

NEWSLETTER PHILIPPINES

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"Even until today, the people who are native to the area practice witchcraft in association with their superstitious ways."



Slogging through rough seas in late January, off Panay Island.

Ship's Log: Horizons...

Glen Knight

The new year finds us excited at the prospect of continued sailing throughout the Visayas region of the central Philippines! We send our warm...and I do mean WARM greetings from the decks of the sailing ship, RIM Nativa. As we approach the end of January, the hottest time of our year is not far away.. By the time March arrives, we will be in the grip of some real tropical temperatures and humidity but at the same time, the most desirable weather for sailing will come. So, we're getting ready to log some ocean miles during our first half of the new year. The inter-island work will take us mostly into the Gigantes Islands, an area dominated by two main islands, Gigantes Sur and Gigantes Norte and a dozen or so smaller islands in the group. The name Gigantes is derived from Spanish and as the story goes, the early Spaniards in the area dubbed the islands with such a name believing that some sort of mystical giants lived among them. Supposedly, one of those giant's skeleton was found interred in a cave, thus the name was given. Even until today, the people who are native to the area practice much witchcraft in association with their superstitious ways. Without a doubt, they need the Word of God among them and we are determined to take it there. We desire your prayers and encouragement as this effort is pressed forward.

Time spent in port during early January was used, making a few repairs necessary to the performance of the ship. The generator required some mechanical work and a part that proved impossible to get has been bypassed with a little bit of ingenuity so the unit functions now as it should. Also, the CAT main engine has some oil leaks I am currently addressing in hopes of resolving simply without major effort. We have made some changes to our sail rigging as well to make handling the sails underway easier and safer.

A visit to Molocaboc Island in the last few weeks resulted in fourteen souls making commitments to our Lord. For this we are grateful and are praying for the people there and Pastor Benjie who labors among them. As we had intended to drill a water well on that island, I did a survey to see the possibility. However the entire island is a limestone rock and drilling there is not possible for our machine. We will pass it up for other locations. We did place several of the ceramic bucket filters in the church and word is that the people are quite enjoying having them. We hope their health condition will improve. See the article on Page 2 of this newsletter for photos and information about this work.

God bless you all!

—Glen, Summer, Juli & Justin
RIM Nativa, Western Philippine Sea

The Sad Plight of Molocaboc Island



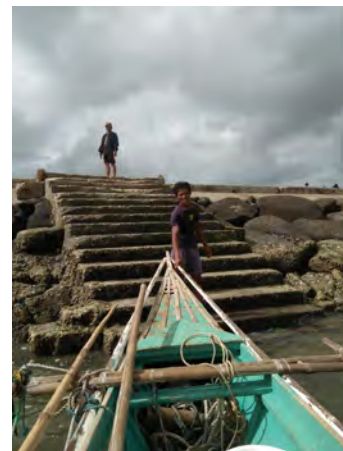
Rain collecting cisterns are used here to store water that quickly becomes putrid and infectious with insect larvae. The ceramic bucket filters help make it potable. We have placed ten.

“I’ve wondered why the people continue to cling to this rock when their lives are so miserable.”



Here is one of the filters we put together for the people in the church. Pastor Benjie is very happy to have them!

Visiting Molocaboc Island in January revealed a sad situation among the people living there, mostly due to their lack of adequate water supply and basic services. The island is a solid rock so it isn’t possible to drill a well. But adjacent to the island is another upon which has been built an elaborate resort...with plenty of water and everything else one can imagine. The problem in the area is the corruption of local politicians and leaders who abscond funding from the government intended for community development on Molocaboc. The circumstance is heartbreaking and begs an answer to the question of why those in places of responsibility and who have the means to make a difference, care so little for their own people.



The church gathers beneath a canvas for their worship activities. It’s difficult for me to get at the reason why there is no building as yet and likely there’s no need to try. The fact is that they are struggling to keep their congregation together for a variety of reasons. We had attempted to take our 2015 medical mission project to this island but it turned out to be unwise and we backed out. There are other needs that can be met.

This little girl in the photo to the right suffers with malnutrition like so many indigent children among these islands. The situation of Molocaboc Island is such that living conditions are generally poor. I’ve wondered why the people continue to cling to this rock when their lives are so miserable. During the stormy weather the island is blasted over and over again. It rises a mere four meters from sea level and there are few trees that can give protection. A massive mangrove planting has been initiated by the government to try to shelter the island’s windward side but it will take years to make a difference because of slow growth.



The pathway in the photo to the left is typical of walkways across the island. There are no roads and the electricity is provided by a generator that operates between 6PM and midnight each day. Fishing is the industry of the island but the waters have been fished out. What remains of the fish are usually small and should be left to grow and reproduce but the fishermen pay no mind to conservation as is the case among most of these islands. That and the fact that the people choke their waters with plastic thrown carelessly to the ground, make it a hopeless situation.

