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A WORD FROM THE BISHOPS

In thanking God for the work done by ALITE for this "Report on Pastoral Ministry of the LCA" the College of Bishops commends the Report to the people of the Lutheran Church of Australia. We encourage study and dialogue on this snapshot of pastoral ministry of our Church, with its research and recommendations, so that together we may grow as God's people in the mission of God.

We give thanks to God for the generosity of the members of the LCA and their support of the LLL, which has made this study possible. We also express our thanks to the 201 pastors and 1519 lay people of the LCA who took time to complete the surveys that form the basis of the Report. Finally, we thank those who made up the focus groups and the writers of the final report.

The College of Bishops continues to work through the findings of the Report and continue to improve the way in which the church supports and strengthens the pastoral ministry of the LCA.

This project was undertaken as a part of the 50th Anniversary activities of the LCA.

The College of Bishops

November 2016



Pastoral Ministry in the Lutheran Church of Australia: A Snapshot Fifty Years after Union

A report commissioned by and prepared for the College of Bishops of the Lutheran Church of Australia

April 2016

Popular Report

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PREFACE

This document is a summary of a larger report based on an 18-month research project on the current state of the ordained pastorate in the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). The Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE) at Australian Lutheran College was commissioned by Bishop John Henderson, representing the College of Bishops, to undertake this study.

The bulk of the work on this project was undertaken by two ALITE researchers, Mr Linards Jansons and Dr Valerie Kupke, under my direction and that of the ALITE Steering Group. The original concept of the project is credited to the Rev Dr Mark Worthing currently Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, North Adelaide.

The acknowledgments that follow give an indication of the number of people who assisted in bringing this project to fruition, and appropriate expressions of gratitude are rendered there. Here I simply wish to express my thanks to Dr Worthing, Mr Jansons, and Dr Kupke for their excellent work and their commitment to ensuring that this project was completed on time.

Dr Stephen Hultgren
Director of ALITE
April 2016

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Mr Linards Jansons
Dr Valerie Kupke
April 2016

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Pastoral Ministry in the Lutheran Church of Australia: A Snapshot Fifty Years after Union

Popular Report

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of a research project commissioned by the College of Bishops of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and completed in April 2016. The project focused on a survey of the ordained ministry within the LCA and was conducted within the context of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the LCA from its two predecessor churches, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia in 1966.

The study was undertaken in order to provide the College of Bishops (COB) and other key decision-makers in the LCA with accurate and up-to-date information about the shape, strengths, weaknesses, expectations, well-being and training of current Lutheran clergy with a primary focus on the care and welfare of pastors.

Most of this summary is taken directly from the report submitted to the COB and largely presents the findings as described within that report. A stipulation of the project brief, as commissioned by the COB, was that the project findings should be made available to pastors and other key stakeholders.

The research project was a large one, undertaken at national level and canvassing views of both pastors and laity on a wide range of topics pertaining to the well-being of clergy in its broadest sense. The success of the project in effectively reporting back on such a large task is due in no small part to the cooperation and support of so many participants within the LCA, both clergy and laity.

The report is broken down into parts which largely follow the sections of the original survey of pastors. It begins with a brief review of the method used in the study and ends with a list of “key” findings, the selection of which was no small challenge, suggestions for further research and finally a series of important recommendations arising from the study.

Method of the Study

In order to gather information on the welfare of pastors across the whole of the LCA a web based survey, accessed via computer, was considered the most effective method. The survey was made up of 104 questions and was posted on line during July and August 2015. All pastors on the LCA pastoral roll was invited to participate, both active and retired.

The survey was made up of eight sections all of which asked questions broadly relating to the welfare of pastors. These sections included (1) the characteristics of pastors and their ministry situation, (2) the well-being of pastors, (3) the personal faith and pastoral style of pastors, (4) the theological and ministry training of pastors, (5) the relationships of pastors with principals and schools, (6) pastors and community, (7) the current LCA call process, and (8) pastoral oversight.

Many of the survey questions were “closed” questions where responses were restricted to the use of various scales indicating levels of agreement, satisfaction or importance. Two scales of personal well-being were used to measure first a pastor’s satisfaction with life and second their recent positive and negative experiences. A number of the questions were open ended, that is allowed for general comments, and some of these have been summarized within this report.

The online survey of clergy was augmented in three ways.

First by four discussion groups called “focus” groups of active pastors within the LCA; two in South Australia (SA) one in Queensland (Qld) and one in Victoria held during October and November 2015. These discussion groups, which were restricted to about 20 participants each, allowed for face to face exchange between pastors on various issues raised within the survey. Some of this discussion is included in this report. Second by canvassing the views of congregational members of the LCA through an on line survey compatible with the survey of pastors. Finally the survey of clergy was supported by analysis of other church data sourced from the National Church Life Survey¹ (NCLS) for both 2006 and 2011. This is a five yearly “census” of church members across Australia, conducted by the NCLS, in which the LCA regularly participates. Ethics approval for both surveys and the focus groups were achieved through the Christian Research Association (CRA) Ethics Committee².

Altogether 201 pastors responded to the online LCA survey. This represented almost 40% of clergy within the LCA and in terms of sample size is more than adequate to reflect the views and needs of the pastoral fraternity. All LCA districts including New Zealand were represented in the responses which also included a small number of indigenous LCA pastors. In terms of ministry area the sample represented an appropriate percentage of parish pastors (50% of responses) though school pastors, and national or district office pastors, tended proportionally to be somewhat over represented and Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) and retired pastors under represented.

Responses to the online lay survey were also good with 1,519 LCA congregational members taking the time to fill in the questionnaire; an excellent outcome and a comparable number to an earlier LCA survey of both pastors and congregations (Cook and Hughes, 2006). In terms of responses, while all districts were represented, both NSW and New Zealand produced a low response rate as a percentage of the total while the SA/NT district was strongly represented. Urban congregations responded well accounting for over 50% of survey returns. Rural congregations, however, also polled relatively well representing over 27% of responses.

While responses to the pastor and lay surveys were very good in terms of size and coverage of district any study of welfare should take note of possible “skews” or bias in the take up of the survey. Intuitively one would surmise that given the number of questions, the level of literacy and knowledge of English required to answer, the time commitment, the need for computer access and the self-reporting nature of the surveys there is likely to be an impact on those able and willing, and with the emotional capacity, to answer a lengthy on line survey. The most important of these “skews” is that pastors within the LCA who are particularly unhappy may not have responded to the survey and so be under represented in the sample. An implication of this is that the percentage of pastors, across all ministry areas, experiencing extreme stress may be higher than estimated in the report. This,

¹ National Church Life Survey (NCLS) <http://www.ncls.org.au/>

²CRA Ethics Committee <http://www.cra.org.au/>

however, could only be verified by identifying those who did not respond to the survey with an associated, and unacceptable, loss of confidentiality. In reporting on both surveys no individual participant has been identified and all responses to questions have been aggregated.

