

Tuesday 11-15-05 – I bought my first pineapple of the season today! I was THE BEST!!! The pineapple here is so good, sweet and juicy. It is just bursting (literally bursting!) with flavor. I think I ate too much though because now my tongue hurts from the acid. That is the price you pay and it is a small one! Shawnda and I went to town today to do some Christmas shopping for the team and pick up a few things at the market. It has been rainy and cool all day and we are enjoying the break from the heat of the sun! Aaron, Eric and Mike are preaching in Eton all week this week. Every night from 7pm-9pm. Aaron, however, is sick with some sort of respiratory/throat thing that is impairing his ability to speak so I am not sure how he will do with his lesson tonight. I think Mike is going to help him teach one of them. Hopefully he will feel better soon since he is also on the roster to teach Sunday morning Bible class too!

Wednesday 11-16-05 – Sometimes the vast difference of life here in Vanuatu compared to the US really hits me. Most of the time it doesn't seem all that different (which I am sure is because I am used to it now). However, there are times...

Tonight was one of those times when I saw something that is a normal every day occurrence here in Vanuatu. Lice is a problem here, especially among children living in the villages. To see a mother with her child's head in her lap picking out the lice is not strange at all. I know that many of you back home can't even imagine what that is like. I couldn't either and now I am so used to it that I don't think much of it at all. You just learn to adjust. Most of the women I see picking lice out of their children's hair pick it out and then smash the louse with their fingernail. However, tonight took the cake and I found it a little on the distasteful side and then realized it was just another "experience" that requires social acceptance. I may not understand it or fathom it, but this is not my home so, I just have to accept it and move on. I keep rambling on about this as if it were some big thing, but really it isn't. It is small – I just happen to have a lot to say about it! Anyway, tonight I saw a woman picking the lice out of her daughter's hair. After she picked one out she would stick it in her mouth, bite it with her teeth and then spit it out. The first time she did this I caught myself staring and had to shut my mouth and pretend like it wasn't anything I had never seen before. It grossed me out because I would never stick any kind of crawly thing in my mouth and bite it. However, it was just her way of taking care of the problem. I carefully filed that away in a file called "Hmmm...I've never seen that before!"

Thursday 11-17-05 – Since Bible study at Rose-Hanna's was post-poned from Tuesday to Wednesday and then post-poned again from Wednesday to today, we went to her house today at 11:30. Shawnda and I were both glad for the change because both of our Wednesday schedules were hectic. The day started out bright, sunny and very hot, however, by time we got back the clouds had rolled in and it was overcast which brought the temperature down. Flexon came by the house this morning at 5:30am because he had just taken his girlfriend, Fiona, (who Shawnda is studying with) to the hospital. She has been having stomach problems lately and it turns out that she needed her appendix taken out. The poor girl is in a lot of pain. Shawnda saw her before the surgery and she was pretty scared. Anyway, after Bible study Shawnda and I walked to the hospital. Flexon has been with her all day and was up with her all night (she lives with his family) so he hadn't had any sleep. So, Shawnda went to relieve him so he could go home, take a shower, eat and take a nap. I stayed for about 10 minutes, but Fiona was sleeping so I came back home. At about 3:15pm it started

raining and we had an out and out downpour for a good 30 minutes. The wind was blowing the rain into our house so I had to close the windows. It got quite cool while it was raining and that was a nice break from the heat. However, cooling rain always comes with a price and that price is higher humidity the next day and mosquitos come out in full the day after that! I can hardly wait! About 3:30pm Eddie and Netty Karris (from Eton) came by. They are in town today and stayed the night at Mike's house last night. They were going to ride out to Eton with the guys tonight so, they came over to our house and waited till it was time for them to leave at 6pm. Aaron ended up not going out to Eton tonight. There was only room for 5 people inside the Brandell's truck and he didn't want to ride in back in the rain all the way to Eton since he has a cold.

Friday 11-18-05 – This morning I did laundry and spent the morning cleaning up our guest room. We have visitors coming from New Zealand and they are staying with us. Antony (who came right after we moved here in April), his son and his brother are all coming for a week. They are going to be working on getting the new building started. The church is very excited about their visit!

