

## ANNUAL REPORT--1960-- FOR MARGERY TERPSTRA

Had you been here on Ponape a few Sundays ago, we might have walked together from Ohwa, where our mission schools are located, to the next of Ponape's churches at Sabalap. Enjoying unusual freedom with most of my family away and our schools on vacation, I decided to make the trip alone. Merrill, my only charge, had declined an invitation to accompany me saying he didn't want to "get hot, tired, and sweaty". What was expected to be a quiet morning's amble to church turned into a rather prolonged plodding but the experience became for me an illustration of the "why" of missions in Micronesia.

Starting out with vigor, on what should have been an hour to an hour and a half's walk, I was soon glad I had done something we seldom do on Ponape, worn real shoes, but sorry I had allowed only enough time to make it to the communion service being conducted that morning by "Wanporon" Martin. The paths which had been quite good when we last made the trip as an entire family, were now slick and slippery or pools and puddles of mud. With our usual footwear, Japanese rubber slippers, I would have soon been "stuck in the mud", as it was, I only sat in in once. Progress was then much faster, for care was cast aside as I was too dirty to try to keep clean.

However, with 180 inches of rain a year one learns to live with mud, thus the conditions of the path were not my chief concern. Doubt had entered my mind as to whether I really knew the way. Chet, whose duties include counseling the pastors at their monthly meetings and visiting the churches as often as possible, had lost time on a recent hike to the same church when he took the wrong path. Probably someone would have been happy to have gone with me, however, with nothing to do but follow the main district road that had seemed unnecessary. The "main road" however, had faded away in some places to nothing but a parting in the tall grasses growing high on each side cutting off sight and breezes.

Twice along the way, I had met friends headed toward our Ohwa church and though they had derided the condition of the paths they had assured me that those ahead were much better. Since this statement seemed such an exaggeration, I decided that at a fork in the road some way back, I must have made the wrong choice. When I needed guidance, I met only a large black boar, and later a sow with a litter of piglets, all of whom after surveying me skeptically, took to the ditches without engaging in conversation. Pausing a moment in the hush and the humidity and hearing only the hooting of the doves, I turned and trekked back to try the left fork of the road.

This accomplished, I then proceeded along what proved a better but less familiar-appearing path until meeting two girls who sadly informed me that this was the wrong path and that the abandoned one



was indeed the right one. Back again at the now well-known junction the girls left with the insistence that it was still a "long, long" way to my destination.

Relieved of the question of direction, I found that my meanderings had provided material for meditation. It would have been wiser to have asked someone to go with me, a companion who would have known the trail better than I. Time would have been saved and no doubt more accomplished by the visit. Suddenly, however, my vision seemed renewed of why we are here in Micronesia as missionaries. We have not come to do for the people of Micronesia what they should be doing for themselves, but we are here to be guides and companions along The Way. With our centuries of Christian heritage and many advantages we should be able to guide those who have only had the gospel a few years in some places and a few over a hundred years in others. Possibly we slow them down at times or distract them as a companion might have done that Sunday morning but most often we should save time if we walk along together sharing our knowledge of Him who is the Way and our experience in His service. I was reminded of "Wanporon" Robert who came to our Mission Meeting on Tol, Truk representing the people of Eastern Truk and requesting that an American Board missionary be stationed in Eastern Truk. Four years ago our missionaries left Truk, now Robert said that after trying it alone the people needed and desired a missionary to again live and work among them.

This spring we passed a milestone on our pilgrimage with the people of Ponape as we recalled our arrival ten years ago to reopen this station following the war. What have I done to share with these people the good-news of life in Christ Jesus? This year with three active sons I have had more than a full-time job as their teacher, (Sunday school teacher too), chief consultant, recreational director, and referee. Thus "missionary" work has been almost an extra-curricular activity. My responsibility at our schools (Pastors' Teachers' Training School and Okwas Christian Training School) was the health and welfare of the 80 students and staff families. This varied service brought calls near mid-night, knocks at mid-day, and interruptions at mealtime. It has included caring for burns, cuts, measles, a just-born baby, bloody gashes, skin ailments galore, and a toddler who tried drinking kerosene for breakfast.

Each turn to lead our chapel service proved a challenge as we realized how much further our message could reach through the lives and witness of the young men who would once again be scattered throughout the many islands which are Micronesia. Our home was the center of many student gatherings. Sunday School, held in our living room, was my responsibility each week, and when we entertained student groups we welcome the young ladies into our spare room. Punch and ping-pong added pleasure to the students' visits.

In an effort to be of assistance to the churches of Ponape, I have prepared lesson materials and had general meetings with the leaders of the Sunday Schools and womens' groups. Soon I will be leaving the field with our boys in order that the older two may have the opportunity of enjoying a normal school and social situation. I hope this work of preparing materials may be continued even when away from the field. As I turn over my responsibilities it is a joy to have some who entered our school when we opened ten years ago, able and ready to assume duties which have been ours. To work ones' self out of a job is indeed a thrilling challenge when the result is a growing indigenous church.