

Article: The LCA and the LM-A

Once again, women's ordination will be the main topic of conversation at the upcoming synod of the LCA (4-7 October). The LCA has released a document entitled "The Way Forward." This document basically states that the LCA can be one church with two practices of ordination. The following comes from a summary of the Way Forward Framework...

Impasse: Despite more than three decades of theological study and debate within the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ), we remain divided on whether or not the Scriptures permit the ordination of women. There remain two widely held views on ordination within the Church.

2. Towards a way forward: At the 2023 in-person sessions of the 2021-23 Convention of General Synod, delegates voted by a strong majority to direct General Church Board and College of Bishops (GCB- CoB) to find a way for us to operate as 'one church with two different practices of ordination' and to report back with a detailed framework to the 2024 General Pastors Conference and General Synod. The Way Forward project appointed by GCB-CoB has diligently worked through the theological, constitutional and governance requirements to allow this directive to be accomplished.

3. The framework: The Way Forward Detailed Framework (Framework) offers an approach whereby both practices of ordination can exist within the LCA. The Framework has five key parts:

Part A: The Church makes the commitment to maintain its identity and form.

Part B: The Church changes its teaching to allow for the ordination of women and men.

Part C: The Church makes a commitment to pastors and pastoral ministry candidates that they will continue to be received and welcomed by the whole church in a respectful environment.

Part D: The Church makes a commitment to congregations and parishes that they may call a pastor who best aligns with their ministry plans.

Part E: The Church introduces a tenure-based provision for nomination for the roles of bishop and assistant bishop.

"One church with two different practices of ordination" simply will not work. The Lord has clearly stated in His Word (1 Corinthians 14:33-39; 1 Timothy 2:11-12) that women are not to be ordained into the public ministry of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the LCA will ordain women. It will become a church divided (if it isn't already).

There are those in the LCA, both pastors and laymen, who are afraid, for various reasons, to publicly denounce this horrible, ungodly teaching. However, these people will have to decide what is most important to them: loyalty to a man-made synod that teaches doctrine contrary to what they have been taught, or the Word of Christ.

In preparation for the fallout of this resolution, a group of laymen from the LCA established the LM-A (Lutheran Mission of Australia), which is based in Victoria. Pastor Matthew Anker has since resigned from the LCA and accepted the position of superintendent of the LM-A. They envisage that there will be those who will leave the LCA after October's synod and hope that the LM-A will become an alternative church for them to attend.

The LM-A has been releasing bits and pieces of statements regarding what they believe and confess. While it is impossible at the moment to judge all that the LM-A confesses, as time goes on, more statements will be released for us to look through.

I have been in contact with the LM-A's founding members, and this dialogue will continue. It would be good if we could continue to help guide them and offer advice.

The LM-A has now announced a series of forums to be held across the east coast of Australia. One such forum will be held at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Toowoomba, at 2.00pm on Sunday, August 25. This forum is open to all who would like to attend. I have been invited to attend, and the LM-A has also asked to meet privately after the forum.