

# From <sup>O</sup><sub>R</sub> Point <sup>O</sup><sub>F</sub> View

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## the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

**Thursday 3-1-07** – Today Shawnda and I went to Mike's house to check on things. He has been gone about three weeks now and we figured it would be a good idea to make sure everything was alright at his apartment. Of course, everything was fine, and surprisingly it didn't smell musty from being mostly shut up and not lived in for that long. We also met his new neighbor. A guy probably from Australia or someplace (NZ?). He seems really nice and hopefully will make Mike a good neighbor since the last people I guess were kind of rude.

**Saturday 3-3-07** – Another day of rain. We've been back to the rain since Thursday afternoon. Oh joy. As usual, I moved Kaela and I over to Shawnda's house right after Kaela's nap. We had dinner together and were watching a movie when our neighbor, Rhonda, called. She told us that there had been some killings and we need to stay in our house. That didn't have Shawnda and I resting easy. Well, as it so happened Shawnda didn't get the chance to tell me about Rhonda's phone call right away because Eric called from Africa. While she was talking to him on the computer she told me about the phone call. Being the safety freak that I am, I went to shut the curtains to our front porch because it was dark by that time and I don't like people seeing in. And at that moment I about had a HERNIA because as I was locking door I saw someone walking up the front porch. Actually, I saw a shirt walking up the front porch. When it is dark outside you can't hardly see people for nothin'! Anyway, I let out a yelp and was immediately laughed at. And I knew in that instant that it was Kal on our front porch. He ALWAYS scares me when he comes (stealthily) and ALWAYS laughs at me for giving me a scare. Anyway, he confirmed what Rhonda had said about there being killings, only he didn't come bearing good news for us. Since Aaron has been gone, I have been staying at Shawnda's - Kal has been staying at our house just for good measure. Well, as it turned out, everyone that Kal lives with went to Eton village for the night and he came to bear the news that he had to stay the night at their house tonight (they don't have a very secure house and it wouldn't be hard for anyone to break in and steal stuff). So, that made Shawnda and I even MORE unsettled. But, what could we do? We just hunkered down and barricaded the house and made sure we were as safe as we could be, said a prayer and went to bed.

**Sunday 3-4-07** – Our hospital has gates on it. Locking gates. And I always wondered why. Why would you want to lock people out of a hospital? Now I know why. Because of the killings they locked the hospital. When we picked up Flexon and Fiona we found out more about what went on during the night last night. Apparently there is fighting going on between some people from Tanna Island and some people from Ambrym Island. The details are a little sketchy. Anyway, in the end a few houses were burned,

3 people from Ambrym and 4 from Tanna were killed. All men, I think. What a mess. So, they locked the hospital gates to keep someone from trying to get in and finish the job and kill those that were only injured. It was kind of a relief knowing that this is only an island thing and not just random killings. Revenge and retaliation is common here. People are very entrenched in their local customs and part of that is something like tribal warfare (only we don't have tribes here so it's village or family or island warfare).

On a side note, it turned out that Kal ended up sleeping at our house. When I went home in the morning I noticed that the outside lights I had turned on were turned off and a couple things had been moved in the living room so I knew he had been there. He came by a little later before worship and said that one of his cousins came to stay at the house so he came to sleep here after all. I was glad to hear that but I wish we had known he was here sometime before bed last night! I might have slept better!

**Monday 3-5-07** – Today was a great day for me! We didn't do our grocery shopping for two reasons: 1) today is a holiday and the Butcher is closed 2) we have stuff for dinner tonight. Aaron was scheduled to come home at 6:15pm so I was looking forward to that all day. I spent the morning getting the house all picked up. It had gotten kind of cluttered with my floating back and forth between here and Shawnda's house while Aaron was gone. Shawnda and I treated ourselves (and Titus and Kaela) to lunch out today. We planned to go to Jill's café for lunch but when we got to town we found out it was closed because of the holiday. So, on a whim we headed out to Erakor island for lunch. We had never been there during the day and were all prepared to get a hamburger when we saw a super-yummy looking chicken dish that caught our attention. And a plus was that it came with Pumpkin and Kumala gratin (pumpkin and sweet potato). Our favorite! So, we decided instead to split that dinner special! And boy was it good!!!! Yummy! We got home about 1:15 and I got Kaela to her nap about 2pm. Then, just as I was making cookies for Aaron, Shawnda came in and said that Aaron called and he was at the airport! Yea for me! He and Tom were able to catch an earlier flight from Ambae and got home early! Yea! It sure is great to have him home again. I left Kaela sleeping and picked him up at the airport. When it was time for Kaela to get up I had Aaron go in and get her (she knew he was coming home after dinner) and she was SO surprised! She hugged him and kissed him over and over and was just so happy to have her Daddy back home! It was a great night!

