

DIAKONIA REMIXED

Webinar on The Office of Deacon Task Force

May 1, 2013

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Welcome to the Webinar

- Welcome and introductions
- How will this webinar proceed?

Our mandate

- To review the articles of the Church Order relating to the office of deacon at the church and major assemblies.
- Recommend resources that encourage revitalization of the diaconate and its role in the community.
- The intent of the review would be to encourage, empower, and educate churches and broader assemblies to structure their diaconal ministry in ways that:



Our mandate

allow for effective coordination of ministry efforts that transform the community and the church, as members minister in and with their community. This harnesses “God’s gifts” in the community for community benefit. The gifts of churches and their members, as well as the gifts lying dormant in the community, need to be stewarded



Our mandate

- Select leadership based on gifts commensurate with the office and vision for ministry.
- Lead church members to exercise their gifts and so enhance their own faith walk as they minister with community, nation, and world.
- Establish terms of deacon tenure that provide for consistent ministry oversight, implementation, and coordination.
- Address the place and role of deacons at the broader assemblies.



Grounds

- The current structure and tradition do not address the ministry context or the expectations of the equality of office established in Church Order Article 2.
- The mandate in the charge to deacons is difficult to fulfill given the current language in the Church Order.
- Past efforts to address this (i.e., asking for stronger classical diaconal committees) have not resulted in churches being the agents of transformation in their communities.

(Acts of Synod 2010, p. 829)



What we were *NOT* asked to do

Offer biblical, theological and historical reasons for permitting the seating of deacons at major assemblies.



What We Did

- Examined Scripture
- Researched Church Order
- Created guiding principles
- Reviewed history



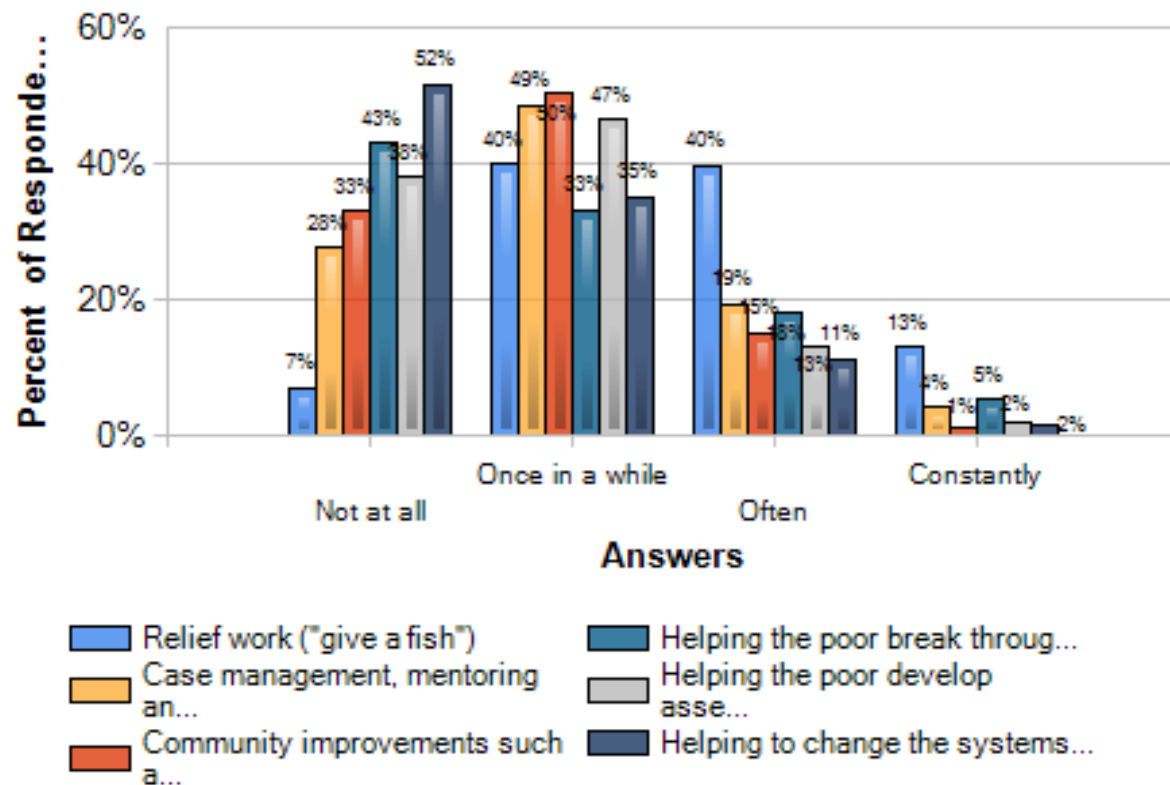
What We Did

- Gauged the mind of the Church
- Gathered resources
- Reviewed relevant materials
- Got assistance from ‘advisors’



