

MISSION: MICRONESIA

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SHIP'S LOG: A General Update on the Mission

Glen Knight

Ministering the gospel to Remote Islands of the Western Pacific Ocean

It is my desire here to raise awareness of the need for scriptural churches and biblical teaching among the islands of the western Pacific Ocean. Long neglected by our fellowship of churches, these islands have virtually faded into oblivion following the events of WWII. With a history of missionary activity that reaches back to the early 18th Century, later years have shown very little growth among true Christian churches and some degree of digression into pre-colonial cult practices. It is my hope that this report will resonate among the churches of the American Baptist Association. The focus of attention given to other island nations in the region, including the Philippine Islands, could stand a bold shift eastward and southward where vast numbers of people are living in spiritual darkness.

SOME FACTS...

The island nations of our concern include, but are not limited to, The Republic of Palau, The Federated States of Micronesia, Guam and The Marshall Islands. Excluding Guam, these comprise a total population, based on the latest census of 2016, of 179,506 people. With the addition of Guam, at 162,895 people, the figure rises to 342,404.

The Republic of Palau, (our home port) is comprised of over 700 islands, however only seven of them are inhabited. The most distant of the populated islands from the Port of Koror is Hatohobei Island, laying 378 nautical miles south by southwest.

In Micronesia, there are approximately 604 islands divided among four states, namely: Pohnpei, (the capital), Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap. They lay on a line of 1,400 miles distance from east to west. The nearest of these to our home port is Colonia, Yap at a distance of 294 nautical miles.

Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Rota, all a part of the USA Territory of the Mariana Islands, lay some 878 nautical miles to the northeast of Palau.

CHURCHES...

There are no ABA churches extant in any of the nations of our concern. Religious faiths among these island nations indicate Roman Catholicism as the most prominent with others following, which include various protestant faiths, the Pentecostals, a small presence of Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Guam has the most number of Baptist churches, affiliating with the Independent Baptists, The Fundamentals and the Bible Baptists. Many people still hold to traditional religions, especially on the more remote, outlying islands. We have found throughout our first year of working in Palau, that most people are only nominally Christian. Understanding this leaves us to question why. Perhaps this is a real-time, world-wide problem.

"There are no ABA churches extant in any of the nations of our concern."



Friends are easily and quickly made when one shows himself friendly...as the Bible says!



One cannot turn away from the warm greetings of happy faces on those islanders who are met day after day. To be called by name is special in Palau!

“It is soon time to enlarge the scope of this work deeper into Micronesia where more people battle with poverty and the absence of spiritual guidance.”



Pastor Joseph Stacks and his daughter, Julianne.

A general update continued...

Further study is needed but on the surface, we have agreed that the typical offerings of existing churches are leaving the people disappointed and in some cases, abandoned at levels of real need.

While there are many churches of varied sorts in the populated areas, the lesser islands are deprived, typically due to the ocean distances that separate them from major centers. The result of that obviously, is the shortfall of spiritual and moral influence and sound, faith-based teaching. We cannot be content to ignore this reality.

REMOTE ISLAND MINISTRIES PRIME OBJECTIVES...

Reach out from Palau

We will continue to use the Port of Koror as our base of operations inasmuch as it has an adequate port facility and is within easy reach of major supply depots located in the Philippines and Guam. We intend to begin by the end of this year, a systematic outreach to the Micronesian Islands beginning with Yap and three of its outer islands: Ulithi, Fais and Woleai. This will necessitate enlisting the aid of native Yapese personnel to assist in navigation among the atolls from Palau to Yap and its islands.

We will launch humanitarian aid projects in Yap. Through the past year, we have been busy drilling water wells, assembling and placing water filters in homes and conducting outreach ministries which include Bible distribution and Bible studies, worship and prayer meetings and distribution of clothing, medicines and hygiene supplies. It is soon time to enlarge the scope of this work deeper into Micronesia where more people battle with poverty and the absence of spiritual guidance.

Provide for better access to the shorelines from the sailing ship

The situation of the islands throughout Oceania is that there are fringing reefs surrounding all the islands and atolls where people live. It isn't possible for the sailing ship to anchor close to the islands and in most cases, we cannot approach to within a quarter mile and very often, even up to one mile away. We don't have sufficient cargo transport from ship to shore. Therefore, we are presently building a cargo vessel of 23' length that can be towed behind the big ship on long reaches between islands and will then, upon arrival at our destinations, be used to ferry equipment, tools, personnel and supplies as well as our Honda 300 ATV and folding trailer over the reefs to the shore. This cargo boat will be powered by a 115hp Mercury outboard motor. The boat is presently under construction. It has undergone buoyancy tests which show its loose cargo capacity to be 2,000 pounds. The cost at completion is estimated to be \$25,000.00. The value of the cargo boat, which we have named, the "EAGLE ATVC" cannot be estimated in terms of ministry. We must finish construction of this boat, take delivery of it from the factory, Mikuni Marine Industries in Bataan, Philippines and deploy it before the end of this year. We lack approximately \$6,000 reaching our projected construction cost at this writing. We trust The Lord to provide abundantly for this project.

