



Micah Alderliesten from Vanderhoof, BC, Grandson of Rev. J.E.F. Dresselhuis, the Ministry's previous chaplain, together with Ernst DeVries and two full time volunteers, Ted Hoekstra and Frank Vink

Canada has just celebrated Thanksgiving Day - a day on which to especially give thanks for God's gifts to us. Not only individuals, but also organizations have much for which to be thankful. For instance, at the Ministry to Seafarers we are thankful for:

- the opportunity to meet sailors from around the world and tell them of God's love for them in Jesus;
- the opportunity to give visiting sailors a copy of the Bible in their own language;
- the opportunity to present sailors in our ports with Christian music tapes and CDs;
- the contribution of clothing, mugs, puzzles, magazines, stuffed animals, etc., received from Bibles for Mission stores in the BC lower mainland and from Smithers;
- the receipt of Chinese DVD/CDs from the Back to God Hour explaining the gospel;
- the participation by most BC and Alberta Christian Reformed Churches in gathering both wrapped gifts and monetary donations for the Christmas at Sea project and your anticipated participation this year!
- the opportunity to hand out approximately 3,000 gifts to sailors during the 2006 Christmas season; and
- the faithful prayer and financial support for the Ministry to Seafarers over the years.

Yes, at the Ministry to Seafarers we have much to be thankful for, and daily we give God thanks for the opportunities for sharing his love that he puts on our path. And thank you for helping to make it possible for us to respond to the opportunities as they arise.

“Do You Understand What You Are Reading?”

- ‘So That They, Too, May Hear’

“Do you understand what you are reading?” That was the question Philip asked the Ethiopian Minister of Finance when he met him on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza (Acts, chapter 8) “**How can I unless someone explains it to me?**” was his response. These words often come to mind when seafarers take Bibles with them aboard their ships. “**Do you understand what you are reading?**”

The Ethiopian invited Philip to come up and sit with him in his chariot so that he could explain what he was reading. “**Then Philip told him the good news about Jesus.**”

In today's world of shipping it's a real challenge to find the time and opportunity to “come up and sit” with the sailors to tell them the good news about Jesus. And so, to help meet that challenge, we recently purchased a large quantity of DVDs from Campus Crusade for Christ. The DVDs, entitled *Jesus, Fact or Fiction - Tough Questions, Compelling Answers* is a 4.5 hour long DVD which explores responses to over fifty of life's toughest questions and includes a copy of the Jesus film.

It is my hope and prayer that by use of these DVDs the Holy Spirit will enable us to come up and sit with the sailors as they read their Bibles so that they, too, may hear the “**good news about Jesus!**” And, just like the Ethiopian did after he received the good news about Jesus, we pray that the seafarers may also “**go on their way rejoicing!**”

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NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2007



Storm in the North Pacific

A Christmas Story

The three Filipino seafarers were waiting in the Ho Chi Minh airport, on the way home for their annual leave. They were showing each other toys which they had bought for their children. One of them had a picture book with Bible stories and looked surprised when I spoke to him, complimenting him on choosing this book for his child.

The other men soon joined in and asked me where I was from. They said that they had been in Vancouver several times. All three men remembered the Ministry to Seafarers, and one remembered the now retired Chaplain Wolfert.

They added that once they were in Vancouver in December, and that they had received shoeboxes filled with gifts. I told them I belonged to one of the churches which prepares these gifts each year, and they said that they had been so pleased with their gift. Suddenly we felt that we had something in common.

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Soon their flight was called and the men moved to the gate to board their plane home. I had to wait a while yet, and as I sat in that waiting room, in Ho Chi Minh City, I felt so privileged for the conversation with the three Filipino seafarers. I reflected on it that when we fill the shoeboxes for the seafarers we little realize how much it means to them.

Seafarers who are far from their homes usually work on ships in order to provide for their loved ones, and can feel lonely while far from their families. If we, because we are followers of Christ, fill and send shoeboxes with small gifts to the seafarers, those shoeboxes become like the cup of cold water which Jesus mentioned in Matthew 10:42.

Anne C. Kwantes, Victoria BC
(A former missionary in the Philippines)



Seafarers also retire! During my ship visits I sometimes meet sailors who are sailing their 'last' voyage, including this German boatswain (standing between the captain and me) who is going home after 42 years at sea! We give him (and the other crew members) a Bible in their own language and a few Canadian souvenirs.



In June, Rev. Simon Wolfert, the Ministry's previous chaplain, received an honorary Life Membership award from the (International) Mission to Seafarers for his contribution to the work among the seafarers.



As a chaplain to seafarers, I am often confronted with harsh realities. Think for a moment of the crew from Bangladesh I met not long ago in Delta Port: twelve days at sea from Japan to Vancouver, seventeen days at anchor in English Bay, then loading coal for shipping to Rotterdam - a non-stop voyage around Cape Horn of approximately 45 to 48 days! What made things worse for this crew was that the captain would not allow them off the ship, not even to visit the Mission so they could phone their families. I asked the captain, "Why not? These men are desperate!" only to be told that he was afraid some would jump ship, and try to make Canada their new home! And because the entire crew was Muslim, a red flag goes up immediately in many ports around the world. Welcome to the world of shipping!



A Chief Engineer (very right) has been at sea for almost 15 months straight. So far the company has been unable to find another officer to relieve him. He's hoping to go home to his wife and four teenaged children soon, but there is a tremendous shortage of maritime officers worldwide. Many are retiring and not enough young officers are available to replace them. There is also a building boom in the ship building industry, putting even more pressure on present crews to man the ships.



Westshore Terminals is the coal terminal in South Delta where I do most of my ship visiting. It started operation in 1970 and that first year shipped a modest 1.5 million tonnes of coal. In 2005, the company shipped a record 20.9 million tonnes of coal! Since 1970 a total of 550 million tonnes of coal has been shipped through Westshore Terminals - representing more than 54,000 trains that were unloaded and 6,800 ships that were loaded!