



# **DIAKONIA**

## **News**

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

Editorial	2
President Letter	3
Farewell to the Faithful	4
Advertisement Webmaster	7

<b>DIAKONIA WORLDWIDE</b>	
DIAKONIA World Executive	8

<b>DAP</b>	
125 years Lutheran Mission	10
Indonesia Jubilee	11
Methodist Church in Fiji	12

<b>DOTAC</b>	
DOTAC Regional Conference	13
DOVE	14
LDA receive Men	14

<b>DRAE</b>	
DRAE Regional Conference	15
News DRAE	20
125 years KGK	22

<b>From Ecumenical Partners</b>	
KAIRE	24

<b>Theological Reflections</b>	
History Diaconal Ministry	26
Worlds apart (Poem)	26
Church in 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	27

<b>DIAKONIA World Assembly</b>	28
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**No. 97, February 2012**

## FROM YOUR EDITORS

In July 2011, I had the privilege of joining with the DIAKONIA Executive when it met in Moshi, Tanzania. Spending time with Deacons and Deaconesses from North and South America, Europe and England, and Asia, really broadened my awareness of Diaconal ministry in many shapes and forms. I felt gratitude for the faithfulness of those who have served in pioneering and challenging situations, and a deep sense of connection with those who continue to the work today with new expressions of Diaconal ministry. It reminded me of the last verse in Hebrew 11, where the writer is speaking about the archetypes of faith: 'not one of these people, even though their lives were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. God had a better plan for us: that *their* faith and *our* faith would come together to make *one completed whole*, their lives of faith not complete without ours' (The Message). What a great image for connections across time and space, past and present. Each of us, working in our own context, contribute to the greater picture of Diaconal ministry. It invites me to a faithfulness in prayer, and an openness to learn about the diversity of Diaconal ministry in our global community. This issue of DIAKONIA News seeks to share news and draw together the connections that weave us together in service and ministry in the name of Christ in whose name we serve.

*Rev. Sandy Boyce  
English Editor DIAKONIA News*



When returned from Moshi, Tanzania, we all were very touched and full of those special moments we could experience at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. You will read some impression in this newspaper. Regional President Lisa Polito gave us a short impression about the DOTAC Regional Conference, that took place at the same time in Oklahoma, US. You will read about that in this issue too.

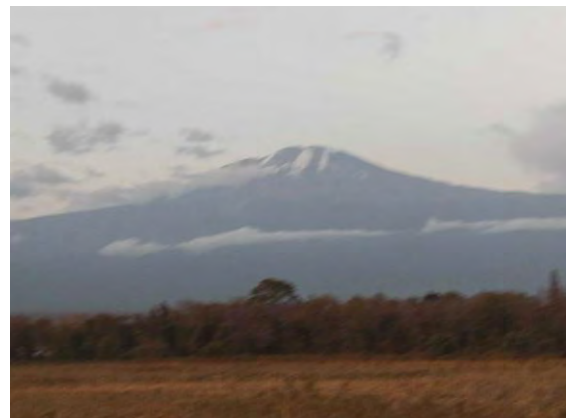
It seems, that 2011 was a year of jubilees. So we have several articles about jubilees in different parts of the world – and look back into history.

Now, we look forward to the next DIAKONIA World Assembly that takes place next year in Berlin, Germany. The planning group is very active and gives you a short outlook to water your mouth. After the DIAKONIA World Executive meeting in summer the invitation will go out and you can start planning.

And, last but not least I want to guide your attention to two advertisements you will find in this issue: DIAKONIA is searching for a new webmaster and there is the opportunity of living and working near the WCC for one year.

Be the overwhelming love of Christ be with you all!

*Dc. Ulrike Kellner  
German Editor DIAKONIA Nachrichten*



*Mount Kilimanjaro*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters in DIAKONIA,

The first month of this year is gone already. In our region the days are increasing again and becoming longer – nature is awakening. We rejoice in the light, warmth and enjoy the multitude of colours in flowers, trees and all plants. Still we are touched by all the darkness and horrors we see in politics, society and natural disasters.

Recently I found this poem that may comfort us, release us and help us to look with hope into the future: All the darkness in the world was not able to extinguish the light that came to us through Jesus Christ.

*The light of his love.  
The light of joy.  
The light of mercy.  
The light of forgiveness.  
The light of his peace.  
The light of consolation  
The light of God.  
The light from our eternal home.  
It shines forever.  
It shines for you.*

May this light fill you so you can pass it on to others!

In these DIAKONIA News you will again find many reports from all parts of our DIAKONIA world.

May these reports encourage and strengthen you. You will hear about the two regional conferences, DRAE in Moshi, Tanzania: *"Help from beyond the moun-*

*tain" and DOTAC in Oklahoma City, USA : „Chairs at the feet of God“.*

In our executive meeting we again spend time on the topic of human trafficking as well as on the world assembly: "Diakonia – wholeness and healing for the world" will be the theme of the conference.

Sorrow and joy, how close together are they sometimes; so you will read about people who departed from us or died, about painful issues, as well as healing experiences.

I would like to point out the DIAKAID projects; the reconstruction on Granada, training in Nigeria, or street work in Manila, Philippines

I am greeting you and hope that the light of God's love may shine upon you. May the Moravian word for 2012 guide and strengthen you: *Jesus said: My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.* (2. Cor. 12,9)

Connected in service,

*Doris Horn  
DIAKONIA President*

DIAKONIA World President Doris Horn celebrated her 40th anniversary as a diaconal sister and member of the Zehlendorf Verein. Congratulations, Doris! Her first assignment was in Nigeria in 1977, where she was not only working as a nurse but also as a missionary. After a short period in Germany she was sent out again to Nigeria and came back after eight years to serve in Cologne and Mülheim/Ruhr.

### Important Internet and E-mail Addresses

#### WEBSITES

DIAKONIA World Federation  
DAP  
DRAE  
DOTAC

<http://www.diakonia-world.org>  
<http://www.dap.info>  
<http://www.drae.info>  
<http://www.dotac.info>

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## Farewell To The Faithful

We remember with love and thankfulness Deacons and Deaconesses who have died in the last year in our diaconal global community. Here are some in particular, perhaps representative of the selfless contribution of many who have served so faithfully as servants of God, for the sake of others.

**Miss Ellena (Ena) Finlayson**, Scotland died 19th June 2011.

On leaving school, Ena joined the British Linen Bank but her ambition was to become a missionary. She was dissuaded by the minister of St Mary's church in Hawick who suggested instead she aimed to be a deaconess. She completed her course in 1961. In her final placement in Aberdeen she worked with the Manor project, a project for adults with learning difficulties, which she was instrumental in setting it up. After her retirement in 1996, she worked in the Fair Trade shop.

Ena was a faithful member of the Diaconate Group of the North East and the Northern Isles. She was also an active member of Presbytery and served on several committees. Ena loved children. She was well known in the local schools and dearly loved by staff and pupils alike. The children had a number of affectionate names for her, one being 'the Jesus Lady' and another 'The Deaconess'. Both are fitting tributes to Ena.

Ena gave her whole life in the service of others and of her Lord. She was kind and generous to a fault. She was a supporter of the Bible Lands Society and sponsored several Palestinian children. She was also a keen supporter of Christian Aid. We remember her family in our prayers and find comfort in the sure knowledge that Ena is now with her Lord and Saviour whom she loved so dearly.

**Rev Dr Mary Levison**, Scotland died 12th September 2011

Mary Levison loved the Church of Scotland. Like few others, she changed the Church of Scotland. Mary served on the Executive of World DIAKONIA for 11 years and was Editor of DIAKONIA NEWS in the

1960's. She was instrumental in bringing the Conference to Edinburgh in 1966.

Mary also was successful in petitioning the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to admit women into the ministry and the legislation for this was passed in May 1968. She was also a prime agent for bringing men into the diaconate and bringing the men and women of the diaconate into the courts of the church.

Mary was very active in many ecumenical enterprises. She made no secret of her devotion to solemn language, to dignity and beauty in worship, to liturgical order and to the sacraments.

Mary really loved God. For many of us prayer and devotion seldom move beyond a duty: for Mary prayer and devotion were a duty and a delight. Thanks be to God for the life of this servant.

