

Mission Aviation Fellowship

The Vennell-a Scoop



Have you ever seen a more rowdy bunch of cowgirls?

Furlough or Bust!

And at this point I feel like I am about to bust. As I write this letter I am sitting in a hotel room in Denver, about a 10-minute drive away from something I truly dread. We have 3 days of travel to get back to Lesotho. Our journey begins with trying to get to the airport at 3:30 AM, since we have a 6:15 AM departure. Normally we would not have to go so early but we have 25 pieces of luggage. I know that seems excessive, but imagine packing for a 2-3 year vacation to someplace 11,000 miles away from a Wal-Mart. Twenty-five pieces for 6 people is not that bad after all.

I have to admit that as I sit here, trying to reflect on all that has just taken place over the last 3 months, I am overwhelmed with emotions. These emotions range from joy in seeing family to the extreme of saying goodbye yet another time. There is the frustration of driving 11,000 miles in 3 months to our thankfulness to Jack's Campers of South Dakota, who loaned us a camping trailer to call home. Or the difficulty of shopping for so many things to take back, while realizing that we have been provided for in so many ways. And then, probably the greatest emotion of all is the one already mentioned—the sadness of saying goodbye. Saying goodbye is by far the most difficult thing that we as a family, and that our families and friends here, have to

do each time we leave for another term in Africa.

I know that tomorrow, as we go through security, after we are checked in on that plane ride to Washington, our girls are going to be sobbing somewhat uncontrollably. There will be tears the size of gumdrops falling from their eyes. Lydia will perhaps have the most difficult time as she tends to be the most emotional of the bunch. Natalie will probably react much the same way she usually does when faced with giant tasks such as goodbye, kicking and screaming. Courtney will probably get angry, but in the end will follow the actions of the crowd as she is still a bit young to know what is really happening. Then there is Lauren. She has already started showing signs of comprehending all that goes into coming and going on these mission trips and our lifestyle. And I must say that she doesn't seem to like it too much. One night she was lying in bed having a hard time going to sleep, as was normal for all the new places, when she started to cry. She said, with big tears, "Momma, I miss my friends in Lesotho but when we leave I will miss Grandma Peggy, and Papa and Honey, and all my cousins!" As the tears rolled down her cheeks and the sobbing continued, mom tried to

console her and let her know that these emotions are real and understandable with all that is going on, but that it would be ok.

As we head back to Lesotho, I want you to do me a giant favor. I want you to pray for the Vennell family and especially these little girls who are so sad, along with mom and dad, to say so many goodbyes. It is not easy, but, as most of you have heard me say while at home, we can face our challenges because we know that our Heavenly Father loves us and that there are people like you at home praying for us everyday.

The desire to get back to Lesotho has been greater this time than any other return, as this time we sense the urgency to make a difference. With 3.5 people dying every hour from an HIV/AIDS-related death, we ask you to pray that lives would be changed and people would come to know the God Who loved us so much that He sent His only Son. I wonder if Jesus' emotions were very much like Lauren's. "I will miss my Father." His sacrifice was huge so that we could know. But not only to know, also to TELL. It is that call that we have answered. Remember you are either called to go or you have the job of sending! Thank you for helping send us!!!!

We want to leave you this Christmas with some pictures of our furlough and of the people we have seen as well as some of the fun things the girls were able to do. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas this year. We love you all and look forward to hearing from you if at all possible. We could really use some emails and letters during this time as it will be tough to spend Christmas away from family and friends from home! With love!

Tim and Tonya

PS. If you did not see us this go around and would like to the next time, just let us know. This furlough was only half as long as the last one so we hope to see those we missed this time on the next one!



The first campground we stayed at in Tennessee.



Lydia wants to marry a cowboy and barrel race. And be a nurse.



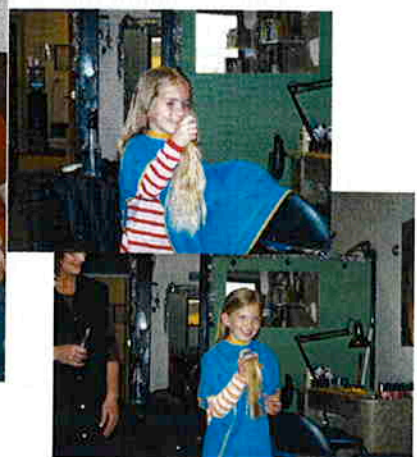
Christmas in Texas and a hug from Grandma while Aunt Leslie watches.



What we all have felt like!



The last night in a Denver Hotel room before returning.



After donating to Locks of Love.



More cousins than you know what to do with.

Mailing address:

Tim and Tonya Vennell
MAF-Lesotho
PO Box 931
Ladybrand, 9745
South Africa

Support address:

Tim and Tonya Vennell
Mission Aviation Fellowship
PO Box 47
Nampa, ID 83653
1-800 FLYS MAF

Email:

tvennell@maf.org

WE LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!!!

MERRY CHRISITMAS!