

WOMEN'S

PERSPECTIVES

the 100th Anniversary of the Diaconal Order

Editorial

Questioning the Order of Diaconal Ministries

By Donna McIlveen

In 1907 the Presbytery of Toronto humbly overtured the Venerable, the General Assembly, to express its approval to change the constitution of the Ewart Missionary Training Home, with the hope of broadening its scope and support, and also to approve a method by which graduates might be specifically designated by the Church. In 1908 the prayer of the overture was granted and the Order of Deaconesses was established.

When I read that overture I am thankful for the foresight shown 100 years ago. I see within the wording a desire for change and a willingness by The Presbyterian Church in Canada to seek a way to implement that change. I can see the momentum that enabled the overture to come before the General Assembly, and I can see the hope contained in the words that speak of broadening the scope and tangibly showing support via designation. I also see the courage that allowed change to take place.

Now one hundred years later, has that momentum been lost? Has the hope been vanquished, the courage replaced by complacency? What is the perspective of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on enabling ministry to fully take place?

The Order has formally existed for 100 years and it is my view that it can continue to exist if the momentum that enabled its original inception is fully embraced, the hope reclaimed, and the courage recaptured. The Order has not been static for 100 years. Membership into the Order is now open to women and men. Members are under the jurisdiction of the presbytery in which they work and/or live. The rights of constituent membership are inclusive of members of the Order serving a minimum of a half-time basis. For 100 years the Order has served within the church, and remains a part of the church today.

As an institution, the church acknowledges that it is in constant need of reform. 100 years ago the church identified a need and the Order was established as the response. As the church continues its reform, is the Order a part of that ongoing reform or is it

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Questioning the Order of Diaconal Ministries (continued)

being relegated to the sidelines? Is it seen as an institution that has outlived its relevancy?

Ruth MacKenzie asks the following question in the concluding paragraph of her article: “What will the future bring?” (“Celebrating 75 years of The Order of Deaconesses”, *The Presbyterian Record*, R. MacKenzie, May 1983, page 31). Twenty-five years later, the question is still before the Order, and The Presbyterian Church in Canada as a whole

Diaconal Ministers assist in the work of ministry. The need to have people set apart for specialized ministry has not diminished over the last 100 years. We live in a post-Christendom context that is vastly different from 100 years ago. Is the church willing to respond to needs that are before it now? Is the church willing to take risks as it fulfills its call to serve in all of life? Is it willing to embrace diaconal ministry as a valid and viable asset?

The wish to hold onto the Order of Diaconal Ministry represents not so much a desire to recapture the glory days of a 100 year old institution, but recognition of the fact that diaconal ministry can flourish in a post-Christendom era.

The role of diaconal ministry purposefully embraces cooperation and respectfully assists others as they journey. Diaconal Ministers engage in situations with the desire to equip and enable the ministry, journeying alongside those involved. Over the years, members of the Order have answered God’s call to service in a wide variety of circumstances. The question before us now is whether this journey will continue. Historically members of the Order have ministered “out and about;” they’ve been actively involved in the journey. The need for a hands-on approach to ministry is even greater today than it was 100 years ago. Today we live in a world where information is instantly accessible but often pursued in isolation. Diaconal ministry is carried out in partnership with others. The Order of Diaconal Ministries is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago.

Specialized ministries, diverse ministries, realistic ministries. 100 years ago diaconal ministry involved reaching out in foreign mission fields, serving as congregational deaconesses, traveling as regional secretaries, being supportive as port workers, doing leg work in church extension and being there in the inner city. Today many of these needs still exist and the call to serve Christ together with his people is still there. People still need to be welcomed, hospitality still needs to be shared, and support still needs to be offered.

As well, being present with others still needs to be affirmed. The Order doesn’t want the potential of diaconal ministry to quietly fade away. We feel that there is very much a place for diaconal ministry in the world today. The possibility for dedicated people to pursue the avenue of diaconal ministry can be - has to be - reawakened, reaffirmed and renewed.

