

# THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

210 NORTH BROADWAY • SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63102

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT



CENTRAL 1-6969  
AREA CODE 314

March 28, 1969

To the pastors, professors, and male teachers of  
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

When the Synod adopted Resolution 3-23 at its convention in 1967, it thereby placed a heavy responsibility on me. By that resolution the Synod directed "that the President of the Synod in conjunction with the Council of Presidents make the appropriate recommendations to the 1969 convention." In this letter I want to add several comments which underscore what the recommendations themselves ought to make clear, namely, that I do not take lightly any of the responsibilities assigned to me. I know I am accountable to the Shepherd of the church and also to a church body which I hold in high esteem.

This letter will supply information concerning the resolution which is enclosed. I am sharing it with you at this point because I am persuaded that you should have this information as quickly and completely as possible. The preamble and the resolution were drawn up in accordance with the stipulations set forth in Resolution 3-23. The Council of Presidents met here in St. Louis on March 17 and 18 to prepare both documents, which are now being submitted to you in the form of a resolution. I might add this was the fourth time in 6 months that the presidents devoted special time to a consideration of this issue. In voting affirmatively as they did, 25-13, the presidents were fully aware of all the factors to which both proponents and opponents of this step have called attention over the past 2 years.

Not only has the Council of Presidents shared responsibility for the enclosed resolution, but these men helped greatly to implement Resolution 3-23. Others who have assisted in this implementation were members of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and men who served as joint commissioners in drawing up the Essays and the "Joint Statement and Declaration." I am confident that all have done so in faithfulness to their Lord, their church, and their conscience. We owe them our gratitude.

I want to pay tribute also to the large number of congregations and pastors who invested much time, energy, and love for this matter. There were many who diligently carried out the Synod's directive "to make arrangements for promoting the widest possible mutual recognition of the doctrinal consensus and its implications for church fellowship."

These recommendations brought in the form of a resolution ought to be a call to explore God's continued guidance and blessing. In faithfulness to His promises God extends His grace when we do not deserve it. By His grace God preserves us in unity and extends our fellowship. I suggest that you see these recommendations as a proper invitation to embrace in fellowship those in the American Lutheran Church. Relying altogether on God, we can move forward together, rendering to each other and to the world those services to which God calls us and for which He equips us by His grace.

God bless you,

Oliver R. Harms

ORH/EK  
Enc.