



...FOR
THOSE
BEYOND
REACH

NEWSLETTER

HARNESSING CREATION

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THE PATHS OF THE SEA

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:1)

A Psalm of Wonder

For me as a pioneering Christian and technician, Psalm 8 is one of the most beautiful hymns in the Bible. A theme reflected in a song I like "How Great Thou Art". In Psalm 8, king David looks up at the stars and is filled with awe at the greatness of God. He marvels that the Creator of the universe would care for human beings at all:

"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Yet David recognises that God has given people a special place in creation; authority over the works of His hands: the birds, the animals, and even *"the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas."*

For centuries, those "paths of the seas" were understood as poetic language. But in the 19th century, one man took those words seriously, and ended up changing the course of science.

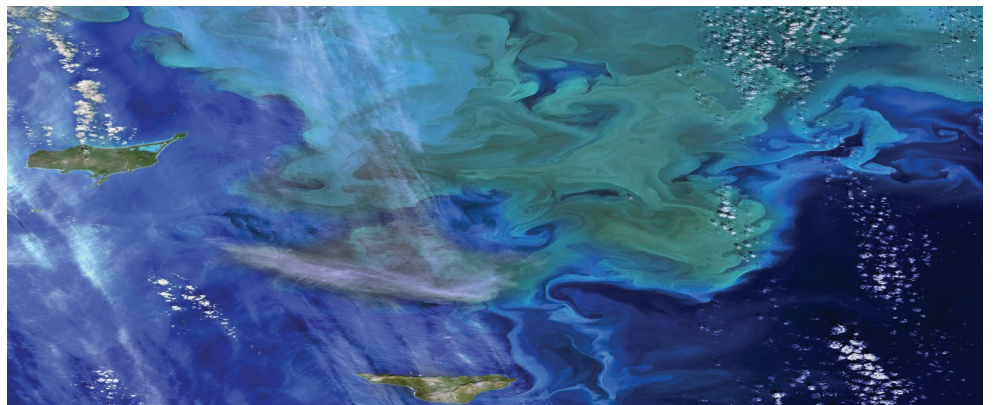


Photo by USGS on Unsplash.com

Taking God at His Word

Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806–1873) was a U.S. Navy officer who would later be called the father of modern oceanography. During an illness that left him bedridden, his son read aloud from Psalm 8. When Maury heard the phrase "the paths of the seas," he paused and said, *"If God says there are paths in the sea, then I will find them when I get well."* Once recovered, Maury began to study the oceans in earnest. He gathered thousands of ship logs from sailors around the world, comparing notes on winds, currents, and temperatures. From this mountain of data, a pattern began to emerge. The oceans did have "paths" — powerful currents that flowed in regular, predictable routes across the globe.



Charting God's Design

In 1855, Maury published 'The Physical Geography of the Sea', the first major work on oceanography. He mapped the great currents — such as the Gulf Stream — and explained how wind and water move together in a vast, interconnected system.

His discoveries have transformed navigation. Ships that followed Maury's charts could cross oceans faster and more safely, saving time, money, and lives. His work laid the foundation for the science of oceanography as we know it today.

Faith and Science, Not Opposed

Maury's willingness to draw insight from the Bible drew criticism from some scientists of his day. His response was simple and confident:

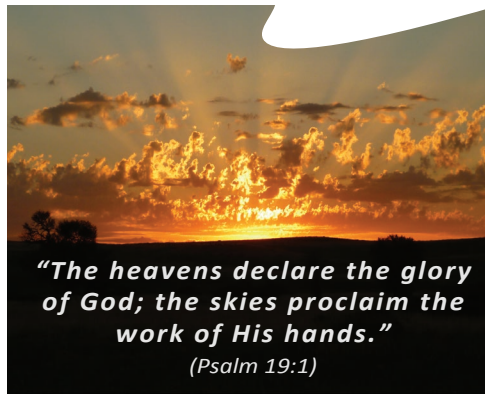
"The Bible is authority for everything it touches. The Bible is true, and science is true."

For him, there was no conflict between faith and scientific inquiry. He believed that studying the natural world was another way to honour its Creator; to uncover the order and purpose that God has built into creation.

A Lasting Lesson from Psalm 8 for Us

Psalm 8 still speaks powerfully to us. It reminds us that although we are small compared to the universe, we are known and valued by God. It also calls us to care for the world He made and to see His wisdom in every part of it.

