

# DIAKONIA

## News



Newsletter  
of  
FOUNDATION DIAKONIA  
WORLD FEDERATION  
of  
DIACONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS  
and  
DIACONAL COMMUNITIES

Editorial	2
President Letter	3

### DIAKONIA WORLDWIDE

Executive Committee	4
Survey	8

### From Around The World

DRAE	9
DOTAC	11
DOTAC Conference	11
DAP	14

### Ecumenical Meetings

WCC	17
KAIRE	20
IDC	21
DIC	22

New Book	23
Upcoming DRAE Conference	24

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No. 92, December 2006

## FROM YOUR EDITORS

After the Executive Meeting in Brazil we were filled with enthusiasm and excitement for the next edition of DIAKONIA NEWS. We had such a wonderful time in a very wonderful Community and Country. This was to be followed by attending the WCC Assembly – probably a once in a life time opportunity to see the worldwide church come together in worship and discussion as well as socially and ecumenically.

It is amazing though how things change and time seems to disappear. Ulrike had to leave the Assembly almost as soon as it started due to family illness at home. Once Janie was home both a brother-in-law and sister-in-law were ill and required her attention.

This was then followed by both Ulrike and Janie having to move house in July (Ulrike to a very different city and working situation) and only now beginning to find some normality to their lives. Therefore the enthusiasm and excitement of February in Brazil faded and the work on DIAKONIA NEWS had to take a back seat.

But here we are with an edition in print and we hope you find something that interests you in the content.

During these months when life was hectic and difficult to see beyond the next few days or week there were always some things that were an encouragement. To receive an email or a Prayer on the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month was a reminder that there were others whose lives were much more unsettled than ours. Brothers and sisters living in danger, with war, famine, drought, earthquakes etc. who needed to know that others in another part of the world were upholding them in thought and prayer. To be reminded that some of us have too much and more of us have too little is very humbling.

As we look back on our time in Brazil we thank God for his goodness in allowing us the privilege to share with each other and to be reminded that we have a God whose

love, compassion and mercy is greater than anything we could ever imagine or even hope for and yet it is there, given to us by his Grace.

As we finish one Newsletter we are already thinking of another and would ask that you would send us stories of work you are doing, Conferences you have held or attended, your plans for the future and anything else you would like to share with your brothers and sisters in the world of DIAKONIA.

At this time of finally getting our Newsletter printed we are aware that it is now the season of Advent. When we started the process it was before EASTER and we realise that time passes so quickly. Maybe in this time of Advent you are preparing events, meditations, reflections, services and so on for others to enjoy but are you yourself taking time to reflect on this special time of the Christian year. Let us remind ourselves again of those verses in Isaiah 9 vs 2-7 and especially the words of verse 6:

**For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government  
will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor,  
Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.**

Take a few moments to think about these descriptions or name for Jesus. Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Do they will you with awe and wonder? Do they give you a sense of security? Do you find yourself filled with love as you realise you are a daughter or son of such a person.

That first Christmas when Jesus was born there was no royal fanfare, no 21 gun salute, no balcony announcement, no flashbulbs or TV cameras. Outside the people of Bethlehem went about their business unaware that any momentous had hap-

pened. They were mostly strangers anyway to the City having come for the census. But heaven was celebrating the birthday of life, life for all humankind. 'And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing **Glory to God in the highest ... and peace to men**' (Luke 2:13,14)

It is our prayer that you will experience and know the Love, Joy and Peace of Jesus this Christmas and that you will be renewed and strengthened in your service for Him.

Jane Martin  
Ulrike Kellner

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Diakonia at the Margins — Challenge and Hope" This theme from the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly of DIAKONIA World Federation in Durham, England captures well the spirit of the ministry of deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers around the world. Daily they rise to the challenge of going to those who are marginalized in our societies — to live with them, to work with them, and to share with them in the hope of Christ.

That ministry sometimes takes the shape of hands-on works of charity. At other times, that ministry is about encouraging, educating and supporting the whole people of God in their diaconal calling. In other places and at other times, that ministry is to raise a prophetic voice reminding the whole church to live as God's agents of *shalom* — peace and wholeness. Ministries — diakonia at the margins — so much needed in our world today.



President Louise Williams at the KAIRE meeting in Bari/Italy this summer (see article below)

All too often, though, the deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers feel that they are somehow marginalized — without support or respect from church member or leaders, left out of decision-making even

about diaconal ministry, asked to defend or justify the role of the diaconate. It can feel lonely to be in this ministry. Perhaps that is why it feels so good to come together with others who share the diaconal vocation. It's like refreshing water to a thirsty soul. The times of coming together, sharing with one another, and worshipping as one refresh and strengthen us to return to the ministry we are called to do. Hope is renewed, and we can once more face the challenges of *diakonia* at the margins.

We will continue to plan DIAKONIA World Assemblies every four years. (The next one is planned for Atlanta, Georgia, USA in July 2009). We are aware, though, that only a very few of those involved in DIAKONIA are able to attend the World Assemblies or even regional conferences of DOTAC or DRAE. That's why the Executive Committee talked about other ways that DIAKONIA can facilitate linkages among our members throughout the world.

In some locations it will be possible to have local ecumenical gatherings of deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers. Sometimes it may be possible for people to travel to other parts of the world to visit someone they met through DIAKONIA and to experience their "world" and ministry firsthand. Others have made covenants to pray for someone half way around the globe. Some keep in touch by writing letters or sending email messages. For still others the primary connections come through reading stories — like those in this newsletter or on the internet.

In all these ways, we are reminded that we are not alone. Through DIAKONIA we are connected with thousands of women and

men who know the challenge and share the hope of *diakonia* at the margins.

*E. Louise Williams*

## **DIAKONIA WORLDWIDE**

DIAKONIA's main web address: [www.diakonia-world.org](http://www.diakonia-world.org)

### **From the Executive Committee**

#### **DIAKONIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 7-13, 2006**

By invitation the Executive met at the Motherhouse of the Sisterhood of Casa Matriz de Diaconisas, in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil.

As it was February the season was changing from Summer into Autumn but for some of us from colder climates it was very hot and humid.



*Entrance of the motherhouse*

It was good to be in another continent and culture and to see and hear first hand some of the work being done by the sisters and Churches. It was good to note the differences and be encouraged by that which was the same and to be challenged afresh about our service as diaconal workers, no matter the culture.

