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Also this season we could talk to sailors about the Gospel. In this Newsletter you can read it in the following reports. We hope that you'll enjoy reading these fine stories. Should you have a wish to know more about the work or want to react to one of the articles, feel free to contact us. We'd love to tell you more about our work in the ports by coming to visit your church or fellowship. On the website you can read how to contact us.

Delfzijl and Eemshaven, 'A small church on the quay-side'

How good it was to have Gabriel coming to our home for a short visit. He is the man who, during his furlough last Spring, took quite some Bibles with him to his church in order to give them to friends who couldn't afford one. Through this action of his I have come in contact with Gabriel's pastor in the Philippines. The ship on which Gabriel sails is called Seaway Moxie and was also the first ship we visited today. To our regret we couldn't meet Gabriel for he was asleep in his cabin for a much needed rest. The watchman however was so kind as to pass on our greetings to our friend. There on the ship we were able to speak to quite some people about Jesus and could also pass on Bibles, woollen hats and a bottle ship. On some ships, because of all the hectic on board, we were not



welcome. But still, we did tell some people something about the Gospel. On the ship Devos Start we had a conversation with an Officer from Friesland. To him all religions were the same. That didn't quite suit my colleague Harm, who was with me, and he started up a conversation with this officer. He started by telling about the many prophecies about Jesus in the Old testament which without fail had all been fulfilled. He also mentioned the prophecies that had been given for the present time and how we can see them being fulfilled around us. It all resulted in a lively conversation. On that ship was also a sailor from the Philippines and I asked the officer if I could speak to the man and he responded in a positive way. And so it happened that a certain Joel, busy with a painting job, was suddenly called up to the bridge. As the officer now was involved in a deep conversation with Harm, I had a good talk with Joel about the power of prayer. In spite of all the social media that connect sailors with their homeland, prayer is still the most powerful weapon that we Christians have. Joel was glad to receive a Tagalog Bible, which was my present to him. The souvenir bottle ship which we handed to the officer was given a nice place on the bridge. In leaving we asked Joel if he could come with us to the car. There we handed some woollen hats to him and for his friends. When asked if we could pray for him, he answered: "Yes, of course!"

And so it happened that the three of us, standing there on the quay-side in prayer, were asking God for protection for Joel's family, for Joel himself and the crew. "Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in the midst of them". In that way, the little spot on the quay-side became, for just a moment, our little church. This morning I read in Romans chapter 10 verse 11: "no one who believes in Him will be put to shame". Also in verse 13: "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved".

We were privileged to share this nice Gospel message with many crewmembers. God is good.

Jan Peter and José Kapteijn.

Itinerant ship-visits.

Semester 5 at the Bible College is the time to engage in practical work. My class mates have all gone to various countries in different continents. I was scheduled for a place in Rotterdam. Having to move house to Rotterdam Zuid through circumstances, this didn't seem to come in handy at that time. But God knows all about my plans. The place where I had to do my practical work was cancelled and so I thought: Why not ask to work in the ports of Rotterdam with the SCFS? With enthusiasm on both sides this plan was accepted. Thanks to my having moved to Rotterdam South, this now proved to be a bonus. As you might know, I have a fervent heart for missions. The many conversations with the seamen proved and confirmed this. All the more by seeing how thankful men were when



meeting up with our group. This also became evident by giving a clear explanation of the Word to them, answering their questions which in turn prompted them to start reading the Bible for themselves. What a power there is in the Gospel! Because we do not teach or give promises in general but point to the Word itself, this touches many with this wonderful power. They themselves now start reading the Scriptures in a new light, looking as to what their position is in the Bible. When probing a bit concerning their scripture knowledge, by many it was obvious that they had no assurance of salvation and that by works this should be obtained. Well, it does not

function this way. During such an "instructive" coffee break, two sailors became much concerned when discussing certain Bible passages. "This verse was never explained to me. It is clearly written, this command of God. Why is the church functioning in a different way?" This question captivated them so much that they didn't want to go back to work until they had (the beginning of) an answer. Not a day of ship-visiting passes without eyes being opened during conversations.

