

Trust Territory of the Pac.
Ponape, Eastern Caroline Is.
December 29, '57

Dear Friends,

They say "the third time's a charm". I certainly hope that is true of this letter. On November 7th I started a letter while Merrill played Christmas carols on a new wind-up phonograph, the boys' big excitement of the moment as we had been without one for many months. Then along came Lola, our typhoon, and that letter seemed irrelevant. After Thanksgiving, when life had resumed a somewhat normal routine, I started again. This time the background music had changed. Outdoors was the "chop-chop" of axes and machetes hacking away at trees toppled by the typhoon. Indoors carols had been replaced with Marshall's favorite, The Adventures of Muffin. To amuse him after he managed to break a leg we wound and turned records until we no longer considered the phonograph an asset, except we were all agreed that the sounds Muffin heard (so the record goes) were superior to the sounds Marshall made when completely bored by inactivity.

I finished that letter with its Thanksgiving theme but by then-- alas, the typewriter was broken. Now with Christmas come and gone and the New Year upon us, it too seems outdated. In an effort to start the new year right I will make this third attempt. We do want you to know that in our hearts at least, we wished you a joyous Christmas and pray that for us all the New Year will be one that will draw us closer to Him whose coming into the world we have just remembered. With furlough drawing near I will be beating this letter home if I let it lie too long this time.

Chet sent our last circular letter the end of March. Perhaps a summary of what we have considered important events since then will give those of you who remember us in your prayers items for praise and continued petition.

May 31st saw around 30 boys and girls between the ages of 17 and 20 graduate from the Oa Christian Training School. We hope their three years of hearing and studying God's Word, as well as secular studies on an intermediate level will have helped to prepare them for useful lives.

June 8: Under circumstances similar to Merrill's premature birth, on this day nine years ago, we had another still born boy. Again we were grateful for the Lord's care and conscious that He knows our way better than we ourselves. The fact that we might have had five boys makes the three we do have more precious.

June 12: Our colleagues, the Hayhows, left on furlough. We have since learned that they will not be returning as the doctor strongly advised against bringing their two boys back to this climate.

June 15: We started our move back here to Oa, our school campus, from the port village of Kolonia, where we had been living for 2½ years.

June 28: The highpoint of this term was the graduation of the first class of 22 young men from the Pastors-Teachers Training School. The boys made history by being the first in the Trust Territory to wear both caps and gowns. How dignified (and different) they looked! The training of indigenous leaders to carry the gospel to their own people is essential in Micronesia as it is impossible for missionaries to reach the widely scattered island people. Pray for these who have entered places of service in churches and schools. They have many problems to face.

July 4-14: Chet made the annual circuit of the island during the special services which have been held since the centennial (1952) to recall the coming of the gospel to Ponape. This year all twelve churches were visited and in each area many expressed their desire to follow Christ.

August: Each year a ministers' school is held to give refreshment, inspiration, and instruction to around forty men who with little formal training have taken up the task of leading their people in worship and

seeking to instruct them in the things of God. In order to help them do this more effectively this year's studies were on the Differences in Protestant and Roman Catholic Beliefs and I Corinthians.

Throughout the summer our move from Kolonia continued making it impossible for me to have sessions with the women and Sunday School teachers. Moving ten miles by water and keeping up houses at both ends during the process is a real chore in the tropics. Mold, must, rust, dust, bugs, rats, termites, cockroaches, heat, hills and your own weariness all complicate the task. It takes months and we've done it twice this term.

Sept. 3: Alber, from Ponape, and Harrison, from Kusaie, both PPTS graduates left for further schooling in Hawaii. Arno, of Truk, followed week later. Pray that their training will prepare them for more effective service when they return in two years. To them Hawaii is a "new World."

Sept. 9: The school year began. We were happy to welcome to the OCTS-PPTS staff Robin Tetzloff from Iowa for a two year term; John and Esra Heine, a Marshallese couple just returned from Silliman University in the Philippines; and Danny Leopold, of PPTS, class of '57

Nov. 10: Jumping off a davenport Marshall hurt his leg. It looked as though it might be broken but winds and waves were too high and the hour too late to take him to Kolonia. The next day I went in with him and an X-ray showed an incompletely fractured tibia which made putting on a cast a relatively simple matter. There we learned that a typhoon had been scheduled to reach Ponape during the time we had been on the water. I decided to wait in Kolonia for the winds to pass.

Nov. 12 & 13: Typhoon Lola hit Ponape. All over the island people had fled for refuge in the few strong buildings. The large church in Kolonia was so full that by evening I decided that due to Marshall's uncomfortableness with his leg and a touch of flu which was making me uncomfortable too, we would have to return to our cottage for the night which would bring the height of the storm. By morning we had proved that "the angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear Him" for although the flimsy house trembled, shuddered, and shook, still it stood. Many Ponapean houses as well as our good sized church in Uh were down. 7 or 8 trees crashed around us unheard above the storm's roar.

Nov. 14: We were reunited in Oa. Like all of Ponape, Oa was a changed place. Chet estimated 2500 trees down or damaged. Except for minor damage most of the main buildings came through well. The wind had come from the two unglassed sides of our house so Chet had bailed out washtubs full of water. A huge mango tree fell, also unheard, a few feet from the front door. A large kapok tree which would have fallen right on the house at one point in the storm fell instead when the wind had shifted and laid it parallel to the house. Perhaps the churches filled with praying people brought Ponape and the outside islands, some of which were even harder hit, through with no loss of life. One thing was tremendously improved-- our view of the ocean--what a price!

Nov. 22-24: Each year special services are held at this time in Kolonia. 93 came in response to the message to give their lives to Christ. The testimony of one minister shows that times of difficulty are times of deepening. He recalled that usually on seeing some of his children who tend his land on another part of the island it had been his custom to inquire about the yams, pigs, coconut and breadfruit trees. He admitted that he was always pleased when they replied favourably. On a trip back to see his land after the typhoon he found it quite devastated and his wife was bewildered to hear him exclaim, "Well praise the Lord." "Why are you saying that?" she queried. "Why see all these things I trusted in, God has taken them away." Then in his rejoicing he killed a pig and feasted a group of his friends. Well might we all learn more of the unimportance of the temporal.

With Christian love,

FLASH: Jan 10: Another typhoon hits Ponape!