

Finding "home"

The next step in the journey was to get official sworn in and then find out where we were going to end up, which started the process of finding a new home of our own in a new country....

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Dec 9

Its been quite some time in between entries. I'm concerned that it will become the rule rather than the exception. Much, much has ensued in the past week. All of it good!

The flight from Jamaica was uneventful yet very beautiful. It was a rather long (2hr) flight and gave us a chance to "change gears". I found myself wishing that it was taking us back to Salt Lake City. I was quite homesick & anxious about going to Barbados where we would find out what & where we doing and going. It gave me time to think about my commitment & how Jamaica had influenced my perception of the West Indies. I was till uncertain about whether or now I could perform as a PCV or deal with the West Indian environment. I remember being very hopeful & anxious about or assignment.

Antigua, where we stopped over briefly, was our first indication that things were improving. It was a beautiful airport facility. Clean and well maintained. I had the first stirrings of hope that the EC was better than Jamaica, and not worse than our Jamaican experience as we had been led to believe. Perhaps our assignment island would be a paradise.

Once landed in Barbados, we quickly found out about our assignments. We were to be stationed in St. Vincent. What I was going to do was something vaguely connected to the Ministry of Finance but beyond that things became "fuzzy".

Dec 11

We had a confused and brief swearing-in ceremony at the P.C. office in Bridgetown. The reception following was the best part. Millers High Life & a lot of free Pepsi. A good deal of food. The best thing was that we were now official Peace Corps Volunteers. The last hurdle in becoming PCV's had been passed. The first hurdles in being PCV's were yet to come. The evening passed rather languidly. We took a swim in the ocean. We were trundled off to the airport to recover some lost luggage. Deb and I said a few good byes to those going off to the islands other than St. Vincent and we went to bed.

Next morning was spent in last minute packing, drinking coffee and getting checked in at the airport. Deb, Babe and I had breakfast at the airport to spend the last of our Barbados dollars & talk about being on St. Vincent. About 9:15a we boarded a trusty LIAT airplane and quickly got off the ground for a 45min flight to St. Vincent. We were almost "home".

"Home" turned out to be beautiful! Kingstown & St. Vincent turned out to be much more than we expected. Clean, small & rather "quaint" we liked St. Vincent immediately. No hassles on the street. No piles of garbage lying around. Friendly people. Beautiful scenery.

Our homestay was less positive at first. Both Mr & Mrs Duncan are quite nice but both are rather old & prone to talk at length. Repeat themselves & forget things. But both were much, much nicer than our other homestays. They have a 31 year old daughter that lives at home with them. Hildred functions at the level of a 5 years old. She is a "downs" child with other handicaps. My biggest problem is that I have difficulty dealing with elderly and handicapped people. Seems the Lord is giving me the opportunity to overcome my personal handicaps. Within a few hours though, I felt at home.



The priority for the week was to find permanent housing. We looked immediately at an unfurnished but beautiful place in Cane Gardens. But, given our incomes & the cost of just the 'basics' we couldn't afford the \$300/mo rent. During the week Mr Samuel, our island coordinator, was pre occupied with placing two other, older couples in houses. By weeks end we were the only people without housing.

Fortunately the other daughter of our host family knew of a place available in Edinborough just a 10 min walk from the hospital. It was an ideal place. A large yard. Lots of fruit trees & supposedly new renovated. Best of all it was right on the sea. We looked at it this morning and it was less than ideal or renovated. Biggest problem is its placement. Right next to a place called the Ambassadors Club. I guess the whole community is vexed by the noise it produces. Noise being one of my problem areas, I didn't want to take it. But my silence was interpreted as consent by Debbie so we agreed to try it. With 9 mornings coming up I have a feeling it will be the Residence Halls all over again.

So once again it with great anxiety that I looked toward the future on St. Vincent. My position, as it turns out, is in Human Resources so perhaps that will provide some stability in my new life as a Vincentian.

