

From ^OR Point ^OF View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Shawnda's Journal (March 15th – April 14th)

Wednesday, March 15th – This morning Cindy took me to see Edna. I wanted to make sure that if she just forgot she wouldn't be embarrassed to come tomorrow to study, so I went and saw her. It turns out that she had a problem at the house and didn't work last Thursday so that's why she didn't come. She said she really wanted to study and was already planning to come tomorrow. It was good to see her and know that she does want to study.

This afternoon Todd and Jeana came over for a while and visited. It has been good getting to know both her and Jeanette. All of them headed out to Etas with the Bakers for the study out there. It's a great way for them to get to see village life without having to sleep in the village. Hopefully they will enjoy that.

Eric, Flexon, Kaela and I went to Mele Maat and studied with Selena's family. There were two men there this time and both were really interested. There is a "core" that studies each time and they all seem to be really interested. Selena, Jenny, & Nettie are the ladies who are always there. Tonight Clement and Andrew joined us and were both really positive about the study. They both made comments (a first for the men out there). We are hopeful that some of these "core" people will obey the gospel in time.

Thursday, March 16th – This morning I did laundry and then I spent some time studying for the Bible study with Edna. I already have today's done b/c it is what I was going to teach last week, but I am studying for next week and the week after that. I am going to try something different (really just in what order I teach things) and see how that works. I am constantly trying to make the studies more clear and understandable.

Edna came at about 2:00 to study. She is such a neat young lady. Today we just went over an overview of the Bible, but she really listened and followed along. At the end she said that she has tried to study the Bible on her own, but that she was glad to be studying with me b/c she liked how things were outlined so clear and it made sense to her. She said that she didn't know it, but that the Bible really is pretty easy to understand. I told her that's the reason God gave it to us – to read, understand and obey. "Seek and ye shall find..." I'm glad she is able to follow along and learn as we go. She is genuinely interested in studying God's word and I am so glad to be studying with her.

This evening I stayed at home while Eric went and taught some song-leading to Alsen at Mike's house. I am really proud of how well Alsen is doing. He is really interested in growing and leading. I think Mike has really been helping him. Alsen goes to Mike's once or twice a week to study, lift weights and visit. I think Mike enjoys the company and Alsen is growing. It's good for both of them.

When the others got home from dinner, we played some cards and then called it a night.

Friday, March 17th – I took some cross-stitching patterns/ materials to some of the women there in the maternity ward so they would have something to do while they are waiting with their babies who are in incubators. Anyway, while I was there, I taught a few of them how to

do it and left the materials with them. I also left some Bible correspondence and other reading material (Voice of Truth International). Salome' has been there for about a month or so and was interested in the cross-stitching, but doesn't seem interested in the Bible study. That's okay – maybe someone else will be interested and she will share them with the others. There was a new young lady there, Marie, whose baby is sleeping sideways and they want her to sleep at the hospital until she delivers so that they can keep a close watch on the baby. Anyway, after we talked for a while, she said that she was having a girl and asked if she could name her after me. Of course I was honored. It was neat.

Saturday, March 18th –Mike called this morning and told us that Patrick (a new Christian from Tanna) had taught his sister and she wanted to be baptized. So, the guys went to witness that. We are all very happy for her – her name is Miriam. We are so proud of Patrick too for teaching her.

We had ladies class at Cindy's today. Only Cindy, Ure, Fiona and me were there, but we still had a great time together.

Sunday, March 19th – It was raining hard this morning off and on, so there were many that couldn't get to worship this morning. Mabel was supposed to teach the lesson today, but couldn't get there in time because of the rain. She felt awful about it, but I told her that it was fine and that she could teach another time. (It would have been her first time to teach.) It worked out fine (I just drew on the whiteboard while I told the story).

Pbles led giving for the first time by himself, so that was neat. Eric preached and did an excellent job. The singing was really good. Then we had a nice time of fellowship afterward too. The Matthew video and discussion has been going really well – everyone seems to enjoy it.

This evening Eric and I walked into town to the little café by the water. We really like that place b/c it's so pretty to watch the sunset, has smoothies, and we have a nice, quiet time to talk. It's good for us to do every now and then just to relax and enjoy each other.