**Sister Hulda Hertel**, Brazil

died in April 2011

After a year long battle with an aggressive lymphatic cancer. In the last two weeks ago of her life, she wanted to return to the motherhouse in São Leopoldo. As another way of transport was no longer possible, so she was brought to the hospital in Porto Alegre by helicopter. Quite significantly, the owner of the helicopter did not want to be paid for the transport. He said: "Our family has to thank her so much."

Sister Hulda had many friends. Her death is a great loss not only to close relatives like Sr. Hildegart but also to the whole sisterhood. She was a very cheerful, warm and extremely dedicated person.

Born in 1943, Sr. Hulda joined the sisterhood in 1964, and received her official consecration as deaconess on 19th September 1971. She was a district nurse in Hamburgo Velho, and from 1974-1987 she managed the day care centre of Ceilândia, a satellite city of the Brazilian capital, where she was at times responsible for 500 children.

Then, her wish to study theology was granted. For three years she served in a parish in the south of Rio Grande do Sul.

She was elected "Senior Sister" of the Evangelical Lutheran Sisterhood in 1996

and held the office till 2005 with great fidelity and responsibility. During this period, in 2001, she became Presidium member of the Kaiserswerther General Conference and held the office of vice-president till 2007. Her last activities included pastoral duties at the hospital of Jaraguá do Sul in the neighbouring state of Santa Catarina.

(source: Sr. Ruthild Brakemeier)

#### **Deaconess Winifred (Win) Hilliard, Australia**

“A great Australian has passed-on and her memory deserves to be treasured by all who love charity and justice.” *Rosemary O’Grady, Lawyer (Melbourne)*

Win died in January 2012, aged 90. She trained in Melbourne as a Deaconess, hoping to follow in her aunt’s footsteps by working as a missionary in Korea, but she was asked to go to Ernabella, an Aboriginal community in central Australia. This became her life’s main ministry, and she lived there for 32 years. She had an amazing ministry amongst the indigenous community at Ernabella, especially with the women.

It was the policy of the Presbyterian Church that the missionaries learnt the local language, so for several months after arriving, Win had instruction in Pitjantjatjara. She retained fluency in the language for the rest of her life.



*ABC photo for 60th anniversary celebrations*

Win took over the role of the arts centre coordinator at Ernabella (established 1948), and the centre remains the longest continuously running aboriginal arts and craft organisation in Australia. Artists worked almost exclusively spinning and weaving wool, and making hand pulled floor rugs incorporating the distinctive

Ernabella designs (anapala walka). Win introduced different media, always with an emphasis on the quality of production. In particular, she introduced batik into Ernabella, enabling the women to translate traditional art and designs onto fabric and thus setting up a profitable business. It quickly became a signature art form for Ernabella. The batik technique has more recently been adapted for ceramic pieces made in the ceramics studio at Ernabella (opened 2003).

Of her time in Ernabella, Win reflected: “I love that I’ve had the great opportunity of living and working with the Aboriginal people in Australia. It’s a privilege that has been shared with others who have lived with the Aboriginal people – in every case you’d find they’re grateful to have been given that opportunity to live with these people and learn to understand their point of view.”

During her 32 years in Ernabella, Win was able to gather a remarkable collection, documenting many aspects of Ernabella’s history including the church and school. The most significant components of the collection are the many examples of art and craft including batiks and other decorated fabrics, children’s drawings, paintings, and various other wooden implements and carvings.

Win was also a very competent photographer, and with her keen sense of history, was able to photograph many aspects of the life at Ernabella, the physical surrounds and flora, and the women and their art. In 1963 she was awarded a certificate of excellence in the Kodak International Colour Picture competition!

Win’s contribution to the life at Ernabella was recognized in being incorporated into the local social organization and given the name, Awulari. She was awarded an MBE in 1977 (Member of the Order of the British Empire) and a medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1989. She wrote several publications including the book *The People in Between*, published in 1968.

Win Hilliard was one of our diaconal pioneers in Australia whose life and ministry we celebrate.



**Sister Agapie Nadia Mikhail Asaad,**  
Egypt, died 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2011



The long time prioress of the Egyptian Community "Daughters of Saint Mary" died on Monday 8, August 2011. The memorial service was held by Bishop Ghazial and she was buried in Sidment,

near Bishop Athanasios. Sr. Agapie was among the first three nuns of the Daughters of Saint Mary Convent (DSM).

She completed her BA in English Literature & Education from Ein Shams University Cairo, Egypt in 1960 and a Diploma in Printing and Design at American University Beirut, Lebanon. After that she gained qualifications in Church management, Church Education & Theology and was active in the multi-religious dialogue, and with mission and development. From 1960 until 1969 she worked as a teacher in Beni Suef and became director of the Gethsemane School in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.



*Daughters of Saint Mary Convent*

From 1991-99, she was Prioress and Trainer for the religious community sisters. She worked closely with Bishop Athanasios and continued his diaconal work after his death. In 1993 she served as Vice-President of COST (Coptic Organization Services & Training). Several publications, translations as well as curriculum books for Religious education were made during the years. At DIAKONIA Assembly in Brisbane, Australia in 2002 she led her community into the family of DIAKONIA and invited the DRAE region for the Regional Conference to Beni Suef. It was

held 2004 under the theme, *Strangers in a foreign land*.

It was a desire to provide long-term security for celibate women who wish to serve the community that led Anba Athanasius, the metropolitan of the diocese of Beni Suef, to establish the Daughters of Saint Mary Convent in 1965. The active nuns of the convent work in the community, but are different from consecrated deaconesses. Whereas consecrated deaconesses relate to the Bishop, active nuns are answerable only to the convent.

The working-nun model, Metropolitan Athanasius explains, provides a sense of security. The fate of the women is not dependent on that of the Bishop; they are nuns who will always belong to the convent. If a Bishop dies, the deaconesses will not have to worry about their future, because irrespective of the leadership of the convent, she will always be a nun there. Tasoni Agapi, one of the first three working nuns of the Beni Suef convent, recounts when Pope Kirolos VI gave the movement his blessing. He had said that 80 per cent of Catholic nuns in Egypt were originally Orthodox, but had converted to Catholicism because they could not find a way to combine a celibate life with community service. Pope Kirolos, Tasoni Agapi affirms, supported the idea.

One distinctive difference between the consecrated deaconesses and the working nuns of Beni Suef is the nature of their work. If consecrated deaconesses are committed to the service of the Church, the working nuns of Beni Suef are committed to the service of the neediest and most marginalised people in society, irrespective of gender and religion. "We have to address social needs. Commitment to the poor is our priority," says Anba Athanasius. "We are committed to the most needy, the marginalised." These include garbage collectors, the mentally handicapped and abused women. The convent includes a refuge for women facing personal hardship and severe marital problems – it is one of the few women's shelters available in Egypt.

The Coptic Orthodox Church, however, does not officially recognise the order, because the tradition of the Coptic Orthodox Church does not have a history of active monasticism, which includes

working nuns or monks who are a part of the community.



*Sister Agapie*

It is ironic, and perhaps reflective of the patriarchal nature of the Coptic Church, that while the Church has refused to recognise the concept of a working nun - on the premise that monasticism and community service cannot be combined - it has been appointing an ever-increasing number of monks to serve in the community as priests. A monk cannot serve in the community unless he is first ordained as a priest.

## **DIAKONIA World is searching for a new Webmaster!**

### *Tasks and responsibilities*

- The Webmaster shall be appointed by the Executive Committee to serve from the end of one Assembly to the end of the next Assembly and shall be eligible for reappointment.
- To upload content provided for the website in a timely manner. This would typically be within two weeks once it has been received.
- To respond to requests to changes on the website in a timely manner. This would typically be within two weeks of received a request.
- Prepare an annual report to the Executive meeting.
- Confer with English and German editors for content
- Serve on the World DIAKONIA Communication Committee

### *Essential skills and competencies/knowledge*

- Able to use computer and have access to internet;
- able to work as part of a team;
- able to work to deadlines;
- some experienced knowledge of DIAKONIA;
- able to travel to Executive meetings;
- experience with website

It is expected that the webmaster will provide a minimum of two hours a month to maintain the World DIAKONIA website.

