

**From:** Gwynne Lawlor [<mailto:gwynne@lawlor.co.za>]  
**Sent:** 03 May 2013 09:11  
**To:** 'David Bannerman'  
**Subject:** RE: Distinctive Diaconate

Dear Bishop David

Thank you for your e-mail and for keeping my glasses safe.

In tidying up my study recently (as an excuse not to settle down to swotting!!)- I came across some old files, one of which is on Deacon's Formation put together by the Department of Training for Ministries, Diocese of Pretoria, CPSA in 1990 and endorsed by the incumbent of the time: Bishop Richard. Are you familiar with it?

The fact that I have the entire file of training booklets for distinctive deacons is in itself an interesting story, that I read **only** the first booklet some 20 years ago quite unusual, and that I had not thrown it out in subsequent moves, quite miraculous! God had a plan! Even when the Dean gave me one of his booklets from this series, I did not recall possessing the entire collection!

It speaks to so much of what we touched on in our meeting..... so relevant to our discussions, and all this happened 20 odd years ago. It hurts to think that the Pretoria Diocese in our then CPSA now ACSA tried so valiantly to develop or re-develop the Distinctive Diaconate, hoping that this would spill over into the other Dioceses and yet today the Distinctive Diaconate is **still** struggling to survive and is still battling to be recognized.

There are two quotes I want to make, taken from the material:

"The diaconate is a unique witness to servant-hood in the Church and in the world, and a distinctive order of ministry." Conference on the Diaconate at Notre Dame 1979.

".... God has been helping us to re-discover the ministry of the DEACON, and has been raising up men and women called to this ministry. They in fact, are the ones who are teaching us about the ministry of the DEACON in the modern church and in our situation. During the extensive discussion which we had in our Diocesan Chapter when we were considering the Diaconate as a distinctive ministry, the late Canon Trevor Verryn cautioned us: "Whatever you do, do not allow the training of Deacons to fall into the hands of the priests, they will just make them in their own image!"

Re: ....the ministry of the DEACON in the modern church and in our situation. Taken from the first training booklet "What is a Deacon" 1990:Preface by Bishop Richard of Pretoria).

This raises a few questions for me:

What has happened with the distinctive diaconate in the Diocese of Pretoria?

Did the ordination of women into the priesthood overshadow and supplant the re-awakening of the Diaconate?

Has the Church changed to such an extent that the role of the Distinctive Deacon has become obsolete?

I would like to get this training manual to you soon if you do not have a copy.

Should I send a copy of this e-mail to our other Distinctive Deacons, or wait until you have had the opportunity to have a look at this material?

Blessings! Gwynne

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