

# Removal of TA 6.11

## A Confutation of the Draft Document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*

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### Preface

This paper is written as a confutation to the recent LCA draft of the doctrinal statement *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*. Now, many will know that I am no longer a member of the LCA (Lutheran Church of Australia) but am now a member and vicar of the AELC (Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church). Therefore, many will be confused as to why I, a member of the AELC, am writing a confutation to a LCA document. I am writing this paper because as a confessional orthodox Lutheran theologian I cannot allow false teachings to go by unchallenged. Even though I am no longer a member of the LCA I am still concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of those in the LCA, and I believe it is important to challenge those doctrines which will only lead them away from the truth. If false teachings are left unchallenged they will spread and infect the wider Church and lead many astray. Thus, this paper is a confutation of the LCA draft document. In this paper I will be going through the errors confessed in this LCA document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry* (see Appendix B for copy of the document).

### Confutation

The first error that needs to be addressed comes from the preface to the document. The preface states that the CTICR has produced this statement at request of the 2015 General Convention. This is referring to the *Resolution 2015:0216* (see Appendix A for a copy of this resolution). For those unaware of this Resolution, at the 2015 LCA General Convention the Synod put forth a resolution to the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (CTICR). This resolution requested the CTICR to put forth two statements; one providing a theological basis for the ordination of women and men, and one providing a theological basis for why the ordination of women need not be church divisive. I shall address the second point later when I will discuss point 1 of the document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*. When I address this second point I will not go into great lengths, for the LCA has produced a document corresponding with this point called *Q&A 8: Does the Ordination Issue have to be Church Divisive?* which I am not responding to in this paper, as this paper is aimed at the document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*.

Therefore, I shall now discuss the issue with point one from the *Resolution 2015:0216*. The error made in the Resolution point 1 is the foundational error for this entire document. The Synod commissioned the CTICR to produce a theological basis for the ordination of both men and women. This, however, is an erroneous commission. This commission puts the cart-before-the-horse. The Synod did not commission the CTICR to go and study Scripture and provide a statement on the issue of the ordination of both men and women, outlining what Scripture says on the topic, whether for or against. No, the CTICR has been commissioned to provide a doctrinal statement that will act as a foundation for Women's Ordination. This is the wrong way around. Instead of seeing what Scripture says on the topic and then basing a statement upon that, the Synod has commissioned the CTICR to work backwards, starting with the statement and then seeking to find Scriptural support for their statement. This is like building a house starting with the roof. The LCA has not sought to be guided by Scripture and to base their statements on Scripture. Instead, the LCA has provided the statement

and based Scripture upon their statement. It is this incorrect starting point which is prevalent throughout the document as the document repeatedly manipulates Scripture to fit their agenda. The next error of this document comes in points 1 and 2. Here the document states that their position on ordination is based upon the Scripture verses used in the LCA Rite of Ordination (John 20:21-23, Matt. 28:18-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-26), Articles 5 and 14 of the Augsburg Confession, and the Theses of Agreement 6 points 1-10. The statement declares that none of these condemn the ordination of women and can be applied to both men and women. This statement is true in the sense that it does not explicitly condemn the ordination of women, and that these statements can remain unaltered whether they apply to men only or to both men and women. However, the reader will notice the repeated rejection of TA 6.11. Point 11 of the *Theses of Agreement 6:Theses on the Office of the Ministry* (1950) states that “*though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. The apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired.*”

Here in 1950 the two Lutheran Synods, UELCA and ELCA, agreed that on the basis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 the ordination of women was prohibited by Scripture. In order for the LCA to ordain women they must therefore remove and reject TA 6.11. However, this removal of TA 6.11 is not as simple as it sounds. For if the LCA removes TA 6.11 and begins to ordain women, the LCA must therefore confess that TA 6.11 is contrary to Scripture and that the two Synods erred when writing this statement. In doing so the LCA would therefore be declaring the prohibition of women’s ordination to be a heterodox teaching (*hetero* means different, thus any statement different to your own is heterodox in your sight). It is for this reason that Women’s Ordination is Church divisive; because in order to promote Women’s Ordination the Synod must therefore condemn the opposing view which prohibits the ordination of women. Also, in doing this the LCA will be declaring that all those Lutheran synods who prohibit the ordination of women are heterodox synods. Thus the LCA will be confessing that those Australia Lutheran synods that oppose the ordination of women, AELC, OELC, ELCR, ELSA etc. are promoting a false doctrine; the same for those Lutheran synods in America that oppose Women’s Ordination, LCMS, WELS, ELS, ULMA, etc.; and also for any other Lutheran synods around the world that opposes Women’s Ordination. The removal of TA 6.11 is not a simple removal but a rejection of that statement and the rejection of that doctrine.