Michiel Kramers.

Amsterdam 1

On the ship Leia the Bible-study group would like to receive 15 copies of the Bible in Tagalog and English for the crewmembers. My friend Marien is willing to go and I offered to go with him. In the past we have often made such journeys together and so we make a plan to go to Amsterdam on a Thursday evening. It would also be a nice break for me as I had been sick in bed the previous week with fever and a bad cough. I was thinking being away even for a day would do me good, in this way I was thinking. We learned that the next day, the ship would still be there waiting for permission to leave the port. Marien then made some official calls in order to visit other ships as well. Before we enter the docks, we prayed. We want to do this specific work being dependent on what God would have for us, asking to be led by Him to meet the right persons. We also prayed for my health as an extra. I still felt some light fever and the coughing tired me. We arrive at the first ship and a female officer with another person is on deck. They are in the process of discharging the ship's cargo of maize and the officer explains that our visit is not convenient, also because everybody is asleep. Soon a third crewmember appears and we give him a tract and a booklet with 25 bible stories in his language. All three persons come from India. The female officer is wearing a scarf and confides she is a Hindu and believes, when she dies, her energy will come back in another being to live on earth once again. By means of a cardboard cube showing a short story in pictures, we have, even when not welcome on deck, used the opportunity to explain the Gospel. Then we go to visit the next ship. Here a Greek officer brought us to the mess room (a large public place) and we were invited to a cup of coffee. Our Greek friend was given a "dollar-tract". On one side was printed a huge sum of money and on the other side a short explanation about the Christian faith, ending with the question: where will you be when you leave this earth? The Greek officer went back to the gangway and we were sorry we couldn't speak to more people. In leaving the ship, we again met our Greek friend there at the gangway and had a short conversation with him. He was reading in the small Greek Bible we had given him. God's Word will not return void or empty!

Having arrived at our third ship, a car-carrier, we received a warm welcome from the Third officer. He is now 4 months on the ship and in two weeks will be 27. He must stay on board another 2 more months before he can return to his girlfriend in Vladivostok.

They plan to marry soon. He has been away from home 6 months and commented: "it is a lonely existence here with new crewmembers arriving and going" For him it is a welcome distraction when people come for a visit and to



listen to him, being interested in his career. We again could talk about the Lord to him and were invited to the bridge. Here we continued our conversation, leaning over a "water-chart" as you can see in the picture. Then we said good bye and started on our journey home. On the way in the car, coughing and sneezing, I came to realise that this was the first time that evening that I again had that cough. During our visit I hadn't coughed at all nor had felt any fever. Our prayers had been answered. That in itself was a great encouragement to me. God hears our plea's, He was there with us and even now on our way home. But He is also with the crew who soon will be sailing over the globe on the high seas.

With friendly greetings, **Martijn Schenk.**

Amsterdam 2

Last January Michiel and I tried to get aboard a small coaster. That time however we had no luck but to my surprise the ship was back in port in the month of June, giving me another chance to meet the sailors. This was at first a challenge, for walking over barges and climbing some ladders I finally did get aboard the ship. The crew were Egyptians and had Greek officers. In the mess room the cook waved us a hearty welcome but in sitting down on a



bench nearby I got a fright for I saw a nasty black stain on my trousers. Somewhere on the way I must have come in contact with a steel cable or so. But the ship's engineer, sitting nearby, put me at ease by saying: "Calm down, wait a minute, I know a perfect way to solve this problem". And sure enough, after treating the stain with a substance it was completely clean. Great stuff this and I thanked the engineer several times. After this we were invited to sit down in the mess room to share the midday-meal. During this lunch we spoke about several subjects. The engineer rose to leave the room for he needed to go back to work again. While thanking him again for his cleaning action,

