

2 got the letter from the bunny. I haven't had time to write a proper answer yet
Galangue, December 12, 1949

Dear Mum, Olive, Ruby, Francis and Ralph,

Well, now I know that you will think ^{me} you are crazy. But this time it is not my fault. I didn't have any regular mail envelopes so as Max was going to Nova Lisboa I gave him Ki's letter for which to buy an envelope. He intended to write a letter to you after he got there. Poor feller he had a multitude of things to do and didn't realize what he had done for some time and then it was too late to remedy it.

Mum, last Saturday we invited all the deacons and deaconesses from our outstation to tea. They had come to the mission for the weekend. It was an "OMESA" WEEKEND. Omesa is the Umbundu word for table and is what they use for the Lord's Supper. Meetings begin Thursday night and are held three times daily through Sunday. Following the worship service they have an "Enjango", (business meeting). We had the tea at four thirty in the afternoon. One deacon had walked about fifty miles to get here. During the dry season they walk much, much farther to come. First we served coffee and doughnuts.

Then Max got out his viewer and some slides taken of our reception here and of scenes around the mission. Most of them had never seen any thing like it before and they just went wild. Then he played some Christmas music on the gramophone. Just before it was time for them to leave we passed each one one of those wonderful pictures that you sent. I had mounted each one a piece of colored construction paper that had come from Everett Church two years ago while we were still in Lisbon. Oh mum, oh mum, if only you and all the people in Strongsville could have been here. Bertha says, "They will never forget this Christmas". These men and women are intelligent, poised, sincere Christians. They dress like you and I with the best that they can afford. They keep their houses clean. They don't have stoves so that the walls are usually dark with smoke. Sam Cole has an idea for a brick lined stove that will be within their pocket book. So maybe in the future this may be remedied. How they love pictures! They exclaimed! They laughed. They showed them too each other. They kept Bertha and Max busy explaining them. When I was writing every one for pictures last year Max was only halfway enthusiastic. He was so busy learning Umbundu that he didn't have time to get acquainted with the house boys as I did. It was from them and their children that I discovered how much they love pictures. Now Max has just returned from a five day camping trip to the villages. He is telling me! When I asked him about a certain Christmas card: "Do you think they would enjoy this one?" He replied: "If you had seen some of the things I have seen on the walls of their houses you would know how much!" In one house I did see some pages taken from a Portuguese picture sheet hanging on the walls. The pictures were of tanks being used in the last war.

Susan is growing like a weed. She sure is spoiling me. When she is really hungry or her pants are really wet she cries. The rest of the time she squeals and giggles and sleeps. She still has only two teeth but she eats strained solids like a horse. They are somewhat more work to prepare than when I could buy them out of a jar at home. She can sit alone, pulls hair, holds her bottle and looks like a baby in an advertisement.

Kenny has finished the first preprimer and got a hundred per cent on the test at the end of the book. He had to recognise seventeen words. I am not pushing him any. I am just letting him set his own pace. He will be well prepared for the first grade next year without any undue strain. Old Tommie tries to imitate him but he is not ready yet to settle down for real school. When the boy goes to the river to wash Susan's clothes the boys go with him and they bring me back armfuls of wild glads and Christmas lilies.

Tommie's Christmas present arrived. Both boys were thrilled with the coloring books. The coat hanger was from Olive to Susan wasn't it? A very useful article here because we don't have many drawers to keep things in. Tommie's card was awfully cute. The Three Little Pigs is one of Tommy's favorite stories.

The bunny certainly came in the other package. Susan likes it a lot. She plays with it a lot more than the boys ever did with their stuffed animals. I don't know why I missed up mentioning it before.

The roses are in bloom now. How exquisite they are! I have hundred's of dollars worth in my garden. When I finished decorating the church last week I wished I could share them with you all.

Max bought me some cloth for a new dress for my birthday. I just had it made up by one of our Christians who is a tailor. It cost less than forty cents; and is beautifully made. He really does lovely work.

You may bring or send this book after awhile. Let me read it but there are some more here that want to read it. Mother