

CLC et WELS rē AAL

A brief history of CLC and WELS dealings with
the Aid Association for Lutherans

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Introduction: Until his vicar year, the author of this paper had never thought too deeply about the programs of the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL). He has combed his hair with AAL combs, written papers with AAL pencils, and had gone to AAL Branch activities from the time of his youth. Also, he has been aided significantly in paying for his ministerial education by way of AAL grants and scholarships. Business-wise, he had purchased AAL insurance policies because these policies seemed to be a good deal.

Thus, it was somewhat of a surprise when the author began to hear of some troubles with the AAL during his vicar year. The author vicared in a town that had a Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) congregation, and he met some former members of that CLC congregation. They told him that they were not allowed to be AAL policy holders any longer in their former congregation.

The fact that the CLC had become anti-AAL to a degree was an unsettling fact. The author had respected (although not always agreed with) the CLC as being a group totally devoted to Scriptural views. The fact that the CLC had not been nearly as antagonistic to their former WELS brethren as other church bodies have been made the author consider the CLC position against the AAL. Was the CLC on to something the WELS missed? Is the AAL a "unionistic leaven" to be eliminated from the midst of confessional Lutheranism?¹ Could the statement "It is part of wisdom to recognize that money can have a detrimental effect on our confessional integrity."² be accurately applied to the WELS?

This paper will therefore attempt to show the CLC and WELS

positions concerning the AAL, and also show how the history of the AAL must be taken into consideration when analyzing the AAL.

I. CLC position

The earliest public rumblings against the AAL in the CLC can be detected back in a faculty study paper by Prof. E. Reim for the Immanuel Lutheran College (ILC) on Nov. 29, 1965. Students at that college were inquiring about AAL scholarships, and the endorsement of the college department heads would be necessary on the applications. After studying Prof. E. Reim's paper, the faculty arrived at these specific conclusions:

- the work that AAL is doing in these programs is church work, involving particularly the work of missions and the training of workers in the vineyard.
- the work is joint church work, in an area that involves more than externals.
- that even before the change that is to go into effect January 1, 1966, it was joint work with such as were no longer joined in the confession of their faith, hence unionistic in character.
- that after the end of this year it will be work done in the name of Pan-Lutheranism, and in the furtherance of its' cause.

It is therefore evident that

- as a school we cannot solicit support from this source without denying the scriptural principles to which our CLC stands committed.
- as for our students, we can for the same reason neither recommend nor endorse these scholarships, but must rather warn against the offense which could result from acceptance of this aid.

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The faculty had taken a definite stand against the supposed "unionistic" practices of the AAL, even before the AAL had formally accepted ALC and LCA applicants.

When certain members of the CLC church in Spring, TX, had heard about the ILC faculty decision, the members posed the eventual question: If it is not proper to accept AAL scholarships, and the ILC faculty has pronounced the AAL unionistic, was it even proper

to be policy holders and members of the AAL at all?

The Spring congregation's pastor studied the matter, along with his Church Council, and the Spring congregation came to this decision on July 18, 1971:

RESOLVED, that we at Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church, Spring, Texas, therefore cannot give endorsement to AAL, and encourage our members to alleviate themselves of any connection with Aid Association for Lutherans. 4

These conclusions were brought to various CLC pastor conferences, and Prof. Gordon Radtke presented a paper on the supposed unionistic characteristics of the AAL.

The first noticeable public display of anti-AAL sentiment in the CLC was in its Lutheran Spokesman, Jan 1972 issue. There J. Schaller laments the fact that a free-will offering taken at the North Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Federation of AAL Local Branches had \$1500 earmarked for the World Missions of the ALC, ELS, LCA, LC-MS, and WELS. Schaller states

Unless otherwise clarified, we have here an apparent situation of church work being done by, and for the support of, members of Lutheran churches which are not in doctrinal agreement. Such a "co-op gift" once would have been called "religious unionism", and so was considered a violation of God's Word. 5

Finally, Rev. Arvid Gullerud was asked to prepare a study paper about the AAL for the 10th Convention of the CLC in July, 1972. Pastors and lay members of the CLC were concerned that all the CLC members speak the same thing and be united in their stand against the AAL.