Dec 21

Its been too long again. Much has happened. Much of it positive. We decided to take the house in Edinboro. The Ambassadors Club next door has been vexing at times. With Nine Mornings going on, sleep has been a rather difficult commodity to obtain lately. However, Deb & I decided it wasn't enough of a problem to warrant our moving out permanently. We made arrangements with Dick and Ann Bienamen to stay with them should the noise become overwhelming. We haven't needed the 'retreat' yet. But with Nine Mornings coming to a close, the partying could become heavy, so we'll take it a day at a time.



Psychologically, its ,been an up & down time for me. Since I have yet to begin work I have a lot of free time to do as I please. I've been trying to keep busy with shopping for kitchen necessities and bread making basics. I've been walking around town & also baking bread. I've also tried keeping busy reading and writing (though not in this journal as much as I should). My days tend to go quickly which is nice but though I may be physically busy, mentally I wander and it has caused me some pain. I tend to either dwell on the past and conjure memories of winter & Christmas's past. Or I look forward to the next Christmas back in Salt Lake. Skiing, relaxing & consuming large quantities of Fritos, French onion dip and Tab. I do miss the American lifestyle I gave up. Sometimes I miss it more than I miss the people. I miss the security of being with a large number of Americans in secure

houses in which bugs are not rampant. I miss the information on TV, newspaper, radios, magazines. Those things are available but at such a cost as to be out of reach to a PCV. Deb and I are considering buying a radio which may well cost \$100 for a very basic unit. But we feel so cut off from the mainstream of local & world events that its important to us to get a radio. Likewise for a Newsweek



(on them) have put me on an

I go from feeling OK & secure to a

simpering sobbing 'wimp' in seconds. Certain words, or thoughts send tears welling up in my eyes. I'm not certain of the cause but I can recognise that I am the only one controlling it and although its difficult, I must not dwell on negative thoughts or be preoccupied with memories. When I deal with the reality of being



remain in that mode.

Experientially, St. Vincent is a

marvel. I honestly do enjoy the island & the folks that live here. Indeed, my American, white minority status places me in a position of harassment or ridicule by young men Vincentians who wish to test their masculinity & status. No doubt

the situation is a photo-negative of the U.S. Southern states environment in the 60's. I thought I was used to being discriminated against in Utah. But the 'discrimination' here is of a different sort and only practiced by the young. So far I haven't been overly intimidated but I'll need God's strength at the first confrontation.

Another kind of experience happened last Saturday. Deb and I went skin diving and haven't quite been the same since. The coral and sponge as well as the multitude of fish was over whelming. I've done fresh water snorkeling but it hasn't anything to compare to snorkeling in the E.C. It was beautiful and beautiful is such a lame word to describe it. The incredible variety of fish as well as the other sea life is too numerous to even begin to describe. It was almost a spiritual experience. Needless to say, Debbie and I have been total converts to skin diving & immediately bought the necessary equipment. Another diversion to fill our free time...I'm beginning to doubt whether we'll have any.

Christmas approaches rapidly and still I haven't decided on any gift(s) for Debbie. The feeling of being in the Christmas 'spirit' comes and goes. I face much the same frustration I do in the states. An inner need to seek out the roots of Christmas; the birth of Christ. Actually in faithfulness to Christ I have been a miserable failure. I need to re-connect to my faith and the church. No doubt both will be closely connected. I look eagerly toward that for I do miss the Zion family I left behind.

cooking. We made the following (for the record): Roast duckling, corn, mashed potatoes, rolls, cinnamon current bread, apple pie. It was a wonderful festive meal (we took pictures, too) and ate until well stuffed. It took 7 hours to prepare and a ½ hour to eat. But it was wonderful and Deb and I had a good day together. Christmas night we tried to call stateside but the circuits were busy. We talked to Mrs. Douyon and then went to the Duncans. All in all, I was pleased with the day but glad it had passed. Sunday we called home and found that (at least in Chicago) it was 64° on x-mas day. About 11° cooler than here but at least it was a non-traditional day for them too.



