Chapter 7

THE DEACONESS SISTERS: PIONEER PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

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THE STORY OF the deaconess sisters is as old as the Christian church. It begins with the apostles yet endures to this day. The deaconesses are dedicated women who dared to be different in order to give full-time Christian service to the ministry of mercy. Their life-style and work are part of the women's movement of modern times. They are the pioneer professional women of the church.

DEACONESSES IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Deaconess means messenger, servant, or helper. It comes from the Greek diakonos and was first used in the Bible by the apostle Paul, in Romans 16:1-2, to describe Phoebe, a woman leader and worker in the early Christian community:

> I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchre-ae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Paul's letters indicate that women were prominent leaders and missionaries in the early Christian movement. Many in addition to Phoebe are named. Theological scholarship affirms that women were preachers, teachers, and leaders of the community as well as nurses serving the sick, the poor, and the persecuted.(1) When the time for definite ecclesiastical organization came, the work of deaconesses had become a necessity to the church and they received a place in its ordered ministry. They were highly respected and counted among the clergy. Evidence that they were ordained to some of the functions of the ministry is abundant in early church records.(2) On this biblical foundation the ministry of deaconesses in all succeeding generations rests.

DEACONESS WORK IN THE EVANGELICAL SYNOD

Deaconess work in the United Church of Christ began within the Evangelical Synod, one of the four roots of the UCC heritage. On March 18, 1889 the *Evangehscher Diakonissen-Verein* (Evangelical Deaconess Society) of St. Louis, Missouri, was organized, and soon thereafter the first Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital was opened.(3) Two deaconess sisters were consecrated to provide the professional leadership for this new venture. In the same year the Tabitha Institute of Lincoln, Nebraska, which was already established as an orphan asylum, added a Deaconess Home to its organization and also began its deaconess work with two

consecrated sisters. After a few years, however, this effort was discontinued.(4)

Impetus for the organization of the Evangelical Deaconess Society resulted from events that had occurred a year earlier. An Evangelical pastor was summoned to give communion to a critically ill parishioner and found her being cared for in her home by a Roman Catholic nun because the woman was too poor to get help from anyone else. Much distressed at the situation and discovering that it was not an isolated incident, the pastor took the matter to the next monthly meeting of the St. Louis Evangelical Pastors' Association. "Why can't we train the young women of our church to care for the poor and the sick as do the deaconess sisters of Germany?" he asked.(5)

So much interest was aroused that a committee was appointed, more discussions were held, and the organizing meeting was finally convened at St. Peter's Evangelical Church. Seventy persons attended-sixty men, eight women, and two ''young ladies.'' All signed their names as charter members of the new organization. Its purpose was twofold: 1. to nurse the sick and exercise care for the poor and aged and, 2. to found and support a deaconess home where deaconesses could be educated and trained.(6) A board of directors was elected, consisting of four pastors, four laymen, and four laywomen, as stipulated in the Articles of Association.(7)

The election of four women to the policy-making level of the Evangelical Deaconess Society was a breakthrough. In most German Evangelical congregations at that time the women sat on one side of the room and the men, on the other. A woman's church membership was held in her husband's name. He voted and spoke for her and the whole family.

Whether a stroke of genius or simply a matter of practical consideration, the decision to include women as one third of the board of directors of the Deaconess Society proved to be fortunate in many ways. Women of the Evangelical churches throughout St. Louis mobilized for action and rallied to the deaconess cause. A wealthy widow donated funds that made possible the rental and renovation of a large home in center city, at 2119 Eugenia Street, which became the first Deaconess Hospital and Home. Women from all parts of the metropolitan area helped to prepare the home for occupancy and spread the word as to its purpose.

On Sunday, August 18, 1889, Katherine Haack, a minister's widow who was already a trained nurse, became the first deaconess of the Evangelical Synod when she was consecrated at a worship service held at St. Peter's Church. She immediately recruited her stepdaughter, Lydia Daries, also a trained nurse, to become the second deaconess.(8)

Meanwhile, members of Evangelical churches in cities across the United States were also being confronted with the unprecedented needs of the poor and the sick in their communities.

In the 1880s 5.5 million immigrants had come into the United States - twice as many as in the preceding decade - and most of them came from Germany. In fact, census records show that four million persons of German heritage were living in the Middle West at that time. Many of the new immigrants were very poor. Coming, as they often did, with a language barrier and lack of skills, they found life harsh and bleak. Crowded city conditions and overburdened sanitation facilities led to illness and epidemics.

