



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

August, 2024



Dear Friends,

“...when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to...” Acts 16: 7

At the present time of this writing, Grace and I are at home spending some quality time with family and friends. That does not mean that our missional activity with ships’ team members stops. We continue to encourage many through the use of social media and email. While we are on board a ship, by assignment, we are able to meet personally with so many. However, once we are not on that ship, we always find that it becomes increasingly difficult for them to meet together on a regular basis. Although there are some very strong spiritually-minded team members everywhere and some who have a great gift of leadership, it remains challenging for them. We claim no special gifts in our own strength, but our physical presence on board does make a difference when it comes to having regular worship services and Bible studies with them. In that respect, we do always look forward to the next ship assignment in order to make that personal physical connection once again.

One of the things I also will be doing here at home, as I’ve done in the past, is to help out a little in our home church. In a few weeks, the Lord willing, I will be leading the Sunday morning Service. I had received an email while still on our last ship assignment asking if I would still be willing to do so. I sent in a message for approval, as is the custom in our church, but later changed my mind about that message. Why? Well, my thoughts had recently been with several ship’s team members and discussions we’d had regarding their future career and life goals and endeavors. I had also read an on-line message that piqued my interest entitled “Doors and Windows”. Many of us may be familiar with these words: “Where God closes a door, He often opens a window!” So, considering the time of year where many young adults and students are considering career and life choices, I hope to use this message of encouragement.

So, let’s bring this back to how these choices affect team members...



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This is a discussion I often have with ships' team members. Some of those who read this Newsletter will know exactly what I'm talking about, because you *are* former team members.

There are always these questions: "I don't know how long I'll stay here...what should I do?" "This lifestyle is so challenging...should I consider alternatives?" And many more thoughts along those lines. Most of the time the questions come as a result of the team member finding out that, although they could make good money (compared to similar work in their home country), that they had a wonderful opportunity to see the world, that they had met many new friends and acquaintances...yet they were starting to realize that this kind of life on board, for the most part, was not sustainable in the long run; especially as it pertained to family relationships back at home. Are there exceptions? Absolutely! I've met many team members who've been at sea for twenty plus years and things are working out well for them and their families back home, but they *are* the exceptions!

Generally speaking, (and yes, there are exceptions) I will advise any team member who asks: Don't stay here. Unless you have aspirations of becoming an officer, a Captain, a Chief Engineer, a Hotel Director, don't stay here. Use this opportunity as a stepping stone...to further your experience in a chosen career...to fill in a place on your CV...to get a good financial grounding for your family, etc. But don't make this your "final career stop".

And I have seen the evidence. Team members who go on to become accomplished musicians, fitness and dietary experts, hotel and restaurant managers, photography professionals, and so many more, once they leave ships' life. And yes, Captains and Staff Captains and Hotel Directors who've made such life choices.

The passage in Acts, Chapter 16, speaks to this as well. And this is the passage I will often use in the discussion with team members. God will direct our paths. We may have ideas in mind about what we want to do with our lives, our careers, our objectives. Sometimes we find that the door that we thought was wide open is suddenly closed. Yes, I also speak from experience. However, when we trust in the sovereignty and providence of God, we will find that He opens a window, where He may have closed the door.

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

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