

Culture Shock sets in

It's been our companion for almost 6 months and shows little sign of abating...

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14/3/83

Another forever gone by. Seems that I just wrote, now it's the 14th. Well, I've been talking to God and have talked with Deb. Things seem to be working themselves out. Mostly I think I was feeling a little culture shock and just came "unglued" when Pearl was here. Things aren't rosy but they are not as bleak as they seemed.

It's Monday morning and I'm having my usual motivational problems. it really is amazing. I'll bitch and moan about not having anything to do and then when I finally have something to do I just sit here riveted to my chair. I'm afraid to go out there (there I said it). I don't know why but I'm afraid. I need to see Mrs John, Mr Ollivierre, Mrs Small, Jeff Venner, and Mrs Cato. plus begin to follow up on training. But the truth is that I'd rather sit here, and hide behind my door and wall and desk. I'd rather not risk it. It's most peculiar and frustrating. I'm in a crisis right now. A career crisis actually. because I'm so reluctant to do any HR work here. I wonder if I'm cut out to do HR work at all. I'm worried that HR "isn't for me" and that perhaps I've chosen the 'wrong' career. Or it maybe that doing HR work in St Vincent is my problem. If I was doing other work here, I might not be so reluctant. I have never had such a dilemma in my life. I've always "forged ahead" whatever the task. The only time I can remember feeling so immobile was when I was managing L-C Standard and going through the breakup with Gail. But it wasn't as bad as this. It's really perplexing. Is it the job or St Vincent? I really don't know and that is what is driving me crazy.

I've been giving 'career' a lot of thought lately as a result of my crisis. Told Mom that "I'd rather be behind a hammer than a desk". Told Deb that "maybe I'm not such a people person". I'm beginning to rethink my goals & aspirations and it's honestly very frightening to be so insecure about a career at 28 years old. I thought I had dealt with all that years ago. But on second thought, I never have. School (all my degrees) was an intellectual challenge, not a means to an end. It was proof to myself and parents that I was worth something. Or actually, a way to increase my worth. It was what "my kind of people did" (they went to college). I guess I'm still haunted by the peer pressure I felt in high school and the perceived goals that my parents had for me. I guess I haven't been as honest with myself and my needs as I thought. I want to be my own boss. I want to be monetarily comfortable so that I can give my kids a good education, relax during my non-work hours and have the luxury of free time to devote to God and community. I want no chains. I want to be free in my love for God and Deb and kids. but I need security in knowing I'm accepted no matter what I do for a living. I need to convince myself that I'm worthwhile no matter what I do. In short (again) I need to mature. But how to mature and how to know that I'm mature. That's the real question.



22/3/83

A week passeth..... my initial reluctance to move was overcome. I find myself breaking up all the things I need to do into daily objectives helps. for example if I need to see Mr X Mrs Z and Miss Y. I see Mr X on Monday, Mrs X on Tuesday etc. I still feel guilty in that I'm not very productive. But I am getting something done and I guess I should be satisfied with that. Still, I can't help but wonder why I'm so reluctant to get on with it. Seems that each objective or activity is a monumental task. I'm really uncomfortable with those thoughts and doubts about my career and competence. It would be much better if I had a mentor or a counterpart. As it is, I am the most knowledgeable one here (in HR matters). But, since I lack experience, and I'm from another culture as well as being 'green' in the job here, my credibility hasn't been established. I plan to work with Inland Revenue and the Library and perhaps, with those out of the way, other departments will enlist my services. But I need to do each little task so that can happen. I need to make some progress everyday. I just hope I can do that....



n me. Lots of folks, mostly young,

First, I don't know why they are

coming over and until my suspicions are allayed, I'm going to be uncomfortable with folks just dropping in. If they come by because they like us, then I don't mind. But if they come by because they want something from us then I'm not real keen on their visits. Granted, the fruit trees are ripening and soon many people will come by to pick fruit (both with and without permission) so I guess I should relax and live with it. But I still feel uncomfortable with what I feel is a lack of respect of other people's space here in St V. Well, it's not just here in St V but rather seems a condition of the adolescence and teen in today's society. It's more noticeable here because of cultural differences. Still, I've got a long way to go until I'm comfortable here both job wise and personally (personally and professionally that should be read). I still find myself taking mental vacations to the States from time to time but I think I spend even more time Stateside in my sleep. My dreams often take me home and I wonder how healthy that is. I even smoke in some of them. Sometimes I daydream about situations that would send me home (some of them terrible and selfish). But I think I do spend too much time Stateside and hope that my mental wanderings cease. At least until some reasonable time like Oct when the

reality of our trip home is closer at hand. Sometimes Dec is light years away, sometimes it's like tomorrow.
But oh how I look forward to seeing home!

