

Thursday 9-15-05 – This morning after Kaela's nap Shawnda, Kaela and I went to town to do some shopping. I am trying to get a head start on my Christmas shopping since I have to send it overseas (and who knows how long that will take!). We also had to pick a few things up at the market and drop off some fabric with a local woman who is going to make a skirt and shirt for Shawnda. After most of our shopping was done, we then went to Seaview Takeaway to eat lunch. When we got there we saw Ure and Gomon and then soon after that Morris appeared so it was good to see all of them. We ate lunch with Ure and it was nice to spend some time today talking with her.

During Kaela's afternoon nap I got some more work done on my BCCs and then tried to relax and read for a little bit until it was time for Kaela to get up. I also got motivated and stirred up some M&M oatmeal cookies to bake for Aaron after dinner.

Friday 9-16-05 – This morning Aaron, Kaela and I went into town to find a man named Sam. I met him, his wife and mother-in-law about 3 weeks ago at the market. Aaron was busy talking with Morris at the time. After I met them and they learned that we are here with Christ's church to teach the Bible he asked me if we would come to their community/village and teach the Bible. I told him that we would be happy to, so, he gave me his name and where he works. They had to leave right after that but, Aaron and I planned to go find him to set up a time to teach as soon as we could. With his trip to Ambae coming up, "soon" was delayed a few weeks. Anyway, we finally found him at the Joint Police Headquarters where he works and talked to him about coming to teach. He told us that it would have to be after next weekend because next Saturday is his son's circumcision ceremony and celebration. It is a very big two-day celebration for those Ni-Vans who are from Tanna island. After we talked with him for a while Sam invited us to come to the ceremony and celebration on Saturday. We felt very honored that he invited us to come. Aaron will be going and taking Mike with him. I will have to stay home with Kaela because an all-day affair will be a little much for her – I would leave her with Shawnda, but she and Eric will be in Epau village for the weekend. It will be interesting to see where this new relationship leads in light of future Bible studies with the family.

Saturday 9-17-05 – I called my sister and mother-in-law this morning. I called my mother-in-law because I received the package that she sent to me for my birthday. She sent me some new shirts and a couple of skirts to wear – I was so excited to get the clothes since my clothes kind of take a beating here. I felt a little sad when I got off the phone with my sister. My parents close on their house in Virginia on Monday, the 26th and will be moving on Tuesday to Ft. Smith, Ark. Jill will be flying to Virginia on Wednesday of next week and driving back to Arkansas with them. I wish so much that I could be there for the house sale and move! It is just one of those times that it is hard to know all that is happening back home and not feel sad about missing it. I guess it is time to resort to my, "try not to think about it" mode...it always helps me get through tough times when I am feeling homesick. I'm not sure if that is very "healthy", but not thinking about what I am missing helps me to appreciate all that I get to enjoy while I am here.

Sunday 9-18-05 – I was so proud of my Bible class again today! Each of the kids were able to recited the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Daniel. Next week we finish up the books of the Old Testament. I am planning to make some certificates for them and give them out after worship is over on Sunday morning two weeks from today. I am very excited about this because I want the kids to know how proud all the adults are of

them – not just me! Next Sunday is my last Sunday to teach Bible class – my two months are up. On one hand I am relieved not to have to think about preparation every week but, on the other hand I am really going to miss it. They are just a great group of kids to teach! I will enjoy my break though – before I know it I will be back teaching again.

We had youth volleyball scheduled today at 3pm. At 3pm it started to rain. It only rained for about 15 minutes and then it quit so we were all glad for that and youth volleyball night continued as planned. With that little bit of rain coming and going afterwards you could just see the humidity in the air. Ure told us that this is the start of the hot season...oh joy. We are all noticing the difference in weather. It is definitely changing...not at its worst in humidity yet but, when I come home from walking to town or to church or anywhere – I want to do nothing more than sit down and cool off!

