

The Master's Mariner

Autumn 2011



Caring for seafarers
around the world

Flying Angel House is Sold!

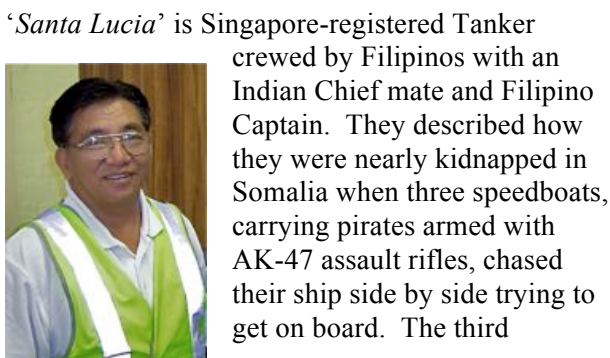
In the previous edition of 'The Master's Mariner', I also described the circumstances that led The Sydney Bethel Union to offer Flying Angel House for sale and to seek an alternative location for us from which to operate our ministry.

On 5th September, contracts were exchanged and Flying Angel hose was officially sold. The terms of the sale permit us to remain in Flying Angel House as tenants until 30th June 2012, by which time we trust that a new venue will have been found, purchased and made ready for this, the next phase of our ministry.

Please pray that a new, ideal venue will soon be found and the move will take place smoothly.

Chaplain George Gayagay

Recently I visited some crew members who shared with me how dangerous life at sea can be:



'Santa Lucia' is Singapore-registered Tanker crewed by Filipinos with an Indian Chief mate and Filipino Captain. They described how they were nearly kidnapped in Somalia when three speedboats, carrying pirates armed with AK-47 assault rifles, chased their ship side by side trying to get on board. The third

Engineer, David, demonstrated how the Captain steered the ship to swing left and right swirling the water violently behind and around so that the speedboats capsized and sank. David said the pirates' goal is to get one of their number on board the ship with his rifle, who would then hold the crew hostage, call his back up so that in minutes the ship would be surrounded by 20 or more speedboats and then the pirates would then kidnap the ship. After spending time debriefing and counselling them, we prayed – giving thanks that they survived the attack.

Three Crew sacked by their Captain. On this visit, crew members told me that their Captain has a very bad temper and that he keeps insulting the Filipino crew, accusing them of being lazy and ignorant; this was stressing them out. In May he sacked and sent home three Seamen with a bad report. Thankfully, their shipping agent in Manila was suspicious of the report and decided to notify authorities in Sydney to discern the truth before he sent replacements. When the ship returned to Sydney, an official went on board and asked the Captain to discuss his problems with the crew. When the Captain refused to do so, the official identified himself to the crew and asked them about their problems with the Captain. They described a litany of health and safety concerns. The official arranged for the Captain to be replaced after the completion of the next leg of their voyage. The crew were jubilant at these turn of events. When the vessel returned to Sydney, I met the new Captain – the crew were so happy and appreciative that they invited me to join them for dinner after I had driven them into the city.

Chaplain Jong Nam Jo

Although many stressful things happened in my personal life, on the other hand my ministry remained wonderfully stable. I sold my house in Concord and moved closer to the city; and in July, my mother, who was living with us, passed away. Although these stressful things piled up, one after the other, I



was thankful that I was able to cope well. I am so glad that my mother had entrusted her life her Jesus many years before. Because of that, I was able to grieve her passing with hope and thankfulness to God.

I would like to share some of the things that have happened during my ministry over the past few months. I try to base my ministry on the word of God, and try to do good works and kindness to others. I met an Indian chief cook at The Mission who was flipping through the Bible. I asked him what part of the Bible he was reading and our conversation turned to discussing the Bible. He told me that he was unsure about Jesus Christ's resurrection and his identity as the Son of God. We had a very helpful conversation! I asked him about his life and, with him, prayed for him and his family there.

When I was visiting crews, I met a chief engineer who had recently become a Christian. For that evening I spent most of my time with him, helping and encouraging him to minister to his fellow crew during their time together. Suddenly, he grasped my head and begun to pray! After my surprise, I prayed for him too!

