

Trust Territory of the Pacific
Ponape District
Eastern Caroline Islands
Sept. 5, '52

Dear Friends,

How quickly 365 days pass! On Wednesday, as we were returning from a day in Kolonia, I realized that it was exactly one year since I wrote my last long letter to you--the one written as we buzzed along in a little boat en route to Oa. That day as we passed our church in U, I mentioned the C.E. meetings which were to be held there over the weekend. This past July (from the 12th to the 29th), the church at U was just one of the centers of activity as special meetings were conducted in observing the centennial of missionary work in Micronesia. The first week's services were held in the large church in Kolonia. Monday at noon a flotilla of 47 small boats with outboard motors, a larger chartered boat towing 17 canoes, and doubtless uncounted craft, set out with a roar for the next stop--U. This was just the beginning of a round the island tour which was to include visits at Oa, Sabalap, Tamon, and Kitti. At each place there were times of special meetings, song, fellowship, and feasting. The Ponapean pig population was greatly reduced to provide special meals for the 700 or so who made the complete trip, and the three to four hundred who played hosts when the group was in their district. In all the time proved profitable, providing fellowship and furthering a spirit of unity, as well as blessing individual hearts.

Chet's participation in the celebration was interrupted on Sunday, July 20th, when he received the word that our third little boy had been stillborn that morning. Of course, he hurried to Kolonia and Cres Ketchum, the new captain of the MORNING STAR, continued with the group to Kitti, the last stop before returning to Kolonia for the closing events. I had not been on the circuit as for about three months I had been in Kolonia completely shut-in and for much of that time confined to bed. Our second premature son, weighing 2 lbs.-4 oz., reminded us so much of Merrill who had tipped the scales at a mighty 3 lbs. As I looked at the tiny one, I was exceedingly grateful for the one whom the Lord had entrusted to our care. Then as I watched the sturdy four year old, I realized more fully just what He had taken away when He saw fit to call the little spirit Home before he ever visited this earth. However, we have only praise to give the Lord for His goodness and mercy through the entire experience. His way is best and we have often proved that, although we would probably not choose the difficult places in life, they almost always bring greater spiritual blessings than would an easier path.

We wish to thank many of you for the expressions of sympathy you have sent us but it almost seemed strange to accept sympathy for we gained real joy from the knowledge that now we have a child awaiting us in Heaven. My doctor said the other day in a rather irreligious manner, "you went down and knocked on the door, and the old man said--not yet." I know that for a time my life was in the balance, but I also know that it was the Lord who said "not yet", and it was His presence which was with me in times of weakness when human help was lacking. I am sure that it was the prayers, which many of you have written saying you were raising on our behalf, which brought such a speedy recovery. My blood count came up so rapidly that it seemed almost overnight that I was changed from extreme helplessness to almost normal strength. Two weeks after I had been so weak I could hardly turn over, I was up and at most of my regular routine as well as able to participate in the classes held during the summer session for our native pastors. Lela Morgan and Chet alternated teaching our Oa Christian Training School students and the ministers, and I had meetings with the wives. This is the third ministers' school and each one has been a time of blessing. It was held the first two weeks in August and was followed by a

week for the Sunday School teachers to give them content and inspiration for their teaching in the coming year.

In the letter we sent out last fall we mentioned that the young people who were soon coming back to school would be staying on until they were ready to graduate. Since last October they have been with us and in January we expect to have our first graduation. We hope that you will continue to pray for the deepening of the spiritual understanding and experience of these students. Just now we are waiting upon the Lord to see if it is His will for at least two of them to spend the year we are on furlough, in Hawaii attending some classes and observing the Christian activities there. If this is to be possible we must look to Him to supply funds, transportation, housing, and perhaps even some clothing for the boys. Would you also remember this in your prayers?

When we think of the close of school, we realize that before we know it our furlough will be upon us. Many of you ask how you should pray for us. As we near the end of our first term we see much which we would yet like to do, both in the building and the physical plant, as well as in ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. It can only be done with His help, so pray that we might have the vision and the strength to accomplish those things which He would have us to. If the way opens for me to complete my last semester at the University of Hawaii, the boys and I may leave a bit before Christ. Michael and Merrill would benefit from a time in school or kindergarten before returning to the States. Just now Michael has "school" in mother's spare moments which aren't always available in sufficient quantities.

As I raise my eyes from the paper I am once again thrilled by the beauty of God's handiwork which is all around us here at Oa; the green hills which rise quickly from the sea forming the background of the picture we see out several of our windows, the dancing green of thousands of banana branches, papaya leaves, and coconut fronds filling in, with a huge mango tree commanding the foreground. The front of the house faces the Pacific Ocean and the east where the sun and the moon rise up out of the water in all their glorious splendor and color. We realize when we talk of leaving Oa for even just a time, that it will be with mingled feelings that we say good-bye. God has been so good to us that daily our hearts swell with praise for His kindnesses. To enumerate our blessings would fill more than the two pages we have set as a limit for this letter. When I read what so many of you write about conditions in the world today, I feel that we must have the better part here on this island without newspapers or a radio to remind us of the problems which man has brought upon himself. (Of course, there are radios on the island, ours has just not proved strong enough to get much more than static.) But then for all of us here or there, whose hope is in Him, the outlook is always the same, for He changes not. May we all find fullness of joy in Him wherever we may be.

With Christian love and prayers,

Chet + Marge Terpstra