Visit to Kaiserswerther Diakonie
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by Sandy Boyce

(This write up includes references from other sources which are cited at the end but there are no academic citations in the body of this article – an 'academic version' with citations can be provided on request. This article is primarily expanding on my visit with further information than presented as an academic paper)

It was a privilege to spend a day visiting Kaiserswerth Diakonie, hosted by Sister Gudrun Schwenke and Sister Sonia Coumann. This year is the 175th anniversary of the establishment of Kaiserswerth Diakonie, to be celebrated in September, 2011. Kaiserswerth is a small town on the Rhine, close to Dusseldorf (in 1929, Kaiserswerth was incorporated into Dusseldorf itself). The Kaiserswerth Diakonie houses the "Florence Nightingale" hospital, with two centres for the elderly, special Colleges for social and pedagogical education, schools of nursing and geriatric care; with pedagogic facilities for children, teenagers and adults, with an institute of continuing education, the so-called "Kaiserswerther-seminars;" with a personnel of fourteen hundred people in many professions and, last but not least, those women, whose work was the basis of all this: the deaconesses from the world's first "Mutterhaus" which was founded in 1836 in the centre of Kaiserswerth.

Historical background to the emergence of deaconess movement

The social context and medical concerns

In the 19th century, industrialization was having devastating effects, with poverty and misery amongst the working class people, and neglect of the children who were forced to work in factories like adults without a chance for a normal childhood let alone education. The rate of crime grew. The conditions were appalling in the prisons and the hospitals, too.

Pastor Theodor Fliedner (1800-1864) had travelled across Europe in the 1830s and was appalled by the suffering of the sick, the poor, the aged, and the outcasts of society that he saw in many places. He and his wife Friederike decided to help, as an expression of Christian compassion and mercy. Fliedner took a deep and active interest in social and community issues in his day. He saw needs, but had limited funds to respond. So Theodor travelled to other parts of Germany and to England and the Netherlands to raise funds.

Everywhere he met Christians, who were developing ideas for reform. He was inspired by a group of Mennonites who had organized the care of the sick in a village in Holland and by Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker who had cared for released prisoners in England., opened the first Deaconess Home and Hospital in Europe in 1836.

He integrated their ideas and opened the first Deaconess Home and Hospital in Europe in 1836. He based it around the deaconess movement: unmarried women who would unite in a sisterhood, wear the traditional bonnet of the married women of the northern Rhine region, go through professional training and help address the social problems of their time. The deaconess service may be for a few years or even for a lifetime.
The particular community health issues at the time included:

- In Germany in the early 1800’s, sick people were usually cared for by members of their family in their own homes.
- Public hospitals had not improved much in previous centuries. The sick and diseased from the poor sections of the population were simply given a roof over their heads, a bed and food. The ‘nursing’ was left to the less seriously ill.
- With the urbanization of Germany and the growth of an industrial proletariat, the question of provision for the sick became urgent.
- The newly emerging scientific and experimental medicine required the establishment of professional nursing in suitably equipped hospitals.
- The fear of cholera, which had been spreading in Europe since 1830, added an urgent reason for a new organization of nursing.

The first half of the nineteenth century stands as a grim period in hospital history. Hospital wards were filled with discharging wounds which made the atmosphere so offensive that perfume was required. The nurses of that period are said to have adopted the use of snuff to make conditions tolerable. Surgeons wore their operating coats for months without having them washed, and the same bed linen served several patients. Pain, haemorrhage, infection and gangrene were rife in the wards. Mortality from surgical operations was as high as ninety and even one hundred percent. Nursing was, if possible, on an even lower plane than medicine and surgery. The nurses were often of the criminal class, had no religious spirit of self-sacrifice, and exploited and abused the patients. Theodore Fliedner had visited many such hospitals and was deeply moved and distressed by what he had seen:

_I had not infrequently found the gates adorned with marble, when the nursing within was bad. The medical staff complained bitterly of the hireling attendants, of their carelessness by day and by night, of their drunkenness and other immoralities. And what should I say of the spiritual attendance. Little thought was given to that._

Protestant nursing associations in Hamburg and Berlin had tried to lessen the distress caused by illness among the masses. But in the slums they were not able to do any real nursing. Their activities were restricted to charitable work only.

