

Appendix A: College of Bishops

The LCA Constitution and By-Laws outline the duties for the College of Bishops (CoB) at Section 8.6.

This report highlights the major foci of the work of the CoB during the last synodical term.

The College of Bishops meets monthly (except January). This involves four to five face-to-face meetings interspersed with teleconferences. In this triennium, the CoB conducted 31 meetings (17 face-to-face and 14 teleconferences). Face to face meetings are of two days duration, and include 'generative' topics relevant to the ministry and mission of the LCA. On occasion, the CoB will also hold electronic meetings via an online discussion board or email.

Additionally each year the CoB also:

- Meets with graduate pastors and their wives who are in their second year of ministry, as part of the graduate pastor program;
- Meets Australian Lutheran College (ALC) final year pastoral ministry students and their wives on two occasions;
- Meets as the LCA assignment panel to formally interview and approve ALC graduate candidates for ordination and conduct initial assignments to called ministry positions;
- Holds an annual retreat for mutual support and refreshment through Scripture, prayer and mutual conversation and consolation;
- Meets occasionally for special purposes, such as following the General Pastors Conference (GPC) to discuss matters emanating from the GPC.
- Arranges special workshops when it identifies the need;

The General Church Council (GCC) has delegated the following Constitutional responsibilities to the CoB:

- Matters relating to pastors on the Roll of Pastors
- Oversight of the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, the Commission on Worship, and the Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions

Over the period the membership of the CoB has been:

- Pastor John Henderson, LCA Bishop
- Pastor Dr Andrew Pfeiffer, LCA Assistant Bishop
- Pastor David Altus, SA/NT District
- Pastor Paul Smith, Qld District
- Pastor Mark Whitfield, LCNZ
- Pastor Greg Pietsch, Vic/Tas District (2004 – 2016)
- Pastor Lester Priebbenow, Vic/Tas District (from February 2017)
- Pastor Mark Lieschke, NSW District (2009 – 2017)
- Pastor James Haak, NSW District (from February 2018)
- Pastor Greg Pfeiffer, WA District (2009 – 2017)
- Pastor Mike Fulwood, WA District (from April 2017)
- Pastor Neville Otto, LCA Secretary (consultant).

We thank God for the faithful service of all who concluded their service during this past synodical term and thank God for our new Bishops.

PASTOR STATISTICS

(Refer Appendix 1, p44)

The LCA holds that 'the office of the (ordained) ministry is an office, which is simultaneous with the church and to which the church is bound from its beginning to the end of time.' (Theses of Agreement VI.3) Therefore, the training, supply and service of our pastors is of vital concern to us.

Accordingly, the pastorate has occupied the largest part of the CoB agenda. We continue to gather data on pastoral supply. We have identified an approaching shortage of supply and the ongoing need for active recruitment. The CoB is active in promoting the pastoral ministry and implementing strategies to best deployment of pastors in our contemporary church. We acknowledge the profound respect accorded to pastors in the LCA, and the need for Pastors to honour the trust the church places in them. We are thankful for the ongoing support of calling bodies that makes their ministry possible. Please pray for the ministry of our pastors as we walk, pray and serve together confidently as God's people in Synod.

CoB also considers the care of pastors and their families, and their ongoing support and development.

The 20 recommendations contained in report commissioned by the CoB, '*Pastoral Ministry in the Lutheran Church of Australia: A Snapshot Fifty Years after Union*', have occupied much of our time. We are addressing them progressively (see the summary at Appendix 2, p44).

ATTENTION TO THE DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The CoB oversees the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (CTICR). This term the major focus of the CTICR has been Synod Resolution 2015:0216:

RESOLVED: that Synod requests the CTICR to build on its earlier work regarding the ordination of women and men to develop a draft doctrinal statement for GPC and the 19th Convention of Synod that presents:

- *A theological basis for the ordination of women and men.*
- *A theological basis for why the ordination of women and men need not be church divisive.*
- *And that GCC resource it.*

The CTICR has done this work using financial resources provided by the LLL through the GCC. The resulting statements will be presented to this Synod. The CoB thanks the CTICR and the Consultation Project Officer Timothy Pietsch for their diligent work in preparing these documents. The CoB also thanks the many people (1300+) who engaged in the consultation process.