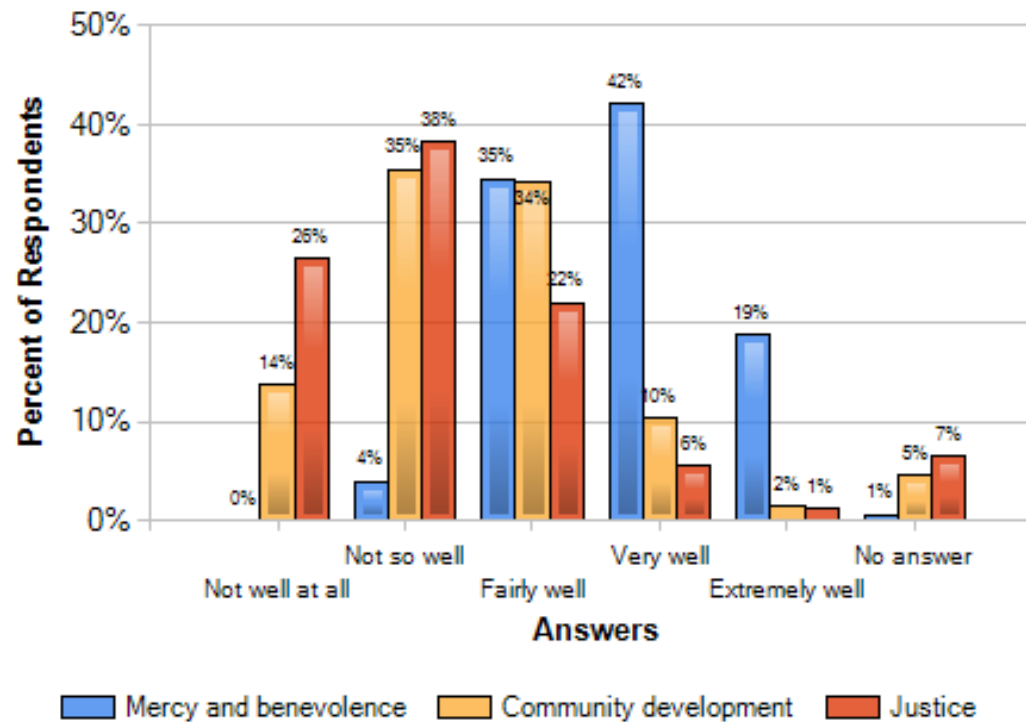
Research

The diaconate at my church is involved in...



