



Diakonia
of The United
Church of Canada

DUCC NEWS

Sharing news, stories and reflections about
Diaconal Ministers and Diaconal Ministry



“Communication has
the same root as
community, as
communion, the
gospel is nothing
without
communication.”

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SPRING 2010

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DOING RESEARCH: A DIACONAL PERSPECTIVE

By Lori Stewart

In “Doing Research from a Diaconal Perspective,” a paper in my EdD program, I considered the issue of who the researcher is, and how that person’s interests, values, theology, and preferred ways of acting in the world, can and do influence the choices that are made about how research is done. As a diaconal minister I find myself in a community with a highly developed sense of vocation focusing on social justice, pastoral care, and education for change. I wanted to know what research methods might be compatible with diaconal values and why.



Margaret Hetherington, Marion Kirkwood, Dorothy Naylor, Carol Stevenson Seller and Margaret Wonfor, building relationship as participants in a study on deaconesses who married ordained men.

I used the DUCC e-mail network to ask other diaconal ministers who were involved in research to tell me about the methodology they used for their work and why they chose

it. My survey yielded eight responses, with respondent’s research contexts varying between congregations, theological colleges, and groups

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DIACONAL RESEARCH

such as women in ministry, and women in society.

I found diaconal ministers identified particular values in the research they did. These included collaboration in different ways: with other congregation members on planning, leadership, and evaluation of the research; on a joint thesis with a colleague; and with the subjects who were telling their stories. They named the importance of integrating action and reflection. One person said, “I consciously chose an area of study and



Lori's research demonstrated that diaconal ministers approach research in similar but not identical ways.

means of study that was concrete and allowed for hands-on experience as it led to new thinking and educational practice”. Two others liked the focus on lived experience that was possible through heuristic and phenomenological methodologies, respectively.

Charlotte Caron

(forthcoming) described a method called ‘thealogy’, which spirals from experience through a reflective process to action and circles around to reflection again. She names the action step as essential to feminist research methodology because of its capacity to empower. Others named as empowering the transformative learning that happened in research.

The quality of relationship with those who are sources of information was important for three diaconal researchers. One reported, “My instinct is to include others, to create together wisdom and understanding rather than to deliver it fait accompli. I am at my best and I feel most enlivened doing things to build and sustain relationships as a mechanism for helping ourselves to be accountable, transformed, and catalysts for the transformation of others”. Mutuality and trust were named as essential for authentic sharing.

What is research from a diaconal perspective? Sometimes choices of different methods were determined by overlapping values e.g. someone may have chosen to do focus groups because it provided participants with an opportunity to

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IN THIS ISSUE: MAKING DIACONAL MEANING

Scholarship and research being conducted by members of the DUCC community is expanding and deepening understanding of the practice of diaconal ministry. In this issue we are only able to glimpse the tip of the iceberg. There is so much we could have highlighted! At least 15%

of the community have written or are writing a thesis. This pool of knowledge creation, on a wide variety of topics, is contributing to making meaning in Canadian diaconal identity.

Check out the impressive list of thesis work at ducc.ca. To

make this list complete, we need your help. If your thesis isn't on the list send the information to webteam@ducc.ca.

Your feedback on the issue is welcome. Anytime. newseditor@ducc.ca

The Editorial Team

DIACONAL RESEARCH

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reflect on their experience, while another chose a heuristic model because of its examination of experience. One researcher named herself as an experiential learner and thus wanted to be open to what emerged in the research process before naming a method. The common value of reflection on experience had different expressions in the choices these researchers made.

This finding confirmed my sense that diaconal ministers would approach research in similar ways but disconfirmed my initial idea that the methods would be common. Diaconal Ministers favoured different methods based on their own frameworks for seeing the world. While I expected that, as is the case for some feminist researchers, I would be able to come up with claims (Reinharz 1992 in Burns and Walker 2005 p66) or principles (Weinger 1994 in Burns and Walker 2005 p66) that were always present for diaconal research, instead I found something that many feminist researchers have discovered: “all knowledge, including women’s [diaconal] knowledge, is...partial and situated” and that “there are no methods which are specific to feminist [diaconal] research” (Burns and Walker 2005 p68).

Having said that, Somekh and Lewin point out that researchers do tend to work within what they call “recognizable paradigms” (2005 pxiii). Others speak of “research communities” (Somekh et al 2005 p1), which constitute groupings of investigators with shared research assumptions. Many diaconal ministers have concerns with providing space for

the voice of the marginalized, resisting sources of oppression, and promoting social justice, all of which are rooted in a particular Christian community’s theological understandings. While the choice of methodology in research done by diaconal ministers will not favour particular



“I have a kind of love—hate relationship with Action-Reflection”

methods exclusively, it will be overlaid by similar epistemological, axiological, and ontological considerations. It is that about which one cares deeply that will provide the most fruitful motivator for deciding how to do research.

My thesis research is on the Action-Reflection Model (aka “the spiral”) developed and used at the Centre for Christian Studies. I am interested in where it came from, how it was/

is used, how it has evolved, and, how it is still influencing those who learned it and now use it.

I have come to acknowledge that I have a kind of love-hate relationship with the Action-Reflection Model. I do not turn to this kind of reflection as a natural and joyous activity! To me it is hard work, and much like prayer, a discipline that must be practiced in order to have ongoing value to the practitioner. I usually do it when I have exhausted all my other resources. I turn to the reflective work to figure out a way forward. And yet, despite my professed aversion, I am coming to understand that while the model was not consciously appropriated in student days, it has exerted a persistent and powerful influence on my practice all of these years. I still draw on the spiral and chose it as the focus of my research.

I have struggled with pinpointing a methodology for this work, concluding that it is really

rooted in the very model I am studying, characterized by the movement from concrete experience, to reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Within that spiral framework, a mixture of methods have been useful including parts of autoethnography (personal reflections on the topic and what it means to me), developmental ethnography (asking the question “How did this come to be?”), community biography (telling the story of a community), and narrative inquiry (“retrospective meaning making” (Chase 2005 p 656)).

In keeping with the Action-Reflection model framework, I began this research with Concrete Experience. This has involved personal reflection on my own experience with the model as well as discovery of the experiences of present and former staff, graduates, and new students, through written reflections, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Many fascinating stories about the Action-Reflection model have been revealed. These narratives layer, contradict, answer, enrich, and question what others have said. They provide a way “of understanding one’s own and others’

(Continued on page 17)

A SACRED CIRCLE OF LEARNING

By Ted Dodd

Sacred Circle of Learning : A Model of Transformative Theological Education by Ted Dodd. DMin, Vancouver School of Theology, 2008.

The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) makes a significant impact on participants' spirits and lives and stands as a model of transformative and integrated theological education. During the two week course, the Leadership Development Module (LDM), CCS's approach is introduced; a sacred and meaningful experience of learning community and authentic faith sharing is engendered.

