

Shawnda's Journal

June 15th - July 14th

Saturday, June 17th - Monday, June 19th - We had a three day layover in Fiji. It was great to see the brethren there. Also, Robert Martin was in town for the day on Sunday so we got to spend some time with him too. The church in Nadi has a few new members, so it was good to meet them too. The rest of the time in Fiji we spent resting and trying to get used to the time difference again. Having to stay a few days in Fiji seemed like an unneeded hassle, but it turned out to be good because of the time we were able to spend with the brethren there and to rest up so that we could "hit the ground running" once we got back to Vanuatu.

Tuesday, June 20th - We got back Vanuatu this morning. We were so happy to be home again. We were only gone a month, but it seemed a lot longer. The Bakers, Mike and Ure were there to greet us when we got off of the plane. There's nothing like hearing my sweet little Kaela's voice saying, "Auntie Shawnda, I missed you." She talks so much more than she did when we left. She is speaking in full sentences now! I can't believe how much she had changed in a month!!!

It is absolutely beautiful here. The weather is so nice. We don't remember it being this cool last year ever! In fact, I had to put on pants and socks this evening! Wow - never thought that day would come. :o)

Today we unpacked and gave the Bakers and Mike their things that we brought back for them. I went to town with Cindy, then we came home and made dinner for the team. Cindy knew I wouldn't want to go to the grocery store on my first day back so she already had everything ready to go. I really appreciated that. During dinner we all gave updates of what we had been up to over the past month. Mike's trip to Santo was a good one. There's much work to be done there. Aaron, Robert and Ken had a good trip to Ambae. There's much work to be done there too. We "called it a night" early b/c we were tired.

Wednesday, June 21st - First things first: laundry!!! I did a little laundry, made a grocery list, headed to the grocery store and so began my reentry into Vanuatu life. :o) After a morning/afternoon of grocery shopping, I needed a little rest. I finished putting things away from our trip and then rested for a little while. This afternoon Eric and I went to visit a few Christians. I drove and did a good job. I have finally decided that I need to be independent. I don't want to have to ask Cindy and Eric to take me everywhere I want to go. It's ridiculous that I haven't been driving here for a year, I just need to realize that I can drive a standard, I just need to do it! Anyway, we wanted to go see Flexon and Fiona and Patrick, Lesava, and Harry. We were so glad to see them. We had a good visit with all of them. We had really missed them. We came home and ate dinner and then headed to bed early. We're still worn out because of the time difference.

Thursday, June 22nd - Cindy and I went to Ure's to get her sewing machine. We both have a few things to sew. I drove to Ure's. It was my first trip to Fres Wata and it wasn't bad. I am getting more confident now. That's good.

I talked to my mom for a while on the phone, but dad was working. It was good to hear her voice again. This evening we walked to the park to have our midweek fellowship. It was Shem's week, but he didn't come. I think he's sick. Ure and her bunch didn't come either b/c

Seskie has malaria and has to stay home to recuperate. Mike, Cindy, Kaela and I waited until 6:00, Flexon and Fiona showed up, then Patrick too. We decided to come back to our house and sing and eat some popcorn. When we got here, we sang (Eric and Aaron joined us) and then we visited, ate popcorn and played cards for a while. We had a really good time with everyone. It's always frustrating when the older Christians don't come, but since Shem and Seskie were sick, we understood. Those of us who were there had a nice fellowship.

Friday, June 23rd - Eric and I went to Epau this morning to visit with the Christians there. We stopped at Eton first to see Eddie, Morris, and others. Morris rode with us to Epau. We had a nice visit with the Christians that were home, Eric asked them their preferences on PIBC course times, and finalized plans with Wallace (for helping with the Vila church building). It was a good trip.

When we got home, Cindy, Kaela and I walked to town to the market. They didn't have peppers. We decided to take a bus back, but halfway home it got a flat tire, so we ended up walking halfway back (but, thankfully we didn't have to trudge up the big hill since we'd already passed it). :o)

This afternoon I spent getting caught up on some "office work." Then I went and visited the ladies out at the farm (Mabel & Rema). It was my first "solo" drive, and I did great. Rema and Mabel were surprised to see me, but also glad. We had a really good visit. I have been thinking about starting a Bible study with several of the young Christian ladies (on how to study the Bible, grow up in Christ, and how to teach others). They are both really interested. I am going to ask Fiona, Leisava and the others if they would be interested in joining us. We also talked about going to visit Woi. Those two ladies at the farm (Mabel and Rema) are so precious and really want to grow.

