

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

VOLUME I

FOREWORD

These documents have been published so that members of the Lutheran Church of Australia may have ready access to significant theological statements of the church. These statements are either made by the church in Convention, or produced by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations or the Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions in response to questions raised in and by the church. The date and status of each document is included under its heading.

Documents adopted by a commission are to be seen as the considered view of that commission, which has been appointed by the church to give advice on these matters. The church may use these documents for the guidance of its pastors and congregations. Subsequently the church may adopt a document – amended or unamended – as expressing the official position of the church. This happens when the document is adopted by General Synod, or by the General Church Council on behalf of the church.

Like all doctrinal statements, the documents contained in this volume are subject to the authority of the word of God. The church must always be ready to submit the documents to the scrutiny of God's word, and then confirm them, amend them, or repudiate them if further study of God's word shows them to be inadequate or in error.

The church has made a clear and important distinction between public doctrine and pious opinion (see document I 4). The Holy Scriptures alone *establish* the public doctrine of the church. The doctrinal statements of the church *define* public doctrine. Pious opinion, however, may be based on traditions and interpretations which may differ from time to time and age to age. Pious opinion can indeed enrich the church, but it must always be subjected to the ongoing scrutiny of the word of God.

This volume should be seen, not as a compendium of doctrine, but as a set of historical guideposts as the church confronts the world in its journey this side of the great Day of the Lord.

April 1989

Kevin J Schmidt
General Secretary, Lutheran Church of Australia

[*edited August 2001*]

The documents collected here are selected from **Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, Volume I**. They are identified by a code on the top right hand corner of the first page of each document. This code corresponds to the page number in the published edition.

Many of the documents in sections B to I have been edited. The General Church Council appointed the undersigned as editor, and Dr L.G. Steicke and Dr V.C. Pfitzner as consultants and advisors. The editor's instructions were to simplify as much as possible the language and form of selected documents, while remaining faithful to their essential content, spirit and intent.

August 2001

John G Strelan
editor