After cleaning all morning I was just beat by the time Kaela went down for her nap. Shawnda came home from her Bible study with Yoland about the same time so we decided to watch a movie. Our plans were to watch *Top Gun* that I had taped off the TV about 5 years ago. However, when we went to play the tape it didn't have *Top Gun* on it at all. We were only a little disappointed about that because we hit the jackpot in what I taped over that movie! The tape was filled with some of our favorite old TV shows! It had *ER*, *7th Heaven*, and *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* re-runs. We still haven't finished the tape so who knows what treasures await us! We were pretty excited to see some of those old TV shows!

Last Saturday night we and the Brandells played Pay Day and Kaela figured out how to roll the dice. She had so much fun with it that we let her roll for us every time it was our turn. So tonight, Eric and Shawnda wanted to play *Farkle* (it's a dice game) so we let Kaela play with us and she had such a great time! And she beat every single one of us! We didn't even have to adjust the rules for her and she still came out a good 2000pts. ahead of the 5 of us! What a little turkey!

Sunday 11-19-05 – Antony and his whole crew came in yesterday afternoon. It is great to have them here and I know the other church members are excited because that puts the building project that much closer to completion. Yesterday evening we had the weekly fellowship at our house as a welcome potluck for Antony, Barry (his brother) and Kevin (his son). It was a great time, as usual! We had a really good turnout. However, the time was set for 6pm and the first people didn't arrive until 6:45 and the rest came about 7:30. Punctuality is not a local strong point.

This afternoon we left at 3pm to go to Eton. The guys finished up their teaching for the week at Eton and then afterwards they had prepared some cookies, cake, bread with peanut butter, juice and hot tea for us. So, we ate and talked with the members there. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and I just love those women out at Eton. Kaela had the best time playing with Rebekah and Morris Felix' little granddaughter. Her name is Urika (Eureka) and she is 2 years old. They played and played all evening and had a great time. Keala was thoroughly dirty from playing in the coral rocks and dirt and she was having a ball! I am glad she is finally old enough to play with other kids and that she found a

playmate near her age. Usually the kids are all so much older than her. All in all it was great night and we were exhausted by the time we got home.

Monday 11-20-05 – Today was grocery day for us! However, this morning Leimawa (from Etas) came over to talk with Shawnda and I. She brought Martino (their 8 year old son) with her and he played with Kaela while we all talked for about an hour. Then she was planning to go to the market. She had this huge basket of paw-paw, corn on the cob, and other fruit that she was going to carry all the way downtown. Once I saw it I told her I would take her in the car. So, Leimawa, Shawnda, Kaela, Martino and I all hopped in the car and drove downtown to the market to go see her sister. It turns out her sister had the day off from the ice cream stand where she works, so we then drove out to Taga Bay to where her family stays. We stayed and talked with them for a while then Leimawa told Shawnda and I that we could go. On our way out Leimawa's sister told us to come by the ice cream stand on Thursday because she is making island dresses for Shawnda, Kaela and I and she wants to give them to us then.

Tuesday 11-21-05 – Shawnda, Kaela and I went to Women's Bible study at Rose-Hanna's this morning. We went by first and picked up Rose so she could come too. I wasn't quite on top of things this morning and I forgot all about picking up Rose, so I was late cooking my food and we were late leaving and late picking her up. That's okay though...we'll just chalk my lack of promptness up to being on "Vanuatu time" instead of what it really was – a lapse of memory. After Bible study Shawnda and I took Rose home and then drove out to Ure's to take her home. While we were there we went and looked at the puppies that Renette's (from Sunday school) dog just had. She had a litter of 8 puppies and we and the Brandells want to take 2 of them. They are brand new so we have to wait a couple weeks before we can bring them home.

Wednesday 11-22-05 – Tonight was Aaron and my night to go out to Etas for a Bible study. Morris Felix (from Eton) has been going with us. However, Kaela didn't get her full afternoon nap and woke up cross and cranky so, I ended up staying here. It worked out fine that way because tonight was the mid-week fellowship/devotional. Shem and Rose were in charge this week so we met at Seafont Park. Our only problem was that they didn't have the lights in the park turned on so Shem had to use a flashlight to do his devotional thought and we ate our snacks in the dark. That's okay, though. We had a fun time and Kaela really like playing with Ure and Gomon.

This afternoon Shawnda and I opened up our very own little sweatshop! That's what it felt like – literally – a SWEAT shop. We borrowed Ure's sewing machine because both she and I had some sewing to do. We set it up in their small middle bedroom and it sure did get hot in there in no time! We had a great time, though! We even got all creative and made an outfit for Kaela out of some extra island print material we had. Shawnda made the pattern and did the cutting and I did the sewing. With our team effort it turned out really cute and I can hardly wait for Christmas to come so I can give it to Kaela. Not that she will have a clue about why I am so excited about it. It just makes me happy!

