

CHURCH ORDER AND APPEALS

Chair: Rev. Bert Slofstra
Reporter: Rev. Bruce A. Persenaire

Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force

- A. *Materials*: Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force Report, pp. 263-98
- B. *Recommendations*
1. That synod adopt the following mandate for the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon:
 - a. Address the following questions:
 - 1) Church Order Article 35 assigns “tasks which belong to the common administration of the church” to the council (pastors, elders, and deacons). What biblical and confessional basis exists for those tasks, which on the congregational level belong distinctively to the office of elder and to the office of deacon (Church Order Art. 35), to be assigned collectively to elder and deacon delegates on the classical and synodical levels?
 - 2) What is the unity that the offices share, and how are the “honor and dignity” of the offices distinguished from how they differ in “mandate and task” (Church Order Article 2)? What does it mean to have parity of office?
 - 3) How does the distinctiveness of each office, the unique giftedness, parity of offices and yet differences in “mandate and task” influence and shape the agendas of major assemblies that would have both elders and deacons seated?
 - 4) In what ways can the agendas of the major assemblies be shaped for meaningful inclusion and participation by deacons, without tying the hands of the individual classis and their local expression (minimal regulation for maximum engagement)?
 - 5) What changes, highlights, or broadening of the mandate of synod would help make the seating of all officebearers at synod meaningful and beneficial?
 - b. That the task force develop a plan for resourcing and revitalizing both elders and deacons, including plans for its implementation.
 - c. That the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon recommend appropriate changes to the Church Order. This would include reviewing the proposed changes within the report of the 2013 Office of Deacon Task Force, considering further changes relating to the other offices, and clarifying a missional vision, all with a view to integrating such recommended changes.

- d. That the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon study Recommendation G of the Office of Deacon Task Force 2013 be studied for suitable ways to be implemented.
 - e. That the task force report to Synod 2015 and forward an update to Synod 2014.
2. That synod appoint the following diverse and qualified candidates to serve on the committee:

Ms. Amanda Bakale
Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen
Rev. Roy Berkenbosch (Member of the Initial Task Force)
Mr. Chris Ganski
Dr. Michael Goheen
Mr. Rudy Gonzalez
Rev. Henry Kranenburg
Rev. Nick Monsma
Ms. Rosetta Polk-Pugh
Mr. Terry Woodnorth (Member of the Initial Task Force)

Staff:

Mr. Andy Ryskamp OR Ms. Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo
Dr. Kathy Smith OR Dr. Henry De Moor

Alternates:

Dr. George Monsma
Dr. Mick Vandenbosch