

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 "hubbly" frame which was posts & woven bamboo was covered with chicken wire.



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.

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