

# From <sup>O</sup>R <sup>O</sup>P <sup>O</sup>int <sup>O</sup>F <sup>O</sup>V <sup>O</sup>iew

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## the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

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**Saturday 10-15-05** – Today was a nice leisurely day which is always nice to have before the busyness of Sunday kicks in. Aaron watched Kaela this morning and played with her so I could finish up with the Christmas packages. At about 9:30am our Australian friends, John and Kerrie, came over to visit us. They stayed for about a half hour and we got to talk with them for a while. They came to tell us that they are leaving three weeks earlier than planned (in November) to go back to Australia so they wanted to take our team out to dinner before they go. It was so nice of them to invite us. We wanted to squeeze in another get-together so they are coming over for fajitas next Friday night. John especially liked Mike's homemade salsa that is very spicy. It is hard to believe that it is almost time for them to go back home. We met them about a month after we arrived here and it seemed like such a long way off. Now it is here. It has been fun getting to know them.

We went to the salt water today. The locals call it the salt water instead of the beach or ocean. Anyway, Aaron, Kaela and I and the Brandell's all went swimming. Kaela wasn't really scared at all this time so, we were happy that she is getting more used to being in the water. It felt great to go swimming and we only stayed about an hour, but as usual, I was wiped out by the time we got home. It works out well to go swimming in the afternoon because that gets us home in time for Kaela's nap. That way Aaron and I have time to shower and take a nap before she is ready to get up again.

It has been getting steadily hotter here lately. The humidity is rising and so is our electric bill because we are using our fans a lot more. It was so very hot and humid when we first moved here, but a month later we were into the cool season and the humidity was not very noticeable. Now the hot season is back and I am melting! I knew it would happen, it just arrived quicker than I expected! With the higher humidity I think we will be going swimming a lot more because sometimes it seems like that is all you can do to get cooled down. I didn't journal on Thursday this week, but Aaron and Eric went swimming during their lunch break. It was just so hot and humid and the office was sweltering! So, they took a \_ hour and went swimming at the lagoon. I have a feeling that will be happening as often as they can fit it in as the heat and humidity increase.

**Sunday 10-16-05** – We had a pretty good turnout for worship and Bible class this morning. Unfortunately the History Maker's Church (a small young people's shoot off of the Apostolic Church) meets right next door to us in a small room just like ours. This was their first week to use their new sound system so it was going full blast on Sunday morning. We had to move Bible class out in the yard under a tree because of the noise, which was fine, except the wind kept blowing our materials around. However, the big problem came when we tried to worship and their music and yelling (yelling, not singing) was so loud that you literally could not hear whoever was leading prayers or talking. And that was with all the windows and doors closed in our room. It was a bit frustrating for all of us. It's not as if they have a huge room that you

need a sound system in to be heard. Personally, I think they were trying to drown out the music from the Four Square Gospel Church that meets in the auditorium of Dumbea Hall.

My Bible class kids will begin memorizing the books of the New Testament this week. It should go a lot faster than the Old Testament because the books of the New Testament are more familiar names.

After youth night volleyball (with a small turnout) our team decided we wanted to play Monopoly again. It's a bit addicting (Aaron and Eric are even playing it on their computers at night)! So we played again. This time Aaron won. We played and played and played. I didn't even wait for him to conquer me. I was the last to go, but it was like dying a slow death waiting for him to finally gain control of all my property and money. It was bound to happen because Eric, Shawnda and Mike all fell to him and he has possession of nearly the entire board. So, I put myself out of my misery so we could go to bed.

**Monday 10-17-05** - Today was grocery day and I wonder if all my journal readers ever get tired of reading this every week. None the less - today was the day! The weather was humid and rainy which isn't really prime drive-around-town-shopping weather, but since it had to be done Shawnda, Kaela and I set out at 9:30am to get started. We spent our first 45 minutes at the Post Office mailing our Christmas packages which are supposed to arrive by Christmas. (We'll see about that!) It took so long because they still do things "old school" here so we had to hand write all our forms, and they have to fill out forms and receipts and glue stickers on the boxes with a glue stick. It took quite a while and I am sure that all the people in the Post Office were thrilled to be waiting on us!

**Tuesday 10-18-05** - This morning was Ladies Bible Study at Rose-Hanna's. The turnout was small as compared to last week, but we still had a nice time. Ure talked to Shawnda and I about going out to visit Rose tomorrow. She is having some spiritual struggles and problems in her marriage and is needing some encouragement. It is so hard to see one of your Christian sisters in need. We are hoping that our visit with her today will lift her spirits. Shem and Rose have such a wonderful family, it is hard for us to see them struggling. However, we know that no marriage and spiritual walk is without its trials and struggles. So, we are going to do all we can to help her through this. I am giving a devotional talk on Psalm 139 that will hopefully give her some encouragement and hope, then we will pray together over this matter.