Thursday 11-23-05 – I just couldn't take it and I had to take a nap today. It has been so hot and humid these last few days. Sometimes I am just overcome with this massive urge to just

lie down and go to sleep – right in the middle of the day! Its terrible because it is always at the most inopportune times...like after Kaela wakes up from her nap – I want to take mine! So I just have to suck it up and force myself to keep busy! Then it passes and I am okay. Anyway, I took a nap this afternoon for an hour and it felt wonderful! And I don't feel even a smidge guilty about it!

Friday 11-24-05 – At the beginning of this week Antony told us that he wanted to take our team out to dinner this week. Shawnda and I worked up out menus for the week and chose Friday as our day of cooking rest. So, this evening our mission team, Antony, Barry and Kevin all went to The Waterfront for dinner. We have been there a couple of times before when we have had out of town guests here. It is always so good! This time I played it safe and got the catch of the day which was wonderful! Usually, I get the BBQ beef ribs and they are very good, but also very rich and I usually end up regretting it later. The catch of the day was mahi-mahi and it was SO good, along with the cooked cabbage, mashed potatoes, and garlic bread. Aaron gave Kaela half of his corn cob and she was so excited about eating it that she didn't want to let it go when we were ready to leave.

Saturday 11-25-05 – This morning we got up bright and early (about 4:30am) because Antony, Barry and Kevin had to be at the airport at 5:30am. I said my good-byes and stayed at the house with the sleeping Kaela and everyone else went with them to the airport. It was great having them here with us. After about 3 days of being here we started treating them like family, we all relaxed and had a great time together. We look forward to them coming again in March with the building crew to get started building the church building.

Aaron, Eric, Mike and Flexon all left for their stay in the village today about 1pm. Aaron went to Paonangisu, Eric and Flexon went to Epau where Flexon got to have his first try at teaching the locals. They even had one baptism at Epau! Leisong's husband, Bob Kaloruk, who has been coming to the studies ever since Eric has been going out there and also has been taking the BCC's was baptized on Sunday!!! We are all so excited about that! Also, Mike went to Eton to teach. They are only taking a short trip this time since Flexon has to be back at work on Monday morning. They will be back on Sunday night. Helena (one of Akisa's friends) was supposed to come stay the night with us tonight, but she never showed up for whatever reason. Shawnda and I stayed by ourselves. We didn't really like it, but we also didn't want to leave after dark to go find Lissie and see if she would come stay with us.

Kaela began walking today! For the last few weeks she has been able to take 3 – 5 steps all by herself with a lot of prompting, but today for no reason at all she took off and walked to Aaron without any prompting! We were so proud of her because she probably walked about 20 steps to our estimation! She is getting so big!

Sunday 11-26-05 – Well, Helena never did come last night. Shawnda and I played it safe - we made sure every door was locked, I had a baseball bat and she had a large Maglite flashlight, and we left the outside lights on all night. We were not women to be messed with! Thankfully we live in a safe area of town, but she and I believe you can never be too safe!

Today is one of those days when cultural differences are a rude awakening. During worship all but one of my Bible class kids were up and down walking around. Shawnda and I have been working to teach them about how to act during worship. (i.e. it's not a time for playing, talking, etc.) I was just so frustrated! Alfonia, Sesky and Jonah were walking back

and forth over and over and over. Tamata dropped his crayons about 5 times. They are the twist-up kind that come in a plastic holder so everytime he dropped them on the tile floor they made a huge racket. When Shawnda and I came home I just yammered on and on about how I was just so frustrated that their parents didn't seem to care. Then, she said something that made me realize the problem. Its not that they don't care - its more like they have never been taught otherwise. It is common in this part of the world to have children's Bible class during worship. So, kids have never been taught that worship isn't a time to get up and walk around and "use the bathroom" about 80 times! It just isn't the culture. You would *think* these days in some churches that it's not the culture in the US... Anyway, not only have the kids not been taught otherwise but, the parents grew up with basically the same situation. If they had Bible class it happened during worship or not at all. So, I had to shove myself off my soapbox and figure out how to solve the problem without being offensive or "a big fat bossy know-it-all". I am still working on that one! I have talked with Aaron about it and I will be praying about it and Lord willing we will find some sort of solution to this problem.