The rest of this report now presents the main findings of the pastor survey. Where appropriate findings from the lay survey are also included.

Report Findings

1.1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LCA PASTORS AND LCA LAY MEMBERS

This first section briefly summarizes some of the characteristics of pastors and congregations such as age, length of service and levels of church attendance.

Pastors in the LCA are similar to most other mainstream denominations in Australia in terms of their average age (53 years for active pastors), years in ministry (18 years) and time spent in their present position (5 years). As well, and again in line with all mainstream churches they are older, and as a professional group ageing faster, than those in other community service professions in Australia (average age 36 years)³.

Well over half (64%) of active pastors (that is excluding retired pastors) who responded to the survey, are aged over 50 years. One quarter are at least 60 years of age. Thus, up to one quarter of pastors, currently active in pastoral ministry within the LCA, are eligible to retire within the next five years. Parish pastors are a slightly younger fraternity with an average age of 52 years and compared to other mainstream Australian church denominations change parishes more often; on average at least every five years.

There is a gap between the age profile of LCA pastors and those of their congregation. On average LCA pastors are older than most of their congregation. However this gap is smaller than for other church denominations in Australia.

A number of pastors, and up to a quarter of parish pastors, no longer occupy church manses. Instead they own their homes outright, are paying off a mortgage, rent privately or use some other form of accommodation.

As measured by responses to the lay survey LCA congregations appear to be dominated by “Baby Boomers”, that is members aged between 50 and 69 years (53% of responses). Of lay members who responded only 10% were under 40 years of age and only 3% were under 30 years of age. Church members reported regular attendance (82.5% of those in the survey attended church every week) and active participation in their church community (54% were “very involved” in church activities). Women are a majority component of rural parishes (on average 62% of the congregation).

³ ABS Data <http://www.abs.gov.au>

1.2 THE PERSONAL WELL-BEING OF PASTORS

This section reports on a series of questions designed to measure the personal well-being of pastors and their levels of stress.

1.2.1 Satisfaction with Life

As a means of measuring their welfare pastors were asked to disagree or agree with five statements along a scale of one to seven which could be summed to give an indication of their satisfaction with life. Such statements included “In most ways my life is close to ideal”, “I am satisfied with my life” and “If I could live my life over, I would change nothing”. Levels of disagreement or agreement can then be summed to give an indication of a pastor’s overall satisfaction with life using a Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) which in turn reflects their personal well-being.

These questions and the SWLS have been used successfully in other studies (Diener, 1985; 2009) to produce scores which indicate very low to very high levels of satisfaction with life on the part of individuals.

On the whole the majority of pastors (57%) reported high to very high SWLS scores which implies an associated high level of happiness and personal well-being. These pastors are likely to be functioning satisfactorily in their ministry. A small minority of pastors (6%) indicated low to very low level of SWLS scores. This group of pastors may be experiencing significant distress in their pastoral role.

Pastors aligned with district or national office roles show the highest average SWLS scores, with parish pastors and pastors involved in aged care or SMP roles reporting the lowest SWLS scores. Almost a quarter of parish pastors (23% or 22 pastors), reported their SWLS as “below average” or “low”. Given that respondents to a lengthy on line survey are likely to be those with a relatively positive outlook this result is important in revealing a significant portion of the parish fraternity who are not happy, not satisfied with life and, potentially, could be struggling with their pastoral role.

Pastors were also asked about which factors improved their well-being and which factors caused them stress.

For pastors within the LCA spiritual well-being and personal well-being, as represented by their SWLS scores, are strongly associated. One does not necessarily cause change in the other, but if spiritual well-being is high, so too is personal well-being and vice versa. A significant part of personal well-being for a pastor, therefore, may be associated with their spiritual well-being.

Two items, independently, however do account for positive change in the SWLS scores of all pastors. Overall, the satisfaction with life score of a pastor is significantly influenced first by levels of enjoyment in their work of service, that is the job itself, and second by the quality of the facilities within which they conduct their ministry. In other words a positive change in these two items results in a corresponding improvement in levels of personal well-being.

In terms of ministry parish pastors with low SWLS scores are giving significantly more time to worship leadership and significantly less time to prayer, bible study, pastoral care and home visitation than parish pastors with very high SWLS scores.

1.2.2 Stress Factors

Parish pastors and aged care and SMP pastors show the highest levels of stress. Retired pastors and others, including ALC lecturers, the least stress. For all pastors the top three stress factors are quantity of work, dealing with difficult pastoral problems and dealing with their own expectations.

For parish pastors with low personal well-being stress factors also included financial concerns, issues related to living in a manse and their relationship with district or national office.

Issues with church governing bodies were also raised in focus groups. Both pastors in the focus groups and those who responded to the open survey question identified the need for transparency in decision making at district and national level and the need for such offices to be more relational in procedure and operation. Clear direction on major issues such as same sex marriage were called for. As well in there was concern expressed over falling congregational numbers and the need for greater direction and leadership at district and national level. A number of pastors mentioned their struggles with small church numbers and their efforts to maintain a functioning congregation. Difficulties in finding volunteers and filling leadership roles were mentioned.

For many parish pastors who responded to the open question in the survey or participated in the focus another critical factor in causing stress was the sheer quantity of paper work which the role generated. It was almost overwhelming. Large amounts of time spent on various ministry tasks was positively associated with above average levels of stress. The need to deal with increasing administration and compliance requirements which impinged on available time for ministry, particularly in under staffed parishes, but not only, was a major issue. As a consequence many identified the lack of time within their ministry for people, for family, for reflection and for their own spiritual nourishment.

Those parish pastors experiencing the greatest stress appeared less able to enjoy even core activities of their ministry such as administering the sacraments or undertaking pastoral care. Overall parish pastors, whose ministerial responsibilities require high levels of “emotion work”, are those pastors with the lowest SWLS, emotional levels which are most negative and whose stress levels are highest.

1.2.3 Strength of Positive and Negative Experiences

The satisfaction with life measure can be used in conjunction with another scale, known as “SPANE”, which measures the Strength of Positive and Negative Experiences by an individual during the past four weeks (Diener, 1985; 2009). Pastors were asked to think about what they had been doing or experiencing in the last month and to report on their feelings against 12 descriptors which were scaled from one to five. This produced a scale of positive experiences; positive, good, pleasant, happy, joyful and contented and a scale of negative experiences negative, bad, unpleasant, sad, afraid and angry.

At least 50% of all pastors who responded to the survey indicated SPANE scales at the positive end but also reported an elevated level of negative experience. While, overall, they were positive, they had experienced a measurable degree of negativity in the four weeks before the survey.

For all pastors three items, independently, cause a significant increase in their Score of Negative Experiences. These items were dealing with their own expectations, dealing with their parish or congregational council and dealing with personal issues, including family, particularly under the spotlight of pastoral ministry. For pastors, and parish pastors in particular, the challenge to demarcate home life from church life was identified as causing significant stress both for them and for their

families. Indigenous pastors encountered a particular form of stress associated with those in their congregation who were not part of the pastor's family getting upset with the family of the pastor.