We enjoyed the hospitality of the Motherhouse and the experience of eating new foods and struggling with another language. It has to be said though that many

we interacted with had more English than we had Portuguese among us.



*Leading Sister Ruthild Brakemeier  
and DIAKONIA President Louise Williams  
in the chapel of the Brazilian motherhouse*

During our stay we had the chance to meet several sisters of the community, members of the Community of Deacons (COD) as well as the President of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IELCB) Dr. Walter Altmann and the head of the diakonia department of this church, Vera Walber.



*Dr. Walter Altmann and Vera Walber  
at the reception*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In her report Louise reflected:

*"As I have thought about those days we shared, I was impressed with how much people held on to the story of the woman at the well. As I heard people talking about that story and reflecting on it, I was very aware of how thirsty they were. They found the assembly a time for them to drink from the living water of Jesus Christ and to be refreshed again. At least from where I listened, that was as important – if not more so – than reflecting on the margins. For the people there knew the margins. That is where most of them worked every day. What they seemed to cherish was the chance to pay attention again to the centre – to Jesus Christ and to the ministry to which Christ calls us all.*

*I wonder, as we think about the shape of the next assembly and as we plan our work together, perhaps that nurturing and refreshing might be an important focus. How can we help members of the diaconates find those places where they can drink deeply of the living water and be refreshed to go out again to the margins?"*

Louise also encouraged the Executive to keep before them some of the areas and concerns that were expressed when we were in Durham, eg. The future of DIAKONIA; how can we respond and connect with the needs we hear? What sort of planning do we need to do in order to help DIAKONIA be an important network supporting deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministries around the world?

Louise reported that in the months since our last meeting in Durham most of her DIAKONIA work had been in the area of communication and correspondence but there were plans for travels in the future months.

In the months since we met in Durham most of Louise's work for DIAKONIA has been in the area of communication and correspondence but there are things in the pipeline for the future months.

## Finance Report

Due to the fact, among other things, that we were meeting earlier than usual the

final audited accounts could not be presented.

Once these accounts have been audited and printed they will be sent out to member organisations.

## DIAKAID

### Completed and ongoing Projects

**South Africa, Hibberdene** – The bridge-building project bringing together rural poor has completed their second year and the final part of the money will be given.

**Rwanda** – the dairy farm built up by the Sisterhood "Abaja Ba Kristo" in Kigali is going well. A good report is given and the third part of their money will be released.

**Caribbean** – the honorarium for teachers in the Bible School will be given again this year and that will complete the programme.

**Uniting Church in Australia** – Deacon Scott Lichfield is working with an after Tsunami-programme in Thailand but we have had no progress report on this project. The next instalment of the funding will be released on receipt of this report.

### New Projects

The **Namarila motherhouse in Bukoba/Tanzania** was granted **15.000 Euro over a period of three years** to fund an education programme for their sisters.

In **Belem/Brazil** a project "kids at risk" working with children living in a favela was granted **2.500 Euro each year for three years**.

There were other requests but not enough information was given regarding the projects. On receipt of this information these projects will again be considered.

### Emergency Fund

Sr. Mary Mwauru from the **Kenyan motherhouse** requested money from the emergency fund to respond to a famine in an area where some of the deaconesses are working. **5.000 Euro was sent for this work**.

## DIAKONIA ASSEMBLY – DURHAM

*The following is part of the report given by the planning group to the DIAKONIA Executive*

The Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO) and the Diaconal Association of the Church of England (DACE) were privileged to host the 19<sup>th</sup> World Assembly of DIAKONIA in Durham in 2005. From the outset we knew that this was a privilege but also a great responsibility and we knew that it would not be an easy task. However, we also were thankful for the opportunity for our two associations to work together at a time when our two churches had signed a Covenant reflecting increased ecumenical co-operation. We also hoped that it would raise interest in diaconal ministry in both churches but particularly in the Church of England.



*Jackie Fowler, DRAE Vice-President and correspondent to the Durham planning group*

From the beginning we acknowledged earlier Assemblies, and past experiences and recommendations but wanted it to be an 'English' experience taking into account our culture, our Christian heritage and our experience and practice of diaconal ministry. Our choice of venue gave us ample opportunity to experience all of this – as an ancient Christian site with the influence of Celtic Christianity and a number of deacons and diaconal projects in the area today.

During the Assembly we hoped to create 'community' – a place of safety, a place of meeting and a place of sharing. We hoped too that this would be in an informal, friendly and relaxed atmosphere (perhaps hoping to dispel some ideas about the English and our ways!!) We knew that there would be things which did not work

out as we hoped but also that we would be surprised and delighted by people and events in ways we did not expect. So, for instance, we were surprised and delighted by the high percentage of delegates for whom this was their first Assembly (and hope it will not be their last!)

Judging by the evaluations and comments received, those who attended appreciated our efforts and found the Assembly and their time in Durham to be enjoyable and worthwhile. We are thankful for that.

Unfortunately the CDs promised had not all been distributed but this was being taken care of.

*The Executive sent a letter thanking the planning group for all their hard work and for providing such a good experience.*

## The next Assembly in 2009

Linda Ervin, Regional President of DOTAC renewed the invitation for the next assembly. They have a committee looking at venues. Two possibilities are in the USA and one in BRAZIL. A final decision will be made at the next DOTAC Executive Meeting. If Brazil is chosen then the Assembly will most likely be in October due to better weather conditions.

## Working Groups

*At every Executive Meeting the committee divide into three working Groups*

**Justice** – the difficulty of some members getting or not getting visas to attend the Assembly in Durham is a question of Justice and the President was asked to write a letter to the Home Office in UK regarding this problem.



*Justice Work Group*

**The injustices named on the cross at Durham during the World Focus Session will be considered at our next**

**meeting.** *If any one has a story of violence and injustice it would be good to send these to our Secretary in order that they can be addressed at our next meeting.*

**Theology** – over the years this group has been working with a living paper on diaconal theology. Again at the World Focus Session we were asked to share stories of our diaconal work. The group are still looking for stories can you send some using the following questions as A starting place. What stories tell us about diaconal ministry?



*Theology Work Group*

**What do these stories tell you about God?  
What from your own experience would you share with others?**

**Future planning group** - It is suggested that future DIAKONIA should stand on two legs:

- Providing a place for face to face meeting with deacons, deaconesses and diaconal workers in their own country and throughout the world
- Providing a forum for face to face meeting with the churches



*Future Planning Group*

There are various areas or levels to consider – world - regions – country – churches. Male – female – sisterhoods – church workers.