Now that the holidays have almost passed, I try to gear myself for the long haul. Having successfully passed the rather high emotional hurdle of Christmas, I now need to face the fact of day to day living in St. Vincent. Christmas has been an immediate short term problem on which I have concentrated and little else has been on my mind. Now I need to look forward to beginning work, getting the garden going, the chickens going, etc Now I must live here and I am a bit intimidated by it. I still find myself looking toward next Christmas home in the states. I look toward COS that will follow 11 months later. I find myself trying to whittle that 2 years into manageable chunks so that our stay will pass quickly. As

mauch to get back to the states as to see how we did for our 2 years in the Peace Corps. I'm anxious to get this two years over to see how we fared. Its also a bit intimidating to think that I'll begin to look for work in just 18 mos. I'm hoping that the US/World economy has rebounded by then but it still looks rather bleak at this end. We made need to make Peace Corps a career.

Jan 4 1983

Well, we've made it into the new year. The days pass so quickly when I look into my journal and see that it has been more than a week since I have written. But day by day I feel that time is moving too slowly. It's probably because I'm anxious to be home. Not in a negative sense. I don't want to be home to be away from St. Vincent. It's because I miss my family and the states so much. But that feeling is changing somewhat. A month or so ago it was an emotional and intellectual yearning for home. Its now sublimated into more of a gut level, almost internalized feeling of need Almost a hunger...I wonder if I'll just have the feeling soon, without knowing why...

Work begins for me tomorrow. I'm quite anxious. The music next door isn't helping that much either. Seems they chose the worst time to be noisy. I've got a feeling that we're going to confront those folks. 'We' meaning the community of Edinboro. It would be useless for just me to complain. I think there are others here that are pretty fed up with having to deal with these guys. I hope we can work out a compromise. At least so that weeknites are relatively quiet. I hardly expect them to give up their business.

We had our first 'visitors' today. Their names were Bernadette and Michelle. They are a couple of young girls that have 'taken' to Debbie. They asked if they could come over and we said yes. (It's nice to have some control). They gave use some help with the garden but mostly just hung around an read magazines. It was quite nice and they were well behaved. Hope they don't bring a bunch of their friends. Two is enough...

Yes the garden has begun. Actually it will be quite a lengthy project. The soil is quite rocky and it will need much cultivation before it is ready to receive seeds. We have a package waiting for us at the P.O. Presumably from Debs mom. Supposed to be seeds. Looks like we're going to get some local interest going in it. Great! We could use the help and always need a secondary project.

The weather seems to be improving. WE had rain every day since x-mas eve. Sometimes all day. Soon though, it will be so dry that we'll wish it were raining again. It'll be interesting to see the seasons change here. I don't look forward to increasing temperatures. The temps have been a near perfect 80°. Love it.

Jan 6 (Epiphany!)

Never mentioned Christmas in terms of Christ (like the unthinking, pagan sinner I am). Now on Epiphany I do remember the miracle of his birth. Moreover, I remember the miracle of His re-birth within me and my re-birth in Him each day. I have been despairing as of late. The last two days have been bummers for me. It may be (and most likely be) due to my starting work. The anxiety associated with that, plus the usual moderate level of stress of just living here PLUS the realization that the Ambassadors club is an every nite rather than a weekend thing, all combined to give me a bad case of the “lets get out of here” blues. The worst part is in the way it affects Deb. I get bummed then she’ll get paranoid and I’ll say how I wouldn’t “be here if it wasn’t for you” and she begins to feel (and rightly so) that I am laying a guilt trip on her. Sometime I wish she wasn’t here so I could just say “I’m going home” and not have to worry about her job or decision. But fortunately, she is a buffer for my more depressing times. Without her I would have gone home, she has stabilized my highly emotional temperament as of late. I’ve actually been quite concerned about my mental health. I have vague memories of my breakdown in 1977 and I have been feeling is similar. A helplessness and a gut level anxiety a kind of “wimpishness” that is difficult to describe. All I know is that it leads to a lot of inaction, indecision and unhappiness. I’ve been feeling trapped and yet unable to determine what I have been trapped into. It’s impossible to describe the feelings, but they have been self-defeating. Nothing specific just a lack of positivism & “fight” in the way I approach each day. A little of escapism and lack of assertiveness. Oh, I don’t know. Perhaps I make too much of it. The bottom line has been that I’ve been none too happy the past couple of days. It’s even affected Deb.