**Wednesday 10-19-05** - Ure called Shawnda this morning and said we will have to go visit Rose another day. Apparently she broke a tooth this morning and Shem is taking her to the dentist today to get it fixed. We might go out and see her on Thursday or Friday.

Shawnda, Kaela, and I walked to town this morning to buy bread at the market. I can get locally made bread at the market for 100 vatu a loaf and it tastes just like homemade bread! (which is because it is homemade...just by someone else!) Anyway, I went and bought two loaves, picked up some tortilla chips at the supermarket and a postcard at the Post Office where I also mailed two correspondence courses. Then we came home, I put Kaela down for a short nap while I made lunch.

**Thursday 10-20-05** - Tonight Aaron and I went to a Bible study at Etos, a small community (not quite a village) outside of Port Vila. It was one that our contact, Sam, who works at the Joint Police Headquarters set up for us. (Kaela went to the mid-week devotional/fellowship with Eric and Shawnda. It was being held at Mike's house.) We had a good turnout for the Bible

study, it started with about 5 adults and by the end there were at least 10 or 12 in attendance. Aaron covered the books of the Bible and basically did an overview of the Bible. They were nicest people and very attentive. We are planning to go back again to next Thursday to study. The study time was set for 6pm and Aaron and I arrived at about 5:45. It took some time for the people to make their appearance so we didn't actually start until about 6:30 or so. Right before we started a woman named Iris brought Aaron and I each a large, thick piece of laplap. I was anticipating having to eat laplap while I was there so it wasn't much of a surprise. While laplap continues to be one of my non-favorites, the fact that I know what is in it and how they make it helps it to not be so un-appetizing. The imagination can wreak havoc on the opinion of what is and is not edible! It was quite dark by that time and they hadn't turned the light on since we weren't studying yet. My first few bites were not so great because I was certain it had fish on it (fish that I wasn't sure how long it had been sitting out). Once they turned on the lights though I was delighted to see that it was simply manioc laplap made with island cabbage and coconut milk. After that, it was quite edible and although I turned down a second piece, it was because I was full and not because it tasted bad. Ni-Van's are some of the most hospitable people on the face of the earth and in a showing of some down-home hospitality they weren't about to let us go away without eating more. So, after Aaron's Bible study a woman brought out a big plate filled with large pieces of boiled yam and 2 chicken legs (complete with the foot attached). I could do without the chicken foot, although I think my Mom used to tell me that my grandma loved chicken feet. I know they expected us to eat the whole plate full of food but, I simply couldn't have done it! It was so much food! So, I ate a hunk of the yam with some of the sauce and onions that the chicken was cooked in and it was delicious! If I had room for it, I would have eaten more - it was so good! It was overall a very successful night and Aaron and I are looking forward to going out again next Thursday.

**Friday 10-21-05** - I spent this morning getting the house cleaned for our dinner tonight. Tonight is team night and we invited John and Kerrie to come for dinner (fajitas again) since they are leaving to go back to Australia in 3 weeks. I also got caught up on my BCC copies. I had gotten behind this week because the duplexer on our copier is malfunctioning. I was waiting in hopes that the repairman would come to fix it, but that hope seems to be in vain. The last time the duplexer messed up he came but didn't know how to fix it. Wonderful repairman. It is still messed up, but I decided to adjust the input of my originals enough so that when it copies them it copies them on-center instead of off-center. That may or may not make sense to you but it makes perfect sense to me!

Our dinner with John and Kerrie was a fun time, as it always is with them and we were delighted to learn that they like to play games! We tried to play Catch Phrase, but the timer was malfunctioning so we ended up playing Monopoly. John said that he loves Monopoly but hadn't played in years, so it was fun. We had to set a time limit because with so many of us playing the game was moving along at a snails pace. John ended up winning so that was happy for him.

After they left to go home we told Mike that we were going to watch a movie. He was sending some emails and he was supposed to come to the Brandell's living room when he was finished. What he *didn't* know was that Shawnda's Dad sent the first three Broncos games of the season on DVD and it arrived today in the mail. We wanted to surprise Mike because he misses nothing more than American football - especially the Broncos! So, we were being all secretive about it and planning to surprise him. While we were waiting he was sending an email to a friend in CO telling him that he would swim across the ocean just to watch a Broncos

game right now! The four of us just laughed and said he had better put his flippers on! When he finally realized that we were playing a Broncos game and not a movie he was surprised and very, very happy! Especially since he had kind of had a bad day so, I think having that little taste of home really cheered him up!