something prompted me to say: "once my heart was smudgy and dirty but now I know that my heart is clean through the work of Jesus on the cross. We all need Jesus in order to die with a clean heart!" He gave me a strange look and quickly disappeared. Was I maybe a bit too direct to him? But on the other hand I believe that also this Egyptian Muslim needs the Gospel and this situation was a good opportunity as any. A few of the crewmembers took some of the Arab Bible literature from the mess room table. I pointed to a chapter in the Bible where in Genesis 16 the story of Hagar is telling about an Egyptian woman who said : "you are really the God that looks after me". I then said: by this Spring of water she had seen God who cared. God is a caring God! After a pause I continued: Also the story of Abraham can be found here who was willing to sacrificed his son. It is all to be found here in the Bible. Muslims know this story like no other. When the Greek officer again entered the mess room, the cook shouted: "now you must tell a Greek story from the Bible to our officer". But before I had the chance to do so, the officer, in an almost bored way said: "Listen, I am busy but the whole of the New Testament is one complete Greek story and don't worry about me, I am already a Christian". He then showed us the cross hanging from his neck and ran off again. I saw by the expression of the cook's face that this man now had a greater respect for the Greek officer. I needed to leave shortly after that and said goodbye. A few days later the cook is on the phone. "When are you coming again?". I cannot spare the time just now but I hope to meet him in our port shortly.

With greetings, **Marien Gijsbertsen.**

Region IJmuiden

The British captain of a mega Cruise ship frankly tells me not to be a believer but that he appreciates very much our work among his crew. He has given us permission to come aboard so he gets a bottle ship souvenir and craft fully made by our senior worker, Gerrit Huisman. The crew's mess room was the place where many a person could be provided with a Bible in his own language, mostly in Tagalog or Indonesian . We pray for many personally. On a Russian bulk carrier we pray for the ship's master and later for the first mate. Both are Orthodox believers and are surprised by this personal attention. A Philippino captain invites me and Anneke for a lunch aboard the ship,



asking also if I could bring a short message from the Word of God. I would have loved to but after talking to Anneke waiting in the car, we decide not to accept the invitation. To our regret, Anneke just cannot climb the gangway. It is too dangerous in her condition. It is frustrating to her! Back on-board I briefly explain from the Bible about the blessed assurance that God gives to each person individually, including Philippino sailors. After that I pray for the captain and the crew in a circle holding hands, all grown up fellows! Later Anneke hands out bags of clothing. On a giant Danish Container ship (15000 containers) we could after many years renew our acquaintance with an old Philippino brother seaman. His desire is to celebrate the Lord's Supper with us. Excellent, we share the

same wish, but where do we celebrate it? "In your cabin?" , I ask. His answer is: "No, in the crew's mess room" Ehh, good idea. I give a short explanation about the bread and wine, the body of Christ. The other crewmembers are having their lunch, but keep their ears tuned to everything we say. One could almost hear them think: "what now is happening here "? The Lord's Supper is a REMEMBER –meal and an ANNOUNCEMENT-meal. In this we proclaim, also towards the crew, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ His body for the salvation of all people in every nation, people or tongue. To the crewmembers I could later hand out Anneke's paper bags containing small personal items which were thankfully accepted. We wish you God's blessing and please remain praying for Anneke's health.

Jan and Anneke Best.

Rotterdam 1

Just before Summer I had the chance to pray for the Philippino cook Jason. Being the only Christian on-board, he has a plight fighting loneliness, notwithstanding the fact that he has other shipmates. Complaining a bit about this situation, he says: "meeting people like you, as port-chaplain, builds up my faith, knowing once more that God loves me". Two months later I meet Jason again and he reminds me of the talk we had. I encourage him with things I



I have recently read in the Scriptures myself. It is good to notice that bottle ships live up to their reputation in catching the sailor's attention. This happened last time with Russians and Ukrainians but also with people from India. Not only on the bridge , but in the mess room "ordinary" crewmembers admire it while reading the words on the mounting: may the Lord bless you and keep you in all your ways, with on the other side : greetings from Havenlicht Port Mission and S.C.F.S. All the more however they appreciate the tracts and brochures in their own language of which we always have an ample supply and can change hands during such favourable moments. Surprisingly, the Biblical literature always draws the sailor's attention. What I also notice lately is, that they ask for a Bible for

personal use. We then write a verse of Scripture on the inside cover together with the name of the seaman.