“I want to help but how to go about it is sometimes an unknown even after many years. It seems that the best ideas and the efforts that come from them are often cast aside and I can’t help but wonder why? I have often found myself working and for the moment have been slightly encouraged that what I do, does make a difference. And then there comes the time when I must move on. But to do so with the prospect that what has been done will continue seems often very dim. But then, it is the Lord who really knows.” —Memoirs

GIGANTES Islands Group—Visayan Sea



The shoreline of a tiny island south of Gigantes Sur was inviting to us on Sunday, January 24 so we dropped anchor and went to meet the people. We found them to be simple and humble with a small church but few Bibles and no study materials. Across the way was the tall peak we had seen and noted in passing at some distance, (photo to the right).

These islands, dominated by the volcanic peak, Isla de Pan de Azucar (Sugar Loaf Island) form the southernmost of the group associated with Gigantes Islands. While en route to the area, we noted four good sized villages which we'd hoped to personally visit, however with weather worsening around us on the strong north winds, we found it necessary to hold up our onward progress.



Admittedly, we're pressing the sailing season a little but the need to go as early as possible compels us to work between the cold fronts that descend from China and churn up our tropical seas. At this point we hope to move onward to the main part of Gigantes Islands within the early part of February. This is the area we plan for a medical mission in April so going ahead is necessary to do some advance preparation among the people.

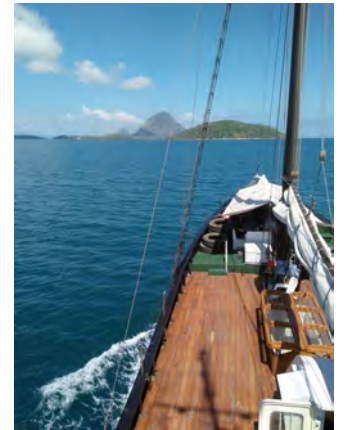


The needs among the people we found are for Bibles and study materials, both of which we placed among them. Good Sunday School study guides for a year and several Bibles were gladly received by the pastor and the little church. The photo to the right shows a load of 500 Bibles in the Hiligaynon language which we have received and designated for the medical project coming soon on Gigantes Islands. This is a prayer answered and we humbly thank God for them.



We look forward to traveling to Davao to the annual Strength for the Laborers conference at PMBS. It will be good to see our friends there again next month. The weeks from now until then will be busy and time afterward will be as well. Thanks for your prayers!

"I will not tell you how difficult it is being an ocean-going missionary. I can't tell of the days and nights of pitching and rolling at anchor nor of the seeming endless hours underway through that well wished "following sea" that cork-screws the vessel with sickening effect. I can't tell you of the night watches for fear of piracy on the water. And neither can I tell you of the dirty harbors and piers and the attitudes of the authorities who are not shy of criminal deeds amounting to piracy on land. So, I will tell you nice things and show you nice photos that you might think the work to be easy and always worthwhile. And you and I will be pleased." -gk



The approach to the southern islands of the Gigantes group shows a beautiful cluster of islets.

"Admittedly, we're pressing the sailing season a little but the need to go as early as possible compels us to work..."



A late afternoon January sun reflects it's glory in the glass lens of RIM Nativa's antique spot-light. Days ranging from beautifully calm to roaring winds and raging seas are typical of this month here at such a low latitude. But consistently fair weather will soon come and with it, opportunities to sail far and work much!

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The missionary ship laying at anchor off Botlog Island, Visayan Sea in late January.

Photo: Justin Shaw

...Reaching people on the edge!



A child sits amid the rubble of her church that was destroyed by the super typhoon of 2013. After two years, still there have been no reconstruction efforts made due to poverty. The scene is typical across this region of the Philippines where aid intended to help the distressed, never arrived. But to rebuild can be undertaken when there is a mind to work. That seems to be the great challenge.

Photo: Justin Shaw

Closing thoughts...

Glen Knight

We often cross paths with people who for all practical purposes, should have given up on their work long ago. And I am sure if the measure of one's work is seen by material accomplishments, then when there is little or nothing to show, then all may admit to the futility of carrying on. But the truth is that what is seen outwardly of a lifetime of work is not really an accurate measurement. It cannot be said that nothing has come of the effort that shows no physical expansion for what is genuine is typically that which is in the heart. Take for example, a pastor who has labored for sixteen years in the same place on a remote island. He has become old and worn. But he has remained faithful and as I listened to his message, it still rang with the joy of truth and burned with compassion for souls. I am sure that when the Lord makes up His rewards in eternity, many will be given to those who labored in the hardest of times and circumstances who in the end, had little to show.



"The tiny islands disappeared and then reappeared only briefly as low hanging clouds and rain falling in sheets moved passed our ship at her anchor. An earlier attempt to sail from the area was quickly canceled as the sea rose to twelve or fourteen feet, plunging stem and stern beneath its rolling fury. In such circumstances to carry on when it isn't necessary is foolhardy and safe havens sought and found are cause enough to put in. Opportunity for moving on will present itself soon enough during this fickle January but until then, catching up on good reading seems to ever be a welcomed repose. And it is not the delay that I will remember, but the intensity of a good novel!" —Memoirs of a Missionary