

COVENANT OR CONVENTION

The article written by Greg Lockwood 'A covenant to promote Biblical Renewal' , seems to be aimed at ensuring that people vote against any proposal for the Ordination of women, which may come forward at the 18th General Convention of the LCA. I note that a list of names have been added, Suggesting that those who have signed this document are unwilling to be persuaded on this issue.

I think there are many who will question the use of 'Covenant' in conjunction with the ordination question. But my concern is not with the title, nor the content of the article. My concern is with meaningful participation in the process of Convention.

At Convention most decisions are taken in three stages: 1. Debate 2. Prayer 3. Decision.

Stage 1. The debate whether both men and women should be available for ordination has been going on for a number of years, and has occurred at previous Conventions of the LCA. At the forthcoming convention time has again been set aside for discussion and debate.

Stage 2. When attending Convention I have always felt that one of the 'highlights' was when the whole assembly was led in prayer before a decision was taken. I never doubted the genuine presence of the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the promise of Jesus that, the Spirit would lead into all truth. This time of prayer never seemed to me to be just cosmetic, but was the time for The Holy Spirit to direct delegates as they voted. The end decision would truly be the decision of the Una Sancta. And the Church would remain because it is of the Trinity.

Stage 3. The concluding act in the proper process of decision making at Convention is for the delegates to decide. Delegates appointed, some by parishes, some by the Church, will make their vote after careful attention, and reasoned consideration of the debate, sincere and conscientious involvement in the Prayer. Then and only then at that point in time should the delegate cast his or her vote.

One of the questions that I am left with after reading the Lockwood Covenant is, how can anybody who has signed the Covenant, participate meaningfully in the process of decision making at Convention?

Have people, who have signed the Covenant, already decided what they will do if Convention decides in favour of Ordaining women? Having publically committed themselves to this position by signing the covenant, can they properly participate meaningfully in the process of a convention decision in the matter of women's ordination?

Should Parishes, which are sending delegates to Convention consider not nominating as their delegate any person who has signed the Covenant?

Should the Church in Convention, exclude from the process of the vote on ordination, any person who has signed the Covenant?

Should those who have signed the Covenant exclude themselves from the vote?

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