Monday 9-19-05 – Today was grocery day so that is what my entire day entailed. Grocery shopping is becoming more of an all day affair these days. Our Australian friend, Kerrie, told us about this great place to buy fresh produce that you can't find at the market. We have also started buying our beef at the different butcher that is cheaper and we found a place to buy chicken breasts and eggs that are cheaper than Nambatu supermarket. After we go all those places we still have to go to Nambatu supermarket to buy things like rice, bread and boxed foods and dairy products so it ends up taking all day. But, that is all right! I did notice an interesting sign hanging up behind the counter at the new butcher where we go. It says "Dog Mince 150vt/kilo". Isn't that nice? Dog mince! For anyone craving a good canine burger! I don't understand the attraction, but there are lots of Chinese people here and from what I know they enjoy eating dogs and cats. Not really my cup of tea but, then again I've heard of people from other countries thinking we are gross for eating fish! To each his own, I guess...

Wednesday 9-21-05 – Sometimes the funniest things happen when you have a one year old. Yesterday evening I was busy cutting potatoes to put in our stew and Kaela was busy crying to let me know how firmly she disliked my doing anything but, paying full attention to her. So, being the creative mother that I am, I gave her a potato to play with. An odd toy, but it worked! It kept her occupied and amused long enough for me to finish chopping the potatoes. After that I completely forgot that I had given her a potato to play with because I was busy getting the rest of dinner together. I forgot about it until just this morning when I found a potato sitting behind a picture frame on our end table. An interesting place to find a potato and I am glad I found it before it went bad.

Thursday 9-22-05 – This morning after Kaela's morning nap, Shawnda, Kaela and I took a walk downtown to the market. I needed to buy some lemons, raspberries and some lettuce. It was nice to get out and enjoy the unseasonably cool weather we have been having this week. Not a sunny day in the week so far but, it has been very nice and breezy these last couple of days. Almost makes me forget that hot and humid season is quickly approaching...almost. Tonight we are having Shem, Rose and their son Jonah over for dinner. We have also invited Daniel, Flexon, Alsen and Donald. This is the last group of Christians that we are inviting over to try and encourage older members to mingle with younger members. We are all looking forward to it!

Friday 9-23-05 – Tonight was team night. We ate fajitas again...oh how our team loves fajita night! We have been spoiled lately because it is tomato season and Mike has been

making homemade salsa with roasted tomatoes, peppers, garlic and onions! It is sooooo good! Afterwards we played games for a little while but, Kaela was feeling quite tired and cranky so we quit early, Aaron and I put her to bed and the rest of the team worked on the computers in the office.

Sunday 9-25-05 – Aaron and Mike left at 9am yesterday morning for the circumcision ceremony/celebration that we were invited to by Sam who works at the police department. I really wanted to go, but I needed to stay home with Kaela. There was a good chance that he would be gone into the evening and Kaela just can't go from 9am till nighttime without a nap. So, I stayed home and Mike and Aaron went to the ceremony. He didn't end up getting home until 12:30am this morning so we were a little short in the sleep department last night! Eric and Shawnda left for Epau about 1pm yesterday afternoon and won't be back until Monday so things were quiet around here all day Saturday and into the night. When Aaron finally came home he had lots of stories to tell (although he saved most for today because we were both so tired) and he brought some gifts from the people who were at the ceremony. They were very honored that he came and also very impressed that he was willing and happy to eat the local food – which isn't something they can say for most white people that come. They were so impressed that they fed him practically non-stop all day. He brought the gifts home, some taro (root crop), bananas, pah-pah (papaya), and a live chicken. Yes. A *live* chicken. Our first one and she is currently tied up by one leg in our back yard. I named her Geraldine. We haven't yet decided if we will keep her for a while, have her butchered or give her away. It is interesting having a chicken. I enjoy watching her walk around our yard (in the small amount of space she is currently allotted). However, I am not a big fan of any kind of bird (terrified of them, really) so I don't like to get too close. She wouldn't be so bad if she didn't have wings or feathers, then again she would have a hard time being a chicken without them! From what I can tell, Kaela feels the same as me – she likes watching it and making chicken noises that we have taught her to make, but if you get too close she freaks out. We'll see what happens to Geraldine.