Does The Presbyterian Church in Canada have a desire to keep the door open and maybe even open it up wider to allow for diaconal ministry to be embraced or is that door slowly closing. Will it eventually be shut tight forever? The church acknowledges that needs change and consequently new directions are required. This flexibility of response has always been a part of diaconal ministry. As The Presbyterian Church in Canada grapples with its direction, can diaconal ministry continue to be an active partner in that journey? Could it even be embraced as a vital component necessary for the journey?

The Order of Diaconal Ministries celebrates the past and looks with hope to the future; strengthened by the knowledge that diaconal ministry is relevant and has within it the potential to go to those places where the church needs to be involved today. The old saying that “we’ve never done it that way before” is not the mantra of the Order. Within the Statement of the Order of Diaconal Ministries is the sentence: “We believe in a ministry that is spiritual, dynamic, creative and a practical re-enactment of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

From this woman’s perspective, there is no question that’s worth holding onto!

Mrs. Donna McIlveen (designated 1983) resides near Prescott Ontario and is serving as clerk to the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry and the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario as well as Administrator and Treasurer for the Order of Diaconal Ministries.

Statement & Purpose of the Diaconal Ministries Order

Statement

Diaconal Ministers are called to be servants of Jesus Christ.

We work collegially in leadership, open to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to equip and enrich others for Christian life and service.

We envision a ministry rooted in the life and worship of the whole people of God which emphasizes Christian Education, Pastoral Care and Social Services.

Purpose

- 1. To provide opportunities for mutual support and spiritual enrichment for all members in accordance with the Statement of Diaconal Ministries.**
- 2. To formulate and express the collective views of the members of the Order and concerns for ministry and make recommendations to the General Assembly through Ministry and Church Vocations of the Life and Mission Agency or other appropriate bodies.**

By Mrs. Margaret Vanderzweerde (designated 1991)

When I was asked if I would be willing to write a short article addressing my years of service to the Church as South Asia Liaison from my perspective as a member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries, I wondered how to approach the task.

My initial reaction was: “what do I measure it against?” There wasn’t anything, since I had not served the Church in any other capacity prior to that assignment. Neither had any other member of the Order served in India and Nepal in the capacity I served.

I can speak, however, about how challenging it proved to be, the joys that I experienced and the changes I saw happening in the lives of individuals, families, whole villages and institutions. This was not so as a result of what I did but as a result of what our church and our church partner in India and Nepal were accomplishing, by the Grace of God.

The position I held was open to change. It evolved from the initial assignment of visiting the traditional Presbyterian

Mission Fields in India and the United Mission to Nepal to assess needs, provide pastoral care to our missionaries, and assist them when necessary to retire back to Canada, to something more complex and far-reaching.

As representative of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) I was assigned to also serve as their representative on the Ludhiana and Vellore Committee of the CCC (Canadian Council of Churches). This gave me a chair on the Board of Directors of both Christian Medical Hospitals and Colleges in India. Annual meetings brought together representatives from around the world as well as high profile doctors within India. Getting to know them opened many doors to Indian Medical Institutions while it also took me into uncharted areas within the Church of North India’s Health programs.

In that respect my nursing training and years of work in a hospital for the chronically ill during the sixties was valuable experience which enabled me to assess needs and report back to the CCC Committee, and to International Ministries.



The CNI (Church of Northern India) arranged visits to many hospitals and institutions within India never before visited by foreign staff in order to see the overall work of the partner, not only traditional PCC work. During those visits I learned the extent of the partner's work, the deprivation in many places, and the tremendous needs in some of the poorest States within India, like Orissa, Bihar, and the N. East.

My years as auditor for Revenue Canada Taxation from 1972 to 1988 had prepared me for the work I was now asked to do, and had given me the expertise to audit designated funds at the institutions funded by the PCC. It also qualified me to serve on the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors of the United Mission to Nepal.

My previous training in counselling and conflict management provided the necessary knowledge to deal with many stressful and unpopular circumstances that arose. The training I received at Concordia Seminary and Ewart and Knox College had completed the slate of requirements for this position.

