

MISSION: MICRONESIA

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Ship's Log: Gospel for all shores...

Glen Knight

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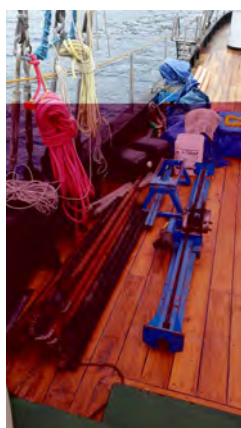
Two young ladies from Ngarchelong Elementary School, Babeldaob Island, pose for a photograph. This is one of our target areas of ministry. A Bible distribution is scheduled here for October.

I have known that there were people on islands difficult to reach and far-flung whose lives were much simpler than the rest of the world and whose contact with the "outside" is very limited or otherwise, non-existent. It's funny that from their point of view, the rest of the world is "outside" while you or I probably consider that the opposite is the case and they are the outsiders. Surely the world has continued its development of all things modern while the remote islanders have experienced only a trickle-down effect. This has its advantages to an extent. But on the other hand, there are disadvantages. As early as the 18th Century when the "outside world" first made contact with people of the Caroline and Marshall Islands, the move was on to update their societies. The lure of technology that produced things like iron, textiles and gunpowder was too strong and the simplicity of their island life was gradually lost. Traders, vagabonds, derelict beachcombers and pirates soon became common. Missionaries from some of the famous western missionary societies as well as the Roman church made early efforts to evangelize the people and establish their domain but sadly, contributed more to the greater confusion of the islanders than to the Kingdom of God. The native practices would often be set aside but briefly in favor of whatever ideology was introduced and soon thereafter, would be restored, only then, as a strange amalgamation of both. That cycle, repeated through the years continues even until now. On this island alone, one can find a variety of Eastern mystics and Middle Eastern credo in addition to the Western cults and lest it be ignored, the hedonic religion of self. There is, however, a true witness to the saving grace of God among some here. The numbers are small. The task is large. Those who go about the ministry of the gospel find themselves immediately confronted with traditional beliefs and superstitions while at the same time, struggling to deliver God's Word in the face of sardonic objections and ridicule. I have heard remarks in the past about how easy it must be to minister among people who are eager to hear God's Word as these islanders are so imagined. The fact is that there are two hurdles to jump: the one is a commitment to go far and to stay long; the other is to rise above the dubious manner of others who have criss-crossed these shores over hundreds of years, taking plenty and leaving little or nothing behind that is honorable. The one thing that seems so vital to success here and in places like this is that foremost, Christ must be known in us. It isn't a religion which we propagate among them but a relationship to God through Jesus.



The photo above shows a typical water cistern used to collect rain water on islands across the Pacific. Where such are in use, there is a need to chlorinate the water or to filter it. The water filters we distribute make this water safe to drink.

“With some sense of melancholy, we closed the warehouse in Bacolod City during September.”



The Little Beaver well drilling system is unpacked and laid out on the deck, ready to drill again this coming week!

Busy August & September



Lying at anchor in our home port, Malakal Harbor, Koror, Palau, RIM Nativa has begun to be referred to as “the church boat.” That makes us smile when we hear such conversation. Gradually, we are winning the confidence of the Palauan people in our area as we reach out to assist them in several ways. We are now awaiting the arrival of our containers from the PI and USA.

With some sense of melancholy, we closed the warehouse in Bacolod City during September and shipped our humanitarian aid supplies and equipment to our new home port in Palau. The photo to the right shows some of the water filters, buckets and desalination plants that are on the way now.



Pastor Jun Abay of Smile City Baptist Church, Bacolod City, together with three of his men helped us clean all the supplies, secure and pack everything and load it all into the 20’ container. Summer, Juli and I made the trip back to the Philippines to accomplish this work in early September.