Worship was very encouraging this morning. We had a great turn out and the brethren seem to all be excited to start our new plans in October. The men decided to have some snacks after worship each Sunday, time for fellowship and then another class or religious video or something. Then in the middle of the week each man is taking responsibility for choosing a day and activity for mid-week fellowship and devotional. Wednesday evenings just aren't working out and it was time to seek a new way of meeting during the week to encourage one another. It will be interesting to see what each week brings as different men are in charge of what we do.

Monday 9-26-05 – Last night was quite a night! At midnight Aaron and I woke up to an earthquake. It was a pretty good one – not destructive although it did knock down one of our picture frames that was on top of our TV that sits on our dresser. That isn't really a good place for a picture frame anyway because it shakes every time I close a drawer. It's a strange feeling to wake up to an earthquake or even to experience one when you are awake. The ground and house make deep rumbling noises. It isn't really scary to me – more exciting, but that is probably because they haven't been big quakes and this is my first experience with them. After the one at midnight that made going back to sleep a challenge, we had another one at about 7am, and then another one happened while we were downtown at the market about 10am. Although Aaron and I didn't feel anything all of

a sudden all these people come running out of the market. We didn't know what was going on – it's an open-air pavilion and we thought a big bird flew in or something. So, we asked a man nearby and he told us it was an earthquake.

One of the men from Ambae is in town for the next three weeks. His name is Mark. Since it isn't often that you have Christians from other islands come to town we invited him to come have dinner with our team. He was subjected to American food: BBQ beef sandwiches and raspberry cobbler. We thought this "Western" food would be new to him but, he told us that he used to work for an Australian man and he ate all kinds of strange western foods while working for him. None the less, he learned to like different kinds of food. It was nice to have him over for dinner.

Also today a man came by who met Aaron at the circumcision ceremony. Aaron wasn't here at the time since he had just left to go pick Mark up to come for dinner. Anyway, the man Steven, just wanted to come by the house and said he would come by later to "storian" (visit) with Aaron. He told me how nice it was for Aaron to come to their ceremony and how wonderful he thought it was that Aaron ate the local food. He actually said that Aaron has a "good heart". It is amazing to realize how very much it means to the locals when you don't balk at eating local food. It is like telling them that you aren't too good for them and the way they do things here. Ni-Vans know that our way of life in the US is vastly different from life in Vanuatu and it shows them great respect to eat the local food and trying to respect their customs.

Tuesday 9-27-05 – Today was women's Bible study. Shawnda, Kaela and I left the house at 11am to go pick up Rahab. We are so happy because she has been coming with us to Bible study for the last 3 weeks. She seems to be having a really good time and I am hoping it is helping to lift her spirits and open a door of opportunity for further Bible study. We were very impressed yesterday because Shawnda told her she didn't know if we could come see her. Shawnda meant come see her later this week, but Rahab thought she meant that we couldn't come pick her up for Bible study next week. Anyway, she said that was okay and she could just take a bus! We were very impressed with this because it shows her willingness to come on her own!

Thursday 9-29-05 – We were supposed to have preaching in the park today, but it has been raining all night. In fact, it has been raining off and on all week. I think we are going to try and switch the day and hopefully the people who are in charge of renting the stage in the park will let us do that for no extra charge. Mike is attending to that business.

I count this morning as a great morning. Kaela didn't wake up until 7:30am so I was able to sleep in till I woke up at 6:45am. Usually she is the early riser and ready to start the day at 6am, much to my dismay. Why is it, though, that the mornings that I don't need to get work done in the morning before she wakes up, she doesn't get up till later and the days when I have tons I want to get done, she wakes up at 6:00?

