

# *Would You Believe!*



by: Darlene J. Anderson

## ANTS IN MY KITCHEN

HOME SWEET HOME may contain a dungeon-type kitchen like mine. You even step down into it.

"Why is it that every time you step down into your kitchen, the complaints begin?" Vernon moans.

Well, I thought that over and tried to ignore the primitive style: walls that are painted with whitewash that doesn't cover the stains, galvanized iron roof that bakes you at noon and drips cold dew at night, lumpy unfinished cement floor, four gun-hole type slits for light. All of these could be ignored.

But what's the clue to sharing your kitchen space with ants - - FOUR VARIETIES - - one of which likes sweet, another starch, another grease, and some that like it all??

"Well, first we get that long wooden bench and four sardine cans filled with kerosene and water to set the legs in. Then we hoist the whole cupboard up onto the bench. Don't let it touch the wall . . . Ah-h-h, we've won!" (The latter is spoken in momentary triumph because . . . )

One day such a simple thing as one green onion top on the bench touching the wall forms a workable ant bridge. Start all over again. Clean it all out. Shake out the ants in the bread, the sugar, the rice, the milk, the - - - everything.

A few days later a newcomer missionary visits and you are forced to take her to that kitchen believing she'll be keenly interested in how to light a kerosene 'wick-type' stove. Well, while you are demonstrating the procedure, she takes one look at the stream of ants flowing across your work area and up the wall. Shiveringly *she* says: "HOW CAN YOU STAND IT with those ants in your kitchen?"

Whereupon you sigh knowingly (15 years experience with ants) and show her the 'bench-can-kerosene' gimmick.

We live in this world but we are not of this world. We have to live with those ants but we don't have to let them live in us!

## FLOORS

"Would you kindly tell me what this fellow is doing to our floor?" I exasperated to Vernon as we viewed our newly rented house.

The young fellow respectfully went on sloshing pails of water on the gritty cement floor until it was the depth he liked; whereupon he produced a rag of doubtful origin and zealously splattered away by hand and by foot. This "cleaning" was followed by a rigorous whoosh-whooshing of the mucky water with a long reed broom.

Having obeyed by husband's stern look commanding, "Keep quiet. He's not making it worse," I was itching to get on hands and knees with a good rag and a pail of soap suds. That slosh method was but a transfer of dirt from one side of the room to the other.

Then I watched a younger boy scrubbing in another house. He actually scrubbed, but his pail was only big enough for his rag which he never did rinse out or wring. The effect was the same dull look.

In the early mornings nowadays I enjoy that floor on hands and knees. I run up a big bucket of water and soap and enjoy a scrub, meditating as I go. It takes more 'umph', but I always delight to finish, stand up at the other end of the room and look for the shine from the morning sun. It's a simple reward. And though it means work everyday, it makes me happy - - perhaps all housewives experience this afterglow.

Often in our Christian work we slosh from here to there without effect, or use the same tired testimony for every contact, when we need to get that full bucket and work on hands and knees to enjoy a "shine" in our life.

## SITTING ON THREADS

When your host offers you a seat and it's made of plastic threads looped back and forth without weaving on a wrought iron frame, and there is nothing solid in sight but the cement floor showing between the threads, you do some fast calculating.

"Can that contraption hold me, American-sized ME?" Still all the other guests are comfortably seated and calmly enjoying those thready, totally air-conditioned chairs. So you sit down a bit apprehensively. And it holds you! Like faith in Christ's work of salvation - - so often an unbeliever sees the faith of others . . . and yet he believes it won't be enough to hold him. But if he can once bring himself to TRY . . . it holds!

These cleverly designed chairs can give you problems even after you learn to sit on them. If children tuck their feet under themselves, they may get their feet stuck through the strings. And one long prayer meeting time I tried to kneel and pray by my tricky chair. Try leaning your elbows on a plastic thread 1/8 inch thick for half an hour! I was groaning for kneeling with bare knees on a sandy cement floor, but when my elbows kept poking between those strings, I became slightly desperate. Faith begun is not done and all through the Christian walk to heaven our faith is tested. Moments of desperation still come to us.

But another thing about these chairs which reminds me of faith is that when you sit in them a long time, the strings stretch and sag way low. You think you've ruined the chair when you stand up and glance back at all those stretched, sagging threads. Yet, when you return a minute later, the plastic is as taut and whole as new. Faith can take a lot of burdens and stretching too; yet it firms up again and again - - as good as new.

## A TRILLED r-r-r-r-r-r-r

It must be that God loves a trilled "r". Actually, I'm sure His heart is thrilled to hear all these beautiful Indonesian "r's" rolling out in prayer to Him.

Seventeen years ago my Phonetics teacher said I was doing fine. I could pronounce all the sounds E X C E P T the trilled "r". Over the past years I've sweated trying to get out even one flap of an "r". Nothing doing.

When we first approached Indonesia in 1969 in the Cherokee-Six, the airport tower controller rattled "r's" like a dog growling. His "R-R-R-R-o-g-e-r-r-r-r" trilled on and on over the plane radio like a machine gun. My heart sank. I thought, "It's sure I'll never be called to Indonesia as a missionary. I could never make it with that trill!"

In Makasar, the next overnight stop in Indonesia, a friendly Indonesian informed me that they even have coined a word for non-trillers. I groaned thinking how I'd be a lisper in Indonesia. I warned Ben, another non-triller, "You'd better start flapping your tongue while you are young." And he did.

It is now 1974 and I am here in Indonesia as a missionary!

I approached language study very pessimistically and half-believing that God would never bother about my little trilling "r" problem. But He said He would supply ALL our needs and I have been taught to wait for an answer and to believe He DOES answer little prayers. You know what? There's a little rumbling developing in my tongue and it's getting more rumbly as we go on studying.

Do you have any little trilled "r" type needs? Pray and believe.

