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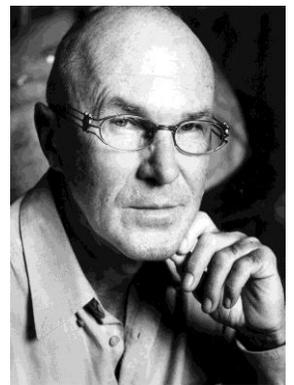
## **On course together**

### **Introduction**

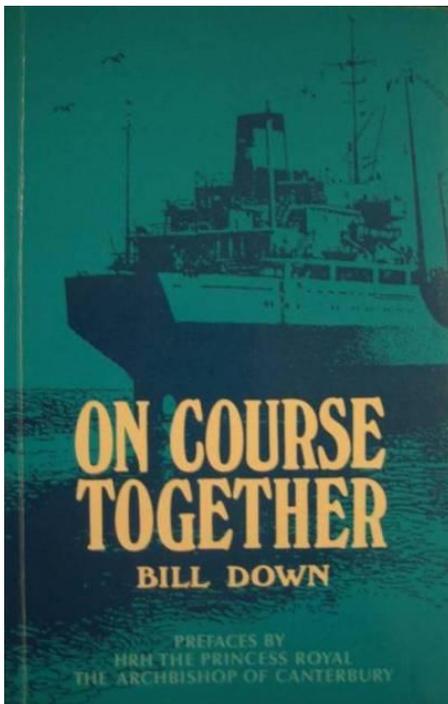
**I**nternational Christian Maritime Association's General Secretary, Dr. Juergen R A Kanz, presented a paper on ICMA's roots at the ICMA Southern Africa Regional Conference Presentation of International Christian Maritime Association's roots at Schoenstadt Training Centre/Cape Town on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

The ICMA Executive Committee decided that the original presentation should be prepared for publication. It is a useful tool to inform the Association's members and staff of the origins of the Association. In the words of DR Kanz:

*"I realized that quite a lot of ICMA oral tradition and experience gets lost when chaplains and executives go into retirement. Looking ahead is fine but sometimes it is important as well to remember what our forefathers achieved."*



The original paper has been edited and re-worked by Dr. Kanz's successor at the ICMA Secretariat, Reverend Hendrik F la Grange. The original paper authored by Dr. Kanz, is available from the ICMA Secretariat.



### **1 Title: "On course together"**

Dr. Kanz began the presentation to the Southern Africa Regional Conference by saying: "I feel at home being with you."

"I am conscious", he said "that Southern Africa Region is the youngest among the eight ICMA regions. It is just a little more than two years that the inaugural meeting took place in Durban. The first ICMA Southern Africa took place in November 2005. I had been asked then to address you under the heading '**Beginning to grow together**'. We have gone quite some stretch of road since then. Biblia Harbour Mission is a full member of ICMA now – alongside with 26 other members. I think that we are no longer merely beginning to grow together, but can trustingly say we are '**On course together**'.

Kanz adopted this title from a book that Bill Down, former Secretary General of the Mission to Seafarers, published in 1989.

## **2 Beginnings**

Pope John XXIII called the Vatican Council that met from 1962 to 1965. Crucially Vatican II led to a renewed interest in people of the sea, and non-Catholic Christians were now deemed to be brethren in communication, even if not in communion, and partners in dialogue.

In 1968 Reverend Bernard Spong, President of the North American multi-denominational International Council of Seamen's Agencies (ICOSA), with the collaboration of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (WCC), invited Catholics and Protestants to an International Consultation on Services to Seafarers to be held in Rotterdam, 24-28 August 1969.

More than 100 delegates from 52 organisations representing 400 centres and 66 countries took part.