Friday 9-30-05 – We are all so excited...mostly Aaron and I really. Kaela stood up un-aided today for the first time! She did it tonight during team night and she wasn't about to give up easily! She did it over and over and over. She would stand up and hold herself up for about 5 seconds. Aaron and I are just bursting with pride and the rest of the team was pretty excited too! We even abandoned our game playing early just to watch her stand up. What a big milestone and now it is only a matter of time before she takes her first step...and then Aaron and I will be running our legs off to keep up with her everyday!

Sunday 10-2-05 – October already. Wow. Aaron and I were talking this morning about how fast the months are going by. It seems like in no time his parents will be here for Christmas, after that it will be our 1 year anniversary for being in Vanuatu, then Robert Martin comes in May, then will be Kaela's 2 year b-day, then Wayne Burger comes in August and before you know it we will be headed home in December for our furlough.

Today we had a big crowd for worship and several visitors and that was very encouraging. Attendance was up which is always nice to see. Afterwards, since it is the first Sunday of the month we had a fellowship meal. Normally we have them in the room where we meet but, since we also were having volleyball at our house, we moved the fellowship meal to our house. We live only 2 blocks away from Dumbea Hall, where we worship. It was probably the best fellowship we have had since we have been here and we all came away feeling encouraged. We ate lunch, then some of the adults and some of the kids played volleyball for quite a while, a few of the men played UNO and seemed to be having a great time the way they were carrying on and laughing so loud I was sure they would wake Kaela up. At about 3pm the teenagers who are friends of Akisa and Moses Mesa came to play volleyball and the rest of us just rested or played card games. Then Aaron built a fire and we finished off the last of the s'mores, which were loved by all! Afterwards, Aaron gave a devotional talk and everyone went home about 6:30pm. It was a great time and lifted the spirits of the team, as well as strengthened our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ here in Port Vila.

Monday 10-3-05 – Today was grocery shopping day. It seems that since we found these great places to buy our beef, chicken, veggies, and eggs, our grocery shopping has turned into an all day affair. But, that is all right, I guess. It is worth it for the wonderful vegetables that we can get at Rainbow Gardens that we can't get at the market. Today I bought some squash there. They also had strawberries, some very nice potatoes, pumpkin and corn on the cob. Shawnda, Kaela and I left about 12pm to go shopping and on the way out to Rainbow Gardens I remembered that we needed to stop and see Rahab. So, we did that first. Preaching in the Park got moved from last Thursday to tomorrow so, we had to cancel Ladies Bible study so we went by to tell her that. Afterwards, we headed out to Rainbow Gardens for our veggies, then to the Boucherrie (butcher) for our beef and also to the chicken shop. Then we took all of that home, put our meat in the fridge and then headed out again to Nambatu supermarket to get the rest of our groceries. Our goal was to get it all done before Kaela's afternoon nap time and we made it just fine! Thank goodness for us all!

Wednesday 10-5-05 – This week is our first week of having a different devotional/fellowship night and it feels rather weird to not going to church on Wednesday night. But, that is all right. Sometimes change is a good thing and hopefully the new set-up for mid-week devotion and fellowship will bring more members in attendance. Aaron and I enjoyed having an evening at home too. After dinner we cleaned up the dishes, then he played with Kaela so I could grade a BCC and then I took Kaela and we finished watching the rest of Anastasia with Shawnda. Kaela had been tired and cranky all evening so it was a relief for 8:00 to arrive and she could go to bed. Afterwards, Aaron walked down to Dumbea Hall to check out a End of Times meeting that SDA was hosting and I finished watching a movie. It was a nice relaxing evening. Tomorrow will be busy though, I have to go shopping to buy a few household items to give to Mark from Ambae. His

daughter is getting married soon and he asked the local church members to donate a few items as a housewarming gift.

