



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, 2019



As far as I can recall, most of the stories of our interactions with ships' staff and crew have been centered around the most amazing grace of God in their lives and the positive comments and conversations that we have had with various men and women who spend so much of their lives on board in service to their families back at home. Whether it be in the form of a church service for the crew, as pictured in the top left photo, or in individual conversation during a ship's visit, photo top right, we have witnessed the joy and gratitude of many seafaring ladies and gentlemen as we share the Word of God with them and the joys of salvation in Jesus Christ.

We don't often speak of the "dark side"... those occasions when our outreach is met with resistance or outright rejection. This too is a very real part of our ministry, and although we might not talk about it so much, I believe it is somewhat incumbent upon us to mention it once in a while. Why? Because the Bible has said, in no uncertain terms, that this is the reality of bringing the Gospel to the world. Our Lord has told us in His Word that as the world has rejected Him, so it will reject His followers. This also happens in our ministry to the Seafarers on board the cruise ships. I'll tell you about one such occasion.

As we walked into the Crew Mess (dining room) during a recent ship visit, we noticed that we had arrived just at the time when quite a large number of crewmembers were preparing to leave the ship; ready to go home for a period of vacation and time with their families. This is often a very emotional time for all.... a joyous occasion in the fact that vacation time has arrived and many are going home... but also a certain amount of sadness because friends are being separated as not everyone goes home at the same time. Relationships have been forged over the last months and now, there will be a time of separation. Perhaps, for some, they may never see each other again. This is quite common. So there is an element of sadness as well, mixed in with the joy of the occasion. There are smiles and there are tears.

We notice a young man sitting alone at a table and it is quite obvious to see that "all is not right with his world." Someone is leaving and he's not happy. We approach him quietly to see how he is doing. However, he quickly puts on a smile and a brave face and assures us that he's alright. Yes, some of his friends are indeed leaving to go home, and he will miss them, but he insists that everything is ok. "Tomorrow is a new day and I will be happy again!", he says. He happens to be from South America and



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he notices immediately that we have come, carrying with us many Bibles in various languages, as we always do on every visit.

During the course of our conversation, I ask him if he has a Bible, and mention that I have one in the Spanish language if he would like to have one. "Oh no....", he says, "I am completely capable of taking care of myself, and I have no need of any God or religion!" He goes on to tell us that his completely positive attitude and his will and determination to make himself happy will do just fine. God does not factor into his life in any way. Although we continue our conversation with him for a while, he remains adamant that everything positive can be achieved simply by keeping in place the right attitude; the notion of a Sovereign God is irrelevant. Eventually, he indicates that he needs to return to his work and leaves.

Throughout the many joys of our ministry, it is occasions such as these that sadden our hearts. I often think of this young gentleman, and others like him who have, in their opinion and belief, no need of a Savior. They will "take care of themselves" and everything will be ok because of their own efforts. They will be the masters of their own destinies. There is no room for God.

So here is my request to you today. Continue to keep our Seafarers Ministry in your prayers. Pray for those who accept the Word of God and make it a complete part of their daily lives. But pray also, and perhaps even more fervently, for those who reject the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Pray that the Holy Spirit of God will yet enter into their lives and convince them of their need for the Love of God and His free gift of salvation and eternal life. Pray that their hearts will be opened and that they will surrender themselves to the Will of God for their lives. Pray that they will then know the comfort and peace of God, knowing that He will look after them in all of life, the moments of joy as well as those of sadness.

In His Service,
John and Grace Van Huizen

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