Focus group members and those who responded to the open survey question on well-being and stress also mentioned the expectations of congregational members particularly around visitation. Members still expected and looked for visits from their pastor despite the scattered nature of many congregations and the fact that many members were only home in the evenings. In order to visit parishioners in their homes, many of whom typically work during the day, parish pastors could be out every night.

Pastors and congregations working within cross cultural ministry, for instance in African Ministry, believed they face particular, and at times higher, stress factors than for more traditional LCA congregations.

1.2.4 Happy but Stressed

Almost one third of the fraternity reported above average levels of stress yet their personal well-being scores as measured by SWLS signify high or very high satisfaction with life, that is, above average personal well-being. In other words pastors can be "happy" yet also stressed. Thus some pastors may be characterised by high levels of stress, often associated with ministerial activity, yet they remain largely positive about their ministry and happy with life generally.

1.2.5 Mentors

All pastors responded positively in the survey to the support of a mentor/confessor/spiritual advisor with 52% of all pastors, including retired, rating such support as an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. Parish pastors were especially positive about the importance of a mentor and this view was supported by most lay members.

Focus group members were also generally very supportive of mentors. This was true also of indigenous pastors. Focus group participants suggested that it would be helpful to get assistance, for instance from district office, in securing a mentor. Also financial support if required. They suggested meeting with other pastors individually was very valuable and in larger ecumenical groups. Professional counselling was also supported. Other focus group members suggested congregational members could also act as mentors.

However a mentor was secured, focus group members strongly agreed it was important to have "safe" people with whom you could share and "walk" with. It was very important for pastors to have a "safe" space where they could be open about issues and concerns.

1.3 THE PERSONAL FAITH AND PASTORAL STYLE OF PASTORS

This section presents the views of pastors and lay members on a wide range of issues related to the style and form of pastoral ministry. These include the practice and task of ministry, pastoral leadership, pastor-pastor team ministry, pastor-lay worker team ministry, and the personal spirituality of pastors

1.3.1 The Practice and Tasks of Ministry

On average, pastors spend the greatest amount of time on preaching, worship preparation, and care for the elderly, and the least amount of time on ecumenical roles and weddings and funerals. But the majority of pastors are not spending a great deal of time on any one task, instead dividing their limited time over numerous, competing ministry areas.

With the exception of parish administration, pastors generally enjoy the many aspects of pastoral ministry, particularly the 'word and sacrament' ministries for which they have been trained, such as preaching, worship, teaching, sacramental ministry, and bible study. But they feel time-poor in meeting its many demands. As discussed in the previous section pastors, on the whole, appear to be "happy" but stressed.

Laity rate the performance of pastors more highly in clearly defined word and sacrament tasks, such as administering baptism and Holy Communion, conducting weddings/funerals, leading worship, and preaching. They rate them lowest in community involvement, equipping the laity, home visitation and ministry to the inactive – situations where the pastoral role is perhaps less clearly defined and where more depends on personal interaction.

In terms of three key LCA priorities, laity see their pastors to be most passionate about *nurturing spiritual growth and an understanding of God's word*, a little less passionate about *developing a culture of practical service and care*, and less again when it comes to *encouraging outreach and connection with contemporary culture*.

Many pastors wish they could devote more time to pastoral care (especially visitation), as well as teaching, equipping and encouraging laity, and their own personal growth and development. Lay members, as well, wish their pastors would devote more time to pastoral care, in particular visiting. They are concerned about reaching two main groups: young people and younger families, and the inactive. A number of lay members feel their pastor needs better interpersonal skills. They also want their pastors to better equip and encourage the congregation, while also focussing on the key tasks of teaching and preaching.

About one quarter of pastors use social media in their ministry either extensively or at least regularly. The remainder are equally divided between those who used social media occasionally and those who rarely or never use it. Over 80% of pastors (and almost 90% of laity) report using PowerPoint in worship on a weekly basis. But congregational websites vary in quality and status.

About two-thirds of lay respondents considered the LCA involvement of their pastor to be important, while a quarter thought it was unimportant. One third thought their pastor was very or somewhat uninvolved, while somewhat over half thought he was moderately or highly involved.

1.3.2 Pastoral Leadership

Most pastors prefer to understand pastoral leadership in terms of being a "servant of the congregation who leads through example and service" (held by 84% of pastors).

There are two views of the pastor as leader that are held more exclusively than other views: the pastor as "one (skilled, trained, appointed) member among many" (held by 55% of pastors) and the pastor as a "servant of Christ having authority" (held by 54% of pastors). More pastors viewed these two

positions exclusively rather than complementarily. The former 'functional' view ("one member among many") is more agreeable to pastors aged 60-69 and the latter 'ontological' view ("representative of Christ having authority") is more favourably held by younger pastors, aged 39 or less.

For a significant group of pastors the notion of 'authority' is problematic, and they prefer to think in terms of 'leadership'. Many pastors also feel leadership skills and dispositions represent a missing element in past and current ministry training.

Three quarters of pastors believe it is good to delegate aspects of worship planning and leadership to competent lay members. Pastors holding a more 'functional' view of ministry are especially disposed to favour lay involvement in worship preparation, while pastors holding a so-called 'ontological' view of ministry are more likely to see worship preparation as the pastor's responsibility. Furthermore, younger pastors (39 years or less) are more inclined than average to think it is the pastor's role to choose hymns/songs, write prayers and prepare special services, while the opposite is held by pastors aged 60-69.

On average, only 14% of pastors believe that they have final oversight in all areas of congregational life, but this percentage increases with age, from 7% (39 years and younger) to 22% (70 years and older).

Lay members tend to assign a somewhat stronger leadership role to the pastor than active pastors do themselves, being a little less inclined to view the pastor as "servant of the congregation" and a little more inclined to think that the pastor has "final oversight over all areas of congregational life". On the other hand, they agree even less than pastors do that it is the "pastor's role and responsibility" to choose songs, write and lead prayers.

Active pastors and laity generally share similar views on the wearing of vestments. About one third of active pastors and laity regard the wearing of vestments as something to be done for all (or most) services. A little over 20% of pastors and laity think they should only be worn for the main or traditional public service of the church, while a similar sized group believe they should rarely be worn, if at all. Most written responses advocate a pragmatic and flexible approach to vestments mindful of circumstance and setting.

On a scale of 1-10 lay members rate their pastor 8.2 for working independently, 7.9 for cooperating with congregational leadership, 7.5 for working with a team, and 6.7 for identifying and equipping lay leadership. Laity also rate their pastor 7.9 for approachability, 7.8 for listening attentively, and 7.1 for time management. Overall, 4 out of 5 lay members score their pastor in the top 50% for these various professional and relational skills.

1.3.3 Pastor-Pastor Team Ministry

57% of lay respondents believe pastor-pastor team ministries are quite or very successful, while 33% feel they are somewhat or very unsuccessful, with a little over 10% undecided.

