

25th January, 1974.

In my original paper on Diakonia I spoke of it as concerning itself with three great areas of human need:

- (i) social welfare
- (ii) development
- (iii) liberation

Some misgivings have been expressed in regard to <sup>a too</sup> an explicitly proclaimed interest in liberation. It could be misunderstood both by state authorities and by people generally and result in suspicion and opposition. It may be advisable therefore to drop the term 'liberation' and refer only to welfare and development. Liberation is implicit in development. Perhaps it may be better to leave it so.

It has been pointed out that, to <sup>integrate</sup> ~~inherit~~ Diakonia into the wider sphere of ecumenical collaboration it would be better if its field of operations corresponded with that of the Natal Council of Churches. There should be no difficulty about this.

A very superficial consideration of areas of human need in and around Durban reveals that there are several broad categories of concern for Diakonia.

#### 1. Education of Church Congregations

-and of the public generally - regarding the social and economic situation of less fortunate groups.

<sup>These</sup> These could be achieved to some extent by the dissemination of information, and thus, of course, pre-supposes that the information is collected, which, in turn, implies co-operation with such bodies as the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, university faculties and institutes, trade unions and so on. Diakonia would not be a research body but a collecting and communicating body.

It could communicate in numerous ways, for example:

- (i) by publishing light, informative leaflets and pamphlets and by disseminating good literature published by other bodies e.g.

- (ii) by providing material for sermons, lectures, prayer services and special days of christian concern and intercessions,
- (iii) by providing discussion outlines based on factual information.

Subjects that could be dealt with are wages, health, housing, influx control, family situations, hotel accommodation and its implications (e.g. at Clermont, Umlazi, Glebe and Kwa Mashu) educational facilities, bursaries, social amenities, channells of communication between community and administration, workers and management; the whole vexed and complex question of domestic workers and their specific needs in the matter of wages, hours of work, transport and recreational, educational and cultural amenities.

## 2. Promotion of Projects

There is no clear-cut distinction between the Education mentioned above and the Promotion of Projects. They obviously overlap, as action is one of the best forms of education.

Under this heading it is envisaged that Diakonia would formulate certain clearly defined and limited projects that Church groups could tackle, such as

- (i) provision of creches for working mothers, e.g. at Clermont where many women work in factories. Trade unions could be very helpful in providing information and guidance.
- (ii) provision of libraries, not only lending libraries, but places where students living in crowded conditions could work.
- (iii) provision of cultural, social and recreational facilities for domestic workers (literacy classes, cookery classes, evening entertainment) in church halls.

### 3. Influencing Commerce, Industry, Government and Administration

This would involve bringing to the notice of people in positions of power the needs and handicaps of people dependent on them in regard, for example, to many of the needs mentioned above and such practical matters as toilet facilities, staff-rooms, canteens, restaurants and so on.

### 4. Self-Help

In the long run the social and economic problems all around us will be solved by pressure from the people who suffer under them. They must be helped to define and formulate their needs and to <sup>co-operate in</sup> ~~act about~~ solving them through education and co-operation.

Side by side with the education of the "haves" to see the needs of the "have-nots", Diakonia should always consider as a most important aim, the promotion of self-help and self-reliance among the "have-nots".

### Conclusion

Anyone accepting the job of Director of Diakonia (or should it be Deacon of Diakonia?) could not be expected to tackle more than a fraction of the problems referred to. Decisions about priorities would have to be taken by the council or committee responsible in consultation with him.