early for their flight. We waited around with them until their flight. Gomon and Seskie came to see them off too. That was nice of them to get up early to do that. Anyway, we enjoyed their visit and look forward to them coming back in March to begin construction.

The guys (Eric, Aaron, Mike and Flexon) left at about 1:00 to head out to Eton, Epau and Paunangisu. After they left, Cindy and I spent the afternoon decorating our houses for Christmas. How fun! Now, it is hard to get in the Christmas spirit when you are sweating buckets, but we tried. I blasted some Christmas music and went to decorating. It was so much fun. It does look a little funny with all of the snowman decorations in my "islandy" living room. But, that's just part of it I guess.

I drove to the e store and I am getting better. I go through these phases of wanting to drive – I think Eric making me drive the truck the other day when we went around the island gave me some confidence. So, I tried again today and did a great job. No stalls and no scary moments – that's always nice.

Cindy and I waited for Helena for quite a while until we decided that she probably wasn't coming. We ate dinner and made sure we were all locked in and then watched a movie and went to bed. We left the porch light on all night and since the security guard knew that we were home alone, we felt pretty safe. It did take me about 3 hours to finally go to sleep – partly because I was a little nervous (every time I heard a sound, it startled me) and partly because it was so hot. I finally got up, turned the fan on "high" and got some cushions from the Bakers couch to make a pallet on the floor. After that I went to sleep pretty quickly.

**Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>** – Cindy and I wore our matching island dresses this morning because Alfonia has one just like it and wanted us to all wear them together. I knew it would be fine once we got there b/c we'd match Alfonia and everyone would know why we were wearing them. I told Cindy we should call and remind her, but we decided not to. Well, Alfonia showed up and she wasn't wearing her dress. So, now Cindy and I were wearing these matching island dresses and looking quite cute – not really. After church I told her that

a white woman in an island dress looks goofy enough, so two white women in matching island dresses tops the cake for goofiness. Oh well, it wasn't a big deal – it was funny though! When we got to the building the security guard told us that we could move into a bigger room since there wasn't anyone renting that right now. The only problem with that is that now we are surrounded by loud guitars, voices, etc. instead of it just being on one side. It really is ridiculous how loud those two other groups have their speakers turned up. One group is in a room smaller than ours and turns their speakers way up (we don't even have microphones or speakers or anything and you can hear fine (that is...when those others aren't blasting us out with speakers!) Anyway, just needed to "vent" about that.

Gomon did a great job on teaching class this morning and Shem did a good job preaching. We had a few visitors and most of the members were there. It was a good group. Cindy and I thought we were staying after just to talk and eat some cookies and juice, but no one else brought anything, so we just went home and ate here. Lissie was there this morning and came home with us to watch a movie and hang out this afternoon. She said that they hired a new girl at work, so they will have a better rotation and she won't have to work so much on Sundays.

The guys got home at about 9:30 tonight. It turns out that the lights on the truck went out on the way from Paunangisu to Epau, so they had to drive home using only two small flashlights. That was a little scary for them (there aren't really street lights out there). At one point a man passed them and then figured out what had happened, so he got behind them and put his lights on bright and drove the rest of the way into town with them. That was a blessing – it could have taken a lot longer to get home if that man hadn't helped them out. They unloaded and then Eric took Mike and Flexon home.

Eric said that Flexon did a great job teaching and getting to know the Christians in Epau. Bob (Leisong's husband) has been doing Bible Correspondence Courses for a while and visiting worship every week. On Saturday he was baptized – Flexon baptized him. Flexon really enjoyed his time in Epau, so much so that he wants to go back next month and do it again. We are all so proud of him and can see such encouraging things in his future in the Lord's work.

**Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>** – I spent the morning doing laundry, cleaning and other housework. For lunch we all met at Jill's Café (it has become a tradition to eat lunch there after a trip to a village – to share what happened with the rest of the team and to eat a good 'ole American meal). This afternoon Cindy and I did our errands and grocery shopping.

**Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>** – Spent the morning doing laundry and working on Bible correspondence courses. I am going to "take over" the BCC from Epau. Partly because I know them, partly because the ones who are taking the courses are already Christians (training rather than evangelistic) and partly because I want to help Cindy. I will take on others as she sees that she needs my help.

Then I worked on typing the Bible study for Fiona and Joanna. Then I worked on my journal and a sewing project. (Cindy and I have been "going crazy" with sewing projects while we have Ure's machine – I even sewed two pillow covers all by myself today!)

Since it is a public holiday, Flexon didn't have to work, so he said he would come work on the truck lights today. Eric, Aaron and Flexon worked on that all morning and some of the afternoon. I fixed an "island lunch" – just throw together whatever you have on hand – it

actually turned out okay. I just used some meat I had marinating for tonight and put it in a soup with Ramen noodles to go over rice. Not my finest creation, but it worked. Some fresh pineapple helped round out the meal.

This evening I put some finishing touches on the two pillows I sewed this afternoon. I also cut, folded and stapled the tracts for tomorrow.

Daniel isn't going to study anymore on Tuesday nights (Flexon is). But, since Flexon was here all day, and he spent the weekend with Eric in Epau, they didn't study tonight. They'll just wait till next week. They are just going to study whatever questions Flexon has (and he always has lots of good questions because of his personal studies).

**Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** - I went to Fiona's this morning to study with her and Joanna. It went really well. We studied "What saves us?" The Bible tells us 4 things that save us...

- 1) Faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- 2) Repentance (Acts 2:38)
- 3) Confession (Romans 10:9-10)
- 4) Baptism (Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21, Mark 16:16)

I went over these four things and how God uses all of these to save us. He doesn't just tell us to have faith and nothing else...He doesn't just tell us to repent and it will all be forgiven...All 4 of these things save us. They work together to save us. If we're baptized, but don't believe first, what use is that baptism? If we repent of our sins but aren't baptized so those very sins can be washed away, are we really saved? No. Today we focused on "Faith." Over the next few weeks we will focus on the others.

I asked them if they wanted to come with me to the Sea Front park to listen to the "Preaching in the Park." Fiona decided to come (it's hard for Joanna to just pick up and leave since she has a baby). We walked to get a bus and on the way there, we talked about the studies we have been having and what she thought about them. She said, "I know I want to be baptized, but Flexon said he didn't want me to be baptized just to follow him. He said he wanted me to study first and then decide." So, I really encouraged her that he was right - there was no reason to be baptized if you didn't understand what you were doing it for. If she were to be baptized before she understood the truth, it would just be going for a swim. It was a really good talk. I really like Fiona and we have a good friendship. We can talk so freely and easily about the Bible, life, anything. It's really nice to be comfortable around her and be able to talk so freely.

We spent the afternoon at the park for Preaching in the Park. Shem was the only one there. Cindy and I didn't remember to announce it on Sunday, so I think everyone forgot (Ure, etc.). But, Shem did a good job teaching and mingling. I handed out some tracts and talked with a few people. There were these two men who asked some questions. I had no problem answering a few, but they just went on and on. Then a group started to gather, so I tried to motion to one of the guys to come and take over, but couldn't get any of their attention. So, I answered a few more and then told them that if they had more questions I would go get my husband, but it wasn't good for me to be teaching them since I was a woman and they were all men. They said, "It's okay." But I told them that I would go get my husband. They kind of split up after that, and Eric was talking, so I just went back and sat down. I wasn't real comfortable with what had happened, but decided that next time as soon as someone asked a question that I would go get one of the guys to come talk with them. That's the only way to avoid things like this. The rest of the afternoon went fine. There were a few who were

genuinely interested and Shem, Mike, Aaron and Eric talked to them. Eric set up a study for tomorrow with one young man who he met. He also said he'd come on Sunday. Hopefully something good will come of that.