The author feels that this paper by Rev. Gullerud sets the stage for the solidified CLC position against the AAL. Gullerud starts his paper by stating the fellowship practices of the CLC and their bases. Then he states his own personal misgivings about AAL practices

when he was a local Branch secretary. He protested to the various offices and officers of the AAL, and received no direct answers that would take away his misgivings.

Gullerud stated the objections that : 1, the structure of the AAL had not been altered so that equal and fair distributions would be given to the individual church bodies after the Synodical Conference break-up, 2, some of the AAL agents he had known gave the impression that they could help the pastors keep track of their members and even direct members to the pastors. Gullerud felt that the agents were attempting to do something for the pastors that was none of the agents' business, 3, AAL seminars for branch officers involved unionistic prayer fellowship, 4, the AAL publications were showing a tendency toward wording that was pan-Lutheran, and were featuring articles by liberal Lutherans.

Gullerud then sums up the history of CLC concerns about the AAL up to 1972. He does caution that the dogmatic distinction between the ^essentials and accidentals of a thing is a proper distinction. However, he feels that the goals and aims of the fraternal organization of the AAL are essentially unionistic. Therefore, the CLC, to be true to its confession, must separate itself from "any type of fraternalism and financial support we give them or which we receive from them."⁶ According to Gullerud, the AAL was not just cooperating in externals, but cooperating also in spiritual matters.

After the Gullerud paper in the 1972 CLC convention, the CLC became more and more public in its anti-AAL (and Lutheran Brotherhood) stand. The educational grants to different Lutheran schools and professors are criticized in the Jan 1974 Lutheran Spokesman: "false teaching is being supported and promoted by the AAL, and that

with a blasphemous piety- in the Lord's Name."⁷ The 1976 and 1978 CLC conventions passed resolutions (apparently unanimously) to "call for the elimination of this unionistic leaven from our midst"⁸ The Christian News articles of Oct 4 and 18, 1976, express the opinion that if the AAL would disburse its funds on a strict pro-rated basis (i.e., if the LC-MS made up 50% of the AAL membership, the LC-MS should receive exactly 50% of the AAL benevolences), AAL would be fair and confessional Lutheranism could be content. That opinion was called a "meat and drink sophistry" in the Nov 1976 Lutheran Spokesman. G. Sydow, who expressed this scathing criticism, felt that most Lutherans were being influenced in their confessionalism by the monies that the AAL and Lutheran Brotherhood were providing. The CLC continued to refuse AAL grants for celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Book of Concord, and other general offers of financial aid. It was felt that "to accept such aid would be contrary to the Scriptural principles of fellowship and separation from error."⁹

Although various CLC articles hinted at displeasure with the WELS for its involvement with the AAL, there were no direct CLC-WELS clashes until about 1979. The Lutheran Spokesman, Jan 1978, noted approvingly that the Dakota-Montana district of the WELS had petitioned the 1977 WELS convention to study the propriety of receiving gifts from non-synodical sources. Apparently, members of the CLC thought that the WELS was making a good start upon disassociation with fraternal societies.

However, these CLC hopes seemed to be dashed to pieces by the response of the the Ten Districts to the 1978 study of receiving gifts from non-synodical sources. The March 1979 Lutheran Spokesman plays up the fact that "there has been no meetings of minds in the

Wisconsin Synod" on the issue studied. The CLC writers were happy that the WELS had felt that receiving non-Synodical funds might have a negative influence upon stewardship and free-will giving. Yet the writers felt that the "larger question" of being involved with a fraternal society had not been answered.

G. Sydow and J. Sydow attack the 1978 WELS study on grants itself in the Dec 1980 Lutheran Spokesman. While they do not attempt to deal with all the study's argumentation and Scripture passages used, they find fault with the conclusion that

the question of whether the church may look for help to support its mission from sources outside the church ought to be removed from the context of right and wrong and placed where it belongs, in the realm of Christian liberty.¹⁰

The CLC writers feel that the 1978 study got its "false" conclusion by an improper interpretation of the Ezra incident in the Old Testament, and an "obtuse literalism" in noting that there are no passages forbidding the church from accepting or even looking for outside help. Other objections were that the WELS took too much comfort in the bylaw changes of the AAL, and there is a false distinction between incidental and essential religious features of the AAL.