**If you feel that you are the person we are searching for, please contact either DIAKONIA World President Doris Horn ([president@diakonia-world.org](mailto:president@diakonia-world.org)) or the Secretary Ulrike Kellner ([secretary@diakonia-world.org](mailto:secretary@diakonia-world.org))**

# DIAKONIA WORLDWIDE

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

## DIAKONIA World Executive

The Executive met in July 2011 in Tanzania. The President Doris Horn reflected: *Once again we experienced great openness and I am always amazed about the level of trust we have amongst the members of the Executive. Only in knowing that we are all serving the same one who said: "I came so that you may have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10,10), we are able to overcome barriers of language, culture and traditions. And so we can discuss and deliberate and make decisions on your behalf for all the members in DIAKONIA.*

"Help from beyond the mountain" the theme of the DRAE conference just before our meeting as well as the beautiful surroundings at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro helped as well.



*Sr. Elly Urio, Rev. Marianne Uri Øveland and Dc. Ingrid Vogt talking to a Tanzanian Parish member*

Some of the topics of the meeting:

\* Deaconess Emma Cantor, Philippines made an informative but also moving and shocking presentation on human trafficking. The Executive identified a high priority to raise awareness in our own context, to tell the stories, inform and if possible offer help. Emma's presentation is available from the Secretary and can be distributed to all members on demand.

The DOVE meeting in Recife, Brazil will work on this issue as well. The Executive decided on a resolution and a prayer to be distributed to all members and churches they belong to. The resolution is printed below and has been widely circulated to member organizations.

\* A new member was approved: Ushirika wa Diakonia Faraja from Tanzania, a male deacons community, serving mainly in the field of education, social work and with people with disabilities.

\* A job description for a webmaster was drawn up and approved. As Neil Thomson, our webmaster for many years, resigned during our meeting, we are seeking expressions of interest from anyone who would like to apply for this office.



*Lyamungo Retreat Center, venue of the DIAKONIA World Executive meeting*

## Resolution on Human Trafficking (from Executive Committee of DIAKONIA World Federation)

Human Trafficking is a worldwide problem and infects almost all countries and all economic systems. It is a form of modern slavery and the biggest money making system in the world. The DIAKONIA World Executive at its annual meeting in Moshi, Tanzania in July 2011 was confronted with the wideness of this reality. As an organization of people involved in diaconal ministry in 34 countries of the world we feel very much connected with the victims of this crime. We want to raise our voice to the elimination of the conditions that lead to and perpetuate human trafficking. We ask our member organizations and the churches we which we belong to raise awareness of human trafficking in everybody's surroundings and do as much as they can to overcome this inhuman practice.



### **We ask you to join in our prayer:**

Loving God, The broken creation yearns for wholeness. Many are sold for sex, in bondage and exploited in factories and fields. Many are starving and thirsty. Many are homeless and refugees. Many are fearful, distraught and hopeless. Many cry out for food, for shelter, for safety, for protection, for worthiness, for respect... for wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Forgive me for closing my eyes and ears to the cries and suffering around me. I commit to you my helplessness and ask you to open my eyes and ears that i can respond to the cries. Make me willing to be an instrument of your love and peace. Help me to take action so your love and peace become real in this world. Amen.

*Signed by the Executive Committee of DIAKONIA World Federation: Sr. Doris Horn/Germany, President; Dc. Emma Cantor/Philippines, Regional President DAP; Dc. Lisa Polito/USA, Regional President DOTAC; Dc. Jackie Fowler/England, Regional President DRAE; Dc. Ulrike Kellner/Germany (also Secretary and Editor of DIAKONIA-Nachrichten); Dc. Terttu Pohjolainen/Finland; Sr. Sabine Ritter/Germany; Rev. Marianne Uri Øverland/Norway; Sr. Elly Urio/Tanzania, Diac. Ingrid Voigt/Brazil; Alternate Dc. Ristua Si-rai/Indonesia; Rev. Sandy Boyce, Editor of DIAKONIA-News, Laura Lazar, Treasurer; Sr. Elisabeth Meier/Switzerland*

### **For more detailed information:**

[www.blog.polarisproject.org](http://www.blog.polarisproject.org)  
[www.asiafoundation.org](http://www.asiafoundation.org)  
[www.fulart.org](http://www.fulart.org)  
[www.oikumene.org](http://www.oikumene.org)  
[www.eif-pcasa.org](http://www.eif-pcasa.org)  
[www.catwinternational.org](http://www.catwinternational.org)

### **MUTUAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

This program aims to support people who wish to experience diaconal ministry in another context, to partner with a member of DIAKONIA from another region, and to exchange information, prayers, and resources with each other. Exchange visits are encouraged with members of the partner organization Living in a globalized world teaches us much about the need to walk, work and learn together. More information from Jackie Fowler.

### **DIAKAID**

DIAKAID provides practical support for new projects. The July Executive meeting approved further grants through DIAKAID. They are:

**Zambia:** € 3.750,00 was sent to purchase motor scooters for deaconesses in rural areas

**Caribbean, Granada:** € 4.000,00 were approved for the Wesley Diaconal Community to run a program for young people to teach skills to rebuild the country after the hurricane as well as to empower them personally and spiritually.

**Philippines:** € 3.500,00 for a children project in Manila. Two deaconesses run a program in a poor urban area.

**Nigeria:** € 3.500,00 for the first year, € 3.000,00 for the second year, € 2.500,00 third year for two deaconesses to support them in nursing training. The Order of Deaconesses is establishing a health care project.

*Sometimes it seems there is not much we can do, but even small drops, if coming together, form an ocean! As a child I sang, "Little drops of water, small grains of sand, from a big ocean and the great land!" I have often experienced the truth of it. (Doris Horn)*

\*\*\*\*\*

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

**Bank account 38 81 759      DIAKONIA World Federation**

**1081 KL Amsterdam, Netherlands/Niederlande**

**IBAN: NL92 INGB 0003 8817 59      BIC: INGBNL2A**

**Or**

**Konto Nr. 4002199      Stiftung DIAKONIA**

**Ev. Kreditgenossenschaft, BLZ 520 604 10**

**IBAN: DE23 5206 0410 0004 0021 99      BIC: GENODEF1EK1**

## NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

As you read the news, please pray the news – prayers of thankfulness and praise, as well as petitions for help, encouragement and practical support. Our diaconal ministries are strengthened when we are informed and connected by prayer.

### From the Region DIAKONIA ASIA PACIFIC (DAP)

#### Australia:

In July 2012, Deacons in the Uniting Church in Australia will host a conference, God is where? It will be held in Sydney from 1st – 6th July in Sydney. A warm welcome is extended to any Deacons or Diaconesses who would like to share with the Australian Deacons in a time of learning and fellowship. This is an open conference and we would welcome Deacons and Diaconesses interested in networking as well as continuing education with a focus on community development. There is more

information on the DUCA website, <http://www.diakonia.uniting.com.au>. For more information, contact Rev Marion Gledhill, [magledma@optusnet.com.au](mailto:magledma@optusnet.com.au).

#### India, Tanjavur:

In October 2011 Sr. Grace Padma was inaugurated as new leading sister of the community. She succeeds Sr. Emily Shanta, who has now retired.

## Celebrating 125 years of Lutheran Mission in Papua New Guinea

*by Sister Ruth Ellen Rebelein*

Approximately 140 former missionaries to Papua New Guinea (PNG), with years of service totalling about 2000 years, met at Wartburg Seminary at the end of March 2011. We had come together to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Lutheran Mission work in Papua New Guinea. Some of us travelled from as far away as Canada and North America for this occasion. After an opening chapel service on Thursday morning, we were welcomed by the new president of Wartburg Seminary, Dr. Stanley Olson. Then Ron and Else Schardt, who served as missionaries in PNG for 25 years, gave a historical presentation on 'Celebrating 125 years of Mission'. Pastor Hans Giegere, now head of the department of theological education in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, brought us up to date on the ELC-

PNG of today. A time of questions, stories and reminiscences followed this. Quite a number of participants entertained us with stories, humorous or otherwise, about their time of service in PNG.

During the banquet that evening Dr. Gary Hansen spoke to us on 'Growing in Mission: Unexpected or Expected?' Pastor Gary serves with ELCA Global Mission as Resource person for Papua New Guinea. The program Friday morning included a panel discussion on the partnership in mission among the ELC-PNG, the ELCA, Wartburg Seminary and Companion Seminary. This panel was very interesting, I thought. Listening to both Pastor Hans and Pastor Gary gave me encouragement about the future of Lutheran mission work in Papua New Guinea.