29/3/83

Visions of home and Christmas.....seems much too early for such things yet a few powerful reminders have drawn me to it. We got a comics page from the Buffalo News from Dick & Anne. Dated December 26th most of the comics dealt with post Christmas depression and children wanting it to be Christmas again. Sort of mimicked my thoughts and feelings but the knowledge that it's only 8 & 1/2 months away and that plans will be firmed up in 6 and 1/2 months or so make it a bit more manageable. Still, I wish I could get out of this home obsession until September or October when the time between won't seem so unbelievably long. Things are improving though on all fronts... almost...

Deb and I had made some last minute plans to go to the Tobago Keys over Easter. It would cost \$600 EC which is steep but would be worth it for a four-day excursion. We would have sailed which would have been the best part of all. Unfortunately the doctor over-booked the thing and we got bumped. Debbie was really looking forward to it. I was a bit more ambivalent but I still would have liked to go. We need a break badly. 4 days away would have been ideal for us. As it is, we'll have to wait maybe until June when Dr Harvey's (orthopaedic surgeon from UK) girlfriend is coming down to visit. We hope it doesn't conflict with our conference in St Lucia which we are also looking forward to. So our mini vacation is sacked. Mom and Dad's trip down is rather dubious too. At least in the near future. Dad didn't sound overly optimistic about his coming down. Money is tight and it sounds like his business needs careful tending. I'm disappointed (and a bit relieved to be honest with you). Disappointed in that I'm really looking forward to seeing them. Seeing them and giving them both tremendous and wrapping hugs is one of my frequent fantasies. I really miss those people! I am relieved, in a sense, that I am getting so defensive of St V that I think I would spend lots of time trying to explain away some of the discomforts of living here. Beggars, snide comments, mosquitoes heat and humidity etc. I want them to love St V as much as I do, yet I know that won't happen in a week's time. So I'm relieved that I won't be put in that bind. Still they haven't said they were not coming, just that no one has said when. More ambiguity....

My job is becoming less ambiguous which seems almost miraculous considering my frustrations over the past 3 months. But the result of that reduction in ambiguity has been mixed. Both encouraging and discouraging (seems I deal with a lot of black/white good/bad issues). It's been encouraging that my workload has perceptibly increased, my idle time decreased so my days go faster. I'm even finding some difficulty in completing some odds and ends that I began or want to follow up on. Anyway things are picking up. The discouraging item on this encouragement horizon is that I'm becoming less confident in the system. If I had some reservations about some inconsistencies within the saint V P.S., those reservations are now full-blown skepticisms. My questions arise out of conversations I've had with two P.S. employees (one an expatriate like me) and the comment the Archbishop of the Anglican Church made. The employees talked about corruption. Pure and simple. Lots of political favors paid to politically powerful men. Taxes unpaid knowingly, property not valued properly, money taken out of the country (secretly). In all I was stunned by the depth and breadth of the "malpractice" in the civil service. I still need to verify the info, but the expatriate, who I would guess to be about as apolitical as you can get, was in a position to know. Perhaps it's the beginning of understanding why top mgt is so resistant to change. They don't want to stop the payola going on. And what they've done to thwart the system is very clever. They continue to have outside agencies (USAID P.C. CAID VSO's) come and do research and publish reports. In this way it looks like much is being done without doing anything. They can give lip service to change without committing any resources to do it. No implementation or follow up means a perpetual cycle. Outside agencies only make the problem

worse through uncoordinated and short-term projects. Peace Corps is the only program I know of that stresses the ongoing nature of their programs. But two years isn't enough. 5 years might be and 10 would be optimal. Peace Corps failing is that it supplies too much segmented programs which fails to generate long-term counterpart integration. Perhaps the system is unchangeable. If people continue to expect help they will do little to help themselves (welfare syndrome). To provide no strings help is to perpetuate dependence. LDC's need to hang on to their HR and implement long-term projects for change. And by the way, that's easy for me to say... but back to corruption, the Archbishop basically capped my conclusions in that he said (during a sermon) a very reliable source told him "the corruption in the St Vincent P.S goes all the way to the top". Perhaps there is something to these allegations after all.



5/4/83

April – already? I won't dwell on the fast/slow movement of time in this place but the agonizingly slow movement of time always seems fast in retrospect. Soon, it will be October and I'll say WHAT? So soon? But the 6 months in between seem interminable...on to other things.

Kind of a mixed Easter weekend. In some respects worse than Christmas. It began benignly enough but Easter Sunday was a struggle. Good Friday was a good day for R&R. Deb and I both took it easy. Did the laundry & some gardening and odds & ends about the yard. It was a quiet, easy going day. We went to church that afternoon and spent a peaceful evening afterwards. Those kind of days I could use more often!