**Saturday 10-22-05** – Today has been a bit of a lazy day. We were all up late last night and thankfully Kaela decided to sleep in too! I made two trips to Nambatu supermarket this morning. The first was with Aaron and Kaela. I needed another loaf of bread to get us through till Monday and he needed to go to the hardware store that is next door to the grocery. Aaron is battling a strong frustration with the hardware stores in town. They never seem to have what he is looking for when he needs it. They may have the same thing in various sizes and colors or whatever, but never exactly what he is needing. I made my second trip to Nambatu with Shawnda. Eric was planning to take her, but he was helping Aaron fix out front gate so I took Shawnda to get a few items that they need for their trip to Epau. They headed out to Epau village this afternoon and will get back on Monday morning.

**Sunday 10-23-05** – My Bible class kids did a fairly good job learning their first installment of the books of New Testament. I say fairly good because they all had trouble remembering whether Galatians came before Ephesians or not. That is okay, though. They will nail it next week, I am sure!

On Thursday night, Sam invited Aaron and I back to do the same overview of the Bible study with his family at his house. We were only too happy to go and since Eric and Shawnda were out of town, Kaela came with us. She did really great up until the end and then it was just too close to bed time for happiness! We arrived at Etas and with a couple turn-arounds managed to find where Sam's family all lived. We got there at about 4:45pm. The time for study wasn't definite so we spent at least an hour killing time, walking around, talking to the kids and basically just waiting for the family to come back from the river where they went to swim and to wash clothes. When they did come back, Sam's wife, Lemawa, brought dinner for us all with her. She is quite a good cook and the food was delicious! We had plain manioc laplap (that was without a doubt the best laplap I have tasted since living here. I even willingly ate 2 pieces of laplap just to show her that I really liked it and appreciated the time it took for her to cook it. We ate cooked pumpkin that was a whole pumpkin, peeled, hollowed out and cooked surrounded by hot rocks. Inside the pumpkin Lemawa had put something like scrambled eggs and coconut milk. It was a very strange combination, but tasted very good. I was very careful to feed Kaela the pumpkin and get nowhere near the eggs. I didn't want a repeat of the airport fiasco! We also had cooked cabbage and pig meat. It was meat from a wild pig and it was the best tasting dish and I could have eaten the whole thing without much effort! She also cooked some prawns in coconut milk for Kaela and Kaela loved them! It seems like I take for granted the modern conveniences I have in cooking with my updated kitchen and all that I can pick up at the grocery store. I have some idea all the work that goes into making laplap, how difficult it is to peel a pumpkin and scrape the meat out of coconuts to make coconut milk. I have no idea all the work that goes into catching, killing and preparing a wild pig for cooking or all that catching prawns entails. Seeing all that food and knowing what I do about the work that goes into preparing it makes me appreciate so much the generosity of Sam's family in sharing a meal with us. Ni-Van people are some of the most hard-working people I have ever met. When it comes to cooking I realize how easy I have it. I "slave" over a hot stove for an hour or so to produce a meal for my family of three. That is nothing in comparison to the

all-day preparation they have just to cook a meal over an open fire, heating rocks, moving coals and getting everything just right. If their dinner accidentally burns, they can't just run to Taco Bell and pick something up. They don't have that option. I am truly and completely blessed. On a side note, I baked some brownies for Sam's family and they were a hit – the kids devoured the container in all of about 10 minutes.

About the Bible study – we had about 15 adults in attendance and they were a very receptive group. They had a lot of questions for Aaron and while there will be some obvious challenges, they seem to be very interested. We will have a few obstacles both denominational and cultural to overcome with them in our studies, but that is all right.

**Monday 10-24-05** – Today was grocery day, but we got a rather late start. Eric and Shawnda came home from Epau about 8am so we spent a good hour talking and catching up and hearing about their trip. Then Mike came over with some mangos (yum!) and some different things to tell us about. Paul Vuhu, our main contact from Ambae island, is in town and is staying with Mike. Shawnda had to shower, get ready, and rest a bit before she was ready to tackle our grocery shopping so we didn't end up leaving with Kaela until 1pm. We went to the market to get our bread, then out to Rainbow Gardens for potatoes, then to the butcher for our beef and then to the chicken shop so I could buy some chicken breasts. After all that we brought our meat home to put in the freezer and dropped Kaela off because she was ready for her afternoon nap. Then, we left to go to Nambatu supermarket to get the rest of our groceries.