The next error is found in point 3. Here the LCA, in agreement with the Lutheran Confessions (Apol. 7&8.28), teach that on the basis of Luke 10:16 (and other verses John 20:21-23, 1 Cor. 3:9. 4:1, 2 Cor. 5:20), that the pastor represents Christ and when he preaches the Word and administers the Sacrament he does so in the stead and place of Christ. It is true and right that when the pastor offers the Word and Sacrament he does so not as himself but as the representative and ambassador of Christ in the place and stead of Christ. I would, therefore, argue that this is a prohibition on women pastors, for Christ was male and is thus represented by males. We can see in the Scriptures (Eph. 5:23-32) that man is the earthly representative and image of Christ, the bridegroom, while woman is the earthly representative and image of the Church, the bride. Therefore, a woman would be in violation of Scripture if she were to stand in the place and stead of Christ.

The draft statement, argues that “women are not excluded. On the contrary, since both men and women are created in the image of God and belong to the body of Christ, both can represent Christ.” (3) (point 17 also teaches that the distinction between genders and gender roles is a barrier built by humans and not an institution of God). This assertion that women can represent Christ, is false and not only does it ignore Ephesians 5, but it is based on an incorrect foundation. The statement asserts that both men and women are made in the image of God. However, this is an incorrect assertion. For nowhere in Scripture is women ever said to be made in the image of God. In Genesis 1:27 it says that “God made man in his own image, in the image of God He created **him**, male and female he created

them.” This is repeated in Genesis 9:8, and reiterated in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 11:7 where Paul writes “**he** is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.” (Emphasis mine)

It is man, not woman, which is the image and glory of God.

Thus since pastors are representatives of Christ (Luke 10:16, John 20:21-23, 1 Cor. 3:9, 4:1, 2 Cor. 5:20), and since men represent Christ (Eph. 5:23-32) and men are the image and glory of God (Gen. 1:27, 9:8, 1 Cor. 11:7), therefore only men should be permitted to hold the public office of the ministry.

This is not gender discrimination but gender glorification.

The next serious issue arises in point 5 of the draft statement *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*. The authors state that Jesus acted in a counter-cultural way by defying many customs of His day, then they undo this statement by saying that Jesus was restricted by certain Jewish customs of the day. The authors are stating that Jesus was counter-cultural when He broken Jewish customs and ate on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-2) or when He taught a woman, Mary, at His feet, which was not customary for a rabbi to do (Luke 10:39). But when it came to picking His disciples Jesus bowed to social pressures and followed the Jewish customs and picked only male disciples.

This arguing is nonsensical. The authors openly admit that Jesus was counter-cultural in some places but restricted by culture in other places. The authors of *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry* are simply picking and choosing the times Jesus was counter-cultural and the times when He was culturally restricted to suit their own agenda. This is not only nonsensical and bias, but also Scripturally offensive as the authors are stating that Jesus, the perfectly free Lord and God, was restricted by the Jewish culture.

Secondly, the authors are simply making assertions without any proof or evidence. They claim that Jesus was culturally bound to pick male disciples, yet do not cite a single piece of Scripture to support such a view. In fact, the Gospels repeatedly show Jesus being counter-cultural, which would only go to show that if Jesus wanted to pick a female disciple He could have and would have.

Thirdly, the authors declare that Jesus chose only men for the sake of His saving mission. Here the authors have basically said that for the sake of His mission, Jesus chose only male disciples so not to offend anyone. The authors are arguing that Jesus was bound by cultural restrictions because He didn't want to offend. Yet this stands in opposition to the Jesus of the Gospels, who was counter-cultural and not afraid of offending. In John 6 Jesus speaks extremely offensive statements when He tells the Jews to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Repeatedly the Jews grumbled at such an offensive teaching. And when the disciples told Jesus that His teaching was a hard saying, He rebukes them for taking offense. Jesus spoke the truth, regardless of who was offended, even if it meant that many turned back and refused to follow Him.

