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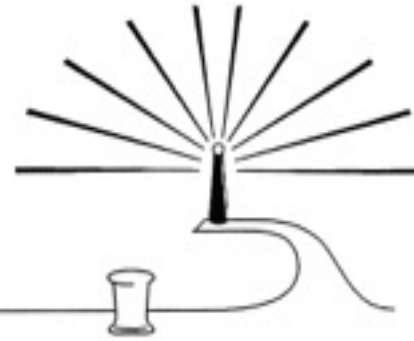
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NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2014 no. 139

FROM THE DESK

Due to personal causes the Bulletin this year didn't appear as regular as you are used to. We hope in the coming year to improve on this. More important rather are the regular appearances of the fine reports in this letter, where you can read about the often moving events of our missionaries when stepping out in faith in the ports.

AMSTERDAM

Each time it is different. You cannot plan things beforehand of what you are going to say aboard a ship. It also happens that I cannot simply recall what I have said in all those talks. As from the day that I first went to the ports (December 1974) I made it a firm rule to fully concentrate on the Lords work that day. He is my "Employer" and I have my thoughts fully focussed on the "Great Commission" that He has given us.

When on my way to the ports I have the radio turned off and ask the Lord that He may send me to the right people. Up till now I can say that the Lord has always sent me to the right persons, namely the ones that He has chosen for me that day. While I am writing these lines, it may be a good idea to tell about some of these answers to prayer of years ago.

So strange enough, contrary to my habit, I did turn on the radio one day and what did I hear? A voice that said: "and don't forget our barge



skippers“. I still know that I continued on driving that night seeking a ship of the inland waterways. It was close to ten o'clock and onboard I met the skipper and his wife and how thankful they were when I knocked on their door at that late hour. In leaving we also prayed. Comes to my mind another story about a seaman from India. I met him again some time back, but that day, once he knew that I was aboard, he quickly walked towards me. I had already struck up a conversation with another crewman but he spoke out saying: "do you have a bible in my language?". In what language, was my question. "Tamil, do you have one in Tamil?". I must tell you that for years I had a Tamil bible in my collection, tucked away in the boot of my car. Just that very morning I was considering not to take it along in my car anymore for nobody ever asked for it. I wanted to remove it from my literature box to make room for other books, when I heard God say: "there is someone who would like to have it!". How happy the sailor was that day. His face was shining as he pressed his bible to his chest.

Some days ago I thought by myself- let me take some extra Chinese bibles with me- and so put an extra carton in the back of my car. Some hours later already ten Chinese sailors from Peking had the privilege to own their own bible on that huge ship that I visited. You should have seen their faces! Often it is hard to begin a conversation with Chinese people but when I tell them that the great- great- grandmother of my grandmother was also a Chinese, happy smiles come to their faces.

Often I also hear people say: "you have come just on the right moment", and in this way I have the privilege to encourage sailors with the words of Jesus. This is our very aim and desire: that they may see the Lord Jesus in and through us. Leaves me to say a hearty "thank you" for your faithful prayers and other tokens of fellowship.

Theo and Yvonne van Zuilekom

REGION IJMUIDEN



Having to battle with some medical implications through which we were limited in a physical way, Anneke and I nevertheless were still able to visit some ships. There was for instance this Chinese Bulk carrier which, after 58 days at sea, had come from Australia to IJmuiden with a cargo of coal for the Tata Steelworks. The captain and his crew are all Buddhists. The captain seems happy to speak to someone other than his own crew, for he invites us to his spacious cabin under the navigation bridge. The Third Officer is sent away to make a special cup of Chinese tea for us, which we accept politely.

We talk about the sea route taken by the ship over the last two months. It is the northerly route above New Guinea, Java sea, Indian Ocean, the whole of the Atlantic from south to north, the English Channel and the North Sea. When the captain discovers that we are "insiders" as to sea traffic, he is very much interested

and wants to know more about the actual purpose of our coming. After presenting him with a nice bottle ship, we tell him about the God we serve, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who sacrificed his Son for us. The man accepts a Chinese/English bible from us, plus "A letter for you" and a CD with Gospel music, all in Mandarin. We

let him read Philippians 4: 6-7. He nods to show he understands. When I ask if I could pray for him, asking God to show him Who He is, he nods again. - Lord, complete Thou thy work!- The crew in the Mess room receives a good amount of Chinese bibles and literature and also a banana box of used clothing.(As always in good condition- well sorted, washed and ironed by Anneke). The captain waves to us for a long time when we leave the ship

On a Russian Reefer moored at the Trawler port, everybody seems busy. One sailor has time for us and accepts gratefully a Children's Picture Bible for his family in Murmansk. He then hastily returns to his work. Quickly Anneke hands him a warm winter coat for the coming trip to the Barents Sea. God bless you!

