



TABITHA'S STORY

Acts 9:36

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.

Our beautiful sister Tabitha Asher, from IUIC Netherlands Camp, is one of my dearest sisters. She's been enduring for the past 9 years, and really embodies the spirit of our foremother Tabitha aka Dorcas. Like Dorcas, she is full of good works and alms deeds (**Acts 9:36**). Many brothers and sisters can show the beautiful garments she has made for them.

I had the pleasure of interviewing her, as she has had such an interesting journey. I hope she inspires all the up-and-coming seamstresses amongst us.

When did you first learn to sew?

I was raised by my great aunt, the younger sister of my maternal grandmother. She started sewing when she was 16 years old, [learning] from the catholic nuns in Suriname. Growing up in her household, I used to sit with her while she was sewing and help her cut the threads. Later on she trusted me to use the needle to sew on buttons. From year to year, I learned to do the basics. However, her 3 children and I strived to go behind the sewing machine whenever she went away to cook or speak to a neighbouring friend.

She worked two jobs as a cleaning lady but was home by 4pm. She would go straight behind the sewing machine to finish projects for her clients. When I turned 12, she would send me to get her haberdashery/mercery, not far from where we lived. It made me proud; that she trusted me to get these things for her.

When she noticed I was doing a good job she would send me to the City of Paramaribo, by bus, to get more of the good stuff (fabric). When I'd reach home with everything from her list, she would be so grateful. It made me so proud, knowing I did good!



Sorry, she died last February, at 88 years old. Writing these memories down, make my eyes tear up.

In 1980 I came to the Netherlands and one month later, she also arrived. She continued her sewing and until 1990, I was there to help and learn. I'd go on shopping sprees with her, learning what to and what not to buy, concerning fabrics. I got myself a used sewing machine. A very bad one, almost electrified myself using it. But the Spirit was there, ready to conquer (LOL)! She still helped me with cutting my projects, the first year. Then, I started doing remakes of what I had in my closet and continued with different pieces for my young cousins and friends.

What inspires you to make clothes?

The print on a fabric is what I love most of all. Then the colors, or the mix of both! When the design speaks to me, I see the dress or skirt pictured in my mind. Then, I buy the fabric!

What aspects of our foremother Tabitha do you relate to?

When The Most High woke me up, I wasn't doing any sewing. However, I soon realised what was needed. I started buying the righteous fabrics, like 100% cotton, and fringes and ribbands of blue, in bulk. You visited me a few times in Amsterdam, in the studio I was living in, up till last February, for 36 years. Do you remember how it looked like a storage room, filled with boxes up to the ceiling?

Foremother Tabitha became my inspiration, after I read and heard her story, during one of the many classes to prepare for the hard times to come. Sis Sara did suggest her name many times. I, however, didn't think I could fill her shoes, like John said about Christ, in Luke 3:16. I'm still so impressed, how so many people prayed and mourned for her after she died. Imagine being resurrected because of the good works you did for God's people.



How have you used your talents in your walk in the truth?

1 Corinthians 7:34

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

I don't like to boast, that's more of a question for leadership and the sisters to answer. Nonetheless, I have taught sisters how to take measurements and sew, have helped the body when we did our first garments for the men, dresses for the sisters, the curtains for the school, etc. Coming together in houses and schools to get these projects done...there's lots of memories and laughs. I helped get fringes for the men's garments in the UK and mailed them over. I enjoy hosting sisters that would visit Amsterdam. I would take them to my favourite open markets and mercery stores. I also mailed shirts to brothers in the Caribbean.

These things excite me! When people come in and are eager to keep the Commandments... this is where 'Tabitha' comes to life! I organised some challenges with my sisters during the lockdowns in 2020/21. For the first challenge, I sent them fabrics to make a bag. The second challenge was to use army combat fabric to make a skirt or dress, to wear at FOT. We also had a 'SPA' zoom last year. I surprised all sisters with a dress; the same fabric, in three different colors. Now, there's always a sister that wears her dress during a meeting or gathering.

Sirach 11:4

Boast not of thy clothing and raiment and exalt not thyself in the day of honour: for the works of the Lord are wonderful, and his works among men are hidden.

Reading this scripture keeps me grounded because it is all of/for the Lord. Seeing the finished dresses and skirts amaze me more; that's someone else's credit, not mine!



I don't know if I've ever told you this, but while I sew, I change designs too. This, for me is 'Spiritual'. I'd be impressed with the results and think, *I did this...when did I have the time?!* I feel overwhelmed [with joy] whenever I make a dress or skirt for sisters. I love seeing their responses when they get it!

We had a DOS event over here in 2021. I had bought some fabric for myself, back in 2020. But when I reached home, looking at it, I thought *this would be nice for all the sisters in the body*. So, the next day, I went back but the Ishmaelite store. I ended up having to wait for months to get it all from his storage!

Finally, in 2021 I started to sew these dresses randomly. No measurements, I just sewed them by love. During DOS, most sisters got a dress, and some had to wait 'till January 2022.

But now, when we're on zoom or congregating, there's always a sister in this dress!! That's what I love about sewing, for my sisters in Christ.

What scriptures do you think of when sewing for the body?

Sirach 11:4

When I accomplish a project, I'm like everyone else. I put them on hangers, look every time I pass, and think *I did that?!* The way I feel, it is the Spirit of The Most High working through me to create! This truly is of the LORD!

How would you describe your sewing style?

Timeless craftsmanship! Remember, I was taught by a woman who learned how to sew from nuns, back in the 40's. So, sewing and designs known to me are from that era. Still fashionable, however, with my own twists, of course (LOL).



If you could make a garment for anyone in the truth, who would it be and why?

Wow! Any sister: Sister Adaliyah, Bishop Kani's daughters, HO Officer Mikhayah. I can't choose sis!



Sarah



Sister Tabitha IUIC Netherlands Interview
Sister Sharon HO Officer Michael IUIC Midlands



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