



AN OPEN DOOR *by Vadym Bondarenko*

In the Scriptures, we see multiple examples of God's work taking place among a group of people or in the hearts of particular individuals preceding the arrival of his workers. Some of these examples include Lydia, described as a God-fearer and a successful businesswoman who welcomed the messengers, Paul and Barnabas, and their message, subsequently acting as a catalyst for the rest of the people in her region (Acts 16). Similarly, we read of the Roman centurion Cornelius' openness and reception leading to many more people under his authority hearing the gospel message (Acts 10). And of course, in the time of his earthly dwelling, Jesus' own encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well jump-started her town's interest in the one "who told her all that she ever did," causing Jesus and his disciples to spend two days among these people (John 4). Instances like these are not just two-thousand-year-old facts, but indeed, are present realities of the God who works to redeem people from every nation, tribe, and language, oftentimes opening doors for the message through the most unlikely ways. In a recent instance, during two visits with a Turkish crew, the chief officer demonstrated an outstanding

degree of hospitality, helping us to connect with the rest of the men as well as unsuspectingly granting us a credible platform to present the good news of Jesus to at least three other Muslim seafarers.

The first time we boarded the Turkish vessel with four of our faithful volunteers, we were met with a warm welcome from the chief officer. From the beginning, the man struck us as genuinely interested in caring for his guests as if we were his own family. Such a display of familial affection toward outsiders isn't necessarily rare among the maritime community, but this encounter most definitely surpassed all of my previous experiences. Our gracious host immediately directed us to meet some of his crew in the dining room. Inside, we were served strong Turkish tea while we helped a couple of men install SIM cards onto their phones. During this time, the chief officer had to step out to check on a call he received. However, at his leave, the chief engineer joined our group and the contrast in character between these two officers could not have been more apparent. In a moment, the chief officer's welcoming and humble posture was substituted by the chief engineer's prideful stance. This

unwelcoming trait was especially manifest when we conversed with him about our belief in God. In the course of our talk, the man exalted his educated background, calling a belief in God childish while simultaneously expressing a deep sense of disgust toward Muslims, that is, his own people. Due to his high rank and proficiency in English, the rest of the seafarers in the room kept quiet. Unfortunately, despite our attempts to speak sensibly and cordially, the man cared only about expressing his opinions. Eventually, the chief officer returned and we had time with him alone. As we talked, he shared with us that his name, in Turkish, means "joy." Many more questions followed from us about his work, politics and corruption, and a recent earthquake devastating his country. All of these questions touched on the reality of moral and natural evil for which our friend had no real answers. When it came to his faith, he seemed just as hopeless to account for the state of the world. So that is where we started—in the beginning with God's perfect creation turned broken because of human sin. As we navigated the biblical story reaching the climax in Jesus's sacrificial coming and his resurrection, our new friend's radio rang... *continued inside*

SHUTTLE CONNECTION

by Robert Roussel

As a part of our ministry to cruise ship crews, we provide a free shuttle to both Walmart and our center. As we drive, we share about our ministry and how we can help them. Along with that, we share an encouraging Bible verse. Recently as I was returning the crew to the terminal, I shared John 10:10, where Jesus says, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." I added a brief comment, "In Jesus, we can find meaning, purpose, and salvation." I then reminded them that our ministry is here to serve them, recounting some of the ways we can help, including offering a free Bible or devotional as they exit the bus.

Five days later, the same ship was here again. I shared the words in Hebrews 12:2: "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." I shared this verse by first reminding them of John 10:10. After everyone had exited the bus, one of them, a young Indian woman, came back to the door and thanked me for sharing. We talked a few minutes, as she introduced herself and told me she had previously sailed on a ship that docked in Miami. She was very encouraged by the port ministry there. After a minute or two, she headed back off to the ship and I proceeded to pickup more seafarers.

