

A HISTORY OF THE CLC'S TEACHING
CONCERNING THE AAL

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The history of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) is a fascinating story. It is a story of vital interest to members of the Wisconsin Synod. As you are no doubt aware that the CLC was formed in 1957 as a protest against the Wisconsin Synod's continuing fellowship with the Missouri Synod.

The founders of the CLC felt that the WELS delayed too long in breaking fellowship with the LC-MS in the Synodical Conference. The Wisconsin Synod at that time felt that it was too soon to break fellowship. They regarded the Missouri Synod as "a weak brother", who perhaps could be called back to repentance and adherence to the firm Word of God. The representatives who would form the CLC felt that enough testimony had been given to the Missouri Synod. They felt that the time to avoid the "persistent errorist" was due. When the Wisconsin Synod in convention voted to remain in fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the CLC formed its own church body.

As you can see the history of the CLC and WELS are intertwined. In fact a number of families were split apart as a number stayed with the WELS and others joined the CLC. The ironic fact was that the two bodies were in argument in almost every doctrine, including the doctrine of fellowship. The only question was the matter of time.

In these past twenty years- from 1957 on- other issues have cropped between the two church bodies. I will examine one issue which sharply divides the two. It is the relationship of the individual Lutheran and the corporate church body to the fraternal insurance companies, such as the Aid Association to

Lutherans and the Lutheran Brotherhood. If the CLC and WELS are ever to have fellowship again, this issue must be addressed. It is a burning issue in the CLC, as well as some areas of the WELS.

The Church of the Lutheran Confession's stand against membership in fraternal insurance companies has gradually developed. At the time of its split from the WELS, I could find no evidence that fraternal insurance was an issue of any kind. In fact, one prominent CLC theologian reflecting on his past involvement with the AAL saw it as good stewardship. He writes, "At the time when I joined the CLC, not only did I hold several small policies with AAL, but I had been local branch secretary of Branch #2 for several years. During the 'good-old-days' of the Synodical Conference it seemed like the thing to do; namely, to take out life insurance with an agency that was church affiliated and sold policies with the sales-pitch that, not only were you protecting your family, but a large percentage of the profits of the company would go into the coffers of your particular church body. It sounded like good stewardship to be helping yourself and your church at the same time."¹ Since the AAL at that time was made up of only Synodical Conference Lutherans, it was viewed as almost an arm of the church. Only a member in good standing of a Synodical Conference church could obtain their insurance. There was no fellowship or unionism problems.

But this situation all changed after the breakup of the Synodical Conference. Naturally there was concern about what would happen to AAL and its insurance policies, now that there

was no longer a Synodical Conference. Men in the CLC (and other church bodies) began to question how they could remain in a fraternal organization when there was no true union in faith. It was understood by the CLC that the AAL was going to change its structure so that the profits would be distributed on a percentage basis to the various church bodies, Gullenud states, "With the break-up of the Synodical Conference, we were told that the structure of this fraternal life insurance company (i.e. AAL) was going to be altered and that an equal and fair distribution of profits would be given to the CLC, so that actually we were not, as voting members of the AAL, contributing to anybody but ourselves. There were even those who even made a trip to the central office of AAL in Appleton, Wisconsin, to find out more about the spiritual involvement of those who held policies and voting membership. No direct answers were forthcoming to allay our fears."²

The members of the CLC still for the most part continued their membership in AAL at the point. The issue was too confused for individual pastors or the church body to speak definitively for or against continuing carrying insurance policies from AAL. It was not clear at this time what form AAL was going to take, so CLC members of the Aid Association for Lutherans waited until the picture was clearer.