Word from Pastor Joel Meredith of Worldwide Literature and Missionary Supply, Calvary Baptist Church, Hamburg, Arkansas is that our next shipment of supplies in a 40’ container is on its way to Koror. The arrival should be during the month of October and could very well coincide with the arrival of our other load from the Philippines. Because there are no available warehouses here in Palau, Brother Joel purchased the container so that it may remain here for use as a storage unit. Thanks, Brother Joe!

The folks in the photo to the right are familiar friends who were daily at the warehouse in Bacolod City. We shared with them often about the Lord and gave things that might ease their lives. It’s sad to say goodbye but everyone made a lighthearted moment of the task.



“All day we watched the sky. The wind lay calm for hours on end at the anchorage but the line of clouds on the horizon was a harbinger of what would come and it seemed to approach so slowly. What we knew was that it would come with ferocity. Sea storms are a marvel to experience from the decks and the cabins of the ship. One feels the surge of the waves against the vessel as she heaves over them. The wind whines through the rigging. All views beyond the bow and stern are blocked out. I would rather be underway. But for the moment we lay at anchor, watch and pray.” —gk

Moving ahead on Babeldaob Island

Babeldaob Island is the largest of the Palau archipelago, laying to the north of Koror. It is an island that reminds me very much of Mindanao, my home island in the Philippines. The photo shows some of the old pre-war phosphate strip mines of the Japanese who occupied these islands until 1944.



As reported earlier, we are nearing the time of drilling for water on the far north end of Babeldaob in the hamlet of Ollei at Arukoron Point, Ngarchelong State. The photo here shows the barrels that are used to collect rain water from the house top. This is typical of all the villages and is used for drinking. Needless to say, there are many stomach ailments due to consuming unsanitary water. An elementary school nearby is also a possible area for drilling another well. We visited the school today, (20 September, 2017) and spoke again with our friend Jeana who is the Principal. There are 77 students and 16 staff members this term. Within days from this writing, we will travel again to the school with a load of Bibles to give to the students and staff. I spoke also with two men today, Douglas and Norman, gave Bibles and prayed with them. We look forward to seeing them again very soon.



The photo to the right shows the principal water source of Ollei Hamlet. It is a spring that flows from the hill. Looking at it, one can see it isn't clean water. Douglas and Norman told me that it is good only for agricultural use and not drinking. When the rains stop the water ceases to flow.

Please help us pray for these islands. Their needs are obvious and among them most of all is the need for The Lord. As is the case in places such as this, many people use marijuana and betel nut and sadly, a lot of alcohol. Suicide is common among the islanders. There is also a high rate of unwed couples bearing children. While there is a lot of professed religion, it doesn't seem to be valid in view of the social and spiritual problems extant among the people. Palau stands at a crossroads. Modern society is colliding with traditional life and it leaves us to wonder what will be the outcome.



"With all the loud talk and I should add, foolishness that comes from our neighborhood despot, one is left to wonder what will really be on the horizon. We live within the region that is the target of North Korea's threatened nuclear attack. Just the other day in fact, we were in Guam. The sense of high alert is certainly felt and seen. With the threats from one side and the promises of retaliation from the other side, should the button be pushed, I'm sitting here wondering how we would fare on RIM Nativa? Well, our faith is in The Lord and our intention is to serve Him and bless the people here." Psalm 33:20 is good!



An earlier well we drilled last year continues to produce good water for the village. Here, Justin is testing the water quality to confirm it safe for drinking. The process of drilling for water in these islands can be difficult because of logistics. Most of the time the equipment has to be hand-carried over long distances.

"I spoke with two men today, Douglas and Norman, gave Bibles and prayed with them. We look forward to seeing them again very soon."



Two other young men we met today, Babu and Ali, will be helpers in drilling the well in Ollei Hamlet. I had actually met Babu, (right) about a month ago when first visiting the area. They are each workers from Bangladesh...examples of what I wrote in the lead article of this newsletter.