As with sole pastor ministries, laity feel their pastoral team ministries are more successful in nurturing the faith of congregational members, somewhat less successful in developing a culture of practical service and care, and least successful in promoting the congregation's mission.

In successful team ministries pastors are seen to enjoy better relationships, a more equal workload, and greater commonality of ministry vision and theology. While pastors in successful team ministries often share similar pastoral styles, this is not a major factor, as the styles of pastors in successful teams are often quite different. And while pastors in team ministries are seen to observe their own priorities when it comes to congregational ministry, they do so less in successful team ministries.

Most team ministries designate one pastor in a senior position. But whether or not one pastor is recognized as senior does not seem to impact the success or failure of a team ministry.

Some of the factors determining the success or failure of a pastor-pastor team ministry are specific to team ministries: the relationship/cooperation of pastors and the division of workload and responsibilities. But it is not always so: as with sole pastor ministries, lay respondents expressed the wish that their pastors would connect with all groups of members and engage in more pastoral care. Dissatisfaction with one or both of the pastors in the team ministry did not always stem from the team ministry arrangement *per se*. Members who are unhappy with the current team ministry are not necessarily opposed to pastoral team ministry as such.

1.3.4 Pastor-Lay Worker Team Ministry

The most common lay worker arrangement is part-time and salaried. Overall, pastor-lay worker team ministries are regarded as slightly more successful than pastor-pastor teams. Laity also believe the working relationship in pastor-lay worker team ministries is a little better than in the pastor-pastor equivalent.

Pastor-lay worker teams are a little more successful (than pastor-pastor teams) in growing a culture of service within the congregation and beyond, and even more successful in promoting the mission of the congregation to the wider community. Laity feel that congregations, and particularly pastors, are quite or very supportive of their team ministry arrangements (but pastors and lay workers were not consulted on this question).

A number of suggestions were offered by lay members as to how the current team ministry might be improved. These included a strengthening of the common vision, greater cooperation, improved training, better communication and increased opportunities for ministry by women.

1.3.5 Personal Spirituality of the Pastor

The personal spirituality of pastors revolves strongly around personal prayer (84% practice daily) and devotional bible reading (52% practice daily). But the personality of pastors factored strongly in how they engaged with God's word and prayer in practice. 45% of pastors also engaged daily in other spiritual activities involving music, art or meditation.

While higher life satisfaction is reflected in slightly higher levels of spiritual practice, the same is true for those experiencing lower life satisfaction: both higher *and* lower levels of life satisfaction appear to be correlated with slightly higher levels of spiritual practice.

About half of all pastors experience a sense of both judgment and grace following poor decision making. However, it would seem that retired pastors have a surer sense of God's grace, whereas active, and particularly parish pastors, appear more susceptible to a sense of law or judgment. There

is a strong correlation between a pastor's satisfaction with life and his sense of judgment or grace: greater satisfaction with life strongly correlates with a greater sense of God's grace, and vice versa.

About 7 out of 10 active pastors feel "adequately" or "well prepared" for spiritual leadership, and most of the remainder feel at least "adequate enough to get by". This sense is also affected by overall well-being: those who feel dissatisfied with life in general also believe they are less well prepared for their task of leadership in ministry, with the opposite being the case for pastors who are extremely satisfied with life. Even so, most pastors experiencing dissatisfaction with life still feel adequately enough prepared to get by in their role as spiritual leader.

1.4 THE THEOLOGICAL AND MINISTRY TRAINING OF PASTORS

The next section summarizes responses to questions about the training and continuing education of pastors.

1.4.1 Satisfaction with and Adequacy of Initial Ministry Training

On a scale of 1 to 10, average satisfaction with ministry training among pastors is 6.9, while the average score for its perceived adequacy is 6.0. In terms of satisfaction, 4 out of 5 pastors rated their ministry training 6 out of 10 or more. In terms of its adequacy, 3 out of 5 pastors gave their ministry training 6 out of 10 or more.

Those pastors who have served for 11-20 years in the LCA rate their satisfaction with ministry training at 7.36 and the adequacy of their training at 6.26 – slightly higher than the average. Pastors who have served 10 years or less rated slightly less than average on both satisfaction (6.63) and perceived adequacy (5.87).

However, the current age of pastors appears to have little impact on how satisfied they are with their ministry training, or on how adequately they believe it prepared them for the actual experience of ministry.

Pastors who are 'extremely satisfied' with life in general are fractionally more satisfied with their ministry training and regard it as slightly more adequate in preparing them for the actual challenges of ministry. On the other hand, dissatisfied pastors are a little less satisfied with their ministry training, and regard its adequacy considerably less when measured against the total number of pastors surveyed.

1.4.2 Length of Training

81% of pastors feel the length of their training was about right, 13% believe it was too long, and only 6% think it was too short. However, younger pastors, and also those who have spent less time in ministry, are more inclined to think their training period was too short, whereas older pastors, and those who have served for longer, are more likely to believe their time of training was too lengthy.

1.4.3 Adequacy of Ministry Training – ten areas

On a scale of 1-10, pastors feel they have been most adequately trained in bible (7.85), theology (7.85), Lutheran history/distinctives (7.67), and to a slightly lesser degree, preaching (6.94). But they feel their training prepared them less adequately in worship leadership (6.3), pastoral care (6.19), and church administration (5.2). And they feel they have been least adequately prepared in the areas of evangelism/apologetics (4.77), leadership (4.49), and ministry to children and youth (4.31).

The current age of the pastor and years spent in ministry have little bearing on how adequate they feel their training was in any particular area. Satisfaction with life is less of a factor when considering *individual* aspects of ministry training, even though pastors' *overall* view of its adequacy is coloured by their general satisfaction with life.

1.4.4 Adequacy of Ministry Training – professional work skills

On a scale of 1-10, pastors rate their initial training in a number of professional work skills very low: working independently (6.1), time management (4.4), working with a team (3.9), and identifying and equipping lay leadership (3.7). There is little or no significant correlation between age and their sense of how well their ministry training has prepared them for these professional skills.

1.4.5 Further Reflections on Ministry Training

The aspect of ministry training most appreciated by LCA pastors is the solid grounding they have received in biblical and confessional theology. However, quite a few pastors wish there had been better integration of this strong theological tradition with the contemporary pastoral realities they would soon be encountering.

Many pastors would add training in leadership to the current training curriculum, as well as apologetics and engaging with contemporary culture, various pastoral and counselling skills, and attention to evangelism and mission.

1.4.6 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Pastors value Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for those undergoing initial ministry training with a mean score of 6.9 out of 10. But among pastors serving in national or district roles, aged care, or schools' ministry the mean score is 7.9.

1.4.7 Promotion of Australian Lutheran College (ALC)

54% of all pastors feel that that current ministry training is about the same standard now as when they first received their training. But 25% think it is not as good now, while the remaining 21% of pastors believe it is better. Active pastors are less inclined to think it is better.

