

"...the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Mt. 21:42

Summer 2019

*They that go down to the sea in ships, that do
business in great waters;
These see the works of the LORD, and his
wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again
to the depths: their soul is melted because
of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken
man, and are at their wit's end.
Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and
he bringeth them out of their distresses*

-- Psalm 107: 23-28

*Before men went to sea in great ships
They started with something that slips
In and out of the water
Like a duck or an otter
But the problem with her is she tips.*

Or

*Hardly any English words rhyme with Cayuco
Like a Count or an Earl or a Duke-o,
Whether log or a boat
It's still something that floats
But the distinction is more of a fluke-o. ~JCM*

Loma de Luz is situated, of course, on the last hill above the Caribbean Sea. The light in the tower serves as a landmark for local boats out on the dark waters at night. And it's no surprise that fishing is one of the most common ways of making a living here. Some consider it their lifelong vocation; many consider it an option of last resort. All consider it a means of putting food on the table for their families. Some sign on to work on the larger fishing boats that go hundreds of miles out for weeks at a time. Some fish the local reefs and banks day to day. Our most basic and common boat, here on the edge of the North Coast of Honduras, is the Cayuco. Take a log (the Ceiba tree works well), burn it out, chip it out, shape it, christen it with a family name... and it is still a floating hollowed out log. Yet almost every early morning, I see our local fishermen go out in

cayucos with a little Lateen rigged sail made of a sheet of plastic, or the bigger ones with an old single-stroke unmuffled diesel, or the smaller ones with just a handmade paddle, and they all sail out of sight. *"These men do see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof."*



We recently saw a documentary on "Mega-yachts: the Latest Craze for Billionaires." Think Five Stories high, five hundred feet long, a crew of 50, and a price-tag of 500 million dollars. The most expensive are literally made of gold and platinum. I couldn't help but compare this with our cayucos. Think 8 inches of freeboard, a length of no more than 18 ft., a beam no more than 18 inches, a price-tag of \$80, and a crew of one.



One of the things we noticed while watching the documentary was that there was nothing evidently special about the mega-yacht owners other than being mega-rich. I mean it was observed by all that if the mega-yacht owners featured on the show were especially erudite or capable or funny or smart or coordinated or good looking or brave, they were doing a good job of disguising that from the rest of us. They seemed to just be very ordinary people inordinately puffed up about being extraordinarily rich. Another thing I noticed was that no one on the show seemed to be at all in tune with the fundamental fact of the unfathomable power and magnitude of the deep--that the sea is not something to toy with, that whether a 200 ton mega-yacht or a 200 pound cayuco, it is all the same to the ocean. You are just another inconsequential, infinitesimal speck of flotsam. This most foundational of the sea's lessons-- temporarily misplaced on the mega-yacht-- is never far from the thoughts of someone on the ocean in a cayuco.



I know a guy pretty well who (and for our purposes he shall remain nameless) once went to sea in a cayuco off this beach at La Quinta just to see what it was like. I can tell you that the experience is made up of 70-90 % (depending upon the trip) a combination of relatively equal parts of terrifying & tedious, freezing or roasting, boring and monotonous and nauseating--kind of like watching the proceedings of the US Congress on C-SPAN for 6 hours.

Ahh,..but 10-30 % (depending upon the trip) of the experience is just flat awesome, stunningly beautiful, orthogonally perspective-shifting, sublimely peaceful, organically harmonized between the sky and the sea, and.... what is the word for sensing your own insignificance in the breadth of God's hand, and the touch of His breath upon your face... like the desert sky at night?... that word.

You have to get up at about 0300 to sleepily get to the beach at La Quinta by 0320 to push off from the sand still half asleep by 0329... to wade out

and hop in and wake up immediately and completely when your butt-end hits the bottom of the boat... and the cold bilge water thereof... at 0330. Just get used to it, because you are going to be in that position for the next 6-8 hours. After a bit of paddling, a moment of fumbling, and an instant ducking (on your part), Andres, the captain and usually sole crew member of this boat, has the sail up like he has done this 1000 times before. The point is to catch the land → sea breeze falling off the mountains and ride it out, hoping you make it to the fishing banks before the wind drops. If not, you've got a long paddle going out ahead of you. Then there is the long wait for the fish to decide whether they are going to jump on the line ... or not. That is the tedious part, sitting upon (and partially in) a slack sea, slowly roasting in the climbing sun. By 0900 or 1000 when the wind shifts to a sea → land pattern, whether you have caught fish or not, you're done... But you are not really done yet. You are still many nautical miles from land. You have another hour or two of paddling to head into the waves and bailing to stay afloat and running before the wind... and praying as you flounder through the growing whitecaps that you don't founder in them or capsize. Then, if you make it to safe harbor, you still have to secure and service the boat, deal with the fish, and put up the gear.

