

Dear Support Team -

Forty days ago we arrived back at Bethesda Mission Hospital (December 10). Within three days of our arrival we were informed that a new 12 month visa would shortly be available for us to pick up at the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore. PLUS... permission to practice medicine and surgery was granted to Wendell by the Provincial Chief of Health in Pontianak. Officially, Wendell's position is as a "mentor" to the Indonesian doctors who serve here. Just now there are twelve young general practitioners on staff - most of them on a temporary basis for a year. Three of them have been here nearly two years. They will be leaving in March - but there is the possibility of new ones coming in next month.

Only one of the twelve GP's, Dr. Augustina, has made a commitment to serve with the Bethesda "MedGo" program on a long term basis - as a medical missionary. This is Divine Providence!. Indonesia desperately needs well trained GP's who will live and work in underserved areas. This rarely happens because almost all GP's either go into specialty training or return to the larger cities to practice. Dr. Augustina has been here over three years and can do minor surgery, care for complicated pregnancies and deliveries (she did a c-section last week with Wendell as her assistant), and she can diagnose and treat seriously ill children and adults. The experience the young GP's obtain at BMH is similar to the training in Family Medicine which is popular in the U.S. Training in Family Medicine has not yet come to Indonesia. Pray that the Lord will call and send more young GP's to serve with MedGo*.

Of particular interest is the anticipated arrival of Dr. Indra at the end of January. His graduation from his general surgery residency is on Thursday, August 24, in Central Java. Paul expects to attend the ceremonies. One of Wendell's responsibilities will be to mentor Dr. Indra as he makes the transition into the kind of surgery being done here which is a step or two advanced beyond the training he has already received. At BMH many of the patients hope for surgery and chemotherapy for cancer - cancer of the breast, bowel, stomach, head and neck. Wendell has had several such patients during these past forty days. Two of the junior doctors assisted Wendell with radical breast surgery on Friday because Dr. Suis Maji, the Indonesian Christian surgeon who has been working here for the past three years was away for a government meeting. For the past 18 months Dr. S.M. has been available only part time because he is a government doctor assigned to direct a small gov't hospital 15 miles from here.

Thank the Lord for Dr. Indra and his wife, Dr. Florentina. They have two small pre-school children. Pray that the Lord will enable them to quickly adapt once again to working here. It has been over six years

since they both served here as GP's. Both of us expect to be deeply involved in their adaptation process.

We did travel to Singapore just before Christmas to obtain the twelve month visa. We spent Christmas in Central Java with Paul and Becky and the three who are with them - Kristen (Senior), Matthew (Freshman), and Karl (6th grade). Peter, who is attending Bethel U in St. Paul, was able to spend Christmas with his grandparents in Pasadena. On Dec 26th all seven of us traveled from Java to Kalimantan to return to BMH. As we arrived Dr. Herman, Dr. Melissa, Dr. Husin, and Dr. Wiwiek (the senior Indonesian docs at BMH) departed for time with their families over New Years leaving the twelve GP's, Paul, and Wendell on duty. In past years the holiday time created a marked decrease in patients. Not so this year.

The next thing - the arrival of the container that shipped out from the warehouse in St. Paul on Dec. 4th (the same day that we departed St. Paul/Minneapolis to come here). We were told that the container would arrive in Kuching (the major city in Malaysian Borneo - just north of us across the border) on January 7. But when we looked at the ship's document (transmitted to us by internet) we noted that the container had been loaded on the ship in Seattle on Dec. 21. Now we have information that the container should be arriving in Kuching today, Sunday, January 20. Continue to pray for the documents needed to obtain the tax exempt import license including a gift certificate which was sent to the Indonesian Consulate in Chicago for validation on December 12. Apparently, it hasn't yet been returned to mission headquarters.

Thank you for your prayers. Both of us are well. Praise the Lord for safe travel and our new visa and practice permission. And for supplying the needed funds for the container shipment including the purchase of the expensive oxygen generator and the freight charges. All bills are paid and, once again, there are some cash reserves in the BMH account at WorldVenture. As well, all our travel expenses including the visa trip to Singapore have been covered by contributions to our account at WorldVenture. God bless you all in 2008.

Wendell and Margie

P.S.: You may contact us directly at borneodoctor1@earthlink.net

* If you'd like to know more about MedGo and the doctors and nurses who are medical missionaries in this program please ask us. Materials are now available.