## WHEN IS IT JOY?

"Count it all JOY when ye fall into divers temptations . . ." James 1:2.

Is that verse apprehendable in Indonesia you wonder? J-O-Y First you got up lonely with Vernon gone for two weeks. Then Feri didn't come to do the washing. Do it yourself. Val can always help wringing the yards of bulky sheets and blankets by hand.

You gather Val and Amy for devotions . . . which are abruptly dispersed by a long-necked black hen clucking into the front room. The chase begins from frontroom to bedroom to kitchen. Clean up the messes and try to restore some quiet.

School grinds on with naughty kids pounding the windows, gleefully laughing and taunting and shouting. Suddenly quiet reigns. Maybe you can find "all JOY" now. You walk into the front part of the house.

What sight greets you in the living room? SNAILS . . . big . . . gooshey . . . garbage pile Japanese snails . . . crawling up the chairs, oozing along the floor . . . smashed on the newly scrubbed floor . . . thrown in by those kids through an open window! Words could never express your . . . joy??? Every swipe of the scrub rag makes James 1:2 a whiplash on your conscience.

By the time it rains on the still damp blankets, you're wondering if you are cut out to be a missionary. Where have those 15 years of experience on the mission field gotten you? So you pray.

Later that day, doing such a simple thing as reading a comical story in Val's book of a woman trying to make a sand-hill crane into a pet, just that quickly you rehearse the morning's snail episode and remember the "plague" scene - - it's funny. Actually it's hilarious. You can laugh at it. You can count it all JOY . . .



## TRUST DEVELOPMENT

Children see most of the reality of life in the Orient. I never saw an unembalmed dead man until I worked in a California hospital. But my children have been exposed to death and other "non-preferr-ed" experiences regularly.

The first two weeks in Indonesia we lived in a home where a mentally retarded girl roamed about with no apparent supervision. Val and Amy sensed something different, but knowing zero of Indonesian, they thought Katarin was shouting at them in normal phrases. She grabbed things and ran; she came into closed bedrooms, and generally had the scene in an uproar since the neighborhood kids thronged to the open windows to watch and taunt Katarin as well as us. How would our Amy react?

At first she was afraid. Her heart would pound wildly if she heard her name shouted by oncoming Katarin. I tried offering a simple explanation that we should be kind to her since everyone else was so cruel. Amy tried. And she was a success! She became Katarin's prize - - they hid and found and played and Amy shared her beloved Raggedy Ann too. It was strange - - a healthy normal child under stress of a new culture enjoying fun with a child so pitifully abnormal.

The second day in our rented house, Amy bounded in terrified. She was one scared rabbit, heart drumming. Our neighbor from the little shack 10 feet out the back door was raging. Being mentally incapable of a normal life, the sight of a child triggers her to a screaming, rock-throwing fit. And that's what Amy witnessed. At first we thought a high bamboo fence an absolute necessity to spare our kids, but the Lord helped Amy so much she's not panicked anymore by Tonte Min. She has learned to consider the problem and stay out of her way. Many neighborhood kids are ambushed and spanked with sticks. The rocks are piled up by her door for retaliation of her imagined enemies. At night our kids may awaken and hear Tonte Min's shrill screams and torrents of angry words, but the Lord has settled His blanket of peace on them and they fall back to sleep.

While we may seek to prevent such blows, God seeks to develop trust and to give them solutions for real-life problems to prepare them to serve.

## STONE-AGE REPAIRMAN

Should some future missing-link searchers stumble upon a white American specimen who lived in Indonesia in the 1970's, and dug holes with bare hands to fix water pipes under his house, and used a stone for a hammer - - it would be a "find", wouldn't it? For weeks Vernon has employed a stone, a crochet hook, a 3 inch screwdriver, and a chair leg knob with plenty of ingenuity to get us settled and keep us repaired.

Having observed gospel work in several countries, we've thought a lot about this matter of efficiency and the "right" tools for the missionary job. The latest models of every appliance, kit or machine still don't guarantee results. Granted, a streamlined hammer uses a lot less effort than a stone, but both hit the nail on the head. An electric-powered saw cuts cleaner and faster, but handsawn boards still can build a house.

What is it then that counts most in accomplishing results?

Vernon's ingenuity must surpass the simplicity of his tools - - likewise God must guide the plan and produce the effect. A right tool can cinch the job - - IF the user knows what to do! Sweat and brute force were applied by our local plumber, but he broke the faucet by wrenching it at the wrong place!

There is a certain mysterious skill and intellect which must guide the efficient workman. Even a stone will do the job if it hits the nail squarely. The Holy Spirit of God is that infinite wisdom we must employ to guide our efforts into productive results.



## "GRAMMAR-CIDE"

The book says, "You must murder a language before you master it."

The new missionary carefully sets her sights, plans her language strategy, and approaches the two carpenters. Getting their attention she gallantly asks, "May I b-o-i-l your shovel?"

Whereupon both men stop sawing to look at each other in the most puzzled manner thinking, "She must have said something in English which we don't understand." They return to their sawing while the suddenly mortified missionary just points to the shovel, grabs it and runs off.

(How could she mix up "boil" with "borrow"?)

The woes of learning a language are many and not all so humorous as boiling a shovel - - unless it might be telling the landlord in a businesslike tone, "Oh, whenever the carpenter is ready to cement the kitchen floor, we'll just move everything into the kamar mandi." (Kamar mandi is the bathroom! What you really meant to say was kamar makan/dining room . . . naturally . . . of course . . .)

Another time you've told of the quite amazing feat of a doctor removing your friend's Dutch instead of his appendix! (Belanda does sound so much like belende.)