President Louise Williams has been asked to write a letter to all Church Leaders introducing DIAKONIA as a whole and the member group which is within their church. She will invite those churches to use the resources of DIAKONIA more.

#### **Committees**

Several small groups meet to discuss and implement the following:

**Finance** – to set the budget for the following year; consider membership fees; travel fund.

**Constitution and bylaws** – to review these and propose any changes that may be necessary

**Communication** – discuss the communication between member groups and the Executive Committee and update any new address list, reminding all of us to respond to communications. The content of the website and its links to the Regions and the possibility of including minutes of meetings, reports, and other papers.

**Public Relations** – production of information brochure for the next Assembly; a CD with basic information, which could be used at presentations and for advertisement and distributed to all member groups.

You will see from this that the Executive Committee work very hard when they meet and are ever mindful of those that they represent.

**This committee is your committee and they are always willing to hear from you. Please remember to send any stories that would be of interest and that others should know about.**

## **Survey among the German participants of the last DIAKONIA conferences**

During the last months in Germany 287 persons were interviewed about how they receive information about DIAKONIA now and how they would like to receive them in future. 25% of the people who were asked answered, which is a good quote. Not all answered all questions, but all of them gave information about age, gender and belonging to a community. So, we can draw a picture about those who are interested in DIAKONIA. As expected most of the responding people are female (88,24%) and belong to Kaiserswerth association (46,27%) or to Zehlendorf association (32,84%). 80% are above 50 years old, 58,21% of them above 60 years. Most of the people interviewed belong to a community which has under 100 members (37,31%), 23,88% to a community which has over 500 members. All other are more or less equally distributed over the different sizes.

### **Communication**

Most important information resource for DIAKONIA members are DIAKONIA News (81,54%). And 90,77% of those being interviewed think this should stay so. On second place there are personal stories (41,54%). 47,60% want to hear them in grass route groups in future. The website is not so known, but this may course from the high level of age.

Most of the people are interested in news from the region, either from DIAKONIA region (79,03%) or from other German speaking member associations (62,90%). More than half of the people being interviewed want to read information from the executive committee (53,23%) or wish to have working material for upcoming assemblies (54,84%).

### **Contacts to other groups**

There exist contacts to members of the own association. The contacts result more out of personal meetings than through written material. Not all answered questions about the personal importance of those meetings. This may be a sign for indifference at this point. But, who is interested wants to deepen the contacts.

Two thirds of those, who attended grass route meetings, gave information about the themes which were discussed there. Equally themes about general diaconal-theological questions (22x) were named with those concerning pre- and after-work on DIAKONIA assembly themes (21x). Few (3x) talked about problems out of the daily work. 17 persons stated that the eye to eye contact to others, who are interested in DIAKONIA as well is important for them, 13 voices claimed to share information about the various communities.

### **Regional meetings on grass route level**

Who ever is interested in regional meetings wants to deepen this contacts (79,63%). They want them once or twice a year (45,65%). Astonishingly every third person is willing to help with the organisation of such a meeting. Probably those, who answered are involved in organisation in their own community anyway, so that they are not afraid in organizing another meeting.

33 of the 43 people, who are interested in such regional meetings, named themes for the discussion. Most wanted to share personal, communitarian and ecumenical problems. And they want to do pre- and after- DIAKONIA conference work together. Also they want to discuss future DIAKONIA in general and under the light of diaconal-theology discussion.

### **DIAKONIA Assemblies**

As in the assembly of Durham itself, people were asked about their memories of the last assemblies. Not all people answered that block of questions. But who answered, attended at least one assembly/conference, most of them a world assembly. The DRAE Seminar at Belfast in 2002 and the regional conference in Egypt 2003 were smaller conferences and not so many people attended. Almost all people (88,14%) who attended a world assembly, are dreaming about joining another one. What a wonderful result for those who are organizing those assemblies!

Pre work for those assemblies was done on various levels. Most important resources were the invitation letter with first

informations (69,09%), travel guides (60,00%) or personal stories (50,91%).

Only very few people talked about bad memories of DIAKONIA conferences (30 people). On the other hand 55 people named good memories. Most of the critics were connected to the DIAKONIA Assembly at Durham, probably because being angry about the insufficient organisation at some points there is still in their minds. A lot of people name the language problem. You can recognise no other scheme in the critics.

The most important thing for people attending DIAKONIA conferences is meeting Christians of other communities, other nations and cultures (each 40 answers). The desire to attend another assembly roots in the expectation to experience ecumenical diversity and at the same time community in spirit. Therefore there is a strong wish to organize future conferences. A lot of people name the challenge to interest young people in the movement and make them involved.

*Ulrike Kellner*

## FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### From Region Africa-Europe (DRAE)



*DRAE members at the Executive Committee*

### Finland

In Finland, the association of diaconal workers of the Ev. Lutheran Church has had a change of leadership. The new leading person is Riitta Hiedanpaahon.

There is some interest from one or two groups about membership of DIAKONIA.

### France:

Sr. Evangeline travelled to Cameroon in January 2006 to visit the sisters at Bafut. She took the DIAKAID money with her for the purchase of a second oven for their bakery. Sr. Sabine from the Community in Versailles had been with us at Durham and we look for our links strengthening.

The Sisters of Reuilly plan to build a chapel for their services to replace the tent which has been their place of worship for the last 35 years. Elements of the tent such as its simple form and good lighting will be part of the construction of the new chapel.

### Switzerland:

The conference of Swiss Motherhouses is busy preparing the DRAE

Region Conference, which will be held in 2007. This has brought the motherhouses into a good and strong relationship.

**Note the change of date of the conference: 22nd-27<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Theme: Friendship as Charisma – Gift of God**

### Netherlands:

The VDW is getting smaller as an Association. Sr. Adri Slob will be the next chairperson.

The Sisterhood at Amerongen keeps very close links with the sisters in Rwanda as well as being involved in different projects within the Netherlands.

### Germany:

**Bund Deutscher Gemeinschaftsmutterhauser** has appointed Sister Corinna Hart, St. Chrishona of Switzerland as their alternate to Sr. Doris Horn on the DRAE Executive.

**Kaiserwerther Verband:** Due to financial problems the headquarters have now moved completely to Berlin. Some of the members, e.g. Sarepta Bethel through the change in their constitution are now again recruiting new members. 13 sisters will be consecrated this year.