In brief conclusion of the CLC position concerning the AAL, the author of this research paper feels that the CLC stand was not a hasty conclusion by a few individuals which was foisted upon an uninformed laity. The CLC is not known for power politics, or for uninformed laity. It is apparent that proper channels and parliamentary procedure were used to bring the AAL matter to the attention of all concerned. There seemed to be no visible anti-AAL rumblings in the CLC prior to 1965 because 1. the acceptance of non-Synodical conference members to the AAL was not official until

1966, and 2. the CLC was too busy consolidating itself and making its confessional stand clear to have the necessary time and manpower to devote to a study of the AAL. Recent developments in the CLC concerning the AAL will be covered in the Addendum section of this paper.

II. WELS position

The WELS was not unaware of the question being raised about the AAL. The Proceedings of the 1973 WELS convention note that the resolution of Floor Committee No. 8

WHEREAS there is a definite need for a clear understanding of the teachings and practices of the many lodges and fraternal organizations to which members of our congregations are exposed; therefore be it

Resolved, That we concur with the request that all possible information be forwarded to the Committee on Lodges and Fraternal Organizations. 11

was passed. Perhaps some lodge and fraternal questions had been triggered by recent AAL developments. Certainly, members of the WELS, which had friends and relatives in the CLC, were hearing about the CLC problems with the AAL.

Yet, Floor Committee No. 8's resolution was just the tip of the iceberg. The President's Report had also drawn notice to the Conference of Presidents' request for a bylaw revision by the AAL. This bylaw^{in question} had been understood to state that members of the AAL were associated in a spiritual fellowship. If this bylaw were true and valid, it would endanger the fellowship principles of the WELS members in the AAL. The Synod's resolution in 1973 noted that the AAL seemed willing to remove any possible offense in its bylaws. Therefore, the Synod resolved to commend the Conference of Presidents' efforts in clearing this matter up, and encouraged the Conference of Presidents to bring this matter to a conclusion without compromising the Synod's fellowship principles.¹²

President Naumann was happy to report to the 1975 WELS convention that

Upon the request of our Conference of Presidents the Aid Association for Lutherans has during the past biennium revised its bylaws in order to remove a wording that no longer applied to certificate holders today. . . Efforts have also been made to bring the reports in the CORRESPONDENT and in YES in such a manner that the bylaw revisions are reflected in them.

Recognizing these changes the Conference of Presidents has lifted the moratorium on applications for fraternal grants from the AAL. 13

However, this bylaw change did not answer all the questions in the minds of WELS members^{concerning} AAL. The Dakota-Montana district of the WELS in 1976 submitted a memorial to the WELS which concerned itself with

Subject: The Scriptural Principles Involving the Expediency of Requesting and Receiving Grants, Gifts, and Matching Funds by WELS for the Lord's Word from Organizations not of the Church.¹⁴

The Dakota-Montana district resolved in this memorial to petition the Synod to study the current practices of WELS in requesting and receiving grants and funds from non-Synodical sources. Although the AAL is not mentioned here by name, it is rather obvious that the AAL would be the main organization considered. The AAL had been the most noticeable in its gifts to the WELS institutions, and the AAL had many members and directors which were not WELS-affiliated.

The President of the WELS made some very interesting observations concerning this Dakota-Montana memorial in his report in the Proceedings of the the 1977 convention. The Dakota-Montana memorial printed in the 1977 BoRaM was a revision of the original memorial which "had expressed convictions as to who may serve on the committee studying this memorial and who may not serve."¹⁵

The author of this research paper was unable to find any list of potential committee members which the Dakota-Montana district did or did not want on the committee. The author can only speculate that the Dakota-Montana district feared that there would be "ringers" on this committee which would bias the study.

