

## 2007 Report of the London Conference of DUCC

The London Conference group consists of 13 Diaconal Ministers and Diaconal Students. We have met seven times since our last national gathering. Each time we have gathered with worship and a sharing time giving each of us an opportunity to share in a more personal way with the group. These times of listening to the joys and struggles of our lives and ministries, and supporting and encouraging each other in the circle have been extremely important. At times we have struggled with the amount of time that we must commit to this very important sharing time versus the need to work on our tasks related to Diaconal Ministry. Each time we have reaffirmed that the greatest need is to be real and present to each other in community because we exist as a dispersed minority across the Conference. If taking this time for mutual support means that we accomplish less on the tasks that we have been assigned, we make that choice for giving support and encouragement to each other is a primary goal.

At the last National Gathering we took on the task of looking at the Educational Booklets, *You were Asking about Diaconal Ministry* and *Profiles of Diaconal Ministry*, produced in 2002. While we wish to affirm the all the effort that went into the production of these booklets, after a review of the booklets and the comments made at the National Gathering at Crieff in 2003, we recommend discontinuing usage.

We began our task by asking a larger question: What do we need in the way of resources to describe Diaconal Ministry? We envision using the Website as the most efficient way of providing downloadable information. This avoids the cost of mass production and allows for the easy updating of material. We will be sharing more about our vision of a downloadable video about Diaconal Ministry (using one made by the Maritime Conference group as a model) at the Gathering and hope that many of you will come prepared to speak about your ministry as part of that video project.

Work on a revision of the Pamphlet on Diaconal Ministry was slow as we wrestled with images for diaconal ministry, and many struggled with the exclusive use of the servant image from John as the model for diaconal ministry. We hope that our time together at the National Gathering will afford us opportunities for further discussion about images and theology. We envision a pamphlet similar to the current one which uses stories of individuals doing diaconal ministry along pictures of them in their diaconal function. This would be downloadable from the Website.

Other activities of our group in this two-year period have been:

- 1) meeting with the new Personnel Minister of London Conference,
- 2) creating a list of DM's prepared to meet with Conference and Presbytery Committees to help interpret Diaconal Ministry,
- 3) recommending that DUCC becoming an Affirming Community,
- 4) creating a Resolution that went from London Conference to General Council asking that a process be established for actively seeking sites for settlement for all Order of Ministry Candidates (whether in congregational ministry or in other Presbytery-recognized community agencies/institutions) so that all may be settled. This came out of the fact that one of our members was unable to be settled in 2006 due to the lack of an appropriate settlement position.

We gratefully acknowledge the leadership of Joan Tuchlinsky as she changed ministry positions in May and now meets with the Hamilton group.

~ Cheryl Kirk ~