

From ^OR Point ^OF View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Tuesday 9-19-06 – Yesterday was grocery day – yee.hah. Mom, Kaela, Shawnda and I ran around all morning and into after lunchtime. We went to Centerpoint supermarket, the butcher, the market and Nambatu supermarket. It was pretty humid yesterday and that just added to all the fun and excitement of running around!

Today has been a much slower day and I am thankful for that. I was able to spend the morning finishing up my updates for my Bible study tomorrow night with Marina. I misplaced my original copy of the Old Law and the New Law and for the life of me I have no idea where it is! So, I had to hop on the computer and write up a new study – translating my quick reference English version into a more detailed Bislama version. Kaela went down for her afternoon nap early (on account of excessive crankiness and crying) and so Mom, Dad and I were able to get in a little game playing. That is one of our favorite family games. I figure all my cleaning/organizing projects and housework can wait until a later date. How often do I get to spend time with my parents?! It's been a good day – after Kaela gets up Mom, Kaela and I are going to walk over the red Chinese store (that's what color the building is – don't ask me what the actual name is because I don't remember!) to buy diapers for Kaela at bedtime. They were clean out at both grocery stores yesterday so now it is time to check out another option.

Wednesday 9-20-06 – Mom, Shawnda, Kaela and I left about 9am this morning and headed out to do some visiting. On Sunday the women got together to make our plan for our Women's fellowships. A few of the women weren't there so we had several women to visit to deliver the program. First, we headed out to see Ure and stayed and visited with her for a while. Kaela was being quite a little toot and fussy pants so we tried not to stay too long. Then, we headed into town to see Rose-Hannah at work and then we went out to see Rose. After that, I needed to deliver a bath towel I borrowed back to Fiona so we dropped by her house and did that. Then on the way into town we decided to go take a schedule to Lissie while were out so we went by her workplace. Finally, we headed home and Mother, Kaela and I were sure ready to eat by that time! Daddy and Aaron got home from eating at the market not long after we sat down to eat. Then before you know it it was time to get ready to go to Etas for the evening. It has been a busy day and I am weary from it!

Thursday 9-21-06 – The highlight of the day today was our women's fellowship in the park. Today was the first sunny day we have had in over a week and I am SO GLAD!!! I was getting a little tired of the rainy, cloudy days. We had a great turnout – 9 women and about 5 or 6 assorted kids (it's hard to remember the exact number). It was a good time of singing and fellowshiping. We tried to each share a scripture but that didn't

work very well since it was INCREDIBLY windy today and you could hardly hear who was sharing what scripture. It was so windy today that I wondered if there was a cyclone somewhere out to see – but seeing as how it isn't cyclone season and there aren't any warnings of the sort – I guess it is just a windy day.

Friday 9-22-06 – Tonight was team night and fajita night. My Dad is a lover of Mexican food and has been looking forward to eating fajitas all week. Just like a Dietz (that's my maiden name for those of you who don't know) – thinking about food all the time! The fajitas turned out great and we played games afterwards with our whole team. It was a really fun evening!

Saturday 9-23-06 – Today has been a work day for me – lots of work to do – mostly in the office. Thankfully, Mother was willing to watch Kaela so I headed to the office right after breakfast and have been emailing, doing Bible correspondence courses, journaling and other assorted computer things all morning. However, I don't feel like I am getting much done since I keep having to run back home for various reasons – most involving Kaela. I just remembered that I forgot to buy my hamburger meat at the store on Monday so I guess I'll be going to the grocery right after lunch to get that!

Daddy and Aaron are building a bed frame for our new (old) mattress and I am so excited about that! I have been trying not to nag but also trying hard to motivate them to get started on that all week! I am getting tired of getting down on the floor to make my bed – it's a bit of a pain.

Sunday 9-24-06 – Aaron was scheduled to preach in Etas this morning so all five of us (Mom, Dad, Aaron, Kaela and I) headed out there about 9:15 this morning. Kaela was really tired for some reason and acted like she wanted to take a nap on the way there but she never did. By the time we headed home at 12:30pm she was more than ready for her nap and fell asleep on Grandpa's lap on the way home. That was a cute sight to see! We had a nice time out at Etas. I always love going to see the Christians out there and worship with them. They are such a great group of people! Our numbers were small this week, unfortunately but we had a nice time of worship and fellowship with lunch afterwards.