Remember the 70-90% to 30-10% ratio (70-90% terrifying & tedious, freezing or roasting, boring & monotonous & nauseating vs. 30-10% awesome, stunningly beautiful, orthogonally perspective shifting, sublimely peaceful, organically harmonized between the sky and the sea)? That pretty much sums up life at sea. I know a guy pretty well who (and for our purposes he shall remain nameless) has been to sea enough on commercial fishing boats and US Navy ships to tell you that for the "mass of men," 70-90 : 30-10 are not considered good odds. The romance and the allure of the sea in books and movies notwithstanding, for most of us on this planet, you don't go to sea because you want to. You go to sea because you have to.

It has been 5 years now since the 24th of June 2014, when one of the larger fishing boats, crewed mostly from our local villages, went to the bottom one dark night off this coast. Nine men died in the deep that night (five from our community)--nine fathers and husbands, brothers, cousins, schoolmates, and friends. The scars from that terrible loss are still visible in many families.

Last night we heard that a commercial lobster boat, named the *Capitán Waly*, out of La Ceiba, with the same skipper that was captain of the boat that sank 5 years ago... he survived last time... he didn't

this time.... The *Capitán Waly* went to the bottom yesterday. She was 80 nautical miles off the coast to the east of us in stormy weather, with a lot of the crew in the hold or the main cabin trying to sleep at 0200, when she capsized and sank immediately. Thirty-three men died in the dark that night of the 3rd of July, 2019. Fifty-eight men from the *Capitán Waly* were eventually rescued, after 6 to 8 hours in the water, and almost all of them had been on the weather decks. Most of those below couldn't get out. One of the reasons she sank apparently was the same reason the boat sank with our neighbors 5 years ago. She was dangerously overcrowded. The *Capitán Waly*, rated at 70 tons, left La Ceiba all checked out with the maximum safe crew allotment, 56 men all told. When she went down off Gracias a Dios 2 days later, she had 91 souls on board, two and a half tons of people beyond the maximum safety limit. And, why were they there? Well, they weren't there for the caviar and champagne. They were there because they had to. They were there to work to feed their families.

The *Capitán Waly* was a lobster boat. In these waters the lobster is the Spiny Lobster, and you don't catch them with traps--you catch them with your hands, often diving 100-120 feet, 10 to 12 times a day. You are not paid a salary or an hourly wage. You are paid by the pound of lobster or sea cucumber you bring up. So a lot of the fishing crew is picked up from villages along the way. They work until the main boat can hold no more. When the diver (and his assistant) get paid by the pound (\$3/lb), it makes no difference to the boat owner if there are 100 guys working off a boat rated for 50. The boat owner is more interested in how fast the boat can get filled and how much fuel he has to buy. This is why there were 91 men aboard a boat rated for & checked out with 56. This is why the *Capitán Waly* capsized and sank. This is why 33 men died off our coast last night. But death is not the only risk; and tedium, discomfort, separation from family, hard work, and fear are not the only costs in this fishing industry. Diving 10-12 times a day to depths of 100-120 feet takes a terrible toll on the diver's health. A study by the Pan American Health Organization reported that of the 9,000 divers in Gracias a Dios (the Departamento just to the east of us, where the *Capitán Waly* went down) 4,200 (47%) were disabled in some way by decompression sickness.

So, where does all of this lobster go? Of the \$52,000,000 in sales last year, almost all of it went to the USA--I'm sure some of it to the finely set tables onboard the mega-yachts.

And where am I going with this meandering story? Well, when I set out on a story navigating by dead reckoning (as in the case of this story), I may not know exactly where the story is going to end up. I began the story thinking I was just writing a buoyant, hopefully funny story about the Cayuco. I figured people get tired of reading about sad and serious things, and a cayuco is not sad and not really even very serious, just your most optimistically indivisible minimum of watercraft. I spent a long time off-and-on coming up with those limericks... (I mean, if you come up with an English word that rhymes with *Cayuco*, please let me know). Then we happened upon this documentary on mega-yachts. The immense disparity between the world those people live in and the real world my neighbors live in was just too stark to pass unnoticed, but I did my best not to turn all serious and start sarcastically ranting about social injustice. No, that's just the way of the world. And, this world has some obscenely privileged people with their own problems in it, and it has a whole lot of the rest of us just trying to get by. Besides as a morality tale, this story has already been way better told ... by Jesus...with the story of Lazarus and the Rich man (Luke 16: 19-31), ... or the Parable of the Rich Man and his Barns (Luke 12: 13-21), or Jesus' Discourse with the Rich Young Ruler (Matt 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-27).