A new university "College of diaconia" opened in Bethel, Bielefeld.

Dr. Katharina Wiefel-Jenner, known by Durham-participants from the service at Lindisfarne, lost her position as CEO at the Oberlinhaus in Potsdam.

**Zehlendorfer Verband: Friederikenstift**

A member that in recent years deepened and strengthened their diaconal identity and spirituality, mourns the death of Sister Dorothea Geweke. She was a strong supporter of DIAKONIA, and to the work in Madagascar. Sr. Ute Hampel retires in November from her work with the Friederikenstift sisters but continues to live in Hannover.

Within the associations there is a strong move for diaconal identity, training and purpose. Church related hospitals and other institutions are asking for partners to help them strengthen and develop their identity as diaconal institutions. As more and more young people come without any Christian influence, lack of orientation and a general disillusionment, our sisterhoods and associations are given new tasks for guidance and training in Christian ethics and values.

**Kenya** – see “DIAKAID Emergency Fund”.

**Ethiopia:** Mekane Yesus Church is still interested in becoming a member.

**Cameroon:** Sister Judith returned to Bafut from Durham, no worse from her experiences with her wheelchair and has resumed her leadership of the Community. Following the various visits of prior Sr. Evangéline/Reuilly at the sisterhood of Emmanuel there were some significant decisions made. To stabilize the community the leading sister of Bafut, Sr. Judith was elected again for a final term of 5 years. Then they established an executive committee with five sisters.

**South Africa:** Methodist deacon Kathy Marsden continues her DIAKAID Project working with three rural communities bringing them together and trying to integrate separate identities, culture and language.

**Rwanda:** the sisters report that their dairy farm project is going well. The proceeds of the project are not only used to feed and train the children at the orphanage but also to train the local farmers in animal husbandry and agriculture.

**Tanzania, Namalira Bukoba:** With the help of DIAKAID seven deaconesses have graduated from school allowing them to obtain employment. There has been a change in leadership in recent years but things are moving forward again and a further application has been received to enable them to continue their education programme which will allow them to serve the local community as teachers, counselors and in craft making.

**Zambia:** The diaconal committee met in December 2005 and among other things discussed were: a means of paying their dues to DIAKONIA; plan a retreat 17-21<sup>ST</sup> August 2006 at the Diakonia Centre in Kabwe; develop a project that would allow them to engage in integrated farming and practical skills development courses for the under privileged.

**Madagascar:** Sr. Angeline attended the World Assembly at Durham and was able to renew friendships and contacts. In a recent newsletter they tell of the shortage in their harvest of rice due to flooding; they have been engaged in church services in the community; leading a worship service on FJKM radio; organising an Open Day for people to come and an opportunity to show their needlework and craft skills; leading retreats; outreach work with their local church; working with the canteen children and the monthly meal for the prisoners.

Three sisters were consecrated in November and that brings their total of consecrated sisters to 10. They enjoyed the visit of Sr. Siong from Granchamp for the consecration and who led them in further education for life in the community.

**Fees, donations and contributions you may send to the following account:**

Bank account 38 81 759      Stichting DIAKONIA  
Amsterdam, Netherlands/Niederlande  
IBAN: NL44 PSTB 0003881759      BIC: PSTBNL2

## From the Region of The Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC)

As well as Linda Ervin, DOTAC President, June James is the other representative on DIAKONIA Executive. June is from Antigua in the Caribbean.



*DOTAC members at the Executive Committee*

### **What does the Lord Require of us? DOTAC Conference, July 1-6, 2006, Port of Spain, Trinidad**

DOTAC (*Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean*) holds a conference once every four years. This year it was the Caribbean's turn to host in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and what a wonderful job they did! My partner Ed Schiere and I attended together. For once I didn't have to "explain" to him about an event when I returned, but instead he was able to be immersed in the experience himself. His own learnings abounding!

The call of being "diakonia" in the world was evident not just as I gathered with like-spirited colleagues, but as I traveled to the event itself. When the airlines cancelled the first flight of a three-part journey to Trinidad, it was an inconvenience for me, but not costly, nor even difficult to arrange an alternate connecting flights, overnight hotels and meals while we waited. I was acutely aware that as a white, educated, English speaking North American I had knowledge, language, and power to insist upon adequate resources to get me to my destination in a timely manner. However, my fellow passengers, traveling back to Venezuela who were mainly Portuguese-speaking had no sense what they could expect. The airlines counter staff tried to stop me from speak-

**DOVE:** DIAKONIA Overcoming Violence Education: We are hopeful that this event will happen in late September 2007.

As mentioned in the presidents letter DOTAC have started arrangements to host the next World Assembly. Probably they will choose Atlanta/USA as location. Dates have to be arranged. You will receive more information in the next DIAKONIA News and on the website.

ing to them about being booked on alternate airlines, hotel, and meal tickets available for their situation. Arriving a day late for DOTAC, and then without our luggage for three days, Ed and I reflected upon our abundance, and how some only have the clothes on their back, and if lucky, a change.



*Sharilynn Upsdell, Russell Mitchell-Walker  
and DOTAC President Linda Ervin*

These early encounters sharpened my senses once again to the privilege I carry, and the responsibility I have to continue to get to know the issues of my global neighbours and colleagues at a deeper level. It is so easy to say these trips are "too expensive", and to argue for them to be closer to home, but I empathize more with those who are blocked from travel due to very low developing world incomes and/or poor access to travel documents into northern countries.

The week of DOTAC itself was full and rich. Of course, there were rich offerings of Guest speakers on the Theme: What does the Lord Require of us? Doing Justice, Loving Kindness and Walking Humbly.

Participants were invited to visit many sites of ministry around the island of Trinidad and Tobago. Ed and I visited some Hindu orphanages and temples where we had explained to us that the many 'gods' they worship were no more bizarre than our own explanations of Trinitarian theology or other metaphors to embody God's characteristics. Faith expression seemed most publicly portrayed by the Hindu prayer flags we witnessed near the temples and on their home properties. A small pottery Diwali oil lamp (called a *diya*), one of hundreds made that day at a local pottery shop we visited, will burn this autumn in my home in solidarity with their Festival of Lights, prompting me to learn more, and appreciate more about another cultural/religious expression.