Thus, the need to develop nursing as a secular profession was recognized. It required two things. One was the provision of practical and theoretical knowledge, in line with the advance of medical science. The other was well run hospitals, in which it was possible to put the gained knowledge into practice. Male and female nurses had to be given a respectable place in society, to distinguish them from the discredited untrained attendants.

For those people who were willing to take on this exhausting and dangerous profession (at that time, bacteria were yet unknown) a form of life had to be found which offered them the personal stability and the security enjoyed by the Brothers and Sisters of Mercy in their communities. In the early 19th century, the Sisters of Mercy (Catholic) were spreading their influence from France, and created an opportunity to establish an equivalent in the Protestant church.
The response by Theodor Fliedner and his wife Friederike

Theodor Fliedner and his wife Friederike were visionaries, and through their efforts they established the Protestant deaconess movement in Kaiserswerth, with the opportunity for a new form of diaconal ministry for women. They established the Mutter Haus (Mother House) community in 1836 which provided opportunities for single women to serve in a vocation as part of their Christian discipleship, and in particular in the nursing profession (which until that time had been predominantly male).

The Fliedners invited the young, unmarried women of their small congregation to join them in this venture of faith. A doctor's daughter, Gertrude Reichard, became the first recruited deaconess of modern times.

Fliedner adopted the outline for a training school from the secular institutions for sick attendants and used the new medical textbooks and handbooks for establishing a school of nursing. Training was assisted by the practice of doctors who recorded their knowledge and their demands in books of instructions and handbooks on medical attendance. This laid the foundations for the training of nursing staff.

The most revolutionary contribution of the Fliedners in the area of training was that they required the training to be threefold: spiritual, intellectual, and technical. This concept changed the entire image of nurses, who were not held in high regard in the early nineteenth century. Most so-called hospitals were miserable places where people went only as a last resort to die. With the motherhouse as a training school the deaconess sisters soon became superior in all three aspects of their work—spiritual, intellectual, and technical. The training was systematic and thorough. As a result, doctors could write orders and know that consistent, careful, loving care would be given in their absence by deaconess nurses.

Fliedner adopted the structure of the women's associations in the wars of liberation against Napoleon. From Frederich Koenne, he took up the ideal of the nursing profession in the sense of the early churches conception of deaconesses as female servants of the church. From the Sisters of Mercy he took over the form of the 'Motherhouse' and with it the method of assignment and gave the sisterhood a certain cooperative basis. He got ideas from the Protestant foundation for community life from the Mission seminary at Barmen.

The defencelessness of the female attendants compared with the protection enjoyed by the Sisters of Mercy showed him the importance of a uniform. Fliedner and his wife Friederike rejected any kind of religious dress, and instead chose the kind of costume worn by married women of the Lower Rhine district at that time. Very soon this became the deaconesses popular dress, which gave them a superior position in society. It was his talent for organization and his exceptional eye for the gifts and abilities of women that enabled Fliedner to build up the institute for deaconesses as a training establishment for Protestant hospital and Parish nurses.
For her part, Friederike worked tirelessly at her husband's side. She recognized the particular sort of community that would work for women, and she faithfully worked for the cause of women and their Protestant liberty. She was very capable in administration, and her particular contribution was to assign the nurses' positions and determined their responsibilities. She actively assisted the nursing profession in establishing its independence with regards to doctors, the clergy, governing bodies and authorities.