**Tuesday 3-6-07** – Today was our grocery day. We got off to a late start because Aaron and Shawnda had to go to town and get the money for the month from the bank. Usually, Eric goes but since he is out of town Shawnda had to get it for them this month. Fiona came a little late – she had a hard time finding a bus to bring her to our house. She said there had been another few houses burned and another person stabbed in the island fights again yesterday. She said that the military on Ambrym sent a message that they need to resolve their problems by Wednesday or they would be coming to this island to take care of the problem. Also, 140 men were arrested for making trouble. I guess they will get this resolved at some point. As for our team (those of us here in Vanuatu) we don't feel unsafe at all. We are just being alert to any brewing trouble (and thus far we haven't seen any personally, thankfully). We are just waiting to see what is happening.

**Thursday 3-8-07** – Last night while we were at Etas for our Bible study, Shawnda called and told us that Flexon and Fiona wanted us to come pick them up. Apparently they live near a family from Ambrym and word on the street is that some men from Tanna are looking for the father of this family because they want to kill him. They think he killed one of their friends (who knows if it is true or not). Anyway, Flexon and Fiona were afraid to stay at their house so they called us and we went and picked them up about 8:30 last night. Then, Aaron dropped Kaela and I off at home and took them to stay the night at Mike's house. They plan to stay there for two days and go back home on Friday. Hopefully, things will have cooled off at their apartments by then. I read in the newspaper today that Vanuatu is now considered in a State of Emergency. Australia and New Zealand travelers are just warned of the problems going on but, travelers from Indonesia have been advised to cancel their travel plans to Vanuatu. What chaos! Anyway, supposedly this State of Emergency is going to last for two weeks. The hospital gates are still closed and guarded by the military police. As before, I don't feel unsafe. We just are more on guard for trouble now. Thankfully, there hasn't been any where we live. They placed a 7pm curfew here in town, advising all locals to stay at home after 7:00.

Flexon and Fiona came over early this morning. Aaron hired Flexon to cut our security bushes that surround our yard. So, he came over to do that. Fiona hung out at Shawnda's house and watched a movie. I had a doctor's appointment at 9:30 this morning. Much to my dismay, when I got there I found out that Dr. Rachel no longer works at Vila Bay Private Hospital (she went back to Australia) and the new doctor is a man from Germany. He is very nice but, I'm not too keen on having to see a man for my prenatal care. I MUCH prefer a woman! But, I guess I don't have a choice right now about that. My appointment was kind of a waste because the guy has only been here a week and didn't know the office procedure for pregnant women – in other words, he knows how to do prenatal care but isn't sure how to go about it in Vanuatu. He basically just took my blood pressure and talked to me. He told me he needs to consult with the OB/GYN that works at the hospital and find out the procedure for doing things, as well as find my past medical records. I will go back next month and hopefully he will know what to do for me.

**Friday 3-9-07** - Flexon came over again this morning to finish trimming the bushes. This time Fiona didn't come with him. I think she took a bus and went back home. It ended up taking him until about 2pm to finish with the bushes and then Aaron took him home afterwards. It sure is nice to have our hedges trimmed back! They were getting a little out of control. This afternoon Shawnda, Titus, Kaela and I went to the butcher to pick up some things we needed for dinner. They didn't have the meat we wanted on Tuesday when we were there so we went again today to try and pick up what we needed.

