

AGENDA 2.2.10

Establishment of Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions, Lutheran Education Australia and Australian Lutheran World Service

BE IT RESOLVED that the LCA establish a group, tentatively called Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand (LECANZ), with the following roles:

- To provide an electronic repository of Earth Care resources through a national website.
- To develop new resources and provide access to existing worship resources, study resources and devotional materials in the area of Earth Care, and to encourage their use by individuals, congregations and agencies
- To provide resources and support for congregations and agencies to reduce their negative impacts on God's creation
- To provide advice to the LCA on issues related to care of God's creation, and encourage the development and adoption of policies consistent with Earth Care
- To encourage, support and coordinate with the existing and future Earth Care initiatives of LCA congregations and agencies
- To liaise and coordinate with the many other faith-based and secular groups who are also concerned with Earth Care
- To report regularly to District and General Conventions of Synod.

REASONS FOR THE MOTION

1. At the National Convention of Synod 2015, the following resolution was passed:
Be it resolved that: "the LCA affirms that a prime responsibility of Christians is to be responsible stewards of creation and all life on the planet and encourages LCA members, congregations, groups and agencies to:
 1. Intentionally and regularly include God's gift of creation and our stewardship and care in prayer and worship, individual and group study and church decision making
 2. Encourage, implement and model ways of living and working that minimize the production of greenhouse gas emissions
 3. Examine the long term implications of an economy which readily consumes and throws away
 4. Act to reduce waste and implement the sustainable use and recycling of earth's resources
 5. Wrestle with issues of resource and environmental justice for poor communities nations and future generations
 6. Engage in dialogue, discussion, shared learning and action with decision makers and environmental groups in the wider community."
2. The enactment of this resolution since 2015 has primarily been through the establishment of the Environmental Action Working Group (EAWG) as part of the Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions (CSBQ), whose primary role has been to provide advice to GCC on environmental issues. In parallel with the work of EAWG, Lutheran Education has developed its LEA Earthcare Charter, and LLL has sponsored 55 LLL Earthcare grants for school projects totalling \$105,000.

3. The EAWG has been largely working behind the scenes in a policy capacity, consistent with the role of the CSBQ. After several years of operation, CSBQ believe that a more prominent role for Earth Care within the LCA would be beneficial, and recommends the establishment of a more prominent “shopfront” for Earth Care across the LCA. This would tentatively be called “Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand” (LECANZ).

Similar groups within other mainline churches here and overseas include Catholic EarthCare Australia (<http://catholicearthcare.org.au/>), Angligreen in the Anglican diocese of Southern Queensland (<http://angligreen.org.au/>), and the USA’s “Lutherans Restoring Creation” (<http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>).

4. At this stage, the only financial resources that would be required would be access to suitable web-hosting and electronic communications infrastructure, which would leverage off the existing capabilities of the national office. Staffing would be through volunteers in the first instance.

The reporting path for LECANZ could be the same as for the current EAWG, and the current membership of EAWG, which includes representatives from Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) and Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS), could form the initial executive of LECANZ.