Thursday 10-6-05 – Tonight was our first ever mid-week devotional/fellowship! It went great! We had a really good turnout, although, I wish more of the young Christians would come, however, they didn't except for Kal and Lissie. None the less it was a great time! It started at about 6pm...add about 15 minutes for the late comers and then we started singing. We sang for a while and then Aaron gave a devotional talk. Kaela was very interested in fussing and crying through the whole thing but, after a friendly "reminder" from me that her attitude was not very pleasant, she calmed down and was her usual cheerful self by the time we started playing games. We played Win, Lose or Draw again because it went off so well the first time we played with the locals. Everyone loved it – I am sure we disturbed our neighbors since the doors were open and we were laughing loud over and over again! Two of the funniest moments were when Lissie and Gomon were drawing. Lissie took her turn to draw, drew her word (from a basket of words on folded paper), and drew a kitchen. Which was fine but, she spent so much time drawing the kitchen that she ran out of time...the real kicker was when we found out that her word wasn't "kitchen" at all...it was cockroach! She was teased mercilessly for that one! The other really funny time was when the game was all over and Gomon decided that he was going to draw some "10point words"...it was all in good fun so we played along...the funniest thing was the words he chose and the best one was when he drew a woman pushing a shopping cart and a very large mouse...you'll never guess what the word was..."pusscat"! We all laughed and laughed and laughed over that one!

Friday 10-7-05 – This morning after my morning chores, Shawnda and I made plans to do some Christmas shopping. I was really needing to get my family's shopping finished so I could send it ground mail and that means it needs to head out this month. It was time to get busy with the shopping. I had about half of it done already and with a lot of luck I managed to finish my family's shopping today! Shawnda, Kaela and I got back home at 12:30pm and I was so hot and tired I was certain I was going to keel over and die. It was a hot one today! Tonight is team night, but instead of playing games tonight the guys are getting ready to go lobster fishing...catching...hunting...whatever you call it. What is the proper term? I have no idea. They's gonna go catch 'em some lobster! Kal's family owns property right on part of the beach outside of Eton and it is prime place to catch lobster. We don't expect them back until midnight so, Shawnda and I are going to have a movie-a-thon while we wait for them to get home. With any luck we'll be having a lobster feast for dinner tomorrow night!

Saturday 10-8-05 – The guys didn't end up coming home until 2:45am last night so it was a late night for all of us. They had a good time going to get the lobster but, they were only able to catch 3 because some other people got there before them and had caught several. They also brought home three of the largest fish I have ever seen. They were all parrot fish, one was turquoise blue, one red and one blackish red. Then they also brought home about 15 very small reef fish that were only as big as the palm of my hand. We were pretty wiped out this morning and of course Kaela was ready to get up at 7am. There was obviously more fish than our mission team could eat so Aaron and I made our rounds this morning and took one of the big fish to Mike's house, another big fish to Steven and Rose-Hanna's and then a dozen of the small fish to Shem and Rose's house. We planned quite

a feast for our mission team tonight! 2 different kinds of fish, 3 lobsters, mashed potatoes and biscuits! Yummy! And it was good! We cooked it all up and ate it all with no problem! It was some good eatin'!

Also this afternoon we went swimming in the lagoon behind the hospital. It was so blazing hot today and the swim felt great! It was a great place to swim because the water wasn't rough at all. Kaela even let us take her in the water with us and once she got over her initial fright she had fun playing in it. Of course, we were all wiped out once we came back home and took showers, but it was a great time and felt wonderful!

Monday 10-10-05 – A few weeks ago Eric and Shawnda went to a music concert put on by the local primary schools. One of the classes of children sang a song that seems to stick in all of our heads. It goes, “Mosquitoes are coming. Mosquitoes are coming. Do you like mosquitoes? We don't like mosquitoes...” The mosquitoes aren't just coming - they are here! And no I don't like them!...But, apparently, they like me.

