

MAY THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS BE WITH YOU, IN YOUR HOMES, IN YOUR CHURCHES, AND IN YOUR LAND THIS SEASON AND THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14a).

A children's Bible Club was organized by two of our church ladies in one of the two Polynesian villages here on Pohnpei. According to their history, two brothers and their wives sailed on a canoe from Samoa all the way to Pohnpei and settled on the two equatorial islands of **Nukuoro** and **Kapingamarangi** and thus the Polynesians became one of our people groups. We have a few Nukuorian families who are members of our church. Many Nukuorians have accepted the Lord as their personal Saviour. Pastor Ray Ezekias, has been the key influence that led these people to us. He plans to relocate to Nukuoro and start a fundamental Baptist church. An American missionary couple, Jack and Melinda Peeler, believed that the Lord wants them to partner with the Ezekias family and plant a church on Nukuoro. Pastor Ray and his wife will be completing their Bible institute training this year.

Another opportunity that God brought our way reminds me that if we, God's servants, are "in the way" the Lord will lead, as Eliezer was led, and succeeded in finding Isaac's wife (**Genesis 24:27**). I am referring to a "newly re-opened door" of ministry in the village of **Nanmand, Kittl**. The family who opened their home are the children of the late Aliwis Santos, who invited Pastor Isamo Welles to start the first mission church out of Calvary Baptist Church in the 1970's. The cinder-block auditorium built by our men remains intact and well-kept since Mr. Santos' death in the late 1990's. Pastor Clayton Eliam and his people invited me to preach on their third official church visit there last week. Upon our arrival, past memories flooded my mind. I recalled the late Mrs. Santos, who had the uncanny ability to pick out microscopic foreign objects from people's eyes with a sewing needle, especially bacteria and such. My eyes were infected when I was in the sixth grade, so my parents took me to the Santos' house during one summer and I lived with that family of 14 kids for several months, while my eyes were treated. My eyes were completely healed by that woman.

After graduating from BJU back in 1977, I returned home and led the village ministry along with two American missionaries. I remember well the long boat ride and the winding channel through the thick mangrove swamp. Once we docked along the shore, it would take us almost an hour to climb the steep, muddy hill to get to the church. We would bring along our changes of clothes, canned goods, a bag of rice, mosquito coils, and, of course, our ministry tools. Being a single young preacher back then, had some advantages. Each week, Pastor Welles would ask if any church members would like to go with me to the village and many young people would volunteer. One particular trip clearly sticks in my mind. We had encountered a bad storm at sea and had lost our way. By the time we corrected our bearings, it was dark. We had to literally claw our way up the muddy road to the top of the hill and had an early Sunday morning shower in the adjacent river. On our return boat ride, it turned out to be the most romantic moonlit night that I had ever seen, so I took advantage of it and so when we landed, I told everyone to take "all of our stuff to the roadside" to wait for our car, while I asked a certain special young lady to stay and help me tie up the boat. It was right there on the boat under the enchanting moon that I proposed. I told her that God had assured me that she was to be my wife and that I would like to ask her hand in marriage. Her response was not that long in coming, but it seemed like an eternity for my anxious heart. It was pounding like it was going to pop right out of my chest. Then I heard the sweetest, most joyous answer when she said, "Yes". I almost jumped out of the boat and walked on the water. What wonderful memories that place brought to me. Please **PRAY** that a church will be replanted there for the glory of God. I believe the Lord is giving that village a "second chance." Some of the new converts are already under persecution now.

Please Pray for my daughter Terisa Joel, who will be traveling from Greenville, SC to the West coast for the thanksgiving week and then fly overseas to Guam where she will visit her aunt and cousins and then fly out of Guam on December 18 to "home sweet home" Pohnpei. I was able to work on her ticket with our travel agent and came up with the lowest fare possible. **WE WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A MOST BLESSED NEW YEAR.**