Dr. Emile Deith challenged delegates to pursue the dual purpose of the Consultation:

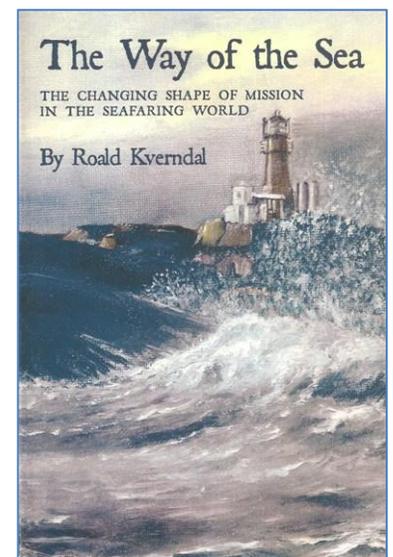
- To study the nature of seafarers needs
- To meet those needs

Both tasks, he said, should be seen in the light of God's promises in Romans 8:28-39 (NIV, 1984)

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

*31What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36As it is written:*

*"For your sake we face death all day long;*





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*we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*37*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. *38*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, *39* neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

On the last day of the Consultation, the delegates resolved unanimously to form an international association of Christian voluntary organisations. The association would be

- a consultative and
- representative body.

It would have both an internal and an external role:

- to foster collaboration and mutual aid amongst constituent bodies and to further common interests, and to serve as a means of more effective communication with other agencies.
- to be the collective and respected voice of the association within the industry and outside it. (*Kverndal, 2008; p 113*)

Reverend Dr. Daisuke Kitagawa, representing the WCC at the Rotterdam consultation, was appointed the first Secretary and Treasurer. In a statement Kitagawa said that the two most important functions of the new ecumenical agency specialising in services to seafarers were:

- *Providing a forum – to help all the national agencies to become more internationally oriented*
- *Creating instrumentalities – to enable seafarers to participate responsibly in the decision-making process in matters which will affect their own welfare and that of their families.*

The name of the new organisation would be “International Christian Maritime Association, its acronym “ICMA” and a subtitle was added: “A free association of Christian organisations engaged in welfare work for seafarers.”

The ICMA Constitution set out the dual function of International Christian Maritime Association as being mutual collaboration within its membership and a collective voice beyond. This consultative and representative nature of the Association was the essence of ICMA.



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Bill Down writes (1989, p 126) that "What happened at the Consultation was manifestly the work of the Holy Spirit."

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, cooperation across the traditional divides between traditions seems neither novel, nor extraordinary. Yet, within the scope of the history of our faith, 40 years of ecumenical working is but a moment in time. But ICMA has been at it for 40 years, demonstrating the faith and pioneering spirit of those who have laid the Association's foundations. We build upon their courage and reap the fruits of what they had sown.

### **3. Identity**

Significantly, the Rotterdam Consultation that resulted in the founding of ICMA was attended by both non-Christian and non-religious parties.

It was however decided that the Association

- would consist of Christian organisations,
- that its ministry approach would be holistic (directed towards the seafarer as a whole person)
- that its scope would be inclusive (reaching out, without discrimination, to seafarers everywhere, regardless of nation, race or creed)
- and that the overriding model of ministry would be seafarer-centred and would facilitate specifically the creation of Christian communities aboard ship.

Non-Christian participants were respected and invited to engage with ICMA in open communication and collaboration.

The Christian ethos of ICMA was further endorsed by adding as a preamble to the constitution that, to qualify as a member of the Christian association, member organisations would need to be connected with any Christian church or Christian community recognised by the WCC or the Vatican.

The definition for WCC membership was:



*"Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."*

### **4. Early developments**



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ICMA would be managed by a Standing Committee. The function of the Standing Committee would be to carry out the general policy of ICMA as formulated in Conference from time to time and subject to any conditions imposed by Conference to provide for the administration, management and control of the affairs of ICMA. (Down 1989, p 129).

The Standing Committee comprised of one representative from each of the following members:

- Apostleship of the Sea
- Deutsche Seemannsmission
- Nederlandse Zeemancentrale
- Council of the Nordic Seamen's Missions (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden)
- International Council of Seamen's Agencies (Association of North and South American organisations, now NAMMA)
- The Seafarers Trust (The Mission to Seamen, now The Mission to Seafarers, and the British Sailors Society, now Sailors Society) and
- The World Council of Churches

The International Christian Maritime Association met in its first plenary (world-) conference in 1972, held in London.