DUCC now has a new globe-trotting (or should I say globe-swimming) companion. Linda Ervin "adopted" a female leatherback turtle on our behalf and we await emails to reveal her

whereabouts. The numbered electronic tag attached to "DOTAC's" flipper as she laid her eggs on the beach in North Trinidad, will guide researchers and us, to follow her migration patterns for the next year or so. There is an ecological ministry of advocacy and protection of these creatures which as babes are cute and small enough to hold in our hands, yet returning from as far away as Nova Scotia, mothers weighed as much as 1000 lbs as they dig new nests on the beach to deposit their eggs. The evening we attended, no mothers arrived at the ocean's edge, but several dozen baby turtles hatched and made their way down the beach, as we cheered them on, and out towards the light on the ocean's horizon.

After the DOTAC event, we toured more parts of Trinidad and neighbouring islands. The Bedford area of Port of Spain still resists modernization as worn houses sport-

ing exquisite Victorian architecture continue to house the descendants of African slaves finally freed in the emancipation.

Resistance to oppression became evident as we learned of how the Africans had been deprived of their bamboo musical instruments by the English, and so they began tapping out rhythms on nearby oil drums used for trash bins in the streets. The first steel drum bands! We witnessed a backyard factory, which over time has developed the steel pan drums today renowned for the wonderful music that had entertained us during the DOTAC Conference.

Further travels to Grenada brought us in touch with the origins of many fruits and spices – creating deeper respect and reverence for the growing issues involved. For example, we saw how most Grenadian nutmeg plantations were wiped out in the hurricane of 2004 and I was shocked to learn that a single cashew nut grows beneath a pear-like fruit at well spaced intervals on a tree, causing me to reflect not upon the high cost of cashews in our local grocery stores, but on the low cost we are paying in relation to the high cost of growing them. Once again I found myself reflecting on fair-trade issues at a renewed level.



Returning home, I was never more aware of meeting Christ wherever we go, when I became seatmate to a 12 year old Trinidadian boy named "Jesus" (Heysoo), flying for the first time, unaccompanied, to visit relatives in Canada. Offering my window seat, I watched his amazement at the unfolding sights below him, and calmed his fear-filled concern as heated arguments broke out on board (in Spanish/Portuguese) at a Venezuelan airport when disgruntled passengers boarded at midnight to find their seats already filled due to overbooking. Without someone to care for and explain things to this young lad, his anxiety would have spoiled the excitement of his travels. How often a ministry of presence and accompaniment means so much as folks explore new situations.

*Sharilynn Upsdell*

*Another report comes from Canada:*

I was disappointed that only three United Church folk were able to make it. There were more Presbyterian Canadians there!! There is so much we can do to examine our priorities, on so many levels - we do get overwhelmed. Maybe for those who have less, and are not overextended the way we are, it is easier to put aside or find the resources for global connecting. They may also know more keenly the importance of those connections, because they are less comfortable. As Karen Ridd once shared, they do not have the 'luxury of despair' that we do – many of their lives are more focused on day to day survival. Knowing how important these global experiences are for us Northerners, one thing I will be working toward is exploring a relationship/partnership with one of our diaconal colleagues in Brazil, with the hope of learning together and maybe providing an exposure trip for our youth at Sunset, and possibly also, for a similar trip for them to come here. It would something to work toward for 2-3 years from now.

One learning that I found exciting was Hyacinth Booth's theological and historical background on ministry and the early church having parallel forms of ministry, not hierarchal like we have presently. It was particularly insightful to hear that if diaconal ministry is a ministry of service, then all ministry is diaconal, (including those doing ordained)! As well many parts of the program gave us in-depth glimpses into the local culture and issues that affect the widest global connections. We learned from George Mulrain, President of the Conference of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean, the history of indigenous genocide with the coming of the Europeans, the arrival of African slaves, and later indentured East Indian workers, which brought a mix of African, Muslim, and Hindu cultures mixed with colonial Christianity that have come together in a culture of tolerance. He noted that the challenge for the culture today is to accept what is distinctly Caribbean and not what was brought there by from the Colonial Empire.

I always find it a rich experience to be among other diaconal folk from so many

areas. It helps not only to ground me in my understanding of diaconal ministry, but also stretches that understanding, because there are many expressions of being diaconal, and so many denominations have specific focuses within their diaconal ministries - home missionaries, youth ministry, parish nursing, social workers, prison ministry... I have found myself thinking lately, especially learning that staff associates will be congregational appointments, not accountable to presbytery, how we, in DUCC, could live out more fully embracing all who see themselves doing diaconal ministry? How can we include and support all those involved in paid accountable youth ministry in our church, who have not had CCS training, but are doing diaconal ministry?

My site visit to Tobago, was a tour of a foster house for children and youth (foster children) which left me challenged with how can we learn from these ministries without being intrusive on the 'clients' lives as we were paraded through the children's home and their room. I was moved by the commitment of the woman who dedicated so much of her life away from her family to



work at the house, and creates a loving home for the children. It was loving kindness in action. I also

found myself looking for what they/we are doing, can do, to address the root issues and problems. Many of the visits still seemed to focus on the charity model of service.

I was surprised to learn that Trinidad is one of the largest exporters of Natural Gas in the world and as a result is very wealthy. Given that it is sad that it was obvious that these resources were not used well in the country - crime and poverty were high, roads were awful off the freeways, and services were under funded. I was struck by the diversity of the neighbourhood where our hotel was. I walked daily and if I went one way, I was on a road with gated, secure, clean

houses - the other road was a wide mix of well kept houses and more poorly kept houses. I was struck by what looked like people just stopping to offer those walking a ride. I later learned that those were probably unlicensed taxis. I was offered a ride one morning also. It was really something to have chicken and fish at every meal (including breakfast!), yet always done differently. Oddly enough, I wasn't sick of chicken and fish by the time I left!

As we reflect on this experience, I encourage all diaconal folk to take every opportunity you may have to participate in events of our wider Diakonia. I always find it a rich and valuable experience that builds a deeper understanding of who we are. I also encourage you to join us at our national DUCC gathering in Edmonton this April 17-20. It is our intent to have some of our Canadian ecumenical members of DOTAC with us at this gathering.

*Russell Mitchell-Walker*

**Fees, donations and contributions you may send to the following account:**

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IBAN: NL44 PSTB 0003881759  
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## From the Region of DIAKONIA Asia Pacific



*DAP President Sala Naucalabalavu  
and DAP Vicepresident Sabitha Swaraj together  
with DIAKONIA-World President Louise Williams*

Due to the scattered geography of this Region it is not possible to meet with any regularity but DAP took advantage of being together at Durham and so held their **business meeting** on the afternoon of the closing day.