Daddy and Aaron squeezed in a golf game this afternoon despite the rain that has been off and on all day. They seemed to have a good time even though neither of them did as well as they would have liked. When they got home we played a card game together and then had a traditional Sunday night dinner of popcorn, cheese, fried egg sandwiches and smoked oysters. People think we are crazy but my family loves eating all those things for Sunday night dinner! Yummy – like a taste of home!

Monday 9-25-06 – This month is nearly over and it occurred to me today just how CLOSE it is until we are back home in the States on furlough! It is crazy! Mom and Dad leave on October 12, then the next day Aaron is planning to leave to go to Ambae island for nearly 2 weeks and then after he gets home we only about 2 more weeks until it is time to leave for the States! We are planning on spending a week in New Zealand reporting to the congregations that have been a part of the building project here. The Church in New Zealand has done so much for us and several members from different

places in the country have come out to help us with the project. It has been great getting to know Christians from another country and to spend time with them. We are hoping that our reporting trip will be a great opportunity to let them know how much they mean to us and spend some more time with the Christians there. Too – we will be sure to squeeze in a little bit of enjoyment while we are there – everyone says that New Zealand is BEAUTIFUL and we can't wait to see it!

Today was grocery day and ANOTHER rainy day! Mom and Dad have been here almost two weeks and I think we have had only one sunny day since they have been here! I am ready for some sunshine! Mother volunteered to stay home with Kaela while Shawnda and I went grocery shopping. I didn't complain! We had 3 stores and the market to visit and that can be very tiring on a sunny day but when it is raining it can be just a mess all the way around! So, Kaela and her stayed home and played stickers and sang and read books while Shawnda and I got our shopping done in record time!

Tuesday 9-24-06 – For about a month now I have been meaning to write about three interesting experiences I had all in a two-week period. All in a two-week period I experienced 3 “firsts” for me. Three things I have never seen/heard/done before. And all of them were very “Vanuatu” experiences. The first one occurred on the day of our Women's fellowship in the park. It happened to be just Ure, Shawnda, Kaela and I that day and I needed to go buy some peppers at the market so I left Kaela with Shawnda and Ure and walked over to the market. When I got there I noticed that there were TONS of people milling around. And everyone was talking SO LOUD! I noticed a few policemen and I thought maybe there was a fight in the market. However, no one seemed to be yelling like they were angry. It was mostly just loud, excited chatter. What in the world?! When I got closer I asked the lady that I bought my peppers from what was going on. She told me that a lady had just put her baby up for sale and another woman bought it! Yep. That's right. A baby for sale in the market. I never got the “official” word on how much it sold for but, word on the street is that it was for 5000 vatu which is about \$50. Crazy. I did see the woman that bought the little girl and she was so happy and kissing the baby and the ENTIRE crowd was following her wherever she went. It was SO CRAZY!!!!!! I don't think this is the first time this has happened and it's a little sketchy as to whether it is illegal or not. I guess more not than so since the police weren't really stopping it. The general public consensus was that it isn't good fasin (“fashion” or “character”) to sell a baby like a head of cabbage. However, some did make the good point that it is better that the mother sell the baby that she didn't want than to try to kill it (which happens here every so often). That was definitely a first for me to see!

The next thing that happened was that one day I was certain I was going to die. I just knew it. Shawnda, Kaela and I were on a bus coming back from the church ground when the bus driver stopped for gas. He didn't even turn off the engine! I was certain that would be the end for us as there was a warning sign looming in the window about the dangers of not turning off your engine while getting gas. I was saying quite a lot of prayers. He probably only got a couple dollars in gas because we were only there for a few minutes but I was still freaked out! Aaron told me later that while it probably wasn't a smart thing to do it wasn't that likely that it would happen. I guess I was a little overly-freaked out. I still don't want to go through that again!

My last experience was quite interesting. Aaron and I and the Brandell's decided that we wanted to get our dog, Rex, spade (sp?). There's too many dogs in our neighborhood and we sure don't want her getting pregnant and dealing puppies. So, we called the vet that comes and gives her shots. I think he is like a retired vet in all actuality. I'm a little sketchy on the details (isn't that nice?). Anyway, he came over one morning to do that surgery. He had Shawnda and I bring a table out from our office and he gave Rex her shots to knock her out and then we hauled her up on the table and he performed the surgery right on our back porch! Interesting....Kaela was very interested in what was going on – she loves looking at cuts and all that. I can't stomach stuff like that so I was trying to keep her out of the way without having to look at anything gross. It was awfully funny to me, though! Rex healed up just fine and is doing great! And just for the record – I disinfected the table after he cleaned up his stuff and left.