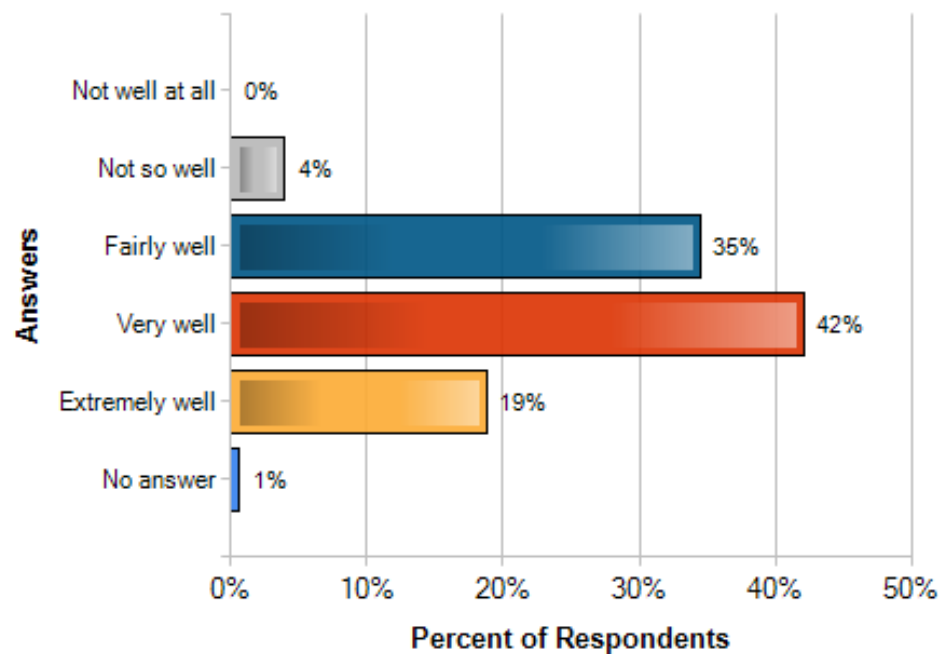
Research

Performance of your diaconate



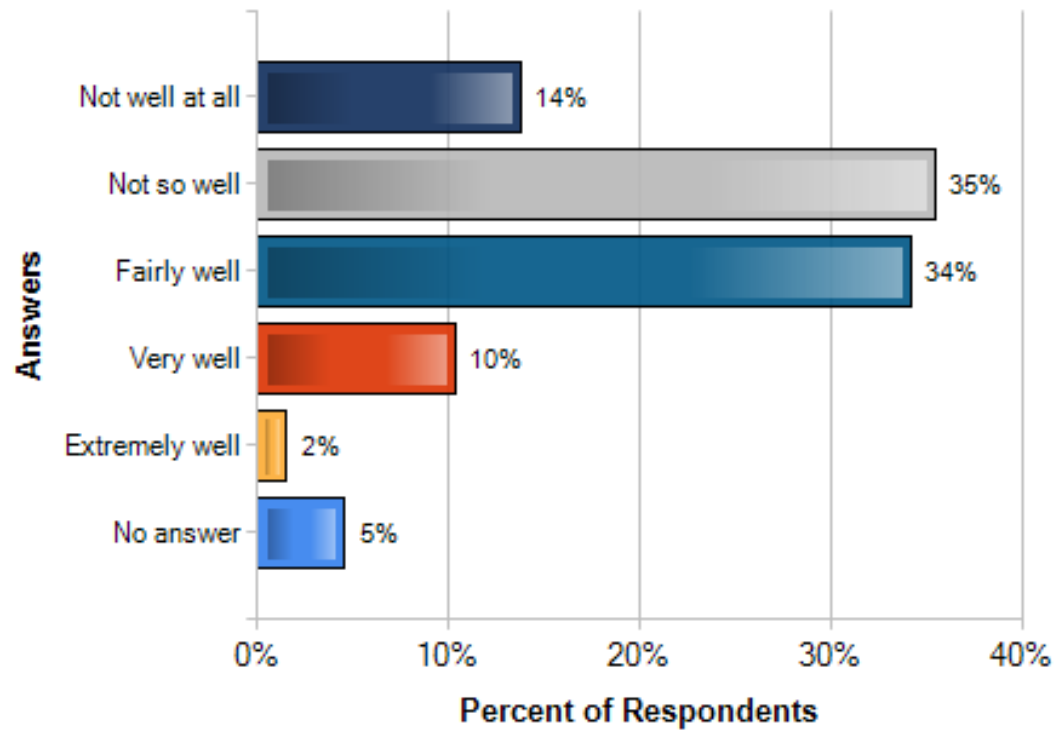
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Performance of your diaconate - Mercy and benevolence