Monday, March 20th – I just had the most wonderful experience volunteering at the hospital. I went to see Salome' and the others to see how they were doing on their cross-stitching. It ended up that she was sleeping, but Marie was awake and ready to "story-on" (visit). She is precious. She kept referring to the baby as "Small Shawnda." She is ready to have the baby. She hopes to have her this week. After I talked with her for close to an hour, Salome' was finished sleeping & feeding her baby and ready to talk. She told me that she is so glad I brought the Bible correspondence courses and that she is excited to do them. She wants me to bring more for her sister to do when she goes home. We talked for about 45 minutes. I gave her my phone number so she could get in contact with me after she gets out of the hospital next week. She said she would want to meet for lunch or see if I could come to her house and see the baby. Before I was about to go she got teary-eyed and said that she was so glad to have me for a friend. That meant a lot to me. I am glad to have had an impact on her life. I hope that our friendship will open a door for me to teach her the gospel in the future. By the way, she said that she was naming her baby boy after Eric because of me.

Tuesday, March 21st – Cindy has pink-eye, so we went to the pharmacy to get her some meds for it. (The pharmacy here is great b/c they don't have restrictions on what is prescription and what is non-prescription. You just tell the pharmacist your symptoms and he tells you what to buy. – Of course if you had something serious, you would have to go see a doctor, but if the pharmacist knows what it is, he'll suggest something.)

I went to the hospital for a couple of hours this afternoon and talked with Salome', Marie, Belinda, and several other ladies. I helped the nurses too by bathing a newborn and various other things around the maternity ward.

When I got home I fixed dinner for Flexon, Daniel, Eric and I. Flexon didn't come (he's been here all day the last two days working on the Baker's car and needed to go home). So, Daniel, Eric and I ate and then played a few games. We have a great time together. Eric and Daniel are alike in so many ways, it's funny to see them together, playing off of each other and teasing each other. We laughed a lot.

Wednesday, March 22nd – I spent the morning copying Bible Correspondence Courses (which is a big job) and working on the Bible study for tomorrow with Edna. I am going to try to teach in the same way as the "Open Bible Study" courses teach (by having her read verses and asking questions about those verses). I just have one course (but it's for after someone becomes a Christian). But, I took the basic idea from it and made my own study for "Who is God?" (in Bislama). I hope it goes well.

This afternoon Eric and I had to run a few errands in town and then when we got back I worked on the Bible study some more and then typed it up. While I was working on that, Eric got a call from Alex (a friend he has studied with in the past who works at the radio station). Alex wants Eric to come do a show with him tomorrow. He'll ask the question, "What is Christianity?" and just let Eric start talking until he has a question or until someone calls in with a question for Eric. Eric's a little nervous, but it will be a great opportunity. He will have time at the end to say who we are, where we meet, and that we offer free Bible studies (correspondence and personal one-on-one).

Thursday, March 23rd – I went to the hospital b/c Marie was having a c-section and asked me to come take care of "small Shawnda" while she was recovering. I did. I gave her her first bath and then held her, sang to her and rocked her until someone from Marie's family came to help her (at about noon). Because I volunteer at the hospital, I get to go in and out even when it's not visiting hours, so I was able to be with Marie when her family couldn't. I was happy to help her out and I fell in love with my little namesake from the moment I saw her. She is precious.

Eric did a great job on the radio. I was so proud of him. He just started talking and kept talking until a caller called. There were 2 callers in the 30-minute show. They both asked good questions and Eric did a good job answering them. It was right at the end of the lunch hour and I think lots of people heard it. It was a good opportunity to speak the truth and tell about the Lord's church.

Edna came at about 1:30 and we went through the study. It went well. She is really bright and said that she liked the answering the questions b/c it made her think. Then we spent some time talking – we always have good conversations.

This evening we had the mid-week fellowship at Aaron and Cindy's. Gomon's family and Steven's family were there. We had a really good time singing and talking.

Friday, March 24th – I went and checked on Marie and little Shawnda this morning. Marie's mother was there, and Marie and the baby were sleeping, so I just left some photos I took yesterday and left. I spent the day working on things around the house.

