

Gwynne Lawlor

From: Gwynne Lawlor <gwynne@lawlor.co.za>
Sent: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 3:17 PM
To: 'archbishop@anglicanchurchsa.org.za'; archpa@anglicanchurchsa.org.za
Cc: pebishop@pedioecese.org.za; bishophveld@iafrica.com; peo@anglicanchurchsa.org.za
Subject: FW: Letter to Archbishop re Future of the ACSA Fellowship of Deacons and the Distinctive Diaconate in ACSA

Dear Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

Would it be at all possible for some of our deacons to have a meeting with you, either virtually or in person, sometime before the end of the year?

I am making this request to you on behalf of a small group, drawn from the Executive of ACSA Fellowship deacons from three different Dioceses, who met for a few days recently to brainstorm the viability and visibility of the Distinctive (or Permanent) Diaconate in our Anglican Communion of Southern Africa.

The ACSA Fellowship that started off through much prayer and co-operation between the deacons of three dioceses at our first ACSA Deacons Conference in Grahamstown in 2015, and with such welcome support from you, as Archbishop of our Province, grew into something so much bigger than anticipated by 2018 at our 3rd ACSA Deacons Conference in the Diocese of False Bay, in which nine dioceses were represented. In this we were aligning ourselves with Deacon Associations in other Anglican Communions, and in other Denominations throughout the World ... "For such a Time as This!" At a time in the history of the World when diaconal ministry is needed more than ever before.

However, it now appears that the Distinctive Diaconate in ACSA is little more than an after-thought.

We state this for 3 reasons:

1. As the ACSA Fellowship of Deacons we appreciate that it is a privilege to be invited to ACSA Provincial Synod, and to ACSA Provincial Standing Committee. This year, sadly, we were not invited and have to wonder in what way we have offended you and our Bishops.
2. Despite a Motion being passed at Provincial Standing Committee September 2018 to set up a Commission to investigate the ministry of the distinctive and permanent diaconate and to report to Provincial Synod in 2019, nothing had materialized. This was addressed at Provincial Synod in 2019 and again a Commission was to be set up, but very little has materialized to date.
3. With notable exceptions, and to our limited knowledge, very few diaconal callings have been recognized and supported in our various Dioceses. Having said that, we do appreciate that not all Bishops are in favor of building up distinctive diaconates.

I would draw your attention to the ACSA Fellowship of Deacons' report in the Agenda book of this year's Provincial Synod (2021).

You will note from the report that much work has been done by your deacons to connect other deacons of our own and many other denominations throughout the world, through our membership of DIAKONIA Region Africa Europe, and DIAKONIA World Federation. Some of our ACSA deacons represent our Province on

international diaconal committees. One Diocese of Grahamstown deacon, through her work on DIKAID, a committee of Diakonia World Federation, has even been able to attract funding for projects in the Eastern Cape.

Is this all to come to an end, through lack of support from our Province for their Distinctive Deacons?

The small group of deacons who met to look into the continued viability of the Distinctive Diaconate in ACSA came to the conclusion that, without support from our Archbishop and our Bishops, we are unable to minister effectively in this vineyard.

We appeal to you, as our Spiritual and Actual Leader, for direction. We look forward to hearing from you,

Grace and Peace,

Deacon Gwynne Lawlor
Member of Executive Committee
ACSA Fellowship of Deacons