Whether this fear was factual or not, the President stated that he would hesitate, according to the constitution and bylaws of the Synod, to make specific nominations to this committee with the original Dakota-Montana limitations. Therefore, it was suggested that the 1977 Floor Committee No. 4 present a slate of ten candidates for this study, and the convention was to elect five of these candidates for the study. Thus, the President of the WELS wisely removed any doubt that this study would be biased from the start by the President. The 1977 convention followed through on the President's recommendations, and a committee was appointed to study the concerns expressed in the 1976 Dakota-Montana memorial.

This "Report of the Committee on Grants" was included in the 1978 Report to the Ten Districts, pp. 183-197. This is the report that either settled matters in the minds of many WELS members, or proved to the CLC that the WELS had become ignorant of the false fellowship practices of the AAL.

The report noted in the beginning that it felt it was especially the AAL grants which gave rise to the questions it would study. The Committee on Grants used any correspondence and documents the President of the Synod had, Scripture references appropriate to the discussion, the Lutheran Confessions, and church history for any help in studying the questions. Various individuals were consulted in the Dakota-Montana district, as well as Synodical officials involved in securing grants. Although there is a vast amount of

scholarly research presented by the Committee on Grants, their report can be summarized as follows:

A. Scripture gives the church the responsibility to support its own preaching of the Gospel.

B. Yet,

While the Bible contains many injunctions that God's people should give gladly and freely of their own, there are no passages which expressly prohibit Christians from accepting or requesting resources from outside the church.

The book of Ezra, in fact, gives an example where the church used support from outside sources to rebuild the Temple. Nowhere did God forbid the Jews to accept this aid, and the Bible does not tell us that the Jews refused these gifts.

C. Scriptural incidents often used to say that God does not want His church to accept assistance from outside sources are applied out of their original context. Abraham, in Gen. 14, did not want it to appear that it was the world, and not God, that blessed him. Thus Abraham turned down this aid from the king of Sodom. Yet Abraham did not deny booty to his men. Abraham, in Gen 23, was just following standard business practices in refusing the burial lot. This was just a way for both parties to dispense with formalities and get down to serious business. Jesus' cleaning of the Temple in the Gospels was to condemn a formalistic worship, and not to condemn receiving gifts. Other passages in the Bible that refer to "taking of gifts" are actually warning against bribery.

D. Receiving support from outside sources is usually a matter of Christian liberty.

E. If receiving support from outside sources inhibits Christian stewardship or creates a false impression of unity (as in Ezra 4:3), then this outside support should be refused. Concerning the AAL:

Though the dollar-amount of financial aid received from the AAL in the last few years is no mean sum, yet it is a small amount when compared with the budgetary and special funds that our members supply through their love offerings. 17

Therefore, the Synod is not reliant upon the AAL for its existence. Interestingly enough, the AAL has set up guidelines so a church group or synod does not become reliant upon the AAL.

F. The AAL has changed its bylaws so that members are not brought into religious fellowship with those not in doctrinal agreement. The president of the AAL insists

It is not our purpose to be a church body, or a Lutheran institution carrying out church work, or an arm of the church. . . . As I have indicated previously, AAL is not part of the church and it is not our role to do the work of the church. 18

G. Applying for outside grants and aids is not "begging," but rather an orderly way of requesting funds which an organization has already provided for a set purpose.

Although the 1979 BoRaM inadvertently forgot to include the "Report of the Committee on Grants", comments from the reaction of the Ten Districts to that report were listed in the 1979 BoRaM. Six districts were in substantial agreement with the report, two districts ran out of time to adopt any resolution for or against the report, and two districts called for further study. The Committee still defended its view of Christian liberty on these matters, and even noted that the Lutheran Brotherhood had changed its constitution so that the members would not be in religious fellowship.

The 1979 Proceedings of the WELS convention note that the Synod adopted Resolution No. 4, which stated

Resolved, a) that we endorse in substance the Report of Committee on Grants; and be it further

Resolved, b) That we thank the Committee on Grants for its report. 19

Thus, it became the Synodical position that the acceptance of grants from the AAL, as well as membership in the AAL, was a matter of Christian liberty. Recent developments within the WELS concerning the AAL and grants and aids will be covered in the Addendum section of this paper.

III. AAL position

In all the debate about the AAL, it is unfortunate that the AAL history itself is so often overlooked. The author of this research paper feels that many "problems" with the AAL can be explained, or at least understood, by looking at the history of the AAL.

