

Elmer and Ruth Warkentin
c/o Miss G. Lima
Darit, Ngabang,
Pontianak, W. Borneo.

Dear Folks,

"And see what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad, and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strong holds. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land." Numbers 13:19,20

In answer to this request by our leader, Ruth and I join with Caleb and Joshua in promising God that we will go in to possess the land. Borneo --like Canaan -- is a land of fruit and fight. Yes, there is much fruit that is ready to be plucked, but there are also the walled hearts of the people who are not yet ready to receive the gospel.

Because you prayed, the Lord protected us from sea-sickness all the way. In answer to your prayer the Lord brought us safely through a Japanese typhoon two days off the coast of Japan. Again, the Lord heard you and helped us through all the customs here in Borneo with little to pay and few complications. We know that your prayers followed us all the way and that because of them the Lord has brought us safely here to Borneo.

Now let me relate to you some of our first experiences in Borneo. On the morning of April the 16th we caught our first glimpses of the land to which the Lord has called us. As our steamer sailed up the river to Pontianak, Borneo, Ruth and I watched the shore-line with eager eye. The foliage and trees were so different and fascinating. Monkeys and fruit added to the color of the landscape. The shore was lined with little stilt-built bamboo houses, and they were filled with little, naked, dark, unkempt boys and girls. The water was darkened with all the filth and dirt of the ^{villages} ~~cities~~ up the river.

Then as we approached the city of Pontianak, we glued our eyes to the dock to see if we could sight our senior missionary, Mrs. Sirag. Yes, she was there, and what a welcome sight it was to see this well-tanned, weather-worn, tired, saint of the Lord. She welcomed us heartily and answered our many questions. Then she helped us with all the customs and baggage -- and what a help it is to have someone ^{at hand} ~~at hand~~ who knows the customs and ~~the~~ language of the land. By the grace of God and in answer to your many prayers, we did not have too much difficulty. We made our temporary abode with some very fine Christian Ammonese. The next problem was the transportation to Ngabang, some 60 miles up the river.

Because it was impossible to get passage on a boat for the next two weeks, we chartered a boat of our own. Into this and around this we loaded our freight and baggage. Of course, we could not call this a first class boat. We slept on bamboo mats, and the ^{aboard} ~~native boys on the boat~~ slept on the floor above us. The bathroom was just a hole in the ~~floor~~ ^{deck floor}, and the kitchen was composed of a large black pot hanging over a few round stones. Oh, yes, let me tell you about the water supply. For washing purposes we dipped the water out of the dirty river. For drinking purposes we did the very same thing. The water is very brown and filled with more than we can think of. Of course, we had to boil it all before we could use it. (Even then I was sure that I could taste all kinds of things in it.) After 24 hours of water travel we arrived in the village of Ngabang. Here we had to unload all our freight and transfer to a truck for further inland travel. That is not as easy as it sounds. The native 'coolies' thought that our pieces were too big to handle until they saw me move some of the things myself. Shamed that the 'Americano' could do more than they, the goods were soon unloaded.

The inland travel by truck was something indescribable. If I could compare these roads with something you might see at home, I would; but I can't. When we were ^{not} ~~help-~~ing the truck through the mud, we were "holding down" our baggage as we bounced through the holes. However, we arrived safely in the village of Darit without any loss or breakage of goods. Praise God. In Darit -- a small village -- we unpacked our baggage on the main street (while everyone looked on) in order to lighten it for the canoe travel of one mile to the Mission house. It was all much work and worry, but we praise God that we have arrived here safely with everything. Thankyou for your many prayers for us.

In the next letter I shall describe the house and the people among whom we will be working. Till then we ask you to pray that God will help us much with the language. The time is very short here unless you pray much. Let us hear from you. Write to Miss Bertha Lowen, Box 141, Chilliwack, B.C. for your change of address or other particulars. God bless you good.

your missionaries
Elmer & Ruth.