



INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS MINISTRY
in partnership with
Action International Ministries



CANADA: 3015A 21st St. NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7T1 - USA: P.O. Box 398 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

June, 2024

Dear Friends,



Natoya
Compassionate, intelligent,
Beautiful and strong,
She's everything right
In a world that's gone wrong.
A woman of faith
Who is strong in the Lord,
Wielding His truth
Like a two-edged sword.
You're richer if you know her,
Impoverished, if you don't.
Stupid if you lose her,
(I could say that, but won't.)
To sum it up,
These are the facts:
Treat her right—
Don't dare be lax.
Because Natoya,
Could destroy ya'.
Written by a fan,
Jeri Cary Christian



“Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!” Psalm 150: 6

Our hearts are full. Our spirits are overwhelmed with gratitude and thankfulness to our God. He has watched over us in all of our travels and has now brought us safely home again. In the power of His Spirit, we have had the privilege of sowing seeds of the Gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ during a ship assignment that has carried us for many miles to places we have never seen or experienced as well as some places we have been before.

Most of all, we are thankful for all the people whose lives we've been granted opportunity to touch with Biblical encouragement, comfort and challenge. They include both guests and team members on board and even some occasions of interaction with some of the residents of the countries we've visited. How blessed we are to have been of service for our Lord during these past months!

I don't usually delve too deeply into “numbers”, but I'll make an exception today in response to the questions I've been asked numerous times over the years: “What does your ministry on board a ship actually look like?” “Are there church services on board?” Usually, I don't even keep track very much about this...we just do what God has for us to do. However, I made a concerted effort to monitor some of our ministry endeavor for the “short answers”. In our two voyage assignments since October: 29 Services for Guests, 87 Bible Study sessions, 27 Crew Services (some with Indonesian “Oikumene” groups and some with the “International” groups and some with “combined” groups). There was also a Good Friday Service, an Easter Sunrise Service and participation in two “Remembrance Day” Services. Additionally, there are personal interaction opportunities every day.

Having said that, let me repeat what I've said many times: We do NOTHING in our own strength, but only through the work of the Spirit of God who gives us the words to speak as He gives us the occasions to serve Him. To Him be the Praise and the Glory! As one of our guests says, and forgive me if I don't quote this completely in accuracy: “Prayers raised; prayers answered; wonder-working God!”



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Looking back over the experiences of the last months, there are some things that truly stand out in our memories and deserve some mention in this Newsletter.

Firstly, there was the level of interest and commitment on the part of both guests and crew in participating in Services and Bible Study. It needs to be pointed out that every day brings with it a full array of activities, lectures, excursions and entertainment for guests to choose to involve themselves in. This is one of the “pros” of cruise travel; the freedom to choose how busy one wishes to be. By example, you can sit somewhere and read a book all day (which some people do) or sit in the Casino all day (which some people do as well) or you can be completely busy all day, and also well into your evening, arranging your personal schedule of where you want to be and what you want to do. Having said that, what a wonderful blessing it is that so many guests *choose* to attend Worship Services and Bible Study sessions and make it a priority to do so at every opportunity!

Secondly, what I’ve just written about the guests in the previous paragraph also holds true for the Team Members (Staff and Crew). The daily work environment for the Team is, of course, very different from the “vacation” experience of the guests. So, it would logically follow that the “needs” of the Team may also be somewhat different, especially in terms of their spiritual life. There are two words that I’ve used multiple times over the years to describe our ministry to the Team: *Biblical encouragement*. Whether we are sailing with a ship, on assignment, or visiting a ship in port, our objectives always include encouragement for the Team. That could mean “walking alongside” with someone who already has Christ in their life, but needs some reinforcement to help them in making that relationship real, or it can mean introducing someone to our God, someone who may have never heard of Him or has had no relationship with Him in the past. There are many other “scenarios” as well, but the remarkable thing to see is *their* level of commitment that these Team members have in their attendance to the Christian Fellowship gatherings we try to provide for them. They also have some choices where they could be at a “Crew Party” or doing laundry or catching up on much-needed sleep or other things, but they choose to attend as regularly as their work schedules allow and are so amazingly willing to share, from the heart, what is encouraging or challenging for them in their relationship with God. What a blessing it is, to see this growth and commitment in these (mostly) young people from nations and cultures all over the world!



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Thirdly, I want to mention one more thing that has come to the fore-front as we have witnessed once again in our recently completed long voyage assignment. Simply stated, the need for continued ministry on board the cruise ships, both for guests as well as for team members can not be understated. Hearts, minds, souls and spirits continue to be encouraged, comforted, challenged and changed because of the work of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of those we have been privileged to serve, both on board in assignments and in ship visits in port. In the midst of an increasingly secular world of cruise ship life where many un-godly things are promoted and encouraged, the proclamation and study of the Word of God must be continued. And it is not simply because we, in our missional calling, say this. We are hearing it from so many on board, both guests and team. Our Christian voice may be small in comparison to the loudness of the world, but it remains strong. May we be encouraged by the faithfulness of our God as He provides us with opportunities to serve Him.

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.” Philippians 2: 1&2.

In His Service,
John and Grace Van Huizen john.air2sea@yahoo.ca

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