

The

Your gazette from MCM
Spring 2022

Mooring



REG. CHARITY NO. 1071480

A DEEPER CUT

Imeet Russian and Ukrainian seafarers all the time - and almost always on the same ship. As you can imagine, there would also be Filipino, Polish, Indian, Romanian, and Cape Verdean seafarers with them. A few weeks ago, I was having a conversation with a Romanian seafarer on deck, and was handing him Bibles in a few different languages including Russian. And what he said on the fly stuck with me - *“maybe they will read this and stop the war.”*

What is happening in Ukraine is sad, and horrible, and disgusting, and shameful! And we need to be praying for this war to end. We need to be praying for Ukrainians as well as Russians. And when we do, we need to be mindful of Ukrainian and Russian seafarers waiting to return home - to a home which may not be the same - walls, roofs, and loved ones may be missing. So, when we try to wrap our minds around the rationale behind this war, let us not be easily swayed by cable news and social media. We

need the attitude of my Romanian seafarer friend - an attitude of prayer for the Word of God to cut the hearts of men, convict them of sin, stress upon their need for a Saviour, pursue their hearts unto repentance, and lead them to receive the peace that transcends all understanding from the Only God Who saves sinners.

As I pondered upon the great wars of the world and the Kingdoms that were built upon it, I thought of one particular war in which the Israelites fought against the Canaanites. In Joshua 5, we find a Man standing with a drawn sword. Joshua asks Him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” The Man answers, “Neither,” and identifies Himself as the “Commander of the army of the LORD.” Joshua immediately identified Who this Man was - God Himself - Christ in His eternal glory, as a righteous Judge. Joshua’s response was to fall down on his face and worship his Lord. Why? The question we need to ask in times of war is



not on whose side *God* is. Instead the question that needs to be asked always is if *we* are on God's side.

Are you someone who is appalled by the monstrosity of President Putin or the corruption of President Zelensky? Are you someone who is wondering how to pray about this war? Are you a seafarer who asks God whose side He is on? Well, the only question you must be asking now is, "Am I on God's side?" As sinners, we are enemies of God who will one day face His sword of judgement.

There is, however, a way to escape His wrath. There is good news!

This Holy God is a God Who saves sinners. And His Word is a double-edged sword that cuts to heal. It is the

Holy Bible. Why not take the time to read it? As you become aware of your sin and your need for a Saviour, turn to Jesus to be saved. He bore the wrath of God and was cut to death, so that everyone who trusts in Him will be saved!

Are you a Christian who wants to pray for Ukrainian and Russian seafarers? Even as you pray for an end to this war, please pray that in and through this, Ukrainians and Russians will hear the gospel, repent of their sins and be saved. And please pray for me as I meet Ukrainian and Russian seafarers on the ships. Please pray for wisdom, for patience, and for listening ears.

For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
Hebrews 4:12

KEEPING MARRIAGE ENVIABLE

SEAFARER PROFILE #3

[The Challenges of Long-distance Relationships]

Seafarers, both young and old alike, accept the compromises they will need to make when they decide to work at sea. The biggest, and arguably the toughest, of those compromises is living away from their family, especially their spouse. The tension of this compromise is heightened among young seafarers who are betrothed or newly married. Young men get too excited and emotional as they share with me pictures of their fiancées or new brides. At times, I am offered the privilege to pray with their loved ones over the phone. The kind of longing these men experience takes a different kind of mettle to measure up to the demands at sea!

At the start of the second wave of the pandemic last year, I had the privilege of meeting Nitheesh, a charming young man. His shopping needs, his prayer requests, and his conversations were all about Aishwarya, his then betrothed sweetheart. In the little time that I spent with Nitheesh, I learnt a lot about his plans and aspirations after he would marry Aishwarya. I sincerely suggested that in all that they would do

as a couple, they must seek first to honour God and then seek to honour each other. And, in doing so, I reminded Nitheesh that his first duty of care and ultimate ministry would be for Aishwarya all through their married life.

Nitheesh is a wise man, and had already pondered hard on how the seafaring life would bear heavily on his married life. He shared a little about his plans to seek work that will allow him more time with Aishwarya and help them raise a strong family. I echoed his concerns back to him. I shared with him how marriage has been an invaluable instrument of sanctification in my own life. “Nitheesh, listen,” I said, “if God is the Potter, and you are the clay, your marriage is the wheel on which He breaks, moulds, and shapes you.”

