

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

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The mutual recognition of baptism (Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches)

Prepared by the working groups of the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations of the Lutheran Church of Australia and of the Episcopal Committee for Ecumenism of the Australian Episcopal Conference. Approved by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations. Adopted on behalf of the Lutheran Church of Australia by the General Church Council, September 1977.

Reviewed July 2001, unedited.

On April 3, 1975, the first of the meetings for dialogue between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches was held at Luther Seminary, North Adelaide, South Australia.

After preliminary discussions in 1973, the meeting had been convened under the auspices of the Lutheran Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations of the Lutheran Church of Australia and of the Episcopal Committee for Ecumenism of the Australian Episcopal Conference.

The dialogue was begun to improve the two Churches' understanding of each other and explore the possibility of greater union between the two communities.

The meetings for dialogue are held three times a year.

At the fourth meeting at St Francis Xavier Seminary, Rostrevor, South Australia, on March 19, 1976, the following resolution was passed: 'This working group recommends to our respective Church authorities that formal and mutual recognition be given to Baptism administered in our two communities.'

This resolution followed careful discussion of each Church's essential beliefs concerning the Sacrament of Baptism. The rite of administering the Sacrament in each Church was also carefully examined.

The above recommendation was presented to the Australian Episcopal Conference in May 1976 and to the General Church Council of the Lutheran Church in September of the same year.

Both Churches have now formally accepted this recommendation.

The General Church Council of the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church wish to declare that each Church officially and formally recognizes Baptism administered by the other Church, as being the Sacrament of the Gospel and instituted by Jesus Christ.