Once a year I had the privilege of returning to Canada to share the experiences at General Assembly and then during a period of deputation which took me from coast to coast. It was a wonderful experience to raise the awareness of people within the church in Canada on what was happening in India and Nepal since for many years there had been little focus on South Asia.

But more than anything else I look back on the joy of the experiences of seeing changes in people's lives, the transformation of whole villages through education, health and development, and a greater understanding among the people themselves. Beyond our understanding is the role religion and culture play in the lives of all people, and beyond our comprehension is the joy present in the lives of people who live, work, and die under circumstances of such incredible poverty.

One powerful example for me is what took place at the completion of a 5 day workshop in a rural village. The workshop brought women, each of them illiterate and ignorant of even the most basic knowledge, to a centre where they received instruction in nutrition, hygiene, establishing kitchen gardens, making a smokeless stove for inside their thatched roofed houses, and some relevant information about their legal rights within that particular district. That

particular week the WHO (World Health Organization) information on the determination of a baby's sex was included in the workshop. It was deemed necessary to do so since women were abused by spouses and mothers-in-law for giving birth to baby girls. At the end of the week one young woman, 18 years of age, malnourished, obviously beaten frequently, with two girl children at home and now pregnant with her third child, stood before the group to share what had been most valuable to her. She said (loosely translated): "You have given me my freedom". Definitely puzzled, I asked her to explain and she said that she was going home and tell her husband and mother-in-law that "when you plant corn you grow corn" It was awesome to hear this from the lips of this illiterate young woman. She had "gotten it" and felt set free from guilt. To realize that something as simple as that could change a person's life and future, for the better was profound.

Bringing nutrition information to a village where children were dying of protein deficiency, where parents grew peanuts for re-sale and fed their little ones rice: now that was incredibly awesome. The stories are endless and the joy is re-lived in the telling.

While in India and Nepal I appreciated that I was accepted and recognized as a Diaconal minister. The CNI has ordained Deacons and so my role within the Church, included every aspect of the ministry. To stand, with a Bishop and other ministers in a river in Orissa to baptize hundreds of converts is awesome, and to serve communion together with other ministers to over 1000 worshippers is humbling and a great source of joy.

By the same token, to be asked to teach certain subjects at the Calcutta Theological College, or to instruct administrators in proper accounting, and nursing students and nurses in holistic medicine: those were the highlights of my life and work in South Asia. I shall always be grateful to God for leading me in this direction, guided by the Church.

Mrs. Margaret Vanderzweerde (designated 1991) resides in Tillsonburg, Ontario and is retired after having served in India and Nepal for ten years, as South Asia Liaison for International Ministries.

By Kathy Ball (designated 1985)

Sometimes I wonder about a suitable answer to the question “what do you do for a living?” Explaining Diaconal Ministries and talking about life as the “Coordinator of Educational Ministries for the Synod / Synodical of BC, The Presbyterian Church in Canada”, can get a bit complicated. People unfamiliar with the language of church get the ‘deer in the headlights’ look followed by a confession about the last time they were in church and why they ‘love God but don’t go to church’. Church people usually understand but wonder why I would choose to do it.

For a few years, I’ve been running as a “low cost, no equipment, easy to do no matter where you are” exercise plan. I tried my first half marathon this fall, and I realise running and regional staff work are very similar. Half marathons are not for the faint of heart: you train hard and come race day have 21.1 km of road in front of you.

You hope the training will work but you aren’t quite sure what will happen. From the wonderfully exciting start to the finish line, the race is about focus,



strength and vision. Slowly you settle in and focus on your breathing and your pace. You hear words of encouragement yelled from the side. You take a cup of water offered by a stranger and keep running. As you run, fatigue sets in and injuries begin to impact body and mind. Eventually, you realise you are running in this alone: no one else is going to get you across the finish line. There are people all around – other runners, spectators, security, water station attendants - but you are alone.

Regional work is also not for the faint of heart and can be exciting at first. The cautionary notes about travel, expectations and setting your pace that are offered in love don’t sink in. You just want to get on with it. You feel called!