Saturday was a busy one. We ran into the market for some last minute items and returned in time for Reynolds (the handyman) to begin working on placing bars over the front windows and replacing some termite riddled boards in the front room and back hall. Shortly thereafter, the Beinamens showed up for our excursion to Autley (or Ottley) Hall where we planned to spend half a day swimming & relaxing. Leaving Reynolds in charge, we made the long walk over to Autley and spent an enjoyable afternoon snorkling, swimming and relaxing. We then returned home (in the heat of the day) to find Reynolds still working away. Amid the construction, we took showers and ate a hasty meal before attending the Easter Vigil service. The service was wonderful & did much for our morale. The liturgy was standard but the music was upbeat and



church as early as we wanted so we had to hoist the banner 'house'.

young 13 year old we have casually befriended, had to make her recognition of us know to use so with a loud "SSSSSSST" she called for our attention. To digress a moment, no doubt I have already mentioned that the local youngsters like to call to us by our first names. Presumably because they can call us by first names which is taboo in general society. Anyway, they call for no apparent reason other than for recognition. Not a 'good morning' or 'Hello' just yell your name incessantly until you acknowledge them. Then, a dumb staring smile and that's all. I've been saying "Yes?" or "Well?" to them insinuating that I am making inquiries as to why they called but it has hardly put them off. Anyway, Desreen is no exception, church notwithstanding and has unabashedly called out to us wherever we are. It's both embarrassing and vexing. Anyway, to press on...after a shakey start, we got settled in only to notice that after last night's "mass baptism" (infant) again there was a whole other group of tots to be baptized. One infant had obvious physical disabilities which bummed out both Deb and I for several reasons. First, is the sheer number of children in this country that bring on visions of a Malthusian holocaust. I find it incredible that any rational, intelligent and loving person could bring such numbers of children into such a bleak & currently unforgiving situation. No one seems to know why females of this country are so incessant in their production of children. I find it personally very distressing and almost distasteful.

Second, it becomes fairly obvious that these women are both young and unwed. They rather blithely offer up their bastard children to God (as is their duty) but with full intent of continuing to produce children in large numbers by several men and without benefit of marriage. Such self indulgence and outright disrespect for God's laws seems blasphemous. And for Deb & I to immediately judge these young mothers as blights against God, brings a concurrent feeling of guilt for having so judged them. As Christians, we are both appalled by such behavior as well as horrified at our lack of love and charity. Perhaps it is our love for them that brings on such pity and horror at their behavior and blatant disrespect for God. I don't know. Though I don't want to sound like one of those Jerry Falwell right-wing extremists, I can't help but be disturbed by the cycle which is perpetuated, and sins which are perpetuated, by these young mothers.

So Deb and I sat through our Easter Sunday service. Knowing the hypocrisy yet feeling bad for judging. We were feeling almost miserable and very far from joyous after church. Christ is risen. He died for our sins yet we still don't listen and almost mock him in the remembrance of his passion. What a struggle it was. As soon as we were outside the convent grounds, Deb & I saw a small toddler with a terrible herniated umbilicus, which sent Debbie into tears. At home we both shared a good cry about being in St V. Another round of why questions and yearning to go home now, followed. We both know that our suffering (pain) is only the acknowledgment of His Presence, a reminder of His dominion over us. We despair so often that I suddenly know that I too, I'm no better than those unwed mothers. But it's so hard. Gad's, I wonder, will we ever muddle through this mess? The rest of the Easter Sunday was better. I talked briefly with Mom and Dad and had a lengthy conversation with Hol and Todd. Our dinner, though not as spectacular as our Christmas extravaganza, was tasty. Sunday evening we visited the Duncans and swung by the Bienemans so that Deb could call her folks (no luck, they, the Bienamens weren't in. On the return home, we stopped at the West End Fantasia to listen to some "pan" music (there's Desrene again). We got home just in time to listen to the Ambassadors Club roar to life after months of quiescence. Wonderful.

Monday (yesterday) we went to Bequia and had our usual lazy, touristy day. The only bad thing was that we managed to get burned to a crisp (I think my nose will fall off). We returned home to find that ants had invaded our foodstuffs (typical) and Deb came down with the diarrhea that I had been fighting all day. You see, things get back to normal quickly. Our longest holiday was over.



12/4/83

Well my nose didn't fall off and though we are peeling now, it was nice (in retrospect_ to soak up all that sun. We didn't get as much sun this weekend but we had a different weekend just the same.

Deb brought home Alan who is a 13-year-old patient of hers. He has been in the hospital for almost a year now. Both his legs were severely broken when a pile of blocks fell on him. The attending Orthopedics man Dr. Hudson was the same doctor who shortly thereafter took a permanent vacation out of here leaving all his patients "in the lurch". Since he was Dr Hudson's patient, Alan was not treated after Dr Hudson left. Even though the staff knew he wasn't coming back, they didn't reassign his patients. Meanwhile, Alan had two mal-union fractures that needed orthopedic attention. He wasn't treated until Dr Harvey arrived in February. Harvey did an amputation on the worst leg and plans to do a bone graft for the other. Anyway, Alan has been at KGH for a long time. Deb & I thought he might like a break and come over for a day. Leave the hospital behind for a while.