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**Bank account 38 81 759      DIAKONIA World Federation**  
**1081 KL Amsterdam, Netherlands/Niederlande**  
**IBAN: NL92 INGB 0003 8817 59      BIC: INGBNL2A**

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**Konto Nr. 4002199      Stiftung DIAKONIA**  
**Ev. Kreditgenossenschaft, BLZ 520 604 10**  
**IBAN: DE23 5206 0410 0004 0021 99      BIC: GENODEF1EK1**

## Indonesia jubilee

Three Batak women from Indonesia found their way to Kaiserswerth, Germany during the 1950's and were educated and consecrated as deaconesses there. Back in Indonesia, Nuria Gultom, Bonaria Hutabarat and Floriana Lumbantobing worked in a hospital and some years later, in 1961 founded the sisterhood IKADIWA.



*The three founding Sisters*

Since then, the close contact between IKADIWS and the sisters in Kaiserswerth remained and therefore the sisterhood was invited to join the festivities of the jubilee in August 2011. So we, the director of the Kaiserwerther Sisterhood, Rev. Judith Kiehnel and Deaconess Gabriele Ebert went to Indonesia one week prior to the event. On our way from Medan to Lumbang Pisang, where the motherhouse of IKADIWA is located, we visited several diaconal institutions where Indonesian sisters worked, where we were warmly welcomed.



Together with Sr. Christel Westerhausen, sister of the Sisterhood of United Mission Wuppertal (VEM) who worked at and led

the hospital in Balige for many years, we spend some days in Lumbang Pisang, where we watched the preparations and conferences prior to the feast.

On Sunday 28, August 2011 the Jubilee started with a service. Many deaconesses, Bible women and other guests came from all directions. The sermon was given by Rev. Lumbantobing, the son of Deaconess Floriana Lumbantobing, one of the three founding sisters, who later left the community and married.



Speeches were given, greetings and thanks were shared, gifts were presented and many good wishes offered for the future of IKADIWA. Not only did the IKADIWA sisters receive presents – but the guests also! This is how the Indonesian people do it. One of the most important gifts is the Ulos, and so the Kaiserswerth Sisterhood received an Ulos too. It now decorates a wall in our meeting place and we treasure it.



Students from the boarding school of Son-di Raya presented dances and the stu-

dents of the deaconess school performed some songs. Pictures from the education time in Kaiserswerth were shown, which led to many questions and a lot of fun.



*Sr. Serepina, Former DIAKONIA World President  
Chita Framo, DIAKONIA World Alt. Sr. Ristua Sirait*

It was a time of interesting sharing and a chance to meet with long time friends, including deaconesses we had met at workshops or at DIAKONIA World assemblies. Among several Bible women from the VEM who were special guests were former DIAKONIA World President, Chita Framo, and present DAP Regional President, Emma Cantor.



A small group of farmers (all Muslim) came from far away to say thanks to the deaconesses for the good work some deaconesses have done with the locals in Parongil. We were very impressed by them, and on our way back stopped by and visited the little village.

It was a wonderful Jubilee and the deaconesses have done a great job to make it all happen. We thank them all and are grateful that we could attend. We are looking forward to meeting them all in future.

*Rev. Judith Kiehnel  
and Deaconess Gabriele Ebert*

## **Fiji – the church under military rule**

During the World DIAKONIA Assembly in Atlanta, participants learned about the cancellation of the annual Methodist Conference by the military regime.

More recently, Methodist clergy in Fiji remain frustrated that the removal of a repressive law requiring permits for religious meetings has been replaced by a more permanent decree by the country's interim military regime. Leaders of Fiji's 2,000 Methodist congregations were thrilled when Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe "Frank" Bainimarama announced on New Year's Day that the Public Emergency Regulations (PER), which in 2009 granted the police and military extensive powers, would be lifted by January 7. Clergy believed meeting permits would no longer be required. But they were disappointed when a new and permanent law — a revised Public Order Act — subsequently replicated the PER, requiring churches

to apply for permits at community police posts.

"When the actual thing came, it was almost a cut and paste thing," Methodist Assistant General-Secretary the Rev. Tevita Banivanua told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "I had hoped that the lifting of the PER would have encouraged us to believe in government. But we have lost trust." Mr Banivanua wants the military to see the Methodist Church as a "friend and not a threat", to work with the church rather than against it, rather than requesting permits with conditions attached. "Why are we being singled out? If we do not know, we cannot do anything. We are ready to work with the government."

The church is planning its annual conference in August, subject to a granted permit — the first since the government cancelled conferences in 2009.

*Source: David Crampton, ENI News,  
<http://www.eni.ch/>*



## From the Region DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean. (DOTAC)

### DOTAC 2011 Regional Assembly, Theme: Chairs at the Feet of God

(see: [www.dotac.diakonia-world.org](http://www.dotac.diakonia-world.org))

We came from places like Kingston, Jamaica; Serra Pelada, Brazil; San Jose, Costa Rica; Kelowna, Canada; Valparaiso, United States and Tortuga. Deaconesses, Deacons and Diaconal Ministers met in Oklahoma City this past July for the 12th conference of DIAKONIA of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC).



*With the map*

The theme, *Chairs at the Feet of God*, was based on the Field of Empty Chairs at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. The outdoor memorial is a field of 168 chairs representing the lives taken during the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building. Native American dancers and an Oklahoma storyteller welcomed us to the conference, followed by a worship service with foot-washing.



*Walter Majola*



*Margret Ann Craine*

Our days together were filled with worship, presentations, workshops, site visits and small group conversation. We heard survivor stories of the Oklahoma City bombings, resulting commitments to non-violence, and about the peace movement arising from the tragedy.



*Pakistani Dancing*

Workshops were offered on different diaconal emphasis such as human trafficking, disaster ministry, working with the poor. We visited ministry sites in the area as well as enjoying many tourist places. One of the days focused on how we care for ourselves as diaconal people with workshops on things like music, Sabbath rest, Pakistani Dance, art and photography. We also had the opportunity to learn about different cultures as we spent time in dialogue with a different area of our region.

The attendees from the Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Bra-



sil presented the DOTAC President with a candle made with beans, rice and paraffin, symbolizing that diaconia has the commitment to look after the body and the spirit.



For the 40 of us attending from the LDA, we had an opportunity to meet new people, discover new callings, listen to stories of ministry and refresh ourselves for ministry. As we gathered from north and south, our songs in many languages lifted up, was truly a foretaste of the feast to come.

Once again, a highlight of the conference was spending time with those from other countries in dialogue, meeting new people, learning about other cultures, discovering new callings, listening to ministry stories and refreshing ourselves for ministry. Songs, sung in many languages, truly provided a foretaste of the feast to come.



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### LDA to receive men into diaconate

Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA), a center for diaconal service and learning in the United States, has commenced for the first time admitting men into diaconal formation. Three men have already applied to begin the 2-4 year process. The LDA, adjoining Valparaiso University, has prepared women for service ministries in the

### DOVE - DOTAC Overcoming Violence

**Experience:** In September 2012, the next DOTAC Overcoming Violence Experience (DOVE) will be held in Brazil. This time the main emphasis will not be on “violence” but on “overcome”. DOVE is designed to build an international team that will participate in a multicultural, hands-on, action-reflection experience, related to overcoming violence in the world. DOTAC will assemble a team of 12 persons, three from Canada, three from the Caribbean, three from Brazil, and three from the United States. The team will gather in Recife, Olinda, and Gravata (site of the Hip Hop DIAKAID Project), Brazil. The event is being hosted by CECOSNE (Centro de Comunicacao Social do Nordeste). Participants will be expected to:

- Find ways to initiate action / reflection experiences in their own country.
- Write reflections to share with the group, their own community, and DOTAC.
- Seek ways to provide leadership and develop networks to assist others in addressing the issues that have arisen from the Decade to Overcome Violence.

Some important components of this event will include community building, cultural exchange, and Biblical and theological reflection. It will reflect a holistic approach to violence. It will include a balance between the theoretical and the practical as well as enable participants to gain a better understanding of the problems and consequences of violence and to explore some things they can do to overcome violence. Further information and application form is available on the DOTAC website, <http://www.dotac.diakonia-world.org> or contact Deaconess Lisa Scherzer Polito, DOTAC President.