Saturday, March 25th – We had ladies class at RoseHanna's this afternoon. We shared our prayer needs and prayed together for them. Then we had a great lunch together and planned for next month. I was so happy with what was proposed. Ure suggested that she would take

the first week and that we meet at the church land again to have another “work day” for the ladies. She said “We need to keep it clean and not let the bush grow up around the building so that when the people come in July, it will be ready to go...” She said she thought we should do it every month. I think it’s a great idea (especially since she thought of it). RoseHanna said that she would be in charge of the second week and suggested that we go out to Etas to visit with the ladies out there. She said that she thought we could encourage them since they are about to start meeting out there by themselves and we need to do everything we can to help them. I was so proud of her. She is really a sweet and thoughtful lady. So, we’re planning that for the second weekend in April. The third one Fiona offered to host out at her house. We’ll go swimming and have a little “cookout,” local style. It will be a fun day together. Then Mabel offered to host the fourth week out at the farm (she and Rema will be “in charge.”) I am having the 5th week at my house (since I won’t be here for most of May and June and I wanted to make sure I did my part too). I think I will make it a time of prayer and getting to know one another better. I was so pleased with how well the planning went and so encouraged and uplifted by the thoughtfulness and willingness of the ladies in the planning.

The guys left pretty soon after we got home from RoseHanna’s. I never like it when Eric is gone, and don’t really like to be by myself once it starts getting dark, so Cindy and I just watched a movie and then went to her house for the night. Akisa came and spent the night with us, but didn’t come till later, and we just talked for a while and then went “right to bed.”

Sunday, March 26th – We had a wonderful morning. My kids (Seselo and Noel) were great today. Mabel helped teach today (went through the memory verse with them and led the review game). She isn’t comfortable teaching yet, but we’re working on that. She and I have decided to start meeting on Thursday afternoons. She’ll come in time for the study with Edna (which will be great for both of them) and then she’ll stay and we’ll work on Bible class stuff (so she will be comfortable teaching – we’ll do little “mini” teacher’s workshops). Flexon taught adult class for Mike (he’s in Eton). We didn’t have as big of a crowd as usual, but we had lots of people who haven’t been there in a while. Lissie came with little Wayne. Also, Yoland and Willie were there. Kal was too. Gomon wasn’t there (he’s doing a job on the island of Epi) but the rest of his “crew” was. Ure brought a neighbor and her son too. Patrick brought his wife, Leikavei. Steven and Flexon ended up being the only “leaders” there (Kal is too shy to lead anything and Patrick is such a new Christian that he isn’t comfortable yet). I was so proud of Flexon for “taking charge.” Steven was sick, so Flexon kind of took what he could and asked Steven just to lead songs and preach (he was already scheduled to preach). I was proud of Steven too b/c he was sick, but he said, “I don’t feel good, but there isn’t anyone else, so please just be patient with me.” He sat down to preach (which was perfectly fine) and preached an excellent lesson. Flexon (without being prompted) announced Patrick’s baptism and later asked him to come “pass the plate” after he said the prayer. Flexon shows such great leadership potential.

Lissie and Wayne came over this afternoon and ate dinner with us. She is such a precious friend. Cindy and I love her so much. We are praying for Kalman (Wayne’s father) as he is a member of the SDA church. He never goes, but isn’t willing to “follow” Lissie to worship with us either. (He’s got “Saturday only” pretty ingrained in him...) Anyway, Lissie expressed her worry about him, but is also hopeful that she can be a good influence on him and turn him to the truth. He is a great guy, but he’s not a Christian. That’s hard for Lissie. The guys got home from the village at around 8:00 or so. Eric and I stayed up for a while and talked about our weekends, then went to bed b/c we were both tired.

Monday, March 27th - I worked on the Bible study for Edna all morning, did laundry, and then we met the team at Jill's for lunch and a village report. I always enjoying how everyone's weekend went in the villages. It's good to hear updates on all of the brethren in those different villages. Then Cindy, Kaela and I went grocery shopping for what felt like the rest of the afternoon. (Grocery shopping days always feel so long.)

I called my parents this afternoon. They are on vacation in Branson and having a great time. I don't know how long it's been since they have gone on a trip by themselves (besides to Oklahoma). I enjoyed talking to them – I miss them.

Tuesday, March 28th – I washed the cushion covers, relaxed and then made some cookies. I went to the hospital this afternoon to volunteer. Marie and Shawnda already went home (yesterday) as did another mama who has been there for almost three months now (she's from Tanna). Belinda and Salome' are still there, but expected to go home soon. I washed a baby, talked to some mamas, and took some babies to get their injections. It was a productive afternoon – I felt like I was helpful. When I got back, I typed the study for Edna.

Wednesday, March 29th – We went to study at Mele Maat this evening. There were only 4 people there. Selena is sick and the men didn't come (one was sleeping at the garden but I don't know where the other one was). We ended up doing the study with the 4 who were there, and made an "appointment" to come back and study with the rest. We'll go back on Friday to study with Selena and anyone else who wants to study.

