

From ^{OUR} Point ^{OF} View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Shawnda's Journal September 15th - October 14th

Friday, September 15th - I did some laundry and then ran some errands. I went grocery shopping (literally no food in the house b/c we've been gone). Then I spent the afternoon unpacking and putting things back in their places. I also spent some time cleaning. Then I played a card game with Cindy and her parents.

This evening we had a team dinner. Cindy's parents are here, so it was nice to have them at team dinner. They'll be here for a month and we are really enjoying having them here. They are the sweetest. We love them. After we ate we decided to play a card game (Cindy's parents are game people - which makes it fun for all of us). We played a game called "Golf." It's lots of fun. We all enjoyed it.

Saturday, September 16th - We had a work day at the land to get ready for our first Sunday in the building. Donald came and helped Mike clean out the inside of the auditorium while Aaron and Eric finished the roof. Dalton (Cindy's dad) finished the electrical outlets that weren't quite finished and I played "gofer" for a while. Then I went and got Maybel and Rema and the three of us cut the grass and pulled the weeds in the front of the building (entrance). We worked until a little after lunch (around 1:00) and then headed home. Eric and I ate lunch and then he and Aaron went back to the land for a few hours to finish the roof.

Sunday, September 17th - We met in the new building for the first time today. It was so neat. There were 16 adults and 5 kids there. We had a nice time of worship. We wish that all of the Christians would have been there, but those who were had a great time of worship and fellowship. Eric preached a great lesson about how we can use this opportunity of "starting fresh" with a new building to examine our lives and "start fresh" in the areas where we need to grow spiritually. It was encouraging and motivating. This afternoon we rested and then headed to Patrick and Leisava's to study. They are such a neat couple - so encouraging and eager to learn more of God's word. What a blessing.

Wednesday, September 20th - Cindy and I decided to run around and try to get the schedules of ladies fellowships to the ladies who weren't there on Sunday. So, MaryBeth, Cindy, and I went to see Ure, Rose, and Rose-Hanna. We also got a schedule to Leisava and Fiona since we were in the area. Then, I went and studied with Leikavei this afternoon. We studied the "three works of the Holy Spirit." It went really well and she enjoyed it. Next week we will study miracles - a "hot" topic in Vanuatu. I just want her to have a good grasp of not only how to study the Bible, but practice in studying topics that she might have questions on as a new convert. I really enjoy my time with Leikavei each week. She's such a sweet lady.

This afternoon we watched Kaela while the Bakers and Cindy's parents went to Etas. Kaela sure is turning into quite the talker. She is hilarious with some of the things that she says. She has always spoken an English/Bislama mix (and she still does), but she says some things in straight English and some things in straight Bislama. It's so cute when she speaks Bislama. I know it's just part of who she is b/c she learned to talk here and hears Bislama more than English really, but it's still really cute coming out of her mouth.

Thursday, September 21st - I studied with Maybel and Rema this morning. We studied the church in prophecy. It was really a good study. I was a little worried that it would be too hard to grasp (especially with the Bislama translation of some parts of the prophecy), but it turned out pretty good. I just wanted to get the point across that the church has always been in God's mind (it's always been His plan to have a church here on this earth). I think they got the point and that it was beneficial in their appreciation for the church.

After the study, we headed into town to meet with the ladies in the park. We had a nice group there (Maybel, Rema, Fiona, Leisava, Leikavei, Ure, Cindy, MaryBeth and me). I love getting together with the ladies - it's always so encouraging.

Since I had left the house at about 8:45 and didn't get back until 3:00 or so, I was a little tired. So, when I got home I rested for a while and then tried to get caught up on some computer work (that I sometimes let get away from me).

Friday, September 22nd - We had team night this evening and enjoyed fajitas!!! I love fajita night. It was Dalton and Mary Beth's first fajita night and they really enjoyed it too. Mike makes the best salsa any of us have ever had. We're getting spoiled with his good salsa.

Saturday, September 23rd - I talked to Eric's family this afternoon. It was so good to hear their voices and see what all was happening in their lives. We talked for a long time and I really enjoyed a "taste" of home. We really miss them. I tried to call my parents too, but I couldn't get through. It's really frustrating when that happens. Eric made me a shelf this afternoon when he got home from working at the land. I helped off and on with that - but mostly I rested and enjoyed a lazy Saturday afternoon.