I am now overjoyed to learn that Nitheesh and Aishwarya are happily married! Would you please pray that this lovely couple will grow stronger in their love for Christ and each other? Would you please pray that seafarers like Nitheesh will better serve their families when they serve at sea? More importantly, please pray that

married seafarers at sea will not be overcome by loneliness, depression, sorrow and temptation, but will instead know the love, comfort, joy, and peace of a Saviour.

If you are a seafarer reading this, would you please take a moment to thank God for your spouse and your family? As you are challenged by the demands of a long-distance relationship, so is

your spouse and your family. Even as you take time to connect online or over phone, try to connect through the study of God's Word. A simple way to do this would be for you and your spouse to follow the same Bible reading plan every day. It would be a great comfort to know that the God Who ministers to you from His Word, so ministers to your spouse everyday.

NITHEESH AND AISHWARYA



#PRAYFORSEAFARERS

Living on *Borrowed Time*

Second chances in life are hard to come by. True or False? Either way you choose, you will go back and forth on your own reasoning. Seafarers, almost invariably, feel that seafaring is either a second chance for them in life, or an opportunity to give their loved ones second chances in life. While that may very well be the case, seafarers know that there is a difference between getting second chances in life and getting a second life. During the pandemic, many stories were gossiped on the ships - of seafarers committing suicide, losing their limbs and lives in a deck accident, and losing work through depression. Many of these stories are that of losing life itself - and losing it without any hope of a second life.

Goldwin is a dear compatriot from the South of India who was gracious and generous with his time to share about second chances he has had in life. He was excited and full of smiles to have met a fellow Tamil on foreign shores. He shared about his family and the challenges that he had to face before finding work on the ships. "This is a second chance in life for me", he said. "I have left behind so much, and being a seafarer has given me and my family a chance to look forward in life." What an absolutely beautiful statement of gratitude and humility! "This life is dangerous, Brother," Goldwin said, "both at sea and on shore - life is so unpredictable." For a straight few minutes, Goldwin was speaking a lot of wisdom



GOLDWIN ON HIS VISIT TO ALBERT DOCKS

for his age. He was grateful for the work of MCM on the ships and invited me to visit him at home in India if I ever travelled to Chennai when he was off work.

The weather was good the next day, and Goldwin with a few others came along for a shore trip. As I showed them around the city and helped them with a little shopping, we sailed into a conversation about life and its frailty again. I shared the gospel with Goldwin and his mates as we drove around. I shared with them the truth that time granted to us by God is a very obvious witness of His grace and mercy, for we are kept alive - even as we sin every day - only by the kindness and forbearance of God. It would have been fair if God had granted us justice yesterday, namely the death and hell that we deserve as sinners. Instead God chose to show us His kindness by granting us life and time to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone Who paid the penalty for our sins on the cross.

Goldwin contacted me on Christmas day to share his greetings. He was shocked to receive the news that I almost died on the night of November 12th, from COVID. It gave me an opportunity to reiterate the good news that we are all living on borrowed time - time that is graciously given to us by our loving God. Even as Goldwin and I share messages on Whatsapp, we always come back to realising the goodness and love of God. If you are a seafarer reading this, would you consider the

truth that, as a sinner, you are living on borrowed time? Would you ponder on the frailty of life and on the mercy and goodness of a loving God?

If you are a Christian, would you please pray for Goldwin and the millions of seafarers like him? Second chances are aplenty in life that God brings our way. Share this good news and give someone else a new lease of life today!

*Do you presume
on the riches of
His kindness and
forbearance and
patience, not
knowing that
God's kindness
is meant to
lead you to
repentance?*
Romans 2:4

Chinese people have an amazingly long and significant history with the City of Liverpool. The Chinese population in Liverpool is the largest of any City in Europe. In fact, Chinese immigration in Liverpool began in the 1800s with seafaring Chinese communities moving to Britain. Two centuries since, Chinese seafarers still visit the Port of Liverpool.

My experience with Chinese seafarers is always interesting. Usually, there would only be one or two men on board who would come up to me to speak. However, when this one person learns of my intentions, he would run back in to bring a few more men. They would all thank me in a language that I could not understand. Yet, the expression of

their gratitude could be very well understood in the clasp of their hands, in their bowing down, and in their smiles.

