

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

VOLUME 2 J. CHURCH-SCHOOL ISSUES

The Lutheran Church of Australia and its schools

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1. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Lutheran Church of Australia (hereafter called 'the church') has a variety of agencies through which it carries out its ministry and mission to the people of Australia and New Zealand.
- 1.2 One such agency is the Lutheran school. The church, through its congregations and districts, owns and operates kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools. It does this in order to make available to its members and to others in the community a formal education in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities in the school.

Thus through its schools the church deliberately and intentionally bears Christian witness to students, parents, teachers, friends and all who make up the world of the school.

- 1.3 Specifically, through its schools the church offers a program of Christian education which
 - serves students, parents, the church, the community, and the government, by providing a quality education for the whole person
 - strives for excellence in the development and creative use by all students of their God-given gifts
 - equips students for a life of service to God in the church and the community
 - provides an alternative to a secular, humanistic philosophy and practice of education

- includes, as a core part of the program, a Christian Studies curriculum which has been developed deliberately and consciously from the perspective of what the Lutheran church believes and teaches
- involves the school community in regular Christian worship.

2. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

- 2.1 The Lutheran school is committed to serving its students by providing quality education which meets the requirements of the state. Such quality education also responds to the needs of students and develops their God-given abilities as fully as possible within the resource limits of the school community.
- 2.2 The principal functions as educational leader in the school. He or she is responsible to the governing council for the total program of the school.
- 2.3 The Lutheran school operates from an underlying holistic world view. All learning and teaching is integrated into this world view, which recognises the role in education of both God's revelation and human reason.

3. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND WORSHIP

- 3.1 The Lutheran church confesses that worship of God is central to the life of the people of God in mission to the world of the school. Within the school such worship may be
- a. public worship by the faithful, involving the ministry of word and sacraments. This worship is open to all and is organised to meet the needs of the school and of the wider community. Or it may be
 - b. school or class devotional exercises which are part of the regular program of the whole school and which in different ways involve all students and staff.
- 3:2 The church urges and encourages schools and local congregations to work together in worship and mission in the world of the school.
- The school pastor serves as worship leader. He oversees and encourages staff, students, and others as they serve as leaders in class and school devotions. He feeds and equips the people of God for service and leads them in mission.
 - Christian principals, teachers, and other staff are key persons in ministry and mission to the world of the school. They participate in worship and lead it when appropriate. They model the Christian lifestyle and uphold Christian values.
 - The school worshipping community works in mission together with surrounding congregations, either as a distinct worshipping group or as an extension of a local congregation.

4. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

The church commits itself to the promotion and support of its schools by

- assisting and encouraging congregations, associations, and districts to provide for the Christian education of members, in keeping with the command of Christ
- providing means and opportunity for the professional theological pre-service and inservice education of teachers

- encouraging congregations and parishes to follow up and minister to the contacts made in the wider community by the school, and to involve the members of the school community in the ministry and mission of the congregation
- working with the schools to help them realise their full potential as mission and nurturing agencies of the church.

5. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNING COUNCILS AND PRINCIPALS

The church expects the governing councils and principals of its schools to

- staff its schools with skilled and registered educators who are able to uphold the teachings of the church and model the Christian lifestyle. In the first instance it seeks to use the services of active members of the church. Beyond that, the church seeks to staff its schools with active Christians from other denominations who are willing to uphold Lutheran teachings
- support and encourage in-service training — including theological training — for the professional development of teachers
- promote the purpose of the school in the local congregation, zone, or district
- help local congregation, zone, or district to use the school as a means of establishing and maintaining contact with the wider community
- actively pursue every opportunity for maximising the school's effectiveness as a mission agency of the church

6. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND PARENTS

The church acknowledges that parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. Through its schools, therefore, the church seeks to support parents in the fulfilment of this responsibility to their children. Furthermore, the church, through its schools, offers to all parents the option of a Christian education for their children.

7. THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AND THE GOVERNMENT

- 7.1 The church acknowledges that the state has accepted responsibility for providing schooling for all its citizens. This education is compulsory, free, and secular in its orientation.
- 7.2 The church further acknowledges that the government permits non-government authorities, such as the churches, to operate schools, provided that they meet certain government-determined criteria, such as curriculum and health and safety requirements.
- 7.3 The church will continue to own and operate its schools in accordance with government requirements, provided that meeting these requirements does not bring the church into conflict with the word of God and the teachings of the church.
- 7.4 The church will continue to accept financial assistance from the government under conditions determined by the government from time to time, provided that the teachings of the church are in no way or at any time compromised.