In order to alleviate some of this suffering, deaconess work was established in a variety of institutions in many cities across the land by members of the Evangelical Synod.

1889—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri
1889—Tabitha Institute, Lincoln, Nebraska

1892—Protestant Deaconess Home and Hospital, Evansville, Indiana
1902—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, Lincoln, Illinois
1905—Evangelical Emmaus Homes, Marthasville and St. Charles, Missouri
1908—Evangelical St. Lucas Deaconess Home and Hospital, Faribault, Minnesota
1910—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1910—Evangelical Hospital, Chicago, Illinois
1911—Evangelical Deaconess Home, Louisville, Kentucky
1912—Evangelical Deaconess Association, Baltimore, Maryland
1913—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Marshalltown, Iowa
1915—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, East St. Louis, Illinois
1917—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Detroit, Michigan
1919—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio

At about the same time, members of the German Reformed Church, also one of the four roots of the UCC heritage, established deaconess work in two locations.

1892—Deaconess Home and Hospital of the German Reformed Church, Cleveland, Ohio, which later became Fairview Park Hospital
1895—German Deaconess Home and Hospital, Buffalo, New York

In 1901 the American Congregational Deaconess Association was incorporated in Chicago, Illinois, at the recommendation of the Illinois State Association. A Deaconess Training Home was begun later that year with instructors from Chicago Theological Seminary.(10)

WORLDWIDE DEACONESS WORK

Deaconess work had been well established in Europe long before 1889. Sixty-five deaconess sisterhoods with more than eight thousand deaconesses were serving at that time not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa, including St. Petersburg, Russia; Edinburgh, Scotland; Cairo, Egypt; Jerusalem; and scores of other places in between.(11)

In the United States, the Lutheran, Episcopal, and Methodist denominations were engaged in various deaconess efforts by the late 1880s, and interdenominational groups were cooperating on some projects.(12) These efforts were all part of the nineteenth-century revival of deaconess work, which had declined after five centuries of prominence in Christendom. Deaconesses were mentioned occasionally in church records, but during the Dark Ages the church had retreated to the monastery and, with few exceptions, the deaconess had become the nun. Some Roman Catholic sisterhoods established care for the sick in relation to their convents, but many such convents in northern Europe were closed after the Reformation.

MODERN REVIVAL OF DEACONESS WORK

A young Lutheran pastor, Theodore Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth, Germany, was responsible for the revival of deaconess work. He had traveled 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. 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, he returned to Kaiserswerth and with the help of his wife, Frederike, opened the first Deaconess Home and

Hospital in Europe in 1836.

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.(13) Despite strong opposition from the townsfolk, 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.(14)

THE KAISERSWERTH MODEL

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. Florence Nightingale, who has often been called the patron saint of modern nursing, studied with the Fliedners on two occasions and stayed in Kaiserswerth for three months in 1851, before beginning her famous work later in England. She spoke of this experience with the Fliedners as the turning point in her life.(15) Of the deaconess sisters at Kaiserswerth she said, "Never have I met with a higher love, a purer devotion than there."(16)

Group living in a motherhouse, a primary concept for the Fliedners as they organized deaconess work, proved to be a significant element of their success and was an initial step in the modern-day women's movement. 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.(17)

Because family ties in the nineteenth century were strong, the Fliedners wisely made parental consent one of the requirements of admission for deaconess work.(18) 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.(19)

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.(20)

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 motherhouse, as organized at Kaiserswerth by the Fliedners, had two other functions. It was also a training school and a local congregation.

Because a deaconess is first of all "a disciple of the Lord," the sisters who lived together in a motherhouse constituted a community of believers that functioned much like a local congregation.(21) Morning prayers in the chapel, which always adjoined the motherhouse, and evening prayers after the workday ended were standard.

The executive deaconess, or Sister Superior, managed the internal affairs of the sisterhood, assisted by committees that were usually chosen democratically.(22) 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.(23)

DEACONESS TRAINING

The most revolutionary contribution of the Fliedners in their Kaiserswerth model for deaconess work was in the area of training. They required that the training 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.

> The first half of the nineteenth century stands as a dark 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, hemorrhage, 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.(24)

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.(25)

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.(26) As a result, doctors could write orders and know that consistent, careful, loving care would be given in their absence by deaconess nurses. These methods were studied by many visitors who came to Kaiserswerth. Florence Nightingale wrote:

> The Sisters are, however, 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.(27)

This was the beginning of structured nursing care.