Points 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20 also pick up this theme of cultural restrictions claiming that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 are only relevant to the culture of Paul's day, and that they no longer apply today in a way that would exclude women from the ministry (note: points 15 and 16 also appear to disregard the roles of the household (Eph. 5:21-6:9, Col. 3:18-4:1, 1 Tim. 2:8-12, 1 Pet. 3:1-7) as “social conventions,” “traditions of the day”, “social opinion” and “standards of the Mediterranean world”). Again, the authors are making assertions without any evidence or proof from the Scriptures to demonstrate the cultural limits of these texts. The authors are attributing Paul's prohibition to a Law of Love and a building up of the Church by not creating offense. The authors are confessing that Paul was bound to cultural restrictions, and that his attempts to “become all things to all people” meant that he couldn't break cultural norms because this would have offended people, been unloving and a hindrance to the Gospel message. Not only is this a misuse of 1 Corinthians 9:22, but this view of Paul is not Scriptural. Paul, like Jesus, is repeatedly counter-cultural and boldly speaks the truth and rebukes fellow Christians without fear of offending them. This can be seen throughout Acts and the Pauline Epistles, for example, in 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10 Paul gives a list of

sinners that will not inherit the Kingdom of God, in Galatians 5:12 Paul tells the Judaizers that if they wish to base their salvation in circumcision then they should go the whole way and effeminate themselves. These are just a few examples where Paul is seen to be counter-cultural and unafraid to offend.

The next issue arises in point 11 of the draft document. Here the authors claim that “the command of the Lord” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14:37 is not a prohibition on women speaking in church but the new commandment of Christ to love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 1 John 3:23, 4:21, the CTICR also cites 1 Cor. 13:1-13 and 14:1 yet neither of these verses mentions the commandment of love). The authors claim that this “law of love” refers to chapters 11-14 and is only referring to practices of worship which applied for the First Century context and is not a prescription for all times and all places.

Firstly, this completely rejects v33-34 where Paul says “as in all churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches.” Not only is it clear that this prohibition is for all places, but Paul uses the phrase “churches of the saints” thus referring to all churches throughout time and space where the saints of God gather to worship. Thus any church which is a church of the saints should not allow women to speak in worship (this is speaking with authority, and should not be confused with chatter or singing or praying in unison. The term here for speak is *λαλεῖν* which is a form of authoritative speaking where one person speaks and the rest listens). In addition to this, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Paul prohibits a woman from teaching or exercising authority over a man. In v13 Paul reasons for this prohibition is “because Adam was formed first, then Eve.” Paul’s prohibition is not a time bound command relevant only to the First Century, but this is the order of God which was there from the beginning.

Secondly, the command mentioned in v37 is not to be confused with the commandment of love from the Gospel and First Epistle of John. The authors have incorrectly translated 1 Corinthians 14:37. The verse does not read “**the** command of the Lord” by “**a** command of the Lord” the text lacks the definite articles (the) which means that the correct translation is “a” and not “the”. In John 13:34 Jesus gives a new commandment, to love one another as He has loved us. This commandment is later referred to in John 15:12 as “**My** [Jesus’] commandment” and in 1 John 3:23, 4:21 as “**His** [Jesus’] commandment.” (Emphasis mine) This is important because Paul does not refer to the command of the Lord in 1 Corinthians 14:37 as “His command” or “the command”. Instead Paul refers to this as “a” command. Thus the command in v37 is not the same as the command of Jesus in John 13:34. The context of v37 will further explain what this command of the Lord is referring to. There seems to be at least two opposing errors when determining what this command is referring to. The pro-Women’s Ordination scholars have taught that this command is the command of love and that there is no prohibition against the ordination of women. As we mentioned above this is completely false. The opposing error states that this command of Paul is a prohibition on women speaking in church. While this second view is not wrong, it is not the full truth. I do believe that this command of the Lord does prohibit women speaking in church but that it doesn’t prohibit only that. Therefore, the question is “what is this command of the Lord in v37?”

Context shows us what this command is:

1. The statement “this is a command of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37) comes straight after the prohibition of women speaking in church (v33-35). This would indicate that v37 does refer to the prohibition on women speaking in church.
2. Verse 37 starts with “if anyone thinks himself a prophet or a spiritual”. This would indicate that the command also refers to Paul’s prohibitions on speaking in tongues and the disorder of prophets (1 Cor. 14:27-32).
3. 1 Corinthians 14:26 begins with “what then, brothers?” and 1 Corinthians 15:1 starts with “Now I would remind you.” These phrases indicate the start of a new section. This means that the section starts at 1 Corinthians 14:26 and ends at 14:40.
4. In v37 Paul says “acknowledge that the **things** [plural] I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.” This indicates that the command of the Lord is referring to things, plural.
5. In v39 Paul mentions prophecy and tongues indicating that this command refers to them as well.
6. V40 states that “all **things** [plural] should be done decently and in order.”

