

NEWSLETTER PHILIPPINES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Ship's Log: Lessons...	1
Photo: "God's Grace"	1
Scenes from across...	2
An Island to reach...	3
Photo of the Month	
Closing Thoughts...	4

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Ship's Log: Lessons Learned

Glen Knight

One should never imagine that things cannot or will not change and when it comes to life at sea and work among islands such as these, it seems this is all the more true. As changeable as the weather, is the nature of our ministry. We plan and plot courses but when it comes to pressing on in the effort, a readiness to change direction is always required. I have a better understanding of what the early missionaries faced in a world that needed the gospel but in times and at locations that were precarious for those who would go and preach. I know why very often, the Lord closed certain doors and opened others. Such has been the case with Remote Island Ministries during September and October. While we had planned great outings and big work, we have spent the time settled in to one port and as far as the ship is concerned, laying low. In the meantime the Lord has used us to minister to others around here and to assist the work of Smile City Baptist Church where Pastor Jun Abay and his family serve. This work is sponsored by Timberlakes Baptist Church of Woodlands, Texas, all of whom are such good friends for so many years. It is actually a joy for me personally to give back to Timberlakes Baptist Church, a small portion of what the good people there have shared with our work for such a long time. There are some photos in this newsletter that highlight a few of the things we've done together with Pastor Jun, his sweet wife, Maricelle and the church.

We had for such a long time, deemed the Port of Davao to be a safe place and a good operations base for Remote Island Ministries. That consideration changed dramatically in September when bandits of the Abu Sayyaf Group of terrorists abducted four friends of ours from the marina where we had befriended so many expat sailors, many of whom had helped us greatly in preparing our vessel for sailing. At this writing Kjartan, John, Robert and Tess remain hostage and we fear for their lives. We were in the loop of those being surveilled for abduction as well, inasmuch as we represent both the United States and South Africa. Intel reports indicate the grave danger we were facing without knowledge. But God, who knows all things, moved us from that port on July 4, and well out of range of the plotters on Samal Island. We are thankful but remain very concerned for our friends. At the same time, great precaution is being exercised in every move we make. We will carry on with faith in the Lord and more wisdom in the work.

Thanks for your prayers. God bless you all!

Glen, Summer, Justin & Juli



“One wonders of the years that that building had been used as a place of worship and why it is now neglected.”



A basket of fresh vegetables for the ship's galley is a welcomed gift as Pastor Ernie and his wife Ging shared a part of their wonderful garden harvest!



In almost every place and along most roads on these Islands, the ice cream salesmen can be found, ringing their familiar bells and eliciting the interest of most everyone around. We were not to bypass this opportunity for one of our favorites, “Pinipig Crunch!”

Scenes from across Negros Island...



An old church in the sugar cane field lies abandoned and dilapidated while workers replant the recently harvested field. One wonders of the years that that building had been used as a place of worship and why it is now neglected. It could be easily repaired and once again serve as a house of the Lord for worshippers.

Some of the youth of the San Juan mission where Pastor Ernie Adlaon and his wife, Ging serve, pose for the photo just before we began the special day of worship. We were celebrating the second anniversary of the mission. Pastor Ernie and Ging are graduates of our seminary several years ago. It's so good to see them active for the Lord in this place!



A small girl peers through the open window of the mission house as our worship activities got underway. Notice the old American Baptist Hymnal lying on the window sill. These books are still popular among our churches here in the Islands but the few we have are now mostly dilapidated like this one. They are easily repaired and remain in use among us for years!

Inside the small chapel building, a good crowd of adult members listen intently to the preaching of God's Word. The theme for the day highlighted the necessity of climbing upward as we reach out to the Lord Jesus for all that is needed in gospel ministry. I am thankful for the faithfulness of these poor people who carry on loving each other and the Lord. Pastor Ernie and his family are doing an outstanding job of leading the church!



An Island to reach for Christ...



Steeped in traditional religion, Negros Island remains an island to be reached for Christ. With strong ties to the Spanish colonizers, many traditions bind the people to the centuries old practices of a faith that doesn't speak of salvation through Christ alone but in its misguided religious effort preaches a faith in Mary, relegating Jesus, the Son of God to a lower position. Gospel ministry is unending.

Planting churches across this island is a challenge taken up by the Smile City Baptist Church. The San Juan mission is an example. Reaching out to adjacent islands has claimed our interest as well. We are presently doing the demographic and geographic studies on sixteen islands that lay to the northwest of Negros. By the end of this year RIM Nativa will be sailing among these islands doing our initial surveys for the first quarter of 2016.



It amazes me to see how excited the people are to receive hymnals like the one the young lady here is using or Bibles, which we give in abundance to those in need. It saddens me to think of the many song books once used among our churches in America that are no longer in service. Literally hundreds of churches around the world could use them and would gladly receive them if they were given. Ask me...I'll tell you how!



Juli loves the children we meet along the way and as she has grown over the past few months, she's begun to really take her place in leadership among them. The children relate well to her for obvious reasons! The songs and games and stories she introduces to them make me a happy dad. I enjoy watching this girl as she finds her niche in ministry...and I rejoice in the Lord!



"Comparing our work to another is like comparing one person to another person for in everything done, there are different personalities and different goals in mind. If all were the same, then there would be little need to add anything because all would be static. The beauty of Christian ministry is its ability to incorporate the differing gifts and ideologies of those involved. And the glory of such a work is in acceptance of others. Anything short of that becomes dull and insipid and useless." —gk



"Sixteen islands lay to the northwest, awaiting our visit before the end of this year."



Pastor Jun Abay and his wife, Maricelle, are doing a great job of leading Smile City Baptist Church, Bacolod City. The San Juan mission is an outreach of the church. It's location is on the lower slopes of the mountains overlooking the city.

REMOTE ISLAND MINISTRIES

A Ministry of
Victory Baptist Church
515 Sherwood Ave.
Sherwood, AR 72120
USA

Stateside Address:
REMOTE ISLAND MINISTRIES
Glen Knight, c/o Cheryl Clem
8101 Thames Ave.
Texarkana, TX 75503
USA

Field Address:
Captain Charles Glenn Knight
Summer C.E. Knight
The Sailing Ship RIM Nativa
c/o The Harbor Master
BREDCO PORT,
Bacolod City, 6100
Philippines

Cell: 011-63-939-372-7916

Email me:
glenknight.ph@outlook.com



...Reaching people on the edge!



Sugar Cane harvest, Negros Island, October 2015.

Photos: Justin Shaw

Closing thoughts...

Glen Knight

Harvest work is an example Jesus used to express the importance of gospel ministry in the world. Not only is it a necessary aspect of service but it is an urgent one as well. And to that we can add the thought that the harvest doesn't end the work. The fields of sugar cane here demonstrate that fact. Left behind in the fields are portions of the cane stalks that will be gathered and reused for planting a new crop. In that way, harvesting is directly connected to planting for a future harvest, and so on. Proclaiming the gospel and making disciples as Jesus taught us is exactly the same. Those who hear and believe become both the planters and the planted, if you will, that assures another harvest of gospel fruit. What an amazing opportunity God has given His people!



"The longer I live the more I realize the importance of deeds as opposed to words. Words are easily spoken and often are impressive enough to sway opinion and direct actions whether good or bad. But deeds make the real difference. And they cannot merely be deeds for the moment but those that endure the test of time. Against such deeds there is no real argument. And to have gone without them would have been to suffer necessity which no one else cared to supply and to have lived without knowing that someone loved enough to work hard and long." —Memoirs of a Missionary, Glen Knight