

The Beginning of the End

- 29/5/84

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3 weeks plus have passed. Life here has taken on an incredible pace. Especially the past two weeks. Seems like I'm keeping up with nothing as of late. Deb had a rewarding trip to St Lucia. The conference made her question her orientation to health care. The guest speaker was David Warner who wrote "Where there is no doctor". Basically, it's a community-based approach to healthcare. The community health team receives trainings in assessing healthcare problems and how to go about solving them. Most of the health needs are met by the team. A doctor is rarely consulted. As risky as it sounds, it's a quite successful approach and builds community cohesiveness and self-reliance. Deb wonders if she has made the position of physiotherapist indispensable in that she does all the work rather than training the staff & patients to care for themselves. Actually, it's not quite that one-sided. She does train the staff and patients to care for themselves but it's difficult to dispel the mystique of the trained medical person. Actually, the program should be 'working-with' oriented rather than 'working-for'. She's now redoubling her efforts to dispel the notion that only a physio can do it. The opportunity exists too, to pass that orientation on to the next physio.

Is there a next physio? Well, it seems so but nothing in the P.C. is for certain. Seems there is a physio coming in for July 1st training and Van is trying to get him/her to come to St Vincent to follow in Deb's footsteps. That would relieve a lot of our extension anxieties and simplify our year-end plans. Just about 2 years(!) ago we began this bizarre & convoluted journey and now we begin to plan for our re-entry into the U.S. life. I'm becoming anxious, for there is still much to do here to prepare for our departure and handing over the job as well as beginning to make outright plans to find work stateside. Development work gets into your blood. Now that the initial agony of settling in has passed. Now that we are comfortable and have made some tangible progress. Now that the opportunity for some real long-term progress has arisen. Now it's time to think of returning to 'home'. Our consciences are beginning to bother us. Our lives are part of St Vincent. St Vincent is a very large part of our lives. I begin to wonder if we can break free and not regret. Opportunities to serve God and our fellow men and women abound where once there was no hope. In some ways I'm angry for the Peace Corps doing this to us. For wrapping our lives up so completely in the 'third world' that it's difficult to extract ourselves. Gads! Where did the change occur? I was so anxious to be rid of this place. Now, I'm anxious about leaving it. As for our travel plans. We got the special dispensation from P.C. and will be going to Europe in September and October. I'm even second-guessing that! The pressure will be off Debbie if her replacement comes but I need to think hard of continuing the unit. Our vacation will make this fall incredibly busy and I think I'll be wanting a slower pace to reflect and plan. We'll get back a mere 5 weeks (maybe less) before our C.O.S. conference. If we early C.O.S. the pace will be terrifying. On the other hand, we will have a chance to see old friends and experience new cultures and scenery. It will be the trip of a lifetime. I'm hoping that all things will go well, smoothly and will come back (to the U.S.) with an incredibly two-year experience that will shape our lives and bring us closer to the reality in the world. That will, I trust, ripple out and change the way others think, too.

Deb's brother was married Sunday. A reminder of family events we have missed in the states. It reminds us of how much we love and miss our families and adds a positive aspect to our return.

Still, we do need to find a balance there somewhere. Find a way to satisfy our needs to be with our families and still serve those who need us. And that need is great on both sides.