No, I knew that this story had more to do with the risks we frail creatures take when we venture out upon the great waters, but beyond that, to tell you the truth, I was kind of wondering where we were headed myself. Then the real-life tragedy of real life kicked in the door on my musings when the *Capitán Waly* went down in the middle of the writing of this article, in the middle of the night, in the middle of the sea that took the lives of another 33 men out there striving upon her surface right off our coasts.



I don't know if you've ever been standing around a grave with a handful of other grave diggers, looking down at the coffin you just lowered to the

bottom of the grave, but I can tell you that it just seems like somebody ought to say a few words. And, if nobody else will, you've got to. So the few words that come to my mind are these: There is something noble about the courage it takes to put your life on the line—the living of your life or the ending of your life—to be willing to put it down on the table not because you want to, but because you have to. You have to feed your family (I Timothy 5:8). You have to put it on the line for your friends (John 15:13). You have to live for something greater than yourself (Phil 2:3,4 or Luke 9:23-25).

In the face of a civilization which seems to have lost its moorings or lost its mind and has somehow become more concerned about toxic masculinity, tribal politics, and purchasing Facebook Likes than fundamental truths, here is a fundamental truth that has not been forgotten by those who still provide, produce, and protect: sometimes, maybe each day, you have to stand up and put it on the line. For your family, for your friends, for something greater than yourself, you have to get on the boat and shove off into the deep, not because you want to, but because you have to.... in “a poor, poor imitation of Him,” the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who put it on the line for us. Whether or not they could have put it into so many words, these men did just that. And, they should be remembered and honored for it.

Let us pray for those left behind.

In Christ Jesus,

Jefferson McKenney, M.D.

News and Needs:

1.) Harvest Aviation (from Dave Fields)

One of the many constant battles that we fight at Loma de Luz is the battle of procurement and delivery. As the technical guy on staff, I deal with this problem constantly. When our construction team needs concrete or lumber, sure they can get that locally. But, when they need water valves or cabinet hinges or fasteners that won't fall apart in two months, well that's another story. When I need a part for a patient vital signs monitor, or something for our digital radiology, that's another story too. We struggle almost daily with repairing older donated equipment, finding important and affordable medicines or supplies the list is endless. Once we've found said part or piece, we have to either go an expensive commercial shipping route or find the next volunteer coming down that (a) has enough space in their already overcrowded luggage to bring it and (b) is physically close enough that we can ship

the item to them in time. The logistics of keeping this ever-growing hospital, school, and children's center operational and fully functional just keep getting more and more complex. We were so grateful last year when Harvest Aviation (<http://harvestaviation.org/>) approached us about the possibility of medical supply flights into Roatan. We would like to be able to take advantage of flights, perhaps once a quarter, and then perhaps the Lord would see fit to allow a flight every other month.



Harvest Aviation plane

The costs are as follows: **\$2600 would pay for one fully-staffed flight able to carry up to 900 pounds of supplies.** This would allow us to have a much more stable logistics supply route. We wanted to make this need known and see if the Lord might lay it on the heart of someone or some group to sponsor one flight a year. The donations would be to the Cornerstone Foundation, and we would then pay Harvest for the flights. Please pray for direction and funding for this important new logistical option for us.

2.) El Camino, the Bilingual School: **NEEDS TEACHERS and TEACHERS AIDES** (minimum commitment 1 year).

3.) Casa Santuario needs missionary/ volunteer **Childcare Management Workers** (minimum commitment 1 year).

4.) **Project Manager:** We are hard at work on the expansion of the entire Hospital (and will be for probably the next calendar year). The logistical challenges of expanding a busy hospital while it stays fully operational are many. There are, additionally always several other large construction projects going on (minimum commitment 3 months).

If you might be interested or think of someone who might be interested in any of these positions, please contact us @ <http://www.crstone.org/long-term-service/>

5.) In order to complete the expansion of the Operating Room Corridor, we are scheduling a period of “Emergencies Surgeries Only” for 19 October until the end of the year. In the month of November we really need Anesthesia Coverage, since both of our Anesthesia providers (Rosanne & Dr. Isaac) will be away during that month. Though it will be “Emergencies Only,” we get plenty of those,

and since it will be down to One O.R. in a construction site, we are in need of a Flexible Anesthetist or Anesthesiologist for part of or all of that month of November. If you can (and are qualified), please contact us via Volunteer Coordinator @ volunteers@lomadeluz.net.

*Thou tellest my wanderings; you have put my tears
into thy bottle; they are already in thy book.*

--Psalm 56:8

One thing the scriptures make clear is that God cares about those who are suffering and those who are giving or losing their lives. I think of the tender and unexpected image of God himself burying Moses. I think of the sparrows who never fall alone. May God guide you in the intimately known ways He leads you to shove off from the shore and give yourself away. May He set your course and remain by your side... no matter what.

--Sally Mahoney for Cornerstone Foundation