Wednesday 9-25-06 – Preaching in the Park was planned for today and our entire morning was planned around that event. However, when Mike got to Seafront park some people were setting up for a school program for early this evening. The boys decided that all the setting up would be more of a distraction than anything so they re-scheduled preaching in the park for next week.

Thursday 9-26-06 - Tonight was Etas night and we had a great time!!!! We headed out there about 4:30 and right after we arrived I walked up the road to Marina's house to study with her. We studied sin this week (what it is and where it comes from) and the study went really well. So far she has been very open, shows great interest and always asks good questions. Questions that are also, sometimes challenging to answer. I am really thankful for the opportunity to study with her and I pray that the Word of God continues to work on her heart.

After my study with Marina, I walked back down the road where I found Mom and Dad showing the Etas kids all kinds of different things. Mom was doing all those kind of games you can do with a piece of string (i.e. the crows foot, the sawmill, etc.) and Dad was doing some of his magic tricks that he likes to do. The adults were having about as much fun with it all as the kids were! Especially Leimawa! She was SO FUNNY!!! She was so excited about everything they were doing and was practically bouncing around the shelter in her excitement! We had a good night of study, Aaron post-poned his Titus study since several of our regulars were gone. So, he just did a devotional and we sang for quite a while. Afterwards, everyone was kind of in a silly mood and there was music playing nearby and we were all getting kind of crazy! It's always good to spend time in Bible study with the Christians there but its also fun to laugh together and just have fun in fellowship! I am going to miss them SO MUCH while were are home in the States.

Also today, Mike and Eric left for Emao island to do some teaching and preaching. There are some Christians on that island but the chief in the past has blocked anyone from the Church coming to meet with the Christians there. That has been quite a struggle for the church on Emao. Shawnda (along with Rhema and Mabel) drove the boys over to the other side of our island to catch the boat to Emao. Kaela went with her since she wouldn't be getting back until after we left for Etas.

Saturday 9-28-06 – Today has been a pretty quiet day. Aaron and Daddy left for Paonangisu village this morning. They are staying until Sunday pm. Dad was excited to be able to stay the night in a village and get the village experience. Mom, Kaela and I stayed home with Shawnda for the weekend.

Monday 10-02-06 – I can't believe it is October. Don't I say that every month? Mostly, my disbelief comes from the fact that we leave for our furlough in just about a month. We are spending a week in New Zealand, reporting to the congregation there that had a big helping hand in our building project. It will be great to see the Christians there and also see some of New Zealand. Although, it will be a little strange to leave Vanuatu for furlough and not to go straight home.

This has been quite a busy and crazy weekend. On Saturday night about midnight Rex (our dog) started barking all crazy. The kind of bark she does when someone is around. With Aaron and Daddy gone that kind of freaked me out a little because I sure don't want any "unwanted guests" coming to visit in the middle of the night. Usually, when she starts barking like that Aaron gets up, gets his huge flashlight and goes outside and checks things out around our whole house. But, I wasn't ABOUT to leave the house by myself after dark. So, I just laid in bed and listened. Then, I heard our the gate on our front porch click open and shut. My heart started pounding and I hopped out of bed, grabbed my baseball bat (I was ready for action!) and went to peek out of the front curtains. Well, I was right – there were people on our front porch! Only it was Tom and Leimawa (from Etas). They had brought Alice to the hospital with labor pains. Aaron and I had told them that if when they came to the hospital, even if it was the middle of the night, Tom could come and stay at our house and wait for the baby to come. Anyway, even though my fears were calmed, my heart was still beating like a tamtam drum! Tom and Leimawa ended up not staying the rest of the night at our house but went back to Etas. To make a long story short, the next day the doctor told Alice that she needed to wait because it wasn't time yet and not to go back to Etas. So, Alice, Tom and a relative of theirs, Morgan came and stayed the night at our house on Sunday night. Dad and Aaron got back from Paonangisu Sunday night also, so it was a full house for us! We taught Tom, Alice and Morgan how to play a new card game and it was really fun playing with them!

This morning, Alice still wasn't really in much pain so she and Tom decided to go back to Etas after he got back from working at the church ground. Today, I did grocery shopping. It was a day to wear me out. Not to be a compainer – but sometimes I really hate Mondays. They give me a headache – basically because we go to so many different places to get the weekly food and throw in cooking lunch and extra house guests (don't take that the wrong way – we are glad to help them out and I love Tom and Alice SO MUCH!) and I was ready to sit down and have a few minutes of peace and quiet this afternoon. I allotted myself 45 minutes for that and then it was time to go work on the computer on Bible studies and then off to the market and the chicken shop. Wow. I can hardly wait to get to bed tonight!

