



# SOS: A CALL TO AFFIRMATION OF HUMAN VALUES

*(A statement of the Sixth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church adopted October 9, 1972, by action GC72.9.145, with 525 delegates voting for and 305 delegates voting against, as a statement of comment and counsel addressed to the members of the congregations of The American Lutheran Church to aid them in their decisions and actions.)*

1. The American Lutheran Church observes with deep concern a national retreat from past commitments to civil rights, equality of opportunity in education, equal access to decent jobs and housing, an integrated society, elimination of poverty, and morality in public affairs. In evidence we cite the following examples:

- (a) An increase in unemployment has been accepted in order to curb inflation without adequate provision having been made for the livelihood of those removed from gainful employment;
- (b) Welfare reform proposals designed to assure minimum standards of adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care for all the nation's people while providing proper incentive for self support are in the process of emasculation and corruption into punitive measures of oppression and want;
- (c) Transportation of school children, long used in rural areas to provide quality education in consolidated schools and to provide segregated education in separate schools, is rejected as a proper means to achieve quality integrated education;
- (d) Achievement of adequate housing is thwarted through failures of governmental policy and operations, through private greed, exploitation, and corruption, and through widespread public resistance to integrated neighborhoods;
- (e) The war on poverty has in too many places been turned into a sop to the poor and a means for political control over them;
- (f) Swollen governmental bureaucracies have proved inadequate instruments for translating personnel and funds into effective programs;
- (g) The private sector too often has failed to fulfill its potential for leadership in solving urgent problems and meeting human needs;
- (h) Christians and the general citizenry have retreated into personal concerns and have abandoned their neighbors to lives of discrimination and want.

2. In the face of this critical situation we call for an earnest recommitment to personal and public honor and integrity, to the achievement of justice, morality and equality of opportunity, and to the centrality of human values and human

well-being. We call upon our members, our congregations, boards and commissions, officers and leaders at all levels of the church to rededicate and recommit efforts to the solution of these crucial problems, to overcoming these evils, and to the achievement of human values and goals. We further call upon the president of this church to use his influence with the religious leadership of America to motivate and mobilize the entire religious community of this nation in a constructive attack on the growing evidences of America's retreat from its commitment to human values, human well-being, and a responsive society. In this way religiously motivated people can exercise a constructive influence on the shape and future of American life.

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