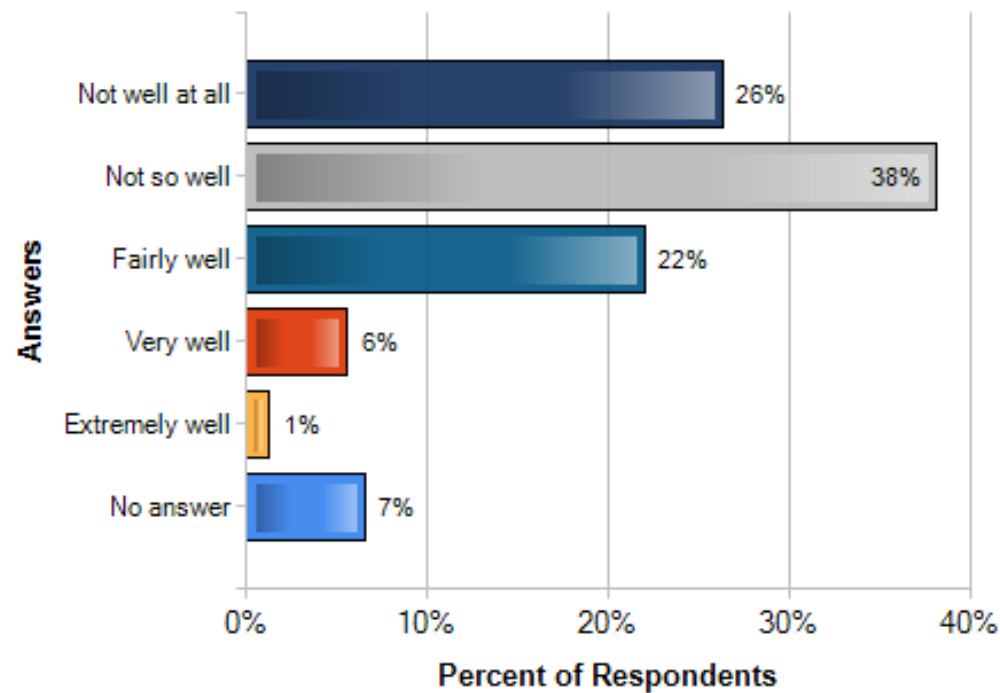
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Performance - Community development