Slowly you settle into the work and you realise there is

rhythm to it. There are intensely busy times when you run at an unsustainably fast pace. There are equally slow times when you can savour God’s invitation to rest and be restored. There are times when it feels like the job is exactly what you trained for and other times when you aren’t quite sure which end is up. I have had the privilege of traveling throughout BC



to congregations, youth conventions, WMS events, Presbytery meetings, and, of course, Synod. It has been an honour to

accompany two mission exposure tours to Malawi and Guatemala. Staying in ‘dia-

conal shape’ requires ongoing attention to your own spiritual health, networking and staying current with trends. These enable you to assist in the spiritual and leadership development of the intergenerational community of the church.

Running and regional work require two things: putting one foot in front of the other as well prepared as you can be; and breathing in and out no matter what.

Mrs. Kathy Ball (designated 1985) resides in Sardis, British Columbia and is serving as Coordinator of Educational Ministries for the Synod and Synodical of British Columbia.

By Tori Smit (designated 1982)

I have been involved in youth ministry, well, since I was a youth. (Don't do the math – please.) Over those years, I have seen models of youth ministry come and go. I have seen failures and successes and I have come to some conclusions about what defines effective youth ministry.

My first and most important principle is that the outcome of any youth ministry must help youth become active, faithful and committed adults. Too often the goal is merely keeping youth in church. In this scenario, we look for a talented charismatic youth leader who, with the help of lots of fun activities and copious quantities of pizza, will distract our youth from the temptations outside the church. It doesn't work. In reality we likely lose youth faster with this model as they are only entertained and never invited into a relationship with Jesus through an integrated relationship with the church. In fact, I believe we would be better off even if we had no youth program but could point to youth involved in the many and diverse ministries of the church.

My second observation is that the front line of youth ministry is now middle schoolers. If we wait until high school, it is too late. The sooner we start to cultivate these relationships, the greater our chance to reverse this trend. Relationship is the key word in this sentence. The best ministry we can do with anyone in the church is to be in relationship with each other. Vibrant youth ministry can be accomplished on a shoestring budget with a congregation that truly cares for its' children and youth.

Youth (middle schoolers and high schoolers) need to have every opportunity to become a part of the whole life of the church. This includes the wider church through events like Christian Camping, Canada Youth and Triennium. It is particularly important for youth from smaller congregations (where they might be the only one) to experience large events to be encouraged in their faith. However, camp and youth events must not become their church. It is critical that youth have meaningful experiences as part of a local congregation. This includes worship that speaks to the needs of youth and tasks that are valued and not just the things adults don't want to do (like washing dishes.)

Finally, the cutting edge of youth ministry is family based youth ministry. For many years we felt that we could "hand over" our youth to leaders

who would do for us what we should have been doing for ourselves. In reality, family and local church is the centre of faith formation. They are where faith is caught and taught and we must all be involved in the work of raising our children into faithful committed lives.

This past fall I had a delightful and surprising experience. We are blessed to have a college and careers young adult group at our church. For a number of reasons we had not been able to start our programming in September as we had hoped. By late October I was getting desperate to pull something together. As I was agonizing over this I realized that every young adult were already involved and vital members of a variety of ministries of our church. Four are in the choir, two are in the praise team, eight are part of the leadership of our LOGOS program and some are teaching Sunday School. I suddenly realized that they were all doing exactly what Christians in a church are supposed to be doing and that we didn't need to set them apart from the whole life of the congregation. That is the goal of youth ministry.

Mrs. Tori Smit (designated 1982) resides in Waterloo, Ontario and is serving as the Diaconal Minister for Youth and Families at Knox Presbyterian Church in Guelph. Tori is also a trainer for The LOGOS Ministry and a writer for Montreat Conference Center and Kerygma Bible Studies.



Telling Our Story

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Celebrating 100 years of Diaconal Ministry in The Presbyterian Church in Canada:1908–2008

By Joyce Davis (designated 1987)

In a peaceful moment on vacation in beautiful Cape Breton, God gave me a call – a call to write the story of 100 years of diaconal ministry. Just as our training for ministry was always from the perspective of working with others in a team, this would be a joint project of the members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries.

