



Isaac blew with all his fury, ripping every sheet of corrugated iron from roof after roof, thatched dwellings had no chance. His timing was impeccable, a high spring tide to stir the raging ocean right across the island atolls. He did not blow himself out to sea, as most did, but with sinister precision targeted every island within reach.

It was April 1982 and Hurricane Isaac had done his worst. Amazingly, miraculously, not one soul was lost, although many were injured. Children were untied from trees days later- parents had secured them there as a "safe" place before entire sand islands went 6' under the ocean.

The relief effort was enormous even six weeks later, when the media had found newer, more interesting stories; the call for help was still going out. At a morning service in my local Baptist Church I heard of the need and again that evening. Within the week I was in Tonga- the worst casualty. A 50' yacht had sailed up from NZ and transported us from island to island as we worked dawn to dusk. Mostly we concentrated on restoring fresh water supplies as some islands were still receiving this valuable commodity in "jerry cans"

This was my first experience in overseas travel. Over the years I would visit more than 30 other nations. But the experience in Tonga left a deep and profound impression on my new Christian life. The following year, 1983, I attended 2 very different training centres, culminating in a very clear missions call to the Pacific.



In the years that passed I have endeavoured in many ways to work out the call. At one point selling my own house and purchasing a suitable yacht to serve from island to island. I was not alone, and in 1987 a group of Christian "yachties" formed Pacific Yacht Ministries. I crewed on a yacht to Fiji (she stayed there 3 years working with The Bible Society.) The same year I sailed to Vanuatu, the team there working with Every Home For Jesus.

Once married, Jenny and I lived in our yacht "Good News," with that same vision in mind. God had other plans and used us in mission to muslim people on the other side of the planet. The vision though has never died.



At the same time another man had a very different vision. He was operating earth-moving equipment as a profession but his passion was to build boats. This, his third was a major undertaking- designed and built on the concept of a Chesapeake Bay Schooner, fast, large, easily handled. The keelson was laid in 1975, and for the best part of 30 years the work wound on in meticulous detail creating

a centre-board schooner of 79' 9" overall length, by 17' wide beam, with a draught of only 3' 6" with the board up and nearly 11' when down. The wheelhouse allows inside steering out of searing sun or downpours and flying spray. The wheelhouse is often the focal point of the ship with its large dining table and seating large enough to be used as two single berths, it has windows all around which allow very good viewing while at anchor or sea. There is a second steering position outside, aft of the wheelhouse.

Below decks is an engine room/ workshop with full headroom to starboard, and down the port companionway the heads with shower, into the sizeable galley through to the spacious saloon. Forward are the crew quarters of one double and two single berths. Coming aft from the saloon on the starboard side the captain has a private cabin.

The whole vessel is built immensely strongly out of macrocarpa (Monterey Cypress), and skinned with Jarra (Australian hardwood) over that on the hull. All up she weighs some 35 tons. She is a gaff rigged schooner carrying an enormous 2400 square feet of sail.

Jenny and I have looked at all sorts of vessels for reaching some of the 22,000 islands spread across the Pacific. Our heart is for the isolated communities of the more remote islands of the undeveloped western Pacific. In Vanuatu, for instance, many islands still have an illiteracy rate of well over 80%

We have considered working for just one missions organisation but in reality feel it an unwise and restricted use of Kingdom resource. Our vision is to serve, specifically we believe our key role is to support the indigenous Church in her effort to reach her own culture. We can bring in many practical skills such as carpentry, engineering or

plumbing, but our whole attitude is one of coming alongside, to support, not to take over.

Transport is always a major obstacle in the Pacific. Many islands cannot provide an airstrip and largely the cost of air travel is prohibitive. Sail is still the most economic and practical solution.

The owner of the Maggie is very supportive of the proposed use of the vessel. Having spent the major part of this life creating this fine ship he is keen to see his "baby" go to people of similar passion and practical purpose.

Jenny and I are not in a position, financially or otherwise, to purchase Maggie at the current asking price of around NZ\$380k, but even if we were we believe it unwise for one family to carry that load. We consider a Trust should be set up, to broaden the foundation and increase input.

The cyclone season in the South Pacific broadly runs from around October through to April. Many international cruising yachtsmen come down to NZ to avoid vulnerability during that season. It also happens to coincide with the NZ summer season. Obviously many of the larger and local boats stay in the Pacific during this time checking weather forecasts.



If the Trust felt it prudent to shelter the ship in NZ waters over the NZ summer several options in charter work may be available to contribute to operating costs.

Essentially unless we find a very generous on-going donor of funds, Maggie will be required to contribute to her own keep. We're still making enquiries along this line. Another very real possibility is she work in the tourist industry in the Fiji Islands for certain months per year to go toward the expenses of missions work in Vanuatu, Solomons or Papua New Guinea. Even while on mission business I think we will have to charge rates for passenger and cargo carrying, though it must be at an island affordable rate.

One advantage of having Maggie based in Fiji is her accessibility to the other islands in case of emergency relief work. Even so the 3-4 days sail from Fiji to Vanuatu is better than 10-12 days from NZ.



Obviously there is a huge amount of detail to be processed. That is one major reason why so few Christians are involved in any boat ministry anywhere in the world! The key here is largely the "right" sort of vessel and the other is very obviously timing. A sound, solid, small ship that can sail in just over 3' of water is invaluable in the Pacific for getting through coral passages, over shallow reefs

and up rivers and estuaries. The only other type of boat I could think of was a large catamaran, but Jenny was resistant to that, as they have a tendency to tip over and not come back up!

We are in close communication with Maggie's owner who is in agreement with our plans and is graciously giving us time to work it through. Every professional seaman that we have asked advice of agrees the Maggie would be ideal.

Purchasing the vessel before setting up the trust is an option, but if trustees can be collected with passion and resource then many of the detail and decisions can be made corporately.

Your input, advice, comments, resource, experience and prayers are all gratefully welcomed.

For further information or discussion please contact us at phil@mission-adventure.org.nz or mail 499 Mahurangi East Rd, Algies Bay, Warkworth 0920, New Zealand, or phone/fax us at +64 9 4256000