Sunday, September 24th - What a great morning of worship and fellowship. I just love Sundays. There were only two kids there (Joshua and Olivier), but I went ahead and did a little lesson with them and we sang some songs while the adults just visited and waited for more to come join us for worship.

This afternoon we went to study with Patrick and Leisava. I know I say this every week, but they are such an encouragement to us. We enjoy being with them so much. We are studying how to have a godly family. Today we started studying children and the commands in the Bible that tell us as godly parents we should teach, train and discipline our children. We will go on to talk about some practical ways to do that. Hopefully they will find this helpful. We are encouraged that they requested this topic and are enjoying studying it with them. Eric has been doing a great job with it.

Monday, September 25th - Went grocery shopping this morning. It was raining, which makes for a "yucky" shopping day. Thankfully Mary Beth decided to stay home and keep Kaela while we went shopping in an effort to keep Kaela out of the rain and to make our shopping trip a little easier. We were very grateful for that. Although, I'm sure she didn't mind staying home with her grandbaby! And, Kaela sure enjoys her grandma and grandpa being here - so she enjoyed the extra "Grandma time." :o)

Tuesday, September 26th - I went to the ultrasound with the birth mother this morning. Everything was normal & the baby was healthy. When I asked about the sex, she said she couldn't tell b/c he/she was too scrunched up and wasn't in a good position. Her next appointment is mid October. So, hopefully we'll be able to tell then. But, it may just have to be a surprise for all of us. :o) We are really excited about becoming parents and pray each day that the adoption will go smoothly.

Wednesday, September 27th - This afternoon I went and studied with Leikavei. We did the second study on the Holy Spirit (miracles). It went really well. We had some good discussion afterward. She is learning and growing. I'm really proud of her.

Thursday, September 28th - I had a busy day today. This morning I went to study with Maybel and Rema. We studied the organization of the church. It was a good reminder for all of us. Then we went to the church building to meet the other ladies for fellowship. It ended up just being Maybel, Rema, Cindy, Mary Beth, and me. But, we still had a good time. We talked about plans for going to Eton next week on Saturday.

When we got back to the house, we picked up Eric and then headed out. (Oh, and Kaela came with us since the others were going to Etas.) Mike and Eric are going to Emau with Eddie and since I didn't want to drive back by myself, I asked Rema and Maybel if they wanted to go with me. So, we headed to Eton, picked up Eddie (and saw Jacqueline's new baby), and then headed to Takara (where they catch the boat to go to Emau). We stayed on the beach there at Takara for a while waiting on the boat. Finally Rema, Maybel, Kaela and I had to leave to get back to town (we were afraid we wouldn't get home before dark if we didn't).

We stopped in Epau to see Winnie's new baby too. He's adorable (Thomas). I was glad to get to see her since I wasn't able to be there with her at the hospital when she had him. She said they are doing well and the baby's healthy and doing well. I'm glad.

When we got home, it was getting pretty close to dark, so Rema and Maybel came home with me and then took a bus home. Kaela and I "hung out" until Aaron, Cindy, Dalton, and Mary Beth got home. I was so tired, I went straight to bed. Driving on those roads sure wears you out. :o)

Friday, September 29th - This afternoon I tutored Joshua for the first time. He goes to school (English) and is in class 4, but doesn't read well. Patrick and Leisava have been worried about him, so I said I'd tutor him for a while and see if I could help. I used this first time to just kind of assess him and see where he is. I think I'll enjoy "teaching" again for a while. I didn't know Cindy and I would be teaching reading while we were here. I know we're not here to be school teachers, but I really think it's important that these young kids are taught to read so that when they are adults, they can read the Bible for themselves.

Sunday, October 1st - It was a great morning of worship. Since Eric, Mike and Aaron were all gone today, Patrick, Flexon, Patrick Jacob, and Wallace led worship. They did a good job. Flexon led songs and preached. Patrick Jacob led the Lord's supper and was the chairman, Patrick led giving, and Wallace the closing prayer. I was so proud of them and they did a good job of leading my mind in worship this morning. Flexon's lesson was really good, well thought out, and he had good applications. It was not only encouraging, but motivating too. Patrick Jacob stood up afterwards and said, "That was a great lesson. I'm glad Flexon encouraged us to stand up strong in our faith and do the Lord's work. We have to remember that the missionaries will not be with us forever. One day they will go home and it will be up to us, so we need to make sure that we are strong." I was so glad he said that. He "gets it." He knows that we are here to help, but we won't be here forever and that his faith has to be "his" faith - not depending on us or anyone else.