But WHY do you think one word and blurt out a wrong one? Ten-year-old Val does better arranging her 100 word vocabulary into understandable sentences than Mama and Papa do with their pages of word lists and lessons. What is to be done in such a hair-tearing adventure as trying to learn a new language in your mid-forties? And we have prayed earnestly for a special tongue - - Indonesian. Therefore, after trusting our all unto His wisdom, we resolve to do better and hopefully pray not to "boil" any more shovels!! In the meantime our mental hides toughen with the constant cackles and smiles and simmering mirth as we murder their language. You learn how to plant a smile on your face as the gales of laughter sweep the crowd when you've done it again - - blurted out some preposterous word in complete sincerity.

## WHAT SMELLS SO GOOD?

One hot afternoon two little girls came to play with our girls - - in English. Because Susie and Page had newly arrived from Canada, I was curious to see how *other* missionaries' kids adjust to the Indonesian scene. They came in carrying what had now become most precious to Susie and Page. What were those treasures carried half way round the world? Susie's plastic bag clattered with weathered seashells found on a white sand beach in Hawaii, plus one dried seahorse. Page clutched her play-worn doll and a little music box. All the kids promptly climbed up on Val's top bunk to avoid the curious stares of the strangers at the window and to share treasures, travels, and talk.

But soon Page's five year old nose drew her to my kitchen. "What is that *good* smell?"

"Just some cinnamon rolls," I answered, not thinking them so very important and forgetting how very monotonous rice can be when it's served three times a day every day.

In half an hour we all sat down to *tjoklat* (cocoa) and fresh cinnamon rolls. Page's eyes grew wide. She literally scooped the margarine on. "OH, these are sooooo good."

Well, a compliment like that rewarded her with another sweet roll which she heaped yellow with margarine . . . and another quickly followed.

Soon the other kids scampered off to play and I enjoyed the chatter of their games. But where was Page? As she passed the table once more, she spied two rolls left. Quickly she scooped on more margarine and enjoyed them to the last.

I was aghast - - one five year old girl containing a half pan of rolls and how much margarine - - I was sure she'd be sick. But she loved it! She had simply enjoyed a blessing to the full WHILE it was yet a blessing.

That's how they do it. MK's around the world adjusting to every kind of situation and simply enjoying a blessing when it happens.



## SUNSHINE MAILMAN

I don't know about your moral fiber, but I work because there's work to be done. The Pilgrims did. The pioneers did. So do I. But that philosophy is strictly localized. We have a "sunshine" mailman here. You *may* get mail IF the sun shines, but never if it rains.

Americans epitomize the postal system of the Pony Express saga. It's hard to visualize them only galloping over the plains in streaming sunshine. And our serious preoccupation with the mails is a wonder and amazement to the Asians.

*Eventually* is not just a time word here; it's a life style in the Kantor Pos. And eventually the bags of mail do evaporate somewhere, (you hope they are distributed) but it's also common for English mails to be "sold" here. And it does give you somewhat of a jolt to enter the Kantor Pos in the afternoon and find the employees playing badminton *inside* the post office!

Thus you get to be so delighted when the mailman's bicycle bell rings, that you dash for the door a bit too excitedly - - you must not forget to tip the mailman. You also begin to expect two letters from one person, the first written two weeks before the second. It's another new decision, "Do I read the second letter first, or the first letter first?"

Then there is a conflict in the Kantor Pos involving religion. The K. P. opens Sunday morning (the Islam people work then), but it closes Friday morning (the Islam people go to prayers). Perhaps at the core of this matter we find the reason for the "sunshine" mailman. We don't know which religious inclination our mailman has. We also strongly suspect that he has two jobs and collects his letters but delivers them when it's convenient. If he gets sick, then all your mail is with him until he recovers!

As the verse in Christ's Word exhorts us: ALL the time . . . "in season and out of season." We are still working in the dark places of this world. May we be more than just "sunshine" mailmen!

## GREEN ONE/BLUE ONE

"Mama, which one are you going to wear today, the green one or the blue one?"

It is utterly amazing to me that even in my quandary of living for three months with but two dresses to wear around the house, I still had 200% of what the disciples were told to take by Jesus on their preaching commission! The famous missionary to the South Seas cannibals, John Paton, was once cleaned out by them leaving only one cooking pot and that minus the lid! Another time he fled with two small blankets and his Bible. Today's jet age missionaries quite often arrive with their airplane baggage allowance and they "make-do" till the balance arrives, often months later.

But do you know something I learned every day when I'd go to the cupboard to select the green one/blue one? I learned that life could be trimmed down an awfully lot simpler for Christians than it is. When there is literally no choice in an everyday matter, e.g. clothes, menu, house, furniture, you trim down your daily frustrations by just that much.

It comes as a shock to analyze how big a treasure of complications we pile up on this earth, *none* of which is profitable. Simple living - - is it for Christians today? YES. We read about it in 1 Timothy 6:6-8 and 2 Corinthians 1:12.

I am reminded of driving on European autobahns and being startled at how simple the worldly folks can make life. Hitchhikers carried ALL in a 40 pound backpack! It seemed incredible to live so close to "zero" all the time. In the Filipino barrios many a pastor could move his whole family with only a cardboard box and a few plastic bags!! I have wondered for many days now if it isn't a more spiritual life closer to "zero". Might we not be more ready for the Rapture/Departure Day with only a green one/blue one to leave behind?



## WRONG WORDS

We believers are exhorted in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be always with grace seasoned *with salt*." May not this *salt* be speaking of Him in such a manner that our listeners are hungry to hear more, to follow closer, to come to Him? The salty speakers season their speech by oft telling, always telling, living their story. Often when we speak we may be tempted to throw in some of the world's salt, but this cannot be.

One afternoon during our language lesson, Amy plunked herself into a plastic chair and interrupted, "What's the meaning of . . . . ?"

Silence. Bapak Guru Mawikere, our Indonesian teacher, was quite obviously flustered. "Where did you hear *that* word, Amy?"

"Oh, all the kids say that all the time."

"Well, Amy, don't *you* say that. I cannot tell you the meaning because I would be ashamed to say it."