**Saturday 3-10-07** – Okay. Pregnancy vent time! There is one thing that truly irks me about being pregnant. That is when I have to eat in the middle of the night because I am STARVING! It's seems like such a waste to get up, get out of bed, and find a snack in the middle of the night. I would MUCH rather be sleeping! Last night I didn't sleep

very well. For some reason I was wide awake for about two and a half hours last night. And the dumb thing about it was that when I woke up at midnight I was hungry. So I ate a small snack and then I was fine. But, two hours later I was STARVING again and I knew that a small snack wasn't going to cut it this time so I had to go make myself a bowl of cereal. There's just nothing like standing in your kitchen chowing down a bowl of cereal at 2am. I would have much rather have been sleeping. But, I guess since I couldn't sleep then eating would have to pass the time! Finally, about 30 minutes later I went back to bed and fell asleep. And today I woke up ready for a nap! But, I did it – I made it until Kaela's naptime before I crashed!

So, what did I do today? Well, Shawnda came over right after breakfast because I had commissioned her to help me re-arrange my bedroom. I have been wanting a change for a while now and I knew I shouldn't be moving furniture by myself so she came over to help me. I have a friend from New Zealand (Jeanette!) that said something profound to me once, "A change is as good as a holiday". That is TOTALLY true! When I re-arrange my furniture I feel so much better! And I love my new look in my room. Plus our bed is DIRECTLY under our fan which is nice in this hot weather.

**Sunday 3-11-07** – We had a GREAT turnout at worship this morning! And nearly everyone was somewhat on time! We had 19 adults and 5 kids! It was so encouraging to have such a big group. The women got together and agreed that we are going to meet at Rosemary's house for our weekly fellowship. Which will ensure (hopefully) an extra four people at fellowship that aren't usually there: Rosemary and three women that are staying with her and her husband. Plus, I think we are going to start having fellowship meals again next month. I am really excited about this because it is always such a good time to relax and get to know each other! I'm looking forward to it! Sundays usually wear me out and today it was no different. By the time Kaela's naptime rolled around I was beat and laid down for a nap and slept nearly 2 hours! Much longer than I intended or even like to but I just couldn't wake up! I guess my body/baby needed it!

The weirdest thing happened tonight. As usual Shawnda and Titus came over to eat with us. And after dinner I got up from the table to take a plate of scraps Rex (our dog). When I opened our back door I got a bit of a surprise! Sitting right in our back doorway was a crab! Yes! A crab! It was so weird! It was just hanging out there. It isn't like we live close to the water or anything. The best we can figure out is that one of our neighbors brought crab home for dinner and one got loose and ended up at our house. Crazy! We didn't really know what else to do with it and Aaron didn't want to drive it down to the lagoon so he just put it in our backyard. One thing was for sure – Rex was TERRIFIED of the thing!

**Monday 3-12-07** – Today was grocery day. The usual routine. Fiona came in the morning, Kaela stayed and hung out with her while she swept our houses and Shawnda, Titus and I went grocery shopping. We managed to finish before lunch today – a nice change from the norm! I spent the afternoon catching up on my email. I hadn't gotten around to it for several days now and I desperately needed to get that taken care of!

A note about Kaela: The child has the most bizarre eating habits for a 2 year old! Other than it takes her a good 45 minutes to finish the smallest of meals – that's not so strange. And believe me, Aaron and I are SURE God is teaching us patience and we are not sure its working! Anyway, for a two year old, Kaela is a blessing in that she will eat just about anything. I rarely fix her food different from what we have for dinner because she eats almost everything. Some things take a little more coaxing than others but for the most part she eats willingly (and s-l-o-w-l-y....mostly due from talking too much!) For dinner the other night we had hamburgers – not a strange thing for her to eat. The strange thing is – she LOVES to eat the grilled onions! Just plain – right out of the bowl. And tonight we had rice, pork chops and white bone cabbage (greens) for dinner. One of our favorite island meals. I gave Kaela a small bowl of rice and greens with pork chop juice on it. I knew she wouldn't be fully sold on that food so I also made her a half a grilled cheese sandwich to supplement. Of course, as usual, she didn't want to try the rice and greens. And finally we made her take a bite and she devoured the whole bowl in record time! Then, if that wasn't enough – she asked for more! Aaron and I were shocked! Who knew she would have such a fondness for that meal? I'm not complaining though – a two year old that eats that kind of food is worth keeping around!