57% of the total number of pastors said they actively encourage people to study at ALC to prepare for the ordained ministry. Among currently serving pastors the figure was 52%. However, a much greater percentage of older pastors say they promote ALC in this way: 69% of 60-69 year old pastors, 85% of pastors aged 70 or more.

The primary reasons given for not promoting ALC were to do with lack of opportunity or suitable candidates, some dissatisfaction with ALC or the wider church, or the nature of the public ministry itself. A handful noted that the recent decision of the LCA not to ordain women was factored into their decision. Some pastors feel that ALC is out of touch with contemporary society, too conservative in its theology, and not sufficiently tolerant of diverse ways of doing ministry.

1.4.8 Perceived importance of Continuing Education for Pastors (CEP)

Three quarters of lay respondents think that Continuing Education for Pastors (CEP) is quite or very important. Slightly less (70%) see it as equally important to resource their pastor's continuing education with time and money.

Pastors are less confident of their congregation's support: only 49% of pastors believe their congregations regard CEP as "beneficial" or "very beneficial". But 45% simply do not know what their congregation thinks about the value of CEP.

1.4.9 Forms of Continuing Education practised or wished for

Self-initiated informal reading is the most common form of CEP among LCA pastors, along with workshops and conferences.

The most common CEP topics pastors expressed an interest in have to do with leadership training/management, pastoral care, and counselling skills. But they also want CEP in the bible, especially as it relates to preaching better, as well as various topics which help them engage the contemporary church and culture both knowledgeably and effectively.

1.5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOLS

The next section covers responses from pastors who are currently, or have been, associated with a Lutheran school. Responses from lay members in congregations associated with a Lutheran school are also included.

There was a strong representation of pastors (124 pastors; 71% of total survey sample) to the section on LCA pastors and LCA principals and schools. These responses came only from pastors who had an existing, or previous, association with a Lutheran school. 627 lay members (42% of total sample) in congregations associated with a Lutheran school also responded.

1.5.1 Relationship between Congregation & School

A majority of pastors who responded to this section (51%; 61 pastors) thought the relationship between a Lutheran school and their congregation was "somewhat" an extension of the congregation's ministry. Twenty four pastors, or 20%, believed they were two completely separate ministries.

Fifty pastors (43%) described the relationship between their congregation and school as "strained" or "minimal to non-existent". 32% (37 pastors) described the relationship as "OK". Only 14% of pastors (16 pastors) described the relationship as "excellent".

1.5.2 Relationship between Pastor & Principal

Eighty two pastors (72%) described the relationship between themselves and the school principal as either “minimal to non-existent” or at best “strained”. 14% described the relationship as “OK”. Only 3% (4 pastors) described the relationship as “excellent”.

These responses differ somewhat to those reported in the LEA report *Principal Health and Well-being in Lutheran Schools* which reflected the views of principals within Lutheran schools. The view of most principals was that “... most principals have a positive relationship with the pastor or pastors most closely associated with their school... “The reality is that only 8 of 58 principals expressed dissatisfaction with the relationship with either the pastor(s) and/or congregation(s) most closely associated with their school”..... “those sites where pastor and principal have difficulty in their relationship are the exception” (Worthing, 2013; page 24).

Lay members were much more positive about the perceived relationships between their congregation and the Lutheran school and between their pastor and the Lutheran school principal than as indicated by pastors.

In the open comments substantial mention was made of the importance of the relationship between pastor and principal. Where this is functioning and productive, congregations and schools are more likely to work together effectively.

74% of pastors believed that up to 25% of their congregation’s growth in the last five years could be attributed to links with a Lutheran school.

1.5.3 Role of Pastor

The majority of pastors (78%) and lay members (66%) agreed that the congregation should make its pastor available for ministry to staff, students and families of the Lutheran school with which they were associated even if they are not members of the congregation. Most pastors (75%) believed that the school should look to the congregation and its pastor for spiritual and theological support.

There was strong support for the view that the principal should be a member of the congregation (69%; 85 pastors) associated with the school. In contrast, the LEA report *Principal Health and Well-being in Lutheran Schools* describes the situation in which principals are expected to be a member of the supporting congregation as one which, for principals, “posed difficulties and was not helpful” (Worthing, 2013; page 25).

In the open comments there was an emphasis on the congregation and the school needing to work more closely together. Pastors suggested a “healthy interdependence” with each other in a “partnership that was servant based” and mission orientated.

The understanding of the principal as the spiritual leader of the school was questioned by some pastors as they believed this gave principals responsibility in areas for which they may be ill equipped. The LEA report *Principal Health and Well-being in Lutheran Schools* found that all 58 principals who responded to the LEA survey felt at least “adequately” prepared to serve as spiritual head of their school (Worthing 2013; page 23).

A number of pastors (49%; 35 pastors) do not believe the distinction between the roles of the Lutheran congregation and school is clear. This agrees with the LEA report *Principal Health and Well-being in Lutheran Schools* in which Lutheran principals also recognised the lack of clarity “regarding the relationship between congregation and school and the understanding of the concept of school as a church” (Worthing, 2013; page 25).

In the focus groups there was some dissatisfaction expressed over the role of pastors within Lutheran schools. Pastors in Lutheran schools were seen merely as “religious service providers” and needed to be given “more of a voice” in the spiritual life of schools. This difficulty was also cited in the LEA report *Principal Health and Well-being in Lutheran Schools* (Worthing, 2013; page 25) which suggests that in “focus groups the clarity of roles between pastor and/or chaplain and principal as spiritual head of the school was found to have often presented difficulties”.

In the open question there was considerable comment around the concept of a “Lutheran” school and its role in mission and the wider church. There was some suggestion that the LCA had not really undertaken adequate theological reflection “on the place of schools in our church”.

Pastors commented that Lutheran schools should remain accessible to all and “not just the rich or elite”. “Lutheran schools should be accessible to Lutheran families and not beyond their financial means.”

There was appreciation of change within Lutheran schools. They were becoming more multicultural and as such there were communication issues. Some were beginning to struggle financially and there could be significant staffing challenges ahead with the downturn in Lutheran principal and pastor numbers.

1.6 PASTOR AND COMMUNITY

The next section summarizes the views of pastors and laity on involvement in the local community as well as discussion on how pastors believe themselves to be perceived within local communities.

1.6.1 Involvement in the Local Community

Active involvement in the local non-church community was supported by individual pastors (average rating of 6.7 on a scale of 1 to 10). Pastors, however, felt even more strongly (average rating 8.0) about the need for the support of their congregation, school or organisation in their work of pastors within the local community.

Overall pastors rated the importance of current content within their sermons more highly than that of lay members (pastors rated current events on average 7.6; contemporary culture 7.4, both on a scale of 1 to 10). Both were rated as less important by lay members.

Lay members rated the importance of pastor, within his sermons, challenging hearers to share their faith in the local community as significantly higher than of contemporary issues or culture (average rating 8.0).