On a Cruise ship of the Holland America Line which regularly calls in at the new Cruise Terminal of IJmuiden. We know we are always welcome onboard. The E-mail we have sent to the Company, asking to be allowed to come aboard their ships, is always honoured by the Head Office in Florida without exception. So knowing we have received permission to come aboard, we now can provide the Indonesian and Philippino crew members with many bibles, CD's and DVD's as well as literature. The leader of the Christian Fellowship aboard is given many extra copies of the Daily Bread booklets to help him with his bible study group. These meetings are held after work, mostly when the ship is at sea.

It is now more than three years ago, on May the 16th in 2011, that we gave an English bible to an Indian Second Officer onboard a Panamese Bulk carrier. He began to read it straightaway from Genesis 1 to Revelations 22 and afterwards accepted the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour. When his ship was in Narvik, high up in Norway, we mailed him. It was September 2014 and we made the suggestion to pray that the schedule would be changed, that the ship would be discharged at IJmuiden instead of Talbot in England, in order that we could meet one another again. To my regret I noticed on the ATS Internet site that the ship was underway to Talbot. The next morning, as usual, I looked at my computer screen and to my amazement I see that the destination had been changed in the meantime to – IJmuiden-. The ships course had been redirected , parallel to the Norwegian West coast, pointing directly south. The estimated time of arrival- September 15- ! Yes, our Great Employer has everything in His own hand!

On the 16th of September we come aboard and what a glad reunion it is. After a bible study, the three of us celebrate the Lords Supper and take time to pray together. Shortly before leaving, our Second Mate receives a message informing him that he can begin his furlough from this very port. He can go home the day after tomorrow and already a flight has been booked for him from Schiphol to India. On his last day in the Netherlands ,as a surprise, we take him on a short visit to Dordrecht where a full size replica of the Ark of Noah can be visited. Afterwards, at home, we have the evening meal together in our garden and then it is time to drive him to the airport. In the best of moods he goes



through the passport control with a rucksack full of presents for his wife and children. Yes, these are the most wonderful days in the life of a seaman. God bless you!

Jan and Anneke Best

ROTTERDAM

Felix Henrichs sent me a nice testimony, written by a friend who accompanied him during a day of ship visiting. As you may know I go with Felix quite regularly to the ships in the ports of Rotterdam and you may be familiar with the reports about his work. Thursday appeared to be a day like many others. But on the contrary, it proved to be an exceptional day with “a golden edge”. So just come with me, to see how I experienced this day. In the years that I am with Felix I haven’t come across anything like this .

We were underway on the ECT Delta road to visit a large container ship and as always we pray first for openness and for ways to reach the hearts of the sailors. Around 11.30 we stood on the gangway, where right away a sailor came to greet us to show us the way to the mess room where the crew was about to start their meal. Like most times there was a friendly invitation to also join in for this meal and we accepted. Just before starting Felix stood up and asked if he could share something with the men. We were together with eight or nine men. Then followed some precious moments with the seamen quietly listening with open hearts as Felix explained the Gospel to them. After the message there was a happy atmosphere and many a conversation started, also about things that happen daily aboard a ship. I was amazed to see Felix speak with such authority in bringing the message of the Bible. It is very important when the occasion arises ,to maintain a good contact with the seamen and not look at your watch for instance. You should also have the ability to improvise on a program while you have the time. So when the men wanted to leave the table to find some rest before the next shift, we wished them good day, promising to visit the ship on its next call in port, which they appreciated.