It was a very low-key visit. Alan isn't very talkative and he's difficult to understand when he does speak. Spent most of the day sitting and watching the sea or reading magazines. We put him to work helping us bake cookies and fix dinner (pizza). I kind of like the guy and we will, no doubt, have him over again. The only tense situations were in wheeling him over and having the children visit. The indifference that some Vincentians have for other people sometimes themselves is amazing. At the Special Olympics a few weeks back, the bleachers were packed with folks who came to watch, not because of the inspiration gotten from watching those with handicaps enjoy themselves and compete, but simply to laugh at the "gimps", "retards" and "weirdos" out in the field. It hurts. And betrays a callousness I cannot fathom. Anyway, Alan's amputation was no exception and many kids came by to see "the boy". Outside of that, and the initial discomfort in having a silent visitor in the house, we had a good day.

We got a letter from another PCV yesterday. Alan Gamble wrote us about the PCVs in Dominica. It was nice to hear about them all and to know that they are doing well. It triggered another round of soul searching for me though. I'm still struggling with the lack of activity in the job and guilt I feel for not doing much. I just feel that if God brought me 6,000 miles to St. V, he brought me here to do or learn something special. I'm trying to figure out what that is. Round and round I go (where I'll stop only God knows). Stemming from that feeling is also a bout of homeless sickness. Gads I wish that would go away. I'm tired...

18/4/83

Seems I'm always tired. it's Monday (wonderful) and I'm plugging along. Deb and I had a very interesting weekend. Very busy and most curious.

For the past two weeks or so Deb has been complaining of a persistent itch and rash. this being her first encounter with tropical living (mine too). She attributed it to high humidity and heat. Not so. It seems she brought an uninvited guest home with her from the hospital. The guest was scabies. A tiny mite which burrows into the skin and clings to clothing. We spent a long three and a half days boiling our clothes and spreading lotion all over us (it burns). Even after such an industrious undertaking, we're still not sure if we eliminated them all. I have some suspicious looking spots. Gads how I hate this place sometimes. I hope we were successful. Nothing takes the fun out of life more than standing over a kettle of boiling clothing in the tropical heat. For two cents I would have abandoned the whole place, and went home.

That thought has been closer to reality than usual. For some reason, I just lose it from time to time. I can't stand it and I want to run screaming into the streets and assault someone so that I'll be sent home. I have noticed that being sent home, for whatever reason, is much more appealing than choosing to go home. I don't want to make that decision. It's too painful and difficult. I have been avoiding the question, or actually, the answer since I arrived. Yes, I want to go home. The next question is when. Dec. is not quite near enough, yet, I think of all sorts of dreadful things that could happen which would require us to go home. A serious illness or even death to a family member is a 'ticket home'. Schizophrenia sets in when you desire a calamity for a ticket home and immediately feel guilty about even thinking such a thing. My fear is that something will happen and I'll become nearly crazy with remorse for wishing it into existence. Wheels within wheels. A possible negative experience lurks behind every longing. You could really become paranoid... I think I have...

Milestones, we always need milestones. I'm looking ahead to the new PCVs who will be here at the end of next month. Following that, it will be the 6-month reunion in St Lucia. 4th of July will be a milestone of sorts because it is on the downhill side of the year. Deb hasn't heard from Min of Health about B-dos trip at the end of July/Early August (another nice break in the action, hopefully, for us

both). October we have tentatively planned a tour of the islands Antigua, Saint Kitts/Nevis, and Dominica. May throw in Anguilla too. We want to see all the PC islands. There is no rush to see them this year, except that our discomfort is the most intense now. Following our three plus weeks of vacation in January and December we will return to less than 11 months of service left. No doubt we'll still need a break. We plan to take one week off every two and a half months until COS. Our money is going for a trip to Europe (or at least, England) after COS and before Christmas of 1984 (just another year!)

Why so much planning? Well the answer is obvious (at least to me). I need to have something to look forward to so I can survive the current discomfort. It tends to soften my impulsive urges to flee. I learn to endure the unendurable for a 3-week respite in SLC in December. In short it's the old "spinach before the ice cream" theory. Though I want to go now, first I need to take my lumps.

Though I am loath to choose to go home, I wouldn't blame myself much (there's a danger). Better people than I have failed to maintain it in this culture. Med students, doctors, pastors and PCVs have left simply because they couldn't handle it. They weren't bad people (as far as I know). Some of them are, no doubt, quite successful stateside. Because of my turmoil and anxiety I can understand how a person could ET. What I have trouble understanding is why (or how) some folks amble through their PC experience without any apparent discomfort. It's as though they were still in Des Moines, IA or Findlay, OH. Nonplussed by their change of culture they simply keep on going about their business as if nothing had changed. It is those people who are total enigmas to me. Granted, they are few in number but the fact that they are there at all is flabbergasting and frustrating. when you Say how unhappy you are with the current situation they just look at you unbelievably with a slight hint of sadness and say "Oh really". I'd like to punch one out, sometime.



22/4/83

Friday is always a cause for celebration. After a dismal and shaky start, the week has ended up okay. I broke out of my phobia and actually saw the people I wanted to see. I am still reluctant to move though. Seems I just rather sit than get out and do something. Maybe I'm just lazy. But really I feel like building a house. Doing something I know I do well and that I know I can complete. This ambiguity can be frustrating.