This afternoon I drove the truck to the grocery store (with Eric). I was pretty proud of myself. I'm getting more and more confident. I'm not quite ready to do it on my own, but I will be soon I think.

I spent the evening with Kaela while Aaron and Cindy went to Etas to study. I always enjoy those evenings. It's great practice and we love her as if she were our own!

**Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>** - This evening we went to Mike's for the mid-week fellowship. It was a good crowd. We sang for a while and then Mike talked a little about making sure we were planning ahead for the new year in our spiritual lives and looking forward to a new year for the church as well. Then we ate, talked and laughed until about 8:00 or so. It was a great fellowship.

**Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>** - This morning Cindy and I went out to Rose's to tell her that we were changing the date of our ladies get together. We had a good visit with them. Shem's brother is here from Ambrym (he's just here for a couple of weeks to sell his produce from his garden). He is a Christian and it was great to get to meet him. We are hopeful that at least one of the guys will get to go to Ambrym soon to visit the Christians there. I think Shem and Rose will go at the first of the year for about a month to help the church there. That will be good.

Then we went and saw Lissie to tell her about the change in date for our ladies get together too. Of course she is fine with that. She said she'd still come over tomorrow just to hang out though since she has the day off. We always enjoy her, so that's great.

We spent much of the rest of the afternoon running around town comparing prices of a few things for Christmas presents (for Mike, Aaron, Eric and Kaela). It's amazing the differences in prices, so you really have to shop around.

This evening we had fajitas for team dinner (always yummy) and sat around the table and talked for a long time (we haven't done that in a while). Then we played Monopoly and I actually won! I don't think I have ever won a game of Monopoly in my life. After Monopoly Mike went home, but the rest of us played a couple of games of "Pitch" (a card game). The guys won, but that's okay...Cindy and I had fun anyway and laughed so hard we ended up in tears!

**Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>** -It's been so hot lately that we decided to go for a swim in the lagoon this morning. It's so nice to be able to go and get back within an hour (and not feel rushed at all!) It was so relaxing and refreshing to get cooled off in the water.

This afternoon Lissie came over to visit with Cindy and me. We always have a great time together. She is such a fun friend.

This evening I made pizza from scratch again. It is Eric's favorite. I don't make it too often because it is time consuming, but that's okay. I like to make it for him when I can. Lissie was still here, so she watched me make it and enjoyed it with us. She had eaten pizza in town before, but it's so different. She said she really liked this kind.

**Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>** – It was another good day of worship and fellowship with the church here in Vila. There were several visitors and a few visiting Christians. Shem’s brother, Ezekiel, is in town for a while. He and his family worship together at home on Ambrym (another island in Vanuatu). We all came to our house after worship to eat. We had a good group, not many visitors, but it was a good time of fellowship for the Christians. This afternoon I took a two hour nap! I rarely sleep during the day, but it was so hot and I was pretty tired that I decided to lay down and cool off. I ended up sleeping for two hours! I must have been really tired.

**Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>** – It is HOT!!! Everywhere I went in the house I carried my floor fan along and plugged it in. Seriously, if I don’t have the fan pointed on me at all times, I just sit there and sweat. It’s a lot like humid Oklahoma in the heat of summer, but here there is no air-conditioner relief here like there is in Oklahoma. So, you can imagine! Needless to say, I am glad for a floor fan that is lightweight so I can “lug” it around with me. I spent some time this morning and afternoon working on my Bible study for Fiona. I like getting it done early, so I can think it through and not have to rush. We went to the post office today to mail some things and I decided to go check on a package my mom sent me about two months ago and I still hadn’t gotten it. So, I went to the customs desk, asked if they had a package for me and she checked in her computer and said, “Well, it says we have one here for Shawnda Brandell, but it says it came on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Did you get a notification slip in your box?” I said, “No, we never got a slip.” She went back and checked on it and sure enough...there it was. It had been sitting in the post office since November 8<sup>th</sup> – apparently they had just forgotten to put a notification slip in our box! Anyway, mom and I had been worrying about it (we thought it was lost in the mail) so it was a relief to know it wasn’t lost.

**Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>** – This morning Martino (Sam and Leimawa’s son – from Etas) came and asked if he could stay the night with the Bakers. Of course they welcomed him and were glad to have him. He is a precious boy. He’s 8 and a wonderful kid. He is on school break and wanted to come play with Kaela and spend the night. So, he rode in to work with his dad and then walked over here this morning.

Martino, Kaela, Cindy and I went to town to do a little shopping. Martino saw several people he knew and they all asked what he was doing with two “Misses” (that is the Bislama word for white woman). He just told them that he was on school holiday and came to stay with us for the night to play with Kaela.

While we were in town it started raining (we’re not talking a sprinkle here – we’re talking a downpour). Apparently the rainy season has decided to finally arrive. It’s crazy b/c it will pour for a few minutes and then completely stop and then some time later it will pour again. It’s a different kind of hot today – a sticky wet hot. At least the sun isn’t so strong while it’s raining. And so rainy season begins...

This evening Daniel and Flexon came over to eat and study. Daniel has decided that he does want to continue. We had a good discussion during dinner (a lot of times it’s quiet, so when we have a discussion I always enjoy it). Then when it was time for them to study, Eric taught them some of the basics of “How to make a sermon.”



**Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** – Went to study with Fiona and Joanna. We studied “repentance” (therefore, we also studied “sin”) and it went really well. The good thing is that they both really already know what they need to do to be saved; they just aren’t quite ready yet. So, we’ll keep studying and teaching until they get to the point where they are ready.

**Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>** – It rained pretty much all day today. There were times where it was coming down so hard that I didn’t know if it was ever going to stop! Rain is really interesting here – I’m sure it’s just the way it is in the islands, but...I’m not used to it. I’m sure I’ll get to where heavy rain doesn’t bother me too much, but right now I am still amazed by its power – not raining one minute and then drenching rain the next! Gomon called and said that if it didn’t clear up that we weren’t going to meet at the park for fellowship. It didn’t clear up, so we didn’t meet.

**Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>** – Leimawa came over today (from Etas) to study with Cindy. She wasn’t there for the study about salvation on Wednesday, so Sam (her husband) told her she should come study with Cindy today. She brought Miriam (her oldest daughter) who has been away at Nguna for school (she’s back for Christmas and school break). Miriam is a sweet girl. She’s 10 years old and great fun to be around! While Leimawa and Cindy were studying, Miriam, Kaela and I played at our house. Miriam is one of the most outgoing little girls I have met since we’ve been here. She was “hammin’ it up” for me – singing me all kinds of songs that she learned at school, telling me all about what life was like on Nguna, and teaching me card games. She was fun. They left at about 1:30 or so to go home. When Leimawa and Miriam went home, the guys went to pick up our puppies from Ranette’s (the little girl that comes to church with Gomon & Ure – her dog had 8 puppies and we told her we wanted 2). The guys came home with two girls – one for each family. We named ours “Jun Tao” (the bad guy from the movie “Rush Hour”) – we wanted something that sounded fierce. Aaron and Cindy named theirs “Rex Kwan-Do” (they wanted a fierce one too). They had bad fleas so we looked up a home remedy on the internet and tried to bathe them in Skin so Soft (that’s what was suggested). It killed some, but we decided to apply it directly tomorrow to see if that helps. I have never dealt with fleas, so this is a new thing for me.

**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** – I spent the day organizing the middle bedroom...the closet was a mess and I wanted to get it cleaned out. I also swept and did a few other things around the house.

I got to talk to my mom, dad, and sister today – that is always a nice treat. I like to be able to hear their voices – it makes it seem like they aren’t so far away.