Deaconess Lisa Polito, LDA Executive Director, said, 'As a free standing organization, the LDA can respond to changing needs of the church and world, allowing the shape of its diaconal ministry to change as necessary. We prepare and support people for ministries of service and advance the church's diaconal mission by faithful ministry among those who are the world's 'most vulnerable'. The LDA builds and nurtures and international diaconate recognized within the church as a prophetic voice and is now broadening its vision by preparing men for service as deacons'.

Dr Steve Arnold, the first male applicant, said, 'I have known about the LDA since I was in high school...(and) I have dreamed of a place where deacons might

be in intentional Lutheran community that is in partnership with the community of deaconesses'.

The LDA is committed to preserving the women's deaconess community in LDA, as a unique witness to the church and to the world. The LDA Board recognizes that there are men who have heard God's call to a life of service within community. The new male community is complementary to the female community within the LDA diaconate.

'Men can now be a part of diaconal ministry – bridging the church and the world by sharing the love of Christ with those in need', said Deaconess Roberta S. Hillhouse, Chair, LDA.

For more information, visit [www.theLDA.org](http://www.theLDA.org)

(In Australia, Rev Bill Harris entered the specified ministry of the diaconate as a Deaconess, before the (ordained) Ministry of Deacon was introduced by the Uniting Church in Australia in 1992. It is with some affection that Bill is referred to as 'Deaconess Bill', to recognize his role as a pioneer for men in diaconal ministry in the Uniting Church in Australia).

## **From the Region Africa-Europe (DRAE)**

### **DRAE 2011 Regional Assembly, Theme: Help from beyond the Mountains**

*By Morag Crawford*

The theme of the Conference was 'Help from beyond the mountain' (Psalm 121.1). We saw our first glimpse of Mount Kilimanjaro from the air as we flew into the small attractive airport of Kilimanjaro.



We were warmly welcomed with the word *Karibu* (welcome), a word we were to become very familiar with as we heard it everywhere. First impressions were of a dry,

dusty land, with a few green trees; passing Masai taking their cattle and goats to fresh pastures; wayside stall holders selling fruit and veg; small hamlets with houses and shops; women carrying their wares on their head; men on bikes all rather thin and gaunt looking. The road into Moshi was relatively straight and smooth but obviously not without its hazards as we passed a car being rescued after an earlier accident.

The two days before the start of the Conference allowed us to see something of life in Moshi and experience the joys of shopping and bargaining with the local traders. It was strange being a minority group. It took a little time to realise that yes, we were the ones who stood out because of the colour of our skin. Beggars sat by the roadside, all of them with some form of physical disability. Back at the hotel we became aware of the difficulties of life in Tanzania as we discovered there was no water. Later, we realised there was



no power. Now we knew the reason for the saucer and candle in the room! This was to become the pattern for the remaining time. Sometimes there would be water, sometimes power, sometimes both, sometimes neither. One learned to make do with what was there, washing in cold water, using an empty drinking water bottle to fill the sink from tubs of water in the bathroom. Oh, the joy when you discovered there was hot water for a shower and then the dismay when you were plunged into pitch darkness because the power had gone off yet again and you had to fumble your way in the dark to find a torch because you had forgotten to take one into the bathroom with you.



*Conference Hall*

The opening of the Conference was held in the town church in Moshi. On arrival, we were given the Tanzanian greeting *Karibu*, and a garland of bougainvillea was placed round our neck by a Tanzanian Sister. Inside the church there was a great feeling of celebration; the building had been decorated with green, white and blue drapes and roses. The celebratory atmosphere continued as a brass band struck up outside and led the official dignitaries into the church. There was some singing from the African sisters, and also a choir of physically handicapped children whose smiling faces were a joy to be seen. The worship was a bit more solid due to the Lutheran tradition.

The Evangelical Church in Tanzania is the second largest Lutheran Church in the world with 5.5 million members. The Lutheran Church in Sweden has 6.7 million members. The Lutheran influence was very evident over all the times of worship at the Conference.

In his address, the Bishop of the Northern Diocese welcomed us to Moshi at the foot of Africa's highest mountain. He noted it had been losing its white glory as a result of climate change due to global warming.



Members of the Diocese have undertaken tree planting initiatives in an attempt to counteract some of the effects but the greater responsibility has to be taken by the industrialised nations to stop the reckless emissions of dangerous gases from their industries. He challenged us to take a message of repentance for the suicidal madness, and to take deliberate measures to treat the wounds we have caused to God's creation.



*Bishop Shaun and Leading Sister Agnes Lema*

He spoke of the overwhelming need of all kinds of Diakonia work in sub-Saharan Africa where half the people survive on less than one dollar per day and where 33% of people suffer from malnutrition. Half of the population has no access to hospitals or doctors, and life expectancy is 41 years. A third of all children do not go to school and only one child in 3 completes primary education. The number of sub-Saharan children who die before the

age of five is 25 times higher than in Europe. Tanzania has a population of 40 million, 4 million of whom have disabilities. We heard how the Northern Diocese is active in projects promoting hygiene, health education, home and family life, care of the environment.

*Ushirika wa Neema* is a community of Lutheran nuns who are involved in social services, teaching, nursing, business, and veterinary medicine as well as managing an orphanage and Montessori teacher training Centre. Before Christianity, the people believed the mountain was God's stool. They have looked beyond the mountain to the Lord who made heaven and earth.



Rev. Aaron Urrio, Director Ushirika Wa Neema

When a child is born they are shown the mountain immediately after their birth. Pastor Aaron Urrio said that when a child's first cry is heard, it is a cry of hard times ahead if the child survives at all as it is threatened by poverty, ignorance, disease, especially malaria and HIV/ AIDS. The people need the help which comes from beyond the mountains, the power of God alone. Aaron reminded us Jesus came to bring wholeness to the sick, the hungry and the stricken world, he challenged us that we in turn are the ones to give life and hope as we reach out with the compassion of Christ in a life of service through diakonia.

The first key note speaker Dr Munga, a Senior Academic of a College for disabled people. She told the story of Josh, a blind boy disabled by a fire which left him with stumps for hands. He had conquered his disability and plays the keyboard and guitar. He sings, *I will lift my eyes and look to the hills, and to the God beyond who*

*makes all things possible.*



Dr. Munga

Through Josh's story she challenged us to see people with a disability, or those less fortunate, as human beings. We all have our abilities and disabilities. Prayers of healing need to be asked for ourselves as well as the downtrodden.

The second keynote speaker looked at the economic hope in poor and developing countries. UN Millenium Development Goals focus on eradicating poverty and hunger, universal primary education, gender equality, improving health, combating HIV AIDS, malaria as well as ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnerships. These are important issues in the current world economic order.



Rev. Aaron Urrio and DRAE President Jackie Fowler

Locally the poor economy has been affected in the textile industry by second hand clothes. Low technology and lack of capital and support has resulted in poor agriculture which depletes soils and opens large stretches to soil erosion. Climate change, the impact of industrialised developed countries, and the effects of multi-nationals, all have a part to play in current



economic development.

As a result of the address, resolutions were later prepared to present to the WCC and all the churches on *Diaconal Responsibility towards Ecology*.

Visits were made to various community projects, to visit orphan children, and *Faraja*, the school for handicapped children, and the training centre for Deacons. The training course for deacons (3 years) includes theology, social work, and medical subjects as well as field work placements. The Centre also runs a boarding school for 80 children with physical disabilities between the ages of 7- 15 years. Although they have a physical disability, these children are academically bright. The school provides Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy for the students, as well as access to doctors and other medical services. After seeing round the school, we met the children in the dining room where many of them were singing and dancing; others were playing games or playing on bikes or scooters.



In small groups we were able to meet with each other and learn something of the diaconal work in the different countries and workshops were scheduled on a variety of topics. We enjoyed a Tanzanian cultural evening with local Tanzanian food prepared by the women from the local churches. On the Sunday we experienced worship in the local churches. Most of the services lasted two hours and were in Swahili. An interesting aspect was the offerings (sometimes they have two or three different offerings). People went forward with their offering, which was then placed on the altar along with bags of produce. At the end of the service the priest led the congregation out of the church and they

formed a circle. The bags of produce were brought out and auctioned off, and then the priest finished with a blessing. Apparently some of the poorer people bring their produce as an offering.