Some **decisions** were made that day:-

- Try to issue a newsletter twice per year, and the editor would be Rev. Shirley Barrow of New Zealand.
- Due to difficulties in opening and operating a Bank Account in Fiji the account would remain in Australia and Rev. Gaye Nye would act as treasurer.
- Deaconess Sabitha Swaraj would act as Secretary.

### **Australia- The Anglican Association**

"A life changing time" is the way many Australian Deacons described their experience of attending the World DIAKONIA Assembly in Durham. They felt renewed and refreshed in their serving ministry and challenged by the theme 'diakonia at the margins – Challenge and Hope'. Their own biennial conference is to be held in October 2006 in Brisbane.

### **Korea**

The sisterhood celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005. A book was published and a video recorded the event. Many individuals and church groups use their retreat house, 'House of Spirituality and Peace, for worship and prayer. The Household Support Project is where they provide free counselling services for middle and high school students and special attention is given to school 'drop outs' and 'trouble children'.

They also hosted two special services for the Japan and Korean Christians in October, 2005. This was a very happy time for them and they were grateful to God for bringing the two congregations together.

### **Indonesia**

The Deaconesses in Indonesia continue to extend their education and skills in order to serve in hospitals, orphanages, street children, Church, and in organisations for the empowerment of women. In 2005 they developed different kinds of ministries, due to the situation in the country, which includes:

- Earthquake and Tsunami in Aceh and Nias
- Famine
- Poliomyelitis
- Bombings of several places.

The strong links between the Indonesian **sisterhood of IKADIWA** with the two German sisterhoods, **Kaiserswerther Schwesternschaft** and **VEM-Schwesternschaft** (sisterhood of the United Mission) who accompanied their founding led to an **international workshop**. It was the second of this kind and held on the island of Samosir in the lake Toba on Sumatra. For a week about 60 sisters worked on the theme of Nehemiah 8:10 "The Joy of the Lord is your Strength". All three sisterhoods promised to strengthen their strong links among each other. As a first result, an Indonesian deaconess makes a language training (6 weeks) in Germany: funded by a VEM sister and living at the motherhouse of Kaiserswerth. It is planned

to provide internships for German sisters in Indonesia.



### India

The Order of Sisters in the Church of South India – there are 65 sisters but only 40 in active service. They are having problems in recruiting single women to train for service. They hold retreats once a year and continue to send sisters to study abroad.

The Order runs four projects:

- Retired Sisters house
- H.D. Kote Project – a community focused programme
- Young women's programme
- Home for Children at risk and Skill Empowerment for the Disabled Young Women

### Fiji

The deaconesses held a workshop in December 2005 on the 'Theological Discussion on Violence' and especially 'Violence against women'.

They hope to host a DAP Region gathering before the next World Assembly.

Since Fiji is small they continue to meet in their own areas each month.

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## Important Internet and E-mail Adresses

### WEBSITES

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DRAE  
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## REPORTS FROM ECUMENICAL MEETINGS

### WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 9<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

14-23 February 2006,  
Porto Alegre, Brazil

Terttu Pohjolainen writes: "This is the first time I attend the Executive Committee of World DIAKONIA, it is the first time I represent DIAKONIA at a WCC Assembly and the first time I visit South America.

The Assembly theme, "God in your Grace, Transform the World", was a prayer before God. The theme describes very well this praying Assembly, where the participants could take part in ecumenical morning and evening prayers, Bible Studies, worship with local congregations, personal meditations, Eucharistic services celebrated by different confessions and naturally festal opening and closing celebrations. These possibilities for the participants were visible signs of the unity of the Church of Christ. Coming closer to each other as we prayed together, sang together and learned to grow together.

This was the first time the Assembly had taken place in a Latin American Country and was one of the broadest global gatherings of its kind. It was the first Assembly where so many young people were present and the participants spoke over 100 different languages. It was actually a smaller Assembly with only just over 900 official delegates and invited guests, observers, etc. but there were over 2000 people there for the *Mutirao*.

*The Ecumenical Conversations* gave delegates the possibility to be in dialogue with different churches in the ecumenical movement. There were 22 different issues or challenges. The delegates, official participants and the youth who were invited could meet in groups and take part in the conversations for the future direction of the WCC



*DIAKONIA Executive Committee members at Porto Alegre*

*The Mutirao at the Assembly* gave a space for workshops, seminars, cultural events, reflections, celebrations and exhibitions in the area of the Assembly. The Brazilian word *Mutirao* means a 'meeting place' and an opportunity to work together for a common purpose. The programme for the *Mutirao* was made by different persons, congregations and organisations and offered so much to do, see and learn. It also offered the opportunity to meet a lot of Christian people from all over the world and to have many deep conversations with them.

Those who came for the *Mutirao* had the opportunity to attend the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, all the Plenary Sessions and Presentations, as well as having their own Bible Studies.

As you can imagine being in Latin America the worship music was lively and was led each day by a choir, many of whom were participants. There was a theme and a symbol for each day and one of the days was indeed memorable for anyone who had been to the DIAKONIA World Assembly the previous year. The theme was God, in your grace, transform our lives and the Symbol was 'Water' and a well, together with jars, materials and flowers was on display.

During the week the Assembly was addressed by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil as well as by many Church Leaders among whom were Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. On the second Tuesday eve-

ning of the Assembly Desmond Tutu led a peace walk in Porto Alegre

It was a colourful and joyful Assembly where music, pageant and drama were woven into all parts of the programme and reflected the diversity of the ways in which God works to transform all that is.

*(edited and adapted from a report given by Terttu Pohjolainen)*

## MUTIRAO

The Executive Committee, at a previous meeting, had decided it would be good to hold a workshop at the Mutirao and one or two of the Executive who would be there would assist Louise in this. When we met in Sao Leopoldo we planned what we would do.

The title for the **DIAKONIA-workshop** was **“Prophetic Diakonia Makes a Difference.”** The workshop will examine the need for both prophetic diakonia and works of charity. The workshop was offered so that prophetic diakonia and more traditional charity are not seen as in opposition to each other, but rather as two expressions of the same motivation for Christian service.



*DIAKONIA Workshop at the Mutirão*

In the days leading up to the workshop we handed out leaflets to people inviting them to come and it was also publicised in the Assembly Programme Book.

Just over 30 people attended, and we were pleased with this. Some came to hear what Prophetic Diakonia meant. Some didn't know at all about DIAKONIA. Some had ideas to share.

