

NEWSLETTER # 1

Taiohae, Nuka Hiva
Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia
January 1986

Dear friends,

Crossing the ocean to be missionaries in the South Pacific has its good and bad points! The good I will mention. We were often delightfully entertained by the porpoises who kept us company from time to time - especially during Lisa's night watch.

They seemed to like her company.

Also, we enjoyed strong winds and a fast passage, arriving in exactly three weeks in spite of our satellite navigation miscalculation, which forced our captain to learn all about the sextant in a crash course while at sea!

This is the "off" tourist season in the Marquesas Islands and we have the place nearly to ourselves. Only one French couple in their sail boat is nearby for "anchor neighbors". The weather has been hot and dry. We have had cool winds at times which help us generate electricity as Loren has installed the wind generator. Also, we have appreciated the fresh water maker for drinking water, a desalter of sea water. We hear that the local water needs special care and chlorination for "Yachties" to use. We did get some of their tap water to wash our clothes in buckets on the boat and hang our laundry out on the rigging.

Taiohae is the main town on Nuku Hiva and has electricity, jeeps, bumpy roads, motorcycles, kids on bicycles, and a few TV sets, French television from a Satellite. The five stores have different things in their grocery line, plus variety items. The French labels make it a challenge to find what we want. Fresh French bread is my favorite. Each store is a part of someone's house.

The French government takes care of these islands, and most all natives speak French. Very little English is spoken here, although they are learning it and now have a French/English teacher to help them. The girls found the doctor and nurses here right away as Lisa is writing a book on medical care in the islands. The girls were invited to have a tour of the 30 bed hospital, and

enjoyed meeting the French doctor and male nurses, especially when invited to a New Year's Eve feast of roast pig and goat!

The airport is on the other side of the island and people arriving by air have the choice of a boat ride, or a 4 wheel jeep ride of 4 hours endurance! around to Taiohae. The plane arrives every Saturday from Tahiti.

The "banker" is also the evening French Chef at the new restaurant he recently opened. We've become acquainted with most of the locals including the authorities and have enjoyed trying to communicate. They always want to know about what we are doing. One young man is here from Canada as an anthropologist and has learned the Marquesas language to facilitate his study of the behavior of Marquesas teenagers. The girls made friends quickly and soon the anthropologist was on-board the "American Flyer" for lunch. We especially enjoyed his visit when he spotted our mandolin and proceeded to play it! Brenda got out our fiddle and guitar, and away we went with music.

I believe music is a big part of our mission. Here is the Word that speaks of this:

Isaiah 42, 10-12: "Sing a new song to the Lord; sing his praises, all you who live in earth's remotest corners! Sing, O sea! Sing, all you who live in distant lands beyond the sea! Join in the chorus, you desert cities--Kedar and Sela! And you, too, dwellers in the mountain tops. Let the western coastlands glorify the Lord and sing his mighty power." (LB)

We understand spiritual warfare and use music to further God's purposes for such a place as this. The teenagers on the islands are crazy about cassette tapes and play loud music on cassette players, just like in America. They were glad to receive some gifts we gave them of Christian tapes, only I wonder who will translate the words for them? The Lord will do it somehow. America, as well as New Zealand, has a wealth of Christian music to share with them. (They do need good batteries for their players, though, as the new store batteries here seem to be rather old.)

We have sailed to the other main bays on Nuku Hiva and find them quaint, primitive, and beautiful. Electricity in these other bays is scarce, no roads in some bays. Travel is by trail, on horseback, or by boat for these folks. There is generally a church in each bay of 25 or more people. They are

Roman Catholic. I felt led to give my John Michael Talbot tape of "The Lords Supper" to a local church worker who seemed pleased. Her grown son was very pleased and we received back the customary gifts of fruits and fish. They didn't speak English but another native did who lived there, so we trust the Word will not return Void, and somehow, they will understand the words on that tape.

The girls and Loren are great hikers and if I can build up my strength we will be able to "touch our foot" on many a place on these islands. We feel like we are scouts sent out as Joshua (1-3) states,

"and the Lord will give to his people every place on which our foot shall tread."

We need prayer for our health. (I have been battling laryngitis and heat exhaustion. Lisa has coral cuts on her feet.) Also pray for unity that we follow Loren's wisdom and that he be strengthened as our spiritual leader, as well as the Captain of this sailboat. Pray also for the direction of the Small Boat Ministry overall and all the Navy of boats the Lord is raising up.

We also want to mention the Ham Radio contacts Loren has made. These Ham people have been faithful to meet us on the air, relay messages and arrange "phone patches" for us. Also, God bless Emil in Grants Pass, Oregon and the Network of Christian Hams that share the Word over the air and pray for the various needs they all have. Their "handle" is ARMS Net, which means "A mature Radio Missionary Service" Net. We got a message to Malcolm in New Zealand through this Net, and he passed it on to Wyn Fountain of the Christian Small Boat Ministries, which we hope to join when we arrive there.

After several more of the Marquesas Islands, we plan to sail on to the Tuamotus and then Tahiti. Please pray for a safe passage for us, as we are apparently sailing in the questionable season for these parts.

Goodbye for now,

Loren, Georgia, and Brenda Murphy and Lisa Zick