

The Synod of the “Firsts” [2021-2023]

On the surface, there were many good things... Melbourne was impressive, the venue was good, the singing was great, the convention was run smoothly, lots of jokes, conversations and fellowship with God's saints were joyful and encouraging.

Unfortunately, what really stood out were the many “firsts”. For the first time...

- We tried to solve theological question – “what is God's design for the office of public ministry” – by administrative means, ignoring the Scriptures.
- Our previous national bishop (Rev John Henderson) said that we can't decide the question of ordination by studying the Scriptures (p 55, Synodical Book of Reports).
- Our previous national bishop (Rev John Henderson) said that he disagrees with the official teaching of the church, where he was a bishop with the responsibility to uphold and teach the church's teaching.
- A member of the General Church Board (Mr Mel Zerner) stated before the Synod that the LCA can't keep waiting for pastors to come up with a Scriptural solution to the ordination question, so it's time for laypeople to take the lead.
- A group consisting of mainly lay-people (the GCB) ignored and overturned the advice of the General Pastors Conference to the Synod.
- Our national bishop (Rev Paul Smith) was “flirting” with the Synod saying that his wife very much wants to be a Lutheran pastor and studies towards that end.
- A congregation, where first assisting bishop (Rev Neville Otto) serves as their pastor, put forward a proposal to change the founding document of the LCA, The Theses of Agreement, so that only we can change our church's teaching.
- Another bishop (Rev Mark Vainikka) promoted proposal from QLD District to change our church's teaching of the office of public ministry.
- A synodical delegate (from Rochedale congregation) addressing Synod publicly declared that our church doesn't have official teaching on the office of public ministry; the reason being that we don't agree on it.
- We decided by popular majority vote not one but two theological questions (on the office of public ministry and on the Church fellowship).
- Every LCA congregation is free to invite anyone to preach in our pulpits and partake in the Holy Communion; if we do it responsibly.
- We decided that we will try to walk to the right and to the left at the same time and that will create unity and peace among us and will help our mission.

Sure, there were other first as well, but these 12 are the ones that stood out.

The question we all need to ask is this: **“What's next for the LCA and for those who love the Word of God?”** May our all-wise Lord provide a good answer for us.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (*Psalms 27:1*)