Overall pastors felt there was less encouragement to be involved in community events than that believed by lay members. Some 27% (42 pastors) felt they were not generally encouraged to participate in community events. In contrast only 1% of lay members believed this to be the case.

The overwhelming majority of pastors (93%: 151 pastors) suggested that, while conducting weddings and funerals are normally services provided to Christians and members of the congregation, if someone from outside their congregation approached them they would welcome the opportunity to do such a service. For many pastors providing such services was seen as a way of making contacts in the local community and witnessing to the Gospel. Indigenous pastors mentioned the conducting of funerals as important.

Most pastors who participated in the focus groups were sympathetic to wider community involvement. For some it was life-giving. But many mentioned the problem of time and the emotional exhaustion of always being on call within their own church community; of being “all peopled out”. It was suggested, however, that wider community involvement by pastors added greater authenticity to their ministry and opened up opportunities for mission work.

A number of pastors within the focus groups also believed that the non-church community thought it important for pastors to be involved in the wider community. Pastors emphasised the need to take their congregations with them when becoming involved in the wider community. Pastors could not do it alone. Nurturing people in faith required participation by the whole congregation.

Shrinking congregations were mentioned as a driver in churches moving out into the wider community. Congregations realized they were “dying” and hence supported their pastor in reaching outwards. Pastors were interested in individual needs within the community but, for some congregations, community involvement was also about survival.

1.6.2 Status of Pastors

Pastors were asked their perception of their status within the local community. Altogether 176 pastors responded to this question and of this group 47 pastors elected to select more than one option. As such their choices could reflect what they believe to be the range of their status across the community rather than a single view.

Overall most pastors, including those who selected more than one option, (41%; n= 72) felt they were at least viewed the same as anyone else within the community regardless of any other status. Another 23% (40 pastors) felt they were highly regarded within their local community while 19% (33 pastors) considered themselves, amongst other views, to be tolerated by their local community.

129 pastors selected only one option to the question of their status within the local community. Over half (57%; 74 pastors) believed their status within the local community to be much the same as for anyone else. Another 33 pastors (26%) considered themselves to be highly regarded as individuals while 19 (15%) felt themselves to be, at best, tolerated within the local community. A very small minority (2%) felt they were viewed with suspicion.

No LCA pastor (0%) believed their status in the local community to be solely that of potential child abuser.

Fifty percent of lay members who responded to this question (624 members) believed their pastor's status to be that of highly regarded within the local community. As such overall they perceive the status of pastor as higher within the local community than as perceived by pastors themselves.

474 lay members (38%) agreed with the majority view held by pastors; the status of pastors was much the same as for anyone else within the community.

No LCA lay member (0%) perceived the status of their pastor within the local community as that of a potential child abuser.

1.7 THE CURRENT LCA CALL PROCESS

The next section summarises pastor and lay member views on the current call process within the LCA.

1.7.1 The experience of receiving and issuing a call

Pastors are more satisfied with their most recent call experience than are laity: 64% of active pastors, but only 59% of laity, agreed that they were satisfied with their most recent experience of call. On the other hand, 17% of pastors, but 34% of laity, did not agree that their most recent call experience was satisfactory.

Among laity there is a greater polarity between positive and negative experiences of the call process, as well as the feeling that current arrangements unnecessarily prolong the process.

Only 38% of lay respondents believe that the pastoral self-assessment information on LAMP is sufficient to help a calling body determine whether the prospective pastor's gifts and abilities match the needs of their congregation or organization.

1.7.2 Opinions about the current LCA call system

16% of active pastors believe the call system works very well. 74% think it is adequate with some room for improvement. Only 10% feel it needs replacing. Laity are less positive: 10% think the call system works very well, 58% think it is adequate, 32% want to replace it.

Pastors, and especially laity, believe the current system favours pastors over the calling bodies.

While there are exceptions, pastors and laity alike tend to think that bishops and district officials have too much influence in the call process.

While pastors and laity are generally satisfied with the current 30 day arrangement, laity are more inclined to view it as too long.

1.7.3 Theological Views about the call

Both laity and pastors regard the call process as a largely human arrangement, and therefore subject to change and adjustment. Nevertheless, they also believe that the Holy Spirit works through this

human arrangement, a view held a little more strongly among pastors. However, only a small number of pastors thought there was a distinctively *Lutheran* approach to the call process.

1.7.4 Reactions to alternative approaches to the call system

Pastors and laity agree that pastors should be allowed to express their interest in a particular call to their bishop. Active pastors also strongly agree that they should be able to tell their bishops when they feel ready to move on, even when no particular call presents itself.

Pastors and laity agree that in *special circumstances* congregations could seek expressions of interest. But while 67% of laity agree that all congregations should be *regularly* allowed to call for expressions of interest, only 57% of active pastors share this view, with 23% of active pastors disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

While a range of views certainly exists, more pastors are happy with congregations making pre-call inquiries than are not. About 80% of active pastors agree that their bishop (or representative) can ask them about their willingness to take a call, or if any reason exists why they are not. While they are less open to letting a call committee know the extent of their interest in considering a call, 75% of active pastors still agree it is OK for a call committee to make such inquiries.

Overall, laity are strongly committed and pastors reasonably open to the idea of pre-call interviews or conversations. About 80% of laity and 70% of active pastors expressed agreement with this approach.

53% of laity like the idea of visiting a prospective candidate's congregation to gather information on his preaching and worship style. But pastors are somewhat averse to the idea, with only 39% active pastors agreeing and a further 39% disagreeing.

Over two thirds of active pastors disagree with the idea of a trial sermons, especially if it involves multiple candidates. About one half of lay respondents disagree with the proposal, while a quarter agree to some extent.

Alternative forms of pastoral appointment are generally rejected by pastors and laity alike. Both groups wish to maintain a distinction between graduates and current pastors.

38% of pastors believe it is inappropriate to call a pastor already in receipt of a call, but 41% do not think this poses a problem.

1.7.5 Family Needs and Concerns when considering a call

For pastors as a whole, family considerations are "important, but not necessarily decisive" when considering a call. But they are more significant for active pastors, being "absolutely decisive" for at least 1 in 5.

Family considerations play a far greater role in the decision making process for pastors experiencing overall dissatisfaction with life.

1.7.6 Further Comments on the call system

The three most common issues raised by pastors and laity about the current call system were (1) the need for more accurate and helpful information about prospective candidates, including greater transparency throughout the process; (2) the nature of district involvement, with an overall feeling that bishops and districts tend to have too much influence; (3) the adoption of professional employment procedures such as expressions of interest, applications and interview processes.

Laity also raised concerns about supply and tenure, the length of the call process, the shortcomings of LAMP, and issues regarding the spiritual and/or secular nature of the 'call'.

Of particular interest (or concern) to pastors is the practice and official status of pre-call inquiries and interviews, with a wide range of opinions being expressed.

1.8 PASTORAL OVERSIGHT

The final section of the survey sought responses from pastors on the effectiveness of current arrangements for pastoral oversight.