Regardless the great improvement in the means of communication with the “homeland”, many sailors appreciate a visit by us on-board from what they call “The Seaman’s mission”. Especially now during the coming cold winter months. It is great meeting so many people from countries where the Gospel is less known than in ours. We thank God for all these chances. We ask you to continue praying for us.

With friendly greetings, **Wout de Vries**.

Rotterdam 2 ‘a God who leads’

Often I am amazed in the way God leads me to the right ship at the proper moment. Last March Johan and I paid some visits to the ships in the Container port. The last ship that day was a container ship with a Philippino crew. We went aboard that particular afternoon during the coffee break, not knowing if we would meet anyone to talk to.



While chatting to the cook I heard my name being called. I turned around and there was my good friend Eddy. I have known this fine brother for years. He is a great witness for the Lord and leads a bible study group on every ship he works on. He had forgotten to tell me that his ship was calling in at the port of Rotterdam. For me it was a sign of God’s perfect leading. The following day we again went on this ship during lunchtime and could continue our conversation. Together with

another believer Eddy now leads the bible group. They were grateful for the material they had received from us and were glad to have met one another after 4 years. My colleague Johan was very much encouraged by Eddy’s testimony.

With greetings, **Felix Henrichs**.

Amsterdam 3

Yvonne and I, by special invitation of a Philippine friend and his family in the Philippines, were asked to come aboard his ship at quarter past six that evening. Our friend welcomed us at the caretaker’s lodge and together we



walked to the ship. He asked us to join him for dinner straightaway where we also had some good conversations. During the meal Yvonne could witness to him how the Lord had touched her aching knee. Also the Norwegian captain was very friendly and happy to see us. Different sorts of Biblical material were handed out and two sailors received a fine concordance. In leaving, after having been aboard for about two hours, some men accompanied us to the car to receive some clothing. We also prayed with them. With several sailors we remain in contact. One day, on the way to a ship, I was held up in a traffic jam. During my last visit on-board this ship it was extremely hectic and didn’t find an “open door”. I promised to come back and wanted to speak to seven Philippino seamen in particular. So I arrived later than I had planned and just at that moment six men had

taken a break and were walking on the quay-side. I had good talks with them, passing on some literature. God is good. The seventh man was on board and had watch-duty, so I went to look for him. “Do you have a Bible?”, he asked straight away, “for I want to know more about God”. He was very interested when I opened the Bible with him. He also received some fine tracts and booklets. In parting I prayed for him and his family.

During the last period, according to my notebook, we were aboard ships with sailors from Croatia, Poland, Belgium, Italy, Rumania, Russia, the Ukraine, Indonesia, Lithuania, Norway, England, the Netherlands and the Philippines. God leads in every aspect! He is faithful!

Thank you for your prayers and other tokens of fellowship.

With greetings, **Theo en Yvonne van Zuilekom**.

The seafarers mentioned in this newsletter do have in actual life different names. For privacy reasons the proper names are not mentioned. The photo's in this bulletin are printed with permission.

Our deep thanks to: "WIN-NL Seafarers' Ministry", City-Bibles, Dutch Seamen Society, Seamen's Centre Amsterdam, Global Recordings Network, Ark Mission, Evangelism Foreigners Service, The Bible Society, Pocket Testament League, Christian Aid Ministries, Operation Mobilization, Sailor Society and other unnamed organizations, who all in their own specific way, contribute to do the job well.

We would like to ask prayer for the health of all co-workers and their families but especially for: **Anneke Best** and **Jan Peter Kapteijn** to continue in the ministry God has given them to do.

A hearty thanks for all you valuable prayers and other tokens of fellowship. In this way God is working, also through you, in order that sailors can hear **His Word** and accept it. We are grateful towards God for the many chances to be a blessing to seafarers.

'Bible-Fit app', 'Wellness at Sea app' and '5Fish app' available in many languages. You can download for free on smartphone, tablet or computer



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