

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 and Ron Tan. Scott Johnson is the director of the missions in Seward and Whittier.

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Navigating and Charting the Coronavirus, by Scott Johnson

"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Recently, I read some early Alaska history regarding nautical exploration in the early 1800's. With a seemingly endless rugged shoreline and harsh weather conditions, Alaska presented great difficulty for navigation and charting. The recent Coronavirus outbreak presents similar difficulties with navigation and charting for the cruise companies and those of us working with them. Ships from all the major cruise companies are being negatively affected by the outbreak. Ships are being quarantined, and others turned away from docking. Complete itineraries are being changed overnight. Many millions of dollars are being lost by the companies and countless seafarers are being affected. The Alaska cruise season is changing with ships leaving Asia routes and coming to Alaska much earlier than ever before. As a service ministry to these ships, we do not know how to navigate and chart the waters of the 2020 cruise season in Alaska. Potentially, there may be some industry wide ramifications to us boarding ships or even interacting with the seafarers. No one has navigated these waters before! We do not know what lies over the horizon or around the next island. However we are convinced our God knows all the details and has a perfect will for our summer season. Thankfully, nothing ever catches Him by surprise! Knowing Him personally, our wise Lord and Shepherd, allows us to walk by faith in His promises and principles. He shall navigate us according to His wise charting throughout both preparation and service in the 2020 season. We do still send out an urgent SOS appeal for your continual prayer support.

Quotes

Oh to be known as a mission that lifts up and magnifies the name of Jesus!!

This mission work is important to be maintained and is fundamental to seafarers. The mission truly represents a lighthouse for them. Captain Italy

I am really glad having received your greeting card last week. It is always a great encouragement for us to receive such a very heart warming and inspirational message from those like you who continue to pray for and support the Christian Fellowships on board Princess Cruises vessels. Rest assured that we will continue the work that the Lord God has entrusted us to spread the Good News of Salvation that only comes through His Son Jesus. Phil

What you do is so important for the crew...so important. Holland

I pray often and during the day many times. HE LISTEN AND I HAVE EVERY PROOF THAT HE NEVER GETS TIRED OF LISTENING. Italy

I like to see things from your perspective even though I am not there myself. Romania

Thank you for your time. Phil

Thank you very much for sending me your ACMS update. It was great to hear about the work you have been doing for our Lord this season. UK

Thank you for everything and although I feel sometimes that I am undeserving of your prayers, I am on the path to our Lord. SAfrica

I would like to convey my thanks to all of you, I know words are not enough, but thank you. Only through the presence of God in your lives, I wish I was selfless like you but I am not. India

I like to see things from your perspective even though I am not there myself. Romania

Please pray for our sensitivity to follow God's leading through His Word and the present adverse circumstances, that anxiety or discouragement not control our hearts, that access be granted for us to visit seafarers on the ships and at the mission, that the virus would raise awareness of human mortality so that the gospel can be shared even more boldly and that our Savior be magnified in all that is said and done. With anticipation of a spiritually prosperous cruise season, we praise God and thank you in advance for your prayers!

The Most Important Head Waiter on the Ship, by Jeannette Seale

**"God leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way."
Ps. 25:9**

When a crew member first comes to work in the dining department, the new hire will be assigned to the crew mess. This is a shock to someone who thinks they will be serving passengers immediately! Since they normally have experience working in hotels in their home country, to be assigned to serving other crew members is a real shock. In at least one ship, the Lord in His great mercy has assigned one of His own children to teach them all aspects of their job. Raymund*, a head waiter from the Philippines, has worked for this company more than 20 years. Not only is he kind, humble, and gentle as he helps the crew struggle through their first weeks, his demeanor and patience transfers to them. When they are moved to the passenger area, they take his teaching and humble attitude with them.

Raymund has been a Christian leader in the fellowship for many years and can sympathize with their homesickness, loneliness, and frustration in a personal way. Not only does he pray for his new crew, and shares the gospel of Jesus with them, but he encourages them to go to the fellowships late at night.