Tuesday 10-11-05 – After I wrote my journal entry yesterday, the most wonderful thing happened! I was busy with dinner preparations when Aaron came running in with Kaela and hollering to come quick. He was so excited because Kaela got her first tooth! Nearly one year and 3 months old and her first tooth is coming in! We were so excited! It seems like it has taken forever and at times I wondered if she actually was going to grow any or be toothless the rest of her life. We are all so proud and happy about it!

Today was women's Bible study at Rose-Hanna's. We had quite a good turn out. Rahab was able to come again and also Morris and Rebekah's daughter, Janet, is in town from Eton so it was nice to see her again. Rahab will start work again on Saturday at the Nambatu Supermarket so she won't be able to come to women's Bible study on Tuesdays anymore. However, she did say that she would like to come for worship on Sunday, so we are hopeful for that to happen! It was a very nice time of singing and we each shared a favorite scripture, which is becoming one of our favorite things to do. I chose Proverbs 3:13-22 to share.

Wednesday 10-12-05 – This morning I got around early and Shawnda, Kaela and I headed out at about 9am to do some more Christmas shopping. Mostly it was Shawnda that was trying to get hers done but, I still was lacking something for my Dad. It's amazing how long it takes to get shopping done here. There are about 50 shops in town that sell basically the same thing, but not at the same price. Sometimes the price differences are significant enough that if you don't check with several of the shops then you might be sorry later to find you way over-paid for something. It is especially that way on what we call Chinese Row. Chinese Row is a street in downtown that is mostly comprised of back-to-back stores owned by people who are Chinese. While they carry very similar or nearly the exact same merchandise, their prices vary somewhat and it is a good idea to check in several different ones to find what you are looking for. Anyway, our shopping trip went well and I found exactly what I was looking for so I was happy!

Tonight was Shem and Rose's night to host the mid-week devotional/fellowship. They chose for us all to meet at the Seafront Park at 6pm. It was dark by the time we were ready to start, but that was okay because we just gathered under one of the street lamps in the park and had enough light. Shem gave a lesson, we sang from the Bislama songbooks and then afterwards we had some small snacks that Shem and Rose brought. It was a nice night for fellowship and the turn out was fairly good.

Friday 10-14-05 – I spent today trying to get things all squared away with my Christmas packages. I have to have them ready to send on Monday so I worked on getting all my presents wrapped, boxes packed and letters written. It was quite the activity! Kaela was of course, a great help to me. Every time I set down the scotch tape she wanted to pick it up, she tried to unroll my packing tape and was certain that I laid out wrapping paper just for her to sit on!

I also worked on my Bible Correspondence Courses today. We got back six introductory courses from the outer islands and three from people who are ready for courses 2 and 3. That made for a lot of organizational work on my part. It is already time to start making more copies of the courses because my supply is dwindling low. Good thing our new toner cartridge just arrived from the States today! I will try to get started on the copying tomorrow.

Tonight was team night and we had the best time! We had stir fry for dinner and then played Monopoly afterwards. You can always tell if our team is having a great time by our varied comments on a game. At one minute someone will exclaim about how much they hate the game that we are playing (because things are not going right for them) and then the next minute they are exclaiming over how much they love it (because they are winning). The louder we get – the more fun we are having! We usually play cards on team night but, for a change, tonight we played Monopoly. It was a plethora of yelling and agony, excitement and happiness! We had a great time! I, of course, had the best time because I won. With my monopoly on Park Place and Boardwalk with four houses on each I wiped out every other player. They dropped like flies...first Aaron, then Shawnda, then Mike and lastly Eric. I was the victor! No one was more surprised and delighted than me. I will be the first to admit that I do not have a mind for business so, usually I am the big fat loser when I play Monopoly. Not tonight though...luck was on my side and I cleaned out all my good friends and had a great time doing it! I'm not gloating though...there is no doubt in my mind that it will never happen again.