Tom and Alice will likely be back later in the week (depending on how things go) and hopefully she will have that baby this week. I know she is more than ready!

Wednesday 10-4-06 – Yesterday was a tiring day. We took Mom and Dad on a trip around the island. It has been raining for nearly a week now (which didn't make the weather great) Because of all the rain, the road around the island was REALLY, REALLY in bad shape and we jiggled and bounced our way from beginning to end. By the time we got home at about 2:30pm we were all ready for a nap...funny how sitting in a car does that to you. We really didn't get to see many more of the Christians other than Harry in Paonangisu and Arthur and Rosie in Epau village. Other than that there wasn't anyone around and everyone was off doing something else, I guess. For dinner we all went to the market and it was YUMMMY! Great food for a great price and we were fed like an army---all for \$10 for the 5 of us. Can't beat that deal.

Today has been a somewhat slow day. Sam called this morning and cancelled our bible study in Etas tonight because it has rained so much that the roads out there are nearly impassable.

Alice had her baby yesterday – a little boy and such a cutie! I was hoping they would let me name it and they did! So, I named him Dalton after my Dad. Now both of my parents have a Ni-Vanuatu namesake. I thought that would be especially special for Tom and Alice because they were able to spend time with my Dad before Alice had the baby and Tom and my Dad have also spent time working together at the church ground. Anyway, that's pretty exciting!

Friday 10-6-06 – I started something new for my last 4 weeks in Vanuatu before we go back home. I have really been wanting to start like a mid-week women's Bible class with the Etas women. However, I was a little unsure about starting it before we left. So, Shawnda suggested that I just do a temporary class that has a series of four lessons and I can pick it back up again when we come home. So, today was my first day for the class. I asked Ure and Fiona to join me and so they came to the house at 8:30 this morning and then we went to Etas. I have all four of my lessons ideas planned with the bare-bones and two of those I have completed and ready to go. My lesson today was on "Lot's wife" and the application was "Letting God control your life---faith & obedience" and then my next week one is on "Queen Vashti vs. Queen Esther" with an application of "Showing respect to your husband". I hope these are good, practical studies for them. I really am enjoying focusing on the lives of the Bible women because that SO HELPS to make the application easy to understand. My study today went great and we had a good time together. I am really looking forward to next week!

Saturday 10-7-06 – Today was Women's fellowship day and we went to Eton Village. The women in Vila all came to our house and we headed out at 9am. Only 1 hour past our projected departure time. Right on "Vanuatu time!" We had a FULL load by the time we picked up the women at Etas as well. We were SO PACKED in that Fiona had to sit in the front seat in the middle (which isn't really a seat), straddling the gear shift. We had a great time, though! Thankfully, the sun was shining and it didn't rain on us today. All together (including the Eton village women) there were 24!!!! That's is probably the largest fellowship we have had in Eton! It was a great time. I am beat, though. The roads were really, really bumpy and that just makes you tired in itself – driving on them. By the time we drove all over town dropping people off I was ready to get home and rest. Tonight, Mom, Dad, Aaron and I are going out for a nice dinner at

Erakor Island Resort Restaurant. I LOVE that place! Should be fun! Kaela is staying with Shawnda and Eric.

Sunday 10-8-06 – Dinner last night was DE-LICIOUS! Mom and Dad really enjoyed eating at Erakor about as much as we enjoyed taking them. It really is a fun/neat/beautiful experience.

This morning we all went and worshipped at Etas village. It was a nice time for us to be there. I wasn't feeling my best this morning. Kaela decided it would be fun to get up at 5am and I have feeling she is going to start making a habit of it for a while. Wonderful. Anyway, I was tired and my patience was wearing quite thin by the time the worship service was over. She and I were both tired and it was starting to show. The women worked hard to put together a big, special lunch for Mom and Dad so once I got some food in me I started to feel a little better. Aaron took pictures of all the families of the congregation so they could have pictures to send back to their families on Tanna Island. Leimawa wanted Kaela to be in their family picture so she was. That was kind of funny. Sam's family of 4...and Kaela. I slept 2 hours this afternoon after we got home. I guess I needed the rest.

Monday 10-9-06 – Kaela was up at 5am again this morning. Only this time I was wise to her plan and just let her lay in bed and "fake" cry. She went back to sleep for about 30 minutes and I did too. I finally dragged myself out of bed to get her about 6am. In which she announced that it was time for me to go make the coffee and she also wanted to go get in bed with Grandpa. So much for my going back to sleep!