Got good/bad news this week. The reunion in St Lucia has been postponed until July (or whenever, probably August, knowing the PC). But, Dr Harvey is planning a charter for mid-June and this time Deb and I are first on his list. I don't know the cost but it should shouldn't be more than \$600 (I hope) we are 'off season' now (at least for tourists) and should get a local rate. So though on again off again it looks like we'll be busy in June with new PCVs a long vacation and Carnival. That ought to make the month very short.

God's given us quite a blessing in the last couple of letters. one from UofU Med Center PT's and one from Zion Lutheran 'gang'. Just when I needed it. I have been suffering lately. It's been largely my own fault but I have been wallowing in self-pity over being here. I felt alienated and disjointed. I felt unwanted. In short I have been very unhappy here. So then along comes these letters telling us how much we are missed and how we are inspirational people. How we are doing more for people than people stateside are. How we are putting our money where our mouths are in terms of 'ministry' and 'service'. Though it's very prideful, though I will lack any humility whatsoever I enjoyed feeling special again. I enjoyed being of use to someone, inspiring them, changing them. I suddenly realized that even though I may not make a difference here, I may make a difference back there. Even though I am not appreciated here, I am appreciated stateside. It helps me to put this experience in better perspective. Though it doesn't cure my desire to go home, it at least soothes some of the symptoms. At the depth of my despair, He comes through for me.

I often wonder at just what is my problem here. I don't like to work. I'm not fond of going out on the street to be stared at like an alien creature. Though I do find some peace at home and in my garden, there are still barking dogs and noisy kids to deal with. But outside of just being different the setting is not so difficult. Well, yes there are some difficulties but not nearly as bad as I make them out to be. Sometimes (60 70%), they really get to me, the rest of the time I'm content. Extending my contentment is the challenge. But I don't know what causes that. This whole contentment thing is just one big, looming question. I'm not sure the answer would come any easier if I was stateside.

But I need to find some peace and contentment here. Otherwise, I will continue to let my resolve be undermined by all of the things I dislike about being here. At least I need to find that so I can maintain for the next 6 months or so. Then I can reflect on it all I want in the luxury of home, in SLC.



3/5/83

Two weeks. OECS training consumed the last week. It was a nice break. It was very nice to be with the old 'gang' again. I realized how well I've gotten to know some of the folks in the PS. I really like that first group. Hope we can get together again. This week is short and free. Free in that I don't have to be in training since there is no OECS training going on. That will be in the two following weeks. But already this week, some concrete things are happening in the job arena. Early this morning I met with Mr King at UWI. We are going to work on some private sector programs in management techniques: acctg, mktg, etc and personnel and personal development. Perhaps a training of trainers program. Mr King talks a good game, so to speak, so I am cautious about follow-through. He was also in PR and it's difficult to determine just when he is selling his program versus selling himself. But he's organized some good things at the UWI and I think he is sincere in his professed need for my services. I know the UWI is hard-pressed for cash so that fact that I am free is a pretty sure bet that I'll be used.

As for another project, Mr Blackman, CIDA rep, met with me this afternoon about this Manpower Inventory project they are doing. He is very much a facilitator rather than a leg man. He gave me a set of forms, a few general instructions, \$200 (BDOS) and let me set the date of completion (end of June). I'm surprised at his laissez-faire attitude but understand his ambiguity. It was a lesson for me. Let people set their own goals then make them stick to it. Anyway, Jill and I will determine who to see and how and I will go do the interviews. The \$200 B is to defray costs for transport and meals, supplies, etc. I still need to find out costs and limits on spending. I can't imagine how to spend all that. I'm feeling very uncomfortable with the money part of the deal.

The job front, in general, has shown great improvement lately. As I said before, I have broken out of my phobia in dealing with this whole experience. In specific, dealing with this bureaucracy. I'm still reluctant but that reluctance is diminishing. at least for now. the Manpower inventory will force me out into the industrial sector. My comfort and greater rapport with staff will make getting the job descriptions done an easier task. Fortunately the phobia disappeared before the

training program began. Otherwise it would have been more difficult for me to determine just what did reduce my anxiety. This way I know it was me conquering my own fears.

Talked to Mom on the phone on Sunday (also Hol and Dad). It was wonderful to hear their voices. Mom concerned me in that she said "come home" about five words into the conversation. Fortunately I had gotten my head together earlier in the week. Otherwise, with the despair I had been feeling a few weeks ago I might have booked passage home. God has protected me well from such decisions. I have been up when Deb has been down and vice versa. Even when Mom was down I happened to be up. Things are looking better. amazingly so.

Sailing trip is firming up for June. it's still on and Dr Harvey is still committed to go. It may span 5 weekdays so that Deb and I would be away from work for 9 days. No complaint there in fact that is growing on me to where the possibility of it aborting our Oct. island-hop plans is not of great concern. I think we both need a vacation, a long one. Even if it only takes us as far as the Grenadines it will be a nice mid-year break. A breather to help us survive until we go home in December.