Seafarers' families, training, lay leaders among seafarers and the exploitation of seafarers by ships flying "Flags of Convenience" occupied the first years of ICMA.

The theme of the second plenary conference was "The Personal and Family implications of Being a Seafarer".

By the second plenary conference in 1975 (Elsinore, Denmark) the WCC definition of "Christian" as it applied to ICMA was disputed. The wording "*and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling*" was deemed by some to be inadequate to express the missiological nature they had expected of the Association.

The agreed minutes of the second plenary conference stated that "International Christian Maritime Association must become a reality at port and regional level, and those member organisations with staff in ports where other member organisations work should meet regularly to plan cooperation and avoid duplication of effort. Such local cooperation would make the ICMA meaningful." (Down, p 132)

The first joint chairpersons of the Association were the Anglican General Secretary of the Missions to Seamen, Tom Kerfoot, and the appointee of AOS in the Vatican, Monsignor Francis Frayne. The need arose for a Secretariat. The spirit of



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togetherness shown by the joint chairs was once more manifested when it came to the creation of an ICMA Secretariat with a full time General Secretary: Missions to Seamen offered office space – free of charge - some secretarial assistance and the use of its office equipment whereas the Apostleship of the Sea financed the remuneration of International Christian Maritime Association’s first (Anglican) General Secretary, Reverend Tom Kerfoot. Other members provided the working budget.

Tom Kerfoot is quoted as having said: “International Christian Maritime Association was by deliberate intent a free association of its members and not a kind of super directing agency”. He understood his own role as being “the servant of the servants of the Lord.”

Bill Down writes in “On Course Together” that a picture of cohesive maritime ministry was emerging. He wrote:

“There can be no doubt that the most significant event of the last quarter of a century in the sphere of maritime ministry was the establishment of the International Christian Maritime Association” (1989, p 121)

## **5. Significant milestones**

“ICMA News”, a regular bulletin, was being circulated by 1978

Maritime Manning Conference, sponsored by ICMA in December 1987, produced a “Code of Good Conduct for Manning Agents”, a model document of its kind.

Survey of Seafarers, 1987, the first and largest survey of seafarers up to that date

ICMA Directory, a database of all ICMA members, and the global network of welfare personnel and facilities.

Bill Down asks in 1989: “What has ICMA accomplished?” He says:

- *It has provided meeting points for people of all backgrounds engaged in maritime ministry at all levels in many parts of the world.*
- *It has promoted understanding between denominations, and inter-confessional and international collaboration, paving the way for collaboration at grass roots level in ports.*
- *It speaks as the collective and respected voice of its member organisations, yet remains their servant. Its strength lies in the fact that it remains a free association of Christian organisations.*
- *ICMA now has extensive experience of collaboration in witnessing to people of widely different faiths and cultures.*



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- *ICMA personnel exercise pastoral, prophetic and evangelistic roles in the shipping world.*
  - *The partnership between ordained and lay Christians in maritime ministry is one of its great strengths.*

Down goes on to ask "What is the way ahead for ICMA?", and says:

- *Furthering the cause of inter-confessional collaboration and the promotion of unity among Christians, seeking a unity in diversity, not uniformity*
- *Building on its spiritual foundation – fellowship in Christ, sharing with one another the riches of our different traditions.*
- *The message of what has been achieved must be communicated to the churches.*
- *ICMA must keep pace with change and grapple with major issues of the day like seafarers' rights and Christian unity.*
- *It must expand its vision to include everybody involved in shipping at every level*
- *International Christian Maritime Association must go on establishing regions*
- *It must involve as fully as possible all who belong to the organisations within ICMA. It needs to become more member-participative.*

## **6. Code of Conduct**

The International Christian Maritime Association accepted a Code of Conduct for members of the Association. While member organisations commit to the Code, all personnel of those members are expected to sign up to it. Central to the Code of Conduct is its emphasis on respect, both for each other – the members of the Association, by vowing not to proselytise seafarers – and for seafarers themselves – committing its members to treat all seafarers without discrimination.