But this morning, before I started work, as I sat alone in my office, I prayed aloud to Christ to give me guidance and strength. He has answered that prayer and though I’m far from being completely at home & free from anxiety, I am a bit more at peace with myself. My strength and success in this place (or in any place) lies in the hands of Christ. I just fail to keep that in the forefront of my thoughts and fail to maintain my “phone lines” to Christ/ I need to maintain my relationship with Him first and the rest should fall into place. Easy to say....so difficult to carry out in

day to day living.

Jan 17th

EGAD Already!?! I can't believe that it has been so long since I written. Much, much has transpired in the past few days (10!) I'm so fearful of losing touch with the important goings on in my lifes past. Time tends to make most events black & white. The greys just fade away. I'm under a time constraint so I better move on.

Most joyful, exciting news is in the family area. Mom & Dad & (presumably) Gramps & Gram are coming down this 'spring' sometime. We got a letter stating that she had won a free trip and that Gramps had won a free trip to Puerto Rico. I don't understand how they 'won' the trips I'm just glad that they are coming. I'm also worried about it, too. Worried that they will find our living conditions 'deplorable'. Worried that they will be hassled as tourists. The poverty and general dirty-ness of Kingstown may overwhelm them. Both Deb and I want it to be an anxiety-relieving (rather than anxiety producing) experience for them. So the news is greeted with both pleasure and concern. Deb and I need to do some scouting around to learn more about St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We also need to find them suitable lodgings. We would like them to stay at our house but doubt that we could support them in the manner to which they have become accustomed. I doubt our beds or our board would be able to keep up with four people. Plus the Ambassadors Club, the lizards, the roaches and (more recently) the dreaded '40-legs' I doubt would be a comfortable experience. We will entertain however and be more than happy to show them around the place and perhaps, go to Bequia while they are here. Frought with anxiety, we're glad to hear that they are coming down to see us!

The next activity of great satisfaction is our garden. After faithfully turning sod, weeding and tossing out rocks we're finally toward the end of our labors. I set bamboo posts for the fencing and just need to wait until we find an economical supply of chicken wire and also need to wait for our living allowance to be deposited. After two weekends of nothing but digging and weeding, the worst of it is over. We have the seeds (save the sweet pepper and cabbage) and need only buy some insecticide and spray can.



The next bit of news is that we may get a dog which is both a blessing and a possible 'curse'. I would like to have a dog to patrol the yard and also for companionship. It would be a nice diversion for Deb and I. But it would restrict our freedom and drain our pockets. Mrs Douyon says she'll take care of the expense and responsibility when we are away but I hate to saddle her with such a burden. We'll see.

Deb really opened my eyes last night. She was talking about how much I looked to "home" as being in SLC with my family rather than with her here in St. Vincent. I have never given that much thought, really. She said she was jealous of that relationship and close family ties that brought "home" to mean my mom and family rather than her. I do look to SLC as "home" but not in such a concrete way. Being away from my family and the U.S. both has put a great deal of stress into my life (I'd love to see my BP). To relieve that stress I think of a return to "things familiar" in the states and I tend to conceptualize it all into the house in SLC where Mom and Dad live. Granted, my true home (literally) is here in St. Vincent. But if indeed "home is where the heart is" then home is in SLC because my heart, my longing, is, right now, to be there. Perhaps not always easy to accept but nonetheless a very real feeling. Yet having to choose between here with Deb and

the states with Mom and Dad I would definitely stay here. No doubt about that.