Today was grocery day and it was raining again. We counted it up – Mom and Dad have been here nearly a month now and we have had exactly 4 days of sunshine since they have been here. Literally. It is crazy how much rain we have had lately! Mother has some kind of stomach virus and she is staying home today. I feel so sorry for her. Being sick and away from home is never a fun thing. I know she would much rather be up and around and playing with Kaela than laying in bed.

Wednesday 10-11-06 – Well mother seems to be over her illness. I guess it was just a 24 hour thing. It is a good thing because we have been looking forward to going to Etas all week. They are having a farewell party for Mom and Dad and it is sure to be great fun. Flexon and Fiona are going to join us in going to Etas tonight and I am so happy because I just LOVE them! (There is a good possibility that I use that phrase a lot. Oh well. It's the truth so everyone will just have to try to love me anyway).

We women met this at lunch time today for our women's fellowship. It was kind of rainy so we met in the park but under the cover of the stage. And it was a good thing it started pouring and blowing not long after we arrived. But, we had a good time. Sang a few songs and talked for a while in spite of the bad weather.

Thursday 1-12-06 – What a GREAT night last night! The farewell at Etas was so much fun and it was the perfect Vanuatu send-off for Mom and Dad. Aaron did a small devotional instead of his regular study and we sang for a long time. That is one of the favorite things to do for that group at Etas is sing. We sang "Sing and Be Happy" for the first time with them (because Fiona requested it) – my Dad led it – and everyone just

loved that song! We sang it twice in a row and everyone was still talking about much they liked that song. I had to agree. It is one of my favorite songs! Afterwards, they presented Mom and Dad with gifts and visa versa. The congregation gave Dad an island shirt and Mother an island dress which they both loved and were so excited to get. Mom and Dad gave their gifts too. And also Timothy and Marina presented them with a locally made mat because their little baby, Mary Beth, carries Mom's name. After the gifts were given then we all ate together. It was quite a feast – more than our usual Wednesday night fare. We said our good-byes and headed back to Vila about 8:00. ON the way home it started raining and Flexon got soaked and was quite cold in the back of the truck. So, as soon as Aaron dropped Mom and Dad and I off at home he took Flexon and Fiona home.

That was the events of last night. As for today – it is Mom and Dad's last day here in Vanuatu. It has been a wonderful month with them. Aaron and I are so glad they were able to come and stay such a long time. It was nice for them to leave without that feeling of "not yet! It's too soon!" We all agreed that a month was just right. We did some last minute souvenir shopping today and then went to the airport at 4:00 only to find out that their plane was leaving an hour late. So we had about 2 and a half hours to kill until their plane left. I was thankful that I remembered the deck of cards and we played Pitch the whole time we were waiting. It was a good last day.

Friday 10-13-06 – Friday the 13th. If we were in the States that would mean something...at least to some people. It never meant much to me. And it doesn't mean much here either. To me or anyone else from Vanuatu. I was supposed to have another devotional day at Etas this morning, but I didn't. Ure was sick and couldn't come. Then Fiona and I mis-communicated and she wasn't able to come with me either. When I got there I found out that Leimawa had gone to Vila and wasn't back yet. And Ruth went to make market. That left only 2 women. I kind of felt like that defeated the purpose of my study since I started the devotional day to strengthen all four of the women there and not just 2. So, I talked with Marina and Alice and told them to talk to Leimawa and Ruth and decide on a day that is good with all them. I tried to gently but directly make the point that there is no use in my working on my studies and driving all the way out there if no one is going to be around to study. So we will see what comes of that.

Since my plan for the day got changed I spent the day doing exciting things like cleaning. The house needed a good cleaning since I didn't devote much extensive cleaning to it while Mom and Dad were here.

Saturday 10-14-06 – Aaron and Timothy (Marina's husband from Etas) left for Ambae island this morning. The Christians on Ambae are going through a weak period spiritually so Aaron wanted to get there to do some teaching and strengthening, especially with the leading men. They will be gone until next Monday. I am staying the week with Eric and Shawnda until they leave on Thursday to go to Emao island. They were supposed to leave on Thursday but the water was too rough so the boat didn't want to cross over. So, the trip got post-poned until next weekend. While they are gone Akisa will come stay with Kaela and I. And Kal (A Christian that lives down the

street and stayed at our houses while we were in Australia) is going to come stay at Eric and Shawnda's house to make sure things stay safe and sound there.