As a member of the program staff at CCS, I have been involved as co-facilitator of the LDM since 1999. When I started the research for my Doctor of Ministry degree, I had led the course seven times

with five different colleagues. Over the years, it has been a deep honour to witness the positive way that the program has touched people's faith lives and ministries. I passionately enjoyed co-facilitating this event, so I chose to make the LDM the focus of my project in order to share an example of CCS learning and to hold it up as a paradigm for theological education.

Doing intentional research afforded me the opportunity to document, study and assess CCS's pedagogical approach. The work gave articulation to what it is about the program that moves people so deeply, and the project identified the dynamics and pedagogical factors that make this educational experience so transformative, relevant and significant.

From my social location and as a teacher, I attempted to be persistently aware of my privileged position. Clearly, my dual role as researcher and course facilitator warranted constant monitoring. I willingly admit that I was not an unbiased, distant observer! Happily, the research project

afforded me the chance to express my enthusiasm for CCS and the LDM. It is, of course, easy to deceive oneself about the worth and importance of something in which one is so enmeshed. Throughout the project I attempted to maintain a critical perspective and analytical reflectivity by disciplined reflection and collegial consultations. In the end, the study, unapologetically, represented my conviction that the invitational and communal atmosphere, and the experiential, reflective, holistic pedagogical practices of the LDM, create deep, rich and meaningful learning.

In the thesis, I tried to paint a picture of the LDM by providing a sense of the event's operation and atmosphere. The schedule was outlined and a few sample sessions of the LDM were described in detail. I wanted to have the flow of the LDM recorded in order to provide illustration of the creative and experiential educational methodologies. Participants were profiled and their comments and observations were examined for evidence of transformative learning.

The study also gave me the chance to consider the current literature of theological education and the voices of those who desire to re-shape and change the present state of theological education. As well, I had the occasion to study the scholarship related to educational theory; self-directed, organizational, strength-based, experiential and transformative learning theories were assessed in relation to the LDM.

One of my hopes was to reach an audience of theological educators, and to name best pedagogical practices of theological education, and thereby, influence preparation for ministry and impact the future leadership of the church. As doctoral theses are not distributed widely,



Ted Dodd

LDM transforms participants through an effective pedagogical approach. CCS is offering the LDM several times a year, this group from Vancouver Island in the summer of 2009..

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(and theological educators are not known for embracing pedagogical change?) this was likely an overly ambitious expectation! Nevertheless I have found it extremely helpful in my own work to have offered a number of recommendations:

-relate to your students and build community.

-treat the participants in your programs with respect and dignity, and hold them in affirmative positive regard.

-dare to be creative in the way you structure your pedagogical activities; appeal to a diversity of learning needs.

-make evaluation and feedback a standard feature of your pedagogical practice; ensure that both assessment of your teaching and feedback to students becomes a normative exercise.

-take up opportunities, in the classroom and through assignments, to enhance reflection on learning experiences.

-keep a commitment to "living a theology of justice" as a central vision of the gospel and your work as a theological educator.

-integrate the theoretical, the practical, and the spiritual in your work as a theological educator.



"Where community is safe and structured, the impossible becomes possible."

A former LDM student.

Having taken the time to articulate these recommendations I find they shape my approach to teaching and help call me to account. Being a theological educator is challenging and demanding work; it is a heavy responsibility and I want to do it well. It is also an honour, privilege and blessing to be a part of so many journeys of transformative learning.

During the course of the DMin several personal insights arose for me as a practitioner of theological education. Most importantly for me, I had keenly reaffirmed for me my vocation as an educator who builds alternative learning communities. I dream that students will carry into their ministries the power and possibility of these sacred circles of learning.

Ted lives in Winnipeg, where he is an avid runner and a great cook.



The use of visual symbol enriches the learning environment and assists participants in expressing themselves through visual art in colour and texture.

AMAZING COURSE

By CCS Staff

Centre for Christian Studies Leadership Development Module student, Fenella Temmerman, deeply appreciated the course:

Where community is safe and structured, the impossible becomes possible. The LDM works as an orchestrated whole, moving participants from being co-learners to co-leaders and round again. ... The LDM may be finished but it hasn't finished with me. It lives on within me as I incorporate its learnings, reflect on the processes, am challenged by the content and remember with warmth those who traveled the journey.

Over the years four Australians, from the Uniting Church of Australia, have come almost 15,000 kilometres to take the LDM. In email correspondence, one of them, Pam Kerr, commented:

I was trying to put my finger on what you do so well, and believe it is the constant integration of faith/personal growth/Christian identity with whatever else you are doing. So you always give the best secular insights in the context of our faith.

Since 1999, the course has been offered every June, and cross-listed by the University of Winnipeg, Faculty of Theology. Last year one on Vancouver Island was added and this year there will be one in August in Calgary. As of 2009, over one hundred and seventy-

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THEOLOGY WHEN CROSSING BOUNDARIES

By JungHee Park

JungHee began a program toward a Doctorate in Theology at the Toronto school of Theology in 2008, taking courses at Emmanuel College.

On becoming actively involved in a minjung Church in Korea in the 1980's, I became deeply immersed in Minjung Theology. In the process, I identified myself as an oppressor raised in a relatively middle-class family and privileged with a university education. I sought to liberate myself from my unearned privilege by joining a church of the oppressed. I realize that I was then thinking in binary terms, expressed as oppressor/oppressed and minjung/privileged. I had thought I could cross the boundaries between class and culture to become one of the minjung

but I began to recognize that my privilege allowed me to cross freely back and forth between them and, at the same time, enjoy my graduate studies, something no minjung could easily accomplish.

When I crossed over another boundary by coming to Canada, I discovered that here I did not have the same privilege and power to travel between the margins and the centre. Even though I lamented the loss of my former privilege, at the same time I found myself feeling liberated; I hoped to gain 'epistemological privilege' instead as one of the minjung in this society. However, after being commissioned and beginning work as a Diaconal Minister in The United Church, I again began to realize that, as an ordered minister in the institutional church, I could not situate myself in the category of the powerless. I have come to recognize that my identity cannot be defined by a general category such as Korean or Canadian or as being on the margins or of the centre.

I am beginning to recognize that my multiple identity and complex power relations with people as a racialized woman and diaconal minister in Canada influence the way I interpret my relationship with God, others and creation and also that my theology influences my understanding and practice of ministry and mission.

Therefore, in my studies I want to identify and explore feminist and other

theological images of God and theological understandings of different relationships with God which shape the theology and practice of ministry and mission, in particular, diaconal ministry.

I also want to explore how one's theology is affected by changes in social status – what happens to one's theology when one crosses cultural boundaries, such as happens to missionaries, diaconal ministers, immigrants and refugees. In this study I will be drawing on the work of two women, Katharine Hockin and Kwok Pui-lan.

Dr. Katharine B. Hockin (1910-1993), widely known as an eminent missiologist, feminist and ecumenist, continued throughout her ministry to discern God's presence at particular contextual points. Hockin's missiology has deeply influenced the United Church's missiology, mission policy and practice. She was a major contributor to the 1966 World Mission Report and the 1988 Partnership document of General Council. The resulting UCC's missiology of partnership is respected throughout the world. (1)

Hockin's missiology also influenced the shape of the diakonia of the UCC. Upon her return from China, she taught the lessons she learned in China which can be expressed as 'listening in context' as companions,(2) at the United Church Training School from 1952 to 1958 and at the predecessor to the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries from 1962 to 1976.