The AAL was also in a state of flux after the break-up of the Synodical Conference. In fact, there was even some doubt concerning AAL's continued existence. After 1962-1963, the membership requirements for AAL were changed. Previous to this

time only members in good standing of synods making up the Synodical Conference were eligible to join. After 1962-1963, membership requirements were changed to "members in good standing of congregations belonging to synods formerly belonging to the Synodical Conference."³ But the AAL Board of Directors was not satisfied with just former Synodical Conference members, but wanted to expand to the other Lutheran bodies in America. Pastor Gullepud gives a CCL observation about this crucial time period from 1963-1966. "It was no secret that the directorship and management of AAL were actively working in the direction of the ecumenical movement, especially as it concerned the major and large Lutheran church bodies. More and more the 'AAL Correspondent' (AAL's official paper), featured articles by leading liberal Lutherans from the LC-MS, ALC and LCA. Its series of 'Men on a Mission' profiles and lauded the work of false teachers and church leaders. So it came as no surprise that on January 1, 1966, the new policy was this: 'There's no change in principle or organization, but as of Jan. 1, 1966, Lutherans who are members in good standing of congregations of the American Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Church in America also are eligible (SIC) for membership in AAL."⁴ When you compare the AAL's goals and principles with its enlarged membership, it is easy to see why the CLC came to the conclusion that the AAL was an unionsitic organization with which it could have nothing to do. AAL states its goals and principles in the following manner, "To conceive and implement action giving membership expression to spiritual and material values of life as best befits an organization of

Christians drawn together through the bonds of the Lutheran faith."⁵

Debate and discussion concerning AAL came to the forefront in the fall of 1965. The faculty at the CLC's worker-training school, Immanuel Lutheran College, in Eau Claire, WI, made a study concerning AAL's program and work. This study was necessitated because of a number of eligible students were applying for AAL scholarships. The faculty became involved because the applications required the approval of the respective department heads of the college. The discussion was conducted under the leadership of Professor Edmund Reim. The discussion led to the following resolution: "From the foregoing (discussion) it should be clear that

- 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 which 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."⁶

These resolutions^{were} approved subsequently by the Board of Regents of Immanuel Lutheran College and by the President of the CLC, President Robert Reim.

The historical record becomes somewhat sketchy at this point. There seems to have been a few scattered areas of protest against fraternal insurance companies. But synod-wide, there was no action by the praesidium or by key officials at Immanuel Lutheran College.

This situation changed quickly in the spring of 1971. Certain members (not specified by name in my sources) of Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church in Spring, Texas, became aware of the fact that the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College refused to endorse AAL scholarship applications.. This refusal caused these members to question their holding of policies in AAL themselves. A study of the AAL and its practices was initiated by the church council on June 11, 1971. After Scripture study and a number of meetings the church council came to the following conclusion:

"Whereas, the work that AAL is doing in its program is church work, i.e., joint church work with such as are not united in the confession of their faith, hence unionistic in character; Therefore it is obvious that the Word condemns membership in and/or support of AAL.

That, since membership in AAL is shown to be wrong from God's Word, nothing more can be added. References: Eph 5:11-12; II Cor 6:14-18; Mt 18:19; Mt 7:15; I Tim 6:3-5; I John 4:1; Romans 16:17-18; Eph 5:8-11."⁷

The church council at Bethel, recommended at the congregations next quarterly meeting that a resolution be passed discouraging membership in AAL. On July 18, 1971, Bethel's voters assembly passed the following resolution unanimously; "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."⁸

This decision by Bethel congregation set into action a rapid series of events. The pastor of Bethel brought its decision to the knowledge of the Wisconsin Pastoral Conference. They studied the resolution and background discussion and concurred with the resolution of Bethel congregation. The Wisconsin Pastoral Conference then asked that a study of the AAL take place at the upcoming General Pastoral Conference in April of 1972. President Robert Reim added a study of the AAL to the agenda. Professor Gordon Radtke of Immanuel Lutheran College presented a study of the AAL, in which he showed to the satisfaction of the CLC pastors that the AAL was an unionistic organization. President Reim, having been approached by a number of pastors, asked, that an essay on the AAL be prepared for the CLC Synod Convention on July 11-14, 1972. These pastors asked for this essay so that they could present the findings to the lay people for their approval. Several pastors asked for this essay so that they all would be able to speak the same language and to avoid causing divisions among the CLC ministerium.

