

THE ANCHOR

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alaska Christian Ministry to Seafarers is to establish and maintain a ministry of service to the seafarers calling on Alaska ports. This includes ministry to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs consistent with the Word of God as taught in the Bible and revealed in Jesus Christ through His life and the Holy Spirit. ACMS is a non-profit corporation run by a board of volunteer directors. All directors and volunteers of the organization shall be eligible to serve if they know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and are active in a local church body. Volunteers come from churches world-wide. Members of the board are Karl Bengtson, Jim Chamberlain, Dean Diller, Bruce Laughlin, George Reichman, Bert Spaeth, and Ron Tan. Scott Johnson is the director of the missions in Seward and Whittier.

Seward Seaman's Mission

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Men always ought to pray! by Scott Johnson

"ask in prayer, believing...." Phil. 4:19

In Luke 18:1 Jesus declares "that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart." As a missionary organization focused on world evangelism and the discipleship of international seafarers, we seek to emphasize and utilize prayer to our omnipotent Heavenly Father. With the coming 2022 Alaska cruise season, we covet your prayers! God's leading and wisdom are greatly needed for preparation and discernment in the coming months, especially with Covid related issues. God is willing to answer our prayers.

"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Mark 11:24 Asking for His leading and power to do His will, He will providentially guide us and provide our organization's every need.

Jesus understood this necessity and urgency for prayer. It moved Him to get away from distractions and pray. "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." Mark 1:35 Jesus' burden for the lost and needy moved Him to pray, and to encourage His disciples to pray. "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matt. 9:36-38

The oceans are truly filled with weary and scattered seafarers!

Fellow laborers for Christ, please pray for the seafarers and for us! Grateful in advance, we will proceed forward with your prayers, expecting His abundant provision. "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Matt. 21:22



God's Perfect Storm *by Scott Johnson*

"He commands and raises the stormy wind" Ps 107:25

God's powerful, loving hand continually moves in everything we do. Yet often, we do not see nor perceive its impact. But in a recent ship to Seward, God's handiwork was written upon many events of their visit.

Before arrival, a shipping agent notified me that an unexpected ship would be coming to Seward. The ship had been rerouted from three other Alaskan ports. I immediately recognized God's handiwork.

Upon arrival, their captain gave me full access to the vessel. The crew were very willing to speak regarding spiritual matters with several responding positively to gospel appeals. On the ship's designated day of departure, the agent notified me of the delay, high winds and waves in the Gulf of Alaska. For three consecutive days, the ship experienced delays. With each delay, more conversations with different crew members surfaced. The storm's timing proved perfect, with two consecutive violent weather patterns resulting in 30-foot waves. God's perfect storm allowed the crew to relax in port and be very open to spiritual interactions.

In His love, He is not willing that any perish and, in His power, raises up storms or calms the seas! "Those who go down to the sea in ships...they see the works of the Lord...for He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves... to the heavens...He calms the storm, so that the waves are still...oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness." Psalm 107:23-31



"Sir, but why...?" *by Scott Johnson*

"...always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" 1 Pet. 3:15

The ordinary seaman (OS) watched me carefully as I walked up the gangway onto the ship. Except for a "Hello Sir," he did not speak to me personally, but appeared to observe my every move on the deck and in the crew mess. By bringing salmon and fresh baked cookies to the ship, I interacted with crew members from Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Philippines. I took snack, souvenir, and electronics orders, returning with armfuls of goods.

On the afternoon of the second day, while leaving the ship, he asked me the first question, "Sir, does Revelation say that we are in the last times?" Since I was only heading to the local store for a snack order, I stopped to answer his question. However, one question led to another and another. He was posted for gangway duty and not busy, so we spent more than an hour with his questions. We talked about Sodom and Gomorrah, Jesus' sacrifice, the mass, Buddha, sexual sins, divorce, authority of the Bible and more. He sent me a message after this first long discussion, "Sorry about my curiosity sir :)" I replied with "No, you have a very good curiosity. You need your questions answered. God will answer your questions." From that moment until the ship's sailing, he would daily approach me with a "Sir, but why...?" I drew him diagrams and opened the Bible with references. He had been raised by his grandparents, troubled as a youth, not married, but had a girlfriend back home. We discussed many religious and life principles from the scriptures. At times, it was as if a light bulb brightened his understanding. Each opportunity I sought to sow some spiritual seed into his thinking. I praise God for he sailed from Seward port with a few of his many questions answered.

