

From Heaven to Earth



Above: Ray from Philippines - far from home. Looking out the window at a passing cruise liner. He is the cook on board an oil tanker with Indian and Filipino crew. He was very excited to hear a fellow Filipino speaking on our local Christian radio station Life FM, and giving his testimony. (When I saw the radio beside the window I tuned it in to Life FM) Wonderful that at that exact time Alex my Filipino friend in Cork was being interviewed!



Another ship - a world away. A friend Allan on a liner told me that his t-shirt came from the NC Mall. I asked him where that is? He told me that it's the incinerator on board! Many passengers just dump their clothes after a cruise. So, some crew can get clothes for free!!



Above: It was wonderful to bring Christine Joy and her friend Nathan from MSC Orchestra into church in Cork last Sunday. All 3 of us shed tears during the service. God's Word and Presence spoke to all 3 of us so powerfully. Nathan told me that he had only been able to go to church twice in 8 months. Samuel Cowan is Belfast last month had been able to bring Christine to church as well. Praise the Lord for being able to build relationships with crew members from liners which do not seem to grant access to missionaries! The Lord opened a door for us!



Teamwork: Wonderful to have my colleague Pastor Johnson with me yesterday and today. Mel the Filipino cook on a small coaster was really blessed and encouraged meeting us. Today Johnson shared from the Bible and we prayed together with 4 Filipino crew. I think his t-shirt says in Dutch "I am within easy reach". Praise the Lord for the soft hearts of Filipino and other seafarers. Surely they are within easy reach of our Saviour!



As we said goodbye to Mel today he showed us the safety sign for today's cargo of woodchips. It reminds me of how many seafarers tell us that we are a breath of fresh air to them. Long time at sea away from friends and family feels like suffocation for many of them...



Above: When I first went to this ship there was no gangway, so I gave them some literature and woolly hats in a bucket which they lowered over the side. The crew come from Myanmar, Ethiopia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania and Russia! They tested the freefall lifeboat, but there was a problem getting it back onto the ship! In the end the shore crane lifted it onto the deck for them! The Russian captain told me that in a previous port they were near Syria and the ship GPS for navigation didn't work because of the war. They had to use paper charts like the old days. This made me think of how many Christians can forget we are at war. We can rely too much on technology instead of our Bibles. How well do we know our charts? The Polish Chief Engineer seemed very angry as I shared a Gospel illustration, but after discussion he calmed down and admitted that God cannot be blamed for the hypocrisy of many so-called Church leaders. The crew were thankful for me bringing them to the supermarket and changing dollars for them.



Above: A crew member from Kiribati (an island in the middle of the Pacific) emailed me this morning to say that some crew would like sim cards. It was good to meet them again after 6 weeks. They supply Ireland with pineapples, bananas etc from South and Central America. On the left is an Indian crew member. They have around 7 nationalities on board. We had a great time sharing with the crew and praying for the cook Samuel beside Johnson. During prayer the Lord showed Johnson a picture of Samuel's home country and how some people had tried to cast spells on him and his family. Samuel confirmed this and we prayed for any bondages to be broken. Wonderful to think that all of us have the ability to hear directly from the Lord about people we meet. I have heard it said before that people can be 'so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly use'. Nowadays I find most people need to be more heavenly minded! I'm so grateful for Johnson and his lifestyle of prayer and Bible study. Praise the Lord for our Ports being an Open Door for World Mission! God bless all of our missionaries and their families as they reach out in Christian love to seafarers from such a variety of countries.