Paul called Aaron at about 5pm and asked Aaron to take him to go see Mark (our other friend from Ambae that is in town). So, Aaron left to go pick Paul up at Mike's. I had already started dinner so, I wasn't sure if Aaron would make it back for dinner or stay and eat with Mark and Paul. As it turned out, Aaron got back at about 6:15 and brought Paul with him so he could meet Kaela and me. I had never met him and so it was good to do that. Paul is a school teacher and his English is very, very good so sometimes he speaks English to us and sometimes Bislama. I invited him to come eat with us and thankfully I had made plenty of food for dinner so it wasn't hard to accommodate another person! After dinner, I cleaned up the dishes and Paul and Aaron came over to the Brandell's house to talk with them. When I finished I came over too and when I got in the office, Eric came running out telling me to be quiet and come quick! When I came around the corner of their kitchen door and peaked in the living room Aaron was standing in the living room with an Ab Roller balanced on his head. He was telling Paul that the point of the mechanism is to pull it up around your body and balance it on your head without touching the sides and then clap three times above your head. Not only that, but it is a very sacred ritual and if you can do it successfully then you are considered to be a very important man. With Aaron's encouragement Paul tried and tried to do exactly as Aaron told him and found it to be very difficult. It was only when Paul was looking at the floor concentrating on how to pull the Ab Roller up around his body that Aaron took the opportunity to motion to Eric to take a picture....Except that Paul caught Aaron sending the signal to Eric! Immediately, we were all dying laughing! It was hilarious! Paul was bending over and laughing and jumping around because he knew Aaron had just pulled one over on him. Don't feel sorry for him though, he had it coming! He is quite the prankster and is notorious for playing jokes on missionaries that come to Ambae to visit. He even told one man that there was a very sacred rock in their village and it is custom to walk around it three times and then kiss it. All the local men sure did find it funny to see this white missionary walking around a rock and kissing it! I am sure because of Aaron's prank, Paul will be waiting to play a good one on Aaron next time he comes to Ambae!

**Wednesday 10-26-05** – We were supposed to have Women’s Bible study yesterday at Rose-Hanna’s, but she called early yesterday morning and asked if we could switch it to today. That, of course, was fine with us. So, this morning I did my usual morning chore routine and then got ready to go to Bible study. It was just our usual small group today plus Rebekah. She is still in town from Eton so she can be available to help take care of Aleina while Rose-Hanna is at work. Alfonia and Tamata came home for lunch and then decided they didn’t want to go back to school, so they didn’t. They are just in Kindy, but the lack of importance placed on education here continually amazes us. There just seems to be the precedent set all over the islands (with the exception of a few families) that if you don’t want to go to school then you don’t have to. For whatever reason - be it you have the sniffles or just don’t feel like being in school that day. In the past the lack of importance on education wasn’t a problem because islanders have survived for years living off their land. However, with the growing rate of tourism here there is a greater need for educated people to work in various stores and shops in town. Eventually, the education system here is going to have to change to accommodate the changing economy. I am glad that the government has taken a step, though a small one, to change basic education from ending with class 6 to ending with class 8. However, that still puts most children (with the exception of those who can afford and desire to go on) finishing their schooling at 13-15 years old. It is just one of the things we face coming from a nation that places a great value on education to a nation where education has very little importance at all.

Aaron, Eric and Mike are going to a Bible study tonight at 5:30pm at Mike’s house. Paul Vuhu is in town for a 2-week seminar with the land workers and he invited several of them to come study the Bible. Last night Aaron and Mike were both scheduled to teach however, after Aaron’s lesson the men had so many questions that they spent the rest of the evening answering questions so, Mike’s lesson was pushed back to tonight. Aaron was very excited about the response and interest displayed by these men. We are also signing them up for BCCs and there are about 10 of the men. Add that to the BCC list that Paul gave us of names of people in Ambae who would be interested in one and we have racked up a total of 30 correspondence courses this week! I had better get busy making my copies!

**Thursday 10-27-05** – Today was Preaching in the Park so this morning our activities revolved around getting ready for that. The guys had a lot of prep-work to do. Since I remembered last night to “cook some paper” (turn the dehumidifier on so the paper would be ready for duplexing) last night, I was able to start my BCC copies this morning. I am happy to say that I got them all done!

Preaching in the Park went great and we handed out about 100 or so tracts on “What is Christ’s Church” and “Food Laws”. The Seventh Day Adventists are very big here in the islands and they have all kinds of guidelines for their members on what they can and cannot eat and drink – they have banned everything from eating pigs to drinking cows milk. So, we made a tract in Bislama covering the food laws in the Old Testament for the Israelites to the lack of food laws in the New Testament for Christians today. I think many people found it to be very interesting information.

