

Gary & Gwen
BISTRITAN

MISSIONARIES TO MICRONESIA



September
2020

Greetings everyone,

I would like to take a moment of your time to give you a quick update and also inform you of a new campaign Global Strategy is running.

First, we are still alive and kicking. We are quarantined (kinda sorta). The whole island of Yap is in lockdown. We had a couple of scares in March when travelers to Yap did not follow proper quarantine instructions, so the governor simply locked down the entire island, which means no one comes in and no one leaves. We still have a mail plane once a week and a supply ship once a month. There are no cases of COVID-19 on island, so we are all free to move about and get on with life. Schools are opened, government is operating, but no tourists or travel allowed.

Yap is a small island, five miles by ten miles, but for the most part life hasn't changed all that much, so if you are going to be quarantined anywhere this would be as good a place as any, maybe even better.

We lost almost three months of school with a dengue fever outbreak and the COVID-19 scare, so we extended our school year into the summer months. We took a one-week break, had teacher training for a week, and then started the new school year on September 2.

A God thing happened to us about six months ago. A man from a village in the south contacted us and asked if we could start a school in their village. Apparently, the government closed down their school two years ago for lack of students. The south has traditionally been very resistant to any Protestant group trying to start a ministry in their part of the island. The elders of the village are aware that we provide Christian education and assured us that we would be welcome to come and help their children.

So they have given us free use of their village school (five classrooms). We are responsible for looking after the school grounds and had to install a new water line. Our main school was operating to capacity, so we moved all our high school students to the south, making more room in our present school. This ensured we had enough income from tuition to make the new school viable. We are about \$3,000 in the hole with all the expenses but are trusting God to make up the shortfall.

What about retirement?, you may be asking. Good question. Our family back in the US and Canada is asking that question, as are our regional coordinators and the Global Strategy office. As soon as we have an answer, we will let you know. Here's what we do know: So far there is no one appointed to take our place. Global Strategy has been looking for over two years. Even when someone is found, they would have to raise support before coming to replace us. Under normal conditions, support raising takes about a year. With all the virus-related restrictions, who knows how long that could take. We would also hope for an overlap in ministry of at least six months. So even if someone was identified as our replacement today, our hope to retire in the summer of 2021 doesn't look likely. The reality is our work here isn't finished and we need to keep on keeping on until it is.

So with all that is happening in the world, what is Global Strategy doing? Another good question. For the week of September 12-18, any recurring gift to support a missionary will have the first month's installment matched, with a match of three times that initial installment (up to \$5,000 total). If God moves your heart to support these two aging, near-retirement missionaries "stranded" in the middle of the Pacific, please contact by phone or website the Global Strategy office. God is our provider and he uses friends like you to keep the missionary and ministry going. What a mighty God we serve!

Visit <https://choglobal.org/ggbistritan> or call 1-800-848-2468 and talk to a representative in Global Strategy.

Blessings... Gary & Gwen



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