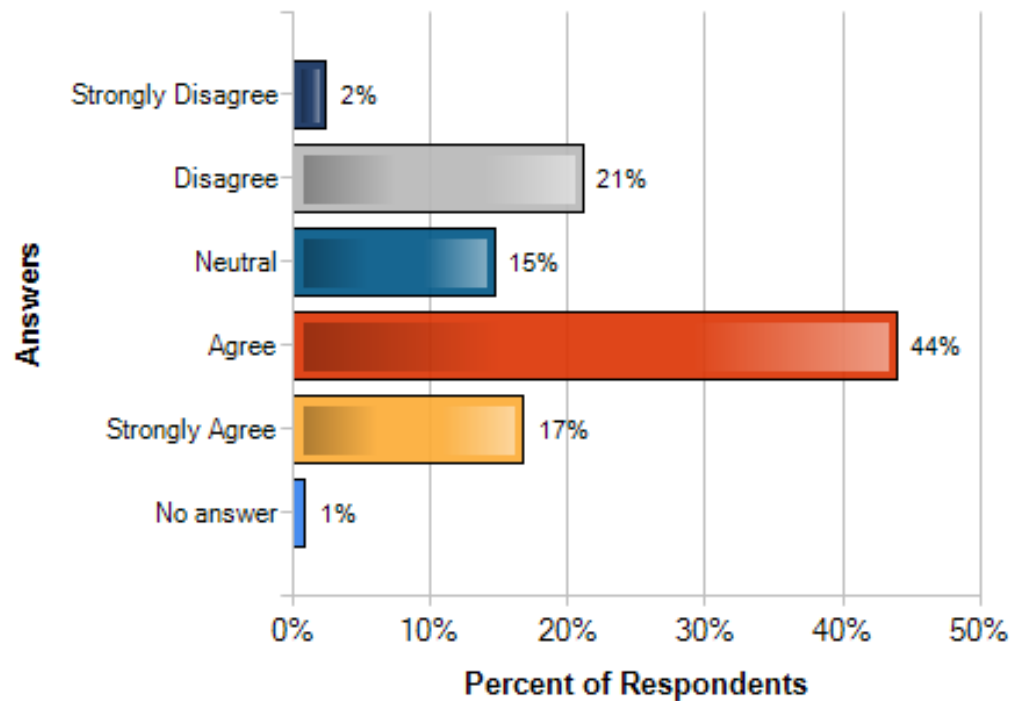
Research

Performance of your diaconate - Justice



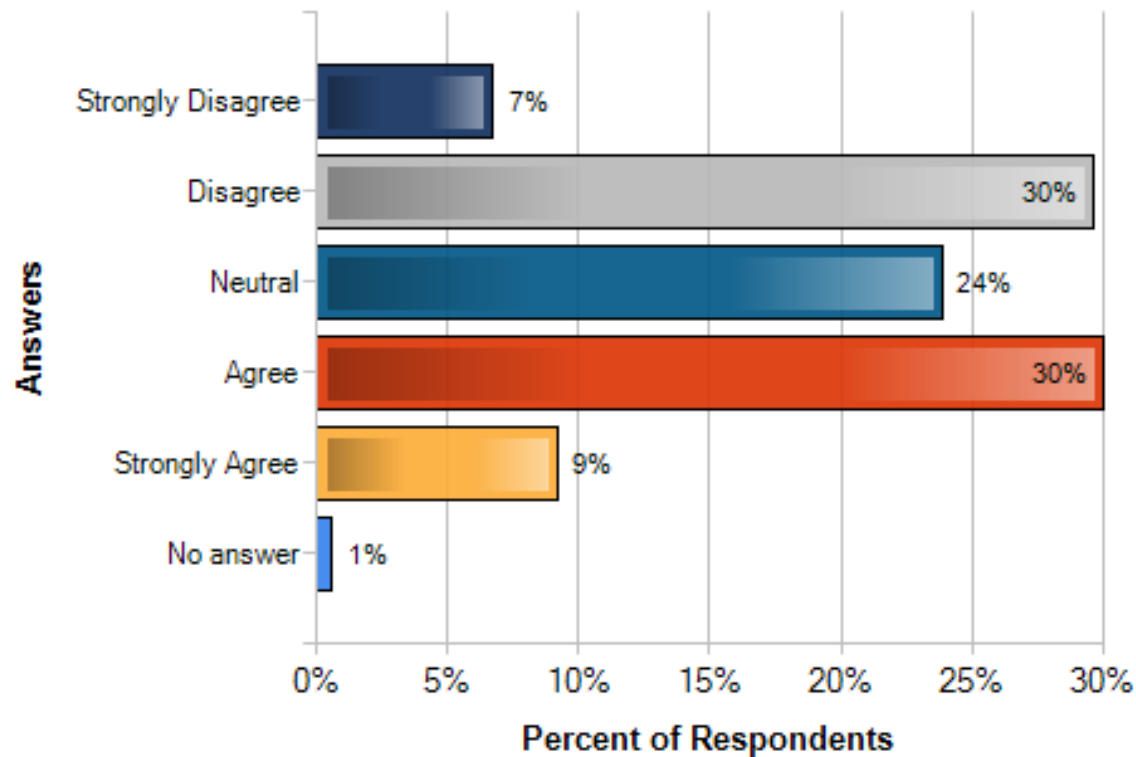
Research

