

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

the Synod not endorse the CTICR paper *A Theological Basis for why the ordination of women and men need not be Church divisive*, since it fails to adequately address the theological issues at stake in a way that can be embraced by all, and therefore fails to adequately serve the cause of church unity.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. The CTICR paper referred to above claims that women's ordination need not be Church divisive since it does not involve any clear word of Scripture being "denied, contradicted, or ignored" (see paragraph 2 and footnote 2). The problem with this claim is that only one side will agree to it, and such one-sided claims cannot serve the cause of unity. Those who oppose women's ordination have consistently argued that women's ordination does deny, contradict, and ignore both 1 Corinthians 14:33-38 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14, and this paper simply ignores their perspective.
2. The CTICR paper then argues (in paragraph 3) that women's ordination does not affect a "foundational" or "key" church teaching, and therefore should not be church divisive. This claim is false, and both sides in the women's ordination debate should be able to see that it is false. Women's ordination involves a change in the church's doctrine of ministry. This is not a peripheral doctrinal matter, something that we can simply agree to disagree on without it affecting our unity or cooperation within the body of Christ. Luther did not treat it as peripheral, but listed the office of the public ministry as one of seven marks of the church (*On the Councils and the Church*, LW 41, 154-55). Jesus did not treat it as peripheral, when he called and trained his Apostles, and through them chose successors to carry on their ministry of word and sacrament. The New Testament does not treat it as peripheral, when it dedicates three whole books to how those who occupy this office should conduct themselves (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, not to mention many other relevant passages of the New Testament). It is not peripheral because it involves the delivery of the means of grace within the divine service, which is something that stands at the very heart of the church's spiritual life. This is central to how both the church and its unity are understood in the Lutheran theological tradition. For instance, *Augsburg Confession* Article VII defines the church as the assembly of believers gathered around the means of grace. It

Toowoomba Redeemer

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



then defines the unity of the church in terms of this common reception of the means of grace, and not in terms of any institutional structure. This understanding of church unity in terms of a common worship life is reflected in the language of the LCA when we use such expressions as "altar and pulpit fellowship" and "Eucharistic hospitality."

3. The practical consequence of this is that as long as there is a significant group of people who feel bound to oppose it on scriptural grounds, women's ordination has to be church divisive, no matter how much human good-will or desire for unity abounds. If the LCA were to ordain women, those who remain convinced that God's word prohibits it would not be able to go along with it in good conscience. Those who refuse to violate their conscience would therefore be forced to exclude themselves from any service at which a woman either preaches or presides. This kind of division within the worship life of the church would mean that the church would be divided at its heart, even if the outward human institution held together.
4. For these reasons it is better that we be honest with ourselves and admit that this issue is church divisive. This is something we should all be able to agree on, regardless of which side it is that we think is the "troubling of Israel" (1 Kings 18:17-18). Then we can get onto the more important question of "What do we do about it?" Assuming that we fail to break the current theological impasse, and a sizeable minority remains unconvinced one way or the other, how can we live with this division in such a way that the mission of the Gospel is still served and Christian love is maintained? The answer of the CTICR paper, that if women's ordination comes in those who oppose it need to go along with it out of loyalty to the institution while privately holding reservations (paragraph 6), does not take seriously the conscience issue that is at stake. While the CTICR paper gives a brief nod to this issue of conscience in paragraph 7, it fails to recognise what a significant issue this is and how it undoes what the rest of the paper has to say.



Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)	Proposer (s)
--	--------------

<p>BE IT RESOLVED that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The LCA encourage the practice of admitting very young children, including infants, to Holy Communion.2. The LCA produce suitable materials to promote the practice of admitting young children and infants to Holy Communion. <p>Reasons for the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In the report received by the 2013 LCA National Synod from the CTICR it was recommended that the age of first communion be significantly lowered with no age specified2. The current diversity of practice of the admittance to Holy Communion across the LCA has resulted in its own pastoral and practical concerns. These concerns may be addressed through the process of working towards uniformity in practice in the admittance of children and infants to communion following their baptism leading to a renewal and strengthening of the use of the sacraments.	St John's Lutheran Church , Unley
--	-----------------------------------