This evening we had our team dinner and watched a movie together. Tomorrow the ladies are going to Eton for fellowship. We are all looking forward to that.

Saturday, June 24th - This morning we had planned to go to Eton to encourage the ladies there. So, Ure, Leisava, Rema, Mabel, and Charlie's two daughters (Julie and Martin) came over at about 9:00. We went and picked up RoseHanna and then started down the road. We dropped Aaron off at Etas and picked up Leimawa and Alice. Once we got to Eton, we visited for a while, then sang and Cindy shared a lesson. She taught on Mary and Martha. Ni-Vanuatu women tend to be Martha's. Cindy did a good job on teaching the importance of putting God and His work ahead of earthly things. While it is our role as women to take care of our families and our house, our first responsibility is to God. This is something we will need to keep teaching on. The women here serve. It's hard for them to put it aside for a while and focus on God and their relationship with Him. The women got the point of the lesson, so we'll try to keep encouraging them to put it into practice.

This afternoon I spent working on the computer, getting caught up on a little more office work, organization, etc.

Sunday, June 25th - We had a good group once everyone showed up this morning. Harry, Joshua, Patrick, Leisava, Olivier, Baby Shawnda, Flexon, Fiona, Stephen, RoseHanna, Alfo-
nia, Tamata, Aleina, Shem, Kal, Stanley, Akisa, Selina, Rema, Mabel and a friend, Claudia were all there. Gomon, Ure, and their family were out at Etas this morning. We had a nice time of worship together. Most of the Christians stayed to watch the Matthew video. That seems to be a good tool that the Christians are enjoying.

This afternoon we rested for a while, then went and visited Flexon, Fiona, Joana, and Lolo. Joana and Lolo just came back to town on Friday. We were so glad to see them again. They have been gone since February (they have been on Pentecost visiting her family). Lolo has grown up, and doesn't remember any of us (even Fiona and Flexon). He'll get used to us again, I'm sure. We are glad to have Joana back so we can start encouraging her again. She didn't have any Christians to worship with while she was on Pentecost, so she needs encouragement.

Eric and I ate dinner, watched a movie and then headed to bed early. We've been going to bed early since we've come back. We have both been getting up earlier, so that may have something to do with it. I like this new schedule, so hopefully we'll stick to it.

Monday, June 26th - I got up, did a load of laundry, and then got ready for the day. It's grocery day - I'm tired just thinking about it. It's not that I hate it or anything, it's just that it takes most of the day to do. Oh well, such is life. This evening Flexon and Fiona came over for dinner. We really enjoyed visiting with them. We had been wanting to talk to them about some things, and this was a great time to do it. We love them so much and consider them some of our best friends.

Tuesday, June 27th - I went this morning and got Mabel (and Emkon - her friend) and we went visiting. We went and saw Rose for a while. She is still not feeling well. In fact, it was the first time I'd seen her since we'd gotten back b/c she has been sick. She seems to get sick a lot. I wish there was something we could do to help her. Ure said when it's cold (we're in the cold season in Vanuatu), she gets sick a lot. So, I guess we'll just keep going to visit her and encourage her when she is sick and has to miss a lot because of it.

After visiting with Rose for about half an hour, we went looking for Woi. She was staying with a brother near LeLagoon. We found the brother's house, but she had moved to a different brother's house to stay, so we went looking for the other brother's house. Once we found that house, that brother said she had moved to live with an uncle. We finally found that uncle's house, but found out he had sent her back to Ambae last week. We were all shocked b/c we didn't know she was going back! So, we are going to try to contact her so she can do correspondence work, get in contact with a church there on Ambae, and so that we can go see her and encourage her when we go to Ambae. All of the running around looking for Woi was tiring. I went and dropped the girls off and headed home.

This evening I was going to volunteer at the hospital, but since I have a stuffy/runny nose and my stomach is upset, I decided I'd wait till next week. Eric had soccer practice, so I stayed home and worked on computer stuff for a while and then went over the Bible study I want to do with Leikavei tomorrow. When Eric got home from practice, we ate dinner, relaxed for a while, and then headed to bed early again. (I guess it's our new routine, to bed early, awake early - I actually kind of like it that way.)