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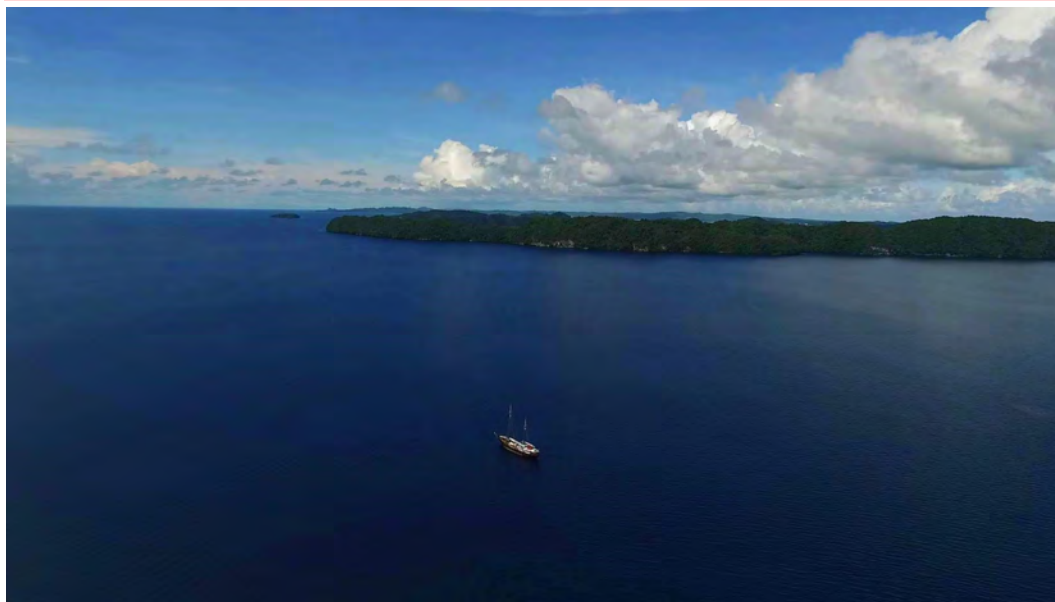
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A sweet Palauan girl, Adellie, with her new hand-sewn dress from Victory Baptist Church.

...Reaching people on the edge!



Almost lost in the deep blues of sky and sea, RIM Nativa lies calmly in a bay off Ngeruktable Island, Western Pacific Ocean. The expanse of ocean and island dwarfs the missionary ship in this drone shot at 400' up and 1/2 mile away.

This photo, curtesy of Justin and his high-tech gadgets!

Closing thoughts...What's in a name?

Glen Knight

When you meet someone for the first time, how long do you remember his or her name? If you're typical, probably not even until the end of the first conversation. Most people just don't pay close enough attention. How about if you're thrust into a culture that expects you to remember the names of people you meet and if you don't, they shun you? You can't get by with a "Hi, guy!" or a "Hey, brother!" you **MUST** use the given name if you expect to converse. And without doing so, you're counted as a foreigner. This is the culture we have found here among these islands. But that's a good thing! As Christians, we say we're interested in the souls of mankind. Those "souls" have names. Is our interest in them great enough to learn and remember their names? It's challenging, I know. And for me, this is a real task. But in time, the dividend for remembering someone's name is big. It shows one truly has an interest in others and their life situations. For example, Summer sat with an elderly lady the other day and conversed at length with her...about everything! They laughed and cried and prayed and smiled. Her Christian name is Elisabeth and she knows she has found a new friend who really cares for her. Knowing her name now, we will show her that there is Another Who knew her before she was born!

"The road northward running up the western side of the island twists and winds its way along, rising from sea level to the highest point above the sea at a mere 250 feet. It is a lush island and filled with signs of the past, the one an indication of Japanese activity from nearly ninety years ago; the other of ancient, pre-historic people whose ruins are left unexplained by those who have studied. The desire to work here is offset by the need to really understand the culture. It takes time and time is what we are giving, knowing The Lord is leading."