AMENDED PROPOSAL FROM THE QUEENSLAND DISTRICT

PROPOSED THAT General Synod direct the General Church Board and the College of Bishops to:

a) Work through the theological, constitutional, and governance requirements to operate as one church with two different practices of ordination and establish a detailed framework through which this could be accomplished, such as by establishing a geographical or non-geographical LCANZ 'District' that teaches and practices the ordination of both women and men to the office of the public ministry.

b) Submit the fruit of this work in the form of a proposal that can be discussed and potentially endorsed by the LCANZ General Pastors Conference and Convention of General Synod 2024.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

A proposal from the Lutheran Church of St Andrew the Apostle, Brisbane City, was brought to the floor of Synod and accepted as a late proposal to the LCAQD 2021 Synod. An amendment to the St Andrew's proposal was put forward by Rev Dr Michael Lockwood, and this amended proposal (above) was passed with a strong majority.

In presenting the proposal, St Andrew's Congregation delegates to the LCAQD Synod made the following comments as background information to the proposal:

The issue of ordination for both men and women has come before multiple LCA/LCANZ synods. Votes conducted regarding this issue have indicated that a majority of delegates are in support of the ordination of both men and women, yet the required 2/3 majority for change to be accepted has not been met. Indications appear to be that there is a majority of those casting votes at Synod who have been led to and accept the understanding that ordaining both men and women is biblically and theologically acceptable.

A growing number of members and congregations of LCANZ are expressing support for the view that treating genders differently with regard to this issue, goes against the heart of the gospel. For this reason, many are finding themselves in the position where they believe that they cannot continue to uphold current teaching and practice of the LCANZ regarding ordination, with a clear conscience.

It has become evident that further theological study, which has identified two contrasting theologically sound positions, has not assisted in alleviating the convergence of opinions within the LCANZ. As such, the matter continues to have the potential to become divisive, regardless of the possible future outcomes of votes with regard to changing the practice of the LCANZ concerning ordination.

There appears to be a minority within the LCANZ who feel strongly that ordination should be restricted to men only. Members and congregations that do not support male-only ordination are becoming increasingly restless as they yearn for leadership of an ordained pastor that is not based on gender. Some congregations are openly seeking women to preach, and as such, are in breach of the current teaching and practice of the LCANZ.

The question of ordaining both women and men appears to have reached a theological impasse, which now threatens to divide the LCANZ. Hence, there is an urgent need to find a respectful way to move on from this impasse.

In August 2020, the LCA released the Report to the LCANZ on a special meeting of the General Church Board and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCANZ over the ordination of women and men. The report offers three scenarios:

1. A single LCANZ synod – one teaching, two practices
   a. Current structure, with one teaching of the ministry and two practices
   b. One overarching governance framework containing two or more synods
2. A single LCANZ synod – status quo (current teaching upheld)
3. Multiple Lutheran synods – we can no longer remain together (we separate).

The proposal (above) appears to best align with Scenario 1b and is not entirely without precedent. The LCA already has a formal agreement with a Church that ordains women as well as men – the Church of Finland – and this agreement was signed after the Church of Finland began ordaining women.

We note that current Districts are not exclusively geographical – for example, Moree in NSW is part of the LCAQD. We anticipate that congregations, parishes and existing Districts across the LCANZ would be able to join or align with this 'District'.

We recognise that relationships between Districts, and between Districts and the LCANZ would need clarification, and that the LCANZ Constitution, currently under review, would need to be able to cater for this additional 'District'.