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

the Synod not endorse *A Theological Basis for the Ordination of Women and Men: Draft Doctrinal Statement*, since it is inconsistent with biblical teaching.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. Scripture teaches us the following about the office of the ministry: (1) Christ chose the Twelve and Paul to serve as his Apostles, all of whom were men; (2) when the early church selected a replacement for Judas, the Apostle Peter insisted that this replacement could not simply be any eyewitness of the resurrection, such as Mary Magdalene, but needed to be a man (Acts 1:21–22);¹ (3) Christ, through the Apostle Paul, then instructed the church to ordain men who fit certain God-given criteria to continue on the ministry of Christ's word that was begun by the Apostles (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9); and (4) he prohibited women from carrying out the central function of the pastoral office, which is the authoritative preaching and teaching of Christ's word within the church as it gathers for divine service (1 Cor 14:33b–38; 1 Tim 2:11–15). In this way the New Testament, both by its example and by a command given not once but twice, teaches us that women should not be ordained.
2. The Draft Doctrinal Statement (DDS) tries to overturn this teaching with a series of six paragraphs that either misrepresent biblical teaching or else fail to warrant the conclusion that is drawn from them. This can be demonstrated as follows:
 - a. The DDS asserts that “the precedent of male apostles does not require that pastors be male today.” This might be true if the precedent stood all by itself and was not supported by wider biblical teaching. Yet that is not the case.
 - b. The DDS reminds us that Jesus included women in his wider circle of disciples. This is true. It just doesn't warrant the conclusion that women should be ordained. According to New Testament teaching, being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a necessary qualification for being a pastor, but not a sufficient one (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).
 - c. The DDS then points us to examples of women in the New Testament who were involved in various forms of ministry. Some of this data it presents accurately. At other points it makes claims that go well beyond the data, such as when it asserts that there was a female Apostle called Junia,² that Phoebe and Timothy both occupied the same office,³ and that Priscilla was a “teacher of the church.”⁴ Unless the data

Toowoomba Redeemer

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



is creatively stretched in this way, it is impossible to make the case from it that women should be ordained. This is because both sides in this debate agree that both laymen and laywomen can share the Gospel, encourage others through God's word, and engage in ministries that are auxiliary to that of the pastoral office (*Theses of Agreement VI, 9–10*). Since it cannot be proven that any of these women were pastors, and were not serving in some auxiliary role, none of this evidence warrants the conclusion that women can be ordained.

- d. The DDS uses much speculation regarding Paul's motives and the cultural context of his day to relativise his prohibition against women preaching and teaching in the church, and to suggest that it only applied in certain first century contexts and not today. Such speculation is unnecessary, since Paul tells us in Holy Scripture why he gave this prohibition. When we examine his stated reasons it is evident that both his reasons and the prohibition that flows from them still apply today.

The chief line of speculation the DDS offers is that Paul prevented women from teaching in Corinth and Ephesus out of cultural sensitivity. It suggests that for women to have taken a prominent lead in public would have been so offensive in first-century Jewish culture that it would have hindered the spread of the Gospel, and that this was Paul's overriding concern. Given how little Paul says about any of this in the immediate context,⁵ how little we know about first century culture, how much the Scriptures tell us about the cosmopolitan nature of the churches in Corinth and Ephesus,⁶ and how often Christ and his Apostles displayed a willingness to offend people's sensibilities, this line of argumentation is mostly speculative and not entirely plausible. Yet even if there is some truth to it, and Paul was trying to be sensitive to cultural norms, this does not nullify the other reasons he had for this prohibition, which he carefully spells out for us.

Paul tells us that this prohibition is grounded in the headship God gave to men at creation, the consequences of the fall for women, and a command of the Lord. Furthermore, he tells us that this prohibition applies not only in one local context, but "in all the churches of the saints." If Paul had given different reasons the case would be different. If he had focused exclusively on the local context or the need for cultural sensitivity then it would be possible to argue that

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



this prohibition does not apply to us today now that the culture and context have changed. But he did not. Instead, the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, points us to creation and the fall and a command of the Lord as the reasons for this prohibition.⁷ These reasons are neither time-bound nor culturally relative. Therefore one cannot argue that this prohibition no longer applies to us today unless one is willing to say that Scripture errs when it gives us these reasons.