In the deaconess community, Fliedner had taken the Prussian constitution as a model for conceiving the system of superiors and subordinates, in which the obedience of the subordinate was the main factor. This was alien to Friederike Fliedner, who had been brought up in the tradition of the Reformed Church. Her model was not a national constitution but the living community, based on the Protestant spirit: the individual's responsibility before God regulates both the duties and the communal life: 'May God give us Mary's heart for Martha's work'. Thus, the whole spirit of the house was to be determined by the work of the women in it. The 'motherhouse' became a valid way of life, and provided an opportunity for women not tied to a religious order. This form was later taken over by the Red Cross.

The Kaiserswerth deaconess movement was the first non-Catholic attempt to harness the evangelical energy of women in a public role. The idea of the sisterhood - unmarried women working within the support of a spiritual community -- spread throughout the world in a surprisingly short time. Single young women could, with parental approval, leave the family circle and find security living and working in the company of like-minded women who were dedicated to a career in the ministry of mercy. Nineteenth-century society generally did not approve of single young women living outside the family circle. And only those of wealthy families could hope for more than an elementary education. The deaconess, however, could get a good education and pursue a meaningful career free from family responsibilities and the constant burden of childbearing, which accompanied most marriages. She was, in a relative sense, a liberated woman, a pioneer professional woman within the protective circle of the church.

Because family ties in the nineteenth century were strong, the Fliedners wisely made parental consent one of the requirements of admission for deaconess work. But unlike the Roman Catholic sister, who was "married to the church" for life, the deaconess was free to leave her work and return to her family at any time if the need arose for her to care for aged parents. Celibacy was a foregone conclusion, not because of church doctrine, but as a matter of practical necessity. No woman in the 1800s could have managed the time-consuming duties of caring for a large family and also give herself to the full-time, sixteen-hour-a-day work of a deaconess sister. If a deaconess did wish to marry, she was free to leave the sisterhood at any time to do so and many did. The General Conference of Deaconess Motherhouses, meeting in Kaiserswerth in 1891, reaffirmed this position:
As a deaconess is free to remain single, so she retains the freedom at all times to enter wedlock in a lawful manner. Neither before nor after consecration need she promise to remain single, but she honestly declares that after mature examination before God and her conscience it is her deliberate and firm determination to be a deaconess and to remain single so long as it may please God.

Deaconess sisters who did not marry and remained in the profession were assured complete care in old age and in times of disability and illness. Such was possible only within the motherhouse setting, where the deaconess sisters served one another as well as others in need of help. Lifetime care was a necessity, because the sisters received only a small stipend for personal use and no salary. They could not, therefore, accumulate personal savings. Such a support system was an early form of social security and provided wonderfully liberating opportunities for the women who chose to become deaconesses. No worries about old age! In a society where, until recently, most women depended on the men of the family for financial security, deaconess work provided an attractive alternative.

The consecration of a deaconess includes a promise of obedience to God and the rules of the motherhouse, a willingness to do any work required, and faithfulness in all things. This promise was not considered a vow for life, such as in the Roman Catholic Church, but a pledge in regard to a certain vocation. It was believed that the one vow of a Christian is the baptismal vow and that no special vow was justified. After consecration a deaconess was addressed as Sister, a title of respect that was not only biblically based but also descriptive of her life-style:

*The name Sister, by which Christian custom addresses the deaconesses, beautifully expresses the communion of faith, in which they stand.... A simpler and more suitable name for the deaconess cannot be imagined. Together with the prescribed dress, this name wipes out all differences of birth and position.*

The practice of calling deaconesses by their baptismal names instead of their family names was another affirmation of the family character of the motherhouse in which they lived.

As pioneer professional women of the church, the deaconess sisters have been the "forerunners of the ordination of women in Protestant denominations." One can truly say that "the whole church is richer through the gifts and grace of these dedicated women." [Minutes, Twelfth General Synod, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 22-26, 1979, United Church of Christ, p. 72]

*Paving the way for modern nursing*

The miserable conditions prevailing among the lower classes needed to be improved. It required nursing capable of coping with the demands of modern medicine and which should only be carried out in a hospital. A profound understanding for both the special character of women, and for the need of sick people, provided the foundation for the ethics of the nursing profession, which was to become of decisive importance for German nursing well beyond the range of the deaconess idea. So the deaconess movement originating in Kaiserswerth
became the real pioneer of structured modern nursing. The introduction of deaconesses into hospitals and Parish nursing led to an immediate improvement, or, better said, a general revival and promotion of nursing in all German protestant states. This development influenced the entire hospital system throughout Germany.