Dr. Kwok Pui-lan, was born and raised in the British colony of Hong Kong and received her theological education both in Hong Kong and in the U.S. She has constructed a multifaceted identity for herself



Diaconal Minister Katharine Hockin was an influential teacher at the United Church Training School in the 1950s.



JungHee Park

JungHee has been exploring the relationship between margin and centre in her own life and considering the theological issues in crossing boundaries.

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from the complexity of nation, religion and culture and developed her theology and approach to the Bible as one being between different worlds. (3)

Kwok's major writings include *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* in 1995 and *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* in 2005. In the former book she identifies herself as an Asian feminist theologian (4) but in the latter one she sees herself as increasingly embracing her diasporic existence.(5) I am interested in tracing how her theological foci and hermeneutics change and develop through these two books.

My thesis may explore how the hermeneutics of Kwok's Postcolonial imagination and feminist critique and Hockin's missiology have been influenced by their cross cultural experiences and how that experience influences diaconal ministry and mission and the contribution that may make to UCC intercultural ministry and mission. Recognizing that the issue of one's identity and differences in power is the core of Hockin's missiology and also of Kwok's postcolonial feminist hermeneutics, I would like to explore a dialogue between them.

Through these studies I hope to contribute to the development of the missiology and practice of the UCC and, in particular, its diaconal ministry and to the learning experiences of men and women preparing for diaconal ministry.

JungHee Park graduated from CCS and was commissioned in 2005. She lives in Acton, ON with her partner and two children.

ZANZIBAR EXPERIENCE

By Val Pitt

Last fall I had the opportunity to live and work in the small village of Jambiani, on the Island of Zanzibar beside the Indian Ocean. This was the most amazing and life changing experience!

With my friend Jane de-Block who is a Public Health Nurse in Stratford, Ontario I accepted a three month volunteer position with "Hands Across Borders Society". I guess the Holy Spirit was working through Jane because I was initially reluctant, but she kept asking me and I decided to be open to where the Spirit might be guiding us both. Within three short weeks all had been arranged and we were boarding the plane to Africa.



The heavy labour of farming seaweed in the Indian Ocean leaves little time for imaging alternative ways to make a living.

We had so many amazing experiences and met so many incredible people during our 'working Sabbatical' in Jambiani. As teachers at the College we had the privilege of working with many dedicated young women and men and hopefully were able to share skills that would enable them to find employment or establish their own small businesses. Zanzibar is a beautiful Island, full of mystique and mystery. It is also one of the poorest places in the world. Our cottage looked out onto the Indian Ocean.

The ocean reminded me of a farmer's field. The men arrived early each day and lifted the sails on their small fishing boats. When the tide receded the women and children would appear spending countless hours tending and gathering seaweed from the ocean. I was astonished when I walked out into the shallow water to find that the sea weed is actually being planted and tended as a small crop. When the sea weed is gathered it is sold as carrageen which is an emulsifier used in thicken things like toothpaste, cosmetics and ice cream. Gathering sea weed is long and arduous work with little financial gain. The hours

1. Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Committee, UCC, "Partnership Review Report: For presentation to the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry," (October 24-26, 2008, Unpublished paper): 9-12.
2. JungHee Park "Mission as Companionship: Toward A Theology of Mission for the Diakonia of the United Church of Canada" (fall, 2009, Toronto Journal of Theology 25/2): 257-274.
3. Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 6.
4. Ibid, 1.
5. Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 25.

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PARABLES OF TRANSFORMATION

By Alyson Huntly

In Parables: Encountering the Power of Narrative Imagination through the Storytelling of Adolescent Girls by Alyson Huntly. PhD, Queen's University, 2009.

After nearly 15 years writing and editing Christian education resources, I sought out Queen's University's Faculty of Education for my PhD because I wanted to deepen my understanding of how people learn. Having worked to help learners of all ages engage the narratives of our faith tradition, I wanted to explore how people use stories to make meaning. With my advisor, Rebecca Luce-Kapler, I encountered an integration of cognitive studies with theories of teaching and learning. Rebecca's research in literacy and narrative practices examines how story is at the heart of human consciousness.

I studied neuropsychologists who show that our conscious selves are not linear or literal. Selves are not born but made. Our self narrative may feel like a movie, our self played out in an unbroken line from birth to death. Our selves may feel as though they have always been "just so," but autobiographical memories are constructed narratives: stories that we tell ourselves about who we are and where we have been, stories that

are formed in and through life experience, stories that are constantly reworked and reimagined in community.

In my doctoral research with groups of adolescent girls who faced particular challenges (such as poverty, bullying, trauma, or disrupted family situations) I explored how girls create sturdy, resilient selves through encounter with the narratives of their own lives and the stories. Building on the work of Carol Lakey Hess and Dori Baker, I formed story telling groups in which girls used a variety of artistic practices to tell their own stories and to encounter other stories about girls (including biblical ones). I was astounded by the depth of relationships formed in these groups and humbled by the trust the girls showed as they shared the profound narratives of their lives.

The girls' stories of self in ways were more parabolic than literal—rich in metaphor, symbol, and imagery and always pointing beyond the story to deeper meanings. Drawing on the work of biblical scholars who understand Jesus' parables as poetic metaphor, I identified aspects of Jesus' parables that helped me to hear and interpret girls' stories: participation, difficulty, metaphor, fractals, truth, emergence, performance, possibility, power, wisdom, and beauty. Listening with a parabolic ear, I came to experience girls' storytelling selves as participatory, metaphorical, fractal, truthful, and emergent; I observed girls'

selves as artistic practices that are embodied performances of their wisdom, power, and beauty. And I discovered how such performances of the self create enlarged spaces of possibility for girls in difficulty.

It is nearly four months since I defended my dissertation. I am back at work as a diaconal minister, part time at City View United in

Ottawa and working with the United Church of Christ (USA) on a new curriculum project called Faith Practices. I find that I use the resources I developed to help groups come together to form community, share the experiences of their lives, and explore the meaning of the stories they encounter.

However, it is the relationship between narrative, imagination, and transformation that continues to hold greatest significance for me. As people of faith, we must constantly struggle against fundamentalism—literalistic interpretations of doctrine and scriptural interpretation, but also the calcifying tendencies of literalistic or linear thinking. We may turn to stone our own view of the world or to fall back on the "givens" of life or belief. Even those of us who think of ourselves as open-minded and liberal can be guilty of fundamentalisms—falling into despair that the way things are is the way things always will be, thinking that we have seen the truth because we believe in justice. We may become stuck in a myths leading to a linear view of life and of history. We may see ourselves as more enlightened or highly evolved than others around us, or we may subscribe to theories in which childhood and adolescence are defined steps on a path to



*we can think that we
have seen the truth
because we believe
in justice ...*

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PARABOLIC IMAGINATION

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maturity. We may believe that our own or others selves are cast in stone.