At the tenth convention of the CLC, Pastor Arvid Gullerud of Sepulveda, California presented an ~~essay~~ on fraternal insurance companies. He was asked to speak to the convention by President Reim after the General Pastoral Conference. He entitled his essay, "Why a Study of the Fraternal Life Insurance Organization, Aid Association for Lutherans?" In this essay Pastor Gullerud

traced the history of the debate in the CLC about the AAL. He also pointed out how the AAL functions in the local branches. He came to the same conclusion as the two pastoral conferences. He then strongly urged that the members of the CLC disentangle themselves as quickly as possible from this ^{involvement} with the AAL. CLC pastors and delegates were urged to remove the "unionistic leaven" as quickly as possible, but in an evangelical manner.⁹

I feel that the proceedings of the subsequent synodical conventions of the CLC will shed a great deal of light on the application of these principles. No mention of fraternal life insurance companies was made until the convention in 1976. Prior to this convention, in October 1975, President Reim received an invitation from Lutheran Brotherhood to participate in a study. This study was aimed at the improvement of Lutheran Brotherhood's aid to Lutheran churches. President Reim declined for the CLC, citing the objections of the CLC to unionistic fraternal life insurance companies. This action was applauded by the Doctrine Committee of the 1976 convention. They furthermore urged greater diligence in purging out the unionistic leaven by congregations. The resolution reads as follows:

Whereas fraternal insurance companies such as Aid Association for Lutherans, Lutheran Brotherhood, and other similar fraternal insurance companies with religious overtones credit each member with having a hand in their activities, which include the promoting of error and support of false teachers.

Therefore be it resolved that we wholeheartedly concur in the action of the President regarding the Lutheran Brotherhood invitation and fully support the answer given by him concerning the religious unionism involved.

Furthermore, be it resolved that we encourage the constituents of the CLC study the matter of involvement in unionistic fraternal insurance companies on the basis of God's Word, and in an evangelical manner seek to eliminate from our midst this unionistic leaven, so that by God's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus we all act in accordance

to God's Word and speak the same thing."¹⁰

With ever great frequency, articles began to appear in the Lutheran Spokesman during the next biennium condemning membership in the AAL. People were urged to get rid of their AAL insurance policies. Congregations were urged to educate members about the unionistic leaven of the AAL, and then to deal with those members who still held AAL policies.

The issue really began heating up at the 1978 Convention of the CLC. Two memorials were made to the convention to immediately deal with the unionistic leaven of the fraternal life insurance companies. I will summarize the two memorials. (For the full memorials please see the attached 13th Convention Proceedings, 1978, The pages dealing with the AAL have been reproduced.)

Memorial #1 was made by Pastor Gilbert, Sydow of Faith, New Ulm. He stated that the memorial to the 1976 did not go far enough. He thought it was imprecise and allowed for differences in teaching and practice in the CLC. He urged that specific actions be made to remove the unionistic leaven from the CLC.

Memorial #2 was proposed by Pastor Norman Gurath of Luther Memorial Church, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In this memorial he urged the CLC to deal with members who still belonged to the AAL immediately. He accused the CLC of acting like the WELS. He felt that the CLC was dealing with members who held AAL policies as "weak brethren," rather as "persistent errorists." He then urged the convention to resolve to "follow the clear Word of God and eliminate from its midst all members who persist in holding membership in any self-identified unscriptural fraternal

church organization. 'Scripture points the way when it tells us to purge out theleaven.'"11

But the CLC's action was having an effect in its congregations already. It was reported that St. Paul's Congregation, Green Garden, Michigan withdrew from the CLC in a dispute over fraternal life insurance. The congregation was split and some CLC members joined the Calvary-Good Shepard parish in Marquette, Michigan.

The withdrawl of St. Paul's Congregation was just the beginning of trouble for the CLC pertaining to the AAL. The 1980 Convention Proceedings urged the congregations to make a study of the AAL and eliminate it from their midst. The convention proceedings state that this will take time and should go ahead in an evangelical manner. This resolution was the last straw for some members of the CLC who felt the the CLC was proceeding too slowly in dealing with AAL members.