It was a good time of sharing and discussion but sadly it was over all too soon.



*DIAKONIA Workshop at the Mutirão*

Here are some of the ideas given and statements made.

- Prophetic Diakonia and criticism belong somehow together. But criticism is credible only, if there is local action in diakonia.
- Charity – it builds bridges
- Prophetic Diaconia is structural diaconia in the society and in the church.
- Prophetic Diakonia and Charity are two sides of the same coin.
- Prophetic Diaconia means that we empower/enable something.
- Charity informs with prophetic voice and vice-versa – Prophetic Diaconia is mutual learning.
- Prophetic Diakonia is formative and it is linked to local/family.
- In Charity we see them and us – in Prophetic Diakonia we see us as the Body of Charity.
- Prophetic means the difference between doing and being.
- Prophetic means the need of getting into grassroots to find prophetic voice.
- Charity can lead to frustration that, in turn, drives to prophetic ministry.
- Charity can be comfortable, whereas prophetic means risky and it is costly.
- Prophetic is charity with justice. Charity should not silence justice.
- Prophetic Diakonia picks up sensitive needs, which have to be done next.

- Charity picks up needs, which no one has met.
- Prophetic Diakonia means change
- Charity without Prophetic Diakonia is not good Diakonia.
- Theology has been the theology of the giver, and not the theology of the receiver.

honestly and faithfully in prophetic and charitable diakonia.  
*(edited and adapted from a report by Terttu Pohjolainen)*

To sum up:

- Charity and Prophetic Diakonia belong together.
- If you are active in prophetic diakonia, charity comes to the right place.
- We need to be critical for what we are doing.
- Charity – Prophetic Diakonia/community – solidarity.
- Life is prophecy, being and doing, giving and receiving, living is giving something. Life is an invitation to live in the tension.
- Charity is motivated by the love of Christ. We are called upon to live



*Terttu Pohjolainen,  
 DIAKONIA representative at the WCC*

## **DIAKONIA PRAYER DAY**

### **26<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF EACH MONTH**

For many who have email, Sr. Doris Horn, DRAE President, sends out words of encouragement from Scripture, small news items from the Region and beyond, points for prayer, and words of appreciation from others.

This 26<sup>th</sup> Day of the Month is very important to many of us. You may not have email to receive Sr. Doris' greetings and prayers, but we can all remember one another on that day and in so doing let it be an encouragement to know we are all being prayed for.

## REPORT FROM KAIRE

**Bari, South Eastern Italy, 16-22 May 2006**

*Kaire* is a biennial ecumenical conference for women in religious orders and diaconal ministries in Europe and its title is derived from the Greek for the angel's greeting to Mary. The idea is that someone can go for up to three times and then allow someone else from her country to have the opportunity to participate. This year the Conference was held at Oasi Santa Maria, a Roman Catholic centre for spirituality and Christian culture near Bari in Puglia, South Eastern Italy.

47 women from 17 countries met to live, pray and share together for six days. The main languages used were Italian, French, German and English.



This year's theme was from John chapter 4, 'Where to find this living water?' The daily Bible studies were led by Mrs. Corinna Combert-Galland, Professor of Scripture at the Protestant Theological Faculty in Paris. This was followed by time for silent reflection and then small group sharing. The groups enabled rich fellowship across nationalities, denominations and languages and the theme of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman provided much to ponder on our various inter-denominations, inter-faith, international and other diverse experiences.



We also had input from different conference members about their ministries and situations, including a presentation from Louise Williams, World President of DIAKONIA.

Two Italian professors spoke to us; one, a sociologist, gave an interesting approach to 'meeting the other' using insights from the rich multi-cultural, multi-ethnic history of the area; the other developed our understanding of the Christian past of the area using the many Byzantine icons and frescos to illustrate her talk.



We made visits to special sights in the area, including a natural cave system, the 'fairy-tale' town of Alberobella with its distinctive conical *trulli* houses and also to some remarkable cave churches dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century and earlier which still bear signs of beautiful iconic frescoes. When a group of Romanian Orthodox sisters sang some of their liturgy in one of these churches the young Italian guide was thrilled to see these places that she loved being used for their original purpose, the worship of God.

We were also welcomed at the *Centro Ecumenico "San Nicola"* in the city of Bari, that is an important place for the study and furtherance of Catholic-Orthodox ecumenical relations. After seeing the Cathedral and meeting the Bishop of Bari, we progressed to the shrine of St. Nicholas for Orthodox Vespers, which was a very moving experience.

On the Sunday we were joined for the morning by local Christians, many of who are part of ecumenical groups in the area.

I found it all to be a tremendous experience of positive ecumenical and international relations, joyously Pentecostal where language, culture and Christian faith intertwined and barriers were broken down, and deeply challenging where those elements demanded loving understanding, respect and co-existence as we pray, work and wait for the fulfilment of the prayer of Jesus that '*all may be one*'.

Rev. Deacon Gill Butterworth  
(taken from *Diaconal Association of Church of England(DACE)*,  
*Newsletter July 2006*).

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**International Diaconate Centre  
The International Study Conference.  
Freising, Germany  
22-25 September 2005**

Deaconess Terttu Pohjolainen, Finland, represented DIAKONIA at the above Conference. It had been a few years since DIAKONIA had such an opportunity and therefore it was good for Terttu to be there.

The theme of the Conference was "Diaconate as a Prophetic Ministry in a Globalized World" and there were 155 participants from 37 different countries.

It was obvious from the various reports that there is much work to be done in this fast changing world where needs are great and resources are few. The Deacon finds himself in tension between the increase in liturgical tasks because of the shortage of priests and the work that they see needs to be done in their communities amongst the poor, the lost, and those seeking for answers.

The permanent diaconate in the Roman Catholic church is growing and is beginning to be seen as an important and essential ministry in the Church.

As most of the permanent Roman Catholic Deacons are married their wives are working with them. In 2001 these wives estab-

lished a network together and were given the opportunity to report at the Conference. They have a representative with full rights at the executive committee.

Over the last three years the representative of the wives at the IDC executive committee, Nelleke Wijngaards Serrarens, made an interesting survey among the wives about the following questions:

- Has the ordination of your husband as a permanent deacon influenced your family?
- What were the expectations you were faced with?
- How do you collaborate with your husband? How do you support his diaconate?
- Does the diaconate have a positive effect on you and your family? Can you give examples?
- Has the diaconate brought problems for you and your family? If so, what kind of problems?
- Do you wish to have more opportunities for talks, events, spirituality, support etc.?

