

Saturday, July 15th - We had some sad news when we got up this morning. Cindy called me into our room and told me that she had a miscarriage the night before. We cried together and talked for a little while. My heart is so sad for her and Aaron. I know that God is holding them close and comforting their sorrow. She is doing well and trusts God's plan. He knows better than we do and she is trusting Him.

We had already planned to go to Epau this morning for a ladies day. So, even though I wanted to stay with Cindy, I needed to go with the ladies to Epau. Thankfully Aaron was able to stay with her instead of going and working at the land. He took care of Cindy and played with Kaela all day so Cindy could rest.

The ladies and I headed out to Epau (Fiona, Joana, Leikavei - we picked up Leimawa and Annie on the way out there). We had a really good time together, and the ladies from Epau seemed to really enjoy the fellowship. I gave a lesson on 1 Peter 1:14-16 (Be holy as I am holy). I talked about what it means to be holy (set apart, different) and how we can live differently than the world. It was some pretty tough stuff to talk about (b/c I used examples of what the world thinks/does and what a Christian should think/do - some that I knew the Christians in Vanuatu struggle with). So, I think it "hit home" and hopefully encouraged the ladies to live a holy life - pleasing to God. It went well.

When we got out to the truck to go home, the battery was dead, so it wouldn't start. Thankfully a bunch of the men from Epau came and pushed the truck and got it started. I drove home (nervous all the way that if I stopped and "killed it," I wouldn't be able to start it again). By the time we got home, I was exhausted from the day.

I rested for a few minutes and then Aaron and Cindy headed to the hospital for a check up, so I got Kaela up from her nap. I spent the rest of the evening playing with Kaela. Thankfully Antony suggested that we get pizza instead of cooking! I was glad about that since I was so tired. We ate that, I put Kaela to bed and then finally Aaron and Cindy came home. They gave her an IV and were making her wait there until her blood pressure came up. She and Aaron sat there for over 4 hours. They were a little bored, but knew it was a necessity. Thankfully they didn't have to spend the night.

Sunday, July 16th - We had a great group of Christians there this morning. Unfortunately, the one with the songbooks didn't come until about an hour and a half late. Thankfully everyone had something to do while we waited (read Matthew 16 and answer questions about it). But, I didn't do Bible class with Seskie and Noel (or the other kids) b/c they didn't show up until 10:00 (when we should start worship). I kept thinking, I should take them out and we can at least sing songs until they get here with the songbooks. But then I'd think, "Oh, they'll be here any minute, once I get them out there, they'll show up with the songbooks." But...we waited and finally at 10:45 the songbooks arrived and we started. It was a little frustrating. But, the good part was that there were so many Christians there today. Of course we were missing a few too, but the majority were there. That's always encouraging. We had a good time of worship. After worship Steven announced that we would have a "thank you" dinner for the guys from New Zealand on Tuesday evening. Then, we watched the Matthew video and went our separate ways.

This afternoon we went to Patrick and Leisava's to study. It was a really good study on marriage. We love studying with them and we are so encouraged by their interest in the things of God.

Flexon and Fiona had invited us over to eat this evening, so after we finished the study with Patrick and Leisava, we headed to their house. We ate lap-lap (made in Malekula's style - which is Flexon's home island). I actually enjoyed it. It was pretty good. Fiona's a good cook and they were great hosts. We so much enjoyed the time of friendship, laughter, telling stories and kidding each other. It was neat for Eric and I b/c it was our first "dinner invite" to a local Christian's house since we've lived here. It sounds strange, but it's just not something people do that often here. We were so glad to just have that time together to strengthen our friendship with Flexon, Fiona, and Joana. It's times like these that "concrete" in our hearts and minds that there is nowhere else on earth we'd rather be than right here in Vanuatu with these precious Christians.

Monday, July 17th - Well, since the schedule was changed we went to two villages within three days for ladies days. This time, it was just Fiona, Rema, Mabel and me that went (due to others working during the week, sicknesses, and things like that). But, even though it was a small group, we had a great time together. When we got to Eton, we knew two of the four "regulars" for women's activities were in Vila (one's daughter just had a baby and the other one is due herself any day now). When we got there, it ended up being Rebecca and the four of us. It was fine. We sang, prayed and each shared a favorite scripture. We enjoyed our time together, and I think Rebecca was encouraged by it. Even though it was a long morning, it was worth it to be there to encourage her (and the four of us were encouraged too). I really enjoyed the car ride with the three girls. We have a good time together. They are a blessing to me b/c they are fun and we laugh a lot. :o)

We stopped by the land so that they could see the progress of the building. We are all so impressed by how much they've done in such a short time! It's great. Of course, Mabel wanted to stop and buy cookies to take to them to have with their lunch (she's always thoughtful like that). We stayed and watched them work for a while and then I took them all home.