The CTICR also presents its work on the study of theological and scriptural understanding of subordination and the role of male headship in marriage and the contextual implications for family violence in its report to Synod.

The CoB worked with the theological and pastoral issues raised by the teaching and practice of Pastor Edgar Mayer and the Living Grace congregation in Toowoomba. Both Pastor Mayer and the congregation eventually decided to resign from the LCA and conduct their ministry independently. This action was finalised in an orderly way on 27 August 2017 with a rite of peaceful dismissal conducted by Bishop Paul Smith.

50.500 REFORMATION CELEBRATIONS/COMMEMORATION

(Joint commemorations, Joint Statement on the Reformation)

The LCA Churchwide celebrations and commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation featured a number of events including joint commemoration on 31 October 2017 with the Roman Catholic Church. In the lead up to this event, the CoB oversaw the work of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Dialogue group in preparing a Joint Statement on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (see Appendix 3). The statement was approved by the General Church Council acting on behalf of the Synod.

PASTORAL CARE/ORDERING AND OVERSIGHT OF THE MINISTRY

The CoB has worked with the Church Worker Support Department (CWSD) and Australian Lutheran College (ALC) to build on the solid foundation laid by Pastor Bob Kempe in establishing Continuing Education for Pastors (CEP). Pastor Kempe concluded his work as Coordinator early in 2017. Close collaboration between the CWSD and ALC has led to the creation of a 0.2 FTE CEP Coordinator at ALC. Pastor Gordon Wegener is the new CEP Coordinator under this arrangement.

The CoB has continued to receive reports and feedback from the Board for Support for Pastoral Ministry (BSPM). The BSPM has served the church well but, in discussion with members of the board, it has been agreed that the Church Worker Support Department is better placed to carry out the board's current functions of personal and pastoral care ministry. It therefore will be proposed at this General Convention that the board comes to an end, with sincere thanks to members for their faithful service, and the work previously undertaken by the board will be continued through the Church Worker Support Department under the guidance of the College of Bishops.

The CoB is also encouraged by the work of the CWSD in its crucial role of supporting and developing those who serve in ministry in the LCA – 'start well, grow well, finish well'. The CWSD is assisting the CoB identify improved mechanisms and resources to support our ministry workers. Pastoral Supervision is a growing emphasis aspect of this work. A working group is examining the churchwide implications and opportunities.

In addition to its work on the ALITE report and recommendations, the CoB is addressing a number of matters relating to the ordering and oversight of the ministry in the LCA. As these have continued to increase and limited resources made it difficult to manage them all, in late 2017, the CoB saw the opportunity to bring them together in a workshop, which they held in May 2018. Major matters it addressed include:

- a. Finalising Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Procedures to accompany the SMP Policy adopted by the 2013 Synod.
- b. Church Planters and the need for Word and Sacrament ministry in new plants. CoB will continue to explore the needs via engagement with Local Mission leaders in working through case studies.
- c. Synod Resolution 2015:0219 (see Appendix 4, p51 for details of Synod resolutions):
RESOLVED: that General Convention support an examination of the creation and development of an additional ministry position that does not require completion of the full Australian Lutheran College (ALC) course for the person to be able to write and deliver sermons and to administer the Sacraments in situations outside those envisaged by the Specific Ministry Pastor Policy.

The CoB studied this matter closely and concluded that the current provisions for licencing and ordination as a Specific Ministry Pastor are sufficient to meet the needs of the church. The CoB sees the resolution as giving good impetus to promote the presently available options and pathways and to work with Australian Lutheran College in the development and provision of training resources and the accreditation of study units.