Thursday, March 29th – Lissie, Lexa and Ure all came over this afternoon to visit. They had all gone to the hospital and stopped by to see us. I enjoyed visiting with them. While we were sitting there, Ure asked about our bilums and Cindy and I both said we were stuck. She told us to get them out and she'd help us. She fixed both of ours and we both are well on our way now. I finally "get it" – it took a while!

Then Edna came over to study. We studied "Who is God the Father?" and it went really well. She is such a sweet young lady. I enjoy her. Mabel didn't come, but that's okay. I figure something came up that she couldn't avoid. So, it's okay. I still enjoyed Edna.

This evening we all met at an exercise park in town to have our weekly fellowship. We went and picked up Fiona and Morris and met everyone else there. It was so much fun. The ladies and kids walked down the exercise path and tried the exercises and the men stayed at the top of the hill and threw the football around. It wasn't a normal "sit down and fellowship" kind of get together, but it was still lots of fun and neat to do something different. I enjoyed it.

Saturday, April 1st – We met at the land at 7:00 this morning to do some cleaning up. The ladies are trying to be a part of the building project. I am so proud of all of the ladies. We had a good time (although I got a nasty blister on my hand from the bush knife that I am not used to slinging around). I was sore, but it was worth it.

This afternoon I did some last minute work on Bible class stuff. Then Eric and I went to visit Leisava and Patrick (Harry Archie's daughter). They are both really interested in studying the Bible and we set up a study for next week. They say they will come tomorrow to worship and are looking forward to it. We are really excited about their interest.

Sunday, April 2nd - It was a great day today, We had a great group of Christians there and a few visitors too. Leisava and Patrick did come today – we were so glad that they did. After worship, Eric announced Leisava and Patrick's new baby, "Shawnda Leitricia." They named her after me. I was very honored. Also, the other Patrick came and brought his wife, Leikavei.

Mabel brought a friend, Woi, and Rema's husband came today too. This afternoon we had a fellowship meal at our house. Everyone came and we had a great time visiting. Later this afternoon I packed and got ready for our little "birthday getaway" that Eric is taking me on tomorrow. We are excited about it.

Monday, April 3rd to Wednesday, April 5th – We left this morning to go to Moso island (where Tranquility Island resort is). We had an absolutely wonderful time. The accommodations are somewhat primitive (we did have our own bathroom right outside our room though and a beach right off of our porch), and we loved it. It was nice to get away for a while and just relax. We both got a little sunburned, but it was worth it.

Thursday, April 6th – I got caught up on housework this morning and unpacked our bag. Lissie came over and dropped off Wayne while she went to the hospital to get some medicine for him. Then, when she came back, we visited for a while. This afternoon Edna and Mabel came to study. We had a great study about "Who is the Holy Spirit?" and she asked some good questions. We had a nice study and discussion. When Edna went back to work, Mabel and I planned for Sunday School. She is really enjoying it (and I sure and glad). This afternoon I went to the hospital to see Salome' but didn't get to see her because they released her on Monday. I was sorry to miss her, but she has my phone number and I can try to contact her through her husband b/c I know where he works. I ended up staying at the hospital for about an hour volunteering. This evening we went to Mike's for the mid-week fellowship. There was a pretty good group there. I always enjoy the mid-week fellowships.

Friday, April 7th – Cindy and I spent the morning running errands in town. I had a terrible allergy attack and was feeling pretty terrible, so this afternoon I just sat around, worked on my bilum, and got caught up on my journal. This evening we had our team dinner. We ate grilled fajitas. We always have a nice time together.

Saturday, April 8th – We went out to Etas this morning for a ladies' fellowship. It was RoseHanna's week to decide where we'd go and what we'd do, so she suggested going to encourage the women at Etas. We all had a great time. RoseHanna, Ure, Cindy, me, Fiona, Mabel, Winnie, Rema, and Woi all came from Vila. Ruth & Leimawa greeted us when we got to Etas. We were so glad to get to spend time with them. These women are so good about accepting new people and treating them as if they had always been a part of the group. It's amazing to watch how loving and hospitable these Christian women are. After we got home, I rested for about an hour and then went to watch Akisa play netball. Cindy had to go to the store, so she dropped Kaela and me off at the netball court and then came and joined us after. We watched most of the game (got there at the end of the first quarter). They played a hard team (very aggressive and hard-nosed). The other team won, but Akisa's team played hard and stuck with them up to the end. I always enjoy watching her play – and I am starting to get to know the other girls on her team. Maybe that will open some doors in the future. I spent the rest of the afternoon working on last minute Bible class preparations (really in preparation for next week, but I planned ahead in case Mabel wasn't able to make it).

