

El Shandia, Tena Oriente
November 26, 1953

Dear Ones at home,

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone and I hope you are all having nice roasted browned turkey with all the trimmings, such as mashed potatoes and gravy, frozen peas, brussels sprouts, and pumpkin pie. I wouldn't mind sharing the repast with you all, especially if we could all be together. However since that get-together has to be postponed for a bit I will just send my greetings. I am alone today as Ed and Marilou have gone over to Pano to spend the day over there. I was going to go too and was rather looking forward to it but a local official has come up from Puerto Napo, the nearest jungle town (six hours walk away) and is he is to come here today to look over our land and all the lines and demarcations so that we can get government papers and deeds to the land, which we will certainly need should any difficulty come up. I have been very busy for the last week and a half getting ready for this guys coming by getting all the boundaries cut through and marked, and doing all by compass readings and then making a scale map of our property. It is quite complicated in spots but I enjoyed doing it, except that I begrimed the time it took. When you cut lines following a compass over hill and dale and through densest forest you certainly have to believe the compass against all instructions from Indians or anyone else, for it is very easy to get all turned around. We are claiming about 1000 meters of waterfront property (sure sounds elegant, doesn't it) and about 600 meters along the main trail so that if it ever becomes a through road we will have access to it. There have been innumerable long discussions with Indians who laid claim to all or part of the land and each one denying the other one's claim but we have tried to deal fairly with them all and wade through the labyrinth (sp?) of traditional inter-sentience that was involved. Everybody now seems happy, praise to our God, and I trust that everything will go through smoothly now. The whole area is about 35 acres. We have just about decided to put the airstrip - that is the new one we have to build up river from us and put the new house up there because that will put us above the curve of the river and therefore away from future danger of landslides in case of any flood the size of the last one. Then too on the far boundary up there there is a stream which falls over the cliff which would give us sufficient power for a hydro electric plant if any one has the vision to put one in. Bob Wittig, the former MAF pilot who is now working as a diesel engineer for HCJB, has promised to get us started on the setup before he leaves the country if we want him to, so with that incentive we may put it in.

By the way, we are going to have a visitor down here the first couple weeks of December whom you all may know: Cliff Peterson. As you may know he has been down in Costa Rica working for the US Fisheries Dept. for the last two years and recently took off a few months to study at the Missionary School of Linguistics there. Anyway he has been threatening to visit us for some time and he is free these next couple of weeks so we expect to see him come busting in here one of these days. He is a swell fellow and has been most interested in the work here for a long time so we are looking for his coming.

Announcement of the week: that long awaited parcel arrived finally and was even more appreciated than I could have anticipated. Jim went all through the stuff in Quito and sent down only what he thought I could use here so I may have received only a part of it. But the two nylon shirts and three pairs of shorts are positively elegant and give me the same feeling, though certainly not the same appearance, that these women must have wearing those filmy blouses. I am the envy of the McCulllys and the Indians in those shirts and they certainly are the ideal thing for this climate as well as being easy to wash and requiring no ironing. So those of you who are responsible please accept my most pleased and hearty thanks - there was nothing to tell me what was from who but I guess that doesn't really matter. The candies, life savers and gun we thoroughly enjoyed by all of us and the handy pencils, ball-point pens, cards, clips, carbon paper, typing paper etc. will be very useful. I am using the carbon paper now in hopes that it will

turn out a little clearer on the carbons but as I turn the page I don't notice too much improvement.

News from here is a little scarce. We are having disciplinary problems in the school which have sort of upset the routine of things and we will be very glad of your prayers that all will go better. Then too the last two Sundays it has poured with rain so that there have been few to the meetings so that there has been no external encouragement in these last couple of weeks. But we believe in faith and spend our time in doing good and helping these people believing that "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus" though as yet they make no response to it nor show much gratitude. We believe and like Abraham receive strength from the believing. I have also stopped everything else to get out some very necessary letters long overdue this week and have about fifteen to send out. The correspondence burden sometimes is overwhelming, but I prefer to send personal letters to people, especially those who help in the work and am glad that the way we operate as assembly missionaries does not involve the long detailed filling out of reports on finances which are the burden on many of our fellow-missionaries here in Ecuador. If I have to spend time on reports I am glad that it is in the form of personal letters to people whom I know share the prayer responsibility of the work with us. We expect the plane to come in tomorrow and we will be glad to get mail and supplies, especially as we are out of kerosene so the refrigerator is out and some things have spoiled.

I was most interested in the report of the Eastern trip that you folks sent in the last batch of mail. I followed it with rabid interest as so many of the places were familiar. Your speaking of Franconia Notch, New Hampshire and places round there brought back many memories of five historic days we spent there in "Gale Cottage". I am sure that the Mass. fishing villages must have been very picturesque. We shared your experience in Boston. It was raining and rather uninteresting so we had to leave the history and tradition behind as we dashed madly on. The news of Aunt Fess and Uncle Alan's ever helming hospitality and unsurpassed hotel service rekindles to flames again the warm embers of memory that have never died out since I was privileged to be with them. And those State dinners! Wow! I'm runnin' to go back again anytime anybody sends no-way tickets to Plainfield though I'd have to stop by Los Angeles to pick up a passenger. But I guess I'd better not get reminiscing now or this letter would drag on indefinitely. Anyway I am very happy for you that you had the "best vacation of your lives" and I'll be waiting to see some of those famous Fleming pictures. I will close this general part of the letter now to dash off a few personal lines to each. Much love to all.

Dear Mary and Henry, Ken and Helena,

I was going to write you separate carbons but the last carbon is not really legible so I have to double up. So please Mary send this on post haste to Mansfield. The last mail brought me up to date on movements of both the Flemings and Blochers. Helena sent a very newsy birthday letter. That opening in Durban's suburb, Cato Manor, sounds very important especially as a majority of men seem to be going into the big towns to find work. I know that God will prepare you and equip you for this if He has willed it for you. Glad to hear Ken has got those spanking new pingpong paddles - he's going to need some practice 'cause I have just finished making a ping pong table for the school boys and I even get around to playing a little now and again myself. For exercise we also play volleyball quite a bit, a three man team played in South American style - it is really a better game than ours, more demanding and faster moving. The famous Shandia team since it has no competition from outsiders I can proudly say is unbeaten.

A birthday letter from Mary which seems always to have a background of classical music playing on the radio as she writes. I really do miss good music, especially as our victrola broke down. As for what you ask about wedding presents (isn't it a little early?) Olive would be a better one to ask than I, I think. Yes plastic dishes would be very much appreciated - I think Arrowhead is the name of the most suitable kind. Revere ware of any kind would also be very useful - and we certainly could use any outgrown but still in good condition baby clothes you might be able to send along. Must close this off now with love from Shandia to La Verne and Izingolweni.

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