

# DISPATCHES FROM ABERDEEN



**Iain Sanders**  
Port Chaplain, Aberdeen

*The Lord is my pilot, I shall not drift.  
He guides me across the dark waters.  
He steers me through deep channels.  
He keeps my log.  
Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and  
tempests of life,  
I shall dead no anger, for He is with me;  
His love and care, shelter me.  
He prepares a quiet harbour before me.  
He anoints the waves with oil  
My ship rides calmly.  
Surely sunlight and starlight  
Shall guide me on the voyage I take,  
And I shall rest in Heaven's port forever.*

### Psalm 23 (Seafarers Paraphrase)

It was my privilege to join with the Lord Provost, Rab Youngman and other retired trawlerman at the Fishermens' Memorial in Shiprow, Aberdeen. I used the above paraphrase and when it speaks of sunlight and starlight I reminded them of the sextant that ships used to carry. It measured the angle of a celestial body and the horizon to give an accurate position of the ship. I lifted the Bible and told them this is our sextant.

On a supply vessel the Polish Capitan engaged me in conversation but he had two main arguments:

- That you should not evangelise.
- Latin is the basis of the English language, therefore we should all be Roman Catholic because the Mass is in Latin.

I asked him the question: 'What is a Christian?', and was able to have a good spiritual conversation with him.



*I asked a Capitan, "What can I do for you and your crew." He said, "Keep visiting us!"*



On one vessel a seafarer asked me what the word catholic meant as in the holy catholic church in the Apostles' Creed. It was my joy to be able to share with him Acts 2:21, 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' I left him with 1 John 1:9, 'Confess your sin and he is able and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.'

On a standby vessel I met two Polish seafarers. One was telling me of a traumatic experience he had had on a previous vessel. As he finished talking four more arrived for coffee. One said he was from Lewis, to whom I asked have you heard of the *Lewis Awakening* and Duncan Campbell? The upshot was that this seafarer was fed up with church and the inconsistencies of Christians. As we discussed about how we are all sinners and all fail, and our need for a Saviour, the others were listening. Praise God for wonderful opportunities.

On another vessel I met the seafarer on watch. He loved his cricket and we spent sometime talking about cricket. Five day matches and 20/20. The Captain, on the bridge, asked me, "How do you know if someone is a Christian?"

During July, the *Tall Ships* came to Aberdeen. Four seafaring charities came together to raise awareness about the work among seafarers. SCFS, Stella Maris, Norwegian Seaman's Church and the Fisherman's Mission. Imagine our surprise and joy when a council official told us that we had been allocated a tent each. Rosie and I manned our stand and we gave out stickers, postcards with Bible verses on, pens and some had their photograph taken with the lifevest and helmet. On the final day I took part in a blessing of the fleet as it sailed up the main channel.

## How can you help SCFS Aberdeen?

- Can you introduce me to other churches and fellowships and pastors? This would be fabulous!
- Would you consider inviting me to speak about the work? To share at ladies' groups, fellowship groups, men's groups, youth work and pulpit supply when necessary.
- Have you considered volunteering? We always need volunteers and full training and PPE will be supplied. You will firstly be required to undertake the SCFS volunteer application process and then obtain a Merchant Navy Welfare Board visitor pass. Visit: [www.mnwb.org](http://www.mnwb.org) and click on Port Visitor and you will be directed to a series of videos. The multiple choice at the end needs to be completed and you will need an established ship visitor to sponsor you.
- Are there any knitting or crochet groups out there? We distribute woolly hats and scarves and knitted toys to the seafarers on regular basis. Please contact me if you could help in this way.





At SCFS, we are thankful for the groups who provide practically for the seafarers with toiletries, socks, knitted goods etc. Can you help by supplying gift packs, especially for the ship visitations at Christmas? (Contact me or check the website - **'Become a Gifter'** page for a contents list.)



*Recently on a supply vessel a seafarer told me his friend had lost his faith. How do I encourage him?*

## Finding Out More About SCFS

Finding out more about SCFS...

- If you need a speaker for a ladies'/men/youth group, midweek or even Sunday services, please do get in touch.
- You can find out all about SCFS, catch the latest news articles and read seafarer stories on the SCFS website: [scfs.org](http://scfs.org).
- For additional resources type [linktr.ee/scfs.org](http://linktr.ee/scfs.org) into your browser.
- The **SCFS Helmsman** magazine is produced 2-3 times a year and provides updates on the wider work. It is available for free to all our supporters. To receive Helmsman by email (preferred, to save on postage), sign up to our mailing list on Linktree. To receive **Helmsman** by post, contact HQ (details below).
- To receive the **Dispatches from Aberdeen**, contact me (details below).

Blessings,  
Iain and Rosie




Rosie's nephew came to visit during the Tall Ships and was marvelled by their majesty.

Then we took him to Cairngorm near Aviemore for a ride on the funicular railway but the top was covered in cloud.



## CONTACT ME

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