Wednesday, June 28th - I tried to get some things done around the house this morning. I did laundry, swept, and reviewed the Bible study one last time. Then Cindy and I headed to the park to meet with the ladies for lunch. It was just Ure, Mabel, Rema, Cindy and I, but we had a great time. They are such sweet ladies. We made the plan for July (tried to change it up a little to get more ladies involved, we'll see...) Then I went to Leikavei's to study with her. We reviewed our last study (a study of the church) and then studied, "Who is a Christian?" It went really well. She said she knew she wasn't a Christian yet, and wanted to become one, but not until she had studied more to make sure she understood exactly what she was doing. I respect

that. I told her I would pray for her this week and that she needed to really think about it before making the decision (to make sure she counts the cost of becoming a disciple of Christ). I was really pleased with the progress. This is the first time she's really communicated to me what she was thinking. In the past I have always walked away feeling a little down b/c I couldn't tell what she was thinking about the study - she didn't communicate what she was thinking. So, it was good to know that she understood and that she wanted to take action, but she wanted to keep studying to make sure she understood really well what she was doing before she "jumped in with both feet."

This afternoon Antony came in. Aaron and Cindy (and Harry) headed to Etas, but Kaela, Eric, Antony and I stayed here. Antony and Eric "consulted" on the building project while Kaela and I played for a while. Then we ate dinner and watched a movie. It's good to have Antony here again. We always enjoy him. (And I think he's already enjoying it more than the last time he was here - it was such a scorcher in March! He said "I can't believe I am still wearing my long pants! Last time I would have been sweating by the time I stepped off the plane!" - That's very true. It should be really nice weather for the building project, so that will be an added benefit.

Thursday, June 29th - I had a laid back day today. I spent some time getting things organized for Bible class. I start teaching again on Sunday. I'm looking forward to that. I also got caught up on my journal and worked on Bible studies that I'll be teaching soon.

This evening we went to Mike's for mid-week fellowship. Antony, Cindy, Kaela and I walked to his house. Aaron and Eric joined us a little later. Shem and Alsen came and we sang for a while to wait on the others. Steven and RoseHanna did come later and we sang some more. Then Mike told about PIBC classes that we'll have in July and the plan for working on the church building. It was a good time of fellowship, but I wish the others would have been there too.

Friday, June 30th - Cindy and I decided to go to town to visit Lissie and Yoland. On the way there, Kaela fell and hit her head pretty hard on the asphalt. It started bleeding and we decided to come home and check it out. When we got here, Cindy cleaned it, bandaged it and put her to bed. I had a lot to do around the house, so we decided to just go next week and see Lissie and Yoland.

This evening we had a group meal (poppyseed chicken - my favorite). We enjoyed our time of fellowship and then watched a movie together.

Saturday, July 1st - Eric and I went and saw Joanna. She and Lolo are back from Pentecost now. It was so good to see them - we were really missing them. Lolo, of course, doesn't remember us. But, I'm sure it won't take long for him to get used to us again. Joana seems to be doing well, but is weak spiritually. She didn't worship the entire time she was with her family b/c there's no church around (on Pentecost). So, I think she's looking forward to worshipping with us again.

John Sheppard (from New Zealand) came today. He's staying with us, and we are glad to have him here. Antony decided to take us all out to eat tonight. He usually takes us out to eat at the end of his trip here, but he decided to do it early this time since the end of the trip will be pretty busy. We went to The Waterfront and it was really good, as usual. I had ribs - yummy. It was a nice evening.

Sunday, July 2nd - We decided to go a little later this morning so we wouldn't be there for half an hour waiting on everyone. We ended up getting there at about a quarter past 9. By 9:30

Gomon and Ure and their bunch were there, along with Flexon, Fiona, Patrick (the one who lives in Ohlen), and Patrick (the one from Tanna). Flexon led us in some songs for about 30 minutes. We would have had Bible class for the kids while the adults sang, but Seselo was the only kid there (and I didn't want to start a new section without Noel either). We knew Steven, RoseHanna and the kids would be in Eton today (along with Mabel and Rema). We all sang until 10. Then Rose, Shem, Jonah, and Shem's mother came in and we started worship. It was a good group. We all came over to our house to eat the fellowship lunch (1st Sunday of the month). We all sat around and visited for a while (and the guys got things "hammered out" about the building project).

This afternoon Eric and I went to study with Patrick and Leisava, but they didn't answer the door. We assumed they must have gone to Paunangisu or something. We stopped back by to see Joana, Flexon, and Fiona since Joana didn't come to worship this morning. She said she wasn't feeling good (she has pink eye) and she didn't have money for a bus. But, Kalkut is supposed to come this week, so he should be leaving her some money (which she can use for bus fare, food, etc). Let's hope so. We enjoyed visiting with them, and then headed home.