satisfied with the role of D in my church

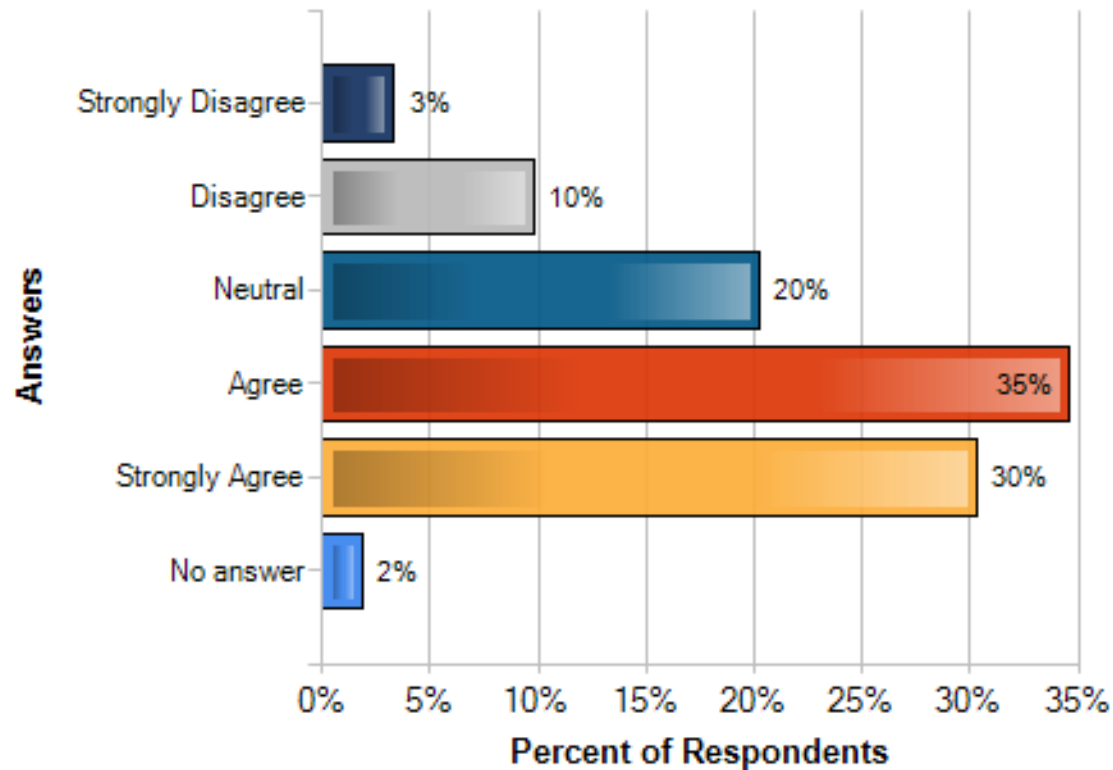


Research

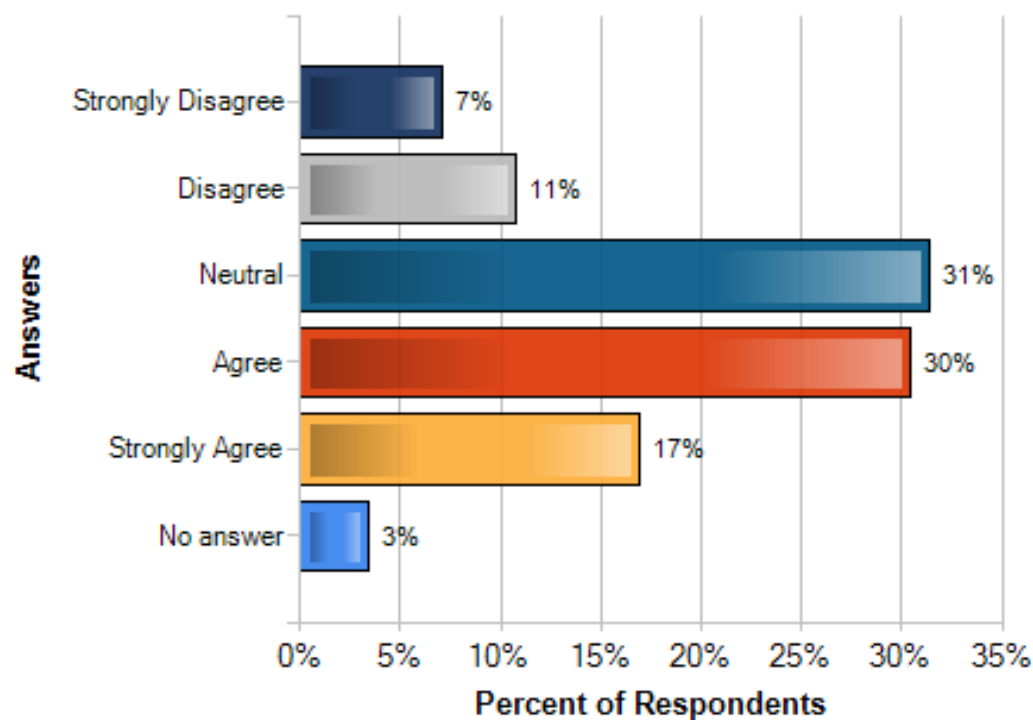
- satisfied with role D plays in my community



