



"E ALA NA MOKU KAI LILOLOA"
(Awaken, ye islands of the far away sea)



IN TRANSITION

By Edith Wolfe

What is Micronesia?

Where is Micronesia?

"Micronesia" means "small islands."

When you look down on Majuro, say, or Kwajalein, Ponape or Yap, you wonder where your Air Micronesia pilot is going to put his plane. As someone said of another place: "When you get there, there's no there there!" Well, anyway, not much.

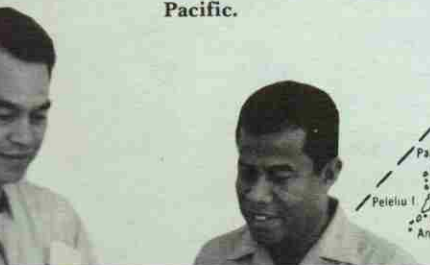
Micronesia, the American Trust Territory of the Pacific, consists of some 2,140 tiny islands dropped helter-skelter, as if by a giant hand, across the wide ocean the width of continental U.S.A. Micronesia's dots of land stretch over some three million square miles!

The islands are divided into districts. Take a look at the chart on this page. Those dotted lines are just to help you get your bearings. Keep in mind that:

• It's a long, long way from Majuro in the Marshall Islands in the east to Palau in the Western Carolines, especially by outrigger canoe, but now, thanks to Continental Airline's proud bird, the trip takes only a matter of hours. (You do have to stay overnight in Guam, though, if you want to go on to Yap and Palau.)

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Rev. Kimo Merseberg of Hawaii and Rev. Jude Samson of the Marshall Islands represent spirit of brotherly cooperation as they plan together for the future of our churches in the Pacific.



A MISSIONARY TO MICRONESIA REMEMBERS

By Chester Terpstra

You should know before you begin reading this article that I am biased. What you read in the following paragraphs is from a prejudicial point of view. As you learn in these columns about the upcoming conference to be held in Ponape between representatives of the indigenous churches of Micronesia (Truk, Kusaie, Ponape and the Marshalls), the Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ (HCUCC), and the United Church Board of World Ministries (UCBWM), I will usually come out on the side of the Micronesians. Why, you ask me, this partiality?

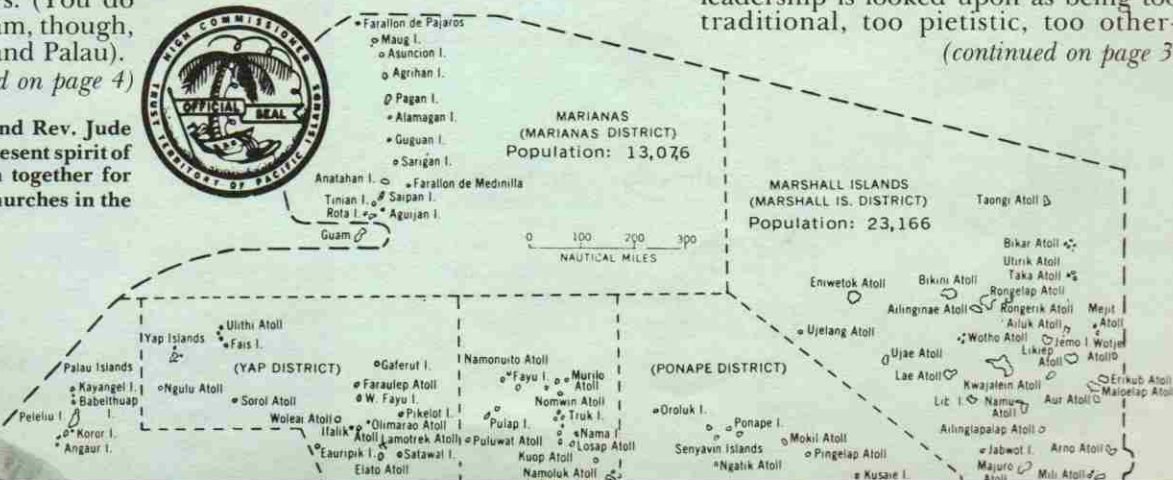
It all began 26 years ago when we touched down in an amphibious plane in the lagoon at Ponape. We were the first missionaries to be settled on the island after World War II. What Harold Belcher and Leslie Dunstan, representing respectively the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (predecessor to UCBWM) and the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (predecessor to HCUCC) had told us after their survey trip of Micronesia was true: the Micronesians, first and foremost, wanted the missionaries from "Boston" back.