The most important hurdle (a personal one) in ministering to Chinese seafarers is the language. I try to get around this hurdle by making Bibles, Daily devotionals, and other gospel literature available to these dear people in Cantonese. In this sense, there is a constant need to replenish resources to serve this particular demographic. I usually give away the quarterly "Our Daily Bread" daily devotionals in Chinese. "Cheng," a Chief mate asked if I could give him daily devotionals for the next quarter as well - he was facing a long contract with no possibility of getting shore

PRAYING FOR THE HEART OF THE DRAGON



CHINATOWN IN LIVERPOOL



A HAPPY CHINESE SEAFARER

leave for the next five months. I could not meet his particular need at that time, but directed him to a trusted online resource for daily devotions in Chinese. Cheng was looking into Christianity when I met him. He told me that the daily readings were a comfort for him. I encouraged him to read the Bible and seek God with a sincere heart, and not as a mere intellectual exercise. Still, language was a big barrier in conveying what was bearing heavily on my heart for this humble Chinese man.

Many Chinese seafarers suffered during the pandemic. It seems that they still do - by way of losing loved ones. While China has the fastest growing Church in the world, the mere vastness of the Chinese landscape and the political strong arm of the Chinese government make it hard for the gospel to percolate into the nooks and crannies of the nation. But what stops us from facing this task unfinished that brings us to our knees? I remember Hudson Taylor once saying that he was called into the heart of the Dragon and that he could do nothing else. I truly believe that with all the interna-

If I had a thousand pounds, China should have it - if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Saviour?"

- Hudson Taylor

tional politics that focus so much on China, especially in light of the COVID pandemic, the people of that nation need our special attention. For if we do not make the most of sharing the Gospel with them, they will surely be at a loss.

Yet, in God's providence the Port of Liverpool is a way to the heart of the Dragon. Consider the privilege of reaching millions for Christ in China through serving a few that arrive at our shores. Would you please pray that these Chinese seafarers will meet Christ through His Word? Amen!



IMAGINE

That the staggering appeal of Liverpool as a tourist city is in part owed to the musical legacy of *The Beatles* is an understatement. The English Rock band formed in the 1960s were significant in shaping the British pop culture of the day. The musical ethos of *The Beatles* is still viewed as the hallmark of British music. A picture with *The Beatles* on Albert Docks is a ‘must’ for all seafarers on shore leave in Liverpool.

During the pandemic, one particular viral post on social media had everything to do with *The Beatles* - Hollywood figures singing John Lennon’s “Imagine.” One evening, as a group of seafarers took turns taking pictures

with *The Beatles*, I pointed out to them that the song they were listening to earlier in my car was made by one of *The Beatles*. On our way back to the Port, I picked up (and on) “Imagine” again, but this time explaining to the seafarers why I thought it was the most horrible of all pop songs ever written. (I mean, “Imagine there’s no countries” when every country had its borders locked tight to prevent a global superspreader? And “Imagine all the people living for today” like there will not be consequences for their actions ever? John Lennon’s Communist Manifesto is as dumb as it is evil!)

One Muslim seafarer, “Anwar,” was shocked that British

pop stars fantasised that there would be no heaven or hell - for that is how John Lennon begins "Imagine." On another occasion, I was having the same conversation with a Chief Cook from India, Cassius. His young daughter was facing a treatment for a health condition at that time, and he was naturally feeling a bit shaken about it. Both Anwar and Cassius commented that a reality with no heaven and hell will not need rules or laws - for ultimately there will be no consequence and nobody would care. "Amen!" I exclaimed in agreement! We all know, in our conscience, that morality is innate, and that life has consequences.

As you can imagine, I share the gospel with these seafarers as we talk about *The Beatles*. At times, I cite the controversial interview with *The Beatles* when they attained celebrity status, when John Lennon claimed that they were "more popular than Jesus." Lennon was shot and killed outside his own apartment over a decade later. Fame and wealth and pride only allowed Lennon's imagination to be what it truly was - just vain fantasy. As I drop the seafarers off at the Port, I usually pray with them, mentioning how fragile life is and yet how flippant we are about it. I remind them of Jesus' question to all of us: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"

Are you a seafarer reading this? What is your answer to Jesus' question? As you can see from *The Beatles*, a life soaked in drugs, sexual immorality, riches and fame

will neither satisfy the human soul nor save it from the consequences of sin, namely, to face the wrath of a Holy God in an eternity in hell. On the other hand, this Holy God is also loving and merciful to forgive you of your sins and grant you peace with Him. God sent Jesus Who came to save sinners who would put their trust in Him. He laid down His life on the cross, thereby taking the wrath of God upon Himself, so that all those who would trust in Jesus to pay for their sins will not have to face eternity in hell.