Despite strong opposition from the townsfolk, in Kaiserswerth who did not want a "pest house" in their midst, and the skepticism of others who scoffed at the undertaking or disapproved of any career for women outside the home, the Kaiserswerth sisterhood grew and became a model for deaconess work all over the world. The deep Christian commitment of the Fliedners, combined with their organizational ability, attracted not only those who wished to become deaconesses but also others who came simply to observe their methods.

Many people came to Kaiserswerth to observe the methods. Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing in England, and considered the ‘patron saint’ of modern nursing, visited Kaiserswerth twice – once for a fortnight in 1850 and for 3 months in 1851 – before beginning her famous work later in England. She took part in the practical and theoretical training of the young German women.

*The Sisters are bound, of course, punctually to obey the directions of the medical man, and they are too well trained not to do so, with far more correctness than is found in other hospitals. The superintending Sister of every ward is always present during the daily visits of the medical man. The apothecary is a Sister, and she goes the round of the patients with him, noting down all his prescriptions and directions which she afterwards transcribes into a book.*

She spoke of this experience with the Fliedners as the turning point in her life. Of the deaconess sisters at Kaiserswerth she said, "Never have I met with a higher love, a purer devotion than there." Fliedner encouraged her to print a small leaflet in London called, 'The Institution of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine for the Practical Training of Deaconesses'. It is the first of many such publications by Florence Nightingale, and is the first work of the rising feminist movement.

Other visitors to Kaiserswerth, such as Jane Bancroft, a prominent Methodist educator from the United States, called attention to the spiritual assistance that the deaconess sisters were able to give the patients: *They must follow strictly the doctor’s orders in all matters pertaining to diet, medicine and ventilation, and must inform him daily of the patient’s state. She also assists the clergyman, if desired, in ministering to spiritual needs.*

As a consequence of the Fliedner's vision, the image of the nurse changed completely. The deaconess sisters, who were spiritually, intellectually, and technically trained, brought dignity to the work of serving the sick. As in the days of the early Christian church, they transformed service to ministry. Modern theologian Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, describing the women of the New Testament, says: "*In [the Gospel of] Mark, to serve is not a humiliating activity but a mutual giving and taking, a self-surrender and mutual acceptance, and exchange*
of love, tenderness, help and comfort." This description could apply to the deaconess nurse of modern times as well.

Prominent though it was, nursing was not the only type of service for which deaconess sisters were trained. Teaching and parish work were of equal importance, and missionary work combined all three. Every deaconess sister was, however, trained first as a nurse regardless of her subsequent responsibilities, "because in no other way can her physical and mental powers be so thoroughly disciplined as by nursing." Teaching became an area of increasingly specialized service as hospitals grew more complex and deaconesses on training school faculties found it necessary to prepare themselves with highly skilled professional qualifications and advanced academic degrees. Some became very able scholars.

The parish deaconess combined teaching and nursing with her spiritual training and was, in reality, an assistant pastor. Fliedner designated parish deaconess work as "the crown of the female diaconate, that is, the highest development or most perfect form of it." The parish deaconess was responsible for Christian education, social work, and home visitation all part of the ministry that the pastor of a large parish could not do alone.

Theodor and Caroline are buried together, and Friederike is buried with 7 of her 10 children. Theodor’s son continued the work after the death of his father, including further building projects. After the early death of Friedrike Fliedner in 1842 at the age of 42, Fliedner married Caroline Bertheau. She brought with her the practical experience she had gained as head sister in the women’s surgical department of a large hospital in Hamburg.
The Protestant church constructed by Theodor was deliberately hemmed in amongst houses so as not to attract attention in a predominantly Catholic area. It is recently renovated for the 175th celebrations.