Jan 20 1983

I've spent all day just sitting and reading. In fact, the last two weeks have been an exercise in patience. I'm extremely frustrated (perhaps, not the only time?). I know there is a great deal of work to be done but I can't do. Mostly because Mr Gaynes has not approved the paperwork necessary to begin my data collection on the jobs here. The possibilities for what to do with the data, once obtained, are endless. However, without the completed questionnaires, I am helpless. I'm also missing the academic resources necessary to 'branch out' into other areas of interest. I'm also concerned that Mr. Gaynes will be the 'bottleneck' of the operation. Last, I am emotionally/psychologically having problems dealing with the cultural pressures. On one hand, I am anxious to begin doing something if only to occupy my time and get the calendar moving again. On the other hand, I can withdraw and 'hide' from the anxiety producing confrontations that arise from day to day living in St. Vincent. I want to work, but I don't want to. I'm frustrated in just sitting here, but I think I'd rather sit here. I could explore and go around and meet people but it's just too "costly" to me as yet. Should I be content and patient with a slow start (which I did, in fact, anticipate) or should I leap to action in the American tradition, I swore last week that this Monday I would force myself to confront this potentially disabling situation. And yet I sit in the office and read. I make my mind up to visit and office or dept head, then forestall the commitment. It's maddening & potentially dangerous because I can 'feel' depression just around the corner. I am very much afraid of becoming depressed because I know what a rapid, downward spiral that can become. The homesickness, the feeling of uselessness the cultural 'shock' could easily push one over the brink. I'm skirting the borders of it now. I am afraid to tell Deb about it because it's such a flighty and transient feeling that I can't tell whether I am becoming depressed or suffering from the psychological shock of just being here. I don't want to alarm her (because of my previous psych problems). I've noticed that she has been showing more signs of the impact of this place and I don't want to add to her burden of trying to deal with this place. She has been more negative toward work than I've ever known her to be. My bellyaching about my situation could only exacerbate the problem. We have pretty effectively balanced each other out emotions-wise. If we should both be 'down' at the same time I don't know what would happen. So I try to hang in

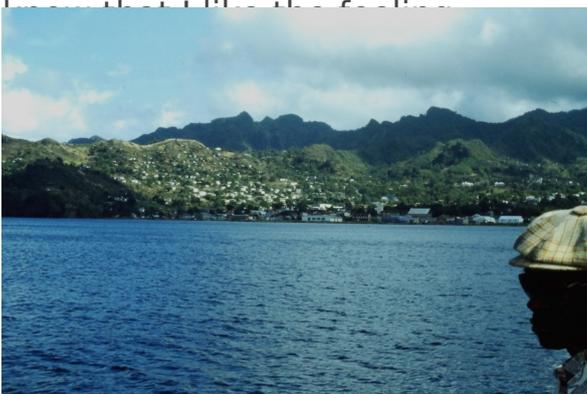
there. As much for my own well being as for hers.

Keith (A.T. Keith) came in from B'Dos this week and will be staying with Deb & I this weekend. A nice change of scenery and a good refresher on the B'dos crowd of E.C.33's We're going to Bequia on Saturday so at least we'll have 1 Grenadine island on our list of places visited.

Jan 24 1983

We had a real 'up' weekend so I wanted to write it down quick! Seems like mostly negative stuff gets written in here so I figured I'd better capitalize on my high emotions and write.