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:

> [The deaconess] 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.(28)

The image of the nurse had 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."(29) This description could apply to the deaconess nurse of modern times as well.

THREE TYPES OF DEACONESS SERVICE

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.(30) 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."(31)

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.(32)

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."(33) 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.(34)

DEACONESS GARB

The uniform type of dress, or garb, that the deaconess sisters wore identified them immediately wherever they went. At first, Fliedner had suggested only simplicity of dress, but circumstances soon compelled him to prescribe a special garb, because "it is well known that feminine nature is easily beguiled on this subject, for which reason a precise and minute rule is necessary. "(35)

The garb 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. Equally important was the fact that

> the deaconess garb is a constant reminder of the dignity of the calling; it is 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.(36)

Although some deaconess sisters did not like wearing garb that made them all look the same, most welcomed it.(37) 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 Gibson girl image that was held up as the ideal for women at the turn of the century.(38) "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."(39)

From time to time the garb was updated in most of the sisterhoods in the United States until it was finally replaced with the standard white nurse's uniform in the 1920s for the deaconess nurse on duty and with the neatly designed, classic, dark blue shirtwaist dress for other occasions.

As the garb changed the deaconess pin became the primary means of identification for a deaconess sister. The Fliedners had discouraged the wearing of gold crosses or any other ornamentation as smacking of Romanism,(40) but Lutheran deaconesses in the United States usually wore a large silver cross.(41) Some deaconess sisters wore a pin similar to that of the Red Cross, but the Evangelical deaconess sisters adopted the distinctive, widely accepted deaconess pin based on the symbol of the Kaiserswerth Motherhouse.

> The symbol of Kaiserswerth is a white dove, carrying an olive branch, resting against a blue ground. The blue flag floats from the old windmill tower on the river bank, attracting the attention of the traveler as he floats up the Rhine.(42)

Printed papers from Kaiserswerth were marked with a woodcut of the symbol of the dove and the olive branch.(43)

The deaconess pin has a white dove, denoting purity, on a blue background, representing courage and faithfulness, with a gold cross, signifying commitment to Christ and his work, all surrounded with a gold olive wreath, representing God's eternal and encompassing love. The pin was

presented to the deaconess sister at the time of her consecration. Although simple in design, like the garb, it was not easy to obtain. Three to four years of intensive training, many long hours of practical experience, plus evidence of deep Christian commitment preceded consecration.

CONSECRATION

The Order for the Consecration of Deaconesses was prescribed in The Evangelical Book of Worship(44) and was similar to the liturgical procedure used in the ordination of a pastor. The order included the laying on of hands and an ordination prayer dating back to the fourth century.(45) In Kaiserswerth the consecration of a deaconess concluded with the sacrament of communion.

As part of her consecration a deaconess promised obedience to God and the rules of the motherhouse, willingness to do any work required, and faithfulness in all things.(47) 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.(48)

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.(49)

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.

So it was that the first two deaconess sisters of the Evangelical Synod were addressed as Sister Katherine and Sister Lydia.

THE DEACONESS OUTREACH

As soon as Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis was opened, in 1889, it was filled with patients, which prompted an urgent call for more deaconesses. Members of the first Board of Directors of the Evangelical Deaconess Society wrote articles in the widely circulated official church paper, *Der Friedensbote*, describing the wonderful opportunities that deaconess work offered to young women in the church.(50)

A few years later the Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis began publishing its own monthly periodical, Der *Evangelische Diakonissenfreund,* in order to publicize deaconess work and to reach a wider audience for recruitment purposes. This publication and its successors were edited by the Rev. Frederick P. Jens. Throughout his forty-one years as Superintendent of the Deaconess Home and Hospital in St. Louis, Jens was a strong advocate of deaconess work and gave leadership to the Protestant Deaconess Conference, organized in 1894, and to the Evangelical Deaconess Association, organized in 1908. He translated from the German the widely used Principles of Deaconess Work, which was published by the Association in 1918.(51)

The Rev. Gustav Niebuhr was likewise a leader in the Protestant Deaconess Conference and a founding member of the Evangelical Deaconess Association. He edited *Der Diakonissen-Herold*, which was published for recruitment and informational purposes by the Deaconess Home and Hospital in Lincoln, Illinois.(52)

Slowly at first but then in growing numbers the young women of the church responded to the opportunities to become deaconesses. Because the seminaries were closed to them, deaconess work was the only way women could hope to have a full-time professional career in the church, and many were interested.