**Tuesday 3-13-07** – This morning Shawnda, Kaela, Titus and I went to three different sit-down Chinese restaurants in town to see their menus. The three of us (really 5 of us-with kids) plan to go out to eat Chinese food on Friday and we want to make sure to go to a good place. Aaron, Shawnda and I LOVE Chinese food (Eric isn't such a big fan) but after almost 2 years in Port Vila we still haven't gone out for Chinese. That's because most of the places are "Take-away" and a little scary looking. And also because Dog and Cat are common food with the Chinese here in Vanuatu --- and also some local Ni-Vans too. We REALLY don't want to eat dog or cat! Anyway, we spent an hour or so this morning doing that and found a great place – very American looking – to go! Yea!

It was a good thing we came home when we did – I didn't sleep great last night and I probably shouldn't have been driving. I am rather scatterbrained today (more than usual!) My major "woops" was when I took Kaela potty at lunch. I took off her shorts, unclipped her onsie and then set her on the toilet – with her panties on!!!! She failed to notify me of that and so she just peed with her panties on – a mess I had to clean up! Aaron and Shawnda had a good laugh about that one! I have GOT to get some sleep!

**Wednesday 3-14-07** – Shawnda had some errands to run this morning so we traded kids for the morning. It's easier for her to not have Titus with her and so she left him with me and she took Kaela along for company. Fiona had called this morning and said that Flexon's family sent crabs from Malekula and she had some for us to pick up. So, Shawnda and Kaela picked up a sack of crabs and brought them back for us. There were only four of them but they were surprisingly big! Aaron and I were excited about that because we especially like crab. So, we washed them off and cooked them up and had them for lunch. They were so YUMMY and surprisingly a lot of meat on them. What a great surprise lunch for us! On a side note – we Americans don't get nearly as much out of a crab as the locals do. We only eat the leg and claw meat but they eat it

all---guts and everything---including (sometimes) the softer shell!!!! I don't think I'll be picking up that habit! No thanks!

We go to Etas tonight for Bible study. I study with Marina again – a first in several lessons about the Church of the Bible. It's raining off and on today which means Etas will be a MESS!!!!

**Friday 3-16-07** – Well, today was our scheduled day to go out for Chinese food but, we had a last minute change of plans. Sam came by yesterday afternoon and asked Aaron to go diving for fish tonight. Andrew and Mary (Sam's brother and his wife) have a new baby and Andrew wanted to make a special meal for the baby. So, they are planning to go diving tonight for fish and try to get some to cook for this. Andrew also wants Aaron to say a prayer for the baby in the presence of the family. We have high hopes that one of these days Andrew and Mary will want to start studying with us. They are such a nice couple and this is their fourth daughter to be born!

Now that our plans have changed, Aaron will leave for Etas about 5pm and Kaela and I will go to Shawnda's with plans to stay the night. You never know how long these diving things can take so I just decided that we would sleep at Shawnda's house tonight. We have now moved our Chinese night to Sunday.

**Saturday 3-17-07** – Well, I didn't find out until this morning that Aaron came home at 10pm last night. He stood under my window at Shawnda's and called for me several times (although, quietly because he didn't want to wake Kaela). However, I couldn't hear him so I was none the wiser since I went to bed early. I guess the water was too rough (there as a major storm last night) and it made fishing too difficult and there weren't many fish to be caught anyway. So, they came home and Aaron said they canceled the special meal and so we moved our Chinese night back to tonight!

Aaron and I had plans to go out to Etas and do some visiting. I really wanted to go swimming today – It is SOOOO hot! Shawnda wanted to join us so the five of us loaded all our beach stuff into the truck and we made plans to go to Etas to visit and then onto one of the beaches near Teouma village. When we got to Etas, we visited for a while then Leimawa told us that they were going to go ahead and have the special meal for the baby tonight and just have laplap and so she invited us to come back at 3pm for that. So, we moved our Chinese food night back to Sunday...again!

