

BORNEO BULLETIN

Elmer and Ruth Warkentin, Missionaries

Regions Beyond Missionary Union,

8035 Burholme Avenue,
Philadelphia 11, Pa., U.S.A.

Canadian Address:
989 Bay Street, Toronto, Ont.



Darit - Ngabang - West Borneo - Indonesia

PRAYER LETTER No. 8

February 27, 1953.

Dear Intercessor:

Christmas, 1952, on the little Mission compound near the equator, in Darit, West Borneo, was a time of real excitement and blessing. Of course, we would love to have joined you carolling or in a good snowball fight, but we didn't -- we sweltered through the muggy days. Yet we wish you could all have been here, seeing but unseen, to view these events.

On the 24th, twelve unexpected guests arrived from Kampet, 15 miles away, to spend their first Christmas with us. This meant calling off plans for opening our parcels on Christmas Eve. Grass mats had to be placed and mosquito nets hung on our front porch (Loren's playpen) where the women slept. We closed the windows to our bedroom after they had all gazed in amazement at the pictures on the walls and most of all at a bed for Loren himself. They had never seen such wonderful things before. Rice had to be prepared for all including the baby who had been carried the 15 miles by an eager, believing mother. A sing-song was arranged for all near kampongs, and late into the evening hours the little bamboo school house echoed His praises down the hill and off into the dark jungles.

Christmas morning brought us to an early start of services, flannelgraph lessons for women and children, a hurried dinner, talking with eager natives, an evening service, and later a feast in our honor by the kampong Dyaks. A full day it was, and we laughed as we were reminded of past leisurely Christmases.

The 26th was the big feast day for all the Christians and their families, and so decorating was begun with the break of dawn. Arbours of bamboo were trimmed with pretty ferns and flowers of rare beauty. Wild orchids were strewn in many places. The Mission kitchen was filled with busy workers. How frightened they were of our pressure cooker in which we cooked the pig and chickens. Big pots of steaming rice were prepared on little outside fires. Savory spices were added here and there until the aroma was really delicious -- the finishing touch being the freshly ground coffee. School desks were piled outside and mats spread on the floor of the schoolhouse. There was a circle of men, there a circle of women, and others of young people and children, chatting and eating. Fingers were made before forks, and we find there is a knack of eating with fingers which we don't seem to get.

Finally, on Saturday morning, while washing floors and cleaning up, we stopped long enough to open our gifts and have coffee and cookies with our native help. Loren sends a hearty thank you for all the useful things that were sent for him. But mother must confess that he loves best the toys that make lots of noise -- his trumpet and his quacking duck.

The first Sunday in the new year Darit witnessed its first baptism of 8 Christians. Though they were but a few, many witnessed the solemn occasion. Nor was the solemnity broken when an old man, having just been baptized, proceeded to take a bath while the next one entered the water. These brothers of ours and yours need earnest intercession.

With the new year the Lord has opened up a new door to us. The local gov't official who has accepted the Lord is now eager that his wife come too, and thus has invited us into his home for bi-weekly classes among the women of the town. Very few are brave enough to come as yet, and many are still busy with the rice harvest; but the blessing of the Saviour who loves the downtrodden is with us. The official's young sister has since accepted the Lord also. His wife has begun to show interest as well, asking questions. Leading these women takes much patience and love which we find only in one source. We always take with us one of our native girls should there be some who do not understand the Indonesian. This opportunity to witness has awakened an interest in her which we trust will grow to a flaming passion for her fellow women in darkness of sin.

Loren says, "I'm learning to pray. Auntie Goodie and Clara smile when I remind everyone to 'shhh' for prayer time. But I need much prayer too, for I'm an ordinary, naughty, healthy, growing boy; loved by every native who comes to the door. I play outside much with my puppy, and so my skin is getting nicely tanned. I have not had malaria since I started taking 'paludrine'. I love to sing 'Joy, Joy, Joy', for I'm really happy in this hot land."

The New Year is well on its way. We pray that for you and for ourselves that "First love" to Christ may be continually new and renewed. That will be to us enough impulse to faithfulness in the work committed to our hands. God bless you all!

Sent by you for Christ,

RUTH, ELMER, LOREN WARKENTIN.