

✚ Senior Lutheran Pastors affirm the ordination of women

Past Presidents and office bearers

Rev Geoff Burger, President, LCA WA District (2000-2008)



In 2000, after decades of theological discussion, most members of the LCA Commission on Theology agreed that there was no Biblical teaching barring women from ordination. Synod failed to take the next step. It is time for us to act decisively and recognise that the Holy Spirit has given visions of ministry to our daughters as well as our sons, calling them to welcome, gather, grow and challenge the body of Christ. It's time to stop praying to the Lord to send labourers into the harvest when we reject half of them.

Rev David Christian, President LCA WA district (1993-1999)

I support the ordination of women because I am committed to the ministry and mission of God. In earlier years I was opposed to the ordination of women on the basis of the Scripture texts. Scripture calls for all things to be done "decently and in order." In the past ordaining women would have brought offense to the Gospel, but now, not ordaining women brings offense to the Gospel and the mission of God.



Rev Dr Joe Strelan, Past Vice President LCA, served on CTICR, Emeritus lecturer ALC

In 1999 the CTICR of the LCA announced the result of its lengthy study of the question of the ordination of women. In brief: 'Scripture and theology permit the ordination of women.' I was a member of the CTICR that came to this conclusion. Nothing I have heard or read since 1999 has convinced me to change my mind.

Rev Timothy Jaensch, President LCAQD (2000–2009)

It is vital that the issue of the ordination of women remains alive in the LCA. The key is patience and perseverance on the part of us who support it, so that momentum towards consensus on this matter continues to build until our Church is ready to say "Yes"



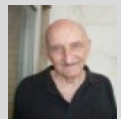
Rev Lionel Otto, Past Vice President LCA (1990-2000) and President, LCA NSW District (1990-2005)



The question of the ordination of men and women in the LCA has been debated now for decades. The passages used in support of male ordination only continue in debate amongst us, and are not clear, uncontested passages. Our equivocation in this matter continues to be an affront to those women among us who feel called to ordained ministry, and those among us whose ordination is accepted and honoured by the Lutheran Churches from which they come.

Rev Reinhard Mayer, President LCAQD (1974-1985)

Far be it from me to expect to be heeded because of my former position. Though now in the twilight of my life, my passion for the Gospel has not waned and it would sadden me indeed to see the effectiveness of the Gospel proclamation limited in terms of the gender proclaiming it. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it IS the power of God..."



Rev John Vitale, President, LCAQD (1993-2000)

The more carefully I studied the biblical record on this issue, the more convinced I became that the Bible does not forbid the ordination of women but rather in many different ways supports it. I would therefore be glad to see the LCA change its position on this important matter.

Rev Dr Ulf Metzner, DTh (Heidelberg), former Director of LCA World Mission Board, served on CTICR, Committee on Theology, former lecturer ALC and Sabah Theological seminary

Faith in Christ is the only way to salvation. Such faith is a divine act of grace: 'grace alone', 'faith alone', 'Christ alone'. In choosing people to administer his means of grace, God did not say 'men alone' as an essential to the path of salvation. When we are truly 'all one in Christ' 'there is neither ... male nor female' and the gender of the ordained person becomes irrelevant.



Lutheran Theologians

Rev Dr Richard Strelan, Associate Professor NT and Early Christianity, University of Queensland, LCA pastor

The Spirit of God is not restricted, let alone controlled, by human organisations and their authority but blows where and how s/he wills, and s/he is the one who determines the gifts given to each member of the Church individually for the common good. Thankfully, the Spirit does not distribute such gifts on the basis of sex or gender.



Rev Dr Russell Briese, Chaplaincy coordinator Griffith University, Lecturer, School of Theology, Australian Catholic University, pastor St Paul's, Beaudesert



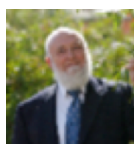
First century Palestine could barely have imagined a woman in a position of leadership in any field. Twenty-first century Australia can barely imagine a woman being excluded from a position of leadership in any field. Sixteenth century Lutheranism said priests can marry. Twentieth century Lutheranism said clergy can be male or female.

Rev Dr Maurice Schild, Lecturer Lutheran Confessions & Church History, Luther Seminary (1970-2000), served on CTICR, Department of Liturgics, Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Commission on Social Questions, LWF Asian Programme of Advanced Theological Studies

The first Easter has Jesus sending a woman to announce the Good News to men. And are we still getting over it? Women fully included in mission and transmission! God's grace – received as well as communicated – is not to be thwarted, or validated, by gender. 'Same faith, same possessions, same inheritance – everything is equal', wrote Luther; and continued: 'He who is called as a man is a woman before God. And she who is called as a woman is a man before God'. It is time to move on ordination.



Rev Dr Norm Habel, Professorial Fellow, Flinders University, recognised Old Testament scholar, author of international theological publications and major biblical works, pastor of LCA



The Gospel affirms the truth that Christ supersedes Moses and the Gospel supersedes the law. Any human institution that reverts back to those Mosaic laws which limit the ministry of women is not only regressive but also violates an essential dimension of the Gospel principle. Through Christ, women like men, have received the gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit but are prevented from celebrating these gifts to the full by being denied, as were the women under Mosaic law, from celebrating the sacraments and preaching the Gospel as ordained women.

Rev Dr Vic Pfitzner, Emeritus Lecturer and former Principal of ALC

Women pastors in the LCA? Yes, for witness to the truth of God is not gender-conditioned within the priesthood of all believers, nor should candidacy for publicly serving God's people with the Word be limited by gender. The ministry, the Word, the authority is Christ's. Gender neither adds to nor subtracts from the Word's power and authenticity.



Rev Dr Peter Lockwood, ThD, ALC Lecturer in Old Testament, secretary CTICR, LCA pastor



Humans are made in God's image, males and females alike. Christ is the image of God par excellence. Therefore Christ is best represented in his service of God's people if his under-shepherds include both men and women. Just as the church understands that females cannot enjoy the gift of redemption if Christ does not embrace the whole human race through his incarnation, so the church is coming to understand that the pastorate at its best should showcase the total Christ as it presents its face to the church and the world.

Professor Friedemann Hebart, DTh (Heidelberg), LCA pastor Melbourne (1974 – 1979), Lecturer, Luther Seminary (1980-85), pastor Bayreuth (1984-2004), College of Church Music Lutheran Church of Bavaria, Bayreuth (1990-)

The central article of our faith is that through Christ's death for us God accepts us in spite of what we are. Therefore, Paul argues, we are all God's children in faith *equally*, no matter what our ethnic or religious background, our social role or even our sex may be. This equality, says Paul, relates to *all* aspects of church life. Dare we then demand that one half of the world's population be excluded from proclaiming the gospel?

