

DIAKONIA World Federation reelects president at global gathering

Sandy Boyce's talk, “Visions for the Future,” encouraged following the example of the pastor who founded the modern deaconess movement.

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DIAKONIA World Federation, an ecumenical association of diaconal communities, reelected Sandy Boyce, a deacon of the Uniting Church in Australia, as its president at its recent global assembly in Chicago.

The gathering of 400 deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers from 28 countries also celebrated DIAKONIA's 70th anniversary.

In a talk titled “Visions for the Future,” Boyce recalled the founding of the modern deaconess movement in 1836 by Theodore Fliedner, a Lutheran pastor in Germany.

“It was a response to the challenging contextual issues of the day, especially with the rise of industrialization,” Boyce said. “Fliedner established a deaconess motherhouse and a diaconal community that would enable women in the 19th century to find a meaningful vocation and that would respond to these challenges in society.”

Boyce encouraged the church and diaconal communities to follow Fliedner's example by asking, “What kind of model for ministry is required in our time and place, for our particular context? How can the church best shape ministry so that the diaconal mission of the whole people of God can be best equipped?” — DIAKONIA World Federation