‘Everyone, Come Hear the Good News from God!’ by Scott Johnson

“The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” Rom. 1:16

A ship’s crew mess is the central gathering place for the crew. They eat meals, drink coffee or tea, sit to talk, smoke a cigarette, strum guitars, raid the galley for snacks, watch movies, or just relax with their phones. Chaplains normally sit in the mess while on a ship. Knowing that all must eat, I try to enter the ship just before mealtime, catching the most crew members.

Melson (not real name) warmed up to me after I brought several food gifts for the crew. He’s cooked on ships for 25 years. He was Catholic, the Philippine national religion. He was married with two daughters and one son back home. We discussed his recipes for sinigang (Filipino fish head soup), slow roast ox tail in barbeque sauce and cabbage dumpling soup. He made me a mushroom and cheese omelet for breakfast. We became friends.

On day two in port, I told Melson that I wanted to draw him a spiritual picture from the Bible. He shyly agreed with a question, “the good news from God?” Yet, after every meal when he sat down for a cigarette, I was always talking with other crew members. He listened from a distance, but never joined. Finally, as I entered the crew mess for dinner on day four, I asked him, “tonight can I show you my spiritual picture when you are done in the galley?” With a slight upward nod of his head, he agreed. After the galley work was complete, he came to have his cigarette. I finished up my conversation and walked toward him, saying “can we talk now Melson?” He affirmed with another head nod and then to my surprise he announced, “Everyone, come hear the good news from God!” Wow! What a delightful surprise! A Bible study announcement! From the six heads that turned in the crew mess, four eventually joined us. As I drew spiritual pictures, and answered questions, we covered many topics. Toward the end of my salvation presentation, I appealed to Melson, by saying, “remember when you told me tonight, “Too much! Too much gifts?” Well, our God is the God of too much gifts. And when He gave us Jesus to pay for all our sins on the cross, that was too much, too much! His grace gives us the free gift of eternal life because Jesus paid 100% for our sin debt on the cross. Will you believe in Him as your Savior?” We continued for a few minutes, then



without prompting Melson announced, “tonight is the first time I have believed in Jesus as my Savior. I believe in Him 100% for dying for my sins!” After I enthusiastically affirmed his decision, another man piped up. “I must leave now because I work at midnight, but hearing this message will help me sleep better tonight.”



In my limited imagination, I could not have thought up the scenario which unfolded in the crew mess that evening. Praises to Jesus who always does exceedingly abundantly above what we could ask or think!

In Memory of Betty *by Jeannette Seale*

Betty Bengtson went home to be with the Lord in December of 2021. Her love and service for seafarers spans the entire length of this ministry in Alaska.

Karl and Betty were stationed in the US Coast Guard in Juneau, Alaska in the 1980's and for three of those years Karl worked in the Marine Safety Office. His duty required him to make safety inspections on all cruise ships every three months. I often saw this Coast Guard officer on a tender going out to a ship that was at anchor, or I would pass him in a passageway accompanied by the navigation officers. One day on the tender in 1986, he leaned over to me and quietly said he knew what I was doing and he was praying for me! I was shocked as I had no idea he had even seen me on the many ships as his attention was always with the bridge officers.

As Marine Safety Officer he became good friends with several of the captains. He and Betty were often invited to dinner with the captain the night the ship was in port. They happily took their four children, which delighted the captain who missed his own children. All the dining room staff delighted in hearing the kids laugh and just be kids. Karl and Betty always tried to share their faith on board and prayed for us in our work with the crew.

Karl's final years in the Coast Guard took him to Guam, where he retired. At that time, they decided to volunteer on the Operation Mobilization ship Doulos. One time they lived on board 20 months with Karl as the first engineer. Betty taught school to the more than 40 children who were sailing with their parents, who also worked and lived onboard. Betty taught ESL classes to the crew so their proficiency in English created better working conditions for the ship. Betty had been teaching at Alaska Bible College in Glennallen, AK, since 1997. They rotated on and off the Doulos until 2008 when the ship went for a refit in Germany. It was decided the ship had too many structural problems, so it was sold and Betty and Karl decided it was time to leave the sea. They then were able to volunteer in the Seward Mission more often as they were in Alaska during the summer.

Karl, her husband, has been a board member since 2003. He volunteered at the Seward Seaman's Mission majoring as a handyman, and Betty loved sharing Christ with crewmen, baking cookies, and fixing dinner for whoever came through the door. They both helped at the Mission until the extremely long hours became too much for Betty. They continued to be prayer warriors for us. We will certainly miss Betty and her bubbly personality, but most of all, we will miss her total commitment to share Christ with the women and men of the sea wherever the Lord placed her.