

Wortman, Louis Marie Dirk (1906–1945)

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Remwil R. Tornalejo is an associate professor in the Historical-Theological department of the International Institute of Advanced Studies Seminary (IIAS). Tornalejo has a B.A. in theology from Mountain View College, Valencia, Philippines, and M.P.S., M.Div., and M.Th. degrees from IIAS. He had served as a pastor, Literature Ministry Seminary dean and instructor at the South Philippine Union Conference. He had served as chair of the theology department of the South Philippine Adventist College. Tornalejo completed his D.Theol. from Theological Union (ATESEA). He is married to Marilou Manatad. They have four children.

Louis Marie Dirk Wortman, commonly known as L.M.D. Wortman, was an educator, and school administrator, who together with his wife Sibylla Habel Wortman, a nurse, served as missionaries to Indonesia.

Early Life

Wortman was the only child to parents Frederik Johannes Louis Wortman and Maria Catharina Sophie Hofland. He was born December 18, 1906, in The Hague, Holland.¹ He attended Gymnasium Middleburg, Neandertal Missionary Seminary, and Dutch Government Teachers College, Theological Seminary.²

Education and Marriage

Wortman married Sibylla Habel, on July 9, 1930, at Tjimindi Badung, Java.³ Sibylla worked as a medical missionary nurse in Bandung prior to their marriage. She was born in Eick, Moers, Germany on May 9, 1903, to parents Gottfried Habel and Elizabeth Bongers.⁴ She had a sister named Maria and a brother named Heinrich. She spent her early life in Eick, Germany.⁵ Sibylla was converted to Adventism through her mother's influence, and was baptized in January 1923 by Pastor Bahre at Homberg am Rhein.⁶

Sibylla attended Eick Elementary School. She went to secondary school at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, Neandertal from 1923-1926. She attended the Nursing School of Amsterdam where she earned a degree in nursing. She took some classes for four months at the Adventist seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1937 while on furlough.⁷

Ministry

L.M.D. Wortman arrived in the mission field on October 29, 1929, to serve as a teacher at Tjimindi Training School in Indonesia. He also served as a Bible worker in Semarang, and as the principal of Tjimindi Training School.⁸ Wortman served as president of Indonesia Union College (Universitas Advent Indonesia) from 1931 to 1942.⁹

When World II broke out and the Japanese invading forces reached their mission field in Java in February 1943, the Dutch missionaries were taken to internment camps. The men and women with children were separated. From time to time they were moved to other camps.¹⁰ According to the account, "There was no connection between the different camps and no one knew anything about his family, except that at the last we were allowed to write postcards with sentences which the Japanese had dictated." Many died in the camps.¹¹ L.M.D. Wortman died June 6, 1945, from dysentery and famine edema.¹² He was buried in his mission field in Indonesia.

Sibylla Wortman worked as a medical missionary in Indonesia from 1930 to 1960.¹³ From 1930 to 1937 she taught at the Training School at Tjimindi, Bandung, Java. From 1937 to 1938 the couple were on leave or furlough. From 1938 to 1942 they taught at the same school. From 1942 until 1945 they were interned, but even there she served as a camp nurse. In 1946, after she was released from interment, Sibylla Habel-Wortman went home to Germany and served in a school at Zanbergem, Holland until 1948.¹⁴ She returned to Indonesia to serve as matron of Indonesia Union Seminary at Gadobangkong (Bandung), Java from 1948 until 1950.¹⁵

From 1950 until her retirement in 1960, Sibylla Wortman served as a nurse at Rumah Sakit Advent, (Bandung Adventist Hospital) in Bandung, Java.¹⁶ In between these years she went home to Germany for a furlough and came back to Indonesia in 1954.¹⁷ That same year she was voted as one of the General Conference session delegates from Indonesia Union Mission.¹⁸

Sibylla Wortman went for a permanent return towards the end of 1960, and continued her denomination service under the Netherlands Union Conference until 1966.¹⁹

Later Life

After her return from international mission service Sibylla Wortman remained active in denominational service as a credentialed missionary. After retirement she settled in Apeldoorn, Holland, and kept busy with church activities in that city.²⁰ There are no available records about her after 1966.

Contribution

Louis Marie Dirk Wortman was a pioneer missionary, educator, and school administrator who devoted his life to the training of the youth in the country of Indonesia. He literally offered his life in mission service, dying as a martyr. He and his wife Sybilla considered the country of Indonesia their homeland. As the *Far Eastern Division Outlook* noted of her, she "thinks of Indonesia as her homeland and awaits the resurrection day when her husband, who is buried in Indonesia, will again be with her."²¹

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NOTES

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7. Ibid.
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10. H.E.R. Schell, "Indonesia During the War," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1945, 2.
 11. Ibid.
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 13. "News From Here and There," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, September 1963, 16.
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 19. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1961), 289; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1965), 174.
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