Do you labour hard to live a holy and blameless life? Do you feel weary and burdened in your own pursuit to right your wrongs? Consider what Jesus said - turn away from your prideful ways of sin and follow Him with a humble and repentant heart. For there is a Heaven, and there is a God, and you cannot live just for today!

***Come to me,
all who labour and
are heavy-laden, and
I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you,
and learn from me,
for I am gentle and lowly
in heart, and you will find
rest for your souls.
Matthew 11:28-29***



FUN FOOD FRIENDS FILIPINOS FELLOWSHIP

One of the perks of being a Port Chaplain is getting to taste a lot of different cuisines on the ships. And when it comes to hospitality on the ships, the Filipinos are some of the most generous people I have encountered. In my experience I have never met a Filipino who did not have a smile on his face. These men have a spring in their step and an effervescent air of laughter about them that is infectious.

I have had the privilege of leading the most number of services on a ship among all-Filipino crews. The most joyful moment during the service is when I invite a few seafarers to read from Scripture in Tagalog. If that seafarer happens to be a Roman Catholic, his eyes light up and voice trembles as they read Scripture, *in Tagalog*. Learning from Scripture that neither penance nor sacraments, neither prayers to Mary

nor priestly absolution of sins will save them from the wrath of God, but only faith in the saving work of Jesus, they bend their heads back to Scripture. To know of the sufficiency of Scripture in the sanctification of our lives, in teaching, in disciplining, in training in righteousness, is either a welcome revelation to their worldview or a stumbling block if they trust in a system of works and human efforts to gain the favour of God. As God's Word assures them that nothing will credit God's righteousness to them apart from the righteous work and sinless death of Jesus Christ, they pause to think with Scripture in their hands.

Most Filipino seafarers have never owned a Bible in their native tongue. Most Filipino seafarers have never meditated on God's Word, never considered prayer and the reading of God's Word as a necessary and indispensable part of a healthy personal re-



FILIPINO SEAFARERS - ALIGHT WITH SMILES

lationship with God. As Christians we do nothing to gain favour from God. Instead we do everything *because we have already* gained favour in the eyes of Holy God. This truth is life-changing for these men who come from a culturally dominant Roman Catholic tradition. And they need your prayers.

Would you please pray for Filipino seafarers who claim to be Christians but have never studied the Bible with a sincere heart? Would you pray that as these men study the Word of God, the Holy Spirit would grant them faith, regenerate their hearts, renew their minds and cause their souls to rejoice in salvation? Please pray that as I minister to seafarers from a Roman Catholic background, I will be sensitive to their sentiments and humble in my sharing of the gospel. I have made many friends among Filipino seafarers and would love for them all to be saved! Amen!

*All Scripture is
breathed out by God
and profitable for
teaching, for reproof,
for correction,
and for training in
righteousness,
that the man of God
may be complete,
equipped for every
good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

OUTSOURCING vs RESOURCING

As a fourth generation Christian from India, I am deeply indebted to the work of English evangelists on the shores of South India. The beauty of that History is that the evangelists were directly sent by their Churches. In these days, as I see it, gospel work is outsourced to parachurch and missionary organisations. While the usefulness of this trend could be argued, it has obviously led to apathy and lethargy of the local Church concerning missions and evangelism.

While MCM relies heavily on the giving of the local Church, we want to encourage and equip local Churches to participate in the work among seafarers all the more - not only by a mere transfer of funds, but also (and more importantly) by the sending of workers for the harvest. Please contact us through the information on the back of this document to know more about how you and your Church could be directly involved in the work that we do.

THERE ARE NOW QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT MCM



1. Head to <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20030441> or click the button above or follow the QR code to give financially. Your gift-aid can also be added with a single-click.



2. Head to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1071480-0> or go to smile.amazon.co.uk to add MCM to your Amazon account or click on the button above or follow the QR code to support MCM at no extra cost when you shop on Amazon through smile.amazon.co.uk



Are you a Christian living in the Merseyside area or in the Northwest of England? Did you know that you could be involved with the work of MCM in many simple and unique ways?