This afternoon Mike called to tell us that the man and woman he performed the wedding for a while back wanted to be baptized. He and Morris studied with them for about 5 hours today. They are from Tanna and are staying at Morris’ farm. They are planning to go back to Tanna in about a month. The reason Morris and Mike studied with them so long is that they wanted them to be sure that they knew what becoming a Christian means – when they go back to Tanna...they will be the only Christians there and will need to worship even if it’s just the two of them and teach others the gospel. They thought about it and decided that they were ready. So, we have a new brother and sister in Christ as of this evening. We are all excited for them and look forward to great things on Tanna.

**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>** – We had a wonderful time of worship and fellowship again today. Fiona and Joanna came with Flexon today – we were glad to have them again. Some other visitors were there as well. We always enjoy having visitors. Shem preached on the will of God and did a good job. After worship we ate some cookies and crackers and then watched the Revelation video. There is one more after this and we will watch it in two weeks (the guys go to the villages next weekend).

This afternoon we went to the airport to pick up Miriam (Paul Vuhu's wife). Her plane was supposed to arrive at about 3:30, but it had been delayed. So, at about 7:00 this evening we headed back out to the airport to greet them. This time she was there (along with Alfina and Myrick – two of her youngest children). They decided to sleep at her sisters house for the next few days until the custom wedding ceremony was over and then they would come sleep at our house after that. So, we won't see them again until Tuesday night. That's okay, we'll enjoy them while we have them.

**Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>** - Cindy and I left the house this morning at 8:00 to try and get our shopping done while it was cooler out. We also wanted to get it done before lunch. Today is Ure's birthday so she and Akisa came over to eat lunch and finish the movie, "White Christmas." We had a great time eating, watching the movie and visiting. We always enjoy our time with Ure and Akisa.

This evening Flexon came over to go over what he was teaching in Epau this weekend. He wanted to ask Eric some questions that he had to make sure he was teaching it correctly.

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** – I had a frustrating morning – it wasn't a big deal, but sometimes I get frustrated over little things. I did the laundry, hung it on the line to dry, and not even 5 minutes later someone started a fire in the yard next door (either to cook or burn trash). So, that meant I had to go out and take down all of the clothes that I had just hung out and find a place for them to dry in the house. Anyway, I know it's part of life in this country, but sometimes I get so tired of smoke!

Thankfully the smoke cleared by "noonish" so I was able to hang my clothes back out on the line. This afternoon Cindy and I ran errands in town and then wrapped Christmas presents. We wanted to get things done before Aaron's parents come so that when they come we can enjoy them.

This evening Eric went and picked up Daniel so he could come eat with us (Flexon said yesterday that he couldn't come today). We ate and then we played a couple of games of "Farkel." We had a great time and then took him home.

**Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>** – This morning I watched Kaela from about 8:00 or so until I went to study with Joanna and Fiona. Cindy wanted to be able to do a "deep cleaning" before Dave and Nila come (which is a little hard to do with a toddler underfoot). So, Kaela and I had a good morning together.

Today we studied baptism. Both Joanna and Fiona want to be baptized, but aren't ready yet to make the commitment involved in following Christ. I encouraged them to talk with Flexon if they had any questions, or they could ask me too. They both know that right now they are "outside of Christ" and want to be baptized into Christ, but aren't ready yet. They know

what a big commitment this is and don't want to enter into it lightly or half-heartedly. I will be praying for them to come to the point where they are ready.

When I got home, I watched Kaela again (Aaron and Cindy went to Etas this afternoon instead of this evening due to some conflicting events this evening at Etas). So, Kaela and I played with her toys, sang songs, played outside in the water, played with the puppies and had a grand 'ole time.

When Kaela went down for a nap I got some things done around the house. I washed dishes, made dinner, did a quick work-out, made some cookies, and painted something for Cindy. Anyway, I feel like I got a lot done around the house and I felt good about it.