On the up-side. Lissie didn't have to work today so she was at worship. It was SO GOOD to see her! It had been a while since we have seen her, even though she lives right down the street. Shawnda and I asked her to come home with us and watch a movie. Which she did and then we relaxed for while and talked, then we watched another movie and then ate dinner and since we had watched *The Princess Diaries 1*, she wanted to see the second one as well so we started that one! With the guys gone, we just had all day to relax and have girl time! Kaela did really great all day and was very good while we watched movies! Then, the guys came home about 7:30pm. So, we shut off the movie and will watch it on Saturday. Apparently, the headlights on the truck went out so the guys had to drive all the way home from Epau using flashlights for light. With three of them holding flashlights out the window and driving the 1.5hr. drive home, I am sure it was interesting!

Tuesday 11-29-05 - Today I did a little bit of work on getting our guest room ready for Aaron's parents. They are coming in about 2 weeks and I am having to work hard to get it ready. Since they are staying 3 weeks I want them to have space to unpack their clothes and things so, that means cleaning off some shelves to make room! This is the first week since we have been here in Vanuatu that we haven't had Women's Bible study at Rose-Hanna's. It is basically a summer break. All the schools are on break until February (since it is summer here). So, we are taking a break from our Tuesday Bible study, as well. I also did some letter writing that I really have been needing to get done. I was very successful with that today and got 5 cards written and ready to mail tomorrow. Tomorrow is preaching in the park and then Aaron and I go to our Bible study in Etas. It will be a very busy day, no doubt! Kaela will stay with Eric and Shawnda while we are gone.

Wednesday 11-30-05 - Today was a very busy day, just as I thought. Preaching in the Park was scheduled for 11:30-1:30 so we were all at the park and busy with that. I got cooked because I didn't wear sunscreen. It was raining and cloudy when I left the house and then later the sun came out. I was only partially shaded by a tree so I got a good sunburn. Kaela didn't come out too bad, just a little bit of sun on her cheeks. By the time we finished with that I was perfectly exhausted and ready to eat and take a nap. When we got home I put Kaela down for her nap, fed Aaron and I, read my book for a while and took a 30 minute snooze. Then, it was time to get up and get ready to go to our Bible study in Etas. Morris

was sick this week so he was unable to go with us. That was unfortunate because it is always nice to have his company! Aaron and I left to go pick Sam up from work (he works here in Vila). As it turned out he had gone home from work at noon so, we headed on out to Etas and met him and his family there. I took Leimawa some used clothes - 2 shirts for her and 3 shirts for Sam. They gathered up some food, we all got in the truck and drove down the hill to where we were going to have the Bible study. This time we ate with some of Sam's family that lives down the hill. We had cooked bananas and kumala (sweet root crop) and some chicken soup made with ramen noodles and canned goose meat...and of course, rice. It was all very good and surprisingly the canned goose meat tasted pretty good. The Bible study went really well and we had a good turnout. Aaron went over the characteristics of the church that Christ established as seen in the New Testament. We had a fairly lengthy question and answer session because one man had several questions over things we had studied in the last few weeks so it took a while for Aaron to answer them. We finally wrapped up and left about 9:30pm. It was a good time and as always I am more than ready to get to bed when we got home! On a side and somewhat random note...the way the dirt looks out at Etas reminds me of coffee grounds - in color and in texture.

Thursday 12-1-05 - Just 14 days till Aaron's family comes! Yea! I can hardly wait! It will be so great to have them here! This morning got off to an interesting and rather gross start...thanks to Kaela. I was in the office working on the computer when Aaron yelled for me to come back home and come quick! I came running thinking Kaela was laying some cute way in bed and I was very rudely greeted with the foul stinch of baby poop. Oh yes, mothers everywhere are laughing at me right now, I can just feel it! Kaela, our dear sweet child, had taken off her poopy diaper while in bed and it was EVERYWHERE! Wonderful. There are no words.

This afternoon Shawnda, Kaela and I went into town to run errands and work on finishing up our Christmas shopping for our mission team. Then I came home, put Kaela to bed and was thinking about the nice dinner I was going to fix for Aaron tonight when I remembered that we have mid-week fellowship at Mike's tonight! So much for the nice dinner. The chicken that was thawed wasn't going to wait another day so I had to go ahead and cook it. I guess the wonderful meal will just have to wait till next week!