All this put together shows us that the command of the Lord in v37 is referring not to love or women speaking only, but that this command is referring to the whole section of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The command of the Lord in this section is the command of good order in the Church. This good order is

shown here in three ways, the silencing of tongues when no one can interpret, the subordination (*υποτάσσεται*, from *υπό* meaning under and *τάσσω* order) of the spirits of prophets to the prophets, and the keeping silence of women.

Thus the command of the Lord in v37 is the command of good order in the church. This includes, but is not limited to, the subordination of women (Esth. 1:22, 1 Cor. 11:3, Eph 5:22-33, Col. 3:18, 1 Tim. 2:12, Tit. 2:4-5, 1 Pet. 3:1-7) and the upholding of the Order of Creation (Gen. 2:7,18-23, 1 Cor. 11:8-9, 1 Tim. 2:13). (note: point 15 of the LCA document rejects the subordination of wives as only a cultural tradition of the First Century)

The next issue with the LCA draft *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry* arises in points 13, 14 and 18. Point 18 refers to a supposed list of women ministers in the Bible including Phoebe, Junia, Priscilla, Epaphras, Euodia and Syntyche etc. Point 18 also brings up the issue of women prophets. Each of these cases of supposed woman pastors have time and time again been debunked. For example, Phoebe is a deaconess. The term *διάκονος* means servant. This term is sometimes used for pastors (Acts 6:4, Col 1:23,25, 1 Tim. 4:6) but the term can also be used for non-pastors (see Rom. 13:3-4, where Paul calls rulers of nations *διάκονος* of God). All those who serve in the church can be called ministers (servants, deacons (*διάκονος*)). Yet Scripture makes a clear distinction between the office of pastoral ministry (pastor/elder/bishop) and offices of lay ministry (deacons, etc.) (Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:1-13). Phoebe (and possibly Priscilla, Epaphras, Euodia and Syntyche) may have been a deacon but that doesn't mean she was a pastor. Secondly, point 13, 14 and 18 argue that women should be pastors because there were female prophets. Point 14 reads "it is important to distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the disruptive wives who were to be silent at worship..." The distinction that the authors have made is not the important one that they should have made. What the LCA document has overlooked is "it is important to distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the pastoral office."

One of the frequent arguments for Women's Ordination is the argument of women prophets. However, this argument fails on three points: 1. the difference between prophets and pastors, 2. the role and function of women prophets and 3. the difference between prescription and description.

The first issue, the difference between prophets and pastors: While it is true that both men and women were called to be prophets this doesn't mean women can be pastors, for there is a difference between the special office of prophet and the regular office of pastor. The prophets were a special office, in which God called individuals directly, without mediation, by His Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). The prophets proclaimed the Word of God which was revealed directly to them (Exod. 4:15, Num. 23:5,12,16, Deut. 18:18, 34:9, 1 Kings 13:1, 17:2, 19:9, 21:17, 22:19, Jer. 1:9,11, Ezek. 1:3, Hos. 1:1, Joel 1:1, Amos 3:7, Jon. 1:1, Mic. 1:1, Zeph. 1:1, Hag. 1:1, Zech. 1:1, Mal. 1:1, etc.). The prophets spoke as God called them. When you consider the number of prophets in both the Old and New Testament they were few and far between, speaking only in special circumstances when God chose to reveal His Word to them. As for the office of priest (OT) and pastor (NT), their office is very different. In both Testaments these offices were regular daily offices, restricted to males (Exod. 28:1, Num. 18:1-2, 1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6) and both entered their office through the means of a mediated call, the Levitical priests by virtue of their birth and the New Testament pastors by virtue of a call or appointment (Acts 14:23, 20:28, Tit 1:5). The office of prophet is a special office in which the person is called directly by God's Spirit. This office can be filled by whomever God chooses whether that be male, female or even animal (Balaam's donkey). However, the pastoral office is a regular daily office in which a person is called through a mediated call of the Church. This office is restricted to males only. The LCA document fails to acknowledge the difference between pastors and prophets.