The play of metaphor in story, the parable as an act of imagination that transforms givens into possibilities, the power of artistic practice to release vision and to re-imagine the world, the capacity of storytelling selves to re-imagine self and world—all these are antidotes to fundamentalism. They are openings to transformation of self and world.

The parables of Jesus point to a way of understanding that is so new, so radical, and so strange that it can only be grasped within the realm of metaphor. They challenge authority; they contest, disrupt, and transform their listeners and the world around them. Possibilities for transformation open up when we understand selves as emergent narratives rather than pre-given entities. The power

of self-narrating, the creative rearranging and reconfiguring of the givens of the social self, is an act of resistance and resilience. Opening up to self as metaphor not “fact” is an act of social transformation.

Narrative has a central role in our tradition. We engage always with the narratives of scripture, history and our own lives. If we do so in a literalistic or fundamentalist way we maintain the status quo, which is to say, the present injustice and unsustainability of human life on this earth. To open scripture, self, and world to parabolic possibilities, however, is to release the power of art and imagination to experience things as they might be or as they are becoming. It is to encounter heaven-on-earth. I experienced the transformative power of narrative imagination in girls’ lives. I believe that such transformative power exists for the church in our engagement with story. I

believe that a parabolic imagination is essential to the life of our churches and our ministry in the world.



Alyson Huntly was commissioned in 1982. She has worked in congregational and social justice ministry and in curriculum development. She is the author of several books for children and adults including Daring to Be United: Including Lesbians and Gays in the United Church of Canada and Naomi's Daughters: Bridging the Generations.

WEBTEAM AT WORK



Garth Mundie



George Clement

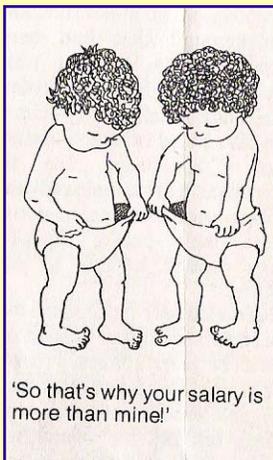
Dorothy Naylor, of Ottawa (left) and Cathie Clement of Winnipeg form the webteam that updates and makes changes to the Ducc website at ducc.ca. Richard Manley-Tannis provides technical expertise. A new feature allows the posting of positions for diaconal ministers. If you know of opportunities for diaconal ministers, send them to the email addresses below. If you have photos of diaconal ministers in their ministry settings, the webteam would be glad to receive them for the photo gallery. There are many gaps in the Profiles pages - they would love to receive yours. See the profile template on the profile index page for instructions. Richard admin@ducc.ca; Cathie and Dorothy webteam@ducc.ca

LOST OPPORTUNITY: DISJOINING AND APOLOGY

By Caryn Douglas

A Story of Lost Opportunity: The Apology to Deaconesses Disjoined by The United Church of Canada by Caryn Douglas. DMin, St. Stephen's College, 2009.

The United Church Deaconess Order was only open to single women. Members of the order who married were “disjoined” from it and thereby forced to resign from employment and membership. The indignity was symbolized by the passing back of the deaconess pin that had been presented at the time of designation. Disjoining, a violent word, conveys the severity of the rupture for women who



At the same meeting where the Apology was given the General Council Executive received the Compensation Models Project report which reveals that women in United Church ministry, on average, are paid less than their male counterparts.

experienced it. Hundreds of women were affected by this rule, not only those who were removed from ministry, but also those who chose marriage instead of ministry. The practice of disjoining was continued well into the 1950's when it began to be overturned for some. In 1960 the practice was officially discontinued, yet as late as 1968 disjoining occurred. In 2006, the United Church issued a formal apology to the women.

The apology largely failed in addressing the historic wrong. It completely failed in making the connections to the continuing barriers for women in all aspects of church leadership. Disjoining failed the women. The apology failed them too.

Disjoining was supported by a common theological view that a woman's primary vocation was that of wife and mother, and, to round out the trinity, church volunteer. But at the same time, the church needed the professional labour of women, so it also proclaimed a theology that supported a public vocation for women. In an attempt to fulfill its competing interests the church then established systems that allowed but limited women's public vocations, while protecting the view of marriage as a vocation.

Even though as many as half of the women designated as deaconesses remained in the service of the church for their entire working lives, popular understanding highlighted that the deaconess order offered a temporary staging ground for marriage. Disjoining structurally systemized this minimization of women in the diaconate. Disjoining entrenched into policy discriminatory,

sexist and heterosexist attitudes. And the discrimination did not stop in 1960 when the rule was ended, or even in 1968 when the last woman was disjoined. The attitudes and beliefs supported by disjoining proved difficult to shed and were actualized directly for another 20 years, most notably when women sought to regain their status.

I feel I was called to do the work of telling the story of disjoining and the apology. When I was a student at CCS in the 1980s I somehow learned of the disjoining practice. I had no idea that marriage bars existed. My astonished angst led to writing a short paper. The professor invited me to be on a panel at a conference where I shared the history and my ideas. My public truth telling began.

For that paper I spoke to Katharine Hockin (see page 6). She identified the church's sexism and heterosexism. She was angry but she laughed too. She told me how the women used covert strategies for undermining the church's power. They mentored each other about what to say to the Woman's Missionary Society psychologist during their interviews for candidacy. When he predictably asked if they would chose marriage if they had the chance, they all knew to say "Of course," whether they meant it or not.

Katharine's story was formative in shaping my understanding of diaconal ministry. Diaconal ministry is about resilience, and it is about community. It is about analysis and strategy. It is about laughter and outrage. It is about living as if the magnificent promise were true: God has brought down the powerful from their thrones. (Luke 1:52)

Caryn Douglas lives in Winnipeg.

A 25 minute DVD, *Holy Matrimony Unholy Disjoining*, made as part of the study is available from AVEL or caryndouglas@shaw.ca.

ONE WOMAN DISJOINED TWICE

Gwen (Davis) McMurtry was one of three sisters who graduated from the United Church Training School and became deaconesses. All three of them were disjoined.



Gwen (Davis) McMurtry, Winnie (Davis) Henderson, and their sister, Irene (Davis) Inglis, graduates of the Training School were all disjoined.

Gwen was designated a deaconess in May, 1944. Although engaged to Doug at the time, no objection was raised by the Deaconess Committee, even though Gwen was upfront that she would be marrying. This was not unusual, the whole system was predicated on deaconess work being temporary, but in the absence of many men serving in the war the openness to deaconesses, even if short term, was even greater. Gwen went to serve the congregation at Lethbridge. When Doug got word that he was going to be sent overseas for alternative service (he was a conscientious objector) he and Gwen got married in December 1944. She resigned from her position and considered herself disjoined. In January, 1945 the Deaconess Committee discussed the case. The Committee decided that:

since Mrs. McMurtry's husband would be

servicing in China with "The Friends Ambulance Unit" and considering the fine work she has been doing in Lethbridge that she be continued as a member of the Deaconess Order. (Minutes of the Committee on Deaconess Work, January 24, 1945)

Gwen agreed to this offer and was deployed again as a working deaconess. When the Committee became aware of Doug's return to Canada in 1947 they "agreed that Mrs. McMurtry be appraised of the ruling as found in the Constitution and that she be now disjoined from the Order." (Minutes of the Committee on Deaconess Work, May 20, 1947)

Doug McMurtry did not recall his wife being angry at having to relinquish her status again. As he remembers, she did not have any real debate because the option of work and vocation for women was just not

possible, although, the church had the power to make it possible arbitrarily! She did, however, relish the time during which she could break the rules and do the work she had been trained to do and had a calling for.