Mom is still planning to come visit and she has gotten as far as getting a price (~\$800 US) and talking to Sharon Miller about going. Still don't know when it is, not even a tentative date. No doubt it will be sometime in the summer. Hopefully it will begin to rain enough to keep things cool for her without ruining their stay. Well, we'll see. Went to a party yesterday at Dick and Ann's. Kind of a house warm, COS, May Day party. Most interesting were the Blakes, a Baha'i couple living here in St V. I didn't have a chance to talk to Jim but Lisa and I talked our brains out. About the states and living in St V. It's always nice to get a fresh perception of this place, even if it is a similar view. I enjoy my contacts with folks from developed countries. We also met and talked with Dennis, a French volunteer and David, from Scotland. Interesting viewpoints and opinions from them both.

19 May 1983

Been busy with training last two weeks so I haven't had time to make entries. Not a whole heck of a lot has gone on. I hate such a long span of time because specifics kind of dwindle into a hazy smudge. Things are at a kind of tentative 'hold' right now, feelings and physical activity.

Sitting in on training is nice for three reasons. First, it allows me legitimate time out from work. Second it helps me to get to know more folks in the P.S. Third, it allows me to observe some professional training. For all these reasons, and for some that are 'hidden', I have enjoyed the training.

I've been feeling a need for a 'time out' lately. I needed to do some reorganizing and alternative planning for my job. I needed to come to grips with the reality of me working here. I needed to explore options. Basically I needed a chance just to sit and think about my situation here. Not so much cultural things but rather my job and my need to feel needed. I've been feeling quite superfluous lately. Like a branch without a tree to hang from. I know I have skills (many). I know I want to contribute to the development process in St Vincent. I've been trying to decide how best to do that. As an HR professional it is an excellent opportunity for me to apply my own theories to my own situation. How to maximize the use of myself in the situation at hand. So far I've done a fairly pathetic job of it. But I am learning so much about myself in the process. It may help me to be more effective back home.



The second reason, for attending the training to meet the staff, has paid off somewhat in terms of me feeling more a part of the organization. It's nice to be able to recognize and say hello to folks in different departments. The only negative aspect I can think of is that I begin to want to do too much to help. I can completely identify with the situation. The despair. The demotivation. I feel it. I know it and I can think of about 50 ways to go about trying to correct it. I get frustrated in knowing that I can do so little to change attitudes in the 18 months I have left. But I want so much to change those attitudes because I care so much for the folks I'm working with. I get to leave voluntarily in 18 months. They either have to leave, stick it out miserably or change the attitude of the organization. With a lot of pushing, brainwashing and a change of government the P.S. may become responsive to public needs. Lastly, I need more exposure to training. I need to do more training so I can become a full-fledged, real life trainer. I still feel like a trainee trainer. The thought of teaching a class in practical economics and a training of trainers program almost freezes me with fear. I'll have to put my money where my mouth is. I do and don't particularly like the idea. It will make me a trainer, or show if I can be one but it will almost certainly show how bad a trainer I am. I am out on a limb risking again and I'm worried about the cracks that are appearing behind me.

Speaking of risks, etc that was part of my work phobia problem. Perhaps the largest part. I've been thinking this phobia thing over and over trying to determine just what caused the whole thing. I thought at first it was just the over emphasizing with the despair felt by many public service employees. But then I thought it was a learned helplessness kind of thing: me repeatedly asking for something or being promised something without receipt. Now I'm beginning to think it's just plain fear of failure. Feeling the risk of wandering into ambiguous territory without a map. What tipped me off was that I had a rush of phobia after committing myself to some programs at the UWI. Same feeling, same response. so perhaps my lack of initiative was is due to biting off more than I can chew. Now that I've bitten off even more I'm really feeling panicky. But on the positive side, the fear is almost so big that I must necessarily put it aside for fear of being overwhelmed. Kind of a "Damn the torpedoes Full speed ahead" sort of thing. Hopefully none will score a direct hit.

Death has been haunting me lately, not my own but of a loved one. Perhaps it's because another PCV was sent home for a funeral and that one of the OECS trainers did likewise. Deb's grandmother had a mild stroke and was almost fully recovered when the letter reached us. All these happenings only increases my anxiety about being so far away from family. Granted there is nothing I could do if I was stateside but it's just getting the info second, third or fourth hand that is unsettling. I won't rest easy until I do go home.

Mom's request on the phone for us to return home, was followed by a written request. Apparently my letters about suffering for Christ touched off of a lot of concern back home. both Mindy and Dad sent letters questioning the theology of the statement. Mindy was also piqued at my criticisms of the RC Church. So I have been writing home furiously to dispel any rumor of my martyrdom down here. Actually I was playing the Martyr bit somewhat overly so the actual situation. I had really separated my suffering from the object or reason for that suffering. Christ himself. Now Christ isn't asking me to have a lousy time in his name. Nor can I be assured that I am pleasing him and doing his will if I am having a lousy time. Yet that seems to be the philosophy I've been operating under. Deb and I (especially me) have put a lot of work and faith into putting the joy back into our difficult times. That's where we went wrong. We failed to see that our serving Him, even while suffering, is cause for joy. Joy and Peace. So I'm trying to change my thinking now. To include him in my suffering so that the concurrent pain is diminished. Actually I should give up my worry and pain (suffering) to Him. This is been my

failure and a turn around has occurred in the realization.