1.8.1 The Effectiveness of LCA Oversight

There is a mixed level of satisfaction by pastors with the oversight currently exercised by the bishops of the LCA. This is reflected in a mean response of about 5 out of 10. Retired pastors are a little more positive about the current exercise of oversight, but currently serving parish pastors are less so.

Pastors are more satisfied with the level of communication by the district and bishops (5.93), but less so with how the bishops exercise discipline (4.72) or pastoral care of pastors (4.73).

Pastors feel that the role of bishop is conflicted between one of pastoral care and the spiritual oversight of pastors, and that of being an administrator, CEO or politician.

Many, perhaps most, expressed the belief that the bishops were genuinely pastoral, but that the system as it currently stands thwarts these pastoral intentions. Many pastors believe the excessive workload and range of responsibilities expected of bishops is counterproductive.

1.8.2 Change in name from 'President' to 'Bishop'

The change in nomenclature from 'president' to 'bishop' has not had a significant effect on how pastors view this role. On average, pastors did not feel that the name change made that much difference to the bishops either.

1.8.3 Pastoral Lists

About 60-70% of respondents agreed that pastors who served outside regular LCA and/or salary structures should remain on the roll of LCA pastors. The exception concerned those pastors who worked in independent ministry: here opinion was equally divided.

Almost two thirds of all pastors agreed that the LCA makes sufficient use of its retired clergy. Most retired pastors tended to agree, although not quite to the same extent.

Overall, there is moderate agreement that there should be an increase in the number of SMPs: almost twice as many pastors agreed with the proposal to some extent as those who disagreed with it.

1.8.4 Open Comments

The most important thing pastors feel the bishops should give greater attention to is their calling to be ‘a pastor to the pastors’. A second key area calling for greater attention is the bishops’ task of providing clear spiritual and theological oversight. Pastors were looking for effective theological leadership. The matter of the ordination of women was cited as “a prime example”.

An aspect of pastoral oversight many pastors feel would be of benefit in their current ministry is encouragement and support from their bishop. Many pastors want their bishop to keep in more regular contact with them, and to simply inquire how they are getting on.

Key Findings & Suggestions for Further Research

This section attempts to draw out some of the most important findings from the whole report. A few suggestions for further research are also offered. This section is followed by a list of recommendations arising from these key findings.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LCA PASTORS AND LCA LAY MEMBERS

In line with all mainstream churches in Australia LCA pastors, as a professional group, are older and ageing faster than similar welfare service occupations in Australia. Up to one quarter of pastors, currently in pastoral ministry across the LCA, are eligible to retire within the next five years. This trend in ageing of the fraternity has implications for succession planning, recruitment and training for ministry over the next decade particularly with current LCA parish vacancy rates approaching 15-20%.⁴

A quarter of parish pastors no longer occupy church manses. Pastors in parishes report on the pressures attached to living in a manse with stress reduced once they occupy their own home. This trend of changing patterns in home ownership by the parish fraternity are likely to have implications for the individual, for the church community and for the LCA.

Further work on changes in pastor characteristics over time is strongly suggested based on longitudinal data for the LCA which has been previously collected by the NCLS over a number of surveys and is likely to be already held by the LCA.⁵ Other longitudinal data including the ABS Census of Population and Housing data⁶ (much of this is at no cost), the International Social Survey Program⁷ and any existing LCA data could also be used to supplement the NCLS data. Analysis of this material would allow for the identification, over significant periods of time, of longitudinal trends in the

⁴ An approximation based on LCA National Office estimates <http://www.lca.org.au/>.

⁵ NCLS data is professionally collected, collated and managed and NCLA publications are peer reviewed and published internationally.

⁶ <http://www.abs.gov.au/census>

⁷ <http://www.issp.org/>

characteristics and needs of pastors as well as other items such as home ownership patterns. Trends in the characteristics of congregations could also be identified using NCLS and LCA data.

THE PERSONAL WELL-BEING OF PASTORS

Parish pastors, whose ministerial responsibilities require high levels of “emotion work”, are those pastors with lowest scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), emotional levels which are most negative and whose stress levels are highest.

As a response more investigation is needed as to how well formed, skilled or prepared pastors are for roles other than worship which are less structured in time and leadership and more relational in nature. Also to what extent are church organisations, church managers and those responsible for pastoral oversight equipped to effectively support pastors experiencing high emotional trauma and significant work stress.

Pastors in national or district office roles report higher levels of positive emotion and higher SWLS. To explore this further research is needed as to why pastors aligned with districts have higher SWLS scores. Is it related to clearer role definitions, greater control over their working day, levels of peer/team working and support, or clearer leadership demarcation and supervision?

Support for a mentor/confessor/ spiritual advisor was rated highly by all pastors, including retired. Fostering healthy adaptive coping strategies by those responsible for pastoral care and thus facilitating the spiritual lives and associated well-being of LCA pastors continues to be vital for the health of the profession and by extension the health of the wider church.

Mentors, retreats, the fellowship of colleagues, who share and care, are necessary for the personal, physical and spiritual well-being of pastors within the LCA.

THE PRACTICE AND TASKS OF MINISTRY

Pastors enjoy ministry, but their time is fragmented due to many competing demands which often take them away from core pastoral work. Supporting and encouraging pastors to manage this challenge, and stay centred on key pastoral ministry tasks, is an ongoing need.

While pastors are strong in formal word and sacrament tasks, there is a perception (by laity, but also by pastors) that pastoral care of members is not always sufficient. Laity in particular stressed the importance of strengthening pastoral relationships both with individual members and groups within the congregation, especially children, youth and young families. The growing number of inactive members are also a concern for laity. Developing increased competency and confidence in pastoral care and people skills is a priority. Related to this is the need for pastors to equip laity for their ministry and vocation in the congregation and community.

Many pastors see their role less in terms of authority, and more in terms of leadership. Yet they often feel ill equipped in practical leadership skills. Provision of training in this area, along with other professional skills, would appear to be welcome.

While team ministries face many of the same issues and challenges as do the sole pastor, there is scope for further identifying the benefits that team ministry can bring to congregational life, especially the service and mission potential of pastor-lay worker teams.

THE THEOLOGICAL AND MINISTRY TRAINING OF PASTORS

Pastors appreciated the sound biblical and theological education provided in their ministry training, but feel less adequately prepared in the areas of leadership, pastoral care and counselling, evangelism, and apologetics. Feedback suggests the following areas for attention: first, better equipping pastors with a number of practical and professional skills; and secondly, helping pastors to more effectively translate theology in the context of contemporary culture.

Many pastors indicated they have not actively encouraged people to study at ALC for the purposes of ordination. While some reasons were provided, it would seem that further investigation of this reticence is a priority.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOLS

In contrast to the views of Lutheran school principals⁸ a significant majority of pastors aligned, or previously aligned with Lutheran schools described the relationship between themselves and the school principal as either “minimal to non-existent” or at best “strained”. A number of issues arise from the differing perspectives of pastor and principal as to the quality of their working relationship, as well as expectations of their roles and the nature of the relationship between school and the congregation. Further analysis of both surveys might allow for a greater understand of these different perspectives.

