

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

VOLUME 1

H. ETHICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Declaration concerning communist and other persecution of Christians

Prepared by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations. Approved by the General Pastors Conference, 1972. Adopted by the General Synod, 1972 Convention.

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As Christians we are concerned about injustice and oppression wherever these are to be found; but toward our fellow-Christians we have a special obligation, particularly where they are experiencing oppression in severe form. Since it is well known that Christians are being persecuted, especially in territories under communist rule, the Lutheran Church of Australia hereby resolves:

1. We solemnly declare our solidarity with the suffering, bleeding, yet confessing Church under oppression (1 Cor 12:26).
2. We praise God for the inspiring, victorious faith and love with which He has blest these our persecuted brethren.
3. We thank our gracious God for having hitherto preserved our nation and Church from the scourge of terror and persecution.
4. We call on Christians who enjoy the privilege of political freedom to be well informed about the fate of Christians under oppression, to pray fervently for our persecuted fellow-believers and for the conversion of their tormentors, to support these suffering Christians by every available means, and to imitate humbly their great zeal and self-sacrifice in the service of the crucified and risen Saviour.
5. We call on all Church leaders to keep the cause of the oppressed Christians before the forum of world opinion – and not by silence to aid and abet their persecution.

DECLARATION CONCERNING COMMUNIST
AND OTHER PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

6. We call on the Commonwealth Government to protest in the United Nations Organisation against the continued violation in the Soviet Union, China and other countries of their Christian citizens' basic human rights, as guaranteed especially in Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UNO on December 10, 1948 (and by the USSR on November 1, 1962), and to urge the UNO to take all possible steps to secure the compliance of the said countries with the Declaration of Human Rights.