Friday 12-2-05 - Today I worked hard to get everything wrapped up for my Bible class on Sunday. I am teaching the about the birth of Moses. I talked with Akisa and she and I have decided to talk with the kids about their conduct during worship. Usually, they receive a coloring sheet or puzzle about our Bible lesson to work on during the sermon. However, since they were walking around and talking during worship last week, we decided that privilege will be revoked this week. I am hoping that it improves their behavior.

This afternoon Shawnda and I did some clothes shopping. Leimawa in Etas asked me if I could bring some used clothes for their family. Right now when she wants used clothes she goes to the "ples blong sakem toti" (dump) and looks in the garbage to find clothes for her family. (For anyone who reads this journal entry - we can always use second-hand clothes for people of all ages) Anyway, I found a great sale (a rare find here in Vanuatu) on some children's clothes and got a few things (both new and used) for their 4 year old girl and 8 year old boy.

Tonight was team night. We had fajitas. We do fajita night every other week and it seems like it takes forever for it to roll around again! We love our Mexican food! Afterwards, we played Monopoly (Shawnda won for the first time ever). Mike went home after Monopoly, Kaela went to bed. Aaron and I and the Brandells decided to play Pitch. We played two games in which Shawnda and I lost miserably and then spent another hour just talking and laughing.

Today I got a package from my friend Sheila in Oklahoma. It was so fun to get it and open it. With her package she sent some pictures from the 4th of July party they had with some friends from 29th and Yale where we all went to church in Tulsa. Looking those pictures was so much fun! I never know quite how to feel when I look at pictures like that. I haven't lived in Tulsa for 4 years now, but we do get to visit occasionally. Whenever we do it is so much fun to see all the people I love so dearly! Now, looking at those pictures I feel happy! But, I also feel a little sad because sometimes it feels like life in the US is passing us by. I love our work here. I love being here and it has become my home. Sometimes it is just strange to look at pictures like that and know that if we had been in Tulsa at that time we would have been at that party. I miss all those familiar faces of home so much! I haven't forgotten those that I love back home because I think of them often when I think of our life in the US. I just sometimes wonder if there will ever come a time when people will forget about Aaron and I because we are so far away. I guess that is something that only time will tell. I just hope and pray that my loved ones back home never forget that they have held a special place in my life - no matter where we were living at the time. And when I think of my different homes (Kansas, York, OKC, Tulsa, Denver) I am thinking of them and all the great memories that we share together.

Saturday 12-3-05 - It was blistering hot this morning so we all worked around the house, then packed up and headed to the lagoon to go swimming at 11am. We stayed for about an hour and it felt great! Then, we came home, Aaron, Kaela and I ate lunch and before you know it - it was time for Kaela's afternoon nap and she was more than ready for it! Aaron and I relaxed for a while then Lissie came over. She came to watch *The Princess Diaries 2* with Shawnda and I, so we did that during Kaela's nap. She ended up having dinner with Eric and Shawnda. Since Aaron had to work on his sermon and Eric had website work to do, we girls hung out and talked and watched another movie! It was a great weekend! I just love Lissie! She is so easy to talk to and when she comes over I never feel like I have to "entertain" her. She has definitely become one of Shawnda and my most treasured friends (who is our age) here in Vanuatu.

Sunday 12-4-05 - It was a busy day today! Sunday's always are! I got up early and got busy cooking 10 servings of rice and boiling my kumala for the fellowship lunch after worship. My Bible class went great, and the kids were very receptive to my "discussion" with them over their conduct in worship. During worship they all behaved and remained in their seats. We only had one problem with one of the children talking too loud and frequently. After worship, everyone came to our house for the fellowship lunch. Usually the fellowship lunch lasts quite a while - at least till 3:30 or 4:00pm. However, everyone departed early today. Steven had left Rose-Hanna and Rebekah at home with Aleina. So he, Alfonia and Tamata all left early. Then Mike had to go to his Bible study at the prison. Shem and Rose had an out of town guest with them (Shem's brother) so they left about 1:00pm. Gomon and Ure with their

family were the last to go. They usually like to hang around a while, however, Ure wasn't feeling well so they loaded up their pack of kids and went home. While we all enjoy having everyone over for fellowship it was nice that they left earlier than usual. It was so hot this afternoon that we wanted to do nothing more than lay down and take a nap. After we put Kaela down that is exactly what Aaron and I did! The heat really takes it out of you!