About 5 minutes into the preaching I went to hand out some tracts and I met a man and his wife and daughter. He asked me several questions about Christ’s church and then asked if we could study the Bible next week. I went to get a pen to write down his information and then also found Aaron so he could come talk with him. His name is Joe and as it turns out he is from Tanna and all of his family lives out at Etas, where Aaron and I are going to study the Bible. We

were very excited about meeting him and the ready-made connection to his family will be a great open door.

I ended up not going with Aaron to Etas for his Bible study tonight. Morris Felix went with him instead. Aaron came back and was so excited because it went really, really well! The people were so receptive even to the point of asking how to get Christ's church started in their little village. Aaron said that Morris being there and able to answer questions helped tremendously. It is always good for us when a Ni-Van can accompany us in teaching and in turn teach their own people. We are expecting great things from this group of people!

**Friday 10-28-05** – Paul and his friend, Dickenson, were supposed to come by the house for dinner tonight. We were expecting them at 5pm however, at 6:30pm they still hadn't arrived so we decided to go ahead and eat. After dinner, they still hadn't arrived so we engaged ourselves in our customary team night and found ourselves playing Monopoly again. It is really becoming addictive. After a long battle with Mike, I finally cleaned house again. It seems to be my lucky game lately and I have no idea why!

**Saturday 10-29-05** – Aaron left for Paonangisu Village this afternoon and comes back home on Monday. Winnie and Nellie, two Christians girls from Epau, came yesterday evening. They are staying with us this weekend so they can play volleyball tomorrow afternoon. Because Aaron was gone, Winnie stayed with Kaela and me at our house. It was good to have her company! Tonight was the mid-week (even though it is the end of the week) fellowship/devotional. Gomon and Ure were in charge of it so they hosted it at Steven and Rose-Hanna's house. We had a fairly good turnout, although, again, it was the faithful few. We had a really good time, though!

**Monday 10-31-05** – Shawnda and I spent the morning hanging out with Winnie and Nellie. We had such a great time! They are just the funniest girls and the more we are around the both of them, the more relaxed we all are. We spent a good hour and a half singing hymns this morning. Winnie wanted to learn some songs that she has heard us sing once or twice, but she herself doesn't know. Then we played cards for a while until I decided I needed to re-paint my toenails and then everyone wanted to polish their toenails – so we just had a nail polishing party! We still had about 3 and \_ hours left till Winnie and Nellie needed to catch a bus back to Epau so we watched *Oklahoma!* We ate lunch and then it was time for them to come home. I was expecting Aaron home by 9am, but he didn't make it back from the village until 2pm. It is good to have him home. Kaela was sleeping so she missed his arrival. After he got home, Shawnda and I still hadn't done our Monday grocery shopping so we left to go do that. However, it is a holiday here and all the butchers were closed so it is plan B for dinner tonight. We will have to wait till tomorrow to buy our meat. Aaron and Eric were supposed to have a Bible study at Mike's tonight with Paul Vuhu's friends, however they went to it and no one showed up. Paul wasn't even there, so I guess we won't find out till later what happened.

**Tuesday 11-1-05** – November 1. One day closer to the humid, rainy season! One day closer, but it hasn't hit yet! It's definitely getting hotter, but the humidity is still bearable and the rain hasn't started yet. We had Women's Bible study today. It was just Shawnda and I, Rose-Hanna and Rebekah this week. I am not sure what happened to Ure. She always comes and if she ever has a conflict she calls one of us. I am wondering if she isn't feeling well. She gets headaches when it is overcast, for some reason. I will have to call and check on her later. Rose-Hanna was

running late getting off work and getting home so we just sang 3 or 4 songs, Shawnda read a scripture and Rebekah said a prayer.

**Wednesday 11-2-05** – Shawnda and I allotted today to do some visiting. We left after lunch and drove out to Rose and Shem's. They were home this time and we were glad for that. We were able to sit and talk with Rose for a long time. Not really about anything of a serious nature – we mostly just wanted her to know we were thinking of her and give her some encouragement. It is customary, for the most part, to take the people you go visit a small gift, usually food. We gave Shem and Rose some bananas, a breadfruit and a coconut.