It didn't take us long to learn to love these folks. For example, there was Wanporon (Rev.) Martin. He had been the right hand man of Rev. Osumi during the Nando Dendodan's years on Ponape. During the years of our nation's island-hopping strategy in the Pacific,

the indigenous people had been huddled together in the valleys and ravines of the interior of Ponape. There they would have no chance to commit sabotage. Martin had stood up to the local military authorities and had moved among the districts encouraging the believers and holding the churches together. He with two other ordained ministers continued to baptize infants and new believers, to administer the cup (coconut syrup) and the bread (breadfruit) and to proclaim the gospel of release to a captive, fearful people.

It was Martin who later taught me the Ponapean language as we sailed from district to district in our outrigger canoe. To this day I truly love Martin. Paul Gregory, David Stowe, Bob Midgley, Bill Donlin, Bill Kaina, Becky Ling and Marge Terpstra will meet Martin when they visit Ponape in a few weeks but then again, they may not. You see, Martin is now almost blind. He suffers from elephantiasis and he doesn't get around too much. Then again, Martin undoubtedly will not be a delegate to the three-way conference. Younger men have replaced him and his peers in leadership roles in the church. From one obvious point of view, this is the way it ought to be because, if the church is to survive, it must have leaders for the next generation. From another point of view, to me it is sad. It is sad because there appears to be a gap in communication between the younger and older ministers. The older leadership is looked upon as being too traditional, too pietistic, too other-

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Only By What They Did And By What They Said But By What They Were
HEY CARRIED THE GOSPEL TO MICRONESIA



Nette Palmer of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, went out to Ponape under the banner of our Woman's Board in 1884. Her memory is still in the place where she lived.



Drs. Chester and Marge Terpstra gave more than a dozen years of their lives to Micronesia, where they not only taught the Pastors' and Teachers' Training School in Ponape, but struggled to build, plant and plan for the future. The fruits of their labors? The lives of many of the people in the church in the islands now. When Marge leads our Hawaii delegation down to Ponape at the end of May, she'll be "going home." Both Terpstas speak Ponapean fluently.



George Lockwood (l.) and Harold Hanlin are two veteran missionaries. George served in the Marshalls, Harold in Ponape, their wives. In fact, Harold and Mary Ruth Hanlin had the distinction of being the last missionaries of our World Board in Micronesia. Harold hasn't left yet! He continues to labor in the islands as a representative of the American Bible Society and as a translator of scriptures. George Lockwood makes his home now on Kauai.



Anna Dederer, now retired and living in California, had been a Liebenzell (German) missionary before her service under our World Board. Her last place of ministry was on Kusaie, a remote island where the gospel first came to Hawaii over 12 decades ago.



The Rev. Tuck Wah Lee and his wife, the late Alice Lee, who gave many years of labor in the Pacific remind us that it was not just "Boston missionaries" who went down to Micronesia in the early days but "Hawaiian missionaries" who served with them. Tuck Wah Lee had the joy of welcoming a Trukese contingent when they made a recent visit to Molokai where he is now the pastor.



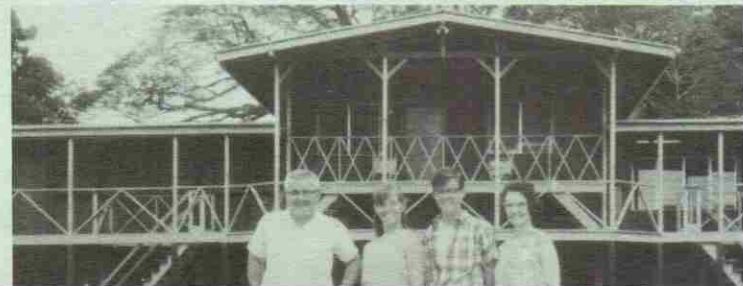
The Rev. Eleanor Wilson "Lady Skipper" the *Morning Star*, famous missionary she seen here on her last visit to the island loved and knew and served so well. After retirement from Micronesia she was past one of our Kauai churches before going to Pilgrim Place, California, where she died in 1971.



