



Douglas B. Stevenson, Esq.

Seamen's Church Institute is a ministry by the, founded out of the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 1834, Church to ships and the mariners who serve on them. This ministry began as "floating churches" berthed along the New York City waterfront and grew to serve mariners out of facilities in Lower Manhattan and Port Newark. Along with direct chaplaincy to mariners aboard the 3400 ships that dock in Port Newark every year, and the creation of training facilities for seafarers who traverse both the world's oceans and America's rivers, the Center for Seafarer's Rights stands as the third leg of this ministry.

Under the leadership of Douglas Stevenson, the Center for Seafarer's Rights provides the only full-time, free legal-aid program in the world for merchant mariners. The labor of seafarers, disproportionately drawn from the developing world, is among the most dangerous work in the world: hard labor in the wilderness of violent storms and roiling seas, and sometimes under unscrupulous ship owners. And all of this happens far from the watching eyes of protective government and institutions. SCI and the Center for Seafarer's Rights are watching when no one else is. When this bishop asked Doug many years ago what it is that he does, he described the experience of chaplains aboard ships in Port Newark shaking the hand of a seaman and coming away with a folded note in his palm: "Help me. This ship is unsafe."

For over twenty-five years Douglas Stevenson has given himself to the safety and well-being, and to the demands of human justice, for those in peril on the sea. The Center for Seafarer's Rights provides legal services of every kind to mariners in port, but Doug also advocates for and negotiates on behalf of seafarers trapped on abandoned ships, or subject to the threat of international piracy. He was pivotal to the creation of the Maritime Labour Convention of 2006, establishing international regulations for the protection of seafarers. His work has taken Doug from boardrooms to classrooms to the decks of container ships; to an eight-day journey through the perilous waters of Pirate Alley off the coast of Somalia; to the chambers of the United States Supreme Court. In every place, Doug is a voice for the voiceless, the rememberer of the forgotten. He is the world's leading authority on seafarer human rights.

Therefore, in recognition and gratitude for his witness to the dignity of every human being, and the inalienable rights of the least among us, offered to the glory of God, we, on this 9th day of November 2018, in the seventh year of our consecration, do award him

The Bishop's Cross

The Right Reverend Andrew ML Dietsche
XVI Bishop of New York