The founders of the AAL were members of St. Paul's church, a WELS congregation. Some of the founders were even educated at Northwestern College. One of the founders, Mr. Albert Voecks, was a member of St. Paul's Church Council. The council had to deal with lodge members in the congregation, and Voecks was troubled over the fact that nobody seemed to be providing sick or death benefits the way the lodges had. Voecks wondered

Would it not be possible to organize a society among our Lutheran people with an insurance feature to make it possible for them to get the desired protection for their families within their own circle? 20

Thus, Voecks and a few others started the AAL. Since the founders of the AAL spoke German, and most of the Synodical Conference members spoke German, it would be only natural for the AAL to confine itself to the Synodical Conference.

The lodge position of the AAL has often been misunderstood. At its beginnings around the 1900's, AAL had no specific denial of membership to the lodge members. Apparently, the AAL directors assumed there would be no lodge members in the Synodical Conference it dealt with. It wasn't until 1911 that there was a regulation (due to the Fond Du Lac branch led by Pastor E.G. Bergemann!) that

no lodge members were to be permitted as AAL members. Also, the AAL did not feel it was its business to ferret out lodge members, since that was the church's business.

Yet the question arose: Was it fair to deny the family of the injured or deceased AAL benefits because it was found out that the injured or deceased had been a lodge member? By 1936, the rules were modified so that a lodge member could be a member of the AAL, but not a voting member or an officer. Again, the AAL felt it was the church's business to deal with lodge membership. By 1948, membership in a lodge was not a question on the AAL application. Suprisingly, AAL historians have felt that the AAL had actually aided confessional Lutheranism by providing equivalent benefits of lodges for Lutherans. The Lutherans would not have to leave their churches to find these "lodge" benefits.²¹

When an organization such as AAL is made up of members of differing religious confessions, the question ultimately arises: Are these members actually uniting themselves doctrinally? There was no problem in the early years of the AAL anyway, since membership was confined to members of the Synodical Conference. Yet it is interesting to note that the WELS had studied the AAL as early as 1902. The WELS pronouncements at that time are significant:

1. The Association claims a purely business character, but does not intend to replace or influence Christian deeds of loving-kindness.
2. Its mutual methods of business, as appear from a perusal of its constitution and Bylaws, are not in conflict with God's word.
3. The name should be changed so that the confessional stamp may disappear, and it should be called: "Mutual Aid Association of Appleton."

4. Since a recent circular gave the impression that this Society claimed to be a servant of the church, it should be expressly stated that this is not the case.
5. The laws of the Society expressly forbid the local branch to deal with congregational matters in their meetings. The constitution further forbids that any resolution should be drawn up in the local branch contradictory to the church ordinances of the congregation concerned.
6. We find that when a member for whatever reason ceases to be a Lutheran he should not suffer financially but he should lose the power to influence the character of the branch by losing his right to vote and to hold office.
7. On these grounds, it is our opinion that this Society is little or not at all to be distinguished from similar societies which already exist in our congregations and should not be combatted as anti-christian, and that joining this Society should be left to the conscience of the individuals. 22

Thus the WELS of 1902, while noting possible dangers, stated that it was not sinful to belong to the AAL. The WELS had advised AAL to change its name from "The Aid Association for Lutherans in Wisconsin and Other States," so people would not identify the AAL as an arm of the WELS. In 1910, the AAL had changed its name so that the WELS objections would be met.

This willingness by the AAL to comply with WELS concerns shows one of the main principles of the AAL: The AAL is not to preach the Gospel or exercise church discipline. This principle was stated as early as 1922 in a letter by the President of the AAL to a person concerned about the lodges.²³ In 1953, the Articles of Incorporation were altered so that membership would be allowed to congregations which belonged in the Synodical Conference up to 1953. If a congregation would withdraw from the Synodical Conference after 1953, the AAL did not feel it was in a position to judge the congregation "worthy" or not of AAL membership. When the Synodical Con-

ference did dissolve, the AAL found it necessary to redefine its sphere of operation. It was felt that the AAL would be overstepping its boundaries if it tried to hold together groups that had decided to separate. Thus, AAL continued to use its old structure, even when ALC and LCA members could become AAL members. The old structure had been set up so that the AAL would not foist a spiritual fellowship upon its members. In fact, the AAL in the 1960's even avoided the use of the word "branch"

until it could demonstrate to LCA and ALC church bodies that a fraternal benefit society can be supportive of church objectives without influencing church policy, interpreting church doctrine, or interfering with the administrative integrity of the church. 24