*Elephants in Tarangire*

A highlight was a visit to the Tarangire National Park where we had the opportunity of seeing the wildlife in its natural surroundings. We were all filled with wonder as we saw elephants, giraffes, zebras etc at close quarters and were reminded that the God of creation gave human beings responsibility to care for His creation.

We had been given many things to think about. We had the opportunity to chat with Deacons and Sisters from many different countries learning what training was undertaken in the different situations. Some of the African Deacons worked across parishes a vast distance apart, some of the Europeans were more involved in project work and social projects. All were involved with people on the margins of society, all were enabling others to fulfil their diaconal calling in the world. It was interesting to learn that in nearly all the churches, diaconal ministry itself was at the margins. Most suffered from the fact there was not enough financial support to train or employ Deacons.

For me the Conference and the whole experience was a time of challenge, encouragement, spiritual uplift and awareness of the support we have in diaconal ministry from our brothers and sisters around the world. All of us are engaged in a variety of service but all are bound together by the common bond of serving those on the margins of society in the name of Christ who himself came as a servant.



### **DRAE Conference, Moshi, Tanzania – a personal reflection**

*'Attending the conference brought home to me how interconnected we all are, and what a small world we live in' by Elspeth*

This summer has been a time of new experiences for me. I had the privilege of going to the DRAE conference in Tanzania. It is something I will truly never forget. Nothing can prepare you for visiting Africa. The sights, tastes, smells, people, laughter and fellowship will live with me for a long time to come. Being in the shadow of Kilimanjaro was breathtaking—when you could see it! I attended a workshop on African music which was great and learnt some Swahili—most of it I've forgotten!



Fellowship was born out of our common diaconal identity and learning about the challenges faced by those ministering in Tanzania and the innovative projects set up by them to meet the needs of their local community. One project was to provide day centres for children who had learning difficulties. The beauty of the project was that centres were set up in a way that meant children only had to travel a short distance and were stimulated and cared for while the care givers – mothers/aunts

/grannies - were able to go out to work. Training was given to care givers so they could work at the centres. A cooperative had been set up to make bags, clothes etc to sell so they could earn money to support their families.



The lasting impression for me is of people in all sorts of ways identifying and responding to local needs. Attending the conference in Tanzania brought home to me how interconnected we all are and what a small world we live in. What I / we do in our own local context has an impact on the whole world. Decisions taken have a huge impact on others—often unseen by us.

One of the most surreal examples of how small the world is was having a conversation with a Ugandan working in Tanzania who had studied in Paisley and was discussing with me which exit form on the M8 he took when collecting a friend from Airdrie (where I was brought up)!!

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

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## More News from DRAE

### Cameroon, Sisterhood of Emmanuel

We wish to express our gratitude to God and to DIAKONIA for your love, support, concern and constant prayer for our Sisterhood of Emmanuel. Immense praise and honour to God our father who led us day by day safely through last year and who as well kept you thereby giving us this privilege to share with you once more.

**Spiritual life:** Our source of strength came daily from the reading and meditation of God's word, Eucharist, retreats, contemplation and individual prayers. Our annual retreat in December was led by Rev. Pastor Emmanuel from Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC). The theme of the retreat was "Living healthily in the Community" which brought a lot of insight and inspiration to all of us.

**Stages:** In January we had a number of celebrations. Our sister Marie Pierre made her final commitment to the Lord in the monastic life in our Sisterhood. This consecration service was presided over by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Rt. Rev. Dr. Festus Ambe Asana who came with his entourage and many other Clergy from Bafut Presbytery and beyond. Multitudes of people and the family members of our sister/other sisters also joined for this great celebration. This occasion was followed by a thanksgiving service some weeks later in the village of our sister where Sr. Shalom and Marie Joelle also come from, so the three of them went and jointly offered their thanks to God in their home congregation. We also celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the consecration of our pioneer sisters - Sr. Judith, who is our prioress, and Sr. Joy Jeanet. Sr. Mary Ann also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of her consecration. All these great and important feasts were a source of special joy, encouragement and hope to us and we thank God.

**Visits:** Two of our sisters, Sr Shalom and Samuella, visited and experienced monastic life for several months in the Cistercian Monastery Parakou (Benin) and Benedictine Monastery Bouake (Ivory Coast), followed by a few months in our Mother House in Versailles – France. Back home several of us went round to different congregations of the Presbyterian Church

in Cameroon to evangelize and talk about vocation in the Christian life. We also spoke about our needs and projects including the construction of a new dormitory to accommodate more sisters. The PC Bonamoussadi Douala congregation gave generously in a special fundraiser to support this project, and we received other financial support that enabled us to go on with the project. Our sisters served as liturgists and readers in the services during the celebration of the Presbyterian Church Day and the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) Golden Jubilee. In July, Sr. Claire and Ruth attended the diaconal Meeting in Tanzania which was very good, and they were able to share how they serve God by taking care of and training disabled persons and also work with the underprivileged in our society.

**Visitors:** Sr. Nathanaelle from the Motherhouse spent 3 months with us. We had a very wonderful and surprising visit by the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) from the Bafut Zone. They generously came with a lot of food items that helped us much. The Christian Men Fellowship from Befang (Wum) did the same and we were so blessed. We spent time singing, praying and sharing together with them. A group from Germany who were visiting the PCC also visited our community and brought us many candles which we are using in the chapel for prayers. Rev. Gerhard Rhim, the pioneer chaplain to our Sisterhood, visited and helped us with lessons on the liturgy and we modified our daily offices. He was a real gift and blessing to us. He celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination while he was with us, which was very solemn and wonderful. We were also happy to have Elke and Constanze visit us from Switzerland. Constanze spent time in our Center for disabled children and girls in Akum as her thesis topic is on disability. Another beautiful visit was the interreligious exchange among religious leaders in Bafut. We were happy to receive religious leaders from the Roman Catholic Church to dine with us and share as brothers and sisters in the same Lord. This occasion comes up once every month and each religious house in

Bafut is always the one hosting. We also had a wonderful visit from Pastor Alan from the Presbyterian Church Texas in America. His visit was initiated by Pastor Kevin Boyd and Mrs. Mbini Lucy who had visited us last year.

**Developments:** In 2011 by the grace of God and the generosity of His people has brought very significant and great changes in our community. The Circle of Friends of the Sisterhood Emmanuel in Switzerland provided finances for two projects. Firstly, we have been blessed with the gift of a powerful generator that supplies power to our community in case of electricity failure and also powers other equipment and machines in the Sisterhood. Secondly, financial support enabled our prioress Sr. Nyemb Judith, who has a passion and good eyes for beauty, to restructure and plant flowers and carpet grass. Our new dormitory is at roofing level. Immense thanks goes to our Mother House the Sisters of Reuilly (Versailles) who have provided the main financial support for this project. Our Chapel has also been renovated – new floor tiles, repainting, new carpet etc. We thank the hidden angel who sponsored this project. We have also fitted many iron doors for security. Our dream and prayer is to be able to fence the whole community to prevent intruders from coming in. We have experienced a lot of protection from God both in the journeys we made and within. We continue to call on you to pray more and more for us, other religious communities, even families and our whole society as the issue of insecurity is ever present.

**Madeleine Caring and Training Center Akum:** Our fraternity in Akum is moving on well though not without some little challenges. Sister Mary Ann and Sr. Emmanuel continue to be in the Center, joined by Sr Divine Edima. Sister Marie Pierre came down to the Mother House in Bafut. We care for 16 children, some in the Center and some in their homes. We also provide for the care and education of 9 others who are orphans and underprivileged children. They live with foster parents or in their homes too. We remain very thankful to The Circle of Friends of Sisterhood Emmanuel in Switzerland and to our sisters in France who provide sponsorship and support for children in our care.

We have started a bakery project using funds received from the World Day of Prayer 2010. The bakery provides for the breakfast of the children and our sisters living with them. The rest of the bread goes to the market and a part of the money from the sales supports the running costs of the house. Our dream and prayer is to build a structure for the children in the near future and the Circle of Friends for the Sisterhood Emmanuel have already given some funds for the molding of sun dry bricks for this purpose.

We have entered the New Year 2012 with hope and trust in God who will lead us through. He will gently lead you through as well. His promise to be with us shall never fail. We wish you once more a happy and blessed Year 2012.

