

DEUTSCHE SEEMANNSMISSION DURBAN

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Report of the German Seamen's Mission Durban 2011

The previous year was again filled with visits to the sailors on ships under German management. Despite the large number of German sailors on board of these ships, my contact with sailors from other nations has greatly increased. Polish officers are more and more frequently conversing with me. I also noticed that the conversation topics with the sailors themselves have changed. Previously the family and the working conditions were discussed, now the sailors' fear of pirates is more apparent. This may be due to the fact that ships coming to Durban, often come directly from pirate regions, or are on their way there. The sailors feel abandoned. My impression is that we as Seamen's Mission were always needed for pastoral care, but it is now apparent that the fears of attacks from pirates have become even more prominent. In our international team we deeply care about sailors who are affected by attacks from pirates, but it is my opinion that the initial pastoral care still falls a bit short. But we are going to address this and act more responsive to the concerns of seafarers.

Since it is no longer permitted to drive in the harbor district, a lot of time is spent waiting for the shuttle bus. (Up to 2 hours a day)

The seamen still need to make an outing of their everyday workday. I hereby do not mean the visits to the Sailors' Club, where their primary needs like making calls, shopping, etc. are satisfied, but trips away from the port area, where they can see something of the country and people. Unfortunately, the condition of my car no longer allows for the popular Safaris, but shopping and sightseeing trips in Durban are still a popular alternative.

Cooperation with ICMA colleagues is outstanding and becomes more intensive. This is partly because it was realized that a team is always stronger than an individual alone can be. The port authorities as well as the public perceive us as the "International Seamen's Mission".

Working in the international team, as well as working with the sailors is still very rewarding.

However taking into account the uncertain financial future of the German Seamen's Mission, I wonder how the work for the sailors will continue.

Especially considering the increased importance of pastoral care as mentioned above.

With much optimism and best regards

Hans-Werner Casper