IN THEIR LANGUAGE  by Adam McCarty

Usually, I start each work day by visiting ships. The procedure is relatively the same, with a few exceptions depending on which dock I visit. I sign in at the guard shack, go the ship, walk up the gangway, sign in with an individual at the top of the gangway, and finally talk to the crew. I tell them that we are a mission-focused seafarer organization here to bring the word of Christ. Some are receptive to the gospel message and others not so much. Why am I sharing this information? Well, that’s because I follow this same procedure with each ship, except on one ship I was interrupted.

While speaking with the individual who would sign me onto the ship, a call came in on the radio. I was rushed over to the captain at once. I thought to myself that this was rather weird, as I am not usually welcomed so hastily. Once I arrived, I was met with a smile from ear to ear by the captain. He was delighted that a seafarer center would take the time to tend to his crew. I told him that our goal and mission was to help the seafarers and to share the gospel message. The captain then asked me if I would be willing to take his crew to our center. I, of course, told him that I would be excited to bring them to our seafarer center.

At the center, I showed the captain and his crew the Bibles in their native language. Surprisingly, he was extremely receptive and was willing to take the Bibles that we had available. He even asked me how to teach the rest of the crew using the Bible study material we had on hand. I took a segment from the Bible study material and showed him step-by-step how to lead a Bible study with the crew. Extremely excited, he told me he wanted to praise God for everything we had done for him. He was thankful we provided the transportation, as well as the Bible study material.

After that great connection, I called our volunteer, Dr. Thomas, to come visit this ship with me. He knows the language of the crew and was willing to visit the ship the next day. Dr. Thomas and I were escorted to the captain’s office where the captain and chief engineer were sitting. The captain was thrilled to see me and shook my hand in delight, but what made him even more excited was to hear Dr. Thomas speak his language. Thrilled as the captain was, he asked Dr. Thomas and I to sit down to have drink.

From this point in the story, it’s difficult for me to give the details. Dr. Thomas was speaking in a language with which I am not familiar. I gathered that Dr. Thomas was having a . . .

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WHAT’S INSIDE

• IS IT REAL?
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Cruise ship ministry days are full of opportunities to meet people from around the world. We offer a shuttle each hour from the terminal for the crew of the cruise ships to visit our ministry center or to go shopping. This service is much appreciated for the crew who have very little time in port. Frustration comes when the busyness of the day gets in the way of opportunities to have meaningful conversations. When I am driving the shuttle bus, I have about thirty minutes at the ministry center between each trip to the terminal. Many times, we are short-handed and this half-hour is quickly consumed with helping crew members from the ship take care of needs such as wiring money home or sending packages. When the phone is quiet and the questions have all been answered, I attempt to spend the remaining time before the next shuttle with one of our seafaring friends.

During some of these few remaining minutes one Sunday not long ago, I was making small talk with a two seafarers. One was from the Philippines and one was from Serbia, but both had taken six-month contracts as photographers on the ship. They were relaxing at the center and playing pool. As we discussed how they were doing onboard, one of them glanced over to see the bookshelves tagged with various languages. She bent down to the Bulgarian shelf and said, "I know this language!" She grabbed one of the Bibles and began to flip through the pages. I asked if she spoke Bulgarian and she said no but it was close enough to Serbian that she could understand some of it. When I explained that we had some Bibles in Serbian, her language, she was shocked. She was so surprised to find something in her language here.

My new Serbian friend began reading some of the words and asked me about this book. I told her that I am a Christian and follow Jesus. I explained that this was the Bible, God's Word, and we read it to learn about Jesus. I told her that we want everyone to have the opportunity to read it in their own language so that they can understand it. She looked at me and said, "Is it real? Is this religion real?" I told her that I had a personal relationship with Jesus and that it was indeed real. I shared some of my story with her and how I had experienced God. She continued to inquire, "So, it's not like the religions where you have to blow yourself up to go to Heaven?" I assured her it was not, and talked to her about how many religions of the world are based on works but that Christianity is different. I explained the good news about how God loves us so much he sent his son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for our wrongs and reunite us with Him. She wasn't ready to make a decision yet. I encouraged her to take the Serbian Bible with her on the ship and to read the book of John to learn more about Jesus for herself. She seemed excited to do so and allowed me to pray for her before returning to the ship.

Cruise ship ministry days are full of opportunities to share about our real Savior with people from around the world. Please pray that we make the most of these opportunities with seafarers. Ask God how He wants you to be involved in His work at the port. You can pray for us, come and serve alongside of us, and give financially so that our shelves stay stocked with Bibles in languages for the people we meet from around the world.
“In Their Language” continued

...gospel-centered conversation. There was dialogue back and forth between the three men. I couldn't help but sit there in amazement as these guys went about their conversation. While I did not know what they were saying, I knew that the Holy Spirit was present. Shortly after their conversation had finished, the captain and chief engineer left the room. I turned to Dr. Thomas and asked him what happened. Dr. Thomas told me that the captain and the chief engineer were so receptive to the gospel that the captain was going to call the entire crew together for us to share the gospel.

I was amazed that we had such an opportunity presented to us. We were escorted to the mess hall in order to speak with the crew. Once again, Dr. Thomas began to share the gospel in their language. I did not know the language, but what I did know was that the Holy Spirit remained present as Dr. Thomas was sharing about Jesus. Dialogue began to happen between Dr. Thomas and the crew, and a few times I was asked to chime in for a thought. At the end of his presentation, we were able to give Bibles to the entire crew, as well as copies of the Jesus Film, Daily Bread devotionals, and Bible study material.

I am extremely thankful for Dr. Thomas and his willingness to serve with us. I am in awe knowing that the gospel was shared most effectively on that day. You don't have to be a trained chaplain to serve with us at Global Maritime Ministries; you just have to be willing to serve Christ and share His love.

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)
I am so excited to be a new member of the Global Maritime Ministries staff and to join them in their mission to reach the nations coming to New Orleans for Christ! Please allow me to tell you a little bit about my journey to get here.

My name is Kimberly Myers and I grew up in Mississippi as the daughter of a pastor. I have always been involved in church and missions since I was very young. As a girl, one summer after Vacation Bible School, I decided to follow Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior and it has been the best decision of my life.

As a college student, God gave me the opportunity to serve as a BSU summer missionary in California. I met my husband Gary while I was serving there and this November we will celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary. We have one son, Jonathan, who graduated from high school this year and he will attend Mississippi State University in the fall.

My husband Gary and I met Philip Vandercook in 1997 when we were interviewing with the North American Mission Board (NAMB). At that time, we were very interested in the work that God was doing in New Orleans to reach internationals seafarers for Christ. We prayerfully considered if God was leading us to be a part of the work He was doing here. After much prayer and what brought us to New Orleans in 2003, but after Hurricane Katrina we felt God calling us to plant our lives and serve Him here in the city of New Orleans.

After spending some time being a full-time mom, I earned a master’s degree from NOBTS in 2007. Since then, I have served as a NAMB collegiate missionary to international students in partnership with Baptist Collegiate Ministry. I have been praying how God might have me use the extra time that I will have once Jonathan goes to college in the fall.

Through a God-ordained appointment, I learned that Philip was looking for more workers to serve at GMM. Twenty-two years after God first introduced us to this ministry, He has now called me to be a part of what He is doing through GMM and I trust that His timing is perfect!

I am so grateful to be a part of what God is doing at GMM and I am thankful for the praying, giving, and going that our ministry partners do to help us take the gospel to all nations!