## **7. ICMA Today**

The aims and objectives of our members remain unchanged. We provide frontline care, delivered to seafarers by our members' chaplains, centre staff and volunteers. We continue to maintain and develop welfare facilities and services. We work with international partners and relate to governments, ports, shipping companies and crewing agents to affect appropriate care of seafarers.

Central to our work is our faith in Christ: it is our faith in God's care for all humanity that drives and motivates our service to the people of the sea. Our organised prophetic ministries of pastoral care, diaconal service and advocacy in almost every



seaport on earth have been the mainstay of seafarers' welfare, in the case of some of our members for as long as three centuries in parts of the world.

Our ministries extend beyond seafarers to include their families and loved ones. Our care is holistic, including all the humanitarian needs of the seafaring community. Our witness to the maritime world is focused upon the human dignity of seafarers.



The specialised needs of seafarers include occupational health, isolation (the separation from loved ones and exacerbated by multinational crewing), the complete integration of work- and life-space, abandonment, the lack of adequate social security, criminalisation, piracy and the fear of piracy, dangerous working conditions, fatigue, restricted shore leave and access to communication and social networks and seafarers employment rights, among others. The world of fishers is of particular concern.

ICMA provides professional training and education to its members' personnel to enable effective responses to these issues troubling seafarers. The value of the International Christian Maritime Association lies in bringing together the faith-based responders for the best use of limited resources, pooling available talent and manpower. Our members are valued in their own right, their faith traditions respected, and they freely apply very different models of ministry while making every attempt to be complementary to (as opposed to being in conflict with ) the efforts of other ICMA members. This approach ensures holistic care to seafarers where it matters most.

Essential to ICMA are

- *Its network of Christian organisations in support of one another's ministries (including connections between chaplains working for different societies in the same port, between those working in seafarers' ministry around the world, and between leaders of maritime mission societies)*
- *Its network of Christian organisations in support of seafarers*
- *Its network of Christian organisations in collaboration with the maritime industry*

- *The inclusive, consultative, participative and transparent nature of the Association*
- *Opportunities to learn from one another and to partner in developing ministries and modus operandi which effectively address changing needs and fluctuations in funding*
- *Its justice ministries and prophetic voice at international level (ILO and IMO)*
- *Adding value to international welfare providers by providing a global interface with seafarers and offering a reliable resource of frontline personnel*
- *Responsiveness to seafarers and their needs generally and in crises (e.g. after*



*disasters and post-piracy)*

- *Regional structure, led by regional coordinators who maintain regional communication, facilitate cooperation among members' personnel who work in regional proximity, organise conferences and establish professional ties with maritime industry partners in the region*



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- *ICMA is the professional organisation for port chaplaincy, offering accredited basic and advanced education and training opportunities to chaplains, lay people and volunteers covering all facets of seafarers' ministry. Training courses include Seafarers Ministry Training aimed at newly appointed chaplains and lay persons in seafarers ministry, International Sailing Chaplains Training for chaplains who intend to sail with crews on ships, Training for emergency response and Crisis Preparedness, Training for Welfare Responders after Piracy, courses that enable the development of onboard faith groups, Courses on pastoral care, Ship Welfare Visitors Course delivery, a joint enterprise of ICMA, ICSW and MNWB. International Christian Maritime Association's Standing Committee for Education and Training (SCET) oversees the quality of accredited courses Its aims are:*
  - *To assess the types of training ICMA members provide for their chaplains and other welfare workers*
  - *To explore which of these courses would be open for training needs of other ICMA members,*
  - *To propose which type of ICMA training should be offered for chaplains and other welfare workers who have been in the maritime ministry for at least five to ten years.*
  - *Cooperation with secular bodies on seafarers welfare, including International Committee on Seafarers Welfare and ISAN (soon to merge into ISWAN)*

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Hennie la Grange

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