

2007 Report from Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean

Mission Statement

DOTAC links and gathers those engaged in diakonia, is a prophetic voice for ecumenical relations and social justice, and encourages, supports and empowers the development of groups doing diakonia in the region.

Preamble:

Thank you for the privilege of representing you all these years. It really has been a great opportunity for me and I do hope that I have been able to inspire some interest in the larger work of DIAKONIA. I must admit that I have been disappointed that not many DUCC people attend DOTAC or World events. I hope that your time with the World President, Louise, will inspire you to be part of this global community. It truly is a wonderful time when Diakonia from all over the world gather, share stories, get inspired, give and receive support and know there are others in the world and in the North America Caribbean region that are doing very similar ministries with similar struggles and hopes.

My last report was in 2005 just before the World Conference in Durham. At the Durham event the DOTAC Executive was presented and that executive is: Linda M. Ervin, President, (DUCC) Sr. Hildegard Hertal, Past President, Vice President: Lisa Polito, (Lutheran), Secretary: Becky Dobson Louter (UMC Deaconess), Treasurer: Ted Hallenbeck (NAAD), Representatives to World DIAKONIA Executive are Linda M. Ervin and June James (Methodist, Caribbean). DOTAC meets once a year and we have been meeting in the Caribbean and Brazil so that people from that region will have it easier to attend meetings. Coming into the US has been difficult for some from Brazil and the Caribbean. Our fall 2007 meeting will be in New York just prior to the DOVE workshop.

DOTAC Trinidad Conference: This conference was held this past June and July and Sharilyn and Russell will give you a report on that conference. I will just say that this conference was a lot of work for DOTAC. The Caribbean is a scattered community and it is not easy to get together to plan. Also there are so few Diaconal people able to work on planning an event such as a DOTAC conference. It is not usual that DOTAC Central Committee has to take on major planning roles but in this case we did. It was a tremendous piece of work for the DOTAC committee but we did very well indeed. We came together with our Caribbean partners and the conference came off, some of us suffering from a lot of stress during and post the conference. Russell and Sharilyn were the only two DUCC people in attendance and I thank them for their personal support to me. Their support was greatly appreciated. They also pitched in and helped with set up and take down of the conference. The next DOTAC conference will be in the US someplace and a date not yet determined.

World DIAKONIA 2005 and 2009: Eric and David were the only two DUCC people that attended Durham 2005 conference and they will give you a report. Louise can also give a report and hopefully a power point presentation of the conference. The 2009 World DIAKONIA

conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia. Ecumenical partners of DOTAC US, are the planners of this conference. Becky and I have been helping to get the Planning committee up and running and that is coming along fine. Becky will be the DOTAC person to have oversight of the conference planning and I will communicate with the committee to provide a liaison from DOTAC to World DIAKONIA. I will have dates for you at the DUCC meeting.

DOTAC New Members: Since we last met we have had several new groups join DOTAC and two are from Canada. They are Diaconal Ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. There are a total of 23 active and retired, with several students in process. The person is set aside by the act of consecration. They are an informal association of rostered diaconal ministers under the oversight of the Assistant to the Bishop. Several members attended the DOTAC conference in 2002. The Deacons of the Anglican Church of Canada have also become members of DOTAC. There are two possible new groups who are very interested in joining DOTAC, one group of Presbyterians from Trinidad and another group from Honduras. Our Vice President of DOTAC takes the responsibility to nurture potential new member communities. These groups also on application can become members of the World DIAKONIA.

DOVE: This is an opportunity for action reflection with other Diaconals from our DOTAC region to gather in New York the fall of 2007 to explore Diakonia overcoming violence. I know that there is one person from DUCC is interested. We are hoping that we will have a group of 12 from Canada, US, Brazil and The Caribbean.