The St. Louis Motherhouse, patterned in most respects after the Kaiserswerth model, became the primary training center for deaconess sisters in the Evangelical Synod. In its nearly one hundred years it trained more than five hundred deaconess sisters,[53] and sent many of them out to ministries of the church, including service in the following benevolent institutions:

Bensenville, Home Society, Bensenville, Illinois

Caroline Mission, St. Louis, Missouri

Evangelical Children's Home, St. Louis, Missouri

Evangelical Home for the Aged, Rochester, New York

Good Samaritan Home for the Aged, St. Louis, Missouri

St. Paul's Evangelical Old Folk's Home, Belleville, Illinois.

The deaconess sisters became leaders in almost every professional specialty related to modern health care and also served as teachers, parish assistants, and as missionaries in Ecuador, Honduras, and India. When the Conference of Deaconesses of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was organized in 1952, some of the deaconess sisters gave outstanding leadership. They also held prominent positions when the first Interdenominational Deaconess Conference in the United States was convened in St. Louis in 1956.(54)

As in many human endeavors, there were abuses. Deaconess sisters were often overworked, and some were sent without warning on overnight assignments that lasted for years. But there were also satisfactions and joys, and these predominated. The oral histories of the deaconesses of the St. Louis Motherhouse attest to this. Many sisters declare in retrospect, "I would do it all over again."(55)

Five capable deaconesses in St. Louis have served as Sister Superior, or Executive Deaconess: Sister Katherine Haack (1889-97), Sister Magdalene Gerhold (1897-1930), Sister Alvina Scheid (1930-42), Sister Olivia Drusch (1942-54), and Sister Frieda Ziegler (1954-) Each brought her own unique ability to this leadership role, and together they contributed a continuity of purpose and direction to the sisterhood.

THE DEACONESS LEGACY

All the deaconess sisters of the United Church of Christ are now retired. Two live in Marshalltown, Iowa; one, in Faribault, Minnesota; and twenty-five, in the Sisters' Home in St. Louis, located in the middle of the large Deaconess Hospital and Deaconess College of Nursing complex to which they contributed so much time and talent. Recruitment for deaconesses was discontinued in the 1950s. Once again times had changed. As many new opportunities for full-time Christian service in the church became available to women, all the seminaries of the United

Church of Christ began accepting women in preparation for ordination. The deaconess calling became that of the pastor.

In retirement the deaconess sisters applaud this new day, which comes full circle to apostolic times, when women and men working together in leadership roles carried the church to the frontiers of new ministries in a world of great need.

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."(57)

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities" in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, eds., *Women of Spirit, Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 36.

2. Jane M. Bancroft, *Deaconesses in Europe and Their Lessons for America* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1890), p. 23, and Henry Wheeler, *Deaconesses Ancient and Modern* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1889), p. 87.

3. Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, *Eleventh Annual Report, 1899* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), pp. 9—10.

4. C. Colder, *History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903), p. 299.

5. Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 1904 (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), p. 11.

6. Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, *Articles of Association*, Article II, 1891 (State of Missouri].

7. Ibid., Article IV.

8. Evangelical Deaconess Society, *Eleventh Annual Report*, op. cit., p. 10.

9. 'Immigration to the United States," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,1958, 15:467. John M. McGuire, "They Settled in Missouri's Rhineland," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 29, 1983, p. 1F, describes the hardships of settlers in Missouri. A typhoid epidemic in Lincoln, Illinois, gave impetus to the establishment of deaconess work there, as reported in *St. John Church*, Lincoln, Illinois 1860—1960 (Lincoln, Illinois, N.D.), p. 19.

10. *Historical Sketches of The Congregational Christian Churches and The Evangelical and Reformed Church*, published jointly by the Executive Committee of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Council of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, June 1955, pp. 29—30. Also see Golder, op. cit., pp. 284, 291—95, 466—67.

11. Golder, op. cit., pp. 69, 604—5.

12. Ibid., p. 273, and Carl J. Scherzer, *The Church and Healing* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 121—28.

13. Golder, op. cit., p. 60.

14. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 179, and Sister Julie Mergner, *The Deaconess and Her Work*, trans. Mrs. Adolph Spaeth (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1911), p. 46.

15. Sir Edward Cook, *A Short Life of Florence Nightingale*, abr. Rosalind Nash (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 47.

16. Anne L. Austin, *History of Nursing Source Book* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957), p. 196. This quotation is from Florence Nightingale in a letter to the British Museum in 1897.

17. Rosemary Ruether, "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age" in Ruether and McLaughlin, op. cit., pp. 72—73.

18. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 183. The other requirements for admission at that time were earnest Christian character; good health; basic ability in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and being between eighteen and forty years of age.

19. Christian Golder, *The Deaconess Motherhouse in Its Relation to the Deaconess Work* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Printing Company,1907), pp. 54-55.

20. Ibid., p. 102.

21. Ibid., p. 49. The Deaconess Chapel United Church of Christ was officially organized in St. Louis in 1950. Its membership is limited to deaconess sisters.

22. Austin, op. cit., p. 195. Information is from a booklet written by Florence Nightingale in 1851, after her first visit to Kaiserswerth, entitled, "The Institution of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, for the Practical Training of Deaconesses."

23. Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, op. cit., p. 35.

24. Malcolm T. MacEachern, *Hospital Organization and Management*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Physicians Record Co., 1947), p. 16.

25. Austin, op. cit., p. 189. Quotation is from a pamphlet, *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*, by Theodore Fliedner.

26. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 287, and Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, op. cit., pp. 42—43.

27. Austin, op. cit., p. 193.

28. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 83.

29. Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *The Women Around Jesus*, trans. John

Bowden (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982). p. 111.

30. Emil Wacker, *The Deaconess Calling*, trans. B. A. Endlich, 1893 (Gutersloh: Bertelman, 1888), p. 106.

31. Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

32. Sister Elizabeth Schaefer of the Deaconess Motherhouse in St. Louis became an able Greek scholar and read her daily devotions from the Bible in the original Greek until she was past ninety. (Information from The Deaconess Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.)

33. Mergner, op. cit., p. 192, and *Principles of Deaconess Work*, published by the authority of the Federation of Evangelical Deaconess Associations in the Evangelical Synod of North America (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1918), pp. 82—86.

34. Adele E. Hosto, “Principles and Experiences in Parish Deaconess Work,” *Der Evangelische Diakonissen-Herold* 10, no. 2 (February 1916):4. Sister Adele Hosto was the only deaconess sister in the United Church of Christ who devoted her entire career exclusively to parish work. Many others did so for given periods of time.

35. Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, op. cit., p. 109.

36. *Principles of Deaconess Work*, op. cit., p. 38.

37. Oral history tapes of individual deaconess sisters in The Deaconess Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

38. Pamela Neal Warford, “The Social Origins of Female Iconography: Selected Images of Women in American Popular Culture, 1890— 1945” (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1979), 2, 28.

39. *Principles of Deaconess Work*, op. cit., p. 37.

40. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 289.

41. Ibid.

42. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 91.

43. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 281.

44. Published by the German Evangelical Synod of North America (St. Louis and Chicago: Eden Publishing House, 1916), pp. 228—31.

45. Prayer used in Order of Consecration of Deaconesses: “Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, who didst fill with Thy Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Hannah and Huldah, who didst in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates, who also didst not disdain that Thine only begotten Son should be born of a woman; do Thou also look down upon these Thy servants who now have been set apart to the ministry of Deaconesses; grant them the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, and cleanse them from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, that they may worthily discharge the work committed unto them to Thine honor, and to the praise of Jesus Christ, to whom with Thee, and the Holy Spirit be glory and adoration for ever and ever. Amen.”

46. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 85.

47. *Principles of Deaconess Work*, op. cit., pp. 28-33.

48. Wacker, op. cit., p. 95.

49. Ibid., p. 85.

50. C. Fritsch, "Diakonissenbriefe," *Der Friedensbote* 40, no.

21 (November 1, 1889):166, and J.P. Irion, "Em Wart an unsre Christlichen Jungfrauen und wen er sonst angeht," Der Friedensbote 40, no. 7(September 1889):134.

51. Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, *Fiftieth Annual Report*, 1939, (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), p. 23.

52. William G. Chrystal, *A Father's Mantle: The Legacy of Gustav Niebuhr* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), pp. 77—94, gives an excellent account of Pastor Niebuhr's work in the deaconess movement.

53. Evangelical Deaconess Society, *Forty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1938, p. 8, reports that 454 deaconess sisters had been in training up to that time. Succeeding reports add more.

54. Mary Lou Barnwell, "Joining Hands in Christian Service," *The Methodist Woman*, July-August 1956, p. 8, speaks of Sister Pauline Becker's leadership as Field Secretary.

55. Oral history tapes, op. cit.

56. Ruether and McLaughlin, Introduction, op. cit., p. 24.

57. Minutes, *Twelfth General Synod*, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 22— 26, 1979, United Church of Christ, p. 72.