

AGENDA 2.1.8

LCA Constitution Review

(See also the Constitutional Review Report, Agenda Item 14.2, p340.)

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod:

1. Affirms the work of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review and acknowledges the contributions made by church members to it;
2. Authorises the General Church Board to establish a Working Group that considers the issues raised in the review, in particular the questions, 'who we are now as a LCA NZ' and 'why do we gather as LCA NZ', noting that these are fundamental questions for the LCA's constitutional arrangements, and ask the Working Group to:
 - a. prepare a position paper that responds to these issues and questions
 - b. have due regard to the principles and findings contained in the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report; and
 - c. engage with key groups within the LCA NZ, including the CTICRand for the General Church Board to submit the Working Group's paper to the in-person sessions of the 2022 Convention to enable discussion by Synod delegates on the issues raised in it;
3. Requests the General Church Board to submit any necessary proposals authorising the move into Phase 2 of the review of the LCA Constitution and By-laws to continue the journey of ensuring the LCA NZ has quality constitutional documents appropriate for the future and that reflects the LCA NZ's understanding of who it is for the future, based on the Phase 1 final report and the Working Group's position paper, for the General Synod's consideration at the 2022 sessions of the 20th Regular Convention of General Synod; and
4. the Working Group consists of LCA NZ members with a mix of backgrounds and perspectives which, together with relevant qualifications and experience, will enable the working group to fulfil its role.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

At the Convention of General Synod in October 2018 the GCB advised delegates it would be commencing a review of the LCA Constitution during the synodical term.

In 2019 the GCB approved the Terms of Reference for the 'Phase 1' of the LCA NZ Constitution Review. An independent person, Les Stahl, was appointed as the lead facilitator for the Review and a Review Team was established to provide him with advice and support.

The process included: the establishment of four working groups to address specific questions/issues; a churchwide survey inviting input from members to key questions canvassed by the review; a Forum, involving the Review Team, Bishops and District representatives, to discuss Les Stahl's draft interim report; a further round of consultation about the interim report

between September and the end of November 2020, facilitated by each of the districts; and a meeting involving almost 50 participants in February 2021 to discuss the draft final report.

The final report was received by the GCB in April 2021. The GCB commends the report and its findings and recommendations to the General Synod (Agenda Item 14.2, p340).

The GCB has determined that, because this is a substantive matter, consideration of the report and its recommendations will be on the agenda of the in-person sessions of the Convention of Synod scheduled for late September/early October 2022.

However, the GCB has formed a view that the report has highlighted, based on the feedback and responses it received during this first phase, that the church needs to reflect on issues raised in the review, in particular the questions of 'who we are?' and 'why do we gather?'

These issues and questions need to be addressed because they are fundamental in the shaping of the LCANZ's constitutional arrangements.

The time between the two sessions of the Convention provides an opportunity to consider them. The GCB is therefore seeking General Synod's support of a twelve-month process that enables a working group to reflect on the identified issues, and the two questions in particular, and prepare a position paper for presentation and reflection upon at the 2022 session of General Synod. The Working Group will seek the input from key groups and individuals to help inform and shape the paper.

The GCB will also prepare any necessary proposals that seek an authorisation from the General Synod for a Phase 2 and indicate the scope of work required in this phase and the likely resources required to complete it.

The Working Group's paper, together with the Phase 1 report, will assist the delegates in its decision-making on any GCB-initiated proposals to undertake a Phase 2 of the Constitution Review.

If such proposals are submitted and adopted it is envisaged that, post the in-person sessions of the Convention of General Synod in 2022, the GCB will move to overseeing the implementation of the next phase, as approved by the General Synod in 2022.