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INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK ON ECUMENICAL DIAKONIA

CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES OF DIAKONIA AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES

Edited by:

- Godwin Ampony
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- Beate Hofmann
- Félicité Ngnintedem
- Dennis Solon
- Dietrich Werner

- Over 100 key essays from eminent scholars and researchers
- Covers all major Christian traditions
- Essays from across the globe
- Up-to-date, many essays reflecting on and within the Corona Pandemic
- A world unique achievement
- More than 700 pages

Training and education for Diakonia, for social care, support for the vulnerable, advocacy for those marginalized and suffering from injustices today needs high quality resources and intercultural, contextual as well as interdisciplinary approaches.

This was the core conviction of major institutions of diaconal work and research in Germany and some of their international partners to come together in 2018 to plan for an International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia. Conceptualized together by the Institute for Diakonic Science and Management (IDM) in Bielefeld/Bethel, the United Evangelical Mission, an international communion of 38 churches in Africa, Asia and Europe, the v.Bodelschwingh Foundation, Bread for the World, Desk for Theology and Ecumenism, Diakonia Germany, the All African Conference of Churches (AACC), and also supported by the Desk for Ecumenical Diakonia in the World Council of Churches a project was developed to bring together key resources on biblical-theological foundations, regional and confessional expressions, new themes and trends and educational approaches and curriculum models for diakonia and Christian social services which can enrich current training courses for diakonia and widen the horizon by inter-contextual and inter-cultural perspectives.

An international editorial group consisting of Rev. Godwin Ampony, Prof. Martin Büscher, Bishop Prof. Beate Hofmann, Rev. Félicité Ngnintedem, Prof. Dennis Solon and Rev. Prof. Dietrich Werner (Convener) worked tirelessly to implement this project being accompanied by a wider international advisory group and members from the network Research in Diakonia. The emphasize was on ecumenical diakonia, i.e. approaches to Christian social services and social development work in many different denominational and cultural settings, the interconfessional and trans-national cooperation and joint action for diakonia between different churches and faith-based actors and the orientation towards the “whole inhabited earth” (oikumene) as the indispensable horizon and frame of reference for spelling out current mandates and profiles of church-based diakonia in the contexts of globalization.

The result of this three years process is a publication with around 100 concise introductory essays and regional survey articles from all major Christian traditions and regions in the world structured in four different sections:

- I. Theologies of Diakonia in Different Ecclesial and Social Contexts
- II. Concepts and Profiles of Diakonical Ministries in Different World Regions
- III. Trends and Crucial Concerns in Diakonia
- IV. Models and Methods for Competency Building in Diakonia

The Corona Pandemic, which has unfolded its global devastating impact during the second part of the editorial process for this project and has deeply influenced many of the contributions of this volume, had underlined the significance and “systemic strategic value” of the professions of care-giving, medical and social support as well as advocacy work for those left behind economically. It also has evoked a new sense of urgency for learning and education: relearning what is really essential and life-giving in our models of development. Learning from one another in terms of inter-contextual exchange about the art of providing care with dignity, love with justice, compassion with advocacy for the vulnerable has strongly come again on the agenda. Thus the volume will be facilitating learning, research and education in many churches and their seminaries, theological faculties and places of theological research around the globe in the future so as to equip churches for being a diakonos, a go-between person between a community and the marginalized, between the suffering or vulnerable and the powerful, building bridges of care and support, of resistance and hope in order that all may enjoy the fullness of life (John 10:10).

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CONTENTS

Theologies of Diaconia in Different Ecclesial and Social Contexts

- Cornelia Coenen-Marx: Florence Nightingale and the Pioneering Role of Diaconia and Holistic Care in Humanitarian Emergencies
- Matthew Ross/Dietrich Werner: Terminologies and Learning Processes for Diaconia in The Ecumenical Movement
- Renate Kirchhoff: Main Biblical Themes of Diaconia from European Perspectives
- Msafiri Mbilu: Different shapes of Diaconia in Biblical Traditions from African Perspectives
- Kjell Nordstokke: Diaconia in trinitarian perspective and as dimension of the Missio Dei
- Darrell Jackson: The diakonia Dei: service of the world and forms of diaconal ministry among Baptists
- Wanda Deifelt/Beate Hofmann: Towards a Comprehensive Concept of Diaconia: care – transformation – advocacy – conviviality
- Ignatius Swart: The Transformative Power of Diaconia – Theological Reflections from South Africa
- Cornelia Coenen-Marx: The Transformative Power of Diaconia – Theological Reflections from Germany
- Andrea Bieler/Henrietta Nyamnjoh: Diaconia and Vulnerability – Diaconia and the Cross
- Stephanie Dietrich/Evangelos Thiani: Diaconia and the Church – Towards a Diaconal Ecclesiology
- Sturla Stalsett: Interpretation, Inspiration and Interruption: The role of theologies in Diaconia
- Nadine Bowers du Toit: Diaconia as Public Theology within a South African Context
- Martin Büscher /Dennis Solon: Interdisciplinarity and Contextuality in Diaconia Studies
- Ingolf Hübner: Christian social service in countries with a predominately Christian tradition and state church history
- Caterina Bain: Christian social service in minority protestants contexts and secular state frameworks in Latinamerica
- Kambale Kahongya: Diaconia as Inclusivity: Living Community with the excluded – A Biblical didactic of Inclusion
- Beate Hofmann/Annette Leis-Peters: The diaconal profil of Christian social services within multicultural settings