In the photo the church is the building with the bell tower; the others buildings are residences. Theodor’s manse is on the left of the church, and is still used by the current pastor of the church.

Theodor’s work is recognised in Kaiserswerth, with a number of tributes and including the naming of the street where the church and manse are situated.

On the same street is the Fliednerhof, currently used for aged care accommodation.

Das Stammaus am Kaiserwerther Markt), originally a hospital and now used mainly for aged care.
The freshly renovated church in Das Stammaus.
The balconies were used originally for hospital beds, so sick patients could attend worship.
The pulpit is original and was used by Theodor in his pastor’s work.

Interestingly, a more recent addition is the altar, which is on a circular platform, so that when the space is not required as a place for Christian worship, the whole platform turns around, leaving the simple cross facing towards the people, with the altar concealed behind.

The altar hanging, like those in many other churches in the region, was made in the houses of the Diakoniewerk. They were designed, woven and embroidered in the Kaiserswerther paramentic workshop. They are designed in such a way as to invite people into meditation and contemplation. Their symbols follow the changing themes of the church year and attempt to be a visual counterpart to the organ.

Some of the building projects in Kaiserswerth include:
• the original Mutter Haus (mother house), now a hotel (Hotel Muttherhaus)*
• the current Mutter Haus
• the hospital/aged care wing for elderly deaconesses, which is also staffed by deaconesses. Most of the elderly deaconesses in Germany live in Kaiserswerth.
• The kindergarten on site
• Aged care facility, especially for ageing deaconesses
• The ‘wash house’ (now a café) and the cafeteria
• The archives, library and museum, as well as a bookshop
• Florence Nightingale hospital

* The 'Mutterhaus' was the centre of the deaconess’ institution in Kaiserswerth. Originally it was built next to the market, but was later rebuilt and inaugurated in 1903. It was the house into which deaconesses returned from their travels within Germany and abroad in order to relax, learn, gather new spirit and
experience the social community. It is essentially a place of hospitality, both in its past and in its current use as a hotel. In its present form as a hotel it still retains something of the feel of a convent, including a 'quiet room' (room of tranquillity) for quiet prayer and reflection, with a double door to ensure tranquillity is maintained away from the hustle and bustle.

_Educational Centres in Kaiserswerth_
There are four educational centres designed to meet the needs of the three priority areas: hospital care, social work and geriatric care. Two of these are the schools of general and paediatric nursing, with a three year training program. The former nursing aides have now became medical experts, who regard the Kaiserswerther tradition as a special obligation. The newest educational branch is the school of geriatric care in which personnel are trained and updated in the care of the elderly. Professional training in geriatric care with its special demands has become more and more important in recent years.

The educational centres for social educators train teachers, many of whom later work in church-funded kindergartens. The professional school was named after the first deaconess Gertrud Reichardt. Here, students are prepared for social service professions and in two years are able to earn the "Fachschul-degree." One of the many opportunities for practical training is found in the kindergarten and day care centre of the Diakoniewerk.

The Desselhoffgroup, the Fliedner-group and Janusz-Korczak- House have about 30 teenagers and children with difficult early experiences.

The young and the old living close to each other: more than 800 senior citizens live in the homes of the Diakoniewerk. They includes "Salem House" on the outskirts of the nearby town of Ratingen, in the "Stammhaus" ("Original House") next to the Kaiserswerther Market, in flats for senior citizens and the retirement homes, the so-called "Feierabendhauser" around the Mutterhaus Church. These differing forms of living and care help older people to maintain their independence and dignity.

The Florence Nighingale hospital is nearby. With its 11 specialties and more than 600 beds it serves as a specialty hospital for the northern part of Düsseldorf. More than 14,000 patients are treated here each year, with more than a thousand babies born each year. The gynaecology and paediatric clinics are specially prepared for difficult situations, including premature births.