That was in 2005 (when I thought that I was retired!). Since then, with the help of a small “working group”, historical information has been gathered, the membership asked to submit their stories, and a framework developed for the book.

In reading the stories submitted, I’ve noticed the hesitancy that many writers have to talk about themselves in case they may appear to be “blowing their own horn”. As a result, their accounts frequently lack the “breath of life”, simply being a factual summary of types and places of work done in ministry.

This fall I’ve gained new insight into how we can make Our Story, and our individual stories come alive. It is through the medium of spiritual autobiography. If we tell our stories in the light of our journey with God, they will come alive, and readers will be able to walk through them with us. As a result, we will both celebrate God’s work through the Order, and inspire ordinary people like us to respond to God’s call in their lives.

We are still looking for stories of diaconal ministry, either from someone who experienced the leadership of a diaconal minister, or from a person who carried out that work her or himself. If you are willing to write something, (even a small anecdote), please look at the guidelines suggested in another article in this issue entitled, “Why write your autobiography?”

The Rev. Joyce Davis (designated 1987) resides in Vancouver, British Columbia and is currently working with students at the Vancouver School of Theology as Director of their field education.

Why Write Your Autobiography

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(or “mini” autobiography)

By Joyce Davis (designated 1987)

You don't need to be someone famous to write your autobiography, just someone who can look back on a life touched by God. Reflecting on and sharing with others the story of your spiritual journey can encourage the readers (perhaps just your family) to recognize how closely God connects with our ordinary daily lives.

My own interest in autobiography developed recently through a course I'm taking with Sallie McFague at the Vancouver School of Theology, called “Spiritual Autobiography”. We are reading and reflecting on the personal stories of both ancient and modern people. One of our first assignments was to tell our own “mini-autobiography” in only five minutes (many ran overtime)!

When writing one's story in the form of an autobiography, one seeks to reflect on and share one's own spiritual identity. As I look back on the experiences of my life, which incidents stand out and reveal my interaction with God? How did their impact at the time bring new challenges, create fresh insight, or stir up troubling questions?

Moving from my earliest memories of connecting with God, through each of the key decisions that I needed to make, until my present place in ministry, how can I share with readers the way God led me in the ordinary events of my life? Perhaps it was a word of encouragement from someone who suggested I had gifts for leadership. On another occasion it may have been a traumatic event that shifted my whole relationship with God. Or it may have been a gradual growth that I became aware of through a specific incident.

The opportunity to write even a “mini” autobiography makes one take a step back and review one's life from today's perspective. Seeing past experiences in hindsight, I can re-evaluate the way particular concrete incidents influenced or changed the flow of my life. I am impelled to do a self-review of the key moments and catalytic experiences that have led me to be the person I am now, enabling me to develop a coherent shaping of my past.

My reason for encouraging the readers of Women's Perspectives to write their (mini) autobiographies arose out of the challenge to members of the Order of Diaconal

Ministries of the PCC (The Presbyterian Church in Canada) to write their stories. They are being collected for a small book which the Order plans to publish in celebration of 100 years of ministry from 1908 – 2008.

Members of the Order who have already submitted their stories are encouraged to revise them by including more reflection on the turning points through which God led them into, and through, their years of ministry. We hope that more members will take up the challenge of sending in their (mini) autobiographies. Perhaps other readers of this article will see this as a new vehicle and opportunity to give witness to God's work in their lives as well!

The Rev. Joyce Davis (designated 1987) resides in Vancouver, British Columbia and is currently working with students at the Vancouver School of Theology as Director of their field education.

By Nita DeVenne (designated 1990)

Beginnings: Phoebe, Paul's co-workers, Mary, Margaret, Susan, Florence... Who are these women? And why remember them and so many more who witnessed through the ages? During 2008-09 The Presbyterian Church in Canada is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Order of Deaconess/Diaconal Ministries. The office of deaconess can be traced back to the New Testament era when women began to make significant contributions to the life of the Christian Church. Paul in his letter to the Romans mentions Phoebe "a servant of the Church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well (Romans 16:1 & 2)". Soon the word deaconess was used to describe a woman officially charged with certain functions in the Church.