- e. Paragraph 5 of the DDS assumes that the great obstacle to women's ordination has been "barriers built by humans." Furthermore, the accompanying background paper suggests that these barriers have arisen because people have accorded a lower status to women than to men. It then argues that the new status women have by virtue of their baptism into Christ breaks down these barriers. The problem with this line of reasoning is twofold:
 - i. First, it is true that the unity and equal share in God's kingdom that all Christians enjoy by virtue of our baptism (Gal 3:27-29) should eliminate prejudice or partiality that is based on human criteria (James 2:1-9; Rom 2:11; Gal 2:11-14; Eph 6:9; Col 4:1; Philemon 16; 1 Cor 7:17-23). However, this is of no relevance to the matter at hand, since it is God's Word that prohibits women from being ordained, not "barriers built by humans."
 - ii. Second, the New Testament's endorsement of the male-only pastorate does not stem from cultural assumptions about women being of a lower status than men. The pastoral office is not about status, but humble service. The New Testament calls pastors to follow Christ by acting as servants of all. It instructs them not to lord it over anyone, but to act as examples to the flock by serving in a self-sacrificial way and treating others as more significant than themselves (Matt 20:20-28; 1 Pet 5:3; 2 Cor 1:24; 4:5; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:3; Phil 2:3; cf. Eph 5:22-33a). This call to spiritual responsibility and Christ-like service without regard for personal status is counter-cultural in every age. If the church were to ordain women, this would not involve any elevation of their status, but would rather be a call for them to lower themselves beneath others.

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



- f. The DDS tries to claim that the ordination of women fits with the view of the public ministry that is articulated in the Lutheran Confessions. Such a claim is false. The Confessions teach that the pastoral office has been instituted by Christ for the sole purpose of serving his word.⁸ This means that ordaining women in defiance of God's word undermines both the foundation and the purpose of the office. Any women who are ordained will be ordained by human beings and not by Christ, and their ordination will embody within it a rejection of at least one part of Christ's word. When a woman then presides at the Lord's Supper, this raises doubts as to whether this sacrament is administered "in conformity with the divine Word," (AC VII, 2) since an element of disobedience to the divine Word is embodied in the celebration.
- g. The DDS then concludes its case by saying that the power of God's word to effect salvation is in no way dependent on the person who speaks it. Therefore it does not matter if this person is male or female, and we can ordain women. This argument boils down to saying that because it is the power of the word that ultimately matters, therefore we can overturn what the word has to say about the male-only pastorate. It should be evident to all that we can't take our stand on the power of the word while at the same time ignoring what it has to say. This argument plays on a half-truth. Yes, the Gospel remains true and has power to save no matter who speaks it. Nevertheless, the church would be unwise to presume that the ministry of the Gospel will not be adversely affected if it fails to teach the whole counsel of God, and deliberately ignores Christ's directions regarding who he wants to lead this ministry.

2 The evidence for this claim is weak at best. First, we do not know for sure that the person mentioned in Romans 16:6 was a woman, since in the original Greek it is impossible to tell whether the name should be "Junia" (a woman's name) or "Junias" (a man's name). Second, we do not know that this person was an Apostle, since the Greek phrase that is sometimes rendered "well known among the Apostles" can just as easily be translated "well known to the Apostles." For example, when the Greek playwright Euripides says in his play *Hippolytus* that "Aphrodite is well known to mortals," he uses the same Greek construction. In this case it is clear that Aphrodite is not one of the mortals, just as Junia / Junias is unlikely to have been one of the Apostles.

3 The Greek word *diakonos* simply means "servant." Sometimes this word is used as a title, such as in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. At other times it is simply used as a description of the kind of role that all Christians should be willing to assume, such as in Matthew 20:26. In neither Romans 16:1 nor 1 Timothy 4:6 is it clear that this word is being used as a title. Yet even if it is being used this way, the evidence from both the New Testament (see 1 Tim 3:1-13 and Acts 6:1-6) and the early church is that the office of deacon was different from that of the elders / overseers, with the former being an auxiliary

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



office of Christian service and the latter being the equivalent of what we now know as the pastoral office.

4 In Acts 18:26 we are told that Priscilla, together with her husband Aquila, took Apollos aside privately to instruct him more accurately in the way of God. It is quite a stretch to conclude from this that she was regarded as a teacher to the church as a whole.

5 In 1 Timothy 2 Paul says nothing about any need for cultural sensitivity. In 1 Corinthians 14 he says that "it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." Given that he does not spell this out further, this could mean "shameful in God's sight," or it could mean "shameful according to cultural norms," or it could mean both. Even if it means the latter, this is a slender basis on which to build an entire case, and does not nullify the other reasons Paul gives for his prohibition.