- d. The 2013 Synod left undealt agenda item 2.5.7 re equipping pastors for team ministry in light of ALITE recommendations: *RESOLVED that Synod place on the Agenda Late Proposal: that the LCA gives priority attention to the nurture and equipping of pastors for the leadership of team ministries in all congregations, particularly including those which do/or could operate in close mission partnership with Lutheran schools, care or other agencies. Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Rochedale, Qld.*

The CoB discussed this in conjunction with recommendation 9 from the ALITE report. It noted the work being done in this area by numerous ministries such as the Board for

Local Mission, Lutheran Education, Church Worker Support, and ALC to name a few. The CoB has asked the CWSD for its support in gaining a picture of team ministry in the LCA as it currently stands.

LEADERSHIP IN THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

The CoB has met regularly with the Assistant to the Bishop – Reconciliation Ministry (AB-RM), Pastor Paul Kerber. A primary objective continues to be to build the capacity of this ministry as the call for it grows in the LCA. Pastor Kerber is working with the Bishops to identify lay people and pastors to be trained in Biblical Reconciliation skills. These people will be equipped to serve in their local settings and we hope also for service to the wider LCA from time to time. Planned training events and specific Biblical Reconciliation material will carry this objective forward in partnership with the Bishops.

The CoB has also met regularly with Pastor Paul Kerber and the Manager of the Professional Standards Department (PSD), Mr Tim Ross. We are vitally interested in responding to complaints in a God-pleasing way, using a sound and evidenced process. The CoB commends the collaborative approach being taken by PSD and the AB-RM. While this is a work in progress, we anticipate a productive outcome as we work through procedures and practices. It is a difficult, complex area requiring much patience and resilience. We ask for your prayers for those engaged in this work, and those who both make complaints and those who are complained against.

OVERSIGHT OF THE COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS, THE COMMISSION ON WORSHIP, AND THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL AND BIOETHICAL QUESTIONS

The CoB has discussed the need and opportunity to provide better support and oversight of these commissions. Early in the next synodical term, the CoB will assign Bishops portfolios for each commissions so that each will have a Bishop to liaise with. Each commission chair will also have opportunity to meet with the CoB at least annually. The CoB recognises the need to work with the shared issue that commissions have limited resources in comparison to the workload expected of the largely voluntarily membership.

The CoB expresses thanks the dedicated workers who serve on these important commissions.

ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH TO BE ACTIVE IN CHRIST'S MISSION AND TO STRIVE FOR UNITY, HARMONY AND GOOD ORDER IN THE CHURCH

The CoB continues to meet regularly with District Mission Directors and LCA Local Mission. The CoB is working with the new arrangements which gather the various LCA operations in local mission into a coordinated approach. This raises new possibilities and new conversations between our mission activities, particularly through the inclusion of New and Renewing Churches. The CoB continues to seek to support our missional work and provide appropriate oversight. There are many challenges, such as the ordering of Word and Sacrament ministry in new church plants and as some existing congregations as they go through significant change (eg when they can no longer afford to pay a pastor). As stated earlier in this report, in this period, we have particularly worked to finalise procedures associated with the LCA policy on Specific Ministry Pastors.

The CoB also considered and acted on Synod resolution 2015:0217 concerning a period of careful theological reflection on the matter of ordination (see Appendix 4, p51.).

CARE FOR PASTORS OF THE CHURCH AND OVERSIGHT OF THEIR MINISTRY

A large proportion of CoB meetings focusses on matters of pastoral care and oversight. Each Bishop is individually responsible for the pastors in his District, and collectively the CoB supports that activity through considered decision making and resolution of matters relating to calling bodies and the care of pastors, church workers and their families. We acknowledge there is still much to learn in this area, and the bishops have formed themselves in to a listening and learning group.

Your bishops, each of them pastors themselves, are grateful to God for every person who works in the Lord's harvest field. This includes a variety of called positions, ordained and non-ordained, volunteer and remunerated, known and unknown. We strive to provide leadership and care that nurtures and develops pastors and all church workers, knowing that we are all under the care of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

To God be the glory.