The Office of Deaconess developed greatly in the third and fourth centuries. Deaconesses cared for the sick and poor, and helped to prepare women for the Sacrament of

Baptism. Later however, with the growth of convents, the practice of setting aside deaconesses was discontinued.

It was not until the nineteenth century that the office of deaconess was revived. In 1836 Pastor Theodore Fliedner established at Kaieserswerth, Germany, the first Protestant community of deaconesses. The movement which he began spread through Europe and eventually to the majority of Christian Churches through the world. The Church of England established the Mildmay Home for the training of deaconesses in 1860. The establishment of a Deaconess Order in the Presbyterian Church was recommended in 1885 by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System. The Church of Scotland instituted such an Order in 1887. The form and the work was, however, different in various countries. The majority of deaconesses in continental Europe (over 50,000 in 1964) are nurses, whereas deaconesses in other parts of the world are trained for and undertake a much greater variety of duties.



In Canada, the Anglican and Methodist Churches were the first to introduce an Order of Deaconesses. In the Presbyterian Church, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (W.F.M.S.) was the first group to take action regarding the training of women. In 1897 it opened "The Ewart Missionary Training Home" (the fore-runner of the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School, later Ewart College) for the training of women for work overseas. ('Foreign' included Canada's West). The 'Home' received the name in memory of Mrs. Thomas (Catherine Seaton) Ewart: the Society's first Secretary and then its President for 16 years; and was located at 540 Church Street which had been occupied by Mrs. Ewart for a short time prior to her death. Within a short time the W.F.M.S. was convinced of the need for trained workers in Canada as well as overseas and discussed this matter with the Presbytery of Toronto. As a result an overture was sent by the presbytery to the General Assembly of 1907 asking that the scope of the school be broadened and "that graduates be specifically designated by the Church when entering on their work". That same year the General Assembly also received an overture from the Presbytery of Winnipeg, transmitted with the approval of the Synod of Manitoba which read:

"The Presbytery of Winnipeg respectfully overtures the General Assembly to takes steps to set aside an order of women who shall be known as deaconesses; who shall serve the Church as nurses, parish visitors, dispensers of charity, and in any other way that may prove to be desirable."

The Assembly approved the steps suggested in the overtures and appointed a committee to consider appropriate action and report to the next Assembly.

The Assembly of 1908 acted on the recommendations of this committee, instituted the Order of Deaconesses to which deaconesses would be designated and took over the direction of the Ewart Missionary and Deaconess Training Home, appointing a Board of Management responsible to General Assembly and acting under its authority.

The scope of the Ewart Missionary Training Home was enlarged, making it an institution for the training of women for the missionary and deaconess work of the Church. With growing numbers coming to the Home, a move to another larger building was again necessary. The property at 60 Grosvenor Street was purchased. A recommendation from the Ewart Missionary and Deaconess Training Home to the General Assembly of 1910 resulted in the name of the

institution being changed to the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home.

In the allocation of property following the historic decision in June 1925, '60 Grosvenor' was given to the United Church of Canada as was Manitoba College in Winnipeg which had been opened by the Canada Presbyterian Church in 1871. In the report to the 1921 General Assembly we read:" This year has seen thee inauguration of the Deaconess Course with 4 students in attendance and four others registered for next year.' By 1923 the enrollment in the Deaconess Course had reached 13. We lost our contact with Manitoba College in 1925. The Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess training School was reborn out of the faith of such friends as Mrs. Daniel Strachan, Mrs. D.T.L. McKerroll, Miss Elizabeth Burns, and Mr. R.J. Lillico who was Chairman of the Deaconess Board.

Those early members of the order worked in congregations, presbyteries, on synod and national staff. Many were employed by the Women's Missionary Society, (Western Division) and the sister society in the Maritime Provinces, the Woman's Missionary, (Eastern Division). In the first annual report of deaconess work supported by the Women's Missionary Society, for the year 1914-15, Mrs. Janet Farquhanson wrote: "It may be to administer relief to the needy, to instruct in the art of washing or housekeeping, or perhaps, cutting out a garment for the untutored mother, or giving instruction in household economy. She may be called upon to address a public meeting in the interests of her work. Above all, it is hers by her loving ministry to soothe the sorrowful, to bring relief to the distressed, hope to the discouraged, and joy to the grief-stricken; in a word, to follow in the footsteps of Him who, when he dwelt on earth, went about ever doing good."