Concepts and Profiles of Diaconical Ministries in Different World Regions

- John Ngige Njoroge: Patristic approaches to Diaconia – Diaconia in the Ancient Mediteranian Region
- Tatiana Gorbacheva: Social Ministry – Social Work with Drug-addicts in Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Russia
- Ion Vicovan: Diakonia and Social Assistance in the Theology and Practice of the Romanian Orthodox Church
- Bishoy Kamel: The understanding, roots and practices of Diakonia in the Coptic Church in Egypt
- Alexi Chehade: Diaconia and Humanitarian Work in the Greek Orthodox Church in Syria
- Bosale Eale: Examples and Concepts of Diaconia in Southern African Christianity
- Willie van der Merwe: Examples and Concepts of Diaconia in Southern African Christianity
- Confidence Worlanyo Bansah and Dzunu Edem: Examples and Concepts of Diaconia in West African Christianity
- Emmanuel Anim: Examples and Concepts of Diaconia in West African Christianity
- Edison Kalengyo: Examples and Concepts of Diaconia in East African Christianity
- Victor Aguilan: Diaconia in Asian Context
- Theresa Carino: Diaconia and Sustainable Development in Chinese Christianity
- Jianrong WU, Zhaozhen MA, Ruomin Liu: Diakonie across Borders: Interfaith Cooperation – A Case Study of Shanghai YMCA & YWCA
- Sushant Agrawal/Joycia Thorat: Diaconia in Indian Christianity
- Janka Adameova/Tsovinar Ghazaryan,: Diaconia and Conviviality in Central and Eastern Europe
- Erika Mejiers/Heather Roy: Reformulating Diaconia in Western Europe: New Approaches and Theological Challenges
- Benjamin Cortes: Diaconia in in the Churches of Central America

Rudolf von Sinner: The Diaconal Church in the Public Sphere in the Brazilian Context
Craig L. Nesson: A Lutheran Theology for Diakonia in North American Contexts
Jenny Wiley Legath: North American Diaconia and the Deaconess Movement
Ji Zhang: Theological Reflection on Diaconia in Australia: Mission and Service in Uniting Care
James Bhagwan: Diakonia as a quest for just and peaceful communities in the Pacific

Trends and Crucial Concerns in Diaconia:

Nadine Bowers-Du-Toit: Diaconia and Human Dignity – South African Theological Perspectives
Dennis Solon: Diaconia and Human Dignity – Asian Theological Considerations
Victor Aguilan: Peacebuilding in the Philippines: The Diaconal Engagement of the Church
Noriel Capulong: Diaconia as Peace and Justice Advocacy – a Philippino perspective
Nico Koopmann: Toward a Public Diakonia in a World of Vulnerability
Rastko Jovic: Dynamics of Diaconia and Public Theology in the Post-Peace Society of Serbia
Adrian Shaw/Thomas Kodacsy: Eco-Diaconia: The ecosystem – A neglected dimension of Diaconia
Sumit Abhay Kerketta: Towards an Eco-Diaconia in a Context of Displacement: Theological Impulses from Adivasi Communities in India
Kate Davies: Eco-Diaconia in Southern African Contexts – SAFCEI as an Example for a Multi-Faith Eco-Justice Response
Chad Rimmer/Julia Brümmer: Diaconia and the Sustainable Development Agenda – The Waking the Giant Project of LWF
Janine van Wyck: Diaconia and Poverty Reduction in Namibia
Mathilde Umuraza: Diaconia and the poor in the Presbyterian church in Rwanda
Andrew Orton: Poverty in the midst of wealth and social exclusion as a diaconal challenge
Kenneth Tsang: Poverty in the midst of wealth and social exclusion as a diaconal challenge
Tony Addy/Ulla Siirto: Conviviality as a vision and approach for a diaconal society
Rossitza Dikova-Osthus: diaconia and migration from (Eastern) European perspectives
Liberato Bautista: Migrants and Refugees: Voice and Agency
Thorsten Moos: Health and Healing in Diaconia in the German Context
Philomena Mwaura: Healing in the Church in Africa as Diakonal Praxis
Godwin Ampony: Health and Healing as key concerns in churches diaconia in Westafrica
Beate Jakob: Mental Health as a Task of a Diaconal Church at the Local Level
Christine Gühne: Diaconia in contexts of traumatization – An Introduction
Muke Nagaju: Diaconia in Traumatized Societies: Learning from the Rwandan Context
Wendy Kroeker: Diaconia as peace building and reconciliation
Vladimir Fedorov: Diaconia as peace building and reconciliation
Aled Edwards: Diaconia and the Challenge of Fundamentalism and Exclusivism
Antje Jackelen: The Need for a Theology of Resilience, Coexistence and Hope
Jaharianson Saragih: Deliverance, Mental Health, and Prosperity: A Holistic Diaconal Perspective from Indonesian Context
Felicite Ngingtedem: Contours of challenges for people living with disability in local churches with examples from Cameroon
Anjeline Okola: An Ecumenical Diaconal Response to Disability: The Journey of EDAN
Beverly Haddad: The Prosperity Gospel, HIV, And #Blessed: Diakonia as Liberating Praxis in the South African Context
Kaia Schultz Ronsdal: Addressing the Spatial Turn in Diaconia
Vladimir Fedorov: Social responsibility in Orthodox Monastic Religious Communities
Christa Schrauf: Social Responsibility in Monastic Orthodox Religious Communities – the case of the Kaiserswerth Association
Sandy Boyce: Social responsibility in Religious Communities – the Case of the World Diaconia Federation
Cornelia Coenen-Marx: Changing Patterns of the Family and Implications for the Future of Care
Johannes Eurich: Ethics of Diaconia: The Relevance of Good Life, Common Good and Global Justice in Diaconia

Jerry Pillay: Transformative Diaconia: From Early Christianity to Development Concepts and Economic Globalization
 Corrie van der Ven/Jörgen Thomsen: Ecumenical Diakonia in the Context of Covid-19 – A Chance for Growing Collaboration between Act Forums and Churches
 Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty: Christian Social Witness towards Polarization, Markets and Money – Pivotal Moments from the U.S. Context
 Melissa Henne: Digitalization in Diaconia: Description and Ethical Reflection
 Christine Globig: Care and Care Deficit – Reflections from a German Context

Models and Methods for Competency Building in Diaconia

Christoph Sigrist: Current state of Diaconia training with special focus on urban Diaconia in South Africa, USA and China
 Martin Büscher/Udo Krolzik: Multi-Rational Management for Diaconic Leadership
 Craig L. Nesson: Methods of Learning in diaconal ministries – Impulses from Liberation Theology
 Tormod Kleiven/Matthew Ross: Abuse and misconduct in Church settings: Learning from the dark side of Diakonia history
 Kenneth Tsang: Diaconal Church Development in Hongkong: Theological grounds, contextual challenges and capacity building
 Bosela Eale: Building in Diaconal Leadership in different Contexts
 Humberto Shikiya: Building in Diaconal Leadership in different Contexts
 Emmanuel Anim: Discoveries in Training for Social Services in Pentecostal Christianity
 Vladimir Khulap: Training for Social Services in Orthodox Christianity
 Carlos Ham: Seeing-Judging-Acting: A Learning Method for Empowerment in Diaconia from a Latin American Perspective
 Elorm Nick Ahialy-Mawusi: Methods for Engaging Youth with and for Christian Diakonia: The Case of the Living Generation Church
 Stefano Bertuzzi: Engaging Youth with and for Diaconia in Italy: from Peer Education to Social Work
 Oksana Porsvirnina: Innovative Learning Programmes for Diaconia – Implications of a Liberating Pedagogy
 Rodolfo Gaede-Neto: Didactics of Inclusion – Diaconia as a Round Table
 Kambale Kahongya: Learning Diaconia in organized Church Institutions – Biblical Principles for Training
 Gordon Zerbe: Christian Social Action and Global Citizenship Education
 Bright Mawudor/Deborah Suparni: Financial Management and Resource Mobilization in Diaconic Institutions
 Matthias Börner, Lusungu Mbilinyi, Angelika Veddel: Global Learning for Diaconia – Rethinking concepts and praxis
 Beate Hofmann: Curriculum Development for Diaconia and Training in Christian Social Services
 Jutta Beldermann: Diaconic Training in v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel, Germany
 Godwin Ampony/Felicite Ngingtedem: List of Some Selected Resources for Contextual Diaconal Studies: Textbooks, places, websites