Alice (from Etas) went to the hospital last night to have her baby. But, she still hadn't had it by this afternoon, and the doctor told her it would still be a little while. So, she came to Cindy's to hang out (instead of just sitting at the hospital waiting). We watched "Oklahoma" this afternoon with Alice. She loved it.

Eric, Aaron and Mike got home this evening at about 6:00. I was so glad that Eric was home. I really miss him when he's gone. I know it was only a few days, but it seemed like it was longer. Next time I think I'll go with him.

Tuesday, October 3rd - Alice had her baby today. Leimawa came by to tell us this morning that she was in labor and it wouldn't be too long. Unfortunately the Bakers and Cindy's parents had already planned to go around the island today, so they missed being there when the baby was born, but they went to see her and the baby as soon as they came home. I went just as soon as the baby was born. He is adorable. I was so happy for her and Tom. It's so encouraging when Christians have babies and are committed to raising them to be Christians. It gives us such hope for the future.

Wednesday, October 4th - I worked all morning on planning for Joshua's tutoring session. This afternoon I started to plan for Emau lessons I'll teach next weekend. Leikavei was supposed to come to our house for Bible study today b/c it's been so rainy, but she didn't come. I am guessing she couldn't get a bus and didn't want to have to walk too far to get one.

Thursday, October 5th - I went out to the farm to study with Rema, Maybel and Winnie. When I got there, only Rema was there. So, we decided to wait until next week to study. We just sat and talked for about an hour. I just love that girl. She's hilarious and such a good friend for me.

I stopped by the land on the way back and ended up staying for a while and sweeping the inside while some of the others finished up what they were doing. Eric and I then took Tom to the hospital b/c Alice was released today.

Friday, October 6th - This morning I worked some more on lessons for Emau. Then this afternoon I went and got Joshua and tutored him. It's going well. We still have a ways to go, but he is smart and he's doing well. I sure and glad mom teaches first grade. She's taught kids to read for so long that it's almost effortless now. She's giving me some good ideas. I tend to rush things and she keeps encouraging me to take it slow or he'll get confused. That's good advice.

This afternoon while the guys were having their weekly meeting, I ran out to Flexon's garage to get something to take to Leimawa tomorrow. When I got home, I noticed that the gate was closed. I looked up and there was a ladder leaning against the side of the house. I assumed the guys must have been working on something, but as I got

closer, I noticed that several panes had been taken out of the louver windows. I ran in and asked the guys what was going on, and they ran outside to see what it was all about. Apparently someone had tried to break in (again!) but had gotten scared off when they knocked the fan over and it made a noise. I'm so annoyed with these stinking thieves. We think it's the same group of people doing it every time. Thankfully the owner of the house has agreed to put bars on the windows, so that will get rid of this problem. Now we are just trying to get them to do it as soon as possible. Another exciting adventure at the Brandell's.

After all of the excitement over the attempted break in, we decided to start dinner. We had fajitas - yummy - so we had some work to do. They turned out great and Dalton & Mary Beth were glad that they got fajitas one more time before they left to go home next week. After we ate, we played "golf" until we were all tired and ready for bed.

Saturday, October 7th - This was a really exciting day. We had such a nice group of ladies there for the fellowship in Eton. There were 11 of us from Vila, 2 from Etas, and 9 from Eton plus 9 kids. It was so encouraging. That's the best turn out we've ever had for a ladies fellowship. We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. I was so pleased to see the ladies all mingling and getting to know one another. We sang, prayed, and then Maybel shared a verse and I shared a verse and a little talk that tied our scriptures together. Then we sang a few more songs and ate. We sat around for about an hour and a half or two just visiting. The ladies all seemed to have a really good time. It's such a good way to be able to strengthen and uplift each other. I'm glad the Vila ladies came up with the idea. I'm already looking forward to the next one.

When we got home I was so sore from riding in the back of the truck there and back. So, I just rested for a little while, got caught up on my emailing, and called my parents. It was so good to talk to them. I miss them and hadn't heard their voice in a while.

