

3686 Avalon Road
Cleveland 20, Ohio, U. S.A.
Oct. 4, 1951.

Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Chester Terpstra
somewhere in Micronesia

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Terpstra:

As chairman of foreign missions in a large suburban church that is hinting at cutting monies to missions, due to expansion of our church building, I appeal to you to send me some details of your work, details of life of the natives (the movie versions are too glamorized), details of your problems and even details about your own family life in the Carolines or wherever you are. I emphasize details because they have a human appeal. Send rough notes, to save your time. I can work them up into smooth English.

You know that one of our few study projects in missions this year is Micronesia. Fortunately, being a long time geography teacher, I "know my way around" as to the geographical setting and with maps and drawings, pictures of the Morning Star, etc, I should be able to impress the physical facts vividly. From our women I expect undivided attention and better still, a willingness to learn increasingly about missions in Micronesia and to contribute a substantial sum to missions. Need I tell you that not all our women are missions-minded! Last month a speaker impressed upon us that missions are people.

Please don't take for granted that the women are already at all informed about Micronesia. Except for a few whose boys were in service at Truk, for example, you had better assume that we are very ignorant. As a teacher, I find that I must constantly revise my ideas of places and peoples.

At this time I do not know how to reimburse you for postage but I will find a way later.

Our study of Micronesia will occur in mid-January. I hope that will give you time for a reply.

Please pardon my typing. It is obvious that I never learned .

If you write in so personal a way that you would want your names withheld, I would do so. I am new and green in missionary leadership in the church and not up to date about missionary matters, as yet.

Bederer .

I am sending a similar letter to Miss

Very gratefully yours,

(Miss) Adelle C. Peters

Trust Territory of the Pacific
Ponape District
Eastern Caroline Islands
January 16, '52

Dear Miss Peters,

Many times in life we would like to roll the days backward and today is certainly one of them as I date my letter in mid-January and then read that the meeting for which you so graciously requested information was to be held probably this very week. I know that an apology will not help to get that information to you in time so I can only ask your forgiveness and hope that Miss Dederer was more thoughtful and efficient than I and that she supplied you with interesting material for your meeting. Perhaps her single life without the additional duties of home and family make her a better correspondent than I. My husband turned the answering of your letter over to me as you were to present the material to women. I am afraid that your kindness in writing with more than adequate time for a reply is what in the end resulted in my negligence. I thought at first, there is plenty of time to write. Then I let it slide into the Christmas season, became absorbed in that. Following Christmas I was in Kolonia where our P.O. is located and fully intended to write until I realized that my only copy of your address was back in our files in Oa where we have our home. Enough for excuses. I shall now take hope from your statement that you hope to study Micronesia "this year" and that there is a "willingness to learn increasingly about Missions in Micronesia" and interpret that to mean that it might not be too late for you to have additional material from our field. Perhaps your first discussion could prove just an introduction and what further material in might send you could be used to supplement and increase the knowledge your women already have. I shall put your name on our mailing list for the form letters we try to put out about four times a year. The one we are working on now is very short and will not be of much help but they are usually quite long and filled with as many details as we can work in. I shall also try to get off a small package of native handicraft which was a part of our Christmas gifts from the natives. We like to share these with people who are interested in the work here.

With this letter I shall also include a rough carbon of an article I prepared this past fall and which is tentatively scheduled to appear in the Oct. '52, issue of CHRISTIAN LIFE magazine. I may never appear since that date is still quite a way off but I think you will understand that I would rather not have you pass it around nor quote from it verbatim but if you can find information from it which you can present in different phraseology I think you could be free to use it.

Now for a few additional rough notes of a more personal nature. Our family consists of my husband Ghet Terpstra myself and our two boys Michael 5 years--and Merrill 3½ yrs. We came to Ponape in March of '50. We are scheduled for a furlough after March of '53. Missionaries in Micronesia spend 3 years on the field then one off following the first term. Additional terms are four years on, one year off the field. The two German couples in the Palau and Truk have been on the field for 15 years or more. They are under the German board.

We have a boarding school for 65 boys and girls--ages 14-20. The leave might be about that of an intermediate school--stateside. Our purpose in having them is to seek to train a few leaders in each of the communities and the outside islands. Secular and Biblical subjects are taught. Mornings are for classes, afternoons are for work and vocational subjects.

Our two little red headed boys are learning Ponape and other native accomplishments. Some of the things we learn amuse us, others distress us. Raising children here has many difficulties--moral, school etc., but they also benefit in other ways. They have both enjoyed good health the younger fully recovering from a very serious asthmatic condition which he had most of the time in Honolulu. Humanly speaking he had every reason to get worse here as these islands have just about everything the Hawaiian Is. have only more of it--rain, humidity, foliage etc. We feel his recovery is an answer to prayer as we made this a special request as we did our deputation work before coming

to this field. Our older boy was born in Honolulu where we served for almost five years. The younger was born at my home in Portland, Oregon but after his return to the islands still a tiny premature baby he developed asthma.

I think that most of you would think of our islands here as a bit more primitive than they are. Life is simple and close to the soil but our folks are not the bushy haired native which many people many people think of as they visualize this area. The Japanese developed the islands a good bit but of course all of that was destroyed during the war. Thatch roof homes are the most common but some are trying to copy simple but more Western design. The islands abound in natural beauty, brilliant blue ocean white breakers on the reefs which form the lagoons, scores of waving coconut trees.

Our mission land here at Oa--two hours away by water from the port settlement-- is over a hundred beautiful acres. Our house is made of mainly native woods and stones but is big and most comfortable. In Honolulu I think it would be considered a lovely home of course minus electricity, dependable water supply etc.

Our churches are much better attended than stateside churches proportionately to population. We have eleven churches on Ponape proper and six others on the islands in our district.

The native language is quite a simple language the difficulties in learning it come from the fact that there is no grammar or speller in it as yet and very little reading material. Few understand English well enough to make good teachers. We are learning it best by just listening and learning from life situations. English is being taught the children in the schools but so was German and Japanese so we don't know if English will ever replace the native languages or not. Two islands in our group have a different language similar to each other but different than Ponapean. It is a Polynesian language. Students from these islands are forced to try to learn two new languages at the same time. All the different island groups have different languages but they seem to learn these with greater ease and fluency than they do a foreign language like English.

The natives are very childlike and look to us for decisions in every phase of their lives. The former governing groups have told the people what to do. Now the American idea of having them decide for themselves confuses them greatly. It will take a different emphasis in education to develop leaders.

These scattered notes seem quite incoherent but if you can work them up I think they might give a better picture. Please do not feel that you must reimburse us for postage. If we can be of any further help please write. If my letter is too late to share with your women at least I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance. I am so glad you asked pardon for your typing. You can see I never learned either. I usually try to blame the typewriter for my spelling too.

Sincerely,