Monday 12-5-05 – 10 days and counting till Dave and Nila come! Yea! I am getting so excited! It is hard to believe it is almost here! Today was grocery shopping day. Shawnda, Kaela and I left about 11am and needed to run some preliminary errands first so we headed downtown. We went to the post office, the market and Bon Marche Downtown. Then we went on to Nambatu supermarket and did the grocery shopping that we needed to get done there. After that we came back home. I put away my groceries and fixed lunch for Aaron and I and Kaela. After lunch, we left again to finish up our shopping. We went to Rainbow gardens so Shawnda could buy potatoes, then to the chicken shop to get eggs and then to the butcher to get our meat. We also had to go to Vila Hardware. By the time we got done it was nearing 3:00 and time for Kaela's afternoon nap. Other good news today: We got a card from Aaron's sister and a letter from mine! :o) Yea!

Tuesday 12-6-05 – This morning we had a surprise visitor come about 6am. Only we were still sleeping so, we didn't know it until 7am. At 7am we were still sleeping because Kaela was having a rare day of sleeping in. We heard someone come in our front gate and then we heard a small knock at our back door. Aaron hopped out of bed to see who it was while I did my best to come alive. Martino, Sam and Leimawa's 8 year old son, had come to visit us. He came at 6 with Sam, but since we were sleeping he went to work with his Dad and then walked back to our house at 7:00. Last Wednesday Aaron invited him to come stay the night with us sometime. Tino, as he likes to be called, didn't know when he wanted to come. However, I guess today was the day of choice – which is fine, it just took some adjusting of the daily schedule. He is such a nice kid. We have really enjoyed having him here today!

At 11am Mike came over and we all got ready for our team picture. It was time to take an updated one for the website and MVM and various other things so, we spent about 20 minutes in the blazing sun trying to get the "perfect" picture. Perfect is, of course, defined by how good Shawnda and I think we look in the picture! Ha. Ha. I think that is a girl thing. Anyway, we finally took one that we were all happy with.

Wednesday 12-7-05 – I spent this afternoon baking some yeast rolls to take to Etas tonight. However, I had a problem with my first round of dough and realized way too late that I had forgotten to add the egg and had to remake the whole thing again. Of course I realized it AFTER I worked up a good sweat in the kitchen standing near the hot stove kneading the dough for 5 minutes. Oh joy. Oh bliss! That's okay, though! They turned out great and Sam's family all like them! Tonight we had our Bible study in Etas. Aaron, Tino and I loaded ourselves in the truck at about 4:15 this afternoon and headed over to pick up Morris, who would be going with us. Then, we went and picked up Sam from work. We got to Etas and I saw Leimawa. However, I was disappointed because she told me that she wouldn't be coming to the study until later because she was going to "worship" (I'm guessing some kind of devotional) with some of the women in her family. So, we all piled back into the truck and headed back down the hill to where we study. We got to Pbles' house (pronounced "Bless")

just as the women were unwrapping the laplap from the banana leaves. I was relieved to find out it was made from manioc and island cabbage because I don't really like banana laplap. We ended up starting the study early (before dark) because the locals were predicting that rain would be coming soon and we didn't want to get caught in it. We run into one problem when we go to study and that is when Pbles rings the "bell" near his house for everyone to come to the study that brings out about 20 children that all want to come see "the Mrs. and the Master" (Bislama for a white woman and man). It made studying difficult for about the first 30 minutes because those 20 kids were wanting to talk and play instead of sit down and be quiet. Finally, Sam ran them all off and told them to go home to their Mamas because it was too dark to be out. The study was on salvation and it went really well for another half hour or so until the rain came. And when the rain came - it really poured! The roof of the shelter we were under had holes rusted out of it so we ended up having to move inside Pbles' house to finish the study. Between Aaron and Morris they did a great job communicating the importance of salvation and the body of Christ. While, we didn't have any baptisms I feel confident that several of the people we were studying with were feeling the power of the Word of God working on their hearts. We are praying that we will have a great response to this study next week! Unfortunately, Leimawa never made it down to the study because of the rain, but I told Sam to have her by the house on Friday when she comes into town. I will try to study with her then about salvation.

