

Report of the London Conference Diaconal Ministers Group

The London Conference Group of DUCC consists of 18 Diaconal Ministers and Diaconal Students. Over half of the group are students. We are delighted to have so many in the Conference studying for Diaconal Ministry and we are impressed with their commitment and energy when they are so busy with demands of their studies!

At the last National Meeting, The London Group took on the coordination to the next Gathering and so our time since then has been focussed on that task. Much time has been spent on establishing a budget for the gathering, coordinating plans for business, theme, worship leadership and local arrangements, creating the brochure for the event, planning the agenda, etc. Often we have felt that our time was too focussed on agenda needs and not enough on support and encouragement of each other in ministry. For this reason, we would like to be relieved of the task of Coordination of the National Gathering, after this meeting. We would be prepared to consider another task. We feel the need for a database to be established to facilitate communication within this dispersed group. We would consider taking on that task or some other smaller task for the next 2-3 years.

One of the challenges that we have faced is the ongoing task of educating the church about Diaconal Ministry. Members of our group are currently working with the Conference Education and Student Committee on a presentation on Diaconal Ministry for the Conference Annual Meeting. The Education and Student Committee initiated this, not our London diaconal group. The purpose of the presentation is to describe Diaconal Ministry and to encourage congregations to consider calling a Diaconal Minister. We feel that the inclusion of Diaconal Ministers on the planning team for this educational presentation is a step in the right direction (originally there was no Diaconal representation!). Perhaps the Power Point presentation that is being created will be helpful elsewhere.

An area of concern for us is the difficulty of having the time and energy to cover the necessary tasks. It is wonderful and important to have Diaconal representation on committees, but everyone is so busy. It would be a fulltime job to cover all the requests! Yet we also need to gather to talk, reflect, and support each other in this important ministry.

With so many students in our groups, we are very much aware of the need for Diaconal positions for Settlement. Four of our group will be commissioned this Conference. They have been an important part of our group and we wish them many blessings as they begin this next phase of their journey.

Cheryl Kirk and Joan Tuchlinsky, Coordinators