

THE SHIP

By David D. Hambleton

*Somewhere in my mind I see a vision of would-be sailors building a ship.
They're talking about how it should be structured.*

To whom would go command? Where should they sail it? What would they see there? Would it serve The Creator who had inspired them in its building? How could they ensure that it would survive as a legacy – or would it? Asked what he had wrought, a master-builder among them said, “I give you a ship, if you can keep it.”

They were good students of ships, and built it better than anything afloat had ever been built before. It was nearly destroyed many times, from both without and within, right there in the drydock; saved only by divine intervention on more than one occasion – and that acknowledged by some of the most skeptical of divinity among them.

Consensus came hard, but it was had. The keel would lay so. The ribs and decks were solid to protect those within. Her sails were set to fly. Glorious, she would be commanded by a captain chosen from the deck plates, for no royalty would be had on this voyage. No subjects were among those builders who threw off servitude to any but their creator, as they themselves created this ship.

Crewmembers elected representatives to the design and navigating councils and to the captaincy. These would stand for re-election frequently so as not to grow over-comfortable or privileged in those roles. The armory was distributed among the crew, to protect one another and keep the leaders honest.

Unique among vessels, this one would be crewed by sailors who owned each a portion of it. When they pulled a line or set a course, they pulled and plotted not as a slave to avoid the stripe, but as one who profits from the pulling or steering. Landlubbers who saw what it meant to be onboard aspired and applied. Many were accepted and became some of the best of the crew, making it better for their partnership as sailors.

It was a sound vessel. The fastest afloat. And it raced ahead of the greatest navies in the world. Indeed, it was attacked before launch and again shortly thereafter and the battles were hard, but this crew and ship won the day. That winning would continue and set the world's shipping lanes free from pirate and despot against all odds to prosper as never before.

In an unbelievably short time, common people all over the globe for the first time were set free to flourish into a standard of living heretofore un-known among any but the wealthiest of kings. Wealth was accumulated and distributed. Incurable diseases were healed and forgotten. Poverty and disaster relief was funded like never in history.

All this success, yet there remained disagreements as to how to set the sail or trim the ballast or which course to set through storms and strife. These were civil struggles among fellow-laborers with honest questions as to how much of the sheet and how much of the jib, how much rum or beef for dinner, or into which port for how long.

Then came an evil among the crew. Sailors who didn't want to sail but had desires to live ashore had crept into the ranks. These postulated that life ashore would be better, as the grass was certainly greener than the ship's deck on this side of the gunwale. They claimed they were wiser, and spoke of their education and scientific approach; though their arguments were pure sophistry, good members of the crew didn't want to be rude so they let them ramble on.

They complained about having to stand watch with others among them based on arbitrary things; green eyes were first, then blonde hair, then tall people were out. A tall, fair-haired, green eyed faithful man called them out and showed their evil, and they cowered for a time, allowing some to be recognized not on arbitrary measures but based on the content of their character. Caught, they hid out for a while, and then blamed the faithful of the persecution and posted criers on deck to repeat the lie until it caught hold among some and then many crewmembers. "Those vicious faithful!"

They set about to re-focus the crew's training from weather, ocean currents, and sailing in general to this ship; promising more logical methods of running it. They hid and obfuscated the knowledge of how the divine had saved them and set them on course, claiming it was the work of people like them who secretly had rejected The Creator since the start. Lost among many were the arts of navigation by trustworthy means, and more than once the ship came near running aground or foundering in heavy seas or on shoals. But there were a remnant among whom the knowledge was retained by passing it not through the wicked teachers but from mother to son, father to daughter, and faithful friend to faithful friend.

The wicked fabricated mythology about The Creator being created by the created, claiming earlier crewmembers had made up the divine being. Free to speak by the ship's guiding dictates, they stood on deck and said it over and over until some said it may be true – at least parts of it...

If the divine weren't real, they were free to behave as they wanted. They rejected morality to the point that it killed some of them, but over and over on deck

they blamed the faithful of not protecting them. The faithful were compassionate and agreed they could have done more to prevent it, and it stuck.

They spun yarns of the ship wreaking havoc among the fish where the keel had cut the water, claiming that sailing her was leaving indelible tracks on the ocean, killing the fish and damaging the planet. They even had a scientist bring out a fish skeleton, saying it demonstrated the notion was true, and two others agreed, so they had a consensus. (Other scientists disagreed, but they were denounced on deck by the wicked, who said they really wanted to destroy the planet so they shouldn't be trusted. Besides, what if the dead fish guy was right? Shouldn't they err on the side of keeping fish alive?) The ship had to put ashore to save everything, or we'd all die like the fish and the faithful would be at fault. Nobody wanted to hurt another fish, let alone be at fault for the end of the world, and it was a small thing and besides these were the logical scientific people saying these things, so good people went along.