After Etas, we went to the beach, stopping on the way at a little store to pick up some bread, crackers and cookies for lunch. We spent about an hour or so at the beach. We didn't want to stay too long because we needed to get back home and get Kaela in bed, shower ourselves, rest a little and head back out to Etas. We had a really nice lunch at the beach and I got in and waded in the water a bit. The seas were quite rough so I didn't go very far away from the shore. Down the beach there were some locals swimming, a group of them, while we were eating our lunch. We noticed that one of them got caught in a riptide. The others were trying to tell him to swim sideways out of it but I think he was too scared. So, then another man went in to help him. I guess they both got caught then so a third went in to help the others. For a minute Aaron was ready to jump up and run down the beach to see if he could help but, the third man was able to help get them out of the riptide. It was a little scary to watch!

On the way home, Shawnda volunteered to keep Kaela tonight – a HUGE help to us – so we just put her to bed and let Shawnda wake her after we left. Aaron, Kaela and I showered. I was SOOOO tired! It's amazing how a couple of hours at the beach can take it out of you! I slept for a while and so did Aaron but neither of us slept really well. Then, we had to get up and head for Etas again.

**Sunday 3-18-07** – We had a good time last night at Etas. I just love those people out there! They are just so fun to be around! When they started their family worship, Sam got up and said a few words and thanked Aaron and I for coming. And he nearly made me cry! He talked about how he knows that their house has lots of muddy ground around it and he knows we don't live like they do and he hoped he wasn't "spoiling" us for being there in those conditions. It just brought tears to my eyes because I knew he was truly concerned about us being there with all that mud. I don't love walking in the mud, but I also don't think I am too good to do it! And it broke my heart that they were worried that we wouldn't want to be there because of mud! Thankfully, Aaron said something to the effect that mud wasn't important and we just were glad to be with them when he got up to give his devotional thought.

We had a nice time there with Sam's family. Aaron gave a nice prayer for baby Joanna and we all ate laplap together. We told them that the 17<sup>th</sup> is a holiday in the US and about our custom of pinching people for not wearing green which they thought was a very funny thing to do! --- I guess it would seem a little odd to someone of a different culture!

Okay. Sunday. Worship today was really encouraging. Another big crowd and Aaron preached a really good message (in my humble opinion)! Tonight we went out for Chinese food and it was a really good experience! The food was good – but slightly different from "American" Chinese food. Shame on me for expecting it to be the same! I ought to know better!!!! It was still really good and we enjoyed ourselves and will likely go back again another time. Shawnda had honey chicken (very good!). Aaron and I shared Lemon chicken and Beef Lo Mein that were both good.

**Monday 3-19-07** – Today was my enrollment day for school. Wow! I can't believe it is already time to get started again! When I arrived in Etas at 8am Leimawa was already taking names and money for the kids. By the end, we ended up with 27 students! I made some rules this year and put them on signs around Etas so everyone would know my rules. One being that every kid had to pay his school fee Monday or Tuesday to come to school and don't bother sending your kid on Tuesday if you haven't paid the fee. I didn't like having to track down school fees on the second and third weeks last year. Also, I put a rule saying that I wouldn't accept kids after Tuesday, the first day. Last year I had too many late starters and it really put them at a disadvantage. So, I just made it known that I wouldn't accept anyone late and please don't ask me to take your kids after the first day! I think that worked well. I only have 5 kids that still need to pay tomorrow – not bad for enrollment day! I didn't bother setting a limit on the number of kids I would take because I figured I probably wouldn't be able to turn kids away anyway. I guess I am too softhearted! We did have a couple of women who were disputing my rule about not taking kids younger than seven – even though I explained it to them twice. Thankfully, Leimawa nipped that in the bud and said that if people

wanted their kids to learn to read and write their Mother should be their first teacher. I just come to help with the teaching but I don't have the time to take kids at a young age and work slowly with them to learn these things. That's why I set the age older – the kids grasp what I am teaching more readily and I can do school in 4 months or so and not a full year. Anyway, I was glad she went to bat for me on that one – it means more coming from her.