Raymund is always eager to bring them over to the book table to meet us. I discovered that as he works in the mess and he sees crew interacting with mission personnel, he prays for us as we discuss the private hurts in their hearts!

"He Who Has an Ear, Let Him Hear", by Nick Kerr

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

A young Filipino man approached me in the music room asking "Where's Bert?" I replied, "Bert has gone back home. He is done volunteering this summer." The young man then began to describe how Bert had really helped him understand the Bible and God's grace more clearly. We then fellowshipped for



ten minutes in a conversation that the other four crew members in the music room could easily hear. When the young Filipino left for the van to return to the ship, I turned and noticed an Indian man staring at me with a full faced smile. He responded to my greeting with "I was listening to your conversation." He really wanted to talk about spiritual matters, so I invited him to go to a more private location in the mission. We discussed many Bible verses and I explained John 3:16 with personal application to him. Many of his lifelong questions were answered in the hour-long Bible discussion. Before we parted, he showed me his phone's search list! His phone displayed the search title "How can I go to heaven?" As he was listening to my conversation with the young Filipino in the music room, he had been searching on his phone for heaven! Before he left the mission, he learned that the gospel of Jesus Christ gives us heaven freely, as a gift, when we believe in Him as our Savior.

A Taste of Heaven in the Philippines, by Scott Johnson

"Now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Romans 1:10-12

During the first two weeks of January, I traveled to three different locations in the Philippines to teach the Word of God in churches and at pastor's conferences. It was my second time to visit the Philippines. What a delightful and prosperous trip! The pastors responded very positively to the systematic, grace teaching in the conferences and the churches seemed genuinely encouraged. Personally, for me, one of the trip highlights was meeting up with Christian seafarers who had sailed in Alaska and were now back in the Philippines. All were seafarers who actively participated in the Christian fellowships on board. Each had sat with me multiple times both on the ship and in the mission house. Most were fellowship leaders at one time on the ships. Remember, that at the end of every Alaska cruise season, we must say goodbye to everyone on the ships, never knowing if we will ever see them again. So meeting up with precious Christian brothers and sisters in the Philippines, warmed our hearts as would a family reunion! Several drove long distances, took ferries and even rented hotel rooms simply to spend time with me or to attend one of the conferences. They brought friends, family members, new spouses, even their pastor for the visit. As in Alaska, we opened our Bibles, encouraged one another, prayed together, exchanged gifts, laughed, listened, ate food and praised our marvelous Savior, Jesus Christ. All the celebration and encouragement reminded me of our future gathering in heaven. As in Alaska, we needed to part once again, but our time was not in vain, not a waste or empty. On the contrary, in the will of God, we spiritually encouraged one another by our mutual faith in Jesus Christ, His Word and the grace of God! Praise and glory to God for I was blessed to taste a bit of heaven... in the Philippines.

Meant for Another, by Jeannette Seale

"So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

Joe and I took part in a NT distribution at a junior high school. Afterwards we drove around the neighborhood to find any discarded books in the bushes. We found only two, one that could possibly be reused. I placed it between the seats of the car. The next day we were asked by a Chinese captain whose ship was unloading bulk cement to take him to shop for provisions. The political situation between China and US has been tense. The captains were friendly but would not allow us to talk with the crew members, nor to leave Christian material for the crew to find later.

When we picked up the captain, the third engineer came along to help. He was very open and friendly, and he practiced his English with me as we shopped. In the vegetable section I mentioned celery; he quizzically looked at me and then went over to talk with the captain. The captain approached me laughing and said the young man could not hear the difference between the words 'celery' and 'salary' and the young engineer wanted to know why I wanted his money!! We had a merry time shopping!

I had opportunities to tell him about Jesus but I knew the captain was watching every minute. As we drove back to the ship the captain was with Joe in our van and the young engineer was with me in another car. I fished out the discarded NT and gave it to him to help with his English and to learn about Jesus, hoping he would slip it into his pocket. He was so thrilled with the gift that as we got out at the ship's side, he ran over to the captain to show him his lovely gift! The captain looked sternly at me and asked if that was a New Testament, and I answered in the affirmative. The captain did not scold me, but replied the young man was sad as he had no gift to give me. I told him the story about celery and salary was one great gift indeed!