Since that day Amy often comes and informs me, her partner in language learning, "Mama, don't say . . . . . either, because if you do, they'll think you're bad!"

Why is it the world uses the filth, but they can't tolerate it for us believers? But should we not take their clue and build up our opportunity? Our speech should be salted by our well-seasoned emphasis on eternal life adventures, our personal victories of the spirit, our tried trials that triumphed, that which the world cannot duplicate for sheer suspense and excitement - - and best of all without the world's 'goshes', 'golly's, and 'gee's or worse. How do I witness: "Christ died for my sins." Is it flat and tasteless or served up with a flare, with love, effort and wit. In other words, NOT a TV dinner affair!

## O MR. CENTIPEDE, WHERE ARE YOU?

After three close calls with centipedes falling from the roof tiles of a farmhouse in South India, and having heard of umpteen "centipedal" miseries in the Philippines, one naturally avoids the slithering, leggy things. Their sting can cause such a pulsating pain and swelling that you will weep.

One night here in Indonesia I had occasion to think of centipedes again. Our non-complicated kitchen sink drain consists of:

1) a hole in the sink 2) a piece of plastic hose between the sink and the outside 3) a rag to stuff around the hose which is pointed to 4) a mysterious bottomless pit under a slab of cement by the back-door. When number 2 clogs, you simply pull out number 2 and number 3 and replace them in number 1.

When the supper dishwater wouldn't pass through the wall one dark night, I went out to do the "plumbing". As I stood there re-winding that old greasy rag around the plastic hose to restuff in the drain, out squirmed TWO very healthy centipedes from the hole! "Thank you, Lord, they could just as well have been in the rag I was holding."

He was watching and spared me that double painful experience. How many centipede-type dangers does He spare me *every* day?

One could get so jumpy over centipedes he'd not dare to step anywhere. I chased one down a hole in the bathroom. One huge one was dead on the cement walk by the schoolroom door. When you flip on the light at night you often see one scurry into a dark crack. Oh, they are around - - you know it - - but RELAX. He is sparing you many unseen sufferings day by day, often hour by hour.



## DURIAN SWEET EFFORT

There *never* was a fruit like durian. "King of fruits" is its royal title in the Philippines . . . but it was forbidden to carry "the king" on airplanes or boats. Explosive?? No, but it would make a terrific throwing device because it has sharp spikes, or duria, covering it like armor. Its greatest protection however, if you're not a durian lover, is its smell. What a smell. Last week Feri surprised us and bought durian at the market. Soon the kitchen had the scent. Then the dining room. Then the whole house. Then Val protested. Amy became curious. Mama's mouth watered.

How do you open a fruit so covered with spikes that it's more treacherous than having your hand stepped on by a baseball shoe? Hard and tough that khaki-colored shell. Wrestling with it on the floor, we eventually got a knife inserted at the stem end and it cracked open beautifully. "Ah-h-h-h, Durian!"

By this time Val held her nose (non-durian lovers describe the odor as Outhouse No. 1). Amy was breathing but she said she'd try. Mama couldn't get a piece of that fragrant, white durian fast enough.

Mama was not always a durian fan. Daddy loaded the Tripacer with durian once a year ago. The plane, the hangar, the house reeked of it. But a pastor's wife arrived at dawn the next morning claiming *she could not sleep* for thinking of eating durian. Well, that high recommendation caused me to try. It tasted like sugar, onions and garlic, and it kept on tasting like sugar, onions and garlic for hours. Daddy ate it by fistfuls. He presented the rest to the Bible school to treat the students of whom 50 percent were fans. The other 50 percent fled! Months later I tried again and was "converted" - - now I am a durian lover.

In the Lord's work there are also durian reactors - - one fellow won't try anything that smells no good. Another fellow cautiously tries, but would rather quit before the thrill of results. And some fellows just get so excited with the challenge of a tough job that they exert all effort and pass every hurdle to get the King!

## WHAT? BUGS IN YOUR HAIR??

"Amy, stop that scratching."

"Why do you keep scratching your head, Amy?"

"Now, Amy, don't you know it's not nice to be always scratching your head? People will think you have bugs."

Not wanting to believe that, but expecting the inevitable in Asia among children - - head lice (and our supply of Kwell Lotion not yet shipped) - - I finally armed myself with a fine comb and plenty of determination. I sat Amy on a high stool in the hot morning sunshine invading the kitchen doorway. If you have seen tropical folks investigating one another for head lice, you can picture the scene. If you have never seen tropical folks investigating one another for head lice, then you have missed one of the most common sights in the Orient.

But investigate I must, and the eggs were there all right, sticking to Amy's blonde hairs, forcing me to slide each minute egg the full length of a hair, to be snapped between my fingernails. Parting and picking. Parting and picking. And snapping. Amy wept but the process continued for one sweaty hot hour. We found the mama and triumphantly smashed her. But every nit had to go also because one egg will grow up to hatch a batch.

It's like a bad habit, a dirty thought, a foul word. Think over your own poor Christian habits. Parting and picking. Parting and picking. Often we weep to be free of that bad egg, but the getting rid may hurt so much more than we want to suffer. It's so easy to put off investigating and all the time you hatch a batch more. I have actually heard beloused folks say, "But we *like* to have head lice - - we like that sound when you crack the eggs." It reminds me of the false satisfaction of nurturing a bad habit.

But after that hour's combing, and sweating, and pulling, came sunshine smiles. "It's not itchy *any more* now, Mama," grinned Amy and ran out to play.



## LONELY BOYS ARE HEARD

One morning in October a noisy, happy group piled into the "mobil" and headed for the Mactan Airport in Cebu City, Philippines. The chatter was continuous throughout ticket checking, baggage weigh-in, and runway viewing. Excitement reigned.