One Saturday evening I spent a little time with some Chinese friends as shown in the picture below. One of the younger crew members was asking about the Bible and its contents, so I asked him if he would like me to explain the Bible to him – he said, 'Yes, please!'. As we discussed the Bible, other seafarers became interested in our talk. That night many Chinese friends took a free copy of the Bible in their own language.



Chaplain Jack Starmans

In our work with The Mission, we meet many people, some of whom are not seafarers. Recently, I met Mick, who is a construction boss from a building site at Port Botany. We got into a discussion and he told me a little about his life.

He's one of those guys like Nathanael (in John 1:47) - what you see is what you get! He had been involved in church things as a boy. We talked about Jesus and what his death on the cross meant for us. He hadn't read much of the New Testament, so I encouraged him to read the book of Mark. The following week I met some of his mates and I was able to talk with one of them. He and Mick agreed to read Mark's Gospel together, at smoko. God willing, they will!



Recently I spoke with a Chinese First Officer. Another MTS Chaplain gave his Bible to him and he has read it several times. The boss once told me that we are like links in a long chain towards faith. I pray that I was another link in his chain towards a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That the same night I met with a Filipino from a crew whom we see regularly. As we talked about Jesus, I asked him, 'If you were to die tonight, and God was to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?', what would you say?' He didn't need to 'phone a friend', but rightly understood the answer to be, 'Because Jesus saved me.' He seemed to have a genuine faith, but hadn't taken a Bible on board, so I gave him a copy of Luke's Gospel and some Bible reading material. We prayed together and he was very happy.

Chaplain Un Hui Tay

Thank you for your prayers & partnership in the gospel.

In the previous edition of 'The Master's Mariner', I told you about a Chief Cook's desire to know more of Jesus Christ. After 3 meetings with him, he told me that he wanted to put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. On 27th June, I visited him and the ship's steward and both of them committed their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ! The angels in heaven rejoiced (Luke 15:10)!



A month later, their vessel returned to Port Botany. The Chief Cook called me and expressed his desire to be baptised. Unfortunately, time constraints meant the arrangements could not be made in time,

but I was able to spend two hours with him explaining the Scriptures and strengthening his faith. He is so appreciative of our Mission To Seafarers ministry, especially our desire to minister to the spiritual as well as the physical needs of seafarers. For that, he gave thanks and praise to our Lord Jesus Christ!

After I drove him back to his vessel, I took the opportunity to visit the Steward and presented him with a Bible (he had requested one in June) and some Christian literature. I reminded them to read the Bible, the literature and to pray. I may not see the Chief cook again because he will be signing off in Singapore in August. Please uphold them in your prayers, that they will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You may remember that, in July, Sydney experienced some wild weather. We had our wettest July in 61 years. Due to the dangerous conditions, Port Botany closed. No vessel could arrive or leave the port. Consequently, a number of vessels were stuck in Port Botany for a week, while some others were stuck out at sea.

Mr C. is the Chief Engineer of a vessel that berthed just before the port's closure. He is from Taiwan likes to visit The Mission and the city. He invited me to have lunch on board the vessel and introduced me to his new Captain. We had very good time of conversation and interaction for the next three days (*that's what I call a long lunch! – ed*). They were very happy to receive Gospel literature and DVDs. I hope to renew our friendship when they return to Sydney.

The following week, while visiting crew, I visited a vessel and found the Captain, Chief Officer, and Second Engineer together in the ship office. After introducing myself, they expressed their delight to meet someone from their homeland of Malaysia. There was a sense of bonding and comradeship among us. As usual, we started our conversation on something light. Then the Captain asked me, 'What do you think, will the world end in 2012?' He must have been reading about the movie '2012' and other New Age speculation on the Internet.

His invitation gave me a good opportunity to share the Gospel. I explained how Bible says that we are indeed living in the last days, which began with Jesus' death and resurrection and which will end with his return in glory. I explained that Armageddon is not a future event, but that it took place when Jesus conquered death and so gave Satan his death blow. No-one knows when Jesus will return but, when he does, it will be to raise people for judgement. Those whose lives are entrusted to Jesus as Lord will be raised to life, but

those who have refused him will be raised to condemnation. It is quite simple – if we have wanted Jesus in this life, we will have him then; if we don't want him in this life, we won't have him then. In terms of Jesus, people will get what they've wanted in this life. After sharing, explaining and answering their questions, the Captain was very moved and requested a Bible. He wants to know more who Jesus is. I am looking forward to seeing him again when he returns to Sydney. I will value your prayers for these 'seeking' seafarers and for the Holy Spirit's leading as we continue to minister to them.