When visiting ships, upon entering the area, you need to pass the security people at the gate to receive your stamp. When leaving a ship you need to ask the watchman onboard to also stamp your card so that the people at the gate can know you have been onboard a ship. So in passing the control room we met Lester. He was a young person raised in the Catholic faith and knew something about the Bible but had never read the stories himself. The ones he had heard were the stories the Priest had read in church. Felix went over to sit next to Lester to explain that the Bible is Gods personal “love letter” to him. He was surprised for he had never heard it explained in this way. He listened attentively to what Felix was saying and in



the end he had a good understanding of it. At the end of the conversation , when asked if he would like to receive a Bible, he answered with a spontaneous YES. He was so thankful to receive a bible. After this talk Felix could pray for and with him.

So this was a day describing the life of a port missionary for you, a day with “a golden edge”. God knows the hearts of these people and He will continue to further work out His Word in their lives. With this knowledge Felix finds it a privilege to do this work and we as co-workers can be of help to him. It is just God’s grace to realize this, and on just a Thursday like this it became all very clear to me again.

A hearty greeting from Jaap

ROTTERDAM

Not so long ago on a rainy Monday morning Henk and I walk to our first ship, a medium sized Tanker. We tell the man on watch that we are Christians and that we have some literature with us. This information triggers a positive and happy reaction in this Junior cadet from the Philippines. We are quickly brought to the Chief Officer who is busy working behind his computer. Later we are introduced to Janine, to Jorge and afterwards to Joe Alfred the cook and we hear a wonderful story.

Six weeks previously Jorge, Joe Alfred and Janine happened to see each other for the first time on an airport somewhere between Manila and Amsterdam. They still hadn’t met personally and were waiting many hours in the transit area of an airport. In the end they had a chat, talking about their personal interests and passions and to where they were traveling. In talking about their passion for Jesus and the desire to spread His message, there was this bond between them straight away. It also “so happened” that they were on their way to the same ship, which was waiting for them in the port of Rotterdam. Their common desire was to be a witness through their personal life and by doing their work well.

We want very much to help them with things they might need. In meeting them we hear that they already had received permission, already five Sundays in a row, to have a fellowship- hour with interested crew members. Joe Alfred brings the Word of God and the attendance has increased every week from 17 to 23. We give him a good amount of bible study booklets and some Bibles and New Testaments which are received gratefully.

It is Wednesday night and we go for a second visit onboard the ship. In an air-conditioned room are three men. It is not hard to guess who they are. Hank and I are receiving a warm welcome and are offered a chair and something to drink. They have their prayer night. We join them and in so doing build up one another’s faith. In the end we give them the Tagalog Bibles they have asked for and we observe that they are very much concerned and involved with their fellow crew members. With thankful hearts we go down the gangway later that night .

Other things also happen during these visits ,like for instance the following, which happened shortly after this visit. Things are quiet on deck when we listen to Santi. I have met him twice since last spring. The young Philippino speaks with a soft voice. First we inquire if he is making long hours but these are reasonable. Then about his working contract. “Yes, I stay aboard for 12 months instead of ten because I need the money”. As I am listening, he continues.”Our little boy died”. “When?” “August the fifth last month”. “How old was he?” ”He was born July the twelfth”. I want to make sure I have understood it all well for it moves me deeply. “Yes, he lived three weeks”. With a concerned look on my face I stare at Santi, in disbelief, hardly believing what I hear. He continues: ”There was something wrong with his little heart, he didn’t make it”. Santi talks without any emotions, saying: ”Such things

happen, you know". After a pause he asks if I would pray for his little son. I don't say-no-, and tell him he is in heaven. I ask for the name of the child"- Eban Floyd. I still don't understand even after tells me about his wife. I inquire after the rest of the family. There is his wife and his four year old daughter. "What are their names?".The daughter's name is Shanel and his wife's name Jane Ellen. I say:"Of course we will pray for you". I feel very much involved and concerned and want him to know it.

We meet people from Burma, India, Spain, Lithuania and Greece. It is about the message of hope, also to the people that can be considered poor. People who are so long away from home, worried about keeping things in order there. That produces stress, brings about home sickness, gives one that feeling of not being part of the family anymore. We also must take in account the few hours of uninterrupted sleep that sailors have to put up with on small vessels , and that weeks on end.

That all of us through prayer and giving will become of some meaning to our sailors, by speaking about the hope that only Christ gives, no matter who that person is.

Wout de Vries



more info: <http://www.havenlicht.zending.nu>