

October, 2020



LCANZ GENERAL SYNOD IS ONLY 12 MONTHS AWAY - What will we say?

The next LCANZ Synod (triennial meeting of the whole LCANZ) is due to be held in about 12 months (September 28 – October 3, 2021) at the Melbourne Convention Centre. The Pastors are due to meet three months in advance at Geelong, from 3-5 July. All of this is, of course, should COVID-19 allow.

As the former Secretary of the LCA, I know that from here on many things are starting to happen in preparation for the Synod. One such thing is that congregations will need to elect and register their Synod delegates. We plan to do this at our November congregational meeting. We're allowed one General Synod delegate, so I think it's a good thing we prepare ourselves and our delegate well by understanding where we stand and what we might like to say, perhaps by way of a proposal or a number of proposals to the Synod for consideration.

Now, of course, we don't yet know what all of the items on the Synod agenda will be. But we do know that for many years now the question of whether both women and men may be ordained has occupied a major part of the discussions and deliberations of the recent Synods. This will again likely be the case in 2021.

So where do we as the body of Christ stand on this? Well recently, we printed information in the Sunday Paper of a 'Report to the LCANZ on a special meeting of the General Church Board and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCANZ over the ordination of women and men'. The document is available on our website.

The discussions took place early in 2020, and it's rather unfortunate that it took six months to produce the report and share it with the wider LCA. However, I believe it's quite important for us to study it, alongside the many theological and pastoral documents on this matter which are found in the LCA's 'Ordination We're Listening' (OWL) site at: <http://owl.lca.org.au/>

I understand that St Paul's has done some study of the theological questions a few years back. So, I'd like to pick up here on some of the concluding remarks from Bishop Henderson:

"Repeating the practices of past Conventions of Synod will not solve this matter. So, what new approaches do we need? How will we prepare for the major meeting of our church where we join together, from Perth to Auckland, Darwin to Christchurch, to worship God and express our solidarity in faith?"

So, as you pray about this issue, as you think about what you are going to say, write or do on this issue, think first about Christ and his unwavering, undiscriminating, unending love for the sinner, the outcast, the broken."

What's our view? What's our response? How will we think first about Christ and his unwavering, undiscriminating, unending love for the sinner, the outcast, the broken?

I'd like to begin to understand the views of people in the community at St Paul's. To this end, I invite you to share your views with me if you'd like to do so. Ideally, it will help if you could write a brief email or note, so that I can gather information and gain something of the picture of how we as a community view this important issue.

Please be assured that I will be thankful for all comments, and your views will be kept confidential.

So, what is your understanding? What is our view?

Let's begin with God's promise...

"And God has put all things under Christ's feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." (Eph 1:22,23)

Pastor Neville Otto