This evening we kept Kaela. She didn't wake up from her nap until a little later since we came home late from Eton. So, we didn't get to play outside like I had wanted to. But that's okay. We'll have other opportunities. She was a good girl this evening. She has had some difficulties with being grumpy lately, but she did really well.

Sunday, October 8th - I woke up at about 5:00 sick and nauseous. After throwing up. I sat up in a chair until 7:00 and then I got up and took a shower. That tired me out, so I sat back in a chair until almost 9:00 when I got up and got dressed to go to worship. By the time we got there, I felt better, but still not great. I was fine through worship, but on the way home I started feeling sick again and like I had a fever. So, I spent the rest of the afternoon and evening in bed.

But, even though I was sick, I still enjoyed worship. It was a good morning. There were three visitors there this morning and that's always encouraging. Eric, Flexon and Fiona are going to start studying with the couple who visited on Wednesday of next week, so we are all excited about that. Eric wants to set up a study with the other guy who visited too, but there's not set date for that yet. So, we'll just keep praying for him and an opportunity to study with him.

This afternoon Eric went and studied with Patrick and Leisava. We only have a few studies left with them. We will miss the time of fellowship with them, but I know that we've formed a great relationship with them and will get together with them at other times. Eric said that the study went really well. They talked about some principles for raising godly children and some ways that Patrick and Leisava can incorporate those principles in their life. They are so eager to be a godly family. It's so encouraging to be a part of their lives and be able to help them. They are such a special family to us. We love them dearly.

Monday, October 9th - Spent the morning grocery shopping (even got a little Christmas shopping done too). Then I spent the afternoon doing things around the house. I worked on my lessons for the Emau trip, swept the house, made cookies, cleaned the kitchen and made some raspberry lemonade. I decided since we were having leftovers for dinner, I'd make a special drink to go with it. And since they had lemons and raspberries at the market today, it worked out great. :o) It was delicious. Eric and I really liked it - it easily rivaled Olive Garden's raspberry lemonade.

When Eric got home this afternoon we ran some errands together. I like doing that. It's kinda fun just running around together. We went and got food to take to Emau, paid some bills, and stopped at a few places we'd been wanting to stop at before, but hadn't had the time. It was a good time together.

Tuesday, October 10th - This morning I went to see several of the ladies and give them schedules for ladies fellowship for the next three weeks. It was good to see everyone, but I didn't get to visit long. When I got home, I ran to town with Cindy, Dalton (her dad) and Kaela. I had a few things to get done and Dalton needed to do some

shopping before they head home on Thursday. It was a rainy, kind of gloomy day, but the shopping trip was successful.

When I got home, I ate lunch and then put some finishing touches on the lessons for Emau.

Wednesday, October 11th - The ladies had a fellowship at the park today. It was a on again off again rainy day. But, it was fun nonetheless. It was Mary Beth's last one with us since they'll be leaving tomorrow. I can't believe they have been here for a month! It went by really fast.

After the fellowship, I went to meet with Leikavei, but she wasn't there. It's always disappointing when you show up and no one is there. I try not to lose heart, but it is disappointing.

I came home, packed my bags for Emau, and did some last minute reviews of the lessons on Emau. I then spent the evening with Kaela while the Bakers and Deitz' went out to Etas. I enjoy Kaela. We played in the sandbox for about an hour and then ate peanuts on the porch (she loves those peanuts). After that she helped me with dinner preparations. Mike was here, so he ate with us and we enjoyed a relaxing evening.

Thursday, October 12th - This was an eventful day. I went to study with the ladies at the farm. Maybel was sick enough to prevent her from coming with my to Emau as we had planned. But, I told her she'd have another chance. She wasn't feeling well and needed to lie down, so we just did the study without her (it was review anyway).

We drove all the way to the other side of the island just to have them tell us that they couldn't send the boat to pick us up b/c the waves were too high. We still had a good time though visiting with the Christians along the way. We stopped in Paunangisu to drop of Leisava and their kids. So, Eric, Mike, Eddie and Bill got to visit with Harry for a while. We didn't get home until after dark. We were all disappointed, but understood the safety concerns and wouldn't have wanted to put anyone in danger. So, we are going to try again next week and hope we can make it this time. :o) It was a long day, but it was still enjoyable.