Friday 12-9-05 - Today was quite the busy day! Wow! I got up early because Kaela was awake and I knew that if Leimawa was coming by it would be around 8:30am. So, I went ahead and took my shower early and got ready for the day. True to her word, Leimawa came by at 9:30. We talked for a while and then she and I studied together about salvation and the body of Christ while Shawnda watched Kaela and entertained Sam and Leimawa's oldest daughter, Miriam. My study with her went really, really well. We talked and studied for a long time and she insists that she was baptized correctly (in the right way: burial, and with the right purpose behind it: understanding baptism is for forgiveness, salvation and to add you to the body of Christ). I know that currently she and her family are worshipping with the Nazarene church so we spent some time on the importance of worshipping with the body of Christ. For a good reason: If you worship with a body that practices things that aren't straight with the Bible, you are showing to them and to God that you agree with what they are doing/teaching. While I do have reservations about her baptism (if it was denomination or not) - it wasn't up to me to decide for her if it was or wasn't. So, I just asked her to spend some time praying about it and reviewing the salvation study before she comes to a definite decision.

After our study it was almost time to eat lunch so she and I fixed lunch for our family, along with her and Miriam. At 1:30pm Sam was supposed to come pick her and Miriam up, but still hadn't arrived so Aaron and Eric took them to go catch a bus by USP (Univ. of the South Pacific) on their way to run errands. The errand that they were running was to Wilco to buy fencing for our new dogs! They went and picked up the 2 girl puppies from Ure's house. They are true Vanuatu dogs in that one is dark brown with light brown markings and the other is black with light brown markings...and they both have fleas. How fun. Oh well, it comes with the territory. If we want to raise ourselves some guard dogs the fleas are a package deal for a while! The Brandell's named their Juntao (from *Rush Hour*) and we named ours "Rex-Kwando" (from *Napoleon Dynamite*). We wanted boy names so they sounded like

we were calling mean dogs when we call for them. We will see how this works for security purposes!

Tonight was our Christmas party for the ladies. Rose-Hanna and Rebekah were the only 2 who were unable to make it tonight so they will give their gifts on Sunday. We had a great time though! We exchanged gifts. I had Lissie's name so I gave her a hot/cold rice pack/bed buddy thingy and I made her 4 hair scrunchies (they are popular here). She loved her gift and I was so excited about her opening it. Either Rose-Hanna or Rebekah has my name so I will have to wait till Sunday for my gift. After we did the presents, we ate together and then watched half of *White Christmas*. The women really liked it although we only got to watch half of it. It was getting late and our guests all had to catch a bus back home. We will finish it another time.

Sunday 12-11-05 – Today was quite the busy day. Worship and Bible class were great. My kids listened really well to our story this week so I was very proud of them because they did so well on the review! After worship we had some small snacks and then watched the second to last Revelation video. Miriam Vuhu (Paul Vuhu's wife) flew in from Ambae this afternoon with 2 of their children. Aaron, Eric and Shawnda all went to the airport to pick her up at 3pm (I stayed home with sleeping Kaela) but, then they came back because the plane didn't come in. Shortly after, Miriam's sister called us and said that her flight was delayed so we planned to go back at 6:15 to pick her up. Well, the flight was delayed again so we finally left for the airport at 7:15. I was the only one of our group who hadn't met her yet and she is just so sweet! She and the kids will be staying with us while they are in town for a wedding. However, tonight they went home with her sister and are staying there to see all the family.

Aaron and I and the Brandell's are planning a surprise b-day party for Mike on Friday. He thinks we are having the weekly fellowship at our house to welcome Aaron's parents into town (which partly we are). What he doesn't know is that I handed out invitations to everyone telling them to come a half an hour before Mike thinks it starts. We are going to decorate with balloons and streamers and make it really special for him. Which I am SURE he will love since he prefers not to tell people that his b-day is coming. It will be the big 4-0! The only thing I am unsure of is the "surprise" part. With the ni-Van tendency to arrive late for everything – he may show up at the same time or before his guests! We will see!

Monday 12-12-05 – This morning I had my alarm set for 6:15 because I needed to be up, showered and dressed before Kaela got up. I knew it was going to be a busy day! Today is Ure's birthday. She is 39 years old! And because Shawnda and I love her so much we decided to make lunch for her for her birthday. However, we also had our grocery shopping to do and that usually takes a good long while to get done! So, we determined to leave at 8am to do our shopping. We had several places to run including taking Mike's b-day invitation to Lissie and printing some pictures to send to people back home and one of Kaela that we will frame for Ure for her b-day present! We really moved and finished all our shopping by 10:30 which was funny because that is usually about the time we start our shopping most Mondays.