After we left their house we went to go see Jennifer, a girl Shawnda has been studying with. In their studies, Shawnda found that Jennifer is already a Christian, however she hasn't been worshipping with the church, or anywhere for that matter. After several weeks talking and studying and encouraging her to come worship, Shawnda had to tell her that she was glad to study, but if Jennifer didn't put God's Word into action in her life and do what she knows she needs to do there is no point in studying further. In essence they could study more, but if Jennifer chooses to remain an unfaithful Christian then they are wasting their time. Anyway, we went to her house to encourage Jennifer to come to worship on Sunday. We did find out that now she has all day Sunday off work so there should be nothing hindering her from coming. She just has to decide to do it. We were glad to hear that, she is such a sweet girl! We gave her some bananas and a coconut also. Before we left she tried to give us some of her rice and a bag of sugar. It isn't customary to refuse gifts here, but we were not about to take her groceries that likely took an hour's pay just to purchase! When I was a child I used to imagine what it would be like if I lived in a really small room (about the size of a bathroom or something) and that was my home, containing everything I own. Today, I saw what it would be like. Jennifer's apartment is literally a 7x7 room. And that is it. Where she lives the toilets, showers, and kitchen area are all community. Her apartment has a 4-inch foam mattress on the floor, a small table that has some things on it, a set of small plastic shelves, and a make-shift closet that isn't built in. Visiting her was a humbling experience.

**Sunday 11-6-05** – Obviously I have been neglecting my daily journal. I'm not even going to try and remember what I did Thursday or Friday during the day. It makes my brain hurt to think about it so I will just skip right to this weekend. We had the best weekend! On Friday late afternoon Shawnda and I went and picked Sesky and Noel. Sesky is Gomon and Ure's youngest son who is 11. Noel is Sesky's best friend who lives in their neighborhood and always comes to church with them. He is 11 also. Anyway, Sesky has been wanting to come spend the night at our house so Shawnda invited him to come and stay the weekend and bring Noel. They are just the cutest boys and we had a great time with them! They played games with us and learned American football and played with Aaron and Eric. They watched movies and ate popcorn too and it was just so fun having them here! We also fed them fajitas on Friday night and both stuffed themselves and declared fajitas to be their new favorite food. (Better than laplap!) So our activities with them filled up Friday night and all day Saturday. They went back home on Sunday after the fellowship meal.

My Bible class kids did great again with their memory work. However, I did have two children that didn't have theirs completed. I was a little disappointed, but that is bound to happen. I came up with an idea for implementing a memory work program so I worked all weekend to get that done. I really had to bust it since I just got the idea on Friday. I made each child a puzzle on a sheet of paper. In each puzzle piece there is a different memory work



assignment. I chose 10 Bible verses and 10 lists such as: the days of creation, 12 sons of Jacob, 10 plagues, 10 commandments, 12 apostles, fruits of the Spirit, etc. For every memory work item they memorize they receive a puzzle piece to glue on their puzzle. I am hoping it will be a way to keep them motivated to reach a goal of finishing their puzzle and also instill some healthy motivational competition to work hard to keep up with the other kids. I stapled each child's puzzle to a small bulletin board that I will keep in Bible class and then display in the room where we worship so the adults can see what the kids are accomplishing.

We had our first Sunday fellowship yesterday and it went really well. Once again we invited everyone over to our house for the meal and games afterward. After we all ate, several of the men played soccer and some American football in our front yard. Everyone else was at the Brandell's front yard playing volleyball and a small group of us were on their front porch playing a game. I taught Sesky and Noel how to play Pay Day, one of my favorite board games, so they wanted to play it again. Alfonia, Tamata, and Renette saw it and wanted to play too, as well as Gomon and Ure. You can only have six players so Shawnda teamed up with Tamata, Ure teamed up with Renette, and I teamed up with Alfonia and we had our six players. It was a great time of fellowship, although we were all beat by the time everyone went home.

We had about 1 and half hours to relax and then it was time to meet John and Kerrie, our Australian friends, for dinner. They wanted to take our team out to dinner before they go back to Australia next week, so we all met at the Wild Pig, which is just a few blocks away from all of our houses. We had a great time with them, they are just the nicest couple and we have really enjoyed getting to know them. At the end our meal we got on the subject of expressions that are *not* cross-cultural. Shawnda and I were telling Kerrie about a missionary friend we have that called a baby a "cute little booger" and later realized it was a major "oops" when she found out that "booger" was a slang term for homosexual. There is never an end to missionary social blunders! Ha! Anyway, Kerrie goes, "Why would she call the poor child that?" So, I asked Kerrie if "booger" meant the same thing in Australia as it does in New Zealand. She gets this ultra-serious look on her face and said in a horrified whisper, "Yes...like something in your nose." Augh! I nearly fell out of my chair laughing. Shawnda and I were laughing so hard we were crying! It was hysterical!