Chaplain Toshi Yano



Toshi doesn't like having his photo shown, but he loves horses, so ...

During our ministry we learn a great deal about the life of a seafarer. They endure great sacrifices in order for the world to operate normally. A primary example is the pressure it places on family relationships. A life spent mainly out at sea presents a huge difficulty for contact with loved ones. Twenty years ago, it was common practice for seafarers to be locked into contracts with shipping companies for periods of 15 months at a time. Recently these practices have been relaxed to a 9 - 10 month period with a break of 2 - 3 months between contracts. Unfortunately, there is no source of income during these breaks. Therefore, it is not unusual for seafarers to extend their respective contracts to periods of two years. This is obviously a very long time to be away from home and a tremendous burden for the seafarer and his family to endure.

I encountered a good example of these difficulties while on a visit to a Turkish gas tanker that had come at port. It was around 3:00 pm and many of the crew had gathered in the mess room for afternoon tea. People were talking very freely about their lives.

The Chief Engineer was, perhaps, the most open speaker. He told us about his family, how he was

the proud father of a beautiful girl of eight years, and we were privileged to be shown a picture of 'the apple of his eye'. As he spoke, he became increasingly open about his desire to leave the sea and to meet his daughter's longing for him to come home to stay. Although he would lose the benefits of his current income and status, and risk unemployment when back in Turkey, what price can be put on a daughter's longing for a father?

This reminded me of the time when a Japanese seafarer told me of his experience with his young son. He had joined a ship when his son was two years old and they had a wonderful relationship together. As he neared the end of his contract he longed for the sight of his son running up to greet and hug him. However, when he returned, he did so to a son who had forgotten who he was and shied away from him, rejecting any form of embrace. It was a very painful event and made him question his choice to become a seafarer.

Going to sea can be financially rewarding, but relationally and emotionally catastrophic.

Sadly, when our bus returns the seafarers to their vessel, it is not uncommon to hear them liken their return to their ship to a return to a gaol or prison.

It is a very important point for staff here at the Mission to Seafarers to seek to understand the seafarers' predicaments and to seek to provide a caring, 'family' atmosphere for them at all times. The Principal Chaplain and all staff at The Mission pray for the well-being of seafarers throughout the world and their safe passage home to their families.

The MtS Consultative Forum 2011



Every two years or so, the Mission holds a 'Consultative Forum', at which delegates from the world's different regions meet together to discuss the Mission's future direction.

In his welcome, the Secretary-General (The Rev. Tom Heffer) wrote, '*Without doubt we are entering one of the most exciting and challenging times in the history of The Mission to Seafarers. Our meeting together this year offers us an important opportunity to discuss vision and strategy as we explore the direction the Mission must take in the 21st Century.*

As our care for seafarers and their families cannot be allowed to stand still, so we are further challenged financially to provide the resources required to offer spiritual and practical help, not only in their everyday lives, but also in the current increasingly violent circumstances that piracy threatens.

By God's Grace we hold this responsibility in our hands and the outcome of our deliberations is fundamental to the help we are called to offer seafarers in the years ahead.

In the meantime, this comes with my prayers and best wishes for your safe travel and for our successful collaboration in mapping out together the future of The Mission to Seafarers.'

The programme included sessions to do with:

- MtS' Core Statement;
- ICMA (International Christian Maritime Association) Code of Conduct;
- Christian witness in a multi-religious world;
- Care of crews;
- IT and communications for seafarers;
- Fundraising, PR and Communications;
- The role of Liaison Bishops;
- Consideration of various Regional Constitutions and Councils;
- Vision for the future; and
- Piracy.



The Australian delegation to the MtS Consultative Forum 2011: Graham Miller (Townsville); Ian Porter (Sydney); Garry Weatherill (Liaison Bishop)

As usual, the Aussie contribution was 'invaluable' (my words!) in making the Forum a very helpful, and therefore, highly successful meeting!

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