The second issue, the role and function of women prophets: The LCA document also fails to acknowledge the difference between male prophets and female prophets. While many of the male prophets were called to proclaim God's Word publically (e.g. Jonah 1:2, 3:1-5), none of the women were called into this position. The examples of women prophets were called to prophesise women or to men in private settings. Miriam lead women and Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, Isaiah's wife, Anna and the daughters of Philip all prophesied in private settings. Paul does not condemn the prophesying

of women (1 Cor. 11:5) but he does forbid the speaking and teaching by women in public worship (1 Cor. 14:33-36, 1 Tim 2:11-12).

Scripture does not forbid teaching by women, it forbids authority over men (Esth. 1:22, 1 Cor. 11:3, Eph 5:22-33, Col. 3:18, 1 Tim. 2:12, Tit. 2:4-5, 1 Pet. 3:1-7) and speaking in public worship (1 Cor. 14:33-35). Scripture teaches that women can teach other women (Tit.2:4, Exod. 15:20 and Ruth 1:16) and children (2 Tim. 1:5) and that women can teach men in private settings (just as Priscilla took Apollos aside for teaching, see Acts 18:26).

The third issue, the difference between prescription and description: The LCA document has failed to draw a distinction between description and prescription with regards to females serving in the Church. Everything that is described in Scripture is not prescribed to us as commands. The Scriptures have described the use of female prophets but it does not prescribe to us the use of female pastors, instead Scripture prescribes only males to be pastors (Acts 1:21, 1 Cor. 14:33-36, 1 Tim 2:11-14, 3:2, Tit. 1:6). The fact that there were female prophets and deaconesses in the Old and New Testaments is descriptive but it is not prescriptive and cannot be used as a basis for ordaining women. Just as the description of the twelve male apostles is not prescriptive and “cannot be a basis for refusing to ordain women.” (see point 4 of *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*).

Thus the cases of women prophets and women deacons does not prescribe to the church the mandate or authority to ordain women. Just because something is described in Scripture does not mean that we are prescribed to do the same. Just because God called female prophetesses does not give us the right or mandate to ordain women. Just as God speaking through Balaam’s donkey does not give us the right or mandate to ordain donkeys.

The final issue that I desire to point out is an error that has very serious outcomes if we hold consistently to the LCA document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry*. Numerous times the document holds that the texts from 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 only refer to husbands and wives, not men and women generally. This position is one that can be legitimately held since the word *ἀνδρός* means both man and husband, and the word *γυνή* means both woman and wife. Context will normally decide how we are to translate, but sometimes the context is not entirely clear on whether it should be man or husband. Context would clearly show that v35 is referring to husbands when it says “your own husbands (men)”. However, just because v35 refers to husbands doesn’t necessarily mean that v34-35 are exclusively talking to married women (wives) and not women in general. In addition, the context of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 would indicate that this section is speaking generally to all men and women and not just husbands and wives.

This, however, is not the issue with the LCA document. The issue is that the LCA document has restricted the prohibitions in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 to disruptive and domineering wives. Point 9 refers to Paul’s prohibition as condemning those “husband-shaming” wives who were preventing worship by disrupting the good order. Points 10 and 14 apply the prohibitions to disruptive wives asking questions during the service. And point 15 applies the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 only to wives who were being insubordinate and domineering over their husbands (note: this is an incorrect translation of 1 Timothy 2:12, *ἀβθευτεῖν* means to exercise authority over but in regards to a governing headship position not an oppressive domineering dictatorship). Thus the LCA draft document has sought to disregard Paul’s prohibitions by teaching that they only apply to those worst case scenarios of insubordinate, disruptive, husband-shaming, domineering, oppressive women. This has been a common argument proposed by the proponents of Women’s Ordination, which has been refuted time and time again, by simply pointing out the context of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 and by showing what type of “speaking” Paul was referring to (this is speaking with authority. The term here for speak is *λαλεῖν* which is a form of authoritative speaking where one person speaks and the rest listens).

The thing that is most dangerous about the LCA draft document is that the authors have mixed together two common pro-Women's Ordination arguments which become exponentially dangerous when mixed.

The first argument is that Paul's prohibitions are not against women preaching, teaching or leading but only against disruptive, domineering women. The second argument is that Paul's prohibitions are culturally and timely bound to the First Century Greco-Roman world and no longer apply to the Twenty-First Century Western world.

