

Weekly Article

I reported back in November on how the installation of Matt Anker as President of the LM-A (Lutheran Mission of Australia) went. If you haven't seen a copy of my report, let me know, and I'll send one to you. I really had hoped that the LM-A would be a Lutheran church body returning to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions and that the AELC could hold doctrinal discussions with them. When I met with Matt Anker in the past, he had indicated that the AELC *Statement of Faith* is a well-written confession and that there was nothing written in this confession that he did not disagree with. However, after attending the installation in Hamilton late last year, I could see that the AELC cannot go forward with any fellowship discussions. I say this because three different Lutheran 'synods' were involved in the installation service. The LM-A led the service. Dr. Adam Hensley, the associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, America, preached the sermon, and Pastor Antonio Reyes, President of the ILC (International Lutheran Council) and President of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines installed Matt Anker. The LM-A has become a member of the ILC, and I do suspect that the LM-A will also seek fellowship with the LCMS. Clearly, there is a problem in the doctrine of fellowship.

Some pastors have now resigned from the LCA and are going through the process of joining the LM-A. I am in contact with a couple of pastors who continue to urge me to work toward encouraging the AELC to begin fellowship talks with LM-A. These same pastors also tell me that while the LM-A holds to a male-only pastorate, they do not discourage women from holding positions such as chairman, etc., of a congregation and having a vote at meetings. Clearly, again, here is another problem.

For a refresher on what the AELC states regarding these issues, I urge you to read *The Unity of the Church, and Church Fellowship*, and *Women in the Church* in the AELC Statement of Faith, and if you have a copy of *The Word Shall Stand*, read Article 17 and Article 23. Both of these are available on the AELC website if you do not have physical copies, or else, ask me for copies. In this time of the strong pressure to “engage in various forms of so-called ‘expressions of oneness in the faith’” (The Word Shall Stand, p. 130), we must know what we, as a church body, teach and confess.