Alice and Elden Buck and their children, right, still live in Micronesia where Elden is pastor of the Kwajalein Protestant Chapel. He will be coming to our Aha Paeaina to serve as keynote speaker on "Micronesia day." Alice Hanlin Buck is a second generation "missionary daughter."

There were many *Morning Stars*, like the one at left, missionary vessels paid for by the pennies of children throughout the United States. These little ships were the lifeline for supplies, mail and friendship for generations of missionaries.

Paul Marshall, right, a school man from Maine, and his family went down to Truk where he served as...



MISSIONARY REMEMBERS

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worldly, even too missionary-oriented. Why this gap, this barrier?

As I see it, the following are some of the reasons: It is true that Martin is a very strong personality. During the war years, he and his peers had to be or they would not have survived. In the early 50's when the three ordained ministers met with the eleven lay ministers, it was always Martin who presided. It is true, I will admit, that that had some dictatorial attitudes. It took several years for that little group to become more democratic and to move the chairmanship among the wanporons, even eventually down to the lay ministers. It took several more years to bring deacons, elders, Christian Endeavor leaders and other lay church leaders into a body now called the Puin en Apuapuali, sort of an all-district church council. To avoid breaking the bond of peace in the community, one moves slowly.

But Martin and his peers did move. They favored the founding of a Pastors-Teachers Training School and the educating of their successors. They favored sending some of these PTTS graduates away for additional experience and training. But somewhere, somehow, a gap developed. Undoubtedly it was partially because the older men knew only a subsistence economy and an agrarian life style, while the returning students were raised under an imported money economy with the glitter of village life. I am not trying to say who was right and who was wrong. I am only saying that something is wrong.

Now back to that political theory called "democracy." It took a long time to become democratic because democracy is foreign to the Island world. Traditionally, they are matriarchal with three lines of authority: *nanemarki* (king), *nanekin* (prime minister) and *samero* (priesthood). These *alii* ruled by hereditary right, not by a democratic process. The Spanish, German and Japanese administrations were not exactly democratic in their rule over these Islands from ca. 1850 to 1941. What I am saying is that Martin came to his strong leadership role honestly. Even to this day, though there are members of the House and the Senate in Saipan elected by the people of the Districts, it is apparent when you move among the people that the *alii* still have the real muscle.

For us, the HCUC and the UCBWM, to say that the church has been in Micronesia since 1852 and thus should have developed self-support, self-determination and self-leadership, to me, is to ignore the history of these islands. Neither the Trust Territory government nor the missionaries can move people from one ideological point of view to another in one easy lesson. In my judgment, too many of us have been far too negative in our attitude toward the leadership in the Trust Territory, not to speak of the demeaning of the work of the missionaries. Men like Frank Mid-



WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

These four photos, taken in January of 1950, show Micronesia as it was 16 years ago. What has happened, we wonder, to the children in these pictures? To that family? Where has the tide of Life taken those boys rowing the boat? What problems have those hand-clapping dancers had to deal with, those stick-tapping girls had to face? What does the future hold for them and the 120,000 or more people who live on those islands who share the Pacific with us? How can the Church help them face the future confident and unafraid?—*Official photographs, U.S. Navy.*



school system, the scholarship program, the public work improvements, logistics by ship and plane are part of their contribution. Let us not forget that for years, 1941 through the early 1960's, first under the Navy and then under the Interior Department, there was a very small budget, \$6 million annually for an area equal in size to the continental United States.

While living in Micronesia, we witnessed their honest effort to come up with an economy not dependent on government handout. Copra, cacao, fisheries, pepper, citrus fruits, animal husbandry, poultry, forestry among other means were tried against tremendous odds. Don't forget, my friends, that when U.N. visiting teams tour the Trust Territory, lots of international politics is involved. All of us tend to listen too much to the visiting experts rather

become insular and deteriorate to back-water mentality but my money is still on the Midkiffs, Norwoods and Johnstons in political leadership, and the Elden Bucks, Harold Hanlins, Eleanor Wilsons, Tuck Wah Lees and Anna Dederers and I would even include the Chet Terpstras when it comes to insight into the socio-religious scene.