**Tuesday 3-20-07** – Oh, naïve little me! And I thought that 27 would be all the kids I would have. After all, everyone said that they didn't know of any other children wanting to enroll in school. Ha! Today an additional 10 kids showed up, money in hand for school. Now my total is at 37 and won't be going any further thanks to my "no new kids after Tuesday rule!" But, 37????!!!! Goodnight! That is a lot! I just can't turn them away. 18 out of my 23 from last year are returning students and added to that are 19 new ones! Yikes! Class went really well today. It was a little hard for me to get back in the swing of things again – I had to shift gears into teacher mode. And even though I was a little shaky on it at first I had it down by the end because I had to punish a boy today – the first day of school! He was one of my old students that has a tendency towards orneriness. He is about 13 or 14 years old and his name is Frendly. He's a good student in that he catches on quickly to writing but he just can't keep his behavior in check! Last year I think I was too lenient on him – I know I was. This year I am determined to be more strict – especially with my class being so large it wouldn't take much for it to get out of hand. Anyway, Frendly made a little boy that sat in front of him cry because he was picking on him (verbally and physically). So, once I caught wind of what was happening I made Frendly go to the front of the class and kneel down with his hands behind his head. From what Leimawa says this is traditional punishment for kids in school. He also had to do that facing the other kids. It wasn't five minutes later and Frendly was crying too from humiliation. I just continued on teaching class and he had to sit there like that until class was over, which he knew was the punishment for making trouble in class. He was fortunate in that there were only about 10 or 15 minutes left of class and not an hour or so. Boy, you could have heard a pin drop out there after I sent Frendly to the front of the class! Everyone was silent – some in awe and surprise and some in fear, I think! I, however, felt a sense of accomplishment! Maybe this will help straighten Frendly's behavior in future classes and will also serve as a lesson to the other kids that I mean what I say! With Leimawa backing me the whole way it sure makes my job easier!

**Thursday 3-21-07** – Last night was our Bible study in Etas. I studied with Marina first and it went really well considering we studied some controversial things. We studied the Church of the Bible. Basically just looking at Jesus' promise that He would build His church and seeing that promised fulfilled in Acts 2. Even though I had to bring some things to light that wouldn't make her happy, it went really well. I was able to show her that the church of the Bible was started in AD 33, in Jerusalem, and it was started by Jesus. However, the Assemblies of God (where she currently worships) was started in the early 1900's, in the USA by a group of people. It is a church began by the idea of man, not that began with Christ. In the end, she stated that she could see that I wasn't just telling her my own ideas and opinions but that everything we had studied came



from the Bible. We will continue our study on the church next week and hopefully things will continue to progress in our studies!

It was a long night for us last night. We got started later than usual and afterwards we took a couple home that live quite a ways outside of Etas (in the opposite direction of Vila) and we ended up getting home at 9:30. Kaela was MORE than ready for bed by then and honestly, so was I!

**Friday 3-22-07** – It has been a really long day for me. I wasn't quite ready to get up for school this morning. We went to the airport at 10pm last night to pick Eric up. He was returning from Africa. Originally, I was just going to stay with Kaela and Aaron was going to drive Shawnda and Titus to the airport. (It isn't a good idea for her to drive alone at that time of night). But, Kaela has been SOOOO excited about him coming home that we decided to wake her up and take her with us. Anyway, morning came a little too quickly for my liking.

School went well this morning. I am giving an exam on Tuesday over the 5 vowels. I have a new curriculum that I developed and it seems to be going well. I actually finish with my school about 15-20 minutes earlier than I did last year but I feel like I am doing a more thorough job of teaching the letters and their sounds. I am hoping that my exam will reflect that. The only thing I am nervous about is how the kids will do. I have decided that it will be a verbal exam since the emphasis is on the "sound" that each letter makes. However, I need to test each child separately to make them actually learn their work. Only, with Ni-Van children, many have a tendency to be VERY shy and put their head down and cover their mouths when they talk which ends up being more of a whisper. It will take some doing to get them to open up and speak loud enough that I can hear. I have had 2 enquiries from parents that want me to take their kids for school and with both I had to turn them down. Not only because of my previously made rule, but also because school is FULL this year!

