

# THE JOEL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

WORLD WIDE NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST MISSIONS

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My latest furlough started out without any glitch. USA bound, the flight made only three short island stops and then headed out to Hawaii. Being a heart patient, I was listed among the wheelchair passengers. Upon arriving in the Honolulu airport, the wheelies were pushed through the crowd of passengers racing toward the Immigration and Custom Inspection area. That was one of the perks of the Disabled. After picking up my luggage in Honolulu, my wheelchair pusher asked me about my next flight, I told him that it would be two hours later and he then left me. I ended up pushing my own wheelchair with my luggage and carry-on baggage on top. After what seemed like an hour of searching for my flight gate, a security guard pointed to the end of the huge terminal. I had to stop three times to hyperventilate my racing heart before getting to my gate. Then and there, I truly realized the meaning of the word "Helpless" and the Lord's calming presence alleviated all my self-pity and anxiety.

The flight from Honolulu to the Mainland was uneventful, but a much needed time to relax after the walk-a-thon in the Honolulu Terminal. When I changed flight in San Francisco, I had more time to relax until the next stop in Seattle, Washington. Again, I got on a wheelchair and beat the other passengers to immigration, then the luggage carousel. Picking up my luggage, I thanked my wheelchair pusher and to my relief, I saw the exit door right in front of me. Pulling along my luggages, I stepped outside and was greeted with the deafening noise of car and bus engines and horns. Fortunately, my niece and her daughter saw me and immediately drove over and picked me up. I spent a few days with them before another relative arrived from Oregon and together, we drove from Seattle to Vancouver, WA, where we attended my grand niece's wedding. There were hundreds of Micronesians present, representing both families of the newly weds. The reception was truly grand. A table, as long as the huge building, was loaded with International Cuisine: Island, American, Indian, Hawaiian, and all kinds of delicacies. It was also a time of reunion as I was able to reacquaint with a few of my Bible Students that I taught back at The Harvest Baptist Bible Institute on Guam. Many of them have married and settled in the US with children and families. Before we parted ways, one of the HBBI Grad preachers asked me to preach to all the former students and the others who flew in for the wedding and we had a great Sunday morning service in an apartment.

From Washington, I flew to Cedar Rapids, Iowa where my daughter and her sister-in-law picked me up and drove me to her house. I guess it's normal to blame jet lag on the next bloober that happened. Upon entering Sherry's house, I stumbled onto the stairwell of the basement and freefall 12 steps, with the help of gravity, to the basement floor. Instantly, my daughter and the other girl were shouting hysterically beside me, thinking that I had passed out or something worse. I calmly assured them that I'm alright and there was nothing broken and no pain at all (I still believe in miracles). I stayed one week with my daughter and realized that I needed to refill some of my heart medicines. When she took me to a nearby clinic and when they found out that I'm a heart patient, the nurse referred me to a hospital with a Heart Center on one of the floors. The attending Doctor decided to admit me to do some lab tests and when he heard about my chest pains, he ordered several heart tests for the next 48 hours. After taking the last test, called the Stress Test, I felt like I just ran a marathon race. I was given a few shots of meds that supposed to subject my heart to simulated stressful activities like running, jumping, push-ups, swimming, etc. Before discharging me, the doctor asked what I plan to do in the states and when I told him about traveling from state to state, visiting churches, he ordered me to immediately go home and spend a month of bedrest and refrain from any strenuous activities for a year. I decided to obey the doctor, rather than be sorry, that is why I have to abort my four-months furlough and return to Pohnpei. One of my friends, The Abrahamsons, who taught Bible with me on Guam, took me to his home in Tipton, IA, where he and his wife introduced me to his home church—The Tipton Bible Church, his pastor and church family. We played a special harmonica/guitar special in their church and I gave my testimony.

I had longed to visit many of you on this furlough, but it was not meant to be, so I hope you understand that this time, the priority is my health. The Lord amazingly touched the hearts of many fellow believers and missionaries to expedite my return trip. I am deeply indebted to all of them, especially the Zimmers, missionaries to Yap, who provided their frequent travel mileage. God is so good in taking care of His servants, even untangling the mistakes they made.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR PRAYERS, FAITHFULNESS, AND LOVE FOR THE LORD AND HIS SERVANTS. MAY THE JOY AND BLESSINGS OF THE LORD BE YOUR PORTION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.