

# THE SEAMEN'S POST

DECEMBER 2016

## COMFORTING A SEAFARER WHO LOST HIS SON REV. LEE

It was a very hot late morning when I got a call from Annie Thomas, one of my volunteer ship visitors, about a Filipino seafarer who was tearful because of the death of his 14-month-old son a year earlier. She asked me to make a pastoral visit and pray for him and his sadness, so I visited him right away.

When I first heard this news, I was shocked and completely lost for words to say to this seafarer. Therefore, I parked my car by the river and prayed for him for a while, asking God for wisdom about how to comfort this grieving father. During my prayer, I was reminded of a Chinese seafarer who lost his 12-year-old son two years ago, and God reminded me of the way that I had brought comfort in those circumstances. Even though the facts were different, the loss was essentially the same. So, I decided to comfort the Filipino crewman in the same way.

When I visited the ship, I went to the galley to see him because he was the cook. His name was Rommel and when I greeted him, he welcomed

me. During our short introduction, I told him about my role as chaplain and revealed the reason for my visit. Then I asked him what had happened to his son, and how his family including himself and his wife were doing now. In a calm voice, he told me what had happened to his young boy and shared his troubled mind. Even though he spoke with a calm voice, he became tearful from time to time.

After I heard the whole story I tried to console him. First, I told him that no one can fully understand his pain or sympathize with him because true comfort can only come from someone who has had the same experience. In that sense, I told him that I too could not fully comprehend

his loss because I hadn't lost my son. But I told him that even though no man could adequately comfort him, God could truly comfort him because our Heavenly Father had the same experience of losing His Son on the cross.

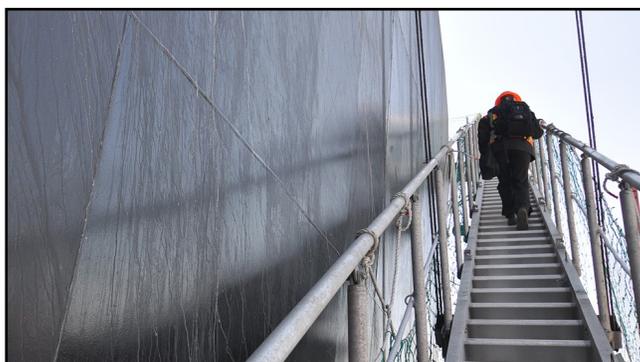
With this statement, I started to explain the Gospel of Jesus Christ using the biblical passage of John 3:16-17 and emphasizing the Father's voluntary loss of His loving Son for us. I told Rommel that was the reason why God could understand his tremendous sorrow and pain about his loss of his beloved son.

After finishing my speech, I asked him how he felt; especially, how could he respond to the gospel? Rommel cau-

“God could comfort him because our Heavenly Father had the same experience of losing His Son on the cross.”

tiously opened his mind and admitted that he never would have thought that his losing his son could in some way be related to God losing His Son Jesus. That's why he never asked for God's comfort, instead he complained to God asking why He took his son so early. But now, he said he could open his mind to God and ask for God's understanding and comfort. That confession naturally led me to ask him if we could pray to God together. When we did so, we both felt God's presence and experienced His comfort through our prayer.

After I came down from the ship, I parked my car by the river again and thanked God for using me to convey His comfort to a seafarer who was hurting.



## FIFTY YEARS OF MINISTRY JANICE HILL

Mission to Chinese Seamen (“MCS”). What does it mean? Fifty years ago, it was a calling to Yun Yong to take the Gospel to his fellow Chinese as they came to Philadelphia on merchant ships. He was so concerned for their hopelessness and loneliness that he started visiting the ships on his own to encourage them with the precious Word of God.

In the course of time, Yun and John Hill became partners in this endeavor and began to reach out to local churches to help. In 1966, the ports were open and anyone could visit on board the ships and all seafarers could go on shore leave. Sometimes the ships took a week or more to unload so it was possible to have an extended conversation with the crew.

I was busy caring for our growing family and so did not become active in the ministry for

many years. However, the Hills had many pleasant visits with the Yong family including picnics at their home. Yun was employed for a time at the Burpee Farm in Doylestown. We would load our family into the Volkswagen van and head for the farm where Yun would give us an abundant supply of leftover fruits and vegetables.

At no time did his passion for witnessing to seamen ever lag. He and John were always actively seeking finance and prayer partners. Once Yun became a Baptist minister other missionaries were needed. One of these was Maynard Lu and a branch of MCS was opened in Baltimore. The Lu family had a home near the port and often entertained seamen there.

Parties and banquets with friends and churches were held where the seamen would come and interact with supporters. Unfortunately, times

have changed and such gatherings are not possible but the love and care for seafarers goes on.