Separately these two arguments are false and problematic but when mixed together they become exceedingly dangerous. When mixed together the teaching reads "Paul's prohibition against disruptive, husband-shaming, domineering women no longer apply to today's time and culture." We can see this clearly taught in point 10 which teaches that the prohibition on disruptive women asking questions was within the "strict" codes of shame and honour of the Mediterranean world, point 11 which teaches that the command that "wives" be silent at worship was only an example of the "Law of Love" in a First Century context and is not prescriptive for all times and places, point 14 which teaches that these prohibitions were only regulations of the time and that different regulations need to be enacted at different times in history, and point 15 which teaches that the command that women refrain from teaching and exercising "domineering" authority over their "husbands" belonged to the social conventions and traditions of the day and does not apply to today's setting.

This is a very dangerous teaching because the authors of this draft document have basically taught that the prohibitions that forbid women from being disruptive during worship, from shaming their husbands and from being domineering over their husbands, no longer apply to today's context. Therefore, there is no prohibition in the Twenty-First Century Church that forbids a woman from being disruptive during the worship service or from publically shaming her husband or from exercising domineering oppressive authority over her husband. Thus, the LCA document is teaching that women are now free to be disruptive during worship, to publically shame their husbands and to exercise domineering authority over their husbands. This is a very serious issue, because if you follow the logical consistency of the LCA draft document, the LCA is now teaching that women can be as disruptive as they want in worship (thus rejecting good order) and that women are free to shame and domineer their husbands. Basically the authors have reversed the commands for wives to be subordinate to their husbands (Esth. 1:22, 1 Cor. 11:3, Eph 5:22-24,33, Col. 3:18, Tit. 2:4-5, 1 Pet. 3:1-6) and are now teaching husbands to be subordinate to their wives, but even worse, they have forgotten the command for wives to love their husbands (Tit. 2:4). They have said that the prohibitions against husband-shaming and possessing domineering authority over husbands no longer apply to today. This opens the gates to public shaming of husbands, oppression of husbands and even cases of domestic violence against husbands.

The LCA's draft document *The Call and Ordination of Both Men and Women to the Office of the Public Ministry* is an erroneous document promoting false doctrine within Australian Lutheranism. This is more than just a promotion of women pastors; this is a rejection of gender roles and gender distinctions, a promotion of anti-male feminist ideology and a pleasing of the culture. It may sound harsh to say these things about the LCA, but this kind of dangerous erroneous false doctrine calls for such harshness. The LCA is no longer listening to the Word of God but is instead listening to personal opinion and the surrounding culture.

# Appendix A

At the 2015 General Convention the following resolution was passed [General Synod resolution 2015:0216]:

That Synod requests the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations [CTICR] to build on its earlier work regarding the ordination of women and men to develop a draft doctrinal statement for General Pastors Conference [GPC] and the 19th Convention of Synod that presents:

- A theological basis for the ordination of women and men;
- A theological basis for why the ordination of women and men need not be church divisive;
- And that General Church Council [GCC] resource it.

# Appendix B

## **DRAFT DOCTRINAL STATEMENT: THE CALL AND ORDINATION OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN TO THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY**

### **Version 1<sup>1</sup>**

*The Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations has written this statement at the request of the 2015 General Convention.<sup>2</sup>*

#### **A. Lutheran doctrinal foundations**

1. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) confesses that the office of the public ministry has been established by Christ for the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. This is foundational to the LCA's teaching on the office of the ministry. Based on Articles 5 and 14 of the Augsburg Confession, the teaching is set out in some detail in the LCA's Theses on the Office of the Ministry (TA 6), supported by scriptural references. This doctrinal statement takes the first ten theses of TA 6 as its starting point but not thesis 11, since this is the thesis that has barred women from the ordained ministry.
2. The texts that underpin the LCA's teaching on the doctrine of the ministry and those that are used in its Rite of Ordination (John 20:21–23; Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26) may be applied equally to men and women. Therefore, the ordination of women to the office of the public ministry does not require any change to the Church's doctrine of the ministry, as set out in TA 6. Apart from TA 6.11, the ordination of both men and women does not change the LCA's doctrine of the ministry as articulated in the Confessions, the Theses of Agreement, or the LCA's Rite of Ordination.
3. According to the Lutheran Confessions, pastors 'do not represent their own persons, as Christ himself testifies (Luke 10:16), 'Whoever listens to you listens to me'. When pastors offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ (AC Apology 7 and 8,28; Kolb & Wengert, 178). Just as Christ appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, broke bread with them, opened the scriptures to them, and opened their eyes to recognise him, so that their hearts were set on fire (Luke 20:30–32), so pastors fulfil their office by opening the scriptures and breaking bread with God's people. Through these channels of grace the eyes of God's people are opened to the

