

Trust Territory of the Pacific
Ponape District
Eastern Caroline Islands
May 17, 1955

Dear Friends,

I have often expatiated on the beauty of our tropical island with its blue skies, brilliant waters, wonderful sunrises, and gorgeous moonlit nights. In order that you might not get the idea that missionary life in this region is all sunshine, I think that I should describe today's weather. This is our rainy season. Actually it should be over by now but it continues. Being a webfoot from Oregon, I thought I knew a bit about rain but really Oregon weather is quite dry. In the month of April we had 34 inches of rain (you Oregonians can check but I think that you don't get much more than that in a year). I am writing from our little cottage home in Colonia and like the mission house in Oa it is situated so as to command a lovely view. To my left one is able to see through the trees some of the mountains which usually stand out in shades of green or bluish purple; turning a bit further one gets a picture postcard scene of a quiet little river with a small red-roofed cottage on its opposite bank, while the central view is of the harbor with the island of Langar (it is to a ramp on this island that our plane taxis after landing in the lagoon) forming a background with the white fringe of reef visible beyond. But all this is speaking of a fine day. Today our panorama in dull tones has appeared and disappeared as the rain has swept in from the ocean and down from the mountains. Since we don't boast even one pane of glass in this house we often have a nice mist blowing inside too and have many puddles on the floor, full pots under the drips, and damp furniture under all the windows. Weather like this takes a bit of the joy out of boat rides to Oa or other parts of the island and walks here and there to carry on the work.

I may say something more about showers later on but first I should bring you up to date on some of our happenings since last writing. Those of you who only hear of us via these form letters must think that we got lost in the masses of Asia's millions as our last letter was mailed from the different ports of call en route back from Furelugh. Such is not the case as we safely reached our destination last June and now it is only vivid mental pictures that we have of those many people we saw on our way. I think that I had always before thought of travelling in terms of seeing places but what impressed us most on our trip was not places but people both en masse and as individuals; individuals like the young boy in the striped tunic whose task it was under the hot Egyptian sun to run down the streets of Port Said and scrap the dung from the road; or the bent over man whom we saw in silhouette on the torrid bank of the Suez Canal as he provided the power to tow two other men along the canal in a small boat; or the dark, fezzed tug boat captain and his crew who seemed so close as we leaned over our ship's rail as they nosed us out into Aden's harbor and yet who were so far removed from us in thought and language, in dress and opportunities; or the crippled boy on the dirty streets of Bombay who ran after us on all fours like a little animal as he begged a coin; and others all along the route. In Hong Kong it was the masses which were so impressive; hundreds of rickshaw drivers pleading for the privilege of running down the street pulling their fellow creatures, or the carriers quivering under the weight of the heavy burdens on their backs or shoulders, or the little children fighting to shine your shoes or raising their hands to beg. Although we met Christians in almost every place we realized that the percentage of those who have heard of Him who is able to make the most difficult life and humble station meaningful is very small in most of these countries. (I read recently that with the exception of the Philippines, there is no country in Asia which has more than 4 per cent Christians.) I believe that I shall be continually content to be short handed in our missionary efforts here in Micronesia after seeing just a tiny glimpse of ~~eth~~ethed in other parts of the world. While at home in the States we had been impressed anew with the opportunities that are everywhere for those who are the least bit interested in hearing the Good News in beautiful churches, wonderful camps and summer conferences, on radio and television programs, in attractive services with interesting speakers and excellent music, through books and Christian movies while a vast majority of the rest of the world lives and dies in ignorance of Him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Is something wrong with our Christianity? It makes

one wonder if the story of the little boy who had been praying for shoes is not applicable. When someone told him that God must not have heard he replied, "Oh yes, He heard and told someone to send me the shoes but they weren't listening!"

Forgive me for this digression but I felt a debtor to say something about the sights which brought lumps to our throats as we saw these people around the world. I was talking about rain and I had thought that I might go on from there to report some of the "mercy drops" which have fallen here on Ponape since we returned and ask you to pray with us that in the time to come we might experience real "showers of blessing". Since reaching Ponape on June 8th, our activities have been many and varied. There have, of course, been some disappointing aspects to the work but there have also been many things for which to give thanks. It was certainly cheering on our arrival at the dock to find it packed and the road lined with many of our Christians who had come to welcome us back. During our first few weeks we tried to visit as many of our churches as possible and at each there were feasts to celebrate our safe return. I think the "after dinner" speech which touched me most was that made by our lay preacher in Uh. With feeling and expression he said that they were all happy that day because they were like children who were crying "Mother and father" have returned". Samuel is himself a man of middle age and the father of quite a few children but his words show how the people look to the missionaries for guidance.