Monday, July 3rd - The men started working on the building this morning. We are all so excited about it. I was trying to get things done around the house this morning, so I wasn't in too big of a hurry to get my shower and get dressed. But then I heard someone outside, looked up and there was Mabel. She had come to tell me that the women in Epau said we can't have the Ladies Day this Saturday b/c it's their week to come to the market. So, we decided to just go do the Ladies Day next Saturday instead and do our ladies fellowship on Wednesday this week instead. So that meant we needed to go around and tell the women who don't have phones so they could prepare. We went and saw Fiona, Joana, Leisava, & Lissie. We were so glad to get to visit with Lissie. We have really missed her. She said she's not doing well right now spiritually. She wants to be involved b/c she knows that she is falling away. So, she asked us to pray for her. We love her so much and want to help her in any way we can. We also went by the land and told Shem and Patrick to tell their wives. Then we tried to get our grocery shopping done. We ended up having to save some until tomorrow - might as well make it a two day adventure! :o) Oh well...

This evening when the guys got home, they were all exhausted, but very happy with the progress so far. They were able to get three layers of block work done. That's a lot more than they anticipated they would get done. So, we are all pleased. They said that the local Christians who have been helping have been great. They are so proud of them. Shem and Patrick from Vila, Timothy, Tom, Philip, and Jack from Etas, and Wallace and two of his grandsons from Epau are all helping. Gomon comes when he can between classes, etc. Steven has been willing to do whatever he can to help, he just can't be out there during the day b/c of work. Anyway, we are happy with the men who have been willing to give of their time to make this possible. We are encouraged by the participation of these men. It's good for the local Christians to be a part of it and not have it done for them.

Tuesday, July 4th - Happy Birthday America! We aren't really celebrating it here this year. We have New Zealanders here instead of Americans this year, and the guys are busy at the land, so we aren't planning anything. We had a good day. I spent the morning with Kaela. Cindy had school at Etas and the guys were working at the land, so Kaela stayed with me. I tried to work out (with Kaela crawling all over me), then I got ready and got her ready for the day. When Cindy got home, we ran some errands, went to the grocery store, ate lunch, and then went back to town to the market. I asked Yoland to meet me after work, so I just stayed in town and

waited for her. I ended up waiting for almost an hour b/c she had to count and turn in the money after her shift was over. Anyway, it was so good to get to visit with her. It was just like "old times." She said she really wanted to come, but had been really struggling with asthma for the last couple of months. She said she had just recently started feeling better and was really going to try and come. She said there were also a couple of other things that were standing in her way. We talked about those too. It was a really good visit. I am so glad we did that - I think it was really helpful for me to hear what she was struggling with so I can encourage her and pray for her. It was also good for her to know that I care. I really enjoyed getting to talk to her today.

This afternoon I peeled and cut up carrots and susut for our dinner tonight and made rice.

Then the guys got home and we had dinner. Of course, we all went to bed early.

Antony's family (Jeanette, Kevin, and Jeremiah) and a man named Trevor (from New Zealand) came in this evening at 11:00. We didn't go greet them b/c it was so late, but we'll see them in the morning.

Wednesday, July 5th - We met Trevor this morning (he stayed with the Raine's last night).

Then the guys headed out to the land first thing. I did laundry, swept the floor, and then got ready for the day. Jeanette and the boys came over this morning. Jeanette came with us to the park and the boys went to the land with Antony.

We got to the park and waited for the ladies to join us. Rose, Fiona and Leisava came after a while. We waited for Ure and RoseHanna to join us, but they weren't there by noon, so we went ahead and started. We prayed and then Rose shared a little something with us from Matthew. Then we ate and visited for a while.

I went and studied with Leikavei this afternoon and she was ready to be baptized. We went to the church land and told Patrick and Eric. We went to Malapoa to baptize her. Patrick said he wanted to baptize her, so that was pretty special. She was so happy to become a Christian. We talked on the way to take her back home and she said she wants to keep studying for a while so that she gets "grounded" in the scriptures.

Thursday, July 6th - I went and had a study with Mabel and Rema. I just love those two girls - they are so fun to teach and just be with. They are such neat friends. We are doing a study of "How to study the Bible." Today we just did an introduction type lesson about how we know that the Bible is from God and why we should study it. It went well. After we were finished, Rema rode with me down to the church land to see what they'd done so far on it. She was impressed. They have almost the entire wall done.

On the way home, I realized that this is the day Kalkut (Joana's husband, Flexon's cousin) was here. He works on a cruise ship and comes through when it does. I stopped by to buy a ball for Lolo (I told him I'd bring him one the next time I came to see him), then went to see them. I stayed and visited with Kalkut, Joana, Flexon and Fiona for about half an hour and then headed back to the house.