That little NT was the only material we were able to get onto the ship and I pray the captain did not confiscate it after the ship sailed. The tiny book is the best gift the young officer will ever receive—a testament with the gospel of life everlasting.

Misunderstanding the Gospel, by Jeannette Seale

"Let all that you do be done in love." I Cor 16:14

"Believing that Jesus died for our sins and we are free to kill people or do whatever we want makes no sense. But I have lots of sins in my life and if I died tonight, I would go to hell." Indonesia

That was the parting shot the waiter gave me as he stood up to leave. When we sit and talk with the crew in the mess while they take 10 minutes to eat lunch often results in a quick conversation that ends with something like the quote above. It is hard for you who read these articles in the newsletter to realize that some of the conversations don't end the way we want them to. The crew usually have an extremely short time to eat lunch and report for work, and when they ask us a question, we must realize we do not always have adequate time to give them a complete answer. We try sometimes in vain to find that same crew member two weeks later when the ship returns or even a month later when the ship visits again. Please pray for us as we attempt to minister to thousands, so that we present a clear picture of the gospel in the time He gives us!

The Most Repeated Question, by Cheryl Reichman

"Are you a 100% certain you will go to Heaven when you die?" Many crew who are troubled and questioning the fate of an "upside down world" are seeking answers and want to hear God's Word. Our mission pastor encourages the mission team, "Live by the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven." Yet God in His wisdom allows us to be very aware of our weakness. Early last season, one volunteer experienced heart attacks, with heart surgery later in Anchorage. At the end of the season, another volunteer was deathly ill and spent 5 days in Anchorage ICU. BUT GOD... "My grace is sufficient for you; My power is made perfect in weakness." In other words, "Will you trust Me in this?" God used His Word, His Spirit and His people, including those praying at home to bring conviction of sin and spiritual life in Christ to many by hearing the Simple Gospel... Christ's life, death and resurrection, a forever relationship—all by God's Grace!

Sometimes I Am Not Listening, by Jeannette Seale

'Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.' Proverbs 19:20

A very supportive captain of the mission work asked Cassandra, another ship volunteer, and me to attend the bridge luncheon each week the ship was in Whittier. The first summer he invited us, I politely declined telling him I did not think we belonged there. He protested and said he wanted us there with all of his bridge officers. He said they were his family and we were part of his family too! But silly me, I declined, feeling embarrassed that he would invite us to such a personal lunch. He explained to me that since the officers were always on different watches, this luncheon every two weeks was the only time they were together to get to know each other. Well, the next summer he again invited us and again we politely declined. We felt we certainly did not belong there! For three summers he invited us to the luncheons.

On his very last visit before he left for vacation, Cassandra and I went to the bridge to tell him goodbye, not even thinking about the luncheon. We walked right into a very formal scene, with an enormous span of table set up on the port wing, with white linen tablecloths and all the formalities a captain would receive. All the bridge officers and some of their wives were seated around the table and the captain and his wife were serving! He rushed over and made us feel right at home, seating us right among the officers and then serving us ice cream and cake himself. He was so pleased we were there and made sure all the junior officers knew who we were and where we were from. He again mentioned that all those present were his family. As I was sitting by his wife, I told her that he had previously invited us for two summers and I had said no because I felt we did not belong. She looked at me expressing shock and whispered, "when the captain invites you, YOU NEVER SAY NO!!!!!!" In two weeks the same ship visited, with a different captain in command. We went to the bridge to visit the officers and one junior officer said that since the new captain was there, they didn't have lunch anymore, and their family was gone! I suddenly realized that God had repeatedly opened a door for us to get to know many young officers that this captain loved and considered his family, and I had missed so many opportunities to share Christ with them, because I had said no! Please pray I will be more obedient in the future!