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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
SEVENTH GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE  
AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

COBO HALL

7:17 P.M. EDT

Dr. Preuss, delegates to the Seventh General Convention of the American Lutheran Church, and friends:

I am deeply indebted to and most grateful for the extremely warm welcome and the wonderful opportunity to meet with all of you just for a few minutes here this evening.

I would like to address my remarks, if I might, not only to those who are here, but also to the more than 2 million 500 thousand Lutherans each of you represent in this gathering here tonight, and the more than 9 million Lutherans in the United States, our homeland.

Very honestly and frankly, I am very moved by the theme of the American Lutheran Church, this convention, both as a President and as a Christian.

Ministering to a hungry world would serve, in my judgment, as a very stimulating, a very enthusiastic call to any assembly of committed people.

I think all of us recognize that the world hungers not only today but yesterday and tomorrow for food. And as I look at the facts and the figures in the office I presently hold, I think even more will be needed in the future.

Equally -- perhaps more importantly -- is the need, as I see it, for spiritual sustenance. Your President, Dr. David Preuss, said it so well in his report to the convention, and let me quote, if I might:

"Bread is a little word designed to describe only the loaves we place in our mouth. It signifies the answer to all our deep human needs. It points beyond the loaf and the kernel of wheat to the Almighty, ministering in love to a hungry world."

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(OVER)

As I entered this room, I was taken by the simple but the very dramatic backdrop that has been provided by the Seventh American Lutheran Church General Convention -- a child, a mother, a native mother with child, a couple, all looking hopefully toward the light that grows from the bread and the cup, the wheat and the grape.

I think the facts are that we all yearn to feed the starving, and when I say that, I mean all Americans. We all thirst for those who are living out their lives in desperation. We all want to win the fight against inflation, maintain peace, and assure justice for all people.

The lesson, I think, is that of every Sabbath, for everyone to hear in our churches and our synagogues, as Americans we must live it.

I am hopeful that we will be able to continue America's humane tradition, your theme of administering to the hungry, to the hungry in all 130 or more nations throughout the world, and as I have told the American people, sacrifices will be required.

Our lifestyles to some extent must be adjusted if we are to remain a source of strength for all peoples in all nations throughout the world. And if I could make one plea here tonight, I would like it to be in this context.

I ask for your help in making that possible for all peoples throughout all the world.

Each and every one of us yearn to feed the starving. We all thirst for those living out their lives in some desperation, and there are literally thousands and millions that are doing that. We all want to do these things that are good for everybody.

But may I say just one word in a somewhat or slightly different tack. I note that the convention will be talking about the Bicentennial, and aren't we proud that our Nation is about to celebrate its 200th anniversary, two centuries of freedom and liberty for all people. And I must say that I have been greatly impressed with the originality reflected in the title that you at this convention have used, "The Commission on the Third Century of the American Life," and I commend you, Dr. Preuss, and all of you here at this convention for that.

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The understandable emphasis, I think, in the past has been what we recognize has been good for America, but it is my judgment, if I could offer just a bit of advice, that instead of looking at the past in toto, we should connect our great traditions and achievements of the past with what we can do in the future.

We must, as a Nation, build from the past and move forward to the future.

I thank you. I congratulate you. I am deeply grateful for the warm reception and the opportunity to just say hello, to commend you and to encourage you for a most successful convention, and all the wonderful things that -- I know from the friends that I have, my former colleagues in the Congress, Congressman Al Quie, and others -- to do what is good for America, what is wonderful for the world.

I thank you and I urge -- because I know it is true -- you will have God's blessings.

Thank you very much.

END (7:25 P.M. EDT)