6 The book of Acts tells us that in Ephesus so many Gentiles converted to Christianity that the silver smiths, who profited from making idols, rioted because of how much business they lost as a result (Acts 19). In Paul's letter to the Ephesians he devotes considerable attention to this incorporation of Gentiles into the church (Eph 2:11 – 3:6). Then, in 1 Corinthians he continually addresses issues that were of concern for people influenced by Greco-Roman culture rather than by Jewish culture. Evidence of this kind makes it hard to sustain the argument that these congregations were predominantly Jewish in their cultural orientation.

7 The DDS tries to argue that Paul's statement in 1 Cor 14:37, "the things [plural] I am writing to you are a command of the Lord," refers exclusively to the command to "pursue love" [singular] given 36 verses earlier and not to the verses that immediately precede it (paragraphs 11 and 12). Not only is this grammatically implausible, it means wrenching the statement out of its immediate context.

8 AC V; VII; VIII; XXVII, 12; XXVIII; Apol. XIII, 11; XXVIII, 13-14; *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* 10, 26, 60-72; LC III, 86; SD X, 10; XII, 30.

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

1. That the Lutheran Church of Australia/New Zealand amend its public teaching to accept the ordination of both men and women;
2. and that the LCA/NZ invite properly gifted, trained, prepared and called women to serve as ordained pastors alongside the male pastors of this Church, exercising the office of the keys by proclaiming the gospel, pronouncing the absolution, and administering the sacraments, to the glory of God and for the extension of his Kingdom.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. In response to the 2015 LCA General Synod resolution the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (CTICR) has prepared a Draft Doctrinal Statement on the ordination of both women and men, and a statement giving the theological basis for why the ordination of women and men need not divide the Church. The CTICR has consulted widely with the Church concerning these documents.
2. The Draft Doctrinal Statement shows that the ordination of both women and men is consistent with the Lutheran church's confessional statements on the ordained ministry (AC 5 and 14) which focuses on making the gospel of Jesus Christ widely available through the means of grace, and which contains nothing that excludes women from entering the ordained ministry.
3. 'The Permanent Status of Theses of Agreement' (A26) states that "the Theses of Agreement are always under the authority of the Word of God, and therefore there must always be a readiness to submit them to the critical scrutiny of God's Word and accordingly confirm them, or amend or repudiate them when further study of God's Word shows them to be inadequate or in error." This change of public teaching regarding the ordination of women reflects a more comprehensive reading of the Scriptures regarding the eligibility of called and trained women for the pastoral office.

Manawatu, Belconnen, Blair Athol, Brisbane City, Brisbane Finnish, Golden Grove, Indooroopilly, Ipswich, Mawson Lakes, Middle Park Nunawading Waverly, Rochdale, Adelaide St Stephens, Sunbury, Sydney, Toowoomba Emmanuel, Tuggeranong, Victor Harbor, Wellington, Woden Valley)

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

before any vote is conducted regarding the ordination of both men and women, no less than one hour be set aside to allow the clear presentation of the Scriptural case for the ordination of men only.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. Many members of the LCA (including some members of CTICR) believe the church's teaching is correct, although many others favour the Draft Doctrinal Statement (DDS) prepared by members of the CTICR.
2. Before voting to change the teaching of the church, delegates have the responsibility to hear the churches teaching clearly explained
3. While there may be several hours set aside for debate on this issue, with each speaker being given three minutes to speak (as there was at Rochdale in 2015); this does not do justice to the church's teaching and all that underpins it.
4. It is fair for all delegates and also wise, to have the teaching of the church presented in its fullness. Rather than restricting the teaching to the two texts mentioned in the Theses of Agreement (1 Corinthians 14:33b – 38 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15) the presentation may include, among other Scriptural texts. The witness in Scripture in 1 Timothy 2:12 and in conjunction with 1 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 1:13:2 -14, 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Titus 1:5-9 and Acts 1:21. The Synod can then have confidence that all delegates have had the opportunity to be fully informed.
5. Significant resources have been put into the DDS – with the CTICR formulating the document and it being presented across the church at consultation meetings. We feel that to give one hour to the presentation of the church's teaching is entirely appropriate given the ramifications of changing the teaching are likely to be very significant for people across the church.
6. If the case for ordination of men only, and the case for the ordination of both men and women)the DDS) before are clearly expressed before we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the vote is taken – it will go some way towards fostering understanding and unity as we move forward.