Hearing this story could have drawn the United Church up short, started into a deeper self examination about the arbitrary use of power. Then the learning could have been applied to practices today demonstrating the apology was sincere. However the church didn't gather or listen to this story, or really any others.

DSL EXPERIENCE LIKE A DISJOINING

When Diaconal Minister Susan Palmer went on the United Church's Discontinued Service List she didn't realize that she would never be allowed to hold a leadership role as a member of the church. "I went on the DSL at a time when I was really burnt out, I needed to walk away from the church, I didn't think I would ever work for the church again so the best way for me to heal was to step away formally." Susan credits the presbytery folks at the time for being thorough with her as she made her decision, but she didn't appreciate that being on the DSL would forever bar her from activity in the church. "I can go to worship, I can be a participant in a group, but when I teach Sunday school I am doing something illegal," Susan explained. After a period of healing, Susan found herself drawn back into congregational church life. "I never actually stopped seeing myself as having a diaconal ministry, but it wasn't in the 'church'. Now I want to be active in serving the community. I don't expect that I will ever seek a call or appointment, but I want to have a

(Continued on page 18)

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL REPORTS

Francis Sandy Theological Centre

Greetings to the DUCC community:

Students, Brenda Duckworth and Phil Schuyler are candidates in the All Native Circle Conference (ANCC), serving in Wasauksing/Shawanaga and Oneida respectively. Phil will be featured in an upcoming Mandate article. Angela Whitwell is completing her discernment in Hamilton Conference and is in process of preparing for ministry in Wahta. Rheta Webb, inquirer, lives in Six Nations. We are pleased to announce that Georgina Elliott, in Lay Ministry at Cape Croker in Hamilton Conference, has been named Sacrament Elder and will graduate at our Annual Celebration in July 2010.

On staff, Kim Uyede-Kai is well into her one-year contract as Keeper of the Vision. Kim guides our students on their ministry pathways and helps keep us focused on our mission. FSTC will be seeking a Vision Keeper for 2011. Rheta Webb is our new Office Manager while Financial Administrator, Norma Cronkwright, keeps us on track.

Animation of events such as Native Peoples' Retreat and workshop and worship at More Franchises: A Second Cup, give students opportunity to develop leadership skills. We continue Affirming Relationships of inclusion in the April circle and in May our students and staff will attend Journey Toward Healing Together-Responding to the Legacy of Residential Schools at Jackson's Point. All are welcome to our Grandmother's Circle and Aboriginal Film Fest in September.

Our partnerships with Five Oaks, the Aboriginal Theological Schools and now the new Aboriginal Ministries Circle at General Council, are vital to our work. Francis Sandy is unique in our relationship with six conferences: All Native Circle; Bay of Quinte; Hamilton; London; Montreal & Ottawa; and Toronto, who also serve the aboriginal communities in southwestern Ontario and western Quebec. This network as well as local urban aboriginal connections is woven into all aspects of our

Centre for Christian Studies

"How does one become a butterfly?" she asked pensively. "You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar."

Trina Paulus

Changes at CCS are still stirring as I reflect on my first year of employment with CCS and at a time when Easter is upon us, and the newness and birth-



CCS Companions 2010: Cathy Campbell, Kathy Toivanen, Nancy Ruth.

life and work. Cross-cultural connections continue to be important to our mission.

Among our Board of Directors Maggie McLeod will be missed, as she leaves the Chair, to take her new position as Executive Minister of the Aboriginal Ministries Circle. We welcome Peggy Monague as Chairperson of the Board. Representatives from Toronto and London Conference will be announced this spring.

Your sister in spirit,

Brenda Simpson, Principal

ing of life surrounds us. So if you are part of the CCS community that is wondering how we are managing, the reality is that we are. Change makes CCS the engaging place that it is. It is true that with change there are struggles but having chosen to be attentive and listen to what God has in store for us, we have made the decision to embrace change and take on whatever comes our way.

Early in 2010, the staff learned that our Principal, Megan McKenzie, then in the early weeks of pregnancy was experiencing significant pregnancy related illness. She is under medical advisement not to come to work until her symptoms are less severe.

The good news is that Charlotte Caron has been appointed part time Acting Principal. Charlotte was

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(Continued from page 12)

on CCS Central Council from February 2004 until November 2009, so is current on the issues facing CCS. Having graduated from CCS in 1972, she has spent much of her career working in theological education.

We also received the sad news that Sherri McConnell will be leaving in May. Sherri has served as Program Staff for the past three years. Her skills as an educator, her knowledge of diaconal ministry, her participation in committees and with the students will be deeply missed.

The Centre for Christian Studies continues to be a flurry of activity. This spring, we cele-

brated as 6 students graduated with Diplomas in Diaconal Ministry, we carried on two simultaneous learning circles and commemorated three incredible women who received the distinction as "Companions of the Centre".

The Rev. Dr. Cathy Campbell has been Rector of St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Maryland, Winnipeg for the last several years. St. Matthew's is a diverse inner-city faith community whose mission is to serve its neighbourhood and be a healing and transforming presence in the world.

Kathy Toivanen is a diaconal minister at Erin Mills United Church in Mississauga, serving in this position for 20 years. She has a deep commitment to creating communities that

embody mutuality and inclusion.

Senator Nancy Ruth is a graduate of CCS. In her work for social justice, locally and nationally, she has long been an advocate for women of all classes and races, giving high profile to issues affecting women.

Nothing has slowed down. Our history speaks for itself; we continue to do God's work as we walk towards a vision of justice and wholeness in the world.

Glenda Knoll

(Continued on page 17)

MORE ON CCS COURSE

(Continued from page 5)

five people have participated in this course. Most have taken the LDM as introduction to the four year CCS diploma program preparing for ministries of education, social justice and pastoral care. As well, many in professional ministry have enrolled in the course for continuing education; others are lay persons who take the program to enhance their lay ministries.

The LDM pedagogy strongly emphasizes co-learning and co-leadership, experiential and participatory learning, diversity of learning styles, self-direction and goal setting, peer review and competency outcomes, integration of spirituality, experience and scholarship. The course is challenging and demanding, however the attention to community building and development of trust goes a long way to empower reluctant or nervous learners. The invitational and communal atmosphere, and the experiential, reflective, holistic pedagogical practices of the LDM, create deep, rich and meaningful learning.