Matthew Maury's story shows how faith can inspire discovery. The "paths of the sea," once a poetic phrase, became a scientific reality because one man believed that God's Word could be trusted, even about the natural world.



*"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands."
(Psalm 19:1)*

May we, like Maury, use the knowledge of the sea's paths to carry the Word of God to every shore!

Story compiled by a HFA Network Partner

Resource: <https://www.bible.ca/tracks/matthew-fontaine-maury-pathfinder-of-sea-ps8.htm>

FRUIT BOXES for JESUS!

Antonio* (*name changed) walked along the beach near his home in Italy. As he gazed across the Adriatic Sea, he noticed that the air was unusually clear. Towards the east, he could even make out the shape of mountaintops! Knowing the position of his home in the region of Apulia at the 'heel' of the boot shape of his country, he knew immediately that he was looking at the land he was desperately longing to reach with the Gospel: Albania!

It was the mid 1970s and little news about the living conditions of the Albanian people ever made it out of the atheistic, communist country. No mission efforts had proven successful yet, as it was extremely difficult to get permission to enter the reclusive country — and when someone did, they would constantly be guarded by government employees. The Albanian people had lived through the hardship and terror of Italian and German Nazi occupation, directly followed by a repressive Stalinist dictatorship which had isolated the country from the world.

Being a missionary, Antonio's heart ached for the precious people of Albania. Did any of them still know about Jesus? God's Word would give these desperate and oppressed people so much hope for today and eternity!

Christians had been trying to find ways to get the Gospel message into Albania and used rivers flowing along the border to float Bibles into the country. Looking at the unobstructed view between him and the many miles long coastline, Antonio knew that it was time to try sending Bibles to Albanian seashores. It turned out that sea currents exist between Italy, Greece and Albania with a fairly steady one flowing north along the Albanian coast — this could actually work! To their delight, Antonio and other missionaries with the same desire realised that the ferry between Italy and Greece would pass through that current!

The team got busy. They printed the Gospel of John in the Albanian language as a thin blue booklet; along with a straw to aid floatation and chewing gum to entice the 'finders' on the distant shore to open the bags, they sealed the Scriptures in plastic. A couple hundred of these packages fitted into a banana box. Several of these fruit cartons were loaded into a delivery van and taken onto the ferry headed for Greece. After many calculations, the group had determined where the vessel would enter the north-flowing current. It was the middle of the night when the men, who had gone on board for this mission, estimated they had reached that current.

As ferry crews are trained to keep their vessel and passengers safe, they're always alert, looking out and listening for unusual movements and noises; that's why the team had to wait until nobody was close. With their hearts racing, the missionaries dumped their precious cargo overboard just at the moment when the ferry pitched into the waves and prayed that the rushing sound of the bow wave would mask the noise of the parcels hitting the water!



For all ships alike 'weather routing' (using ocean currents and weather systems) is vital to plan the safest and most efficient route

Once all the Bibles were floating in the Adriatic Sea, the team prayed and hoped that they would reach Albania and do their work. There would be no way for them to find out about the outcome. All they could do now was pray and trust that God would use their 'investment' for eternal gain.

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days."

Ecclesiastes 11:1

Over a decade later, in 1991, Albania's oppressive and brutal regime was toppled and finally, the country opened up! Antonio and others took the opportunity and opened a mission station in Tirana, the capital of Albania. I was also there along with my family, helping the team with Bible translation and computer technology. We were shocked to see the condition of the country after decades of atheistic dictatorship. It was unbelievable! Later, by God's grace, it became possible to start another mission station on the shores of Albania. One of our staff members there talked to the locals about the blue booklets our team had thrown off the ferry, back then, and showed them a similar package.

"Oh we know this," they said, "we found those packages years ago!"



Albanian seashore

"The army was there too and soldiers with Kalashnikovs forced us to gather them all and to hand them in to be destroyed."

Our friends heart sank at the thought of the armed men burning those precious Scriptures! But then one of the men winked and said: *"... but you know, each one of us had one."*



Representative photo

In hindsight, we see how God used the 'seeds' that were sown and brought about fruit for eternity. People found the booklets the team sent across the sea, and the Holy Spirit turned the printed words into the Living Word of God in the hearts of many of the readers and they gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Today, there are other oppressive regimes like Albania once was. I am grateful to still be involved in sending the Gospel across the waters but now with advanced technical possibilities, as you can read in the following article. Will you join us as we continue to 'cast our bread upon the waters'?