Then suddenly the loudspeaker boomed out: "All Filipinas passengers for Cagayan de Oro, board your aircraft." Just as suddenly five people were *alone* in that crowded terminal. Ben was going back to school, BUT Dad, Mom and two kid sisters were going to move to Indonesia. We all groped through goodbye hugs and our hearts stopped when Amy and Val began weeping. Twelve year old Ben, sensing the emotional static, grabbed up his hand baggage and rushed for the plane. Only the Lord and that huge plate glass window kept us from running after him. When he paused on the steps, set his bag down and waved once, it was so final it hurt all the way through.

We came to Indonesia and we missed Ben every day as we knew we would. By December it was evident he couldn't come "home" for vacation - - the red tape was too long and too thick. Feeling almost selfish in our urgent desires for him, we prayed boldly one morning: "Lord, please make a way so Ben won't have to spend three weeks without his family." We just left the prayer there at His throne.

Very soon after a letter came from Australia saying money was being sent for only *personal* needs, especially "something for Ben, that boy of yours in the Philippines. He's too young to be so far from his parents!" Vernon prayed and went down to the Bouraq Flight Office, where occasional chartered flights are made to the Philippines.

"Any flights planned for Davao?"

"Yes, December 20. But NO seats available."

At that exact moment the plane's charterer entered saying one of his men wanted Singapore, not Davao. "I have one seat available - - do *you* want it?"

On the sunny afternoon of December 20, Daddy flew off to Davao where he was exactly in time and promptly boarded a special evening flight for Cebu where he hugged a surprised Ben at 8:30 P.M.

The God-in-charge-of-international-flights is also the God-who-answers-lonely-prayers!

## KIDS KIDS KIDS

Bar none, children are the biggest production of the Orient. They literally *flow* out of schools, along the streets, through the neighborhoods, everywhere.

We love kids too. We've been raising five of our own since 1948. Our last home in the Philippines was in a Chinese compound of apartments clattering with chattering children. And we naturally expect kids to be rushing to see an "orang Amerika," but the kids around us now seem bent on tempting us to anger. They look in our windows anytime (often lean in with both elbows!), and especially if a visitor arrives. They throw stones at us as well as at the fruit tree in the yard. They relish banging the schoolroom windows, rattling doorknobs, shouting our names monotonously, throw sand through the window onto our bed, throng us wherever we go, rub our white arms, laugh boisterously over any attempt by us to language with them, pull Amy's hair and nose till the tears flow.

Our landlord beats them off with a rattan switch - - we thought that too extreme - - and attempted more gentle approaches. Yet the clamor goes on. Indeed it became a hard knot of bitterness when morning dawned and the unwanted attention came calling.

Then we saw that HE LIVED like this: "and it was *noised* that He was in the house and straightway *many* were gathered together insomuch that there was *no* room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and HE PREACHED the Word unto them . . ."

And HE SPOKE to me personally, "... Harden not your heart."



## SELLING SPEED

It is one thing to drive to a store to buy something; it is quite another to have the sellers passing on the street in front of your house. I can remember the whistling popcorn wagon which trundled down the streets of Minneapolis on hot summer evenings - - everyone ran to buy and there was always plenty of time. Here we have been exposed to what we think is an economic battle of wits because no seller ever stops to find out if you want to buy!

Perhaps you wonder what these speedy salesmen sell? Hot peanuts at about 8:30 P.M.; brooms go by regularly on a pole over the peddler's shoulder (unless you really need to buy a broom, it seems). All sorts of furniture, sticky-gooey concoctions in covered pans balanced casually on a bobbing child's head, even curtain rods! How about a kite? One day I was able to buy a plastic lampshade which I'd wanted for a couple of months, but that was a fortunate day - - I saw the fellow coming.

To buy you have to be R-E-A-D-Y. For our dull foreign minds it takes half a minute to absorb what the fellow was shouting, IF he was shouting. One fellow passes daily with a gunny sack and empty cement bags; he sort of trills "Tle . . . kron," as he hurries by - - still a mystery to us. By the time you've deciphered the call, your man is already halfway down the block and still you have to check your appearance before dashing out into the street plus get money from a locked cupboard. Good if you have two active kids who can chase the fellow down the street before he turns a corner and disappears. Sometimes you want what they're selling, but you just give up because you can't win the race! And if he's on a bicycle, well, who ever heard of sprinting after a horsecart to buy a flower pot?

Now, the "es" man is quite different. He intentionally drags along the street tinkling bells, to make sure every child's mouth is watering for his frozen treats on sticks or he'll sweatingly shave up some suspiciously flavored ice into your outstretched glass. All the while the kids are rushing home to beg rupiahs to buy "es". Yes, that fellow's never in a hurry.

In *selling* the gospel do we go dashing along, even shouting, but never waiting long enough to ask if anyone wants to buy? Do we tinkle the gospel bells to really invite the sinner to get eternal life? Do we pass by on another day to offer again

## "WHAT? NO GARBAGE MAN??!!"

We were carefully taught in missionary orientation classes that all you have to do when confronted with this disposal problem is: 1) burn the refuse or 2) bury the debris. It all sounded so terribly efficient and sanitary. So first we tried to burn the offensive stuff. But banana peels don't burn, neither do leftovers or egg shells. Bones might be cast out the back door to the stray cat the kids befriended, but that cat has already been joined by her four cat buddies and they yowl loudly whenever the door opens and anyone appears with anything that resembles food. Amy and Val had the stray cat colony fast developing through their efforts to get rid of the fishy garbage by tossing it out to a pleading cat . . . or two . . . or three.

One day matters piled up till a hot argument ensued between Mom and Dad.

"We HAVE to do something now! We're breeding flies and it smells . . . it looks miserable out the back door." (on and on ad infinitum)

"How can we bury garbage without a shovel? The back yard is stony, too small . . . the stray dogs dig it up."

"BURN IT then!"

"Burn it? How, when the daily wash is hanging on plastic lines over the fire and smoke?"