Clinical pastoral care is an important part of the work of the church. Many people want to talk and need consolation and help, especially in times of sickness. The parish on the grounds of the Diakoniewerk provides training in clinical pastoral care for laymen and theologians from a wide geographic area.

The psychiatric work in Kaiserswerth can be traced back to the year 1852. From then until now, the psychiatric clinic has been a department of the Florence Nightingale Hospital. It is a priority that social psychiatry and psychotherapy be as near as possible to the community, as oriented as possible to the patient's
place of residence. Many mentally ill people don't need hospitalization. The outpatient clinic makes it possible for them to live at home and still have the help of daily therapeutic support. Those who no longer need clinical care but still some ongoing support can find rehabilitation while living in a temporary home or in a psychiatric residence group. Occupational therapy and job training, the management of a common household and the exchanges among group members support the stabilization of these generally young people.

This is a comprehensive system of health care and support, ‘from the first breath of life to the treatment of pain right up to the care of the dying’, providing care and help for the body, mind and soul.

**Deaconesses**

Living and working conditions for women have changed, but there is still the longing for spiritual resources and mutual encouragement within the sisterhood at Kaiserswerth. Women continue to find a community which helps them to discover their spirit of life, and provides training in nursing and education for their diaconal commitment.

“Our inner and outer life if formed by dialogue among ourselves and with others and through activities, such as training, meetings on a diaconal and ecumenical basis, as well as celebrating, socializing, and coming together in prayer and in stillness’.

Christian women working on social projects are welcome to join the sisterhood, with deaconesses spread out all over Germany.

The women were originally uniformed, which enabled them to have a distinctive presence in the community and identified them immediately wherever they went. It had a number of advantages. It wiped out all differences in birth and position and symbolized the spiritual relationship of the sisters to one another.

‘The deaconess uniform is a constant reminder of the dignity of the calling; it was also a protection, for a deaconess may go at any time of the day or night, in pursuit of her calling, and may appear anywhere, without molestation. Her dress is, so to say, her ticket of admission, her letter of recommendation’.

Although some deaconess sisters did not like wearing garb that made them all look the same, most welcomed it. The simple, long, black dress, usually worn with a white collar for street wear and with a white apron for work, and a small cap tied on with a bow was much easier to care for than the many petticoats, tucks, and ruffles worn by most women during the nineteenth century. The garb liberated the deaconess from much of the drudgery of the flatiron and from the tyranny of trying to keep up with the societal ideal for women at the turn of the century.
"The garb cuts off at once all luxury in attire and saves much money, time and thought which women think they must spend in order to keep their clothing in current fashion."

The Fliedners discouraged the wearing of gold crosses or any other ornamentation as alignment with Roman Catholicism. The symbol of Kaiserswerth is a white dove, carrying an olive branch, resting against a blue ground. It is a sign of hope, and a symbol of challenge to help others. A blue flag floats from the old windmill tower on the river bank, visible to the traveller on the Rhine. Printed papers from Kaiserswerth were marked with a woodcut of the symbol of the dove and the olive branch.

Nowadays, only a few of the older Deaconesses continue to wear a uniform while most of the others wear a simple scarf and a silver chain with the symbol of diakonia (dove).

The stained glass window in the Mutterhaus refectory with the dove.

Sister Hilda, Sister Gudrun, Sister Sonia
On the day of our visit, we met Sister Hilda, a nurse by training who spent 10 years in Brazil as a midwife from 1957-67. She tells the story of being given 3 weeks notice of her imminent move to Brazil, with no training or preparation. On arrival, she immediately plunged into helping deliver babies. She said she had to learn how to ‘sew’ on the job, and said she felt sorry for the first woman on which she had to learn! Sister Hilda is a remarkable woman, very down to earth and good humoured. It made me wonder who is recording some of this aural history, as it is quite significant.