On Nov. 9, 1981 Pastor Gilbert Sydow (who memorialized the CLC Convention in 1978) withdrew from the CLC. St. Peter's, Rochester, where Pastor Sydow was vacancy pastor, took the same action on Nov. 10, 1981. Two weeks later Faith, Sanborn, Minn. and Pastor Marvin Eibs also withdrew from the CLC. These actions were reported in the February 1982 issue of The Lutheran Spokesman in the following manner: "St. Peter's congregation of Rochester, Minnesota, and its pastor, the Rev. Gilbert Sydow, and Faith congregation of Sanborn, Minnesota, and its pastor, the Rev. Marvin Eibs, have withdrawn from membership in the Church of the Lutheran Confession because they disagree with the judgment offered by the praesidium concerning the evangelical manner to

be used in counseling members who are involved with fraternal insurance companies."¹²

On the other side of the issue, other pastors and congregations took action in response to the 1978 and the 1980 CLC conventions. On May 23, 1981, Pastor Leonard Berthal and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Missoula, Mt., terminated their membership in the CLC. They stated that they could see how an insurance company could be termed as "unionistic" or how the CLC could say it was not "in fellowship" with the AAL. The pastor and church agreed that parts of AAL's work was unionistic, but did not agree that the AAL itself was unionistic.

The 1984 Convention Proceedings also speak of the problems with the AAL. It seems to have become an issue what proper evangelical practice concerning the AAL should be. The highlights of the discussion center on these two paragraphs:

"Given the clarity with which we have spoken in previous convention resolutions, we believe that we need no longer consume convention time discussing the nature of AAL/LB or the appropriate response to it. However, our responsibility remains. It remains for each pastor and congregation to carry out the intent of our resolutions faithfully and without flagging. Each of us has a responsibility to the people we serve, to the colleague, and to the CLC at large, to address the matter of unionistic societies, particularly as it becomes apparent that there may still be people involved. Certainly there will be no one who will disagree, for none of us is willing to compromise the Truth of our God, of the confessional steadfastness that has been a mark of our church since its inception. On one hand, it behooves us as brethren to be faithful in our efforts in this area so that the Word of God is not violated and that our fellowship may be preserved as we have known and enjoyed it.

On the other hand, it behooves us all to assume that each brother is acting faithfully according to Scriptural principles, and the resolutions of our past conventions. We all must be on guard against passing judgements on

anyone based on hearsay and rumor."¹³

At the 1984 convention, two more pastors and one Christian day school teacher resigned. They felt that the CLC was infested with a spirit of legalism. Pastor Fred Archer, for example, cited the 1978 convention resolution on the fraternal insurance companies as the basis for his decision.

As you can see from this paper, that the issue of the fraternal insurance companies is a hotly contested issue in the CLC. Pastors and congregations have left the CLC over this issue. The CLC has been involved with this question now for almost twenty-five years. With the recent discussion between representatives of the CLC and the WELS regarding merger this matter will need to be discussed. From the research I have done I feel that this issue may continue to separate the CLC and the WELS, even if the question of fellowship is settled.

ENDNOTES

¹Gullerud, p. 2

²Gullerud, p. 2

³AAL Bylaws

⁴Gullerud, p. 3

⁵AAL V. 63, #447

⁶ILC Faculty Meeting Minutes, 11/29/65

⁷Bethel Church Council Minutes

⁸Bethel Voter's Assembly Minutes, 7/18/71

⁹Gullerud, p.6

¹⁰1976 Convention Proceedings, p. 26

¹¹1978 Convention Proceedings, p. 41

¹²Lutheran Spokesman, 2/82

¹³1984 Convention Proceedings, p. 15

Bibliography

Convention Proceedings of the Church of the Lutheran Confession,
1972-1984.

Gullerud, Pastor Arvid, Why a Study of the Fraternal Life Insurance Organization, Aid Association for Lutherans?, essay,
1976.

in Mankato in January of 1975. It became evident that there was a divided opinion among the brethren over this matter. Therefore Professor Kuehne was asked to present an essay on the same subject at the Okabena pastoral conference in July of 1975. Professor Kuehne was asked to continue his study. He did and prepared a set of propositions on marriage and polygamy which were sent to all pastors, teachers, and delegates prior to this convention. Comments on these propositions were requested. These propositions, together with the comments received, will be turned over to the Floor Committee on Doctrine.