That doesn't mean however that my troubles with living here are over. There are still many things which complicate my life more so than in the states and that I would rather do without. But we're passing some real milestones the next month or so and with increased involvement on the job front it may be Christmas sooner than I think. gads, I hope so.

Keith Paulson has returned to St. V for a 3 to 4 month stay to work on local applications of appropriate technology. He brought much news from Barbados. That Robert Rivas had ET'ed (#8) and that our 6-month conference is now scheduled for August. Actually that's okay with me. We have firmed up our sailing plans for June 15th to 20th. Carnival will be 26th through July 5th and Deb still has a possible rehab conference in Barbados the end of July, early August. We also plan to fly to Dominica after our conference in St Lucia so we'll get a bit more travel in. Gads with August gone, will be busy preparing to visit the U.S. So things have a positive forward flow. Hopefully a fast one.

25/5/83

I always like to begin the week with a surprise. This morning I found out that my boss has been transferred to the Min. of Comm & Works and that the MCW PS is now the DFS. Sounds like musical ministries to me. One problem is that Henry (the old boss) was the 'prime mover' behind this job description exercise and with him gone the project may be prematurely finished. The other hassle is just in getting used to a new supervisor or even determining whether or not he should be my supervisor since I'm doing little which impacts directly on the DFS anyway. It was a 'relationship of convenience' before. I would rather work with Mrs Soso the Chief Personnel Officer (more logical & similarity in task). I do want to do more training, so attachment to Establishment/Services Commission/Personnel would be a logical choice. But logic is rarely a justification of a decision here. Mostly I'm going to kick back, do this CIDA project and then tackle the new situation. The exciting vagaries of PS life.



It was rainy and overcast most of the day
e us some color.

Actually I liked the long (2 ½ hr) boat ride

though I could have done without the brain jelling, super amplified music and the crowd of people. But I did enjoy the trip. There is a freedom on the sea which brings a deep inner peace. A peace of just being there. So I really like the ocean and look forward to our sailing excursion on June 15th (or so). As for the island of Mustique, well it's unbelievable. The houses are big and beautiful. Meticulously maintained and well looked after. The whole environment there is so much more pristine and clean. Even the public toilets were a marvel. It was the perfect resort

island just like you see on postcards or travel brochures. But Deb and I wonder what the local people do to survive. What work is there on Mustique besides domestic stuff? We didn't see a store or a shop. No car rental agencies, gas stations etc. They could have been and probably were well hidden but we wonder about the oppression or poverty which may exist there. Are there opportunities for the local people to improve themselves and their island?



Deb and I have given this oppression thing a lot of thought. We wonder about the perpetuation of that oppression here in Saint V. The poverty, the unemployment, it seems to stem from efforts of outside agencies to correct problems here. There is a “learned helplessness” that began with the British and is now perpetuated by the current government in power. Our assistance, rather than liberating, only builds dependence. And the government is a partner in that by poorly utilizing donated resources so that more resources need to be donated. It is a structural problem too. Governments work with governments where it should be people working with people. The bureaucratic deals with the bureaucrat and the poor continue to suffer. Peace corps, and other agencies (even development agencies with the St. V gov’t structure) should begin their needs assessment at the level of the people. Generate issues with the people. Develop strategies for implementing

with the people. Provide the necessary skills plus training to do the job. Squeeze money locally where existing human and material resources can't make it then, and only then, fund externally. A loan most preferable in projects which generate income and a 'grant with a promise' in those circumstances where future income is too uncertain to guarantee repayment. The promise being a repayment 'in kind'. That is, that one town, village etc, must assist the neighboring village in a similar project in order to repay the 'loan'. This seems the most oft overlooked area: a specific time limit must be established Beyond which no further assistance will be given except in extreme cases of drought, hurricane, natural disasters. Finally, someone, sometime has to begin to coordinate the development activities of outside organizations. In country staffing may be a bit of a financial strain so a multinational body may want to sponsor overseeing the development process though a local should be an integral part of the staff. In this way common goals, approaches and time frames can be established and monitored so that the current practice of going from 'door to door' as funding is exhausted can be stopped. Now all of that is pretty dry stuff in terms of "setting the world on fire" type of development work but what we, we as Peace Corps volunteers, VSOs or whatever's need to do is to break out of continued perpetuation of the problems by us providing continued 'interim' help. We must begin the practice of understanding through communication with the people we are supposed to be helping. and set limits on that help (e.g. time)

On our trip to Mustique, there was a colony of bizarre looking houses on Bequia. It looked as though they had been abandoned for several years but architecturally, structurally they were beautiful. Yet they stood abandoned and overgrown. Dreams lost? And why? Near Mustique there is an enormous cruise ship driven on the rocks perhaps a mile from shore. You could imagine her grandeur at her prime. People gaily strolling the decks in the Caribbean sunshine. Perhaps kissing and under a huge West Indian moon hung high above. Yet there she lay now. Rusted, split, with a gaping hole in her side. Dreams again lost. Was it planning that went astray? Good direction gone bad? My fear is that our attempts at development here in St. V. will be found, in ruins years later. Forgotten, rusted hulks. The last quivering outlines of our dreams.