*“I can't tell you how I've imagined the work would go through all of these years. Neither can I express in adequate language the marvel I have personally felt at seeing God's Hand throughout. It is more than I can explain. While one would not have guessed it to be where it is today even five years ago, suffice it to say, twenty-five years back, there could have been absolutely no clue. However, I have never once doubted what The Lord can do and will do when even one has yielded to His perfect will. It must stand as a monument to Him and Him only.” —Glen Knight, *Memoirs of a Missionary**

A general update continued...

Establish a shipboard “Maritime School of Missions”

In view of the ongoing need for workers and with a view toward expanding the effort through adding personnel, we intend to begin a special training school, specifically designed to meet ministry demands in Oceania.

This is an atypical school with instruction given, based on real needs in remote areas of Micronesia. It is intended to share knowledge of the reality of life in a water-world apart from the rest of civilization and modern convenience. The school will be accommodated on the ship as well as on the various islands of our concern. Ports of call for the future will include: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro. Students will undertake studies in Bible, History and Culture of Oceania, Ship Operations, Survival, Medical First-aid Care, Horticulture, Seawater Desalination and basic Construction skills. Enrollees will be from four to eight at a time and the duration of study will be from three to six months per session. The cost to each student will be \$600 per month for room and board plus airfare to the ship’s nearest port of call. Students from throughout the world will be welcomed aboard in this specialized training program.

Increase monthly support for Remote Island Ministries

The missionary sailing ship is in good repair. We have recently purchased another 25KVA diesel generator, adding to the ship the ability to produce up to 50KVA of electricity. We also added another 300’ of anchor chain to our bow. We can now anchor in deep water, which is a necessity, working among these atolls. Our Caterpillar main engine is in good condition as well as are the sails. New, triple-braided rope was recently purchased as well as all new double and triple rope blocks for the sails.

The main problem is a financial one due to the cost of diesel fuel in Micronesia which at this date has reached \$5.02 per gallon. A fully bunkered load of fuel oil today, even with the wholesale discount in the Port of Koror is more than \$5,000.00. This constraint is severely limiting our ability to navigate in desired areas. We must therefore seek to raise our monthly ministry budget from \$5,050.00 to a minimum of \$8,000.00. (The crew’s wages at present consume \$5,000.00 monthly. This is dramatically different from wages paid in the Philippines.) We must ask additional churches to partner with us in Remote Island Ministries to meet the growing demand in serving the nations of the western Pacific Ocean. Please remember that our ship, RIM NATIVA is unlimited as to where she can sail. We cannot allow lack of funding be the reason we don’t carry out the mission.

A UNIQUE MINISTRY

It is difficult to ascertain the extent of full-on gospel maritime ministries in the world. The challenge of navigating the world’s oceans is enough in itself to turn many missionaries away from such a pursuit, not to mention the cost of necessary equipment. Suffice it to say, REMOTE ISLAND MINISTRIES is among the very few who attempt such work. We have twenty-four years of experience in the region of the western Pacific Ocean. Our hearts and minds are set to carry on and we cannot allow lack of funding or any other thing to inhibit this effort to any extent. We will sail, trusting The Lord to provide all things necessary. We ask for your prayer and for your continued partnership in the work.

“Are you afraid of what God may demand of you?” was the question, to which the answer was given, “Not at all. What I fear is what I might demand of myself, which could be much less than what He has made me ready to do.”

—Glen Knight, *Memoirs of a Missionary*



Elizabeth Stacks lending a wonderful hand in our exhibit during the national meeting. Thanks so much, Liz for your love and assistance!

“The main problem is a financial one due to the cost of diesel fuel...”



Patty Davis of our sending church, also provided wonderful help in the Remote Islands Ministries exhibit. Thank you, Patty!

REMOTE ISLAND MINISTRIES

A Ministry of
Victory Baptist Church
10000 Brockington 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
Malakal Harbor, Koror, PW

Email only:
glen@rimnativa.com

Cell: +680-776-6397 (Palau)
Stateside: 682-304-3517

Email me:
glen@rimnativa.com



...Reaching people on the edge!



Islanders such as the children in this photo from our voyages in the central Philippines, are always fascinated by the things we bring. Here, as in so many other places, our son Justin, used his drone to draw a crowd. While we made an aerial search for a suitable water well drilling spot, we also found an easy audience for sharing the gospel. Through the days that followed this photo opportunity, many children and adults came to confess faith in Jesus Christ. Such is the way of ministry on these remote islands.

Closing thought: Thankful for helpers... Glen Knight



Words of thanks seem so inadequate to express our appreciation to Chris and Patty Davis of our sending church, Victory Baptist, Sherwood, Arkansas. They helped us in our mission exhibit during the annual American Baptist Association messenger assembly which met in Lexington, Kentucky in June. We would have found it very difficult to man the booth without their assistance and also, that of our great friends, Pastor Joseph Stacks and his wife, Elizabeth, pictured elsewhere in this report. Summer, Juli and I are truly blessed to have such able and caring friends who give their time so freely!