During the 1950's missionary vans were sent to Alberta and Saskatchewan by the Women's Missionary Society, (W.D.). A graduate deaconess was in charge of each van and she was assisted by a student deaconess. A story is told in the Order's 90th Anniversary Stories of Diaconal Ministry of one person learning to drive in May and then having to teach the student how to drive! They visited in homes, conducted Vacation Church Schools and assisted in Church School. For many years the port receptionist was an important worker, usually a graduate serving under the W.M.S., (W.D.). Hospital visitation has been another important ministry which has been carried on by deaconesses as well as hospital chaplains. Others have worked as congregational deaconesses, Directors of Christian Education, as Area Educational Staff in presbytery and

synod and at the national church level on boards and committees, in curriculum development and leadership training etc. The Women's Missionary Society. (W.D.) and the sister society in the Maritime Provinces, the Woman's Missionary Society, (E.D.), now the Atlantic Mission Society, employed many graduates. In the 1958 issue of The Presbyterian Message, there is a list of 40 graduated who were Eastern Division girls, or worked in the Maritimes, or have lived there since marriage.

Throughout the years whether in the Training Home, Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School or Ewart College - the name chosen in 1961 for the new building - the curriculum changes kept pace as certain needs arose. For example, in the 1950's and onward the emphasis was on training of professional workers in Christian Education. Another significant change came about with the period 1965-1970 when the realization came that men as well as women should have an opportunity to study at Ewart. The period preceding 1966 was the period of discussion for Presbyterians about the possibility of women becoming ordained ministers and elders. In the same period Ewart was considering the fact that although many men were teachers in the secular world, very few men had the opportunity to become involved in education in the Church. Some 8 men are Ewart graduates with Warren Whittaker marking over 25 years at Flora House in Winnipeg.

In 1982, the Order of Deaconesses was changed to the Order of Diaconal Ministries. This name change was made to be more inclusive-to include both male and female, and also the variety of ministries which are open to those trained at Ewart College. Then in September of 1991, Knox College and Ewart College were amalgamated and the Ewart College building was put up for sale and sold. In

1992, Diaconal Ministers gained access to the courts of the Church. We cannot foresee the future as we continue to serve the people of God in educational, pastoral and social service areas, in nursing and teaching and wherever else we may be called to use our talents, creativity and training. Within the Order members support and encourage one another, and challenge others to hear and respond to God's call to ministry. The Order is connected world-wide through DOTAC (Diakonia of the Americas the Caribbean) and Diakonia World Federation.

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resides in Toronto, Ontario and is currently an on-call
chaplain at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto as
well as being involved in local church activities.*

Resources:

*A History of the Deaconess in the
Presbyterian Church in Canada.* Prepared by
a Committee of the Order of Deaconesses,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1975.

*Stories of Diaconal Ministry. 90th
Anniversary of the Order of Diaconal
Ministers 1908-1998.* Margaret Robertson,
Editor 1999.

*To Keep the Memory Green A History of
Ewart College 1897 – 1987* by Irene Dickson
and Margaret Webster, 1986.

Women's Perspectives (WP) strives to keep women in touch with each other and share their theological perspectives, biblical insights, special interests, joys and concerns with the whole church. WP is published 6 times yearly. It is written by guest editors and overseen by WP Committee, in co-operation with the Women and Ministry Committee.

These committees are connected with the office of Ministry and Church Vocations, the Life and Mission Agency, The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Views expressed in WP are not necessarily endorsed by the WP Committee or the PCC.

Readers comments and contributions are welcome at womensperspectives@presbyterian.ca

For a free subscription or to view previous issues, go to www.presbyterian.ca and type "Women's Perspectives" in the Search our Church box.

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