What I Do: I give an annual report to DOTAC about the work of DUCC, CCS and any other information that folks might be interested in. I also write a report for Tapestry and Diaconal News. I pass along information about DOTAC and World DIAKONIA through the DUCC communications network. I ensure that our newsletters go to the World DIAKONIA Secretary and I ensure the DOTAC member groups on line newsletters go out on the DUCC communication site. I communicate to individuals of DUCC about matters that they might be interested in such as education services for people in Fiji and the Caribbean. I ask for volunteers for DOTAC and World events. I ensure that our dues are paid and I provide information to DUCC members as requested. As President of DOTAC my role is a little more which means I am in regular contact with Becky our secretary for such things as DOVE, minutes, meeting places, agenda and currently World 2009. I have regular conversation with our Vice President Lisa who makes the contacts for new member groups and also has oversight of the DOTAC web page. I also have regular contact with Ted Hallenbeck our treasurer. I develop the DOTAC agenda one and half months prior to the meeting and assign tasks and ensure that follow up is done. As President I receive invitations to other DOTAC member groups. I have attended several DOTAC member gatherings. I have been to the UMC Deaconess gatherings, the UMC Deacon gatherings, the Lutheran Deaconess Association/Conference meeting. I will be attending the UMC Deacon 10th anniversary celebration this year as well as the NAAD meeting. I have had to decline a few invitations but hope to be able to visit most of the member groups before I depart DOTAC. My term will conclude at the rise of DOTAC 2009.

A DOTAC Meeting: Each member group will provide a report; there will be at least two story telling sessions about the process of becoming Diaconal, there will be a local exposure and an opportunity to meet with other Diaconals in the area for conversation. There is worship twice a day and a concluding communion service. In the years of the World Federation meetings we have an installation service for the executive. As we receive new member groups we have a service of welcome. We usually take some time off to enjoy the area we are in. Our meetings are about five days in length. Of course there are new Member reports, Finance, World DIAKONIA report and other reports as required by our activities.

DIAKAID Projects from DOTAC Region:

Completed Project:

Honorarium for teachers in bible school in the Caribbean will be funded with € 1,000 this year (see minutes Dresden 2003).

New Project:

In Bélem/Brazil a project “kids at risks” is starting. Children living in a favela shall be given a prospective for their lives. They ask for 2.500 € per year for a three year programme. This was agreed.

Project Requests and Exploration of Projects:

The Wesleyan Community in the Caribbean asks for funding for their medical care centre in Grenada where they teach basic survival skills. They ask for 20.000 US \$ over three years. More information is requested.

A project on diaconal training in the Caribbean – more information is requested

DIAKAID Projects: DRAE & DAP:

Ongoing:

The bridge-building project through a day-care-centre in Hibberdene, South Africa, brings together rural poor people with those having resources. A report is given and the third part of the money will be provided. (see minutes from Valparaiso 2004)

The dairy farm in Rwanda built up by the Sisterhood “Abaja Ba Kristo” in Kigali/Rwanda is going well. A report is given and the second part of the money will be provided. (see minutes from Valparaiso 2004)

The after Tsunami-programme of Deacon Scott Lichfield in Thailand provided no report.

Therefore the second payment is held back until the report is given.

New Projects:

The Namalira motherhouse in Bukoba/Tansania is asking to fund their deaconess education in a three year programme. They ask for 15.000 € over three years. This was agreed.

Other Requests:

Two projects in India – proper application and more information has to be given

World DIAKONIA Emergency Fund

Sr. Mary Mwauru from the Kenyan motherhouse asked for money from the Emergency Fund to respond to a famine in an area where some of the deaconesses are working. € 5.000 were sent out from the Emergency Fund.

Other: Eric Tusz-King and I were invited to do a workshop on men in DIAKONIA with the Lutheran Deaconess Association/Conference in August 2007. This was a great event and I think a good workshop. Eric and I had never worked together and I thought we did very well.

Another Note: At conferences in the USA when I am invited to be part of a 'party' I often give the Canada quiz. I am invited back to the next UMC Deaconess conference to give them another quiz, they will be doing their Canadian history preparation for the quiz. It is a wonderful way to build bridges across borders.

This completes my report. I hope that you will have an opportunity to speak with Louise about the work of World DIAKONIA. I am always willing to speak about the work of DOTAC.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Ervin
Feb. 2007