CONTINUING ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN PASTORS

30/06/1996

A meeting of the LCA organisation "Women in Ministry" was held last Wednesday week in Adelaide. Speakers were Pastor Paul Smith, Dr Normal Habel, Margaret Hunt, and Betty Paech. Forty to fifty people attended, mainly women. Betty Paech said that it is inevitable that there will be women pastors in the LCA. Others decried the fact that there are no women pastors yet. Some complained that women are studying at their own expense at Luther Campus, Adelaide, and without the guarantee of a job. It was argued, on the basis of the story of Mary and Martha, that for the Jews only men would have sat at the foot of a rabbi. However, Jesus was radical, and did not agree with the Jews that woman's place was in the kitchen. Pastor Paul Smith, pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, North Adelaide, said that he would be happy to have a woman ministering to him.

The basic Scripture verses that deal with this are 1 Cor 14:33-38 and I Timothy 2: 11-14. The sad thing for the LCA is that, in the debates over woman's voting in congregations and at synods, women's reading lessons, being members of church committees and councils, and assisting at the altar during the Lord's Supper, what these passages are saying has been so clouded over that it is going to be very difficult to resist this strong advocacy for women pastors. There have been reports that this group is contacting congregations, urging them to elect delegates to the next general synod who favour women pastors.

The issue is a serious one. After St Paul said that women should be silent in the churches, he added that this was a commandment of the Lord. Transgressing a commandment of the Lord is disobedience, and wilful disobedience is perilous to faith. Then Paul continued, *"And if anyone ignores this, he is not acknowledged."* By *"He is not acknowledged,"* Paul didn't mean that he would ignore such a person, or that the believers at Corinth would ignore him, but that the Lord will not acknowledge him. That is serious!