Tempers flared until we sat down to eat dinner when Val broke into tears and prayed, "Help us, Lord, to solve this problem about the garbage before we get so angry at each other."

Like a sweet scented breeze her words came on our burning ears, and then we prayed too. And we solved the problem. Now we flatten cans just like World War II days, and we burn the papers with kerosene and we fatten up the neighbor's goose and ducks with the rest.

In the midst of the hot dispute we needed that simple rebuke.

Ask Him BEFORE the argument gets too big.



## OVERHEARD

Rushing about tucking the one set of newly dried sheets back on the beds before bedtime, I could hear Val's voice clearly reading to Amy something about a young girl's testimony for Christ. The reading went on telling how Beth had wandered far from her home seeking answers to her spiritual questions and how she was witnessing to a strange boy she met in the park.

As Valerie's voice rambled on about Beth, I began to wonder where the kids had found that interesting story. So I peeked out into the front room. To my amazement "Beth" was all handwritten on a long, ruled yellow tablet. And ten year old Val was the author-ess! It was indeed a pleasure to Teacher-Mama from a grammatical viewpoint, but much greater from the Christian-Mama standpoint.

How did the *writing bug* get us? (I started these Indonesian anecdotes at the same time.)

Again our loneliness during Daddy's trip to the Philippines and the raininess of every day and the strangeness of being "alone" in a foreign land drove us to borrow a book, *Papa's Daughter*. Val promptly devoured the pages, fast becoming the "Button" of the book, who wrote stories. Then Val's pen began to race over the yellow pages of her tablet.

Out of every bad comes a good - - the Lord says so. He proved it to us again. Amy is hearing short stories, and as Val so earnestly announced the other day, "Oh, I'm writing different *short* things so I can figure out how to end my important story of Beth. You can't just drop it at the end, you know."

How true that all our lives we are unfolding stories that never "drop" . . . they shall go on to eternity if they are His story in us!

## PEN AND INK INJECTIONS

Normal procedure for travelling abroad is to check with your doctor or travel agent to see what injections you must undergo to fulfill international requirements, and hopefully, to guard yourself against some of the more sinister tropical diseases. Thankfully the holes don't remain - - maybe missionaries would resemble sieves from the cholera injections every six months.

We've often wished for a painless injection. Some babies are lovely. They smile and coo right through the 1/2 c.c. anti-cholera or scratches with smallpox vaccine. Of course, you always face the baby away from the painful end of the syringe while you hope like everything that he'll like the nurse and forget her tortures. You can't imagine all the persuasion gimmicks missionary parents use to try to make it "fun". The *untrumpeted* approach is best where we all go together, bravely hoping not to cry, and when Mama carries candy to pop into the wailing child's mouth. But then if you have to watch your son get four injections in five minutes, you wonder how much candy to bring!

And sometimes your loyal kids tell a most efficient government nurse, "I want MY Mama to do it!" (Bless their trembling hearts.)

But worse than the initial sting is the delayed discomfort when the site becomes hard, red, hot and the arm goes stiff. What we need today is a painless injection.

Now recently Vernon went to the office of the Dokter Umum to get cholera and smallpox immunizations. After stamping the yellow WHO card and collecting a fee, he dismissed Vernon - - the most UNpainful injections ever known. We thought they must be afraid to hurt the "orang Amerika"; actually we wanted the protection of the immunizations. "Oh, this is the way we do here. It's OK. You have the stamp, don't you? Happy Trip!"

As you mull that over you catalog it along with the Christless Christians and the loud blaring of "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" when no one knows English and they'd freeze to death if it ever did snow here! This world is a sham - - full of the most amazing contradictions, such a weak crutch on which to hobble along.



## COINPURSE FOUND

Amy happily clutched a most precious gift for a five year old, a flashy pink coinpurse, speckly-glittery with a loud SNAP. "This is special for you, Amy," said the smiling Chinese storekeeper, "because you are going to Indonesia and this purse is my remembrance for you. Don't forget me, huh?" Oh, how Amy liked that purse.

Another month, another day, another country later we couldn't find the prized pink purse. We searched the house. Poor Amy. She was scolded for being careless. Perhaps the kids from the street, who always flock around us, had taken it. Really it was a sobering matter because it meant every little toy had to be guarded or lost.

New Year's Sunday we attended a neighborhood church service. We joined in trying to sing the hymns in Indonesian even though they are sung to numbers rather than notes! We strained our ears to catch some spiritual crumbs from the pulpit - - all in Indonesian. We happily put our rupiahs into the offering bag - - even Amy managed to fumble around and drop in her rupiahs just in time. It was a happy service.

But just after the congregation was dismissed, Amy came with a sour face. "Mama, look at that girl. She's got *my* purse."

I was very doubtful of that, but sure enough, it was Amy's. HOW?? That young lady turned out to be the sister of Joke, a young girl who had helped us in the house the first month in Indonesia. And Joke must have helped herself to the precious pink purse.

A mother's righteous indignation would have demanded the return of the purse right on the spot. But a missionaries righteous indignation undergoes a rechanneling exercise in such matters. Yes, the purse was stolen and yes, Amy deserved to have it back. But no, it wasn't worth upsetting a Sunday morning churchful of people, and yes, Christ would have said, "Suffer the wrong." So we weighed it all together and Christ won.

Amy has seen that purse again since then with the sister, but Amy's learned a bit of a godly truth that some precious pink things are sacrificed for His testimony.

## BANKING WITHOUT A BANKBOOK?

One January day while Vernon was in the Philippines, a messenger pedaled up to our door with an important looking portfolio and announced in greatly simplified English, "I have your money from Hongkong."

"My money from Hongkong?" (Could Vernon have gone on to Hongkong from the Philippines?)

"Yes, your money from Hongkong and . . . Shanghai."

"SHANGHAI!!" (We've been encouraging a Chinese girl to go to Shanghai as a missionary - - could she be there already sending us money?)

