



Rev. Chester Terpstra  
Ponape, Eastern Carolines  
Pacific Trust Territory  
Easter season, 1952

Dear Friends:

A little over a year ago Heinrich, a man in his early thirties from the Catholic district of Net, asked one of our ministers for a Ponapean New Testament. I heard nothing more about this young man until a few weeks ago when the same minister mentioned to me that his Net friend was ready to be baptized. At the time we happened to be having special services at the Church of Colonia, so I had a note sent inviting him to attend these services. Hearing the Gospel explained, I told him, would help him to understand the Word he had read.

After the meetings were closed the young man came up to the house to see me. He was still interested in coming into the church. I presented the claims of Christ to him personally and he was ready to follow the Saviour. Because my Ponapean is still faulty I thought it best to send him to one of our ministers who had come from a background of Catholicism. Recently I heard from this minister that he had explained the Gospel to this young man on three different occasions, and after each exhortation he had sent him away to think it over. Each time Heinrich came back, he was in earnest, he had considered the cost, he was willing to pay the price, by God's grace he wished to follow Christ. A few weeks ago he was received into membership at the church in Colonia.

At church just the day before yesterday I heard this recent convert comment on the passage which relates the story of the father bringing his demon-possessed son to Christ. The father put the responsibility on Christ saying "but if thou canst do any thing have compassion on us, and help us." However, Jesus taught the father with His words "if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" that the burden of the matter lay with him. It thrilled my heart to hear this young man exhort his fellow Christians saying that the same principle was true today. All things are possible with God, the crux of the situation is whether we will exercise faith and thus see the power of God released and set to work on our behalf.

Heinrich is in the family of the king. To my knowledge his family is the only Protestant witness in the whole area of Net which turned Catholic back in 1886 when the Spanish came in and subdued the work of the Protestant mission.

The abovementioned meetings in Colonia are part of our program in Evangelism. Other special services have been held here at Oa as well as in a nearby district. The results of these efforts have been most satisfying.

Another phase of the same program is the Sunday School. With Miss Lela Morgan's consecrated help we have witnessed a 30% increase in attendance as well as a marked spiritual growth. To augment the program for the children, there is now a weekday Bible and music club.

March 6th marked the beginning of our third year here on Ponape. New periods, quarters, years.... in my past business life always meant inventory, balance sheets, and plans of study for the future. I still like to work with statistics and perhaps some of you would like me to share with you a few findings in regard to the work here.

(1) There are reasons to believe that self-support may not be too far off for these people. Church giving last year increased 49% which encourages one to believe that our churches are near financial independence. Here at the school of Oa there are also some bright signs. In 1951 copra production on this Mission property was upped



(2) I feel much of this financial progress is due to the splendid missionary spirit many of these Ponapean Christians manifest. On this 100th Anniversary of the Gospel in these parts the people are investing their money in "foreign missions." Approximately one-fourth of their offerings will be going to those who, as they put it, "have not received the light of the Gospel." This is most encouraging to us. A missionary-minded church prospers; a self-centered group dies a natural death. The same principle also holds true out here. Even the children have caught the spirit and are gathering shell on the reef with the proceeds being their gift to further the Glad Tidings.

(3) Six of our seventeen churches are putting up new sanctuaries. A seventh has just dedicated its new building. The men gather the sand and coral from the sea and do the actual construction. The women furnish the money for the purchase of cement and roofing. This spirit of cooperation is meaning the Ponapeans are worshipping in edifices which cost them very little money (the last church finished cost \$400 and a few cents). Yet they do value their church. Has not each stone and board meant hard work and sacrifice on their part? This is the work of their own hands. This is part of them.

(4) Statistics show that Micronesia's 1946 population is 1,100,000. With these thoughts in mind we chose "The Children for Christ" as the subject for study for this year. The Morning Worship services, the Christian Endeavour groups, the ladies societies all center their programs around this theme. The youth of Micronesia need special guidance. To many, democracy means "do as you please." New temptations are presented to them under our regime. Some think the religion of their fathers quite old fashioned. We are stressing the importance of genuine Christian living on the part of the parents, especially before their children. I know you will agree that no type of evangelism can substitute for a Godly concern on the part of fathers and mothers for the spiritual welfare of their children. The God of Abraham must also become the God of Isaac and Jacob..

Recently we were asked if we had any particular need back in October of 1951. A pastor had felt a special burden to pray for us and wondered why the Lord had placed us in such a definite way on his heart. Just at that time our special efforts in Evangelism were beginning, and it thrills our hearts to know that our hands are upheld out here by many of your prayers 3 to 5 to 7 thousand miles away. Indeed we do have One Lord, One Faith, and but one common mercy seat. Continue to plead our cause before our Almighty High Priest.

A bit less than a year after we heard of Marge's father's death I received a dispatch stating that my mother was very ill. She survived that crisis but still is very low. We would appreciate your remembrance of her as well.

In Christian love,



for the Terpstras on Ponape

This letter was distributed by the Missions Council, 14 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts. Notification of change of address should also mention the Terpstras' name.