

## **Carol Witthun's Guam Chronicle – June 2020 Edition**

Hafa Adai from Guam!

When I look at this picture, I cannot help but think of the phrase from the Disney song in the movie *Aladdin*, *A Whole New World*. So much has changed globally since I wrote my March prayer letter. We have become a world of face masks, social distancing, jobs losses, an unstable economy, closed schools and businesses, graduation cancellations and Zoom meetings. All of this has caused many people to feel fear, anxiety, distress, isolation, and depression. I am excited that I work for a ministry that is broadcasting programs that give a message of hope to those who are hurting around the world. Because people have been forced to stay at home, they are now looking for programs on their radio, their phone and social media sites that will ease their fear and anxiety and answer their questions about life and the coronavirus. TWR is doing just that.



How has this “event” affected life on Guam and me personally? The virus “arrived” on Guam on March 15 when the first 3 cases were diagnosed. However, Guam began feeling the economic effect of the virus before that date with a major drop in tourism because visitors from Japan, Korea and China (the first countries in the world to experience the virus) were not coming to visit Guam anymore. When the virus hit Guam, Governor Leon Guerrero worked with the Guam legislature to quickly implement safeguards to try and prevent the spread; schools and colleges were closed immediately, non-essential businesses were closed including shopping malls, and eating establishments became drive thru, pick-up or delivery only – no eating inside. Limitations on the number of people who could meet forced the cancellation of church services. Many of the churches, including mine, went “on-line.” As of the writing of this letter (early May), there have been 154 cases on Guam with 5 deaths and 124 released from isolation.

Because TWR Guam does “communication work,” we were considered an “essential business” which allowed us to stay open and continue our broadcasts. However, the staff had travel documents that they needed to have on their person when travelling to Merizo in case we were stopped. Many of the staff worked from home; for the most part I did too. When people were at the site, we made sure that we cleaned surfaces and wore masks if we were going to be closer than 6 feet to a person. We have also had a lot of video meetings. Lauren Libby, TWR’s President & CEO, has been hosting Zoom meetings with the TWR global staff on a regular basis to give us words of encouragement and updates on what is happening with TWR’s ministry globally. With the time difference, it was happening at 10:30pm Guam time (my bedtime), but I still joined in the video meeting. It was great to see TWR staff from around the world participating in the meeting.

At times, grocery shopping has been a challenge because it is taking longer for deliveries, by ship, to reach Guam. Even essential things like dairy products can run out of stock before the next shipment comes in. There is a limitation on the number of people who can be inside shopping for food. Wearing masks is required for doing any type of “in-person” transaction. The good news is gas prices have dropped considerably on Guam to \$2.97/gallon (compared to \$4.79 before the virus). Because the curve has flattened here, Guam has begun the slow process of re-opening. Hopefully, people will be careful, and we will not have any setbacks.

I was supposed to be traveling to the States in May/June for a wedding, vacation, to meet with supporters, and to do global budget work at TWR's office in Cary, NC. The wedding was postponed, and my vacation plans were cancelled because the place where I was going to stay was shut down with no dates of when it will re-open. Out of concern for my health in traveling so far (Guam to NC) and the length of travel time (38 hours with multiple connections), TWR Cary urged me to cancel my trip – which I did.

I still have the global 2021 budget project to do, but it will happen from Guam now. This project involves preparing CSV files for all TWR's global budgets (Asia, Africa, Europe, USA and Latin America) that are imported and posted into our finance software. For a global ministry, you can imagine that is a lot of line items. There is a line item for each account number used for each month. So, if one budget package used three different account numbers



budgeted over 12 months, that's 36-line items. Most departments have multiple budget packages and most fields of service have multiple departments. I think you get the picture.

TWR is now broadcasting the gospel in more than 275 languages. Isn't that amazing!? More people are getting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ in their heart language. TWR recently updated their website ([www.twr.org](http://www.twr.org)). The opening scene is drone footage of the Guam site. It is a great view from the sky of our transmitter site! At the top of the TWR home page you will see a ribbon where you can click on a link that gives you information on how TWR is responding to COVID-19. Special fundraising has been happening to pay for programming produced in multiple languages (including several in Asia) related to the coronavirus. If you go to [www.twr360.org](http://www.twr360.org) you can listen on-line to many programs prepared by our partnering broadcasters which will keep you informed, encourage, and inspire you during this pandemic.

In closing, I want to thank you for your continued prayers and financial support. In one of Lauren Libby's recent global addresses to the staff via video, he mentioned that despite the global pandemic and economic hardships that everyone is experiencing, people are continuing to give to TWR's ministry. Thank you!

The ways you can connect with me are by personal email ([witthunc@yahoo.com](mailto:witthunc@yahoo.com)), Facebook, and Zoom. (If you want to chat with me live, send me a message and we can work something out; I have a Zoom account.)

In His Service,

Handwritten signature of Carol Witthun with a smiley face.