**Monday 11-7-05** - Aaron and I headed out to Etas this afternoon at 4:30. First, we went and picked up Sam, who is our contact at Etas and whose family we are studying with. It was quiet the eventful trip, as it turned out. We ended up only studying with Sam, his wife, and his mother. They had several questions and the study went well. The eventful part was at the beginning when we first got there. Sam told us that he was going down to see his family and they would bring our food back up the hill and we would cook it near the place where we were studying. The place where we study is a tarp/tent set up on top of a hill and Sam's family all lives down the hill. I decided to go see if I could help his wife, Lemawa, so I walked down the hill to talk to her. While I was talking with her, I heard a chicken making all kinds of racket and out of nowhere about six dogs come and chase it down and pin it to the ground. I was surprised to see it was still alive after all that. A young boy got the chicken and was carrying it over to where I was standing. He was holding that bird and getting closer and closer and I was doing my best not to freak out because I am afraid of birds...chickens and all. Seriously afraid. He kept coming closer and I was trying to inch myself further away without drawing too much attention to myself. I couldn't get far enough away from that bird. One of the girls, Ruth, caught me and I must have been looking rather nervous because she gave me a strange look and I knew she was searching for some kind of explanation. So, I had to break down and tell her

what the deal was, which I don't like doing because everyone thinks I am crazy to be afraid of birds. Anyway, Ruth took the chicken from the boy and we all climbed back up the hill where Lemawa started a fire to roast some bananas. (They were very good, by the way, she laid them on the fire in their skins until they were black on the outside). Aaron and I settled down to watch them cook, and Sam took the chicken from Ruth for a minute and then gave it back to her and told her something and pointed at a large boulder sitting nearby. Yep, the boulder was for the bird. So, she just starts whacking this chicken's head over and over against that rock. I was trying not to watch because I was a little worried that its head would come flying off, but I just couldn't help myself! I've never seen anyone kill a chicken (that I can remember) and the whole ordeal was just intriguing! Well, she kept whacking that chicken against the rock and the poor thing wasn't dead yet. So, Sam came over and took the chicken from her and gave it a good whack till the head was just dangling from the body. I know that sounds kind of gross, but that is the way it was and if I had to witness it, the rest of you at home can share in it too! I was certain it was dead then, but Ruth took the chicken back and hit it a few more times for good measure and then I just knew that head was going to fly off and fall in my lap. But it didn't. Then, she sat down and started pulling its feathers. At that point I was thinking if they asked me to help pull feathers, I could probably do it knowing that the thing was dead. However, they didn't and I was glad...especially when it jumped out of her hands and landed in a nearby pile of leaves. Apparently, chickens have a hard time dying and don't like to do it right away, and if I had been near that bird I would have had a hard time holding myself together. All the kids thought it was funny and went and retrieved it from the leaves and finished pulling its feathers till that that was a neck-ed bird! Afterward, Sam took the chicken, washed it off, and got it ready for roasting. I was rather impressed with myself by the end because seeing them kill that chicken didn't keep me from wanting to eat it. After all, you can't eat meat without killing its owner first! That's just the way it works. And that chicken roasted over the fire was YUMM-MY! You know what they say - "There's a first time for everything!"

**Tuesday 11-8-05** - We were supposed to have Women's Bible study today at 11:30 but, Rose-hanna called and asked if we could switch till Thursday. That was fine with me because I am rather tired today since yesterday was such a long day. One of our cats, Gigi, was pregnant and we knew she had her kittens in our roof again, but we hadn't seen any sign of them until today. I heard one meowing really loud so I went and checked and sure enough they were crawling around on the roof. She had three of them this time, 2 pure white ones and a calico. They sure are cute, however, they have fleas and I am going to have to try and remedy that situation since Kaela is already interested in playing with them. Shawnda and I are working on names for them. After we got the kittens down, she, Kaela and I went to Nambatu supermarket to tell Rahab that Bible study day is switched. I feel so bad for Rahab. With the Christmas season approaching everyone at the supermarket has to work full days. She is working 7:30-11:30 with a 2 hour lunch and then 1:30-7:30 again. Everyday. Her lunch break is the only break she gets and with the new schedule change the employees don't enjoy the benefit of overtime pay. They get paid the same amount every month whatever their schedule is. It so hard to see people you love being abused by their employers that feel they have to work their employees to death without the benefit of a higher paycheck. After we left Nambatu we went to the market to buy bread and then to the chicken shop. I needed eggs and fresh chicken, but the chicken doesn't come in until 3:30 so I will have to go back and get it. I spent this afternoon working on my lesson for Bible class and getting some computer work done.

**Thursday 11-10-05** – Last night Aaron and I went back out to Etas to have a Bible study. However, the turnout wasn't as we would have hoped. There are two groups of people wanting to study in Etas. Sam's family that lives on top of a hill and the rest of his relatives (of some sort) that all live at the bottom. There is quite a bit of distance from one to the other so we weren't too surprised when no one except Sam and Lemawa (his wife) came to study on the top of the hill. We studied anyway, Aaron had put together a study of sin, and he will present it again next week and we will meet at the bottom of the hill and hopefully Sam's family will all come with us in the truck. We will see.

