

SERVING IN THE MICRONESIAN ISLANDS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC P. O. Box H, Majuro, MH 96960

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Stanley & Marvinne Cline

*Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.
Isaiah 24:15*

Dear Friends and Co-Laborers,

Many children in camps or Junior Church know the song which includes the statement "... the countdown's getting lower every day." We know the feeling -- frantic! Our last day of classes was Wednesday, and then less than three weeks later we are to be back in the States. So much must be done -- closing out the school and making necessary changes so the Finneys and McElhenys can carry on the work in our absence. Our alien papers must be renewed, bank records must be changed to allow for other signatures, other people will have to be "walked" through the operations here so they will know where everything is and what procedures are to be followed. Packing must be done and we'll need to try to anticipate everything we will need for six months. In addition we must have our apartment ready for another family (the Finneys) to move in.

We've been writing about needed additional classroom space. Limited finances are forcing us to plan for a temporary classroom in the church. This means that chairs, desks, blackboards, etc. will have to be set up so things can be moved out and in again before and after services. People are still coming, trying to get their children in the school.

Just this week one of the deacons of the church died. We had just seen him at the hospital a few days ago and knew he could not last very long in his condition. At the end of the Wednesday night service as I went to the door of the church, Helmer's wife met me and said she had just been told he had died that evening. He was buried this morning which is a very rapid sequence of events here. The "eorak" or grave-leveling will be scheduled for the day after Christmas. This is a very sad time for the family. It seemed so incongruous to have a decorated Christmas tree in the room and the body lying on display nearby. The burial was maybe ten feet from the back door in a burial plot where there were numerous small graves alongside the large ones. As the crowd gathered for the burial small children played around and on the graves. No one seemed to think it unseemly. However, to me it seemed to speak of a people so close to and so familiar with death that many take it as just another "run-of-the-mill" event for which few truly prepare.

Perhaps considering the lateness of this letter it is too late to write to you concerning the Christmas season (and we hope you had a blessed one), but I think it is appropriate to encourage you to look in the days ahead to the very real possibility of our Lord's soon return. Many of the readers of this letter have been supporters of this ministry and of us personally for years, and we deeply appreciate the faithful interest and provision. Please continue to pray -- many major decisions and plans must be made and implemented. Please continue to pray about the need for school teachers and other staff.

In His Service,

Stanley and Marvinne Cline



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