I didn't feel too well this afternoon. It was a long day of school and such and by Kaela's naptime I was beat! I laid down too and ended up napping for nearly two hours, only when I got up I didn't feel better for it! Then, I got a small scare and had to make a doctor's appointment for this afternoon. I was able to get in to see him at 4:30 and was relieved to find out that I had nothing to worry about – all systems go! Thank the Lord, but I had already cried buckets of tears over it all that by the time I got home from the doctor I was thoroughly exhausted! I'm looking forward to a good night's sleep!

**Saturday 3-23-07** – Aaron had plans to go to Etas this morning and take some of the men to get coral. They are building a toilet for the kids to use for school. I feel like I have hardly seen Aaron this week (we have both had rather demanding schedules these last few days!) and so I decided Kaela and I would ride along with him. I got both of us ready to go. The coral that they are going to get is by a lagoon and I had plans to jump in the water while they were getting the coral. It was a beautiful sunshiny day and I was glad to be going along for the ride! I was able to swim a little bit – much to Kaela's displeasure (she hates the water!) – but it felt GREAT to me! Afterwards, we went back to Pbles' house and the men unloaded the coral. It was at this point that the GROSSEST THING EVER happened to me! Augh! I still feel repulsed when I think of it! I was sitting under the shelter for the church building talking with Alice and Ruth. There

were several kids around, all watching the excitement of a toilet being built. When, a little girl (about 6 years old) came over to sit by me. Her name is Meriam and she was in my school last year although not this year because she is too young. Anyway, she was sitting by me and all of a sudden leans over and wipes her runny nose on my arm! And I don't mean that it was running just a bit – she was a usual village child that lets their nose run till it reaches their lip and *then* does something about it. Well, she did something about it all right!!!! ALL OVER MY ARM!!! I was so repulsed! It was disgusting. I gave her a normal “village mother” reaction - I whacked her on the shoulder and strongly told her that was a bad thing to do and if she needs to wipe her nose she needs to go get a towel and wipe it and not wipe it on my arm. Drive me crazy!

After all that excitement, Tom told Aaron that Peter and Salome (two of the new Christians in Etas) are having marital problems. So, Aaron and I went down to Sam and Leimawa's house (where both of them had been talking to Sam) and Aaron held an impromptu marriage counseling session with them – it lasted three hours. It was good that we went and we feel like we made some headway with them – at least we got them back in a forgiving mood and tried to help. Aaron talked to Peter while I talked to Salome first and then Aaron spoke to them both together. I was really proud of him and how well he handled things. I'll brag on my husband a bit – he has a real gift of being able to talk to people who are upset and talking to people about difficult things. He did a great job and I am just so proud of him for doing so well on his first ever marriage counsel!

We ended up not getting home until 3pm and all three of us were SO TIRED by that time! We were also really hungry because we only had a small lunch of rice and island cabbage in Etas. So, as soon as we came home, Aaron and Kaela got their showers while I made lunch and then we all ate. Then, we put Kaela down for a late nap and I finally took my shower. And then we rested until dinner time. It was a long and tiring day, but a really good day!

**Sunday 3-25-07** – We had a great turnout for worship this morning – a record for meeting in the new building, I think. 23 adults and 8 kids! It was so encouraging!!!! I wish all those Christians who have been kind of on-again-off-again about coming to worship could have been there. They might have gotten some real encouragement out of there being so many people! We are having our first fellowship meal after worship next Sunday. We haven't had one since meeting in the new building. I got with some of the women and talked to them about it and they wanted to do it. So, I encouraged them to talk to their husbands so the men could meet and decide if we should have one. They were really excited about having a meal together again so next week, it is! Because we don't have toilet facilities or a good source of running water at the church ground, we aren't going to have it there. After much debate, we agreed to have it at our house. Our team was pushing for having it at either Flexon's or Claude's house (mainly to make it more of a “local activity” than the “missionary activity”) However, the men really wanted to have it at our house. I hope and pray we have a good turnout for it next week!