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<sup>1</sup> Feedback from the consultations will inform version 2 of the statement.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution 2015:0216 of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Convention of Synod. The draft doctrinal statement does not express the position of some members of the Commission.



good news of Jesus and their hearts are set on fire. Women are not excluded. On the contrary, since both men and women are created in the image of God and belong to the body of Christ, both can represent Christ.

4. The ministry of the first twelve apostles, which was foundational and temporary, continues today in the public ministry of word and sacrament. The precedent of male apostles and a male pastorate are facts of history; this precedent does not establish a requirement of the divinely instituted office. The fact that the twelve apostles whom Jesus commissioned were all male is descriptive of the preaching office at the time, but it is not prescriptive of the office for all time. Therefore, it cannot be a basis for refusing to ordain women.
5. Jesus certainly acted in a counter-cultural way by defying many of the customs of his day, but there were certain restrictions imposed by the Jewish culture of the day. One of those restrictions was that only men could become disciples of a rabbi (teacher) and Jesus himself was a rabbi (John 1:38; 3:2; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; 20:16). Therefore, for the sake of his saving mission Jesus freely chose only men to his inner circle of disciples or apostles. Jesus' calling of the twelve apostles, who represented the twelve patriarchs of Old Testament Israel, also brought Israel's history to its fulfilment. Therefore, they played a unique role in the history of the Christian church. These historical and cultural factors cannot be overlooked when trying to understand why Jesus did not include women in his inner circle but why they can be included in the church's ministry today.
6. The doctrinal basis for the ordination of both men and women recognises Christ's institution of the office and understands that the prohibitions in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12 do not apply today in a way that would exclude suitably qualified women from call and ordination to the public office.

## **B. Biblical foundations**

7. Two texts (1 Cor 14:33b–36 and 1 Tim 2:11–15) have provided the basis for the LCA's prohibition of the ordination of women (TA 6.11). However, as the following paragraphs demonstrate, neither text speaks directly to the topic of ordination to the office of the public ministry, and neither text contains a command, either of the Lord or of St. Paul, that would prohibit the ordination of women.
8. The mission of the church is St. Paul's primary consideration at Corinth. He insists that worship be practised 'decently and in order' so that the gospel may be proclaimed clearly and the church built up in love (14:33a,40).
9. The loveless exercise of spiritual gifts and the husband-shaming speaking of wives prevented worship from being conducted decently and in good order and therefore from building up the church in love (14:1–36; see esp. 8:1).
10. Also, within the strict codes of shame and honour throughout the Mediterranean world, such public display was prohibited (14:33b,36). The expansion of the church at Corinth, with its origins in the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18:1–11), would have been greatly hindered by the disruptive questions of wives (14:34,35).
11. 'The command of the Lord' (1 Cor 14:37) is Jesus' love command, the new commandment (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:21; 1 Cor 13:1–13; 14:1), the command that his followers love one another as he has first loved them. The command applies to all the worship regulations in chapters 11–14. The immediately preceding command that wives be silent at worship (14:34–37) should be seen in this light, as an example of how the law of love applied in a first century context, not as a prescription for all times and places.