Research: Deacons at Classis

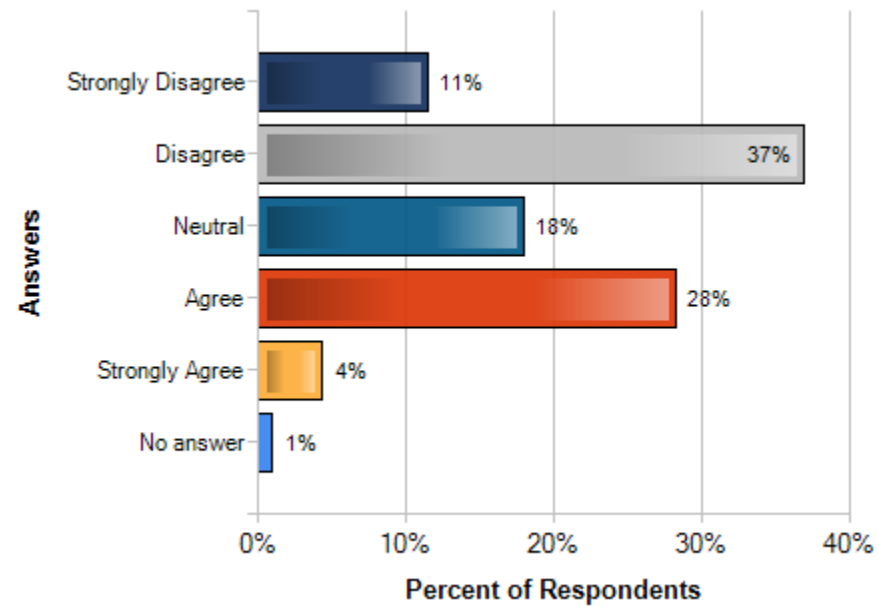


Research: Deacons at Synod



Research

Deacons are elders in training



Research - survey

- "Simpler" tasks done frequently and well
 - mercy
 - benevolence
- Complex tasks done rarely and less well
 - community engagement
 - justice advocacy



Research - survey

Deacons at Classis and Synod would enhance:

- Work of deacons
- Leadership
- Church Ministries



Research

- Diaconal Committees
- Reference to service (*diakonia*) in creeds and confessions
- Historical Summary



History: Promise and Un-fulfillment

“the delegation of deacons to major assemblies will not immediately bring diaconal service into larger attention and interest throughout our churches. But if we recognize that the church is a united body and that all of its work is interrelated, that the scope of the ministry of mercy has taken on large global dimensions in our day, and that the very presence of deacons at major assemblies can serve to focus the attention of the church on the fact that our compassionate Savior wills that the work of mercy shall stand in the center of the full interest of the church, then the presence of deacons at major assemblies can be a step in the direction of honoring Christ more fully in his compassion and mercy. The church has a great responsibility to show the mercy of Christ both in, and to, our troubled world. Let deacons be involved at the level of decision making to project the image of compassion and mercy in the church to a sick and despairing world.”



(1967)

History: Promise and Unfulfillment

Noting no changes after the consideration of many reports on the issue, Ridder concludes in 1982

“the time in which we live provides almost unlimited opportunities for the development of the office of deacon.

It would be a severe loss to the church if the diaconal office is further subsumed under that of eldership.”

(italics added for emphasis)



Guiding Principles, #1

The whole church is called to *diakonia*.

“to equip the saints for *diakonia*, for building up
the body of Christ” Eph. 4:12



Guiding Principles, #2

More than charity and giving of alms,
Diakonia is the mission of the church in:

- Living out God's reconciling love
- Working for justice and peace
- Leading the church to participate in the mission of God.



Guiding Principles, #3

Change the language of the Articles of the Church Order to reflect:

- Justice
- Reconciliation
- Peacemaking

...and be consistent with

- The Contemporary Testimony
- The Belhar Confession
- The forms of ordination



Guiding Principles, #4

Parity of the Offices.

“It can be argued, therefore, that the CRCNA is gradually moving toward the view that it is a person’s ordination as such and not his or her specific office or mandate that qualifies a person for delegation to classis. Or to put it another way, the CRCNA may finally be drawing the logical conclusions regarding the parity of offices.”

(Henry De Moor)



Guiding Principles, #4

Deacons should be appointed as delegates to serve in the major assemblies of the church.



Guiding Principles, #4

“The council of each church shall delegate a deacon in addition to a minister and an elder, provided the classis approves of the delegation of deacons to its meetings. Deacons delegated to classis shall be given credentials identical to those given to ministers and elders. The gender of diaconal delegates to a classis shall be consistent with the decisions of that classis concerning the supplement to Article 3-a of the Church Order”

(1997)



Guiding Principles, #5

Not about 'power balance' but about FULL representation of the *whole* church which these offices represent.



Guiding Principles, #6

‘minimal regulation for maximum engagement’ John Calvin states, “If the church requires it, we may not only without offense allow something to be changed but permit any observances previously in use among us to be abandoned.”

(Calvin, Institutes, 4.10.32)



Our Recommendations

- Refocus on Ephesians
- Flexible terms of service
- Mutual accountability and strengthening the office of deacon in consistory
- Broader mandate for deacons in the CO
- Article 40 — deacons at classis
- Article 42, deacons involved in church visiting
- Article 45 — deacons at synod



Term of Service

ARTICLE 25

a. The elders and deacons shall serve for a limited time as designated by the council. **The length of term should be appropriate for continuity and succession of ministry leadership, accountability for ministry outcomes, and the regular infusion and flourishing of gifts as the Spirit endows each generation.** Retiring office-bearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of the church make immediate eligibility for re-election advisable. Elders and deacons who are thus re-elected shall be reinstalled.

b. [Remains the same]



Term of Service

ARTICLE 25 (continued)

c. The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people.

