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INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK ON ECUMENICAL DIAKONIA

CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES OF DIAKONIA AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES

Edited by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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