



BORNEO BULLETIN

Elmer and Ruth Warkentin, Missionaries

Darit - Ngabang - West Borneo - Indonesia

April 25, 1951.

Dear Co-labourers:

A thatched roof, bark walls, and four foot stilts to raise it above the ground, this is our abode. Inside we settle down with our "stuff" in one large room of the four-roomed house. Dayahs peek through the cracks to watch the unpacking. When we eat they sit about twenty, cross-legged, around the room watching this strange process. How rich the Americans must be! Yet to us it seems that rice three times daily is a little monotonous. And we use shiney things to convey the food to our mouths while they use only their fingers.

Yes, life is really rugged, perhaps even more primitive than we had anticipated. But it is, nevertheless, blessed to be in the place of our Lord's appointment. Now to do His work is our hearts' desire as you lift us up before the "Throne of sufficient Grace."

In order to arrive at Darit, let us go back all the way to Seattle. There, at six o'clock in the morning of February 20, two precious mothers and two sisters sang, "God be with you till we meet again" as we left the shore. God was with us throughout a calm, restful trip. Our only excitement came when one night we hit the tail end of a typhoon off the shores of Japan. We had sweet fellowship also with the Merritts and little Gracie, who proved to be a grand traveller.

At the dawn of the morning of April 10, just ten months after our wedding, we watched the shores of Borneo coming into view. Mrs. Sirag's brown, smiling face greeted us in port at Pontianak. Then in two days our ordeal of red tape, etc., was over and we chugged up the river to Ngabang. There are no beautiful docks on which to unload our baggage out here, and no cranes to do the lifting. Manpower is also scarce, though spectators there are plenty.

Only one man would dare the trip to Darit with such a heavy load. During the twenty-two miles we began to realize why. Such roads do not exist in America. The heavy, daily rains simply tear gullies into the soft, brown clay. Repair and upkeep is impossible.

Darit is a little village about ten miles past Anik, where Mrs. Sirag and the Merritts are busy with workmen preparing the new house. Miss Lima (Goodie) and we will carry on at Darit for the present. But our truck could not come past the village over an eight-inch plank bridge to the station. Thus, surrounded by brown faces, we unloaded in the middle of the main street.

Sampans tip easily and cannot carry very much, for they are about twenty feet long and only three feet wide in the middle. And here there is only one. The crates had to come off our stove, bed, and chairs, and one big box had to be unpacked in the street. When that last load was on its way, toward evening, rain began to pour down in torrents. The men became discouraged and said they could not roll the barrels up the steep bank. Of course, they only knew how to handle rubber and rice. Furthermore, the rice diet leaves them weak and lazy. They were all surprised at the work an American could do. I rolled one up by myself; then they were willing to help with the rest. (over)

For more than two hours we worked in the dark, with water pouring on us from the skies and over the slippery bank. Were we wet? Were we tired?

The drying of our baggage began the next day. All must be hung out immediately to keep mould from setting in. Then we watch the sky, and at sight of a thundercloud, run to the rescue.

Surprisingly enough, or shall we say due to the protecting hand of the Lord in answer to the many prayers going up for us, very few of our things were damaged. Our biggest loss was five pairs of shoes which were stolen at Pontianak.

We can praise the Lord. We are really happy here, and expect to enjoy our work. Nothing is fancy or soft, but there are undying, precious souls here. There is a need to learn the Dayah dialect, but we must first plug away at the Malay. They tell us Malay is an easy language. Pray that we'll grasp it quickly and correctly.

There is room for many to join us here without fear of competition. If you come by the way of the Throne, God will bless you and yours, and out here "other sheep" will come into the fold.

Happily in His Service,

ELMER and RUTH WARKENTIN.

To add other names to our Mailing List,
and for Change of Address, please notify:-

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