Ure's b-day party was great fun! Her and Akisa (her 17 year old daughter) came. They are just so funny and a lot of fun to be around. She loved her framed picture of Kaela

too! We ate lunch and watched the rest of White Christmas. Then, we sat around and talked for an hour or so! What a great fun time!

Tuesday 12-13-05 – Aaron called Sam (from Etas – which, by the way, is pronounced “Ay-toss”) this morning and invited him to come to our house for his lunch break. Aaron really wanted to meet with him and get an idea of where he is in regard to baptism. It is just so hard to get a feel for a particular person when you are teaching a study to 5 or 6 people! So, this was Aaron’s opportunity to spend some time talking with Sam. I cooked lunch for them and then Eric and Shawnda brought their lunch over and we all ate together. Aaron and Eric stayed to talk with Sam so Shawnda, Kaela and I made ourselves scarce! We got ready and went to town to go to the market to buy bread and then also to Nambatu supermarket to get some balloons and streamers for Mike’s party. Also today, Kaela’s 2 front teeth broke through! Now she has 4 teeth and we can see the beginnings of at least 1 or 2 more!

Wednesday 12-14-05 – Shawnda spent the morning babysitting Kaela so I could get the house cleaned in anticipation of the arrival of Aaron’s parents. I had planned to clean all day, but it just didn’t work out that way. At 9am Sam called and said that they had to cancel the Bible study tonight and asked if maybe we could come and pick him up at his lunch time and go out to Etas at 11:30 and conduct the study then. That was fine with us, so I adjusted my plans for the afternoon and we left at 10:45 to go pick up Shem. Morris went home to Eton so, he couldn’t go with us, but Shem was willing and we were glad for it! I left Kaela with Eric and Shawnda. We got out to Etas at 11:45 or so and there was no one to be found, except for the band of children that came running to meet the truck, yelling our names and laughing. It is so fun to be greeted by those kids! There are about 10 of them that live in the near-vicinity of Sam’s house so, we have gotten to know them pretty well and see them a lot! However, there were no adults to be found. I guess some had gone to the river to swim and others had gone to see some family somewhere else. So, we were back to playing the waiting game. And wait we did. For 2 hours we laid around and played with the kids and waited for people to show up. You have to get good at waiting here because in Vanuatu you find yourself doing a lot of it. (And your white skin generally means you are the only one concerned about time.) There are exceptions to that rule, of course. So, anyway, we waited. I leaned up against a tree and took a little siesta. I was so tired and my head was pounding from the sun. Even though I had sunglasses it was still very bright and I got myself a good headache.

Finally, Leimawa showed up, she had been at the river. She got busy making sure that our lunch was cooked. We had roasted bananas and chicken. I don’t know why I am always playing audience to the chicken killing! I guess I am just lucky.... This time the kid didn’t kill the bird by whacking its head on a rock – he killed it by squeezing its neck until its head was flopping around. Isn’t that nice? There are no words. Of course the thing refused to die right away and was flapping its wings for a while after. No matter. Once they dressed it and put it on the fire – it was good eatin’!

It ended up that only Sam, Leimawa and Sam’s sister came to the study. That was okay, though. Aaron went over the steps of salvation again and we also studied counting the cost. It went really well and they had lots of questions afterwards. We thought maybe that this today we would have a baptism, but Sam says that he just isn’t ready yet. That is all right because we want him to be sure that he knows what he needs to do. So, we will go back

next Wednesday and study with the whole group again. Aaron talked to them about coming to worship on Sunday. They said they would come. However, afterwards Leimawa pulled me aside and told me that she just thinks Sam will come on Sunday. So, naturally I asked her why and she told me that she is going to visit her mother on Sunday. Her mother lives in town. This is a common problem here (and all over the world, I guess) – a big problem – in that if someone has something else they want or need to do on Sunday morning they just decide to skip out on worship. It is just how many people here are raised. In her eyes, visiting her Mother on Sunday is very important and that is what she is going to go do. Likely, her mother asked her to come. However, she has to learn and grow to the point that she realizes that worship must come first and then if she wants she can visit her mother. I didn't want to be harsh on her or make her think she has to come to worship because I am telling her to. However, I couldn't rightfully say, "okay, no problem" - because it is a problem. So, I talked with her about it and she said she would come. I am hoping she does although I am not completely sure that she told me that to "appease" me. We will see. Sam and Leimawa and their family are such wonderful people and have so much potential!

P.S. Aaron's parents come TOMORROW!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Yea!