Friday, July 7th - I watched Kaela all morning while Cindy was at school at Etas. Kaela helped me wash dishes, do some laundry, sweep the house, and various other things around the house. She's so good when we are working - as long as she's busy, she's happy. But, when she gets bored, you'd better believe she'll let you know! :o) I do enjoy watching her though. She is a sweetie.

When Cindy got home, we ran a few errands and then spent the afternoon working on various projects. I sorted and organized the family pictures that I got when I was in the States. I don't

know what I'm going to do with them yet, but it's good to have them all in order and ready to get started (whenever I decide what I want to do with them).

Saturday, July 8th - This morning I worked on my lesson for Epau. I worked a little on my lesson for Mabel and Rema too. I like to work on lesson preparations in the morning. It's like my brain starts shutting down in the afternoons. Oh well. I got some of it done and will work some more on it early next week.

This afternoon Cindy, John, Trevor, and I walked into town and did a little shopping. They wanted to look at the souvenirs and Cindy was buying some gifts. So, we spent a few hours there. Then we came home and ate. This evening, for the first time since they started the building project, we stayed up and played a game (probably b/c we can sleep late in the morning and aren't working on the building). It was loads of fun. We played "Cranium" - Jeanette, Trevor, Cindy, Kevin, Jeremiah and I. We had a great time.

Sunday, July 9th - For the first time ever, Cindy and I were late and everyone else was early!!! I felt bad, but what can you do? I'll tell you what - it was a great crowd today. There were more local Christians there than have ever been there on one day before. There were also Christians from other areas, some visitors and lots of kids. It was a wonderful time of worship and then fellowship afterwards. I love seeing the "new" Christians and "old" Christians interacting. It's so encouraging.

For some reason, I was so tired this afternoon. I didn't sleep well last night (I woke up coughing and couldn't breathe through my stuffy nose) - so that's probably why I was tired. I came home and laid in bed and read for an hour b/c I was tired.

This afternoon Eric and I went to study with Patrick and Leisava. They wanted to study what the Bible teaches about families (like husband and wife relationship, how to raise your children, etc.) It will be a lengthy study (like 5 or 6 weeks), but should be really good. We love Patrick and Leisava and are so appreciative of their friendship. They are such a neat couple - so ready and eager to learn the word of God - and how to follow it in their lives.

Monday, July 10th - Laundry and Grocery day! :o) That's always fun. I spent time working on Bible studies, but after a full day of shopping, I usually don't feel like doing an awful lot of thinking. Oh well. I will spend the morning on it tomorrow.

Tuesday, July 11th - I had a productive day working on Bible study preparations. I feel like I got so much done. I love that feeling. Then I finished up typing and preparing the lesson for ladies day at Epau on Saturday. Jeanette, Kevin and Jeremiah went home this afternoon. We sure enjoyed having them here. We love that Raine family. We hope to go see them in New Zealand some day (along with our other new kiwi friends). :o)

Wednesday, July 12th - - Happy Birthday Kaela Sue! Although we had a really good birthday for Kaela, we also had some struggles too. Cindy started having complications with her pregnancy and we went to the doctor and the hospital to get it checked out. They put her on bed rest. That's hard on her. She doesn't feel bad, so it's hard for her to stay in bed. But, we are all hoping that bed rest will help the problem.

I had my Bible study with Leikavei and it went really well. I really enjoy studying with her - especially now that she's a Christian. She was more "interactive" today than she has been in the past. I enjoyed it. I went and saw Ure on the way home - she's been sick. I just visited with her for a few minutes because Cindy had a doctor's appointment we needed to get to.

Thursday, July 13th - I went to study with Rema and Mabel. I love studying with them. They are a joy to teach because they really want to learn. We talked about 5 keys for knowing that you are studying the Bible in the right way (making sure you don't take things out of context or "proof text" to make your point, understanding the different ages of the Bible (i.e. Patriarchal, Mosaical, Christian), knowing which commands were meant to be temporary and which are permanent...those sort of things.) It was a good lesson - they both said they learned a lot that will help them with their study of the Bible. I just love those girls.

Friday, July 14th - Fiona came to help Cindy around the house (laundry, sweeping, etc) for a couple of hours and then Leimawa came for a while too. It was nice for both of us - it freed me up to get some things done around my house too. I did some laundry, swept, cleaned the toilet and shower, and did dishes. I actually even had time to do a scrapbook page this afternoon while Cindy and I watched a movie! It was a good day.