First we had Keith (Paulsen) from EC-33 (now in B'dos) stay with us this weekend. Though it strains our budget (to put it very mildly) its also very nice to have him. Not that Deb and I are bored with each other (hardly). Its just that 'third person' relationships help us put our experience in perspective. We were overjoyed to have him complement our home and surroundings and I've been amazed that the Ambassadors have hardly played at all. I'm sure that this place appears to be very ideal to him. Lately, it has been. He also talked about EC-33 volunteers in B-dos so we have caught up on that gossip. I'm feeling better about Debs & my experience here in St. Vincent. Not only because I know that other volunteers are having a tougher time, but just because I've begun to want to stay here. And I know that this experience is being shared all over the EC (and the world for that matter). There is a kinship there. A rather tenuous thread which links PCV's in a way which can't be duplicated. Yeah, its still tough. I'll still get depressed (seem more manic/depressive - I'm manic now). I want to see my family. But the bottom line is that I'm feeling OK about being here. I don't know how long that will last but I do



The second thing which made this a nice

weekend was the trip to Bequia. The boat trip was fine (if crowded). I saw actual flying fish for the first time. I fell in love with sailboats! Bequia is a sailors haven. I could just imagine sailing down from Florida or even the NE coast to come to

Bequia. Its beautiful. The beaches were clean, quiet and virtually uninhabited. Though the coral was the greatest, the snorkling was OK. Swimming was great. Its really the tropical island. Quaint shops, boats on the beach and in the harbor. It's quite a place.

Thirdly, we went to the beach at Ottley Hall (Keith & I). We swam out to the wreck and along the beautiful reefs there. Found some huge sand dollars. Basically it was good exhausting fun. Keith has rented a bike so we may go to Barroulli today and check out some projects going there. But the bike came in handy in going to Ottley and up to Fort Charles. Things are looking up for now Footnote PM]

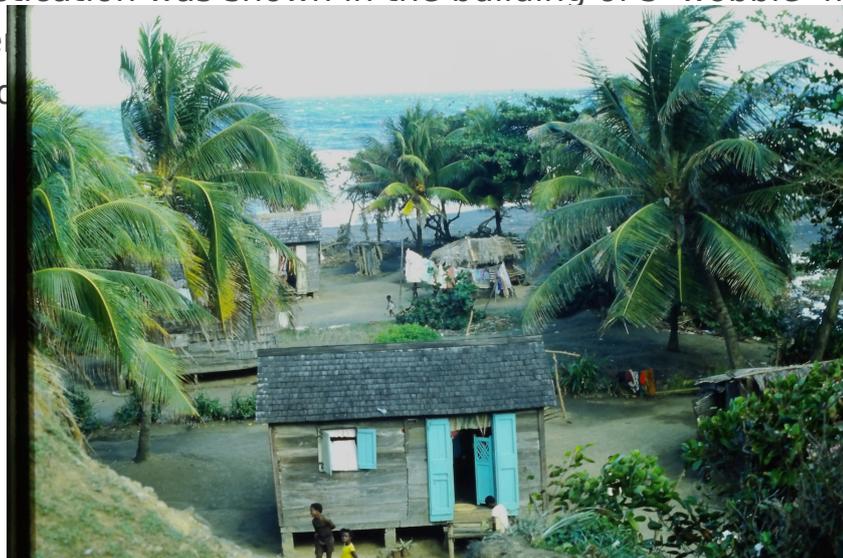
This is just to put this manic/depressive thing in perspective...Got a letter from Mom this AM (small packet actually) which contained a letter, a Zion "Herald" and two Poli Sci exams (from 1980!). I suddenly realized just how poor a form of communication a written letter is. Mom said she'd be sending along Debs files and books but it would cost "a fortune". I thought I had said for her to send the files (at any cost) But to bag the books if they were too expensive. Sounds like she is sending the whole thing. Egad. It is so frustrating to deal long distance. I've got to call and it all straight if possible (another expense). So that letter, and its full implication, has burst my bubble.