All results are summed and published in a brochure titled "Partners in Solidarity – Wives of Deacons" which can be ordered at the IDC or at the DIAKONIA secretary.

## **Diaconie International Conference (DIC)**

In May this year I attended this Conference in Bratislava. DIC is an organisation of theologians working in diaconal welfare institutions. Meeting for the second time (the first was in Heidelberg in 2004), this German-based organisation decided to gather in the Eastern dimension of Europe. The title of the gathering was **“Seek the peace of the city – Diaconie as active agent in Europe’s social change”**. About 100 theologians active in various diaconal welfare organisations all over Europe met to discuss Diaconie’s role in Europe. Within the Europeans union, the shaping of social services in the community is coming to have an even greater importance. Diaconie see the social change in Europe more and more as an opportunity for participation and involvement. The various traditions that have developed in the different European regions during the shaping of their own social-welfare structures are becoming clear. The conscious incorporation of these different traditions opens wide possibilities for involvement, and reveals opportunities as to how Diaconie can play an active role.

Opening presentations outlined the conflict between social and economical development in Europe and described the challenges these present for the Churches. Following a social evening hosted by the theological faculty on the University of Bratislava we gathered on the Saturday to share various models of Diaconate. Outlining the present roles and a future vision, five platforms presented models from Eastern Europe, Nordic and Latin countries, Germany and Britain. All these are working with great change, but Eastern

Europe is not tied by changing large unwieldy institutions; during the Communist time these ceased and they are almost looking at how best to start from scratch.

My presentation from Britain centred very much on the grass roots model, educating local people, enabling local communities to change through facilitating new skills and gathering the political voice to bring local concerns to those in authority. Despite the translations not being accurate the ‘young’ eastern deacons were keen to learn about education in local communities to bring about change and also to involve local people in *diakonia*. Unfortunately for the organisers, the European Commissioners did not attend and hear the “good news”. However it was clear that we all have many ideas and hopes to share, and that the deacons from the churches across Europe need to continue to meet to identify the deep need to stay in the cities and bring the caring face of the servant Christ to those being forgotten in the changing economical climate that cares more for the successful.

On Sunday I attended a local Lutheran church led by a clergy couple and the Lutheran Bishop of Bratislava preached. I felt very at home in the liturgy and speaking to the Bishop over lunch I feel that the Lutheran church of the Eastern European Countries has much to teach us about collaborate ministry as they work to create new patterns of ministry. Perhaps it is the deacons on the margins of Europe, and often the Churches, that can be an active agent for social change in Europe.

Rev. Deacon Ann Wren  
(from DACE Newsletter)

## **BREAKING THE MOULD OF CHRISTENDOM:**

### **Kingdom community, Diaconal Church and the Liberation of the Laity**

*David B. Clark, Epworth Press – Published November 2005*

This book is a ground-breaking study of a new model of church, 'the diaconal church'. Its background is a world facing momentous change and a church stuck in 'the mould of Christendom'. The author argues that for the church to fulfil its mission in today's world, four fundamental changes have to take place. First, it must hammer out a theology of community rooted in the nature of the kingdom as a learning community. Second, it must be transformed into 'a diaconal church' whose mission is to serve 'the kingdom community' within the world. Third, its 'laity must be liberated' from clerical domination to become the servants of the kingdom community. Fourth, the role of the deacon as catalyst is now crucial for the liberation of the laity. The book includes five case-studies of the diaconal church in action, and an evaluation of the diaconal potential of five worldwide Christian 'renewal movements'.

As a Methodist minister and lecturer, David B Clark has been a pioneer in exploring new ways of being church. He has been deeply involved in and written extensively about the local church, lay ministry, the Christian Community Movement, schools as learning communities and urban renewal. He is now a Methodist deacon.

In times of crisis, prophets appear in the church. David Clark is such a prophet. His book brilliantly analyzes the mission of the church in contemporary life, presenting a vision of a church for the world which is full of the spirit of Jesus Christ. The con-

trast Clark draws between the Christendom church and the diaconal church is highly significant for the British churches just now, and presents a vision of renewal and hope not only for the church but for a suffering world.

*John M. Hull, Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at the University of Birmingham and Honorary Professor of Practical Theology in the Queen's Foundation of Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham.*

David Clark challenges all Christians, and not least deacons, to make a Copernican shift in their understanding of diaconal mission. Too frequently the discussion leaps from the servant church to the diaconate as exemplifying it. David Clark argues that it is first and foremost the laity, not deacons, who are called to represent the servant church in the world. The deacon's all-important task is to raise the awareness of lay people to that calling and help them to fulfil it. The book addresses urgent questions for the self-understanding, practice and formation of the diaconate. It is a must-read for deacons worldwide.

*Sue Jackson, Warden of the Diaconal Order, Methodist Church in Great Britain.*

***David Clark has invited us – members of DIAKONIA – to read this book and "if possible to get the discussion moving forward on a diaconate for the twenty-first century, rather than us either going round and round in circles or not bothering because we seem swamped by diversity".***

*To order the book contact David Clark at Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell, Derbyshire. DE45 1BG.  
Email: dclark@fish.co.uk*

**Fees, donations and contributions you may send to the following account:**

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Stichting DIAKONIA  
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# Friendship

A gift to be shared – a diaconal calling

Basel

Schweiz  
22.06 - 27.06

D R A E -- Conference 07



## Tensionbow Friendship:

chosen - given

natural –spiritual relationship

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Specialists from Churches and social institutions  
will examine more closely together with us this theme  
---- Reports– Workshops – Guidances ----

The multinational variety of Basel leads unquestionably into a religious and cultural plurality. Beside that rapid changes and fast- moving society developments are taking place. Many ethical and moral values are deteriorating. The call to redefine values is emerging in post- modern time. Also in the Diakonie we can experience this new start. This leads to questions concerning identity and concepts:  
Who am I – do I need the others, the communities? Can I rely on friends in a crisis?  
This complexity of society influences all of our diaconal work and church structures and calls for political decisions. How do we meet the marginalised “other”? How do we perceive them – are they client, stranger, foreigner, friend, sister or brother? Can we take on the challenge and hope to build the world wide body of Christ?  
Experts from churches and social institutions will explore this theme with us together.

Costs: about 750.-CHF -- 500 € per Person