PASTOR AND COMMUNITY

The place and authority of pastors within the local community has changed. They are no longer necessarily “highly regarded”. Rather the majority of pastors believe themselves to be viewed much the same as everyone else in the community. Yet how pastors are perceived within their local non church community is a critical function of their effectiveness in ministry and mission. Further investigation could identify if this shift in authority is a positive and or a negative trend for pastors. Pastors may not necessarily consider the change in the community view as a negative factor.

THE CURRENT LCA CALL PROCESS

Most pastors think the current call process is adequate with room for improvement, although laity are less satisfied. While pastors mostly see it as a human mechanism through which the Holy Spirit can work, laity are more inclined to see it simply as a human arrangement. These views suggest there is openness to adjusting or changing aspects of the current call system.

Pastors are moderately open to the idea of pre-call inquiries, interviews, and expressions of interest, and laity more so. Further investigation could ask if the adoption of some professional employment practices might serve the call process well.

⁸ Worthing, M. (2013) Principal Health and Wellbeing in Australian Lutheran Schools Lutheran Education Australia (LEA), CAMP Australia and ALITE Research Project Final Report ALITE ALC Adelaide

Laity wish to receive more accurate and transparent information about prospective candidates, and often express concern about the nature and extent of district involvement in the call process. Some of these are matters are procedural, while others impinge on deeper questions of oversight in the LCA.

PASTORAL OVERSIGHT

There is a generally low sense of satisfaction with the way oversight is currently exercised in the LCA. In most cases, this is perceived as a systemic, rather than a personal, problem. That is, pastors feel that the role of bishop is conflicted between one of pastoral care and the spiritual oversight of pastors, and that of being an administrator, CEO or politician.

Feedback suggests several areas for attention: identifying the specific ways bishops can realistically exercise pastoral care of pastors; clarifying the ways in which both their 'authority' and their call to 'leadership' is understood and implemented; and investigating the way current church structures limit or constrain the exercise of their office.

Recommendations

The following list of recommendations relates broadly to the care of pastors in the LCA, although they also reflect other matters discussed in the Report (particularly the current call process). They are addressed in the first place to the College of Bishops, although they would invariably involve the agencies, pastorate, and congregations of the church.

In most cases, each section of the Report has given rise to two or three recommendations. However, not all the issues discussed in the Report form part of these recommendations. That is not to say they are unimportant. But priority has been given to those matters which seemed most urgent or received most attention in the Report. They also focus on goals which can be realistically achieved, and which encompass the broad range of views that emerged on certain points. While most of the recommendations involve a degree of further research, a number of immediate practical suggestions are also made. It is hoped that they build on existing LCA initiatives and further the church's mission as outlined in the LCA Strategic Priorities.

Recommendation 1 *That existing research data pertaining to the LCA and the pastorate is identified and gathered, utilized in longitudinal research, and continuously managed and upgraded.*

Recommendation 2 *Conduct further research in order to estimate the supply of pastors over the next 5, 10 and 20 years, and what implications this has for the LCA in terms of recruitment, training, succession planning, and allocation of resources.*

Recommendation 3 *Conduct further research on changing patterns in home ownership by LCA pastors and the implications this has for the individual pastor (and his family), for congregations/parishes, and for the LCA.*

Recommendation 4 *Conduct further research on factors contributing to the well-being of specific groups of LCA clergy, namely, parish pastors, aged care pastors, Specific Ministry Pastors (SMPs), and pastors working in LCA or District roles, with recommendations made for the care of clergy.*

Recommendation 5 *That attention be given to the emotional formation and relational skills of ministry candidates and recent graduates, and that to this end pastors undergo an initial unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) within the first 24 months of ministry.*

Recommendation 6 *That the LCA develop and implement, as part of its code of practice, guidelines for professional pastoral supervision encompassing all active LCA pastors, and particularly recent graduates.*

Recommendation 7 *That professional development opportunities in the area of apologetics, evangelism, and engaging with contemporary culture be made available to pastors (as well as to church workers, students and congregations).*

Recommendation 8 *That professional development opportunities in the area of pastoral care and counselling be made available to pastors, focussing particularly on developing specific skills and competencies.*

Recommendation 9 *That research be conducted into the potential benefits of pastor-lay worker team ministry, especially with respect to developing a congregational culture of service and outreach and the equipping of laity.*

Recommendation 10 *That the LCA or Districts provide guidance for pastors in acquiring practical and professional leadership skills. This would comprise: (1) guidance in/promotion of accredited and non-accredited training options (2) application to the training and equipping of lay leadership (3) theological guidance in evaluating leadership training options.*

Recommendation 11 *Conduct further research and make recommendations concerning the issues underlying the level of support and promotion given to ALC among pastors of the LCA.*

Recommendation 12 *That congregations are given greater exposure to the role, importance and forms of Continuing Education for Pastors (CEP), and that broad guidelines are developed to help congregations and pastors jointly work out programs of CEP/professional development.*

Recommendation 13 *Conduct further research on the relationship between the pastor (both congregational and school) and school principal, focussing on current expectations about the role of the pastor in the school and understandings of the nature and extent of the pastoral office in the school environment.*

Recommendation 14 *Interview those pastors (and congregations) whose ministry includes demonstrably high levels of involvement in their local community in order to (a) ascertain the nature of this ministry, and (b) explore the connection between this involvement and pastoral/personal well-being.*

Recommendation 15 *Based on 14, provide recommendations and resources for wider involvement of pastors and their congregations in local communities, including a theological rationale to clarify the nature of pastoral involvement in the local community.*

Recommendation 16 *Investigate the theological and practical implications of approving and incorporating a number of professional employment practises (expressions of interest, applications, interviews and pre-call conversations) into the process for calling pastors.*

Recommendation 17 *Facilitate more accurate, objective and comprehensive information about prospective pastors for calling bodies.*

Recommendation 18 *Clarify and communicate the roles and prerogatives of congregations and District leadership in the call process.*

Recommendation 19 *Bishops take immediate, achievable and practical steps towards ensuring they more consistently engage in the pastoral care of pastors.*

Recommendation 20 *Review the workload and range of responsibilities of bishops, with a view to recommending achievable changes resulting in a reduction in managerial responsibilities and a facilitation of theological, spiritual and pastoral leadership.*

Conclusion

In conclusion it is anticipated that the findings within this report effectively highlight the current views, expectations and challenges of those presently serving within the ordained ministry of the LCA. The report offers potential pathways for further analysis around the recruitment, training, mentoring and ongoing professional development of ordained pastors with particular regard to well-being, leadership, practice and mission. As such the report, and the voices of those it represents, should potentially act as a strategic pointer for the LCA. It is hoped that, in some small part, it reflects the faith, commitment and professionalism of those it seeks to speak for.

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