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Hamilton

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

the Lutheran Church of Australia becomes a full member of the International Lutheran Council.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) is at present an associate member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The LCA participates in Conferences at which it can speak, but cannot participate in the same way as a full member including in the ability to influence decision-making.
2. The ILC is a worldwide association of 37 established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.
3. The ILC exists for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening, and promoting confessional Lutheran theology and practice centering in Jesus Christ, both among member churches and throughout the world
 - ◆ by providing opportunities for the joint study of contemporary theological issues.
 - ◆ by giving mutual support and encouragement to the heads of member church bodies.
 - ◆ by encouraging and assisting member churches in planning for mission outreach.
 - ◆ by strengthening theological education through conferences of theologians and seminary teachers, mission staffs and those involved with human care.
 - ◆ by facilitating communication between confessional Lutheran churches of the world through the publication of ILC News.
 - ◆ by stimulating and facilitating the preparation and publication of confessional Lutheran literature.
4. Full membership of the ILC would enable the LCA to participate fully, including in decision making.

Holy Cross Lutheran
Congregation,
Belconnen; Good
Shepherd Tuggeranong
Lutheran Parish

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

the Lutheran Church of Australia becomes a full member of the Lutheran World Federation.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of 145 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 74 million Christians in 98 countries. Two of these member churches are associate members, including the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA).
2. The LWF confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.
3. The LWF was established in 1947 as a Federation of Lutheran churches. Lutherans worldwide wanted to confess, reflect, reconcile and to respond together to human suffering in the aftermath of the Second World War. The LWF strives to put Lutheran faith into action within and beyond the communion, and seeks God's Word and Spirit to guide it. This action takes a variety of forms from theological reflection and dialogue with other churches and faiths, to deepening relationships, sharing about our faith, serving those in need and advocating for a more just, peaceful and reconciled world. The LWF shares a vision, purpose and values. It works to strengthen Lutheran relationships and build an inclusive, respectful communion. It is on a common journey of renewal shaped and enriched by the different contexts within which we live.
4. While the LCA can participate in LWF activities as an associate member, including humanitarian actions as a part of the Lutheran World Service and the LCA is able to speak at Assemblies, it cannot be part of the decision-making process as it is not entitled to vote and cannot hold elected office.
5. With full membership the LCA would be able to influence decision-making and to exercise its views through being able to vote and being able to hold elected office.

Holy Cross Lutheran Congregation,
Belconnen; Good Shepherd Tuggeranong Lutheran Parish; Lutheran Church of St Andrew the Apostle, Brisbane City; Finnish Lutheran Church of Brisbane; Mikael Agricola Finnish Lutheran Congregation of Melbourne; St Paul's Sydney Lutheran Congregation;

Full text of proposal (including reasons provided)

Proposer (s)



BE IT RESOLVED that

no further discussion come before Synod to amend the Theses of Agreement VI regarding the Office of the Ministry.

Reasons for the proposal:

1. The inaugural Synod in 1966, bringing the ELCA and the UELCA together, after prayerful consideration agreed and voted to accept the Theses of Agreement regarding the Office of the Ministry.
2. Three subsequent Synods; namely 2000, 2006 and 2015, after earnest and sincere prayer to God for His guidance on this matter voted to uphold the current Theses of Agreement on the Office of the Ministry in the LCA.
3. To uphold the authority of Synod to make binding decisions on the LCA and not negate this authority, Synod's decisions must be honoured.
4. Must we not obey God's guidance and His Will as demonstrated at all four Synods of the LCA?
5. Like all confessional statements, the Theses of Agreement are always under the authority of the Word of God. Are we being influenced and perhaps deceived by "a readiness to submit them to the critical scrutiny of God's Word and accordingly confirm them, or amend or repudiate them when further study of God's Word shows them to be inadequate or in error." *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions Volume 1A. Theses of Agreement: The permanent status of Theses of Agreement.* Is it not man's wisdom, i.e the wisdom of this world, made foolish by God *1Cor. 1:20*, being put before the authority of Scripture in interpreting God's Word for us?
6. Should we not remember Luther's warning after the Reformation, "Until now you have heard the true, faithful Word; now beware of your own thoughts and your own wisdom. The devil will light the candle of reason and deprive you of your faith". *The Church Through the Ages, Page 443.*
7. This is a doctrinal matter, and a decision has been made in accordance with God's Will and the will of LCA Synods on four occasions.

St John's Lutheran Church, Minyp