

News from a Unification Church Missionary in the South Pacific

Vicky Tatz
August 8, 1975



Photo date and location unknown

Letter of May 16, 1975:

I arrived yesterday on the island. It has taken a little time in readjusting, but I'm confident I'll fit right in. The islands are very beautiful. The ocean is a bright bluish-green color. Many wild flowers are to be found. Among the coconut and palm trees you see cattle grazing; running free among the houses and by the roadside are many pigs and chickens.

The country seems to be poor and undeveloped. The people, though, are friendly and very helpful. It reminds me very much of rural Louisiana. They are very religious; we have Mormon, Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, and Seventh Day Adventist Churches. They are responsible primarily for the education of the children. The churches and schools are the focal points of the community. There are also some Peace Corps volunteers here, whom we met yesterday.

Last night I met my Japanese friend, who was staying with a local family. We will both have to learn the language here.

Things here are very expensive. The American dollar is worth only perhaps 60 cents in the local currency, so I hope to find a part-time job.

I really love the people. They are kind. There is no crime here. Yet I believe it will take some effort to win their trust. For the most part they are carefree and laugh easily. There are many children everywhere. The people are also very musical and love dancing. I know I have much to learn here and much growing to do. My constant prayer is to love the people and to bring them into the heavenly kingdom.

Letter of May 20, 1975:

I'm moving into a new house today which is very comfortable. Last night I taught my second lecture to a young man working in the Department of Statistics here. I showed him pictures of our work in America, and I think he'd like to go to America.

So far I've just been getting to know the city, talking to people and getting information. We've met some very nice people including the bishop of the Catholic church. He is a very wonderful person, warm and friendly.

But the island has its problems. Many people have no work, the pay is low, but the cost of living is high. There is really nothing for young people to do. Many roam around in gangs at night, mostly drinking at clubs. Some who have traveled to New Zealand are dissatisfied here. Breakdown of the family unit is just beginning.

Letter of May 25, 1975:

Hello again from the island of coconut and palm trees. The people here live in thatch-roofed huts with coconut wood walls. They have electric lights but no covers or refrigerators.

Many people also live in "palongy" houses, which are more European-like. "Palongy" is a word given to the white people here no matter whether European, American, Australian or whatever.

Walking down the street, you will hear the children say, "Palongy, Palongy." I don't think it is derogatory. The native language is the main one spoken here, but English is the second language, and so slowly, very slowly, I am learning the native language; but most of the contacts I've made know and speak English very well.

The native dress is quite different. The people wear something like a dress which they wrap around their waists. It has a slit up the side, with many in flowered patterns or prints, usually in very bright colors. The girls usually wear a flower -- such as a hibiscus behind their ears; the men do too. They don't wear shoes but go barefooted.

The people for the most part are very friendly and hospitable. The majority have few concerns except for work and what they are going to eat. Much emphasis is put on tradition and holding on to old ways. It is comfortable here and the people like that. Except for those who have traveled to New Zealand or other countries, there is not too much thought about the outside world. Yet there are people who are concerned about what is happening elsewhere, though they are probably in the minority and those who are younger.

This is a very religious country. But religion for many people is mostly tradition and not a very deep understanding. The younger people who have traveled and seen the world and who haven't had their questions answered are a little more open. I've met more people -- a policeman and a few others -- and have taught them the Principle of Creation, and we talked of Jesus and his life and mission. They are good people and seem serious.

What I've tried to do is to serve them in some way, making cards with poems I've written or giving gifts. Also I've tried to think of some way to serve the community, so I've been cleaning up garbage on the street. Still, I don't feel that I've broken through. I do much walking, trying to contact people at home. Every day I witness, trying to find good people.

Last night I went to a Youth For Christ meeting. When they asked me to speak, I talked about Reverend Moon's life. One of the members of the group is a reporter for the local paper and wants to write a short article on me and our church. It was a good meeting and I think people were inspired.

June 7, 1975:

This weekend was the best one I've had so far. I've been teaching the prime minister's son and we have a good relationship. I visited him Saturday and we spent about five or six hours together. I helped him peel bananas, which are eaten green here, and also helped (though very little) to roast a pig. We talked deeply for a long time about some of the problems in our respective countries and in the world. I tried to explain more deeply about God and about the things I had already taught him.