So the next A.M. I ventured out on my first banking experience in Indonesia. The bank was easy to find and I felt encouraged . . . until I found no one spoke English well enough, nor I Indonesian well enough, to communicate properly. They asked for my ID so I handed over my passport with the photo of myself, Val and Amy, an exact likeness, and there we all stood. They didn't believe me! It didn't help that the money order stated "Mr. Darlene Anderson," sent through The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, from Australia!! Confused? So were they. Finally they okayed me to pick up my 59,801 rupiahs at the proper window. (\$100)

It all began to seem very efficient as we waited in order for our numbers to be called. Suddenly a teller burst a box of depositor's coins. Off they danced in every direction, rolling under counters and chairs, everyone running to scoop them up. I wondered if he was ever able to account for them all even after sweeping them into the dustpan.

Then Number 19 was called. I went to claim my money with a tally sheet ready to recount the rupiahs because I hadn't yet learned to think in money without decimal points. As I neared the recount total, I could see something was short - - way short. The teller abruptly whooshed the whole pile of bills away and said, "There must be some mistake." Then followed a tirade of hot words to a sub-teller who meekly found his mistake and we all felt happier.

Thinking it must be the bank, I promptly went to another bank to deposit that large amount. To my amazement I was told that I would have to keep track of all deposits myself - - there was no bankbook. I must keep my own receipts and records or I wouldn't know where we stood. How thankful I am that God keeps the books for us . . . aren't you?



## WHEN IS A PROBLEM A PROBLEM?

"Jangan pasang listrik! Ada ofu!" shouts Feri.

What is that girl garbling at 5 A.M.? Get the towel, get your clothes. Head for the bathroom. Flip the switch. Disrobe.

Buzz . . . zz . . . zzz What's that up by the light?

Suddenly you remember. The ofu (bees), a whole colony of them, are cozily nesting in your side yard wall. One day they swarmed in the tall pomelo tree and made such a droning that you peeped cautiously out of the schoolroom to see if it was safe.

But now here you are huddled in the small bath cubicle. Evidently one scout bee liked the warm bulb in the pre-dawn darkness and zoomed through the open vent. Should you continue the bath project? Just where would the bee sting you? Can Scout I perhaps call Scout II etc.? A colony!!

Scout I circles lower and lower and you with all that skin bared. Get dressed, Gal. Let's face it. Wait till the sun's up. Then go ahead.

Some days life problems are also buzzy. They won't leave. Rather, you seem to attract them. They tend to settle rather than lift. And your prayers don't lift them either. Let's face it. WAIT till the sun's up. Things look different then.

Which reminds you of the black night you flipped the switch for the W.C. (water closet). What's that on the floor hopping? A small dark frog/toad (who feels zoological at that hour?) is there. You don't know how he got in, but you're *sure* he can't get back out. And if Val comes in later, she might let out a yell to wake the neighborhood. So off with your slipper. Whop! He wiggles from the blow but still sits there. Whop! Same reaction. Then as you get interested, he slowly turns his little belly up, lies down carefully on his back, stretches out his two legs with one kick and is "dead". You feel a twinge of pity for the little fellow. You should toss the carcass out the door, but decide to wait till sun-up.

Guess what? At sun-up he's up on his feet and hops off unaffected. Problems are like that - - they look different after sun-up.

## COMMUNIST INFILTRATION

We are virtually living under a Communist economic takeover here. What does it feel like to sleep under Communist blankets?

HOT.

What does it feel like to use Communist toilet paper?

SCRATCHY. (like doubled pink crepe paper)

What does it feel like to eat Communist candy?

UNUSUAL. (you eat the inner wrapper - - gelatin, they say!)

What does it feel like to use Communist water faucets?

DRIPPY. (even the plumber can't stop the dripping)

Yes, we call it Communist infiltration of a practical sort. It's a curious situation considering the fact that Indonesia was almost seized by the Reds in 1965. Then why are all the store shelves loaded with Peking/Shanghai goods - - MADE IN CHINA?

"It's cheaper," seems to justify your query.

So now every time one munches the candy wrapper or vainly tries to turn off the tap, or eats Communist apple crisp, one wonders, "What's a conservative like me doing here?" Our *only* consolation is that Red China's mad race for Asian markets will allow the opposite effect of an open door for the free nations to unload some products. And what is their BEST product? The Word of God!

Are we vitally seeking a "market" for the Word of God? Are we personally doing something to distribute the Word? Are we being gripped with the growing possibility that China can be infiltrated with the Word of God? I believe I should take this as a personal responsibility in our day.



## DUCK VS DOG

Everybody has a gag reflex, but it seems missionaries are the ones who have the most opportunities to use the mechanism. It can really act up on you in certain overwhelming situations!

Last Christmas season we were invited to a church anniversary with plenty of food to be served. After the preaching, while waiting to "dig in" to those heaped platters of food, Amy and Val came to tell me there was going to be one *special* thing to eat, according to a new-found friend who spoke some English. I was curious too, being interested in the recipes of different nations. Eventually the man made his way over to me and advertised very highly this *specialty* of Minahasa area. "D-o-o-k," he announced in his self-styled English. Well, who wouldn't like to sample duck - - it's always a specialty.

About the time we began the banquet table rounds, he rushed up to point out the "D-o-o-k" dish, but there wasn't a wing or drumstick in sight. I was glad there wasn't an ear or a tail either, for I suddenly realized he was saying "d-o-g" not "d-u-c-k"! Several months later we still *howl* with laughter over that gastronomic test.

Then one lovely Sunday at a Gideons meeting with friends, we again were rounding the table when a Chinese sister whispered: "That dish is 'teekus', very chili-hot." Now she was warning me of the spice, but my mind was rapidly chalking up: "Teekus equals rat!" Evidently my face gave me away because they all reassured me these were not house rats but forest rats - - whatever difference that might make. Well, I carefully selected a black leg and body and downed the leg - - thankfully it was too hot to finish.

