

# NLM President's Message

**Gratitude:** *the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.*

There's been a secular movement towards gratitude and kindness lately as people, and organizations, are trying to overcome a general trend of society to be unhappy and unkind to others. The Bible talks about how the lack of thankfulness (gratitude) is the basis for sin:

*"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."* (Romans 1:21, NIV)

But, as you may guess, trying to coerce people to be kind only goes as far as they consciously work at it. We, as Christians, are filled with the Holy Spirit and don't have to work at kindness, or gratitude, because it's in our new nature via the Holy Spirit. One evidence of the outworking of the Holy Spirit through us is how much gratitude the seafarers show when we visit them, and what we give them.

A few years back I was wondering if the seafarers really liked what we were putting in the gift bags, so I handed out surveys. I gave them the option to choose which items they felt would be the best for them. The result; they consistently chose all items on the list. At Christmas time we give them toques, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a comb, granola bar, razor, bible study, New Identity in Christ bookmark, a Christmas tract, socks, Our Daily Bread devotional, and cards for our website and the Jesus film. Our mid-year gifts include the socks, granola bar, and the printed materials.

We've also given out lots of bread donated by Cobbs Bakery. Recently, we visited the Seal Island and took 4 bags of bread. The chief cook was so overjoyed at the bread that I took a picture of him. The seafarers also love getting toques at Christmas time. One seafarer, on the Osaka Bay commented, "incredible toques!" If you read our ship reports around Christmas time you'll often see the seafarers proudly displaying their toques. I remember hearing about one seafarer who wore a toque on each foot and one on his head when he went to bed!

Many times we receive gratitude from the seafarers for coming to visit with them. We can also tell how well a visit went if they escort us to the deck when we're leaving. No matter how they show it, we truly appreciate the show of gratitude from the seafarers. It's nice to know that what we do has an impact on them. But, the main thing is that they hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; that's why we're there and that's why we visit with them, give them gifts and bread. We also, as a ministry, express our gratitude to you, our supporters, for toques, help with wrapping gifts, attending AGMs, donating sweaters and other clothing, and financial support.

Blessing to you all,  
Grant Sandeman-Allen