He is such a good person that I really love him and hope I can bring him into God's family. His father, the prime minister, was sick so I wrote him a poem entitled "God's Leader," which the son was going to give to him.

Then I went to visit a strong Christian man I had met, a Seventh Day Adventist. He lives several miles outside the city so I took a taxi and then walked the rest of the way. We had a good conversation, though we disagreed about which day was the Sabbath.

I explained about the purpose of creation and Jesus' mission in relation to God's will. I believe he was moved spiritually, although he didn't agree with everything.

Today, Sunday, I visited another contact who lives a short distance away. We then walked back to my house. I showed him the brochure about the Barrytown, New York training center and he asked about going.

I then went to visit the Christian man again. I bought a cake for him and took a taxi, then climbed the road to his house. The road going up to his house is a very difficult climb, very rocky and slow going.

I was very tired because it was hot and I had already done a lot of walking. When I got there I was exhausted. He wasn't there, so I asked his father-in-law where he was. He said he was up on the mountain working on his plantation.

Well, the mountain was very steep and also very muddy, rocky and difficult to climb, along with my being so tired. Also it was mostly jungle.

I debated whether to take a chance and try to find them, or to go back to town. But since I had come that far, I was determined to complete my mission, which was to see him, so I began climbing. It was very steep, and my rubber boots were not much help in the muddy terrain. I finally found him high up on the

side of the mountain. I think he was a little surprised to see me. We went back down and I showed him the cake. He was deeply appreciative.

In the course of events I taught him another lecture and he accepted just about everything I said. He was very humble and I felt Heavenly Father really spoke to him, so the meeting was very successful. He invited me to come stay overnight with him at his house, and I said the next Friday I probably would. I think that with much love and gradual feeding of the truth that he and his wife and child can come to be Family members. I was just so elated the rest of the day. It was a very good weekend of sharing love, fellowship and truth.

July 1, 1975:

I have met a wonderful married Couple -- we are becoming so close! He was going to a Methodist theological college to become a pastor and was kicked out for feeding hungry people in a nearby village. His father-in-law is a village chief. I am also teaching a number of other people.

July 6, 1975:

The island has to import at least 80 to 90 percent of its goods. The economy is just a subsistence economy and people eat mostly starchy foods -- taro (a root that's cooked), yams, breadfruit, bananas, fish, pork, and once in a while chicken. Some people earn only 25 to 35 dollars (their currency) every two weeks, but with a family of four or six, or many times seven or eight, it is very difficult to survive, especially with prices so high. As a result most people stick to the staples, and so do the stores.

Many high school age teenagers are interested in finding out more about the Bible. Even though there are many churches, people seem to go to them more out of habit and tradition than out of deep conviction.

Tradition here is something of a barrier. It keeps people from taking initiative because of pressure exerted by the village chiefs. Still, in many ways the life is very principled in some areas. I believe there is a great deal of frustration and discontent. Many young people leave to go to New Zealand. There just isn't much opportunity here, unless you want to be a farmer.

Children are always crying. They are hit many times by their parents or they beat up one another -- a real void of heart. This hostility is also expressed in the way they treat pet animals -- they kick them or throw rocks at them. There is generally not much care shown for them. I can understand what St. Paul says when he says the whole creation groans in travail.

July 10, 1975:

Sometimes walking and talking with young people I've met on the village dirt roads, I feel like Jesus walking with his disciples explaining what they hadn't understood. I have made friends with people in the Department of Justice and the Department of Economic Development, both good people. I am thinking of giving lectures on Victory over Communism to the police department, where I met a very good person.

I've been really trying to learn the island language and it's coming slowly. It is not an easy language to learn, but with practice I will be able to master it. It will help greatly with our work.

July 21, 1975:

I found communist magazines in the town library, including many from North Korea and Red China. I think that New Zealand and Australia are becoming more and more influenced by Communism, but many people here -- or at least many of the young people I talked to don't know much about it.

I believe the economic situation is getting very tight. Things are getting more expensive and they're running out of some foods. The fact that they have to import almost everything doesn't help either. I believe that New Zealand and Australia will cut down on immigration because so many people are immigrating and even stay illegally. That would create even more problems.

August 8, 1975:

Rev. Moon's words become all the more real here in the field, in these countries. When he says we have to work harder than all of the past saints and Christian missionaries before us, I can well understand what he means. I know without Heavenly Father it would be impossible to do anything.