Sunday, April 9th – This morning went well. Mabel taught the boys for the first time. Seselo wasn't there – he was sick. So, we just had Noel and Toto (we let Toto come in our class so Noel wouldn't be the only one). There was a good group there this morning. Patrick came, but since their little boy was sick, Leisava didn't. But, we are planning to study with them this afternoon.

We went to Patrick and Leisava's this afternoon to study and it went so well. I am so glad we have gotten to know them. They are both so smart and really understand. It's so encouraging to study with them b/c they are really interested, quick learners, and excited. That sure makes it encouraging and fun to study with them. What a neat family.

Monday, April 10th – We went to Mele Maat this morning to study with Selena. She has been sick and wasn't at the last study (about salvation) – so we went to study it with her. She was really receptive and knows what she needs to do, but really understood the importance of the decision. So, she said she wanted to talk to her husband. She knows she is responsible for herself, but she said she hoped she could talk to him and get him to study too so that they could help each other in following through with their decision. I can respect that. So, we pray that she will be ready to make the decision and that her husband will be interested in studying too (or at least be supportive of her).

Cindy and I spent most of the afternoon running around getting groceries. We ran into a couple that Eric and I met at Tranquility Island, Gibbo and Mina, and talked to them for a while. They are such a fun couple –really sweet. They go back to Australia on Thursday.

Tuesday, April 11th – Cindy and I went with Mike to look at apartments. He really wants to move to a smaller place, but these two we looked at are too small we think. One is a studio and one a one-bedroom apartment. The studio wouldn't really work although it is a convenient place (downtown behind the police station), but Cindy and I both thought the one bedroom was great. It was clean and spacious. He really wants two bedrooms, but we don't know that he can find any in his price range (that are suitable). We'll keep our ears open and keep looking.

We spent the rest of the morning downtown trying to pick up a few things that we had both been needing. Sometimes shopping is so frustrating here. It's pretty limited (compared to what we are used to in the States). But, it's better than what we would have anywhere else in Vanuatu, so we should be thankful. :o)

This evening we went and studied with Patrick and Leisava again. We are trying to go twice a week since we leave for the States in about a month. They are so great to study with. We are so encouraged by their interest and excitement.

Wednesday, April 12th – I went to study with Leikavei this afternoon. She's Patrick's wife (who was baptized in March). We had a good study. She is interested and is glad to study. I'm glad she asked to study the Bible. Hopefully she will obey the gospel soon.

Eric went to study with Kim and Rehab (at Mele Maat). I stayed home with Kaela b/c she's distracting and I would have spent all of my time carrying her around and trying to keep her quiet, so I decided to stay home with her. It's a good thing I did b/c her little tummy was sore.

Thursday, April 13th – This morning it was just one thing right after the other. I got up ready to get my Bible study all finished and typed up (for today) but had to do several things before I could get started on that. Then, right when I sat down to do that, Marie called. She had baby Shawnda (the other one) down at the hospital to weigh her so she wanted me to come see them before they went home. I went, but couldn't find her at first. But, I did see Leisava (and the other baby Shawnda). So, I sat and talked to her for a while. There were tons of moms

and babies there! It was crazy. (They pull numbers when they get there and they were already through the first 100 and starting over with #1.) Then I saw Marie and went and talked to her and held Baby Shawnda for a while. She was glad to see me. I told her I would come see her and the baby soon out at their place.

After the hospital, I came home and got the Bible study typed up and ready to go. Then I waited for them to show up. Mabel and Woi came at about 1:30 and we waited until 2:00, but Edna never showed up, so we went ahead and did the study anyway b/c Woi is interested and wanted to start studying. It was a good study for her to "start" with. She asked Mabel how her sins could be forgiven and Mabel told her that she needed to be baptized, so Woi said she wanted to. But, Mabel said, "Not yet. You need to understand what you are doing first. Let's study with Shawnda and she'll help you understand." So, we are going to continue studying with Edna, but we'll do another study with just Woi after Edna leaves each week. She's a lot father along than Edna and needs to understand the importance of the church and salvation so we'll go to that next.