*Prioress and Emmanuel Sisters  
Bafut/and Akum.*

### **Rwanda, Rubengera**

Two retreats have been held this year, which were very welcomed. There are two new sisters: Sr. Espérance Rusine and Sr. Apollinarie Yankuriye, who were consecrated in August. Sr. Médiatrice Mukamana repeated her vow after three years of education. And there are three young women in formation.

The project of training farmers (both male and female) is in its third year now. 150 persons per year attend the course and receive their certificate. A technical college is being built at Rubengera, where there will be woodwork and carpentry education. The orphan house is still growing. The work of the community is highly valued by the government and national authorities.

### **Madagascar, Mamre**

Once again, the sisters have suffered from natural disasters. This time, the rice fields were flooded and had to be recultivated. The work of the sisters is focused on the education of about 100 children and excellent results have been achieved.

### **Switzerland, Zurich/Zollikerberg**

As most of the sisters are retired now, they contribute to the life of the institution by providing morning, noon and evening prayers. They use their own liturgy and welcome everybody who is willing to have

some prayer time during the day. In the morning, the Herrnhut watchword is the center of the worship; in the evenings, the gospel is read with a different one each year. Intercession is essential. It contains prayers for the institution and its employees, sisters and brothers in Switzerland and abroad as well as pleas for the wounded world.

A Bachelor in Diaconal Work is now on offer, which leads to a double qualification as a social worker and deacon.

**Germany:** The President of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), Nikolaus Schneider, and the President of Diaconal Institutions in Germany (DW), Johannes Stockmeier, have officially asked for pardon towards those children who were victims of violence in church operated homes during the period 1945 – 1975. A committee, consisting of church officials, victims and government representatives, established a compensation fund of 120 million EURO. The German parliament accepted this fund. It will be financed equally by church, federal government and other countries.

As already reported in DIAKONIA News 95, there has been a highly qualified meeting of members of diaconal and spiritual communities in Berlin, November 2010. All lectures are available in a small booklet, available at all German diaconal associations (Name: Impuls III/2011).

Diakonie Germany is testing new ways to advertise for social work positions using Facebook, blogsites and Twitter. Information about diaconal work and job possibilities may be spread through the world wide web, with job descriptions, interviews, latest job offers and schedules of education possibilities presented.

In Bremen the two sisterhoods of the motherhouse are merging into a new sisterhood named "Diakonie-Schwesternschaft Bremen".

#### **France, Versailles/Reuilly**

Soeur Nathanaëlle received a medal for her engagement in the project "Rivage", where volunteers for chaplaincy in hospitals and social institutions are educated. The award was given by the Mayor of Versailles in a festival at the town hall.

### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kaiserswerth General Conference (KGK)**

In the 175th year of the existence of the Kaiserswerth motherhouse, the Kaiserswerth General Conference (KGK) celebrated its 150th anniversary. Over 100 deaconess houses, diaconal communities and institutions in Europe, North and South America and Asia are connected with this association. More than 160 people gathered at Kaiserswerth, Germany, where the Conference was founded in 1981.



Source: Frank Elschner

Under the theme, *In diaconal community – worldwide work for others*, KGK President

Christof Naef from Switzerland welcomed the delegates. Greetings were heard from the WCC General Secretary, Olaf Fykse Tveit, Eurodiaconia Secretary Heather Roy, and DIAKONIA President Doris Horn.

The keynote speaker was Annette Leis-Peters from Uppsala University. She started her lecture with greetings from former DIAKONIA World President Inga Bengtson and then continued with the theme, *Vision for Mission and Mission for Diaconia*. Her reflections referred to the research that was conducted at the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre over the past 10 years. She started with four main points: 1. Diversity of religions and world views; 2. Postsecular society; 3. The limits of the national welfare systems; 4. Care and gender. She then developed four areas where diaconia and the Kaiserswerth idea in particular, have a special task: 1. Intensify cooperation; 2. (Re-)Discover the religious dimension; 3. Perceive and fight social exclusion; 4. Practice international community.





Source: Frank Elschner

As a summary for the future, she linked being prophetic with engaging in diaconal work. She said: "I want to round up with a result from the European research project, 'Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective'. In the analysis of the material, the question was raised if diaconia and the churches in the first place should be a critical and prophetic voice in society or if they are mostly needed as provider in the welfare and health care system. The result was clear. These theoretical alternatives were no real alternatives. If diaconia and churches take on social responsibility and do diaconal work in the field of welfare this is heard very loudly in society. In other words: Diaconal services and actions are heard much louder and much more effectively than messages produced on paper. In light of this call to diaconal work, she noted that "Kaiserswerth and the Kaiserswerther Generalkonferenz are facing a huge work load and a promising future". For further information, contact: [annette.leis@crs.uu.se](mailto:annette.leis@crs.uu.se); [annette.leis-peters@diakonhjemmet.no](mailto:annette.leis-peters@diakonhjemmet.no)  
For the immediate future, the Kaiserswerth General Conference has chosen the following priority: It will promote the development of diaconal ministry and the estab-

lishment of diaconal community in Eastern Europe. Accordingly, the General Conference is offering a study trip to Kaliningrad, June 6-14, 2012. The 42nd General Conference will be held in Dziegielewo, Poland in 2014.

This will provide a forum to assist leaders in diaconal ministries to keep diaconal culture alive and to strengthen their specific expressions of Kaiserswerth identity. It will foster the exchange of concrete expressions of the Kaiserswerth traditions for diaconal ministry and community in the contemporary context. Members support each other in their transition processes. The General Conference promotes exchange on diaconal themes and projects between management boards as well as staff in their professional work and development. Through this exchange, the General Conference contributes to the prophetic voice of diaconia internationally.



Over 30 authors from 8 countries shared their stories about the modern diaconal association and contemporary diaconal communities and institutions, collected in a book (in German) which was produced for this occasion.

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

**Bank account 38 81 759      DIAKONIA World Federation**  
**1081 KL Amsterdam, Netherlands/Niederlande**  
**IBAN: NL92 INGB 0003 8817 59      BIC: INGBNL2A**  
**Or**

**Konto Nr. 4002199      Stiftung DIAKONIA**  
**Ev. Kreditgenossenschaft, BLZ 520 604 10**  
**IBAN: DE23 5206 0410 0004 0021 99      BIC: GENODEF1EK1**



## FROM OUR ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

### Kaire 2011

*by Susan Dawson*

Kaire gathers together women from many different countries and Christian traditions, every two or three years. Whilst it is not a formalised organization, it has a core group who organize the meetings,. The invited participants are women who, as part of their Christian witness, have an ecumenical stance. In 2011, the 40th anniversary of the first Kaire meeting was celebrated.

The experience of living, worshipping, studying and sharing with a diverse group of women is quite unique. A Greek Orthodox theologian led the Bible Study. There were also Romanian Orthodox sisters, Roman Catholic sisters from France, Germany, Italy Columbia, Hungary, Slovakia and Ireland, Anglican priests and Deacons from England, and Deacons and Deaconesses from the Reformed traditions in Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland.



We stayed in the Ecumenical Institute, Chateau de Bossey, in Switzerland: a beautiful rural area with a stunning view of Lake Geneva and the Alps. The sun shone for us throughout the 5-day meeting. The pattern of the week was early morning worship, breakfast, an hour's Bible presentation, followed by an hour's silence for personal reflection. After this, small sharing groups gathered for another hour, and then congregated all together for prayer under a tree prior to lunch. The afternoon schedules included various presentations.



The theme of the week was the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, and Hospitality. Elina Kasselouri, through her gentle, thoughtful and deep knowledge of the Biblical texts and Greek, enabled us to imagine the impact the Angel's words had on Mary and her reaction after he had gone. As a mother it was not hard for me to imagine Mary's desire to spend time with another pregnant woman who was also miraculously pregnant. She would understand where most would not.

The hospitality Elizabeth showed to Mary started with the greeting. Elina explained that the Greek word for greeting meant more than words of greeting; it meant a long physical hug, thus the two babies in the wombs of the women also touched. This gives a much deeper sense of the emotional coming together of the two women after Mary's long and dangerous journey to be with Elizabeth, which she overcame because of her deep desire to share her story with another woman. Elizabeth offered Mary hospitality, for Mary stayed several months, but the hostess herself received as much as she gave. Elizabeth's husband had been rendered dumb and speechless, until the birth of his son. Maybe Elizabeth needed a companion with whom she could share her joys and fears as much as Mary did.