As an introductory module for the CCS program, the schedule of the LDM sweeps broadly across a diverse range of themes. The course offers initial tastes of a variety of subjects that are covered more extensively in the comprehensive curriculum of the four-year diploma program. The subject matter includes pastoral care, education, social ministry, theology, biblical studies and diaconia. As well, the module presents topics that form the core and foundation of the CCS educational process: plan-

ning, goal setting, facilitation, group dynamics, feedback, and conflict management. Also included throughout the schedule are opportunities for daily worship, regular community building, evaluation, work teams, faith journeys, staff-student interviews, case studies, and theological reflection.

At the end of one year's LDM, one student was mourning the closing of a very positive and intense experience of community and learning. He lamented, "Now we have to go back home and deal with the real world." In his wisdom, CCS contract staff and Lutheran pastor, Don McLeod, responded, "This is the real world. Now we need to go out and create this reality in the rest of the world." For many of the previous participants, the LDM has provided a glimpse of the realm of God that they long for in a faith community and in the world.

DUCC TO GET NEW PIN



This is the pin that disjoined deaconesses had to return. In an act of defiance many women refused to submit theirs. In memory of this history DUCC is getting a new diaconal pin. Sharilynn Upsdell is coordinating this project. If you have suggestions contact her at spiral-spirit@telus.net ASAP.

What does FJS stand for? See page 18 for the answer.

DOTAC UPDATE

By Sharilynn Upsdell, DUCC rep to DOTAC

Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC) has a new President – Lisa Polito of the Lutheran Deaconess Association serves in Valparaiso, Indiana. Mentored by past president Linda



American Lutheran Lisa Polito is the new DOTAC President.

Ervin of DUCC, Lisa brings organization, humour, and experience to her leadership of DOTAC. Ingrid Vogt of Brazil is our other DOTAC representative who will attend and bring issues to/from the World Diakonia meetings with Lisa. Ingrid has a passion to host the next DOTAC - D.O.V.E. (DOTAC Overcoming Violence Experience) in Brazil in 2012! Be sure to watch



Brazilian Ingrid Vogt represents DOTAC to the World Federation.

for more information on this event, as the 2007 event in New York was an incredible model and we really want to have some DUCC members attend the Brazil D.O.V.E. event.

Ingrid and Lisa have returned recently from the 2010 World Diakonia Executive meeting in Finland and confirm that they will be bringing issues of Human Trafficking to the DOTAC table this fall. Here is a link to an article called Call it Slavery: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=459603.

[fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=459603](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=459603).

The next gathering of WORLD DIAKONIA will be in Berlin in the summer 2014... mark your calendars now as this will be a fabulous opportunity to view East/West Berlin first hand and meet others serving Diakonia around the World!

In October 2010 - DOTAC Central Committee will gather at Canyon Camp just outside Oklahoma City. At that time we will further plans for the 2011 DOTAC Conference in Oklahoma: "CHAIRS – at the feet of God", July 10 to 14, 2011. This theme title picks up on the Field of Chairs Monument created to honor the 168 who died during the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building. DOTAC and the DOTAC 2011 Event in Oklahoma are now available on FACEBOOK – please join them to be kept up to date on the latest emerging issues.

Recent DOTAC news releases have indicated that DOTAC sent funds to the Haitian relief fund, and Gillian Wilson, our DOTAC member of the Wesleyan Diaconal Community in the Caribbean expressed gratitude for the support and prayers. As well, continued prayers and political persuasion is being urged regarding ongoing detention and violence against health care workers in the Philippines. While at the Atlanta DOTAC Conference the Philippine women tearfully shared with us how their leaders were being banned from gathering. In February, our UCC Executive Minister Omega Bula, called upon the Government of Canada to

condemn the arrest of the 43 health workers and call for their immediate release, as well as to help safeguard the future of democracy in the Philippines by putting pressure on the Philippine Government to take immediate and concrete steps to implement measures to stop and prevent election-related violence and human rights

What is the Fund for?

The Kaufman Fund is to help with the cost of retreat, reflection, renewal and rest experiences and to make possible a grant or loan to persons who find themselves in a financial emergency. Any event or opportunity which meets these purposes will be considered.



Am I eligible?

The Fund is available to all United Church diaconal ministers and all CCS graduates.

How do I apply?

You can request a grant by writing a letter. For more information visit ducc.ca and look under Resources, or contact Judith Astley (519) 884-8082

The Kaufman Renewal and Emergency Fund

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abuses. There is concern regarding the safety and freedom to vote at the upcoming May 2010 election in the Philippines.

DOTAC involvement continues to nudge me into an intentional focus in my ministry on those who are marginalized, particularly internationally. I've recently moved from the lower mainland of BC back to Kelowna to fill a one year Maternity Leave position at First



Field of Chair Memorial in Oklahoma City inspired DOTAC 2011 Conference theme, CHAIRS at the feet of God, July 10 –14.

United. Our Outreach mornings provide a time to connect & share resources with our downtown neighbours; prompting us to further analysis with others regarding short-term services and longer term changes in our ministry and polity. We are also building a new relationship with Sister-Community in El Triunfo, El Salvador and have already enhanced our community as we've begun introducing some Spanish language hymns which have resulted in an unplanned, but extra warm welcome for a new El Salvadorian family who have subsequently become involved in our worship, outreach, and children's programs.

DUCC COORDINATING CTE

The Coordinating Cluster continues to meet regularly. We gathered in January for an overnight retreat at a local retreat centre and our last meeting was March 3; we will meet again on April 24th. Some of the issues we've worked on include the following:

Money available for regional gatherings—because of reduced funding from the national church, more of our own membership income is being used to pay our international membership dues, which is putting a strain on our budget. So, after much discussion, we decided to split the year in

two—cheques for requests received from January to May will be issued in June and cheques for requests received from June to November will be issued in December. The amount of the grants will be determined based on the numbers of requests in each half of the year. (Treasurer's report on next page.)

2009 National Gathering—minutes from the gathering were completed and sent to the website folks for posting.

2011 National Gathering—we have been in email discussions with the local arrangements folks in Winnipeg about plans for the next national gathering, primarily trying to identify a location and dates.

(Continued on page 16)

DIACONAL SWAP

From the ELCA *Diaconews*

While travelling with a group of American Lutherans in Nigeria, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Diaconal Minister Kris Perry met a Lutheran diaconal minister from Denmark. This chance meeting led to an idea to host an exchange of diaconal ministers between the two countries to foster understanding of how diaconal ministry is lived out elsewhere. Each country is now trying to recruit interested participants. Another project underway is to identify 6-8 men and women to join a similar group of Danes who are building a Conference Centre next fall with their partner church in Nigeria. This is another opportunity to learn about Danish diaconal ministry and to work side-by-side with diaconal colleagues from another country.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

(Continued from page 15)

Candidacy Pathway—we will be having a discussion/conversation about this document at our next meeting.

DUCC Structure—the updated Structure diagram has been submitted to the DUCC website.

General Council—We are attempting to gather and maintain a complete list of diaconal ministers who are active at the General Council level. Folks are invited to provide their involvement information to Christina Paradela at christinaparadela@hotmail.com.