27/5/83

Been leafing through this journal of 6+ months. Our 6-month anniversary is next Saturday and I've been trying to get a handle on the goods and bads of this experience. It's a difficult process simply because good and bad are relatively subjective. My goods and bads are different from Debbie's and from everybody else's for that matter. Even my 'standard' continues to evolve over time so that I'm not even sure what's good and bad at least outside of God's moral will. Now it's time (or almost time) to do a quarterly evaluation since we are 1/4 through our 2-year commitment. I've been holding off on our newsletter just so we could spend time (Deb and I) sharing the pluses and minuses of being here. Reviewing this journal, one stark reality has hit me. In terms of being able to deal with being here, I haven't changed much. That in itself is a bit depressing. I have changed, but not much. And certainly the transition hasn't been as easy as it appears for some others. This place is a shock. Not just visually or viscerally but psychologically. I'm really feeling it. Deb and many others say that I am too analytical. That's true. But what I'm trying to do is to determine the source of my psychic discomfort. Would I be as overwrought over my job if I was stateside? Would I handle my frustration in the same way? Would I be as reluctant to get on with it if I was in a stateside organization? What is it I don't like anyway? I could go on. It would help me answer a big question: are your feelings and frustrations the same as they would be at home? Perhaps it's unanswerable. Since I don't have much of an HR job history in the states, the answer is at least difficult. Maybe I'll never be able to answer it. That in itself is a question.

Yes I'm feeling bleah and strung out. Maybe it's the full moon. Perhaps lunacy is my problem. Perhaps I need to learn to take things more lightly. But that's difficult to do since I condemn Vincentians for not taking the situation here seriously enough. If there were more thinkers like me, perhaps things would improve. The people would all be near crazed like me, but things might improve.

As a release, I've been thinking about writing a book (seriously). Something I could look forward to doing on a regular basis. Maybe my anxiety would find a healthy outlet in such an endeavor. My biggest problem is that I don't know how to write or

even begin such an ambitious endeavor. Well, it's always a thought.

Job change is a very real possibility and something I might lobby for when and if this job switch of my boss takes place and I meet with Mr Marshall. I'm hoping something positive happens on that front because when this CIDA project is done I'll be back to square one on my job description endeavor.



30/5/83

Had a nice busy weekend. Friday night there was a wine tasting & Cheese party at function. Must've been 30



It's never a good idea

to mix several different types of wines from Boone's Farm to Liebfraumilche. But it was fun, fun, fun and now I finally met all the PCVs here in St V.

Saturday night there was a farewell party at Mrs Douyon's (cocktails and dinner). She is such a wonderful person and the perfect hostess. Sitting on her back porch sipping martinis felt a bit too much like 'home'. Reminders like that are vaguely unsettling not because of the feelings but because of the place. Makes me want to go home so I can feel those things within proper surroundings.

Sunday we got up to Duncan's to visit and to meet the new PCV's staying there. It's nice not to be a rookie anymore. I tend to chatter-box a bit too much and not listen enough. Sounds almost like Cliff & Marie. Anyway, Dave & Max seem like nice enough guys and seem to be relieved to be here. They had similar complaints about Jamaica. Hot, dirty, uncomfortable. I guess even Sligoville gets warm this time of year. They were glad to leave there and seemed as happy as we are to be here rather than there. We only talked to them briefly while we rambled with Lanie & Alfie and tried to placate Hildred. We'll be having the welcoming party at our

house this Saturday so we'll get more of a chance to talk about St V, Jamaica and training. We move one step forward in completing our service here.

We saw "On Golden Pond" last night. And saw is very descriptive since the audience was so noisy that we couldn't hear much of the dialogue. Very vexing but such immaturity is no surprise. The lack of interpersonal sensitivity is a major problem here and is evidenced by people being unable or unwilling to emphasize with touching movies like "On Golden Pond" (Kung Fu movies are popular and understandably so. They require no emotional input). Anyway, the movie itself triggered lots of homesick responses within me and reconnected me with the importance of relationships in our lives. In this country where relationships are shallow and immature for the majority such a movie was a juxtaposition of cultures. Interesting perspective. It made me wonder too about Dad & Mom and how important my relationship with them is. Though they are not immortal, it's difficult for me to conceive of losing one or the other of them. And perhaps the moral of the movie is that a solid relationship can even transcend death. It is better to have had a loving relationship and lost it, than to have never shared in that experience at all. That the 'risk' of building a relationship is far less than the tremendous loss of losing a father or mother and having never known them. A word of wisdom for the Vincentians.