

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

VOLUME 1

G. INTER-DENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION – CHURCH MOVEMENTS

Guidelines for dialogues with other churches

Adopted by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, February 1977.

Edited March 2001.

1. Dialogue, as the Lutheran Church of Australia [LCA] understands the term, is official and authorised conversations with churches which are not in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCA. The conversations concern matters of faith, doctrine, and practice.
2. The purpose of dialogues may vary from time to time. The basic aim is that the truth, as confessed and practised by the LCA, is brought to bear on matters of faith and life in the context of dialogue. For this purpose the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations [CTICR], acting on behalf of the church, elects committees to dialogue with churches which are willing to enter into such conversations.
3. The dialogue committees of the church are to conduct these dialogues
 - in the light of the authoritative witness of the Holy Scriptures
 - with the testimony of the historic confessions of the church constantly in view
 - taking into account the development of tradition within the dialoguing churches
 - keeping in mind the current pastoral directives in force in the churches
4. All genuine dialogue will be conducted 'in view of eternity' and with the firm belief that in such conversations the truth will prevail for the welfare of the church and the glory of the Lord of the one holy catholic church.
5. Local, district, or national dialogue groups shall not, under any circumstances, commit the church as a whole or in part by common statements with other churches. All findings, papers, and reports of such conversations shall be communicated to the CTICR for its study, assessment, approval, and use.

Note: In 1983 the CTICR added further guidelines (edited March 2001):

6. Dialogue committees shall in general follow the procedures set out by the LCA in the constitution of the CTICR, under 'Duties' pt 5 (3) & (4) in the *Handbook of the Lutheran Church of Australia*, B38,39. [The main points concern the role of General Synod and the Church Council in making official pronouncements on the position of the church, and making decisions about entering into formal relations with another church; and the role of pastors conferences in studying CTICR documents and making recommendations to the church -Ed.]
7. Dialogue committees work for the CTICR. They should, therefore, keep the CTICR informed about the nature and scope of the dialogue and about the papers submitted and doctrinal positions taken. Dialogue papers should be made available to the CTICR as requested.
8. The work of the dialogues should be promoted in the church. Dialogue committees should provide the church with regular reports and information on dialogue matters. The committees should supply adequate background material for any statements presented to the church for information, discussion, or adoption by the church.