12. Paul's warning that 'anyone who does not recognise this is not to be recognised' (14:38) applies to those whose disorderly conduct at worship breaches the commandment to build up the community in love.
13. Paul is clear that women served as prophets in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 11:5), a significant office in the early church (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). Prophets had the inspired spiritual gift of speaking and teaching the gospel clearly, so that people were built up in faith and love and were led to the praise and worship of God (1 Cor 14:3–5, 19, 24–33).
14. It is important to distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the disruptive wives who were to be silent at worship and raise their questions with their husbands in the privacy of the home. Read as a whole it is clear that St Paul's highly specific worship regulations apply only in the social setting of the time in order to avoid giving offence to regular worshippers and to unbelievers and outsiders (1 Cor 14:22,23). However, his commands to build up the church at worship, by loving one another and by ensuring that worship takes place 'decently and in order' for the sake of the gospel, apply until the coming of Christ in glory. Different regulations invariably need to be enacted at different times in the history of the church in order to achieve these unchanging goals.
15. The context for 1 Timothy 2:11–15 is a situation of disorder. Paul insists that the effective witness of the gospel depended, among many other things, on wives conforming to the social conventions of both the synagogue and the Greco-Roman world of the day, which required that they regard the home as their proper realm, conduct themselves quietly and reverently, live in subordination to the traditions of the day, and refrain from teaching or exercising domineering authority over their husbands (1 Tim 2:9–15). The effective witness of the gospel has always demanded the highest standard of conduct among Christ's followers (Matt 5:16; 1 Thess 4:11–12; 1 Tim 3:7; 6:1). But today the behaviour that makes a deep impression on outsiders no longer includes the deferential silence of women and their subordination within the domestic realm.
16. The early church was quick to formulate a consistent code of conduct governing interpersonal relationships (Eph 5:21 – 6:9; Col 3:18 – 4:1; 1 Tim 2:8–12; 1 Pet 3:1–7). Presupposing the transforming effect of the gospel, these tables of duties set a far higher standard than the 'secular' household codes of the day, countering the all too ready notion that freedom in the gospel implied licence in ethics, and paving the way for exemplary Christian conduct that would enhance the spread of the gospel. If the conduct of Christian wives deviated from accepted social opinion and standards in the Mediterranean world the reception of the gospel would have been severely hindered.
17. In Galatians 3:27–28, St. Paul speaks of the unity of all baptised believers as children of God. The gospel does not abolish natural distinctions between people of different nationality, class or sex; rather, it erodes barriers built by humans that deny our unity as believers, barriers between Jews and gentiles (Acts 10:1–48; Eph 2:11–22; see Gal 2:11–14), between masters and slaves (Philem 16; 1 Cor 7:21–24; see Eph 6:5–9; Col 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1–2), and between males and females. Since men and women share a common identity as children of God through the gospel, the distinction between the sexes that has been regarded as essential to the ordained ministry is made null and void.
18. Even though the following examples may not have a direct bearing on the ordination of women, they show that women were involved in leadership roles in Israel and in the early church. Already in the Old Testament women are shown serving in leadership roles among the people of God (e.g. Exod 15:19–21; Judg 4 and 5; 2 Kgs 22:14–20). Jesus commissioned women to proclaim the resurrection to the disciples (Matt 28:10). The daughters of the evangelist Philip were prophets (Acts 21:9), Priscilla, the wife of Aquila,

took the lead in teaching 'the way of God to [Apollos] more accurately' (Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:3), Phoebe was a deacon, or minister (Rom 16:1), the same word that describes the ministry of Epaphras (Col 1:7) and Timothy (1 Tim 4:6). Junia may have been an apostle (Rom 16:7). Paul said that Euodia and Syntyche 'struggled beside [him] in the work of the gospel' (Phil 4:3), and nearly one third of the church leaders whom Paul greets in Romans 16 are women. Although there were a variety of models for leadership and a variety of ways of ordering the holy ministry in the early church, these New Testament examples show that women were included in leadership and ministry roles in the church.

### **C. Conclusion**

19. Although the gospel transforms people, relationships and communities, the early church was careful and cautious in its practice so as not to create undue offence. With its home in Judaism, where women could not serve as priests in the temple or as leaders in the synagogue or study the scriptures with a rabbi, the church would have failed to make significant inroads with the gospel if all previous restrictions on women were immediately lifted. St Paul's regulations regarding the conduct of wives in worship and in society at large were driven by his overriding missionary imperative, to 'become all things to all people, so that [he] might by all means save some' (1 Cor 9:22).
20. Neither 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 nor 1 Timothy 2:11–15 records a command of the Lord that would prohibit the ordination of women. In a different social context today, the equal standing before God of all the baptised means that we can remove the role restrictions that have prohibited women from being ordained.
21. The ministry of word and sacrament has been instituted by Christ so that people may come to believe in him and be built up in faith, hope and love. The New Testament does not insist that those who hold the office must be male; they could also be female. The ordination of women to the office of the ministry is compatible with the doctrine of the ministry, as articulated in AC 5, TA 6.1–10 and the LCA Rite of Ordination. Therefore, duly called, qualified and authorised women may be ordained alongside their male colleagues and exercise the office of the keys, by proclaiming the gospel, pronouncing the absolution, and administering the sacraments (John 20:21–23; Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26).