

## Your Voice #14 3.03.2023

### A Synod Report

*By David Christian, 20.2.23*

As a result of a late call up to replace John Kleinig I was one of the three Emeriti Pastors at Synod and the oldest pastor present. Some positives about the Synod were the venue and accommodation, especially if you liked walking. The sermons were great, though the worship was very traditional with hardly a woman participating. It was good to meet fellow pastors and delegates.

Synod sessions were mostly dysfunctional with countless points of order, challenges, questions and amendments. Once again pastors had far too much to say, and were over represented. This resulted in the Box Hill proposal falling short, though once again receiving about 60% of the votes. That means only 40% are in favour of our current teaching.

**The QLD** proposal came closer to where the church is at with 73% support. This must lead to WO in some form or another at next Synod. A SA District proposal to soften our statement on Altar and Pulpit fellowship passed strongly, but not without many pastors speaking against it.

Clearly a segment of our pastors are becoming more conservative and this is distressing the majority of the church. Due to all the filibustering in debates many people were unable to speak, including me, and some of our finest women whom God has called to be pastors.

This is the speech I had prepared but was unable to deliver.

**"I am David Christian**, one of three emeriti Pastor Delegates. I am speaking in favour of the Box Hill proposal, supporting the ordination of women as well as men to be pastors of the LCANZ.

- The Box Hill proposal recognises the division in the LCANZ over the ordination of women as well as men, and proposes a way that is faithful to the Lutheran Confessions and to the Theses of Agreement. This proposal calls for whomever God calls to pastoral ministry to be eligible for ordination.
- It is faithful to God who desires all people to be saved through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.
- It is guided by St Paul **who became all things to all people that he might by all means save some. All things** surely included the many women in St Paul's ministry team.
- It is faithful to God who is calling women as well as men to be pastors in the LCANZ today, and makes it possible for them to be ordained.
- This proposal is an encouragement to the whole church, and especially to the half of the church which is currently not permitted to be part of the ordained ministry of the LCANZ.

When God called me from being a farmer to being a pastor 62 years ago, I knew I had to obey God's call. Everybody encouraged me and nobody prohibited me, because I was a man.

God is calling women to be pastors and they also know they must obey God's call. But it is so different for women in the LCANZ. TA 6:11 is prohibiting them from being ordained. The church which is crying out for pastors prohibits these called women from being ordained. The church which is calling us to pray for pastors, prohibits these women God has called, from being pastors. God has called them, but the church refuses to confirm their call because of TA 6.11.

The Box Hill proposal calls this Synod to recognise that God is calling women as well as men to be pastors in the LCANZ. I ask each of you to join me in supporting the Box Hill proposal. I ask each one of you to join me in supporting the women God has called to be pastors. Thank you.”

**For Synod 2024.**

1. Church leadership will need to prepare a very clear case to how the church will move forward with two practices on ordination which do not divide the church or drive people from it as has happened for years.
2. Church leadership will need to find a way to stop all the filibustering which made a mockery of this Synod.
3. The church will need to hear the pains and cries of women and others, and start healing broken people and stop crushing them.
4. The church will need to return to the Gospel of Grace, and to AC 4 & 5.
5. The church needs to be more welcoming of the inclusive Holy Spirit, Acts 2, 2 Cor. 13:13, Gal. 3:26-28, 5:16, 22-25.
6. Each of us needs to grow in prayer for unity in Christ above all, not firstly for uniformity in practice. Our prayer also needs to be for the spread of the Gospel by every means possible.
7. Every congregation needs to be given greater freedom to live and spread Jesus as appropriate to its local community.

*David Christian is an SDC Member*