Today, God is using Rev. Byeong Lee and Board member Larry Chang to continue to bring the Word to seamen from many countries and to teach a new generation about sea ministry. Many churches support the work along with individuals who have been touched by this open field of need.

Yun Yong and John Hill are both with our Heavenly Father but the work they began goes on - spreading the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ to officers and crew who spend many months away from their families. My memories of the love and passion of these ministry pioneers reminds me of the awesome ways that God works to grow His kingdom and the honor it is to serve Him.

### THE JOY OF HEARING A CREWMAN'S BORN AGAIN EXPERIENCE REV. LEE

What kind of topics can be discussed in Christian fellowship? There are many which come to mind. For example, children's education, family issues, health, sports, church life, and more can be the main menu for most of Christian sharing. But what about spiritual experiences like becoming born again, struggles with sin, and walking with the Spirit? When was the last time you talked about these kinds of topics with your friends, Sunday school class or pastor?

Even though we share our lives with Christian friends, our fellowship tends to be superficial because we never discuss our real spiritual condition with God in these relationships. Therefore, our Christian life often feels lonely because we have no truly deep friendships within which to share our real life.

The mission to seafarers, in general, consists of two parts: one is evangelism, and the other is discipleship. The relationship of these two cannot be sharply

distinguished, because these two are very closely related to each other. Evangelism is the basis for discipleship, and discipleship is the purpose and goal of evangelism.

Most of my ministry to seafarers is evangelism, but not all the time. In many cases, I meet a Christian on board and enjoy genuine Christian fellowship with them. My talk with Ryan,



Filipino seafarer, while driving on errands in the SCI van, was one of those times that I enjoyed real Christian fellowship with a brother in the Lord.

It was a hot day and Larry Chang and I were occupied with ship visitations. In the afternoon, I got a call from a ship requesting shopping assistance so I went to the terminal and picked the crew up. On the way to a local shopping center, Ryan asked me about my being a pastor. He then shared his experience of becoming born again at his home church the previous winter.

ship, while he was listening to his pastor's preaching, he experienced the Holy Spirit touching his mind with the Word. He suddenly realized that he was unqualified, filthy, and dirty before God. At the same time, he experienced Jesus Christ pardoning him and cleansing him from all of these ugly sins with his precious blood. He felt free before God. Not only did Ryan come to personal faith that Sunday, but also his sister experienced the same thing.

Ryan told me that he has been changed a lot since that time. His goal for life before was to realize his own desires, but now he lives for God's will and God's glory. He got on board before to make money, but now he gets on board to preach the gospel. For this purpose, he established an on board fellowship where he and his shipmates have a Bible study and worship service together. So I encouraged him a lot and prayed for his growth in Christ and his ministry on board.

During his vacation, he went to a worship service one Sunday morning with one of his family members. In the middle of wor-

### A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT HILLARY MCLAUGHLIN

Dear MCS Supporters,

I currently have the privilege of serving as President of the Mission to Chinese Seamen. As I look back on our fifty year history, I see how God uses each of us to spread the Good News and support Christians in their walk of faith. Thinking of the presidents who preceded me - my uncle David Hill and before him my grandfather John Hill - I am reminded how God can use our different strengths to further His king-

dom. I am also inspired by our ability to reach out to the world without ever leaving our own backyard.

While I have only been directly involved with MCS over the past several years, my memories of the Mission go back much farther. When I was in elementary school, I visited my grandparents during the summer. I fondly remember my grandfather patiently teaching me to write Chinese characters as he himself was trying to

learn them. It was a great example of the heart that he had for the Mission.

I must admit that I can no longer write in Chinese, but I pray that I can use the gifts that God has blessed me with to continue his amazing work with seafarers. We are so thankful for the way God has blessed the work of MCS over the past fifty years and I pray for His continued blessings for another fifty years and beyond!

#### Become a Monthly MCS Donor

A gift of \$25, \$50 or \$100 per month can have a significant impact on seafarers who are in spiritual, physical and emotional need. Ask your bank how to set up automatic giving checks. Or write one yourself and send it to:

MCS, c/o Janice Hill,  
White Horse Village, G-163  
535 Gradyville Road  
Newtown Square, PA 19073



Rev. Dr. Byeong Eun Lee earned Doctor and Master of Divinity degrees from Westminster Theological Seminary, and is active in port ministry along the Delaware River.

www.seamistry.org

### PRAYER & PRAISE LOG

- Pray for Rev. Lee's safety as he climbs slippery gangways to board vessels in cold and icy weather.
- Praise God for His mercy to sinners who put their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for Christian crew and officers to have meaningful on board fellowship and meet with God in prayer.

*"For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast"*  
**Ephesians 2:8**

**YEAR END GIVING!**  
As 2016 draws to a close please prayerfully consider how you might participate in this wonderful ministry to international seafarers! Rev. Lee's work depends on your financial and prayer support. It is such a joy to store up treasure in heaven!