

# Three examples in eight days of our important work for seafarers -- and local commerce.

Recently we encountered three ships with major problems -- all within the span of eight days. With dexterity and resourcefulness, the Seamen's Church Institute staff met each challenge.

The M/V Annabel arrived in port on a Friday with the crew being denied shore leave by the captain at the company's behest.

Each seafarer had been cleared by Customs but the company feared that they might jump ship because of the history of seafarers from their country, Myanmar (Burma), doing so.

After consultation with Mesfin Ghebrewoldi, our veteran senior ship visitor, I emailed the flag state (Liberia) that this was a clear violation of their rights and was simply unfair to these men who had not been ashore in months.

Within a few hours, the flag state worked out a deal with the owners to assure them shore leave the next day. On Saturday we visited the ship and were greeted with broad smiles from the crew. We were clearly heroes to them. We even got invited for lunch.

Three days later the crew of M/V Nord Angel reported that they had not been paid in months and their families were suffering from the lack of money. I called in the international union inspector from Baltimore to visit the ship along with Mr. Ghebrewoldi. Turns out that the company had forwarded the money to the manning agent in the Philippines but it had not been forwarded to the seafarers' accounts. This ship is now on a world-wide watch by the international union.

The ship has left port. But we are still working with others to resolve the problem.

Finally, the next Saturday one of our chaplains, Pastor William Rex, received a distress call from the M/V Atlantic Falcon stating that the delivery of stores had been short-changed by a significant amount. What he discovered was that the captain and the Chandler had a kick-back arrangement that benefited the captain.

He also found out that the captain had alienated his whole crew with repeated derogatory racial remarks against the crew. The ship agent held up the sailing of the ship until all the stores were delivered to the ship. Pastor Rex spent 12 hours on the ship attending to the needs of the crew and providing medication.

What would have happened if SCI had not there to help these vulnerable men? Who would have helped them? No one. Your support makes this ministry possible and seafarers are eternally grateful for your gifts.

The Rev. Canon James D. Von Dreele  
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November, 2011