We are not having much luck with cats at our house. When we got up yesterday morning Aaron found the two white kittens dead, killed the same way the kittens were when we first moved here. We used to think it was a dog that killed them, but now we think it was another cat because we haven't had problems with dogs in our yard since Aaron put a gate up at our driveway. There is a particularly mean tomcat, that we named Humperdink, that comes around and I personally think he is the kitten killer. 6 dead cats in 6 months. How sad.

We went to Women's Bible study today and I was a nice time. Ure wasn't able to come, but we aren't sure why. I always miss her when she isn't there (which isn't very often). She is just the sweetest person I have ever met and never ceases to brighten my day! She is a true light to the world and a great encouragement to me! I wish everyone I know in the US could have the pleasure of meeting her.

**Saturday 11-12-05** – Today was sweltering hot and made me want to do nothing more than lay around and try to cool off. However, that didn't happen really because there is always something to be done. Kaela has a cold and she has been quite fussy today, I feel bad for her because I can tell that she doesn't feel well. I am hoping that if I keep pouring the fluids down her she will get better and I can avoid a trip to the doctor. Going to the hospital always takes a big chunk out of my day because I general have to wait a while. I went to the eye doctor yesterday. They have a very nice eye clinic at the hospital that is funded by donations from different companies. Some are in Vanautu and some in New Zealand. My eyes have been red and dry for the past few days and it was affecting my vision and preventing me from wearing my contacts. So, I went to the eye doctor yesterday. He told me I have some sore of infection or something. I call it eye-itis because after three tries I still couldn't understand what kind of "itis" it was. Anyway, he gave me some antibiotic drops and told me to come back next week for a check up. It's a real pain to not be able to wear my contacts, however, I am very thankful that I don't have any pain as a result of it.

John and Kerrie head back to Australia on Monday so today they called us and asked Shawnda and I to come by. They cleaned out their refrigerator and food supplies and gave it all to us so we were happy to take it off their hands. We aren't sure when we will see them again, but it will undoubtedly be a few times in the next five years since they own a home here.

**Sunday 11-13-05** – Today has been a long day, but a good one. My Bible class kids practiced their books of the New Testament during class this morning and sang them for everyone when worship was over. I gave them all certificates again and I am just so proud them for learning all the books of the Bible in order, many adults can't even claim that ability. They have done a wonderful job with their memorization! What a great group of kids! After worship we ate some snacks, mostly cookies and crackers and then watched the Revelation video. It ran a little long this time and the kids got restless so Rose-Hanna and I went outside with them while they played. Afterwards, Eric and Shawnda's truck wouldn't start (AGAIN! – They have a lot of

problems with that) so the boys tried pushing it up the sloped driveway and letting it coast down to start it. Some local men who were nearby helped, however, with all their effort in the blazing hot sun it STILL wouldn't start so we had to just leave it there. It has been so blazing hot lately that after I walked home I put Kaela down for her nap, changed clothes, guzzled some water and laid nearly comatose on our bed under the fan for a good 30 minutes. Then I read a chapter out of my book and decided to take a short nap before the volleyball kids showed up. However, my short nap turned into a long nap and pretty soon I had slept an hour and it felt GREAT! After volleyball I just couldn't bring myself to step in the kitchen and fire up the stove to cook dinner so I smiled real pretty and told Aaron that a hamburger and french fries sounded wonderful and he was quickly agreeable to that so we went to Seaview Takeaway for dinner.

We are just starting to feel the beginnings of the hot season and it is a reminder of what it was like when we first moved here. When we first moved here I couldn't make it through the afternoon without a nap or I'd be ready for bed at 8 o'clock. There is a good reason there is a standard 2-hour lunch break here (generally from 11:30-1:30). It is just too hot some days to even function. The body just needs rest! And this is only the beginning. We will see what my outlook is in December, January and February when we are in the depths of heat and humidity! I can hardly wait!

**Monday 11-14-05** - I am having a little trouble getting into the Christmas spirit. Every time I go to Nambatu supermarket I am a little wierded out by the Christmas music playing in the background. This will be my first Christmas to spend in any place even remotely hot and I am missing the "feeling" of fall and winter. There so much anticipation for the holiday season that comes with the temperature dropping, the leaves changing, and the excitement of a first snow of the season. I didn't really think I would miss these things, but I do. I miss them very much. I guess it will just take time to get used to identifying the Christmas season with increasing heat and seeing pineapple and breadfruit at the market.