Sister Gudrun trained as a nurse at Kaiserswerther when she was 16, and returned only five years ago to Kaiserwerther Diakonie after she was widowed. For her, living amongst other Deaconesses is a way for her to gain spiritual and social support while continuing her ministry of service as a nurse working with lung cancer patients.

Sister Sonia began her probation as a Deaconess in June 2004, and was formally accepted as a Deaconesses on 16th December 2007. She continues her work in a hospital with geriatric patients.

Community life at Kaiserswerth
Because a deaconess is first of all "a disciple of the Lord," the sisters who live together in a motherhouse constituted a community of believers that functioned much like a local congregation. Morning prayers in the chapel, which always adjoined the motherhouse, and evening prayers after the workday had ended,
were standard. The executive deaconess, or Sister Superior, managed the internal affairs of the sisterhood, assisted by committees that were usually chosen democratically. A pastor served as the superintendent of the institution engaged in deaconess work. He conducted worship services, supervised the spiritual training of the probationers, and sometimes served as business manager and public relations director.

Nowadays, a group of 16 deaconesses has formed a special circle. They try to convey the experience and the values of the traditional Deaconess movement to the younger generation. Young female school graduates who are not yet working are able to live together for a year in a Christian community in the Mutterhaus. They learn about the different fields of activity in the Diakoniewerk and share in the spiritual life of the sisterhood. They experience the togetherness of different generations, professions and talents, also the life of the congregation, where they can give creative impulses to prayer meetings and services in the Mutterhaus-Church. The Deaconesses in the community at Kaiserswerth meet for morning and evening prayers each day, and share in the community life in their residences.

There are shrinking numbers of women seeking to join the deaconess community, in part because women nowadays are able to pursue their vocations freely in society without the deaconess order.

175th anniversary
In 2011, the 175th anniversary will be celebrated to remember the distinctive contribution of Theodor, Friederike and Caroline Fliedner. It was impressive to see the way that Kaiserswerth has honoured Fliedner with signs and signage around the town. Fliedner made an important contribution to the emancipation of women in the 19th century. When Theodor Fliedner died in 1864, he left a multifaceted institution of the women’s deaconess movement that met the needs of the new era using new methods.
The seats around the campus are for the 175th anniversary and contain the words, reserved for discussion.

Sister Sonia, Sister Gudrun, Rev Sandy Boyce (UCA) and Fr Raimund Blanke

Partnerships
In Germany and soon in other countries people asked Fliedner for advice and help in establishing other Motherhouses and nursing centers as far away as Cairo, Jerusalem, Istanbul and even America. The deaconess movement gave a new image to nursing, social work and education within and outside the church parish. The sisters at Kaiserswerth maintain strong links to ecumenical partners in Brazil, Palestine, Indonesia and Romania, and there are several cooperative and ecumenical projects.

Wall of remembrance - the graveyard close to the grounds of Diakonie Kaiserswerth contains gravestones and memorials for the Deaconesses who have lived and served there.
Sources
Theodor Fliedner and Nursing by D.Anna Sticker, Diakoniewerk, Kaiserswerth (first published 1972, reprinted 1987), Alte Landstrasse 121 Postfach 31 01 20, 4000 Dusseldorf 31 (Kaiserswerth)

Brochure – ‘Welcome’: Das MutterHaus Hotel, Tagungszentrum

Sisterhood of Kaiserswerth (Kaiserswerther Schwesternschaft) – General Information brochure (in English)

Kaiserswerther Schwesterngrusse/Kaiserswerther Schwesternschaft magazine

Kaiserswerther Mitteilungen (Das Magazin der Kaiserswerther Diakonie), 1/2011

http://www.countryjoe.com/nightingale/history.htm

http://www.ucc.org/about-us/hidden-histories/the-deaconess-movement-in.html, by Ruth W. Rasche, Archivist for the Deaconess Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri and member of the UCC Historical Council.
Old entrance with the "Mutterhaus" visible in the distance

Old Mutterhaus, now renovated for use as a hotel.