This afternoon Cindy and I rested, emailed, and talked a little. Then we started dinner. We had Chicken pasta toss - which is way yummy - but it's really hard for one person to make b/c there's so many parts to it (it is a lot easier when you're making it for a few, but I was making it for the 9 of us - which is a lot). Anyway, after we grated and chopped the veggies, I started all of the other parts of the meal. I started to get a little stressed about it, but thankfully a few of the guys helped out with things (made Koolaid, washed some dishes as I "dirtied" them and various other preparatory things like that). By the time it was ready to sit down and eat, I was ready to lay down and go to bed! But, it was yummy, and everyone really enjoyed it, so I guess it was worth it! :o) I did end up enjoying the meal and even after dinner conversation. But after that, I came home, took a shower, and got in bed! Long day - but a good one.

Tuesday, July 18th - Well, as is sometimes the case in Vanuatu, you have a plan for the day, but it doesn't always work out that way. We planned to go to the grocery store this morning. But, while we were getting ready, some mamas from Etas came over. They were worried about Cindy and wanted to stay and visit a while. They are so sweet and thoughtful to think of her. Since Leimawa came a couple of times already, they

didn't want Cindy to think that she was the only one of them who cared. We appreciated their visit.

Since they came, I left Cindy at home with them and headed out to do the grocery shopping alone. It was fine, just a little overwhelming at times buying for them, us and everyone else that's here right now! :o) Oh well...

This evening we went to the church land for the dinner to thank the men from NZ for helping with the building.

Wednesday, July 19th - Tuesday, August 8th - Due to the "busy-ness" of the last month/month and a half has made it difficult to keep up with journaling. So, here's a recap of the last three weeks. Antony and the other guys from NZ (plus our guys and the local Christians) had a busy, but productive week with the building project. By the time they left to go back to NZ, the building had all of its walls, the rafting roofers, and some of the "rendering" done. We really enjoyed getting to know them and appreciated all of the hard work that they put into the building here in Vila.

The day Antony was scheduled to leave, the group from the US arrived. Tom Bailey (from Altus, OK) and Wayne Burger (from Denver, CO) stayed busy with PIBC classes. They had a packed schedule, but did a lot of good teaching. The local Christians learned so much and enjoyed the classes.

The rest of us did a variety of things, but enjoyed them all. We did attend the classes each evening (at the church building without a roof - and it rained most of the evenings). But, besides the rain, everything else was great! We also visited villages, painted a church building, spent an afternoon at the beach, visited an amazing waterfall "park" and enjoyed the island and people of Vanuatu.

The only negative thing while they were here was that I was sick for several days, so I had to visit the doctor (once I got antibiotics, I was fine). Being sick was a little bit frustrating since we had the guests. But, like I said, I got over it with some antibiotics, so it's alright. I had to get well (this cold had been hanging on since we got back from the States). I was glad that I finally got it taken care of.

I can't tell you how much we enjoyed having the young people staying with us. The boys stayed at our house and kept us laughing. The girls were such a joy to have too - they were so sweet and helpful around the house. The Christians here were so encouraged by the young people and their dedication to the Lord. What a privilege to be a part of it all.

Guests are always a treat, but this group was particularly encouraging to us. We had two devos while they were here and that meant a lot to us. It was also rejuvenating for me to be able to just sit and visit with the girls about life, the Bible, being a missionary, and all kinds of things like that. I was sad to see them go home. But, I do hope that the time they spent here helped them grow in their spiritual life, made them realize how big God is, and showed them that God's plan for His church is amazing. They now know Christian brothers and sisters who live in Vanuatu, serve the same God they do, and love them very much.

Wednesday, August 9th - I spent the day getting caught up on things around the house - washed sheets, towels, etc. Cindy, Ure and I met at the park for ladies class - there were supposed to be more, but noone else showed up (probably b/c of the rain). I

also went to study with Leikavei, but the roads were so muddy to her house that I couldn't get the truck out there. So, I will have to wait till next week to study again. When I got home, I cooked and then worked on the computer for a few minutes until Kaela woke up from her nap. Cindy and Aaron went to Etas this evening, so Kaela stayed with us.