Only a few days later, I was at the center while Stephen was driving the bus. The same young woman came in and asked if we could do a Bible study. Lee and I happily agreed, and when I asked if she had something particular she'd like to study, she responded, "Yes actually. I have some questions about Hebrews 7." As we sat and explored the scriptures with her, it was clear that she was very excited about God's word. She told us she's been a believer most of her life, but a couple of years ago, she was challenged to take seriously her personal Bible reading. That was obvious, because she was very knowledgeable and her convictions were just as strong.

Our conversation, which began with Melchizedek of all things, moved to how she shared her faith with others on

One great experience we had recently was with a Sri Lankan seafarer. A church group of young adults from Grace Baptist Church in Tennessee joined me in visiting a Sri Lankan third officer on a container ship. We had a group of about 4 or 5 go to visit the ship, and for many of them, it was their first time boarding a ship! We were greeted by two seafarers from Sri Lanka at the entry point of the ship. The third officer took us to the ship's office to sit down and talk with us.

We were able to ask him about his home life, family, and religious beliefs. He shared with us that he is a Buddhist and that he was not well acquainted with the gospel message. One of the young adults named "Big Will" had the opportunity to walk through the Romans Road to Salvation with him. He opened to three verses: (1) Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (2) Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," and (3) Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and



SRI LANKAN SHARING

by Jason Roberts

believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Big Will asked him if he had ever heard that message before, and the third officer shook his head and said "no." Big Will then asked if the third officer was ready to turn his life over to the Lordship of Christ. Out of genuine honesty, the third officer shared that he wanted to study more before making any decision to follow Christ. We all understood and encouraged him to study more and to seek Christ by reading the Word with all his heart.

Oftentimes this is what ministry looks like: simple conversations. It is not always flashy, although God certainly can and does work in those ways from time to time. I still find encounters like these very meaningful because I know the Lord was working through our conversation. I believe God used this moment to stir the mind and conscience of the third officer, and the Holy Spirit was working to draw him to Himself. Please pray for Global Maritime Ministries as we seek to share the gospel message with seafarers from Sri Lanka and all nations!

board, the struggles of witnessing within an ungodly culture, and the need for good fellowship. We spent over an hour talking, during which time I shared with her a few other passages for her to study. With enthusiasm, she opened a notebook full of notes from her personal Bible study and wrote down the scripture references. We let her know that we would be here for her to pray for her, study with her, and encourage her in her walk with the Lord in any way we could.

Toward the end of the conversation, I was able to introduce her to Stephen, as they had only interacted in the bus previously. Stephen was able to tell her of other believers working on her ship.

We prayed with her before she left, asking the Lord to bless her in her work and provide her encouraging Christian fellowship on the ship. Would you join us in praying for her and Christians like her as they walk with the Lord far from their home and their church home?





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Evelyn Heinemann
January 24, 2026

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend and longtime supporter, Ms. Evelyn Heinemann. For many decades, she faithfully served this ministry, and her quiet faithfulness helped sustain this work for the glory of God.

The Lord was kind to give her to us, and while we grieve her loss, we rejoice knowing she now rests in His presence.



OPEN DOOR *continued*

... calling for his attention. At this, he apologized, and invited us to come back the next day for dinner.

On our second visit with the Turkish crew, we were taken into the officers' dining room by our caring host. We were introduced to the captain and a couple of other men with whom we shared a meal. Afterward, we presented several gifts for the men, talked about the uniqueness of the city of New Orleans, and, consequently, engaged in a spirited discussion centering on the question: "Who is Jesus?" Throughout the three hours of conversation, we compared a variety of claims found in both the Koran and the Bible. In the process, we drew much on objective truth and God's revelation of himself throughout history. Finally, in the midst of all the friendly arguments and counterarguments, clear lines were drawn regarding the Biblical claims of the uniqueness of Jesus's son-ship as the second person of the Trinity, his sinlessness, his atoning death on the cross, his resurrection, and his inevitable return as the Judge of all. Ultimately, helping these men see him as he truly is, not simply a prophet, priest, or king, but God, the Savior of all those who turn to him in repentance and faith. Our Turkish friends understood the message and pondered. Later, we affectionately said our goodbyes, hoping to see these men again, if not in this world, then the one to come.



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