Deacons shall lead the congregation in ways that inspire faithful stewardship of their time, talent, and resources and so give life in this world the shape of God's kingdom by calling the members to be ambassadors of reconciliation in all areas of life. Thus, deacons shall create and encourage participation in structures and ministries that use member gifts in areas of compassion, community transformation, creation care, justice, stewardship, and pastoral care, both locally and globally.



Grounds: See Guiding Principles 1, 2, 3, and 6.

Deacons to Synod

CURRENT Article 45

The synod is the assembly representing the churches of all the classes. Each classis shall delegate two ministers and two elders to the synod.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 45

REVISED Article 45

The synod is the assembly representing the churches of all the classes. Each classis shall delegate **one minister, one elder, one deacon and one other officebearer** to the synod.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 45



Resourcing a revised Diakonia

1. World Renew support for deacons.
2. CRCNA Executive Director ensures collaboration with the CRC.
3. CRCNA Executive Director prepares a report for Synod 2014.



How can you help?

- Pray
- Make sure your council studies the report
- Make your voice heard
- Attend synod in person if possible
- Encourage your deacons



For Further Study

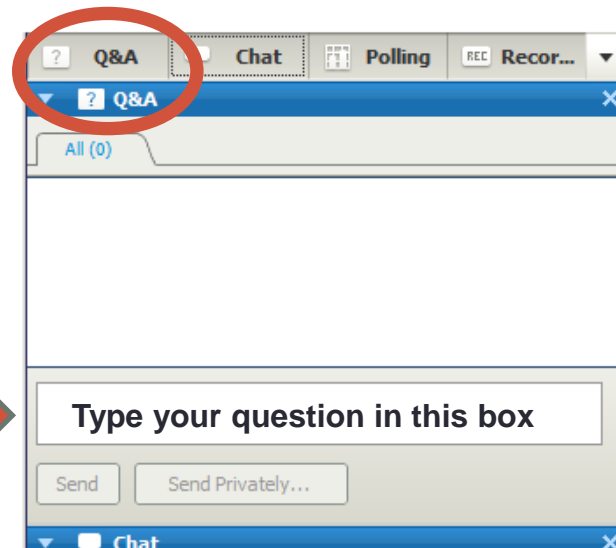
- **Read the whole report at:**
http://www.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/resources/synodical/Diakonia.pdf
- **Study the survey data at:**
http://www.crcna.org/pages/diakonia_survey.cfm
- **Remix our theme song, “Everybody is Diakonian” – hear it at:**
<http://network.crcna.org/content/deacons/musical-remix-everybody-get-diakonian-and-win-200>
- **Diakonia Remixed website:** <http://www.crcna.org/diakonia>
- **Synod 2013 Agenda** (includes report, overture, and communications): http://crcna.org/sites/default/files/2013_agenda.pdf



DIAKONIA REMIXED

Questions & Answers

Please send your
questions to
“All Panelists”



Everybody Get Diakonian!

by Greg Scheer

Diakonia, what's that mean?

You say, its all Greek to me.

But when you hear it with new ears,
maybe you'll catch the Spirit.

Cause it's being Jesus' hands and feet
in a world so full of need.

This world is groaning for release:
open your ears.

Jesus is calling you to hear.



Diakonia used to be
a lonely band of deacons.

But the way that they see it now,
it is me, it is you, it is everybody working,
helping our neighbor, doing good deeds,
showing the love of Jesus.

You don't think you're needed? Open your eyes:
take a look around.

'Cause sometimes it seems that there's no hope,
when everybody wants to break it down.



Rap:

Well, it used to be, in the CRCNA,
that deacons served and elders led the way.
Are you ready for a brand new feelin'?
Everybody get DIAKONIAN!
Would you be freakin' out
if I told you you're a deacon now?
Let that spin your head 'til the room is reelin'.
Everybody get DIAKONIAN!
Serving God is everybody's business.
So get busy, get jumpin' in it.



Throw your hands up to the ceilin'.
Everybody get DIAKONIAN!
West coast, East coast, city, suburb,
Young and old of every color,
Indonesian, Friesen, Navajo, Korean:
Everybody get DIAKONIAN!
Remix, rethink, redeem, reboot;
remember that our God renews
us all to a new way of bein'.
Everybody get DIAKONIAN!

