

Editors' Comment

The issue 1/2020 that you have now opened digitally was planned as an “open issue” – which means all five of the articles were freely sent to and brought through our review and publishing process. It can never be predicted exactly which of the articles in the process will be part of the next open issue of the journal. Each article has its own timeline depending on the possibilities of the authors and the very decisive peer reviewers who work with the text. When it was decided which articles would be part this issue it came as a surprise how closely they were connected thematically. The theme of the issue could have been “Diaconia in the public and political sphere,” a subject that each of the five articles relates to in one way or another.

The first article of Johanna Kallio, Hannu Lahtinen and Hanna Wass from the University of Helsinki/Finland is a quantitative study that asks how the voting behaviour of deacons in Finland differ from other professions in the same social class in general and from social workers in particular. Interestingly, the authors find some discrepancies! The next two articles are analyses of publications, statements and informative literature of diaconia or religious organisations regarding their role in the public sphere. Thorsten Moos from the Protestant University of Wuppertal/Bethel in Germany examines public materials of Diakonie Deutschland, the German umbrella organisation of all diaconal institutions and services, from the perspective of public religion. He identifies four levels of diaconal negotiations with the public (organisations, convictions, individual motivations and symbols) and studies how diaconal responses, memorandums or blogs communicate on these four levels. Bjørn Hallstein Holte's article is the first COVID-19 related research published in *Diaconia*. Holte is based at VID Specialized University in Norway and studies health protection information about the coronavirus that the Islamic Council of Norway has provided for its members. For his analysis Holte uses the concept of religious organisations as public spaces and Niklas Luhmann's concept of communicational permeability.

The fourth article written by Jakob Egeris Thorsen at the University of Aarhus, Denmark and the fifth article by Tron Fagermoen at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society are theological reflections about the role and voice of diaconia in the public sphere. Jakob Egeris Thorsen's article is a plea for more (explicit) Christian identity in the work of diaconia in the Danish secularised context. He leans his considerations on the arguments of Charles Taylor, Pope Benedict XVI and Jürgen Moltmann. Tron Fagermoen revisits the Swedish theologian Gustav Wingren to understand what kind of language diaconia could and should use in postsecular and pluralist society. He argues that Wingren's dialectical approach to

universalistic and particularistic faith communication goes beyond the bilingualism that many of the other contributors to this discourse opt for. That all five articles of this issue circulate around the role and communication of diaconia and religion in the public sphere (or ask how deacons relate to the politics) is a clear indication for the comprehensive social changes that are going on at the moment. It is very likely that we will read more about these changes in future issues of *Diaconia*.

May I use the opportunity to remind you of the *Diaconia* review section, for which Kaia Schultz Rønsdal (k.d.m.s.ronsdal@teologi.uio.no) and Erica Meijers (p.e.m.meijers@pthu.nl) are responsible. Please do not hesitate to contact Kaia and Erica if you have suggestions for reviews or want to review a publication yourself. And please do contact the editorial secretary Jeremy Heuslein (journalfordiaconia@gmail.com) or myself (annette.leis-peters@vid.no) if you have any suggestions or reflections about possible issues of the journal or the future of the journal in general.

With best wishes for a good reading,

Annette Leis-Peters