**Monday 3-26-07** – Today was grocery day. I felt so bad. In a truly “off” day we were all still sleeping at 7:30 this morning when I heard our front gate click open and closed. And then I remembered that I had forgotten to tell Fiona that she didn’t need to come at 7:30am like she did last week. She usually comes at 9am and I felt terrible that she got up early and came early when she didn’t have to! We went ahead and got Kaela up and ate breakfast and she had coffee with us. Then, she started on her sweeping. With her coming early and Shawnda and I getting our shopping done early, Fiona was able to go home right after lunch instead of 1:00 or so. It has been a long day today – it seems like I haven’t had much time to sit and rest. Hopefully, tomorrow won’t be quite as busy. The good news is that today I got box of goodies from my mother-in-law! Yea! I love getting packages in the mail!

**Tuesday 3-27-07** – I had school again this morning. Today I gave my first test over the sounds of all the vowels. I was impressed that over half of the kids got all five sounds correct and most of the other ones got 3 or 4 correct. I had three absences today and I have a feeling that those kids thought they could stay home and miss the test. However, little do they realize, that isn’t the way it works!!! It was a good day of school though. I ran later than usual in getting back home and by the time I finally did get home, make lunch and sit down, I was ready for a rest! It looks like we will have an early dinner tonight. Aaron and Eric have a meeting with two of the men from church – it’s a men’s planning meeting. I think it will be a good thing for them to do and hopefully it will have a positive outcome.

**Thursday 3-29-07** – Well, the meeting Tuesday night went really well and the guys came home very excited and encouraged by it. That was good news to mine and Shawnda’s ears! On Wednesday the weather center issued a tropical storm warning for Vanuatu. It was scheduled to hit close to our island of Efate sometime around noon. We weren’t quite sure what to expect from this storm. We ended up with some high wind gusts and rain off and on all afternoon. Because of the weather, we cancelled our Bible study in Etas. Rain we can handle but coupled with high wind gusts it kind of renders an open air shelter useless!

**Friday 3-30-07** – Aaron and Kaela went with me to Etas this morning. Since we didn’t got to Etas last night he wanted to go visit with some of the men and me going out there already in the truck just proved the perfect opportunity. School went pretty good today. I kind of had an off day – but it may have just been me that was feeling “off”. I felt like it was school was boring for the kids today. I’m not sure why I felt that way. I guess teachers just feel “off” once in a while. It was a good morning over all though. I got to talk with Leimawa, Alice, Marina and Salome and I always like being able to see them!

I spent the rest of today resting. We ended up not getting back home until about 11:30 and by that time I was hot and exhausted. So, I took a cue from my body and rested for a few hours, basically just trying to stay off my feet. Which believe me, is A LOT harder than it sounds! I am my mother’s daughter (and some of you will laugh at this) and I have a really hard time staying off my feet. I am always thinking of something I just “have” to go do and of course it is always something “real quick”. Ha! I am a mess! Anyway, I lasted with my resting for a few hours and then I remembered I

needed to go to town, so it was back in the truck for me and I was running errands – the grocery store and the post office.

**Saturday 3-31-07** – Finally! The last day of March! The month that I always think is never going to end – the heat and humidity that feels like it is never going to end! April will, Lord willing, bring some cooling down. I love the cool season here! It is perfectly wonderful weather! Like fall in the US – cool in the mornings and evenings and hot (but not too hot) in the daytime. Love it!

Today was cleaning day at the Baker house. Aaron left at about 7:30 this morning (effectively sneaking out before Kaela woke up so she wouldn't cry for him). He, Eric and Flexon went to cut the grass and do grounds clean-up at the church building. I stayed home and cleaned house for our fellowship meal tomorrow and Kaela played like such a good girl around the house! I was so happy about that! I told her that she would need to play by herself for a while because I needed to get the house cleaned. And she did it! She played all kinds of things – and occupying herself the whole time! I was so glad about that! Once Aaron came home, we had lunch and then he and Kaela went to work weeding the sand box in the front yard while I walked to town. I needed some corn from the market and some skirt steak from Centerpointe supermarket. Today is unbelievable hot (it has GOT to rain sometime soon – the humidity is killer today!) so I took a bus back to the house rather than walking back up the hill from town. After I got back, Aaron got Kaela set up playing in her water/swimming tub on the back porch while I made the soup for tomorrow. One less thing to do in the morning! I'll still have to make a big pot of rice and cook my corn (which takes a half hour because it is local corn).