

From ^O_R Point ^O_F View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

November 4, 2006 – January 31, 2007

As our furlough was approaching I wondered how Kaela was going to do. I don't think I was the only one because everywhere we went people would ask us how Kaela was doing with all of the traveling. To tell the truth, she surprised and delighted us every step of the way! Aaron and I are incredibly thankful that she did so well. She loved flying and even said when we boarded the airplane and sat down, "I love the bus!" (Well...I guess it *is* kind of like a big bus!) For Kaela, every house we were in was her home. She slept anywhere and everywhere. On the plane, in the car, on the floor, in twin beds, double beds and queen beds all by herself. Sometimes she was in the same room as us, sometimes she slept in a room by herself and even once in the same room as a teenager. And each house was her home. And each bed was her "new bed". Even going so far to correct a few people who would comment that she was sleeping in their guest bed – she just had to say, "No, this is MY bed!" Aaron and I were so proud of her for being so good-natured through all the craziness and changes. We felt like that if we acted like all the different houses and beds were no big deal then she would feel the same way. Like it was just part of her life. Of course we had our share of "toddler moments" too, but overall Kaela did just great! She arrived at each house, happy to see whomever we were staying with, played and giggled and laughed her way through the day. Then, she gave her good-bye hugs and kisses and we did it all over again at the next house! Seeing her learn new things about life in the US, hearing her vocabulary expand and just

watching her blossom while being home was one thing that made it so hard to leave in the end. But, our team and friends and work were waiting for us, so back we went to Vanuatu.

Looking back on our time in the States we realize what a whirlwind three months we have had! Furlough is a strange thing. It was our first time back home to the US after coming to Vanuatu almost two years ago. And it was both strange and wonderful coming home. The day we left Port Vila had us filled with excited butterflies. We had been looking forward to going back home for so long! And for many months the time was so far off. Then, all of the sudden it was here! And even on the flight from Auckland, NZ to Los Angeles I was having trouble convincing myself that it was really happening. To be back and visiting all our favorite places and seeing all the people we love so much made me so happy! And yet I felt a little out of place – not because I didn't belong but because I have been so "out of the loop"! Children are growing up, our old friends are making new friends and our loved ones lives are changing everyday. And I stand almost on the outside looking in. Happy to be where I am in Vanuatu. Thankful that my life is where it is. But, also wistful because life goes on and people change without us there to watch it as it happens. And I do realize that it's going to happen – it's not like I fool myself into thinking it's not. But sometimes I want to say, "Hey! Wait for me! Don't change without me!"

However, I guess as the old saying goes, "You can't be two places at one time." I love being home in the States and I love the conveniences and all my favorite things (the food!) and most of all I love being with both our families and all our friends. But then, there is the flip side – my Vanuatu life. I love it too! I love mission work more than I thought possible. I love the country and the people and the way of my life there. It's home to us now. And when January 31 came I was ready and I was glad to be home.