

## **Diakonia Remixed, 2012**

### **Executive Summary**

The Diakonia Remixed report is largely the result of a desire of many in the CRC to have a greater impact in the larger community of which the church is a part. The report stated that “the central theological and ecclesiastical conviction that has guided our work is that the church does not simply *have* deacons but is by its very nature and calling a diaconate – that is, a community created by the triune God to be a servant people in the world”. (p. 3)

The complaint of churches to synod is that the ideal view of the office of deacon hardly ever seems to be realized in the daily practice and that deacons are often perceived as “elders in training”. Moreover, “the local diaconate does not have the structure and support needed to carry out the charge it has been given”.

**And . . .**

“while the vast majority of deacons do very well at setting the offering schedule, hardly any were actively pursuing better housing policies in their communities or seeking restorative justice.” (p. 4)

The scriptural starting point was refocused from **Acts 6:6** . . . “*They presented these men (deacons) to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them*”.

. . . to **Ephesians 4:11-13** “*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*”.

Diakonia cannot be reduced to simple acts of charity and the distribution of alms (as suggested by the use of Acts 6 in the form for ordination) but includes a much broader and richer mandate. The Contemporary Testimony articulates a broad and comprehensive mission for the church as a people gathered “to live out the story of God’s reconciling love . . . working for a world of justice and peace”. The scope of the Testimony’s vision for the church includes creation care, service to the poor, prayerful political participation, peacemaking, advocacy, economic stewardship, and education for prophetic watchfulness over our world”.

The Guiding Principles of the Diakonia Remixed report are:

1. It is not simply the case that the church *has* deacons, but rather it is the case that the whole church *is itself called to diakonia*, which we understand as God-glorifying service that is rendered to the world in obedience to Christ. (pg. 20)
2. *Diakonia* cannot be reduced to simple acts of charity and the distribution of alms (as suggested by the use of Acts 6 in the form for ordination), but includes a much more broader and richer mandate. (pg. 20)

3. The Church's role in society is described not only in terms of mercy, but also of justice, reconciliation, and peacemaking. (pg. 21)
4. The taskforce is guided by the "principle of parity" between offices. (pg. 21)
5. The delegation of deacons to major assemblies is not about equal representation as such, as if there should be some balance of power, but rather it is about the *full* representation of the *whole* church which these offices represent. (pg. 21)
6. 'Minimal regulation for maximum engagement'. (pg. 21)

"Diakonia, as the work of service that restores shalom, is not confined to any particular office but belongs to the church as a whole. The calling of deacons is not to perform that service on behalf of the church, but to equip, empower and enable the church to live out its own diaconal calling". (pg. 3)