Many people feel that the AAL took a turn for the worse in the 70 's and 80's in its stand on religious fellowship. While unfortunate individual instances can always be shown, it was not the intent of the AAL to lapse into religious fellowship. In 1971, the AAL scholarship policy exclusively for Valparaiso University, was dropped in favor of a policy that would treat all Lutheran colleges and universities equally. When the WELS approached the AAL about a questionable part of the AAL constitution in the 1970's, the AAL showed a great willingness to please the WELS. The constitution was changed, and public notice was made of the AAL policy. Henry, Schieg, the President of the AAL, stated in Yes, an official paper for the AAL,

We are not a part of the church. It is not our purpose to do church work, nor to unite Lutherans for any other purpose than to provide the mutual benefits that accrue through membership in a fraternal benefit society. 25

When commenting on "Fraternal Purpose #5" of the AAL bylaws,

To aid Lutheran church bodies, Lutheran institutions and such nonprofit charitable, educational and civic organizations as the Board of Directors may determine 26

President Schieg states

The key words are 'to aid', that is, to assist. We are sometimes misunderstood in this regard. It is not our purpose to be a church body, or a Lutheran institution carrying out church work, or an arm of the church. Rather, it is our purpose to aid Lutheran church bodies and Lutheran institutions in carrying out the work which they determine they wish to carry out.

AAL is not a part of the church. But because its members are also members of various congregations, which in turn are members of church bodies and support Lutheran institutions, it is logical that AAL members would want to aid Lutheran church bodies and institutions to the extent that funds are available to do so. This is part of the thrust of both local branch activities and benevolence activities. 27

Also, it has never been the intent of the AAL to make churches or church bodies dependent upon AAL monies. In a pamphlet outlining the AAL's "Lutheran High School Enrichment Program," it is stated

AAL does not want in any way to undermine the financial independence and financial responsibility of the schools themselves. 28

Some have also pointed to the fact that the AAL never used to give out grants and aids in its early years. Thus, some feel that the AAL monies now spent show a desire to aid liberal causes. Actually, the AAL admits that it had been lax in giving out benevolences according to its original intents. According to Wisconsin law, a fraternal benefit society is not required to have programs of charity or benevolence. A fraternal benefit society must be a non-profit corporation with a) a program of insurance for members, b) a local branch system, and c) a representative form of government.²⁹ These features the AAL has had from its early history onward. AAL historians feel that the AAL was neglectful of its fra-

ternal benefit responsibilities because the Synodical Conference was leery of any lodge tendencies or social activity. The basic need in the early years of the AAL was to provide low-cost insurance to its members. The AAL did not have have the monies at first for many benevolent functions. The 1950's was a significant time for the AAL. Since life insurance company taxes had become significant, the AAL had to justify its tax exemption. Thus, there was a renewed emphasis upon branch benevolence activities. Also, fraternal benefit societies must often perform some of their benevolence activities beyond its their own membership to qualify for tax exemption. Thus, government regulations urged the AAL to become what the AAL was intended to be, a Lutheran fraternal benefit society, and not just an insurance company for Lutherans.

IV. Observations

Why have the CLC and the WELS come to differing conclusions concerning the AAL? The author of this research paper feels that there a few basic reasons for the differing conclusions:

A. The WELS seemed to have had, or searched for, more information about the AAL than the CLC had. The "Committee on Grants" of the WELS gave more information about the AAL itself than the writers in the Lutheran Spokesman. It seems that the WELS committee went the "extra mile" to get information and explanations from the AAL and work with the AAL. Very little is said by the CLC writers about what was done to get the AAL to see the CLC's position.