Early in July we again played host to our colleagues who came to Mission Meeting. For the first time since becoming mission secretary I was able to start the minutes by saying that the meeting was called to order without the accompaniment or rain on the roof, but we did have a time of spiritual refreshment as we planned and prayed for the work throughout Micronesia. As chaplain Chet shared some of the inspiration he had received from his time of study. While Dr. Hanlin made a trip to Kusaie some of us went on the circuit of special services which were held in commemoration of the coming of the gospel to Ponape. These started in one of our smaller churches and as we slipped and slid in the red mud from the little guest house to the church we thought that the peoples' spirits might be dampened by the rain which was giving most of them their showers while they were trying to sleep in inadequate shelters. However, showers of blessing were falling too and the meetings were all well attended even the 4:30 am prayer services. You are almost assured a good crowd when the church has been filled with people sleeping row on row! The next stop was here in Colonia, then Uh and the closing service in Oa lasted from nine in the morning until two in the afternoon as one after another testified to the blessing he or she had received from the various meetings. We know that many of you at home were praying and the result was the Spirit's presence in our midst.

August was filled with activity and inspiration for us and for those who attended the weeks school for the deacons, two weeks for the pastors and their wives and a reunion for our former students. During the month of September we spent most of our time here in Colonia helping the elementary mission school get under way, meeting with the Sunday School teachers, and attending the Sunday School childrens' day here as well as going out to three in different districts. The two big events of October were the coming of our new missionary family, the Hayhow, and the reopening of the Oa Christian Training School for 67 young people. The Pastors' Training School which was scheduled to begin in December was delayed until January due to transportation difficulties in bringing the young men together from all of our stations. Now it is well under way with one semester completed and we know that you will remember these young men in your prayers. It is our hope that each one may become a consecrated and useful servant of God among his own people.

The last few months have brought at least two important changes in our lives. The first was our move from Oa, where we have our boarding schools and which had become home to us during our first term, into Colonia, the port and largest village of Ponape. When the Ponapean Christians knew that another family was to be stationed on Ponape they requested that one couple stay in Colonia as Miss Lela Morgan had left and the center of the island's activity was now without any missionary. Our first thought was that the work could be carried on with Chet and Ernie Hayhow commuting to Colonia at least once a week but as time

but as time went on we became convinced that it was important to have someone living in Colonia all the time. For several reasons we felt that we were the ones who should come in here. It wasn't easy to contemplate the move as we loved the school work, the house we had built, the land, and the way of life there which is much more typical of life in Micronesia, but we wanted to come because we felt it was the Lord's will for us. This means that Chet only spends two days a week in Oa teaching in the schools and then has more time for visiting in the churches as well as working with our largest church which is here and having classes with the public intermediate school students etc. We covet your prayers that the Lord might work in a very evident way as the temptations of the world multiply in our "big city". It means that as a family we will have less time together as Chet is at Oa or out visiting in the other districts or away on field trips. Just now he is on the run to the southern islands and when I heard Sunday that the ship was on the reef at Kapingamarangi I wondered when he would be home but I understand that they were able to get it off so it should only be a brief delay.

The second change is that we have a new "master" in the house. Marshall Jeffery arrived at about 2 am, March 27th and, true to his name, he has been marshalling the house ever since. We had really expected a little sister but his coming brought "joyful peace". (This is the meaning of Jeffery) Fortunately daddy was at home to assist in the delivery as Marshall arrived quite a few minutes before the doctor. All went well and according to the kitchen scale he weighed about 8½ lbs., almost back to Michael's record and nothing like the 3 lbs. and 2 lbs. 4 oz. of our two prematures. We appreciated hearing that many of you were praying for the baby's safe arrival and you might be interested to know that the old difficulty ~~seems distant~~ November and then the symptoms gradually disappeared. You can check those prayers off as abundantly answered as mother was able to be up almost immediately and now at seven weeks Marshall is tipping the scales at 12 pounds.

While writing this letter I have been a bit ashamed to realize what ancient history of of it is as there has been so much time between letters but perhaps it isn't so bad as I thought. Many of the things will be taking place again and you will know what you can be praying for. Soon it will be time for the summer schedule which will include schools for the deacons, ministers and wives, and this year because of more personnel on the field a week for the Sunday School teachers and a young peoples' conference will be added. The July circuit of meetings will again visit four areas and we will have another reunion of former Oa students. Next month Chet will have the privilege of going to the Marshall Islands and giving two courses for two weeks to the Marshallese ministers as they have their biennial association meeting. A new event to be held late in August or early September will be the first Indigenous Leaders Conference. Then too there will be the children's rallies which we hope to add some new features which will give the children added interest in attending S.S. and learning the lessons each week. The Pastors' School will continue through the summer months due to the late start but the OCTS students will return to their homes.

We promise you that you won't have to read such a long letter next time as Chet plans to be writing again before too long. Thanks again for your continued interest expressed in letters and packages. We have just revised our mailing list. If your letter was not correctly addressed would you drop us an airmail (4¢) postcard or notify the Missions Council. We have deleted many names from whom we did not receive cards. If you heard this read in a group and would like to have future letters sent to your own address just let us know.

Sincerely,

[Margery Terpstra]