

THE SEAMEN'S POST

FEBRUARY 2016

CREW ENCOURAGED IN THE MIDDLE OF DESPAIR REV. LEE

In the middle of November, a ship which had 21 Myanmar crewmen, came to the Packer Avenue Terminal. When I visited them the first day, most of the crew was so exhausted from the long voyage. They had loaded steel coils at a port in China, crossed the Pacific Ocean, traveled through the Panama Canal into the Gulf of Mexico and then around Florida and up the east coast to Philadelphia. It was an almost 40 day journey so most of the crew were burned out from all of the work involved.

To make matters worse, when they finally arrived at the terminal in South Philadelphia, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officer decided not to issue any of the crew shore passes because they did not have U.S. visas. This led many of the crew to feel despair because they had been expecting to go ashore and refresh themselves after the long and ar-

duous voyage. They also were eager to contact their families in Myanmar, who would ask them to go shopping for them in the U.S. So quickly their joy at arriving in Philadelphia had disappeared and been replaced by discouragement.

As a chaplain, I prayerfully considered how I might help these 21 seafarers. What could I do to help them laugh and feel happy? When I first visited them, I could sense their despair and the captain was kind enough to invite me to his cabin for a discussion. He wanted to know how I could minister to them while they were detained on board.

So I suggested a few things. First of all, I offered them Internet access via a WIFI service. Second, I offered to purchase SIM cards for the crew's mobile phones so that they could talk with their families. Third, I offered to go shopping for them if they provided detailed lists and cash to cover the costs.

The captain gladly accepted my offer, and I did all that I had promised. It took almost three hours to activate 21 SIM cards. I spent almost an entire day shopping for the items on their lists. In the end, the entire crew was able to talk with their family members and friends, and

“love itself had changed their despair to hope and discouragement to full joy”

feel happy about the gifts and necessities which had been purchased for them.

Before the ship left the Packer Avenue Terminal, I met with the captain again and he said that they were so lucky to meet me in Philadelphia. Through my help, their needs had been met and the captain acknowledged that this was not simply a port service to seafarers. He saw that love itself had changed their despair into hope and discouragement into full joy. As I prepared to depart, I hugged the captain, blessed his ship, her crew and their families, and their long journey home.



GOSPEL SHARED WITH CHINESE CAPTAIN REV. LEE

It was the first ship visit of the new year. Chinese and Filipino crewmen were on board and some of them wanted to go shopping. Before taking them ashore, I had an opportunity to talk with the captain. When he came upon me while talking with his crew, he greeted me and I wished him a Happy New Year! He returned the good wish and that led us to talk about New Year's resolutions.

The captain shared a few of his hopes for 2016 including his family's well-being and good health, safe voyage for his ship and crew and good wages for his work. I responded by asking him, "Is this just a wish? What if someone made your wishes come true, then what would you

think? Would you believe him?" He said, "Yes." So I talked about the biblical story of God's answer for His people.

After he heard God's story, he shared his personal family background. He was born into a Christian family, and his parents had a deep faith in God, but he was not a believer. He added that his parents are still praying for him to become a Christian.

Suddenly, the captain's eyes were opened and he said, "God is answering my parents' prayer through you. I just wished for earthly wishes without any basis, but God is living and he controls our destiny. I have to put my trust in Him from now

on, and I have to live by faith." He then asked for a Bible and prayer, which were a joy for me to provide.



KOREAN CAPTAIN PLANTS CHURCH REV. LEE

During a bitter cold day in February, I received an email from a Korean captain whose ship was soon to arrive at the Philadelphia port. It was a Wednesday when he finally arrived at the Packer Avenue Terminal with a cargo of steel. The crew consisted of two Koreans and 20 Filipinos.

could enjoy Christian fellowship. Clearly, God had generously answered his prayer!

At first, even though the Filipino men were only nominal Catholics (didn't read the Bible or have a prayer life), they would not join the captain's worship service. So the captain decided to earn their hearts by

Over time, more of the crew joined in worship and soon the captain saw guitars on board. During their free time, the men were learning Gospel songs and organizing a choir that sang together several times a week. The entire atmosphere of the ship was transformed. Praising God had changed their dry and boring life into a vivid and joyful life.

As we met, the captain told a story about how the new onboard fellowship had helped them as they traveled across the Atlantic Ocean. They encountered a huge storm which lasted almost an entire week. The whole crew was terrified. During the Sunday service, the whole crew prayed together and asked God to send his Holy Spirit to help them overcome their terror. He answered their prayers and the onboard Christian fellowship was strengthened.



When I visited the ship, its captain invited me to his cabin and shared his excitement about his ministry on board. Ten months earlier he had been hired and began praying for God to use him to plant a church so he and the crew

could enjoy Christian fellowship. Clearly, God had generously answered his prayer! At first, even though the Filipino men were only nominal Catholics (didn't read the Bible or have a prayer life), they would not join the captain's worship service. So the captain decided to earn their hearts by serving them and treating them kindly. At every port, he bought them snacks. He also never stopped speaking about the benefits of Christian fellowship on board. Finally, a few of the men attended his Sunday worship.

Rev. Lee's Devotion Suffering for Perfection Roman 5:3-5

The Apostle Paul teaches us that our afflictions are used by God to produce endurance, character and a hope that does not disappoint "because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." We who are in Christ will be glorified but before we get to our heavenly home, we experience suffering. It connects our justification to our glorification. And we are made perfect by misery just like Jesus! In ordinary life, God whispers to us, but when we encounter difficult emotional, physical or spiritual events, God is shouting His love to us.

MCS PRESIDENT GOES HOME TO THE LORD

It is with heavy hearts that we report the loss of our President, David Alexander Hill who went home to be with the Lord on November 12, 2015. David was the youngest child of John and Janice Hill and was raised on Walnut Avenue in Wayne, PA. He graduated from Radnor High School in 1983 and attended the University of Pennsylvania and Penn State University, graduating with an Engineering degree.



David worked in the field of computer network technology and resided in King of Prussia with Anne, his wife of 19 years. He succeeded his father as President of Mission to Chinese Seamen in 2005 and spent a decade tirelessly supporting Rev. Lee's work among seafarers. During a long illness and hospitalization, David held firmly to the promise of eternal life he attained at a young age when he received Christ as his Savior.

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 wet weather.
- Praise God for His mercy to sinners who put their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for Christian crew and officers to have discipline to study the Bible and meet with God in prayer.

"Therefore, because we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

Romans 5:1

SAVE THE DATE!

The annual MCS banquet will be held on Saturday, **April 16th** at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, PA. A Chinese dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. Hear stories of hope and transformation. Learn how you can participate in this wonderful ministry to seafarers!