Another thing. Mom sent along a X-mas letter from the Yapps who live in England. Charlie when on and on about Prince Charles & Lady Di, how they met & were asked to a party, etc. Both the Yapps children have very good jobs with General Foods. Just because George "got them in the door". Made me realize just how much the "rich get richer and the poor get poorer" is a real statement of the conditions of man. The rich have the means to perpetuate themselves, the poor just struggle to stay alive. Grant that Jeff & Nancy have something on the ball or else GF would send them packing. But are the same employment opportunities offered to all on an equal basis? Or was it that Mr. Yapp gave them a little push? I guess I am angry in that I know I could perform or out perform Jeff or Nancy but I'll never have the chance. Life just isn't that way. The poor here in St. Vincent would love to have the same chance as those two. I doubt they even come close....

1/25/83

The first thing I wanted to sit down and write. The weather is cool & rainy. Buckets have been falling since early AM. "Oregon Day" I think Oregon would be much like this in summer. The weather, heat-wise has been too forgiving. I begin to worry about 'melting' when the hot part of the year begins in June. Only 5 months away. How soon that seems. July, Deb and I plan to attend a conference in B-dos (24th-31st). Seems that Mom (from the latest letters) will not be coming down for sure. Perhaps she was dreaming or stretching the truth a bit. I'm not hurt, just surprized I was not more cynical when I first heard she was coming. I usually temper mom's unusually enthusiastic plans/goals for the future. Take 'em with a grain of salt. I guess I was just too anxious to have her here. So, Deb & I are back to square one on our travel plans. Though we haven't heard mom's plans for sure, we've decided to plan our 'Easter get away' to some other islands(s). Need to do more exploring about. I would really enjoy a few days on another island. Need to contact other EC-33's...

Yesterdays trip to the Leeward side was an eye opener. I found what shocked me the most was that I wasn't appalled by the living conditions. I guess my 'standards' have changed. Indeed, the small rickety shacks were just one step above living in the open air. Some were merely collections of galvanized or planks haphazardly leaned together. Some were the most rudimentary beginnings of structure; four posts, a roof, with planks, bamboo, pieces of galvanized making up the walls. Greater sophistication was shown in the building of s 'wobble' frame which was posts & wove the bamboo was covered



built with T&G planking.

However, the most sophisticated would have been a low standard house in the U.S. So, as I stood amid the shacks in the 'Glebe' I was amazed at how little I was revulsed by my surroundings. I pity the children. The poor little urchins are barely clothed. Some appear to have eaten little. I saw few males at the homes looking after the children. They males can be found sitting under trees talking & working a soccer ball among themselves (which appears to be the only talent they have). Actually, I was overwhelmed by the immensity of the task for any development organization. The Gov't has done a bit of housing but there empty units. CaDEC has been very involved in housing rehab but is having limited success. Mostly because the people have not taken responsibility for themselves. They think the housing has been 'given' to them so they expect more. The land was given to them so why not a house? I find the same "more, more" attitude here as I found in SLC housing rehab. If you give them a door, they want a free door knob, too. First I was saying these people (Vincentian 'Glebe' residents) have no pride. No initiative. No hope for getting out of this mess. Then, I suddenly realized I was generalizing. Seems to me that most (if not all) chronically poor people suffer from this "give me more" attitude. I have no idea from here it comes but it seem to have a universal component. It may be tied up in this "Rich get richer, poor get poorer" rhetoric. The socio-economic web is spun in great complexity here.

I could press on with my thesis on why males lack responsibility in general. And females seem to so willingly jepordize the lives of their children but I won't. Mostly because the interrelationships are just beginning to make sense to me. Its tied up in the whole picture of the "life is cheap". But just one more thing. While waiting at the service station to get gas, a woman came up to Lylee Cato (who was driving) and told him in dispassionate almost whimsical terms that her son had been 'lost' on friday. Died shortly after birth. Lylee cheerfully said that there would be others. What was lacking in the whole conversation was grief, remorse a sense of loss. Perhaps life is cheap here but that doesn't mean it is meaningless.