You really are biased, aren't you, and even a bit boastful?

Yes, indeed, I am. I believe the missionaries in post-war Micronesia did a good job. No, they were not perfect, far from it. But they did meet the Micronesian church where they were and endeavored, step-by-step, to work themselves out of a job by building up a strong, indigenous church.

At the three-way conference, it will be apparent that the Micronesian church

STOP PRESS (As of May 20)

Typhoon Pamela has left 10 persons dead on Moen, Truk. (Our latest Micronesian visitors to Hawaii were from this island.) No news of damage to our Trukese churches. One Great Hour of Sharing and Hawaii Conference funds totalling \$4,000 will go down with our delegates to 3-way Conference as tokens of our aloha and concern for our Micronesian brothers and sisters. No word yet from Woman's Board President Becky Ling, now on Micronesian visit, on whether or not she will be able to make her planned stop in Truk during the week of May 23.



"We can understand each other," says Nancy Yamashita of Oahu as she speaks in Japanese to Micronesian women who have been in Hawaii on visits to our Woman's Board. From all the districts people have come up to learn, teach, share and seek ways of cooperating with one another as Christians in the Pacific.

MISSIONARY REMEMBERS

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from HCUCC and UCBWM. They are going to raise questions about land, leases, priorities, theological training, scholarship screening, proposals for program and projects, the political unity of Micronesia, membership of Micronesian churches within HCUCC, their relationship to the Liebenzell Mission.

These Micronesian leaders are the products of our Pastors-Teachers Training School. At least nine of the twelve at the first three-way Conference in 1973 were PTTS graduates. You teach a gospel of freedom, equality and justice to students, and they will later come back to demand the same in their deliberations with you. And that is the way it ought to be.

I should really level with you before signing off. Undoubtedly, some of my bias is not based on logic but rather on sentiment. For example, my friend Martin. He not only was a right-hand man in the work but when we buried our two still-born sons, he helped to dig the plots in the church yard and to make the little caskets out of make-shift lumber. More than once, he risked his life for the sake of Marge and our, then, infant sons. Through typhoons, literally troubled seas, and innumerable incidents of danger, he was always there. So be patient with this sentimental (I almost wrote, old) man.

Kaselelia maingko!
Chester Terpstra

MICRONESIA

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• Each group of islands has its own particular history, language, culture, leaders. The common language is English but most people speak their own tongue.

• The Marianas have just voted to pull out of the Trust Territory, opting for Commonwealth status with the U.S.A. The other districts are not too happy about this and they are still struggling to figure out what their status should be.

• In pre-World War II days, people lived by fishing, subsistence farming, maybe by growing coconuts for copra. Now, however, with Uncle Sam's multi-million dollar T.T. budget, a cash economy has developed which makes it hard on the fishers and farmers.

Problems are many—economic: how shall people live except by handouts from Uncle Sam? Ecological: an article in the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1974 said:

"Is Micronesia among the undiscovered paradises for wanderers who want the way-out? Sadly, no. After almost 30 years of life under American administration these naturally beautiful islands are sea-going slums. Along the jungle roads, beneath the waving palms, lie the stripped skeletons of automobiles, decaying examples in front of every hut of an American-inspired search for status. Untreated sewage now seeps into too many once-pristine lagoons. The fine, white beaches of Majuro are awash in beer cans until you reach the end of the road, 30

miles from town. Beautiful, downtown Moen, the main city of Truk, is a gathering of quonset huts along a pot-holed road where muddy water stagnates."

The *Examiner* article ends with this observation: "What is beautiful in Micronesia is the primitive. What is ugly is pseudo-development, the culture of concrete block and pop-top cans."

The gospel of Jesus Christ came to Micronesia over 100 years ago—carried by missionaries from our own islands. There are churches in every district, on even the remotest inhabited islands. The churches are strong. The people are devout Christians, both Protestant and Catholic. The question: How can these Christian churches give leadership in Micronesia in the coming decades? Can we help? Does the Church still have an important role to play in the next century as it had in the past? These are some of the questions that will be asked in the three-way conference on Ponape this month.

IN NEXT MONTH'S FRIEND:

Vietnamese Refugees

THE

Friend



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