My family rather segregated me after finding out I'd sampled the rat. But imagine Amy's chagrine another day when she went along to borrow a shovel to bury a dead rat found outside our house. What did the old grandma say to Amy? "Why do you bury the rat? Why don't you eat it?"

Sometimes even prayer before the meal doesn't *seem* to sanctify a food sufficiently, but His grace can help you eat a rat or dog or ... ??

## "BOO, BU!"

There are some sentimental words in life and one of them is Mother or Mommie, right? Imagine my sudden dethroning as Mother to be addressed, "Bu!" What was my reaction - - "Boo!"

But Bu is very acceptable here, so I've had to sort of slink down and be called Bu. The language guru only laughed at my chagrine when I told him of booing and boo's being less than respectable to any American mother's ear, instead picturing a crooked umpire, disfavored candidate or a spook on Halloween. "Sorry, Mother, but you're Bu here," they tell me.

Thinking it over later I wondered at how much our own way of doing seems the ONLY right way, when the plain truth is - - there are other right ways - - it's hard to accept but it's only sensible. I'm sure an Indonesian baby who formulated Bu-Bu would be as much delighted over as an American infant gooing Ma-Ma.

Here is another example of how ears get retrained. "Sus" had no bad connotation to our ears in 1957, but by 1958 we came to hate the sound for the Filipinos fling it out for every near mishap, in anger, surprise, shock, endlessly and constantly. It is short for "Jesusmary-josep," the Holy Family of the Catholics, yet they exclaim "Sus!" in blasphemy as well as idolatry. So we forbid the word in our mouths for 15 years.

Then what do we hear when we get to Indonesia? "Sus Ely will cook for you;" "Sus Jul brought these curtains;" "Sus Min helped get these chairs." "Sus" means sister here, commonly used and endearing among Christians, even if it does stick on our tongues whenever we say it.

Yes, very often we have to rethink our opinions as believers, and yet we may not change what God has set in His Word - - never!

## COCONUT OIL . . . is BETTER . . . for shampoo

A missionary is expected to like every food cooked in coconut oil.

A missionary is expected to eat every food cooked in coconut oil.

A missionary does eat every food cooked in coconut oil.

But maybe . . .

A missionary does not like every food cooked in coconut oil.

Then what??

In 1960 I made American stew in India. It tasted distinctly like coconut grove shampoo without the bubbles.

In 1973 I made American stew in Indonesia. It tasted hintingly of shampoo suds.

Now what??

In our non-coconut oriented American society, we believe coconut *must* flavor yummy pies, cakes and cookies. Or ice cream. Even chocolate candy bars munch well with coconut. And for shampoo -- the greatest. But eggs fried in coconut oil?? ADJUST, MISSIONARY, ADJUST.

A Christian is expected to like personally witnessing for Christ.

A Christian is expected to be personally witnessing for Christ.

A Christian does personal witnessing for Christ.

But maybe . . .

A Christian does not like personally witnessing for Christ.

Then what?? ADJUST, CHRISTIAN, ADJUST.

(P.S.: You know something? We're beginning to like that coconut oil flavor!)

## UNLOCKED WINDOWS

"Are you ready to go?" calls Papa.

"Wait till we get the house closed," calls Mama.

Whereupon they close two bolts on the kitchen door, two bolts on the side door, one bolt on the schoolroom door, two bolts in the bedrooms, 15 or more bolts on the windows, lock and hide two keys for the wardrobe doors, lock both bedrooms, lock four inner glass windows, lock the schoolroom door, and FINALLY work their way to the front door. Lock it and go out the gate, which of course must be latched.

"We're ready!"

If you've never lived in such a "secured" society, this sounds absolutely ridiculous, but it's the commonly acceptable duty in all homes here.

At night we bolt all the shutters (thankfully they're all slits!) and leave the tops of our shutters open lest we suffocate (we have an iron grating there . . . of course!). If an Indonesian sleeps, he closes all the windows airtightly. An Indonesian housewife keeps the dish cupboard locked, the clothes closet locked, the food shelves locked. Our neighbors lock up their cookies in their bedroom. This must be the keymaker's paradise (or nightmare??).

At first we rebelled. Actually we couldn't remember to lock 20 windows and 5 doors. It seemed overly suspicious to lock up our clothes. And we even dare to keep our food on an uncovered bench in the kitchen.

Two mornings we woke up to find open windows -- we'd forgotten to lock them the night before. One afternoon we left the door open and a pile of neighborhood kids were chasing through the house. One Sunday we were leaving for church and found a low table parked in front of our bedroom window with a long bamboo pole with nail hooks for snatching clothes out the window. At times like that we thank our watchful Lord for His letting us lose nothing . . . and dutifully, we lock up afterwards.

So often we have cause to be blessed that He watches when we have already been told that it is *our duty* to "Watch."



## SOOTY BREAD

Flames shoot up the wall. Smoke pours from the oven. Burning kerosene drips to the floor. The stove handle is puffing fire.

You charge into the scene to rescue the bread which you thought was baking, not becoming charcoal!

When the fire dies and you view the situation a bit breathlessly, you sit on the cement steps feeling utterly unloved and abandoned. All that work sifting out weevils and beating dough in a too-small bowl, kneading and raising it twice, anticipating fresh delicious bread and rolls. As you peer into the now totally blackened oven, you see two black pans with two black concoctions inside.

Val arrives on the smudgy scene. "But look, Mama," she encourages, "the bread is baked. So are the rolls. We'll just eat the part *inside* the pan."

Yes, we could try that. And we did. The bread was baked just right. Minus the charcoal crust that we sawed off, the bread was still moist, soft and appetizing.

So, Lord, you proved again that we may have to put out the fire, hack off the top, clean up the mess . . . to enjoy the blessing. And that's how it seems to be in Indonesia. Getting started may be just that way.