

AGENDA 2.2.4(V2)

Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement

PROPOSED AMENDED MOTION

Submitted by Box Hill St Pauls Congregation

PROPOSED THAT

1. Synod accepts there is ongoing division and no consensus in the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCA) on the matter of whether both men and women can be ordained according to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and
2. For the sake of the gospel and the mission of God that we share in the LCA, that Theses of Agreement (T.A.) 6.11 be removed from the Theses of Agreement¹, and
3. For peace and unity, the LCA allows for two practices in the office of the ministry, being male only ordination and the ordination of both men and women effective from 4 February 2024, and
4. The Constitution of the LCA be amended as set out below (words to be deleted – ~~striketrough~~; words to be added – **bold**) and General Church Board be authorised to make any necessary changes to the By-laws to enact points 2 and 3.

Article 5. THE MINISTRY

5.1 The Church recognises and upholds the Office of the Ministry as the office divinely instituted for the public administration of the Means of Grace. For this purpose it shall receive into its Ministry, by ordination or by colloquy of ministers ordained elsewhere, ~~men~~ **persons** whose qualifications for the office have been established and who

5.1.1 accept and hold the Confession of the Church;

5.1.2 accept the Constitution and By-laws of the Church; and

5.1.3 undertake to participate in the work of the Church and to promote its Objects.

Such members of the Ministry shall be recorded in the official Roll of Pastors.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The report of the February 2020 joint meeting of the General Church Board (GCB) and the College of Bishops (CoB) stated:
'After many years of research, study of God's word, respectful engagement, dialogue and debate with each other in healthy, scriptural, Christ-centred ways and after several synods have debated and voted on the subject, we have not reached consensus'²;
2. This proposal acknowledges the LCA's long and prayerful study of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions leading to many years of discussion, dialogue and debate on the matter of whether Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions provide for the ordination of both women and men. The LCA has strived together to faithfully submit to Scripture as the sole source and norm of doctrine and practice. Yet, we have not reached consensus understanding. The LCA is stronger when we are together in our witness in following Christ in his mission to the world. Like those who went before us to help us become one in 1966, this proposal seeks to provide the way forward for the us to remain one church with a

¹ Theses of Agreement 6.11 reads: Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired. 'Theses on the Office of the Ministry', paragraph 6.11; Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, LCA, page A17 and see <https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/cticr/>

² Report to the LCA on a special meeting of the and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCA over the ordination of women and men, published August 2020

shared mission to proclaim Christ to the world.

3. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) came together as one church in 1966 for the sake of the gospel and the mission of God through the witness of God's people to the world. This proposal seeks to maintain this unity.
4. At the constituting Synod of the LCA at Tanunda in 1966, Dr S Hebart preached at one of the worship services on Colossians 3:13-15:
'Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.'
Our sincere hope and prayer is for God's peace amongst us and that our witness to the world is of the gospel, as we put on God's love which binds us together.
5. In relation to ordination, some hold to the view that Scripture teaches that only men may be ordained to the office of the public ministry. At the same time others hold the view that Scripture teaches that both men and women may be ordained to the office of the public ministry.
6. Both views are earnestly and prayerfully held as being the witness of Scripture.
7. Neither those who support the ordination of both women and men and those who support the church's current teaching have been able to persuade the whole church that their position alone has clear scriptural support, even though both make such a claim. There is ongoing agreement on the Confessional Lutheran teaching on the Office of the Public Ministry in Augsburg Confession Articles 5 and 14 and as evidenced in TA 6:1-10.
8. The Theses of Agreement (TA) Article 1 outlines the LCA's agreed basis for church fellowship. Paragraph TA 1.4 is particularly pertinent.
9. The addition of point 3 to this proposal makes explicit our understanding that TA 1.4.e. speaks to the very situation of the LCA today. For the sake of our continued shared gospel witness as Lutherans in Australia and New Zealand, TA 1.4.e. provides for us to be a church with one teaching on the Office of the Public Ministry and to have two practices of ordination. This provides for congregations to call either men only; or both women or men as pastors. This therefore allows those who are conscience bound to either position to continue together in common Lutheran fellowship.
10. The proposal acknowledges that a transition time is desired by some in the LCA, including to allow the General Church Board and College of Bishops to work through the associated matters required to operate as one church with two different practices of ordination. In the interests of supporting unity of the church, an approximate one-year period prior to implementation of the change has been incorporated. 4 February 2024 has been selected as an appropriate Sunday, being Epiphany 5.
1. We are stronger for the mission work God calls to and for our common witness to the world when we are together as one Lutheran Church in Australia and New Zealand. Our proposal strongly advocates and provides for us to remain one.