DUCC Statement of Vision—It had been noted that the document we worked on at the national gathering had previously been called the Statement of Belief. As the Coordinating Cluster, we affirmed the minutes of 2009 National Gathering which referred to it as a Statement of Vision.

Communication from MEPS – We received an invitation from MEPS to attend the next meeting of the Permanent Committee in April.

Linda Clark,
Secretary

If I wasn't here I could be having REAL fun on the United Church website downloading the PAR form and filling it in. Ohh, I could be sending it to Margaret along with the completed membership form I got from ducc.ca and a blank cheque. How come I'm missing all the fun????

How did I get stuck between these two? I'm already a DUCC member thru PAR!

Did I or didn't I? Dang, I can't remember if I sent in my 2010 DUCC membership! Oh no, I'm going to be one of those delinquent DUCCs. IF ONLY I had signed up for PAR to pay my membership! If I get on PAR right away I'll be contributing by next month.

DUCC Treasurer
Margaret Collard,
90 Heatherside
Drive Toronto, ON
M1W 1T8 (w) 416-
431-5054 matthew132@sympati.co.ca



DUCCS ON PAR

Treasurer's report Our financing this year is tight. Our MEPS grant from the General Council offices is down by \$1000 from 2009. In 2010 we received only \$3000. As a result the Coordinating Committee has tightened up the overall budget and to cover our expenses we really need **YOU to pay your membership fee**. The registration form is on the DUCC website (ducc.ca) and you will notice that the fees are increased as decided at the last National Gathering. Each membership price constitutes a full membership with the top benchmark being \$150.00 and anything over 150.00 is considered a donation.

2010 Membership fee: \$10; \$25; \$75; \$125; \$150. It is now possible to pay your membership monthly through PAR. (see below)

Requests for funding for regional gatherings will consider considered in June, and then again in the late fall. The amount available will depend on the number of requests. If you would like more detail on the budget and the current financial statement, please visit the website at ducc.ca.

MORE NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS



Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre

Over 100 people attended graduation ceremonies in April, bringing a joyous spirit to the Centre. Student enrollment has grown over the last year and this is being celebrated. The Board is hard at work discerning the future directions for the school to ensure a strong future in changing times.



Three of ANCCs diaconal ministers, Sue Everton (*left*), ANCC Leading Elder, Maria Joyea Shepherd (*centre*) and Melodie McKellar were at the ceremonies, along with other diaconal ministers, Verna McKay, Ann Naylor and Caryn Douglas.

Norah McMurtry, Keeper of the Centre

St. Stephen's

Caryn Douglas (*left*) and Yoon Ok Shin were the diaconal graduates at St. Stephen's Convocation.



ACTION REFLECTION RESEARCH

(Continued from page 3)

actions, or organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time". (Chase 2005 p 656)

The meaning of this model for the people connected with it (including me) is emerging as I seek and interpret the patterns in the stories I've heard. I have noticed how it has continued to inform the work of diaconal ministers. I am learning about when it works well, when it shouldn't be used "as is", and what its limitations may be. I note that the model has always been subject to evaluation and has continually changed in order to address gaps. Most of all I am hearing how powerful this model can be for effective action and significant change.

From the individual stories, I am compiling a collective story to re-present authentically the ways in which the CCS Action-Reflection model has been used in this community and the meaning it has for the people involved. Interpretation and the-

ory building leading to proposals for practice and action will follow. This is where I will draw in wisdom from the literature. There is much yet to do. It is my hope that the creation of a thesis will be only the beginning of the storytelling and meaning making about the significance of the Action-Reflection model in the life of the community it has influenced.

Lori Stewart graduated from CCS in 1987 and was commissioned a diaconal minister after completing a Masters of Religious Education at St. Michael's College. She is doing her doctoral studies with the University of Sheffield in England.

Burns D and Walker M (2005) "Feminist Methodologies" in Somekh B and Lewin C (2005) *Research methods in the social sciences* London: Sage Publications.
 Caron C (forthcoming) "A Witness to Loss" in R Berman (ed) *Research partnerships: feminists confronting challenges* Toronto: Inanna Publishing.
 Chase S (2005) "Narrative Inquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices" in Denzin N and Lincoln Y (2005) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3rd Edn Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
 Reinharz S (1992) *Feminist methods in social research* Oxford: Oxford University Press (quoted in Burns D and Walker M (2005) "Feminist Methodologies".)
 Somekh B, Burman E, Delamont S, Meyer J, Payne M, and Thorpe R (2005) "Research communities in the social sciences" in Somekh B and Lewin C (2005) *Research methods in the social sciences* London: Sage Publications.

ZANZIBAR EXPERIENCE

(Continued from page 7)

spent labouring under such conditions leaves little time for innovation or alternative methods of earning a living.

The front porch of our cottage became a meeting place for our friends from the village who came by frequently to learn English and share in laughter and singing. We learned a new language, shared in meals, and even attended a wedding celebration and yes, the birth of a new baby! On the front porch, time seemed to stand still as we enjoyed community and sharing stories with one another. We even learned how to live closely with a family of rats!

The front porch also became a place to ponder and reflect on our daily experiences. We learned a lot from our students who seemed to have so many insights about life and their daily struggles. One young man told us, "I don't wish for more money or possessions than I need. I only wish for enough. Enough to share with my family and my community. I have seen what happens when you have too much. You store it away and begin to pit yourselves against one another. We are a family here on Zanzibar. We are survivors and we care about what happens to our family."

For this opportunity to follow the nudge of the Holy Spirit and to live and work in community with so many beautiful people I remain thankful.

Val Pitt is a diaconal minister living and working along the shores of beautiful Lake Huron. She seeks to live her life and ministry with passion and compassion.



For Jesus,
Sake

Do YOU have a story to tell?

DUCC NEWS is interested. New ministry ventures? Travel experiences? Diaconal encounters? Ideas to stimulate conversation? newseditor@ducc.ca.

DISJOINED BY DSL

(Continued from page 11)

volunteer diaconal ministry. The only way I can do that is to ask to be taken off the DSL."

Susan's name is before all the presbyteries this spring. She expects that her full status will be reinstated when the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario meets in May.

Susan reflected, "It is like a dismemberment from the church. I thought I was the one choosing to distance myself, but the church was choosing to distance me too."

After several years of teaching part time and operating a Community Shared Agriculture project from her garden near Portage la Prairie, MB, Susan is working full time, in a public health program with families with young children and attending Trinity United Church in Portage.



Susan Palmer

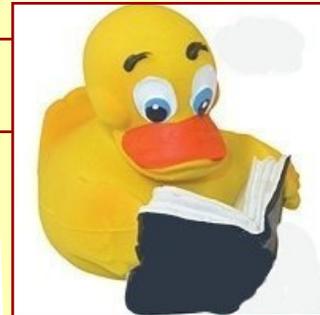
Susan Palmer will be reinstated to the active ministry list.