Compiled from reports by a HFA Network Partner

INNOVATIVE 'FERRIES'

As Christians, we have been given the mandate to make Jesus known throughout all nations (Matt 28); this is God's mission field and therefore ours as well. We do what we do because we are commanded, but also, we believe the Gospel is the universal remedy that addresses human need in any and all cultures. While we have come some way from the scale of closed nations of the 1970s, there are many countries and people groups that are still isolated from hearing the Good News today.

Fortunately, technology has also come a long way from the days of pushing banana boxes off ferries 'hoping' the ocean currents will wash at least a portion of these packages onto shore - which as we now know they did, praise the Lord!

So, what do ferries, fruit boxes and the paths of the sea have to do with HFA? Our God is a creative God who gives His people ideas and solutions to bring Bibles to unreached and isolated people groups who would otherwise have no access to the Gospel. Sometimes it is impossible, or extremely dangerous to send a person to share about Jesus, so we use technology instead! The exciting news is, that there is no place on earth today, which cannot be reached with the Gospel. It's just a matter of being creative and finding or developing the right technologies and making them available to co-labouring missions and partners; and that is exactly what we do - to bring Hope from Above to those currently beyond reach.

One of the main technologies among the different 'tools' we've developed in the HFA network is a water drone. This is a solar powered, satellite controlled, self-driving vessel which can be used to transport Bibles to distant shores where underground Christians could receive the 'delivery'. Or where this isn't possible, the Scriptures can be released into an ocean current which will take them to the shore. Previous Bible delivery operations like the one mentioned earlier have proven the concept works! With greatly advanced technology and oceanography, transporting Bibles across the sea has become so much more attainable.

Many of you will remember that we launched our first ever water drone in late 2023 into the seas (after 7+ years of research & development, creative designing, construction and inland testing). While we did achieve an amazing feat of travelling 500km away from the coast, we lost contact with this vessel after six weeks on the ocean.

We were disappointed that we couldn't see our prototype through to its destination, but we gained a wealth of applicable knowledge and data. And we are certain that God is in control of that craft and its precious cargo and could still be taking it to its destination through the paths He created.

Since this first launch, we have learnt so much and discovered that tides, ocean currents and wind play a far greater role in the journey of our water drone on the ocean than we first realised, or had the expertise to understand. With many obstacles and 'traffic' in the oceans, finding the best possible path through the seas is enormously important to the success of the journey. God has brought together among our network teams technicians and specialists who are drawing on the many resources from oceanographers like Maudry who have gone before us. They are working with technological resources for ocean currents and wind gauges to create prediction models to help us even more accurately transport these Bibles through the seas to reach those who have not yet heard of Jesus. A few weeks ago, two members of the *HFA Network* had an online-meeting with a university professor and a physicist. The conclusion: you can put a bottle in the water anywhere in the ocean and quite precisely predict where it will end up!

How amazing is our God! We have so much technology and resources available to us these days to utilise for His Kingdom. I'm sure our missionary friends back in the 1970s would have valued these resources to be able to 'send' their packages with greater insight and accuracy.

As times and seasons change, God equips us with all we need. Just as He called Oholiab and Bezalel to use their gifts, talents and resources around them to build the tabernacle, and to teach others the skills needed for such a task (Ex 31:1-11); we have been called to use our gifts, talents and resources to reach those who have never heard of the love of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Like Oholiab and Bezalel, we aren't doing it alone! Through thick and thin, setbacks, success and opposition, brothers and sisters have given of their resources, time and skills, and prayed obstacles away! If you are already part of our team at the factory or behind the scenes, we thank you so much! If you aren't yet: will you join us in prayer or working hands-on at the factory? We'd love to hear from you!

Current progress of our latest water drone



Water drone construction: parts and components

Our team is working hard to complete the next water drone. Insights gained from our prototype have been integrated: a 'tweaked' shape design, upgraded electronics for enhanced vessel operation and accuracy. Please join us in prayer for God's protection and unhindered progress, as we push towards launching this craft; that we may bring Light into dark places!

Like our brothers in Albania, we may not hear for many years (or even at all this side of heaven) of those who come to know Jesus through the Good News being sent across the seas, but we firmly believe this:

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11

**Kate
COO**

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