B. Closely related to the preceding difference is the basic fellowship differences between the CLC and the WELS. The CLC feels that once an offense is noticed and brought to public attention, immediate separation must occur between the parties if that offense is not corrected immediately. The WELS admits that an offense should be noticed and brought to public attention, but separation need not occur until the offending party is persisting in its error. The CLC saw problems with the AAL, and worked to separate itself with the AAL as soon as possible. The WELS saw the same problems with the AAL, but tried to clear up these problems first before thinking about "outlawing" the AAL.

C. Strangely, there does seem to be a difference in hermeneutics between the CLC and the WELS. The CLC showed a tendency to concentrate on a few Bible passages and stick to those passages for the basis of its judgments about the AAL. The WELS, on the other hand, was careful to search the entire Bible for points that would relate to the AAL question. The WELS was hesitant to make the Scripture and Biblical incidents say more than what was plainly stated. The CLC strove to get any deduction they could out of their limited "proof passages."

D. The WELS took the AAL at its word as much as honestly possible. The CLC, having come to its own conclusions, had a prior decided against the explanations of the AAL.

In conclusion, the author of this paper has tried to present an objective history of the forming of the CLC and WELS positions concerning the AAL. Extensive quotations were used in this paper to show the official documentation of the CLC, WELS, and AAL, and

not just the "sour grapes" of an upset individual. While there is always a tendency toward impropriety where money and different Lutheran bodies are present, the author agrees with the conclusion of the WELS in 1902 and 1979: Membership in, and association with, the AAL is a matter of Christian liberty.

ADDENDUM

In recent years, the CLC has not been as united in its practices concerning the AAL as it would like to be. While the CLC had declared the AAL to be unionistic, the matter of dealing with CLC people in the AAL was still up in the air. The 1981 CLC pastors' conference debated over the "evangelical" manner to be used to counsel members in the AAL. In the Feb 1982 Lutheran Spokesman, there was a notice that Rev. Gilbert Sydow had withdrawn from the CLC because of the CLC's manner of dealing with its AAL members. Rev. Sydow, who had written many of the articles in the Lutheran Spokesman critical of the AAL, evidently felt that the CLC praesidium was not moving quickly enough with its AAL members. The March 1983 Lutheran Spokesman notes that Pastor Robert Wehrwein had been suspended from the CLC for agreeing with those criticizing the praesidium's actions. Could these two instances show that the CLC is using more of a WELS practice in patient dealing with "errorists?" Time will tell.

However, it also must be said that the WELS brethren are not as united in opinion about fraternal societies as hoped. There was not 100% agreement in reaction to the Committee on Grants report, as noticed in the Northwestern Lutheran of Aug 6, 1978. It remains to be seen if the 1983 WELS convention will have any memorials critical of WELS practices in the matter of grants and funds, as the 1981 WELS convention had. The secretary of the 1983 SE Michigan Pastor-Teacher-Delegate Conference notes that there was considerable discussion again about fraternal life

insurance companies in that conference. "Opinions ranged the whole spectrum on this matter, making any concensus impossible."

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May the Lord grant the grace to the WELS to be "like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (Phil 2:2)

END NOTES

1. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 21, #9, Mar 1979, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Gullerud, Why a Study of the Fraternal Life Insurance Organization Aid Association for Lutherans?, p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 4.
5. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 14, #7, Jan 1972, p. 6.
6. Gullerud, op. cit., p. 5.
7. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 16, #7, Jan 1974, p. 6.
8. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 21, #9, Mar 1979, p. 7.
9. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 23, #2, Aug 1980, p. 11.
10. Lutheran Spokesman, Vol. 23, #6, Dec 1980, p. 8.
11. Proceedings of the 1973 WELS convention, p. 145.
12. Ibid., p. 42.
13. Proceedings of the 1975 WELS convention, p. 23.
14. Book of Reports and Memorials to the 1977 WELS convention, p. 174.
15. Proceedings of the 1977 WELS convention, p. 23.
16. Our Position on Grants, assembled by Pastor Win. Koelpin, p. 52.
17. Ibid., p. 58.
18. Ibid., p. 60.
19. Ibid., p. 65.
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21. Ibid., p. 68.
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