BARB ELLIOTT TRUST FUND

For Innovative Ministries

Support for diaconal projects that are innovative and difficult to fund. Grants of up to \$5000 are available each year for funding projects. Donations to the Fund are always welcome. Applications are due February 15. For information on the application process and funding criteria please contact any committee member. Applications can be sent to: Russell Mitchell-Walker Sunset United Church 177 Sunset Drive Regina, SK S4S 6Y7 sunsetunited.russell@sasktel.net

DUCC RESOURCE REVIEWS



The Invention of Lying

Warner Brothers. (2009)

Review by Richard Manley-Tannis

Okay, so I got this email from DUCC to consider writing a movie review for the Newsletter. I found out the due date, decided I could do it, and then I had to choose a movie ... There are two things you need to understand before proceeding into this well critiqued and articulated review that will, of course, be more than a review - perhaps even inspiring!

I like movies ... well more succinctly, I rarely dislike a movie. There's always something in there that catches me with an 'aha' or cool effect, shiny picture, exciting moment or morsel worthy of reflection; and

This, in turn, might appropriately lead the Reader to question my authority. And, to reinforce the appropriateness of that challenge, I even sat through the entire sequel Highlander II: The Quickening. If you happen to possess a tendency of the geek and watch sci-fi this is illustrative. While all of the other people, with whom I went to the movie, actually left in the first 20 minutes, I stayed. Now this could also be due to my OCD-like relationship with movies and popcorn, but that's too much information!

So, a movie review, eh? Well here's what I have for you: The Invention of Lying ... First of all, it's classified as a romantic comedy - some go so far as to further classify it as a 'high romantic comedy.' Now I highly suspect that has nothing to do with a theological critique ... but it is actually helpful as that is why I thought a review would be cool! The tale takes place in a parallel world where no one lies! What you think is what you say - it definitely presents a callous place. A world that offers a lot for reflection: questions about language, compassion, how we choose to communicate ... but that's likely me over-thinking (I believe we call that Spiraling in some circles ...).

So, it's a comedy - definitely not slap-stick in nature - that is dry in nature, with a sprinkling of Britishness (yes, reviewers get to make up words!). So, the reason for the review is owing to the premise of what happens when someone learns the art of lying and is con-

fronted with death and suffering. In a world in 'what you see is what you get,' death is a practical and pragmatic affair. There's no hope for the protagonist's dying mother and so, in a moment of empathy, he lies. The lie is intended to offer comfort, but the comfort introduces into this world something that meets a spiritual hunger: meaning. Now that meaning is called 'The Man in the Sky.' And, as with all frames applied to the Holy, once it's out, everyone wants to quantify, qualify and make sure that they know the do's and don'ts. And as is our wont, the hope is quickly left behind as people get stuck debating the details ... enter the usual comedy tensions in a romance and there you have it ...

Great review, eh? I bet Blockbuster will be sending me royalties quite soon ... the use of this movie for reflection - whether in a Youth Group, a discussion Circle that includes theological Traditionalists, Agnostics, Atheists and a few cynical Liberation Theologians, Confirmation moments or simply a movie night of Fellowship - seems to me filled with lots of possibilities. The movie provides one of those wonderful pop culture, main stream opportunities to start a conversation about faith in a way that is not intimidating.

Here's the exciting summary. If you are looking for another resource to begin conversations about faith, God, language and relationships that do not feel churchy and is relevant to people's lives then this might be worth considering. If you are looking for a reason to have popcorn and maybe simply unwind, it'll likely meet that need too ... and if you are expecting it to be a great movie filled with Academy-like moments and you do not end up having that experience ... remember you've at least had popcorn!

Richard Manley-Tannis is in a team ministry at The United Church in Meadowood in Winnipeg, when he isn't in the popcorn line.



DUCC RESOURCE REVIEWS

Niigaanibatowaad: Front Runners

Review by Sherri McConnell

At a special ceremony at the opening of the 1999 Pan Am Games in Winnipeg, Manitoba, seven First Nations men in their fifties entered the stadium in war canoes. One of them held the Games torch. In 1967 when Winnipeg first hosted the Pan American Games, ten outstanding athletic teenage boys were chosen to run 800 kilometres over an ancient message route with the Games torch. When the runners arrived at the stadium, they were not allowed to enter with the torch. Instead, a non-Aboriginal runner was given the honour. Thirty-two years later, the province of Manitoba issues an official apology.

These are the words on the back of the DVD jacket outlining the story of the film Niigaanibatowaad: Front Runners. Based on the play *FrontRunners* by Laura Robinson, this film is an important contribution to the balancing of history and memory, and the process of moving towards right relationship with first nations and Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The DVD, a shortened version of the play, addresses the

impact of the racist and abusive residential school system head on. Thomas, the film's narrator, is a residential school survivor now in his 50's, who has been invited by the organisers of the 1999 Pan Am Games to finish the torch run he and others were not allowed to complete back in '67. This brings up painful memories for Thomas, but in the end, he realizes that finishing the run is his first step towards healing.

The United, Anglican and Presbyterian Churches commissioned the development of a study guide to be used with this film as part of their commitment to support the work of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This study guide provides excellent suggestions for working ecumenically, facilitating respectful discussion and dialogue, and for raising awareness of these issues in your local faith community. It also includes resources for further learning, and suggestions for action.

While I will always prefer live theatre to a film based on a play, this DVD and study guide resource is a wonderful opportunity for each of us, individually and collectively, to continue to educate ourselves about the impact – past and present – of the residential school legacy in Canada – and to inspire transformation and change.

National Film Board of Canada release (available at AVEL)

Study Guide (2009) is available at www.united-church.ca

Sherri has been a member of the CCS Program Staff for the past three years but recently felt called back to community work. She will be taking on a position as feminist counselor at a women's resource centre in Winnipeg in May.

Weaving a Changing Tapestry

The Story of the Centre for Christian Studies and its Predecessors

Review by Kathy Douglas

Gwyn Griffith's history of the Centre for Christian Studies, *Weaving a Changing Tapestry*, proved to be an excellent resource to create community as a group of about 15 met with her, people connected to the history across many decades. Gwyn shared highlights from the book and it's compilation. In the comfort of a circle we were reminded of the CCS ethos of justice, inclusivity and community, present through the history beginning in the 1890's until today.

The book gives a detailed overview of the school and it's formation, setting each era in a social context. Chapters explore the contribution of strong women leaders, the power of naming and labeling, the effect the school had on

the denominations.

Gwyn gave emphasis to the contributions and struggles of women in the church and the paradox the students experienced. She reminded us that many women were required to have a profession upon entering and supported in career development after graduation yet were obliged to give up 'their pin' upon marriage. This issue was a highlight of the conversation and lament was offered. [see page 10]

I would recommend holding a launch in your community to learn about the history and meet some of it face to face!

To plan a launch or order copies of the history book contact CCS at gknoll@ccsonline.ca or call 204-783-4490.



Sisters Shirley Douglas and Helen Banting with photo of their sister Dorothy Skinner (Vogan) grad of the United Church Training School class of 1946. Both women attended the book launch at the home of Kathy Douglas (CCS Grad 2008) and niece to Dorothy.