



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



April, 2019

Dear Friends,

The Bible frequently speaks of the Church and its description as a “body of believers”. For example, read the few verses from Romans 12: 4-8. We recently had a wonderful opportunity to experience this while spending some time with staff and crew, as well as the guests, on board one particular ship. We were given the privilege to organize and conduct worship services as well as daily Bible studies for all who wished to participate. What a blessing it was to see the Spirit of God at work in the hearts of so many people, as evidenced by the desire and commitment of all who joined with us in worship and study!

By the way, while I’m thinking about it... please add this to your prayer list... we are *invited and assigned* to organize these activities by the cruise line, and their office tells me that our presence there is both desired and very popular with guests; especially the Bible studies. My paperwork instructions even advise me that my messages should be “positive and Christ-centered”. However, despite the guest desire, only the Sunday services are written in the Daily Programme of ship activities. Our Bible studies are not mentioned, much to the dismay of the many guests we interact with. *Pray that the Lord will open the hearts of those in the corporate offices to listen to the voices of the guests who earnestly desire to see much more of our activities publicly promoted.*

Our experience with the guests during our times together led me to, once again, think about our activities with staff and crew. We often find that (for various reasons) the Christian Fellowship groups of the various nationalities will meet separately and at different times. One of the encouragements we always give to them is this: “...regardless of nationalities or cultures or languages, try to find an opportunity where you can all *meet together* in praise and worship with our God.” When they are accepting of this suggestion, and together with our encouragement to help them, they organize to come together in one place and at one time, typically in a guest area conference room and close to midnight.... Now *that* is an awesome picture of our unity in Christ! Their determination and commitment to meet in their individual groups is always amazing to witness, knowing their daily workloads, etc. But to see their enthusiasm to all come together is even more astonishing. They invite their friends and co-workers, Christians and non-Christians alike. They’ll share songbooks together. Some will have Bibles on their phones and share together.



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We bring as many Bibles as we can to give to them and in various languages. English, French, Spanish, Filipino, Indonesian, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Chinese, etc. Even though they may have the Bible on their phones, nothing replaces a personal copy of the Bible, in their own language, in their hands. Once the singing is done, which sometimes can truly be described as “a joyful noise unto the Lord”, 😊, then I will be asked to bring a message from the Word of God. Even if the English language is challenging for some of them, it is so completely evident that their hearts are longing to hear what our God has to say to them, particularly as I endeavor to apply it to their daily lives at sea. Often, I will see many heads nodding in understanding, eyes riveted toward me, some appearing very tired, yet so wanting to be there. I will see smiles and occasionally, I will see tears. Words fail to truly describe these experiences for us.

Sometimes, a Captain will say that the way all of his many crew members from various nationalities work and live so well together, it makes for a better “united nations” than the official United Nations. I will take that a step further. When we see so many crew members of various nationalities, cultures and languages, worshipping our God together... *that's* the best united nations one could ever imagine!

Our Winter season is drawing to a close and the ships we visit will soon leave the winter home ports for their summer itineraries. We have experienced God's great blessings in our ministry and we praise and thank Him continually for the opportunities He has given us to plant seeds in hearts, opened by the Spirit of God. We've been able to share, to encourage and, yes, to “rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.”

We also thank all of you who continue to support us in this ministry with your gifts and your words of encouragement to us and your prayers for us.

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!”

In His Service,
John and Grace Van Huizen

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