The Kaire group experienced Swiss hospitality and delicious Swiss fare. As well, the group experienced the hospitality of respectful and gracious sharing and listening to each other's stories and ac-

knowledging the diverse spiritual, theological, and worshiping traditions. The common worship encompassed three languages: German, French and English, and different musical and liturgical traditions. The sadness of being unable to share the Lord's Table together through a Eucharistic celebration was expressed by some: and within our sharing group the different understandings of how this meal expresses our faith was explored graciously and respectfully. Assumptions and presumptions were addressed through kindness and generosity. This is how true dialogue works.



*KAIRE Secretary Alice Reuter, Eleni Kasseouri*

The group enjoyed a full day in Geneva where we visited the World Council of Churches and received hospitality from the women pastors and deaconesses of the Protestant Church of Geneva and visited the Protestant Museum and Cathedral.

As a hospital chaplain, I am aware of the privilege of meeting people who are vulnerable, emotionally, spiritually and physically. I visit anyone who appears on the hospital lists as members of the Presbyterian Church. This means in effect, that I am often an uninvited guest; sometimes welcomed, sometimes not. Whilst I hope I am offering something of value to the patients and/or their families, I am profoundly

aware of the hospitality I receive from them, when they share their stories, their joys and their pain with me. This hospitality is deeply rooted in Christian witness, for Christ both received hospitality through the sharing of meals etc, and gave hospitality in his response to the poor, the sick and the vulnerable.

The Kaire meeting was an enriching experience at many levels: spiritually, through the prayerful and creative worship, emotionally through the fellowship of sharing, and intellectually through excellent Biblical exegesis with Eleni. She led us to a greater understanding of the challenges facing Mary and Elizabeth and encouraged us to reflect on how the hospitality they offered one another can be translated for us in our daily lives today. My challenge now is to carry these new insights into my personal and professional life and develop relationships that imbibe the biblical hospitality of inclusion, listening, attending and caring, at a deeper level. The challenge for all of us at the Kaire meetings is also to facilitate and encourage our church communities to further develop an ethos of hospitality and inclusiveness in our Christian mission to the wider world and to other Christian Churches.



*At the WCC*

There is the opportunity to live and work at Chateau de Bossey for one year! Join the ecumenical sisterhood, experience sharing with roman catholic and orthodox nuns. The institute is closely connected to the World Council of Churches and also related to the university of Geneva. Therefore, theological studies are possible too. For more information please contact Rev. Dagmar Heller, [dagmar.heller@wcc-coe.org](mailto:dagmar.heller@wcc-coe.org)

# THEOLOGY

## Some History of Diaconal ministry

*By Sister Janice Painter*

Diaconal ministry has developed with wonderful diversity, with sometimes surprising connection between people and places. In Philadelphia (USA) a Lutheran layman, John Lakenau, sought help from the church community in Germany for work in a hospital. Seven deaconesses responded to the call, and Lakenau promised to support the establishment of a deaconess community in the United States, suggesting that they would see a day when their efforts 'will have sent powerful shoots in all directions'.

Sister Maria Roeck was the first English-speaking graduate of the fledgling Lutheran Deaconess Community in Philadelphia in 1902. Her major work was to establish a community dispensary for those suffering from tuberculosis which was devastating the community. The first Auxillary began with 12 women, and expanded to 19 Auxillaries with 2,500 workers. Not only was this evidence of Lake-

nau's vision for 'powerful shoots in all directions', but the work of the Auxillaries cut the mortality of tuberculosis in half in less than twenty years.

In Tanzania, a Lutheran University College was established. Japharery (Robert) Shehaghilo was a member of the first graduating class in 2010 and now works with children with disabilities. Robert, his college, his workplace and his relationship to Sister Maria are all fresh and vital.

There are many such stories of interconnectedness in our global diaconal community. They are a source of great joy as they weave together the experiences of those who have been pioneers in diaconal ministry and those who serve in such diverse ways today. It commits us to pray with thankful hearts, and to remain faithful in prayer for our global diaconal community.

*(some material in this article from Bill Nolan, [www.kencrest.org/blog](http://www.kencrest.org/blog))*

## World's apart

We're worlds apart...  
And yet we're the same  
Children of God  
by any other name.

Our child-like faith  
helps us concentrate  
on God's love, joy  
and dying for our sake

We're in the world  
but not of the world  
crying and praying,  
we help care for the world

Seeing Jesus  
in every face we meet  
Sharing by loving and  
washing of feet

We live our life,  
called to this mission  
Diaconate, serving  
our called commission.

*Karen Triomphe,  
Diaconal Ministers, ELCIC*

## The church in the 21st century – a call to prophetic witness

The key task of the Church in the 21st century is to keep itself relevant in the modern world, and one of the best ways it can do that is by reclaiming its prophetic voice in the name of Christ. Being the Body of Christ means doing our best to stay true to Christ's message. It means being a voice that stands up to our culture, to our media, to our government, and to ourselves. It means continually calling all to Christ: his love and acceptance of all people, his emphasis on community and relationships, and his rejection of materialism.

In the last half-century, the Church has to an extent embarked on a journey of rediscovering its prophetic voice. We've discovered that not only does Jesus have something to say about our world today, but that his words are absolutely vital. We have to stand up to injustice, to speak a word of hope and healing to the oppressed, and a word of repentance to the oppressor. Reclaiming our prophetic voice isn't about putting ourselves above the world and shouting down at it. It's about acknowledging our position in the World, but not of it. We too are broken, caught up in the same sin as all humanity. But we can still claim the prophetic voice, as long as we're willing to hold ourselves up to its scrutiny along with all humanity. We can

even model Gospel-centered healing and repentance in seeking to change ourselves. God is always present and active in the world, even in our shortcomings.

Reclaiming a prophetic voice is hard, though. The prophets in ancient Israel didn't limit themselves to speaking in safe contexts. They got out in the thick of it, and proclaimed loudly and confidently. If the Church is courageous and loud in calling out injustice, today's youth will take notice. If the Church takes a strong stand against oppression, today's youth will listen. And if the Church reclaims the lead in healing the world, today's youth will not only join in, they'll move straight to the front. They care deeply about the world. They're aware of the global community of all humanity in a way that no generation before them has been. All they need is a voice to teach them what to fight for.

In responding to the 21st century, the Church is poised to return more fully to its roots in a counter-cultural Gospel of hope and justice. In so doing, we can not only work to heal some of the brokenness present in the world today, but also heal some of the brokenness present within the Body of Christ itself.

*(edited from an address by Niles Eastman, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago)*

### Important Internet and E-mail Addresses

#### WEBSITES

DIAKONIA World Federation  
DAP  
DRAE  
DOTAC

<http://www.diakonia-world.org>  
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# DIAKONIA 31<sup>st</sup> World Assembly

## Save the date: 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> July 2013!

The next DIAKONIA Assembly will be held in July 2013 with the theme: *Dia-konia – wholeness and healing for the world*. The Assembly will be in Berlin, Johannesstift Spandau. The dates are 1st – 8th July.



*Johannesstift, Berlin Spandau*

The conference is for Deacons and Deaconesses. The cost for DIAKONIA members is Euro 800.00; the cost for non DIAKONIA members is Euro 1000.00

The program will include Bible Studies, keynote speakers including high ranking German theologians such as Cornelia Coenen-Marx, Monika Renz, Bishop Rosemarie Wenner.

**A seminar designed especially for leaders will take place, 'Christian Management Style'.**

The famous German church musician, Fritz Baltruweit, will lead our singing during the week. Field visits will include diaconal and touristic sights in Berlin reflecting the theme, *healing and reconciliation: healing bodies, healing*

*souls, healing wounds of history*. On Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, we will open the Assembly to visitors, so that they can join workshops. We expect many German deacons and deaconesses to come to Berlin for this occasion. A huge summer party at Johannesstift is planned for all participants. On the very last day, we all will go by boat to Berlin Dome where we will have our closing meeting and worship.



*Berlin Dome*

For information you may look into the websites of Berlin ([www.berlin.de](http://www.berlin.de)) or of that of our venue, Johannesstift Berlin ([www.evangelisches-johannesstift.de](http://www.evangelisches-johannesstift.de))

**More information will be available in July, so keep a look out on the DIAKONIA website and in the next edition of DIAKONIA news.**