They even advocated and succeeded in authorizing and carrying out killing babies and the old, if their life wouldn't be very comfortable or normal; like they knew. In no way, shape, or form should anyone err on the side of life because scientists said there were too many people on the planet for sustained habitation anyway, so we had to find a way to let some go. Who would go? Life was cheapened, and young crewmembers in fits of normal desperation found themselves devalued and tragically took their own lives.

They spread lies about how some captains were trying to establish an empire, desiring to conquer other people and rule them – and even keel-haul them! They elected captains and council members who argued for sailing against winds or in circles to purposely slow progress to seaward and float ever-more close to the coast – though they called themselves forward-thinkers and some wanted to believe them so they put hope in the change they advocated.

They ridiculed those who set straight courses guided by the great navigator. Caught falsely accusing, they accused the accuser of something outrageous. It was a lie, but there they stood on the deck shouting the lie until many crewmembers began to wonder; were both sides somewhat to blame? Feeling convicted, some faithful conceded to meet them half-way to their shoreward westward course. From the intended true bearing of north they went first to northwest, then half again to west-by-northwest. Some of the faithful objected and said we should turn east to compensate, but they were shouted down as ridiculous and the ship ambled on into the brown coastal water.

These forward-thinkers secretly aspired to turn into a marsh where they could ground the ship and raid her, spilling her wealth onto the shore to be picked over and shared by the landlubbers there.

The faithful knew that blue water was where this ship was built to sail, running with the wind to new horizons. There were heated disagreements in the navigation council's cabin. It was desperate, and the wicked knew they couldn't take the ship to their chosen destination by honest means, so they fought. Arguing at first, then accusing the faithful of mean-spiritedness and ill-intent, wanting to take the ship out to get lost at sea. The faithful engaged them and held the wicked from the tiller for some time, but there eventually came times when they took over. The faithful reasoned, "They haven't truly harmed us yet, so maybe we should tolerate them among us? Give them a turn at the wheel..."

They tried again and again to open the gunwales to allow uninvited landlubber stowaways aboard who would work in the scullery and scrub the deck like other crewmembers supposedly refused to do. Besides, these workers would vote and contend on their side against the faithful.

The wicked raided the treasury and threw the hard-won wealth of all over the side onto their friends' small boats and into the deep water. If they could bankrupt the crew, they'd have nothing with which to buy provisions in order to continue the journey.

How appalled were the faithful when they realized these wicked argued only enough to distract; for they were no longer trying to win control, but to scuttle the ship under their very feet. They hacked and burned at the hull and keel in order to dash a hole or crack the back of the ship so they'd have no alternative but to turn ashore – or founder and wash up there anyway.

How this tale ends is entirely dependent on the faithful. The truly wicked are not many, but they studied Machiavelli and Alinsky, so they are good at standing on deck announcing their talking points until the lie appears true. But a lie is a lie, and we see through them like never before. These humanists have "educated" many and "reported to" many more with their insidious, blasphemous, hopeless, damning ideas until people feel damned hopeless. They've even co-opted many otherwise faithful people with one cause or another, telling enough truth to bring them along and retaining them by offering ever more utopian dreams, or dispiriting the faithful by assuring them that the divine is imaginary.

It will take action on the part of the faithful to win, by having faith in The Creator an nothing besides, and by loving – truly loving – those around until they ask why. The only way to accomplish what we must is always standing on the solid foundation laid by The Great Shipwright. We must counter the actions of the wicked with righteousness and goodness, so we must study to be found approved as crewmembers of The Creator's ship, bringing true hope, faith and love to the broken and dispirited. Let's invite some landlubbers aboard and teach 'em to sail!

This ship of state, the United States of America, is the legacy to which we've been born and to which some of us have aspired and achieved citizenship. She's

covered with barnacles and there are holes in the sheets. The deck is mossy and the yardarm hangs kind of funny. She'll take some shoring up, and a lot of scrubbing, but we're a crew with a legacy and a backbone of steel! She's our ship! She still sails right fine with a steady hand at the rudder and quick climbers in the rigging. Her promise remains strong and bountiful, though she's been pillaged and vandalized. Let us swab the decks and unfurl the sails, set a vigilant watch and pick up a good wind and bearing once again! Come sail with me!

This ship of state is built for you

Guide and sail her straight and true,

Rip a bright white wake through dazzling blue

Into brilliant red sunsets, oh faithful crew

May our Heavenly Father bless the United States of America.