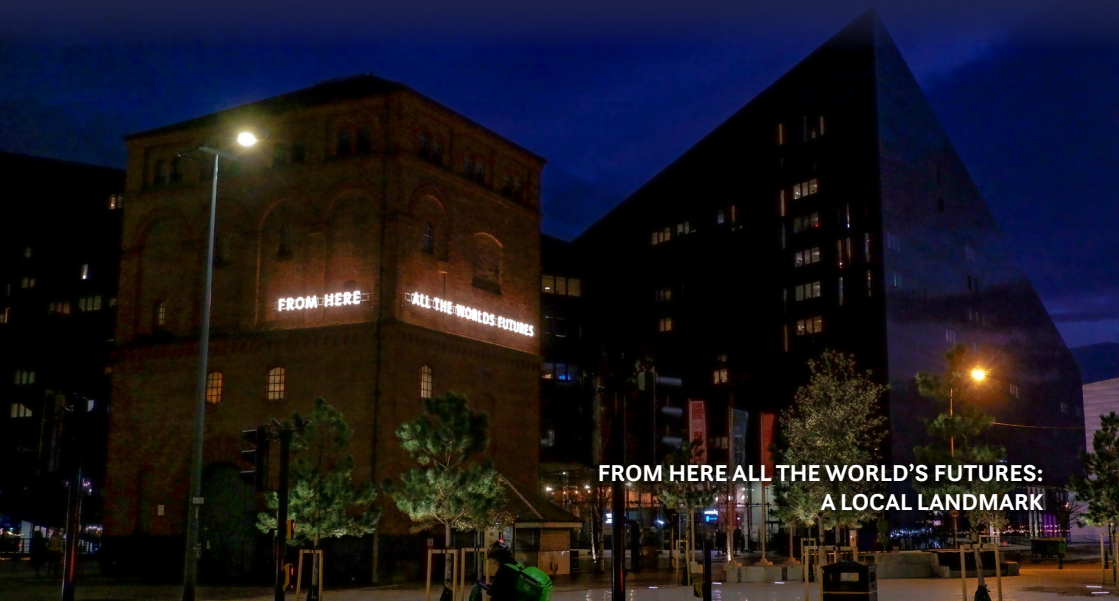
THE LOCAL CHURCH: We need your local Church to be praying for the gospel work among seafarers.

Many Churches in Merseyside and Northwest England are unaware of this mission field. What was historically the burden of local Churches - the dying souls of seafarers - is now either completely forgotten or completely ignored. Your local Church could host seafarers on a Sunday, collect goods to be distributed to seafarers, donate Bibles and literature, and invite the Port Chaplain to share about the work with them.

THE LOCAL CHRISTIAN: We need local Christians to be praying for seafarers. Individuals could Champion the cause of MCM in their local Churches, Fellowship groups, and among other Christian friends. Why not ask the Port Chaplain how you can volunteer?

THE LOCAL FAMILY: We need local families to be praying for seafarers. Why not teach your children to pray for seafarers? It would be great for children to know about seafarers as much as they know about pilots, and firefighters. How about dressing up as a seafarer to school one day?

LOCAL RELIABILITY



**FROM HERE ALL THE WORLD'S FUTURES:
A LOCAL LANDMARK**

MCM PRAYER BULLETIN

Thank God! The work of the Gospel still carries on in the Ports of Liverpool, Garston and Eastham.

Please pray especially for Ukrainians and Russians, and all seafaring lives disrupted by the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russian trade and commerce.

Please pray for seafarers who will leave their spouse and family for the first time. Please pray that they will find the presence of God nearer and dearer in their time of solitude on the ships as they read His Word and shepherd their family from a distance.

Please pray for our efforts to bring increased exposure to MCM among local churches and Christians in the Merseyside region.

Please pray for the work of the Port Chaplain - for discipline, faithfulness, motivation, and encouragement.

Please pray for our plans to organise a one-day rally to pray for and support seafarers.



FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS!

We live in an age when social media is powerful enough to steer elections, manipulate the masses, mute disagreeing voices, lend a megaphone to the elite, turn cameras away from famines, and put a spotlight on wars. Are you distracted?

Jesus said, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Not the other way around! Is your treasure in heaven right now? What news is so good that you would want to hear it and share it all day, everyday, and everywhere? Set your mind on that! Dear Brothers and Sisters “whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Phlp: 4:8) Fix your eyes on Jesus!

In Christ

Chriswin Raj

271 Marsh Lane, Bootle L20 5BG
chriswinraj@gmail.com
+44(0)7718481775
fb.com/chriswinraj
fb.com/mcmliverpool
#PrayForSeafarers
#TheMooring

**NOTE: If you would like to subscribe to or unsubscribe from this mailing list, please let us know. Please be advised: for reasons of privacy and security, names of seafarers and ships mentioned in this newsletter may have been changed.*