Thursday, August 10th - I went and studied with Maybel and Rema (Winnie joined us too). It was a good study - I really enjoy studying with them. I love those girls. This afternoon I washed the rest of the sheets, towels and blankets and then swept the house. It was hard to sweep while we had guests, so it really needed it. :o) Oh, we had an "Only in Vanuatu" moment today. Only in Vanuatu does the vet come to your house to "fix" your dog (yes, we had full-on surgery in our carport this morning!!!) Then, when he left, he left a vile of antibiotics for us to give her for the next two days (guess who gets to do that job?!). He also showed us how to remove the stitches. It was almost a tenth of the cost of going to the vet to have them do it, so I guess I can't complain! :o) Eric went out to Epau to try to finish cutting and fitting the louvers (windows) of the church building there. He brought Rosie and Winnie back. Winnie has an appointment at the hospital tomorrow, so she and Rosie will stay with us this evening.

Friday, August 11th - This morning I swept again and did some laundry. Fiona was here watching Kaela while Cindy was at school - so we visited too. When Winnie got back from the doctor, I took her out to Mele to stay with a friend. Since we were out that way, we decided to stop by and see Selina in Mele Maat. Fiona and Rosie were with me. But, when we got there, Selina had already gone to her garden for the day. That's alright, her neighbors said they would pass along the message to her that we had come. Hopefully just knowing we came by will encourage her. Then we stopped by Rose's on the way back to town. She is doing great (not sick anymore). I was so glad to see her - I haven't seen her in about a month I think (b/c of sickness and busyness the last couple of weeks). When I got home, Cindy, Kaela and I went to town and got a few things. Then we came home and got ready for team night dinner - FAJITAS! We haven't had them in a while and boy were they delicious tonight. Can't tell if it's just b/c we haven't had them in a while or if they really were better than normal - regardless, they were good!

Saturday, August 12th - We had a good relaxing day around here. I got up early to watch Kaela so Aaron and Cindy could go out to breakfast. We did a craft project - the time flew by! We had a good time - she even did well with the gluing. I was surprised. We made a number book (she is working on number recognition - she can say them, but not recognize them yet). Then, the rest of the day I worked on Bible class preparations and worked on the computer. This evening Eric and I walked to town and enjoyed a nice evening together. We did this crazy little "date" where we got a smoothie at one place, then walked to another place to get fries, then another place for a coke. It was actually pretty fun. We also stopped by and visited with Lissie b/c she was working this evening.

Sunday, August 13th - It was a great, encouraging, uplifting day. We had a great group there for worship this morning and most of them stayed to watch the video afterwards. Flexon preached today and did a great job. I was so impressed and uplifted by his lesson. It was well thought-out and presented well. He taught on the blessing we have b/c we are no longer tangled up in sin, but then he asked, "But what now?" He then talked about how once we're Christians, our body doesn't belong to us anymore - it's Christ's. So, we need to be using our bodies to glorify Christ. It was a really good lesson - he gave some great illustrations that brought it home too. As Alsen stood up to lead the closing prayer, he said, "I need to say something first" (which, in itself, is really an assertive thing that doesn't usually happen). Anyway, he said that Flexon's lesson really touched him and that he knew he needed to work on using his body to glorify God. He also said that he and Flexon became Christians at about the same time and he was amazed by how far Flexon had come and that he needed to get busy. He also said that he hopes Flexon continues to grow and get better and better. It was so neat to hear. I was proud of them both. Also, Patrick led the opening prayer and did a good job in leading our minds. It was great to be led by these young Christian men. What an encouragement.

This afternoon we studied with Patrick and Leisava. They are the sweetest. We just love them so much. They are such an encouragement to be around. They kept saying that they were so glad to be studying about the family and how that since they have become Christians, and want to follow the Bible, they have noticed that their family is really getting better. It wasn't terrible before, but they have seen great improvements b/c they have become Christians and are making an effort to follow Christ in every area of their lives. It is so neat to see God working through His word to affect not only individuals, but entire families. It's amazing.

Monday, August 14th - This morning Marie (the other baby Shawnda's mom) called and said that she wanted to see me. I was glad b/c I hadn't seen them in months and I didn't really know where they lived. They were going to the hospital (all of them are sick - except Marie's husband). So, while they waited for their number to be called, they decided to come to our house and rest. I got to hold the baby for a while, and the other kids played with Kaela. It was good to see them. I hope that someday in the future they will want to study. As of now, they aren't ready yet. But, I keep hoping that someday they will be.