Fraternal Life Insurance

An essay was delivered at our 1972 convention entitled "Why A Study Of The Fraternal Life Insurance Organization--Aid Association for Lutherans?" Considerable discussion followed. The unionistic character of the Aid Association for Lutherans has been studied in conferences since then and brought to the attention of our people through the pages of our Lutheran Spokesman.

In October of 1975 Lutheran Brotherhood, also a fraternal life insurance organization, invited representatives of our Church of the Lutheran Confession to participate in a study aimed at improving their program of financial assistance to the Lutheran Church. The president declined their invitation and explained our objections to unionistic fraternal life insurance organizations. The correspondence will be in the hands of the Floor Committee on Doctrine.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Immanuel Lutheran College

The new dormitory in which many of our delegates are housed is a very substantial and attractive building. It was authorized by the 1974 convention at a cost not to exceed \$160,000. The basement of the new building was designated as the future kitchen-dining area for the student body. When the Building Committee studied the combination of a dormitory with dining facilities in the basement, it found this arrangement unsuitable. Urged by the Building Committee and the Coordinating Council to make the kitchen-dining facilities a part of a future phase of our Immanuel Lutheran College expansion program and to use the dormitory basement for other much-needed purposes, the president notified all congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession that he would so direct the Building Committee if there were no strenuous objections from our Church of the Lutheran Confession membership. The results were favorable and the building was constructed as it now stands before us.

The cost exceeded the limits set by the convention, chiefly because inflation upset our economy so badly before the money could be collected and the dormitory constructed. When bids were opened, the most acceptable bid was \$215,000. Even at this figure, some items that the Building Committee felt were essential had to be eliminated. In order to proceed with the project at this high figure, the Coordinating Council met in Okabena on July 9, 1975, and authorized the Building Committee to proceed with the program. The Coordinating Council also decided that we should strive to pay for the building by the time of its dedication. The Building Committee was also urged to continue with the planning of the next phase of our Immanuel Lutheran College expansion program.

The Building Committee and the Publicity Committee did their work well and the response of our members toward this project has been most remarkable. Although the actual cost of the building reached \$223,985.79, our members gave gifts almost

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Church Fellowship. Whether there will be occasion or valid reason for further meetings we leave in the hands of the Lord for whose guidance we pray.

C. M. Gullerud, Chairman

REPORT OF COMMITTEE #1: DOCTRINE

I. Other Church Bodies

Concerning other church bodies we are always ready to give testimony regarding our faith and doctrinal position, in meekness and reverence toward God's Holy Word. (I Peter 3:15)

II. Fraternal Life Insurance

Whereas fraternal insurance companies such as Aid Association for Lutheran Lutheran Brotherhood, and other similar fraternal insurance companies with religious overtones credit each member with having a hand in their activities, which include the promoting of error and support of false teachers,

Therefore be it resolved that we wholeheartedly concur in the action of the President regarding the Lutheran Brotherhood invitation and fully support the answer given by him concerning the religious unionism involved.

Furthermore, be it resolved that we encourage the constituents of the CLC study the matter of involvement in unionistic fraternal insurance companies on the basis of God's Word, and in an evangelical manner seek to eliminate from our midst this unionistic leaven, so that by God's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus we all ^{act} in accordance with God's Word and speak the same thing.

III. The Third Use of the Law

The Floor Committee on Doctrine, through both internal and open discussion evaluated the Three Points of Agreement regarding the third use of the law as set down at the Midway Motor Lodge meeting, held February 23 and 24, 1976; namely:

1. The law, which instructs us as to what works are God-pleasing, in no way whatever is a power or force for the doing of those works.
2. The law in its third use instructs the Christian, because of his flesh as to what works are truly pleasing to the Lord, while simultaneously reproving the Christian for failing to do those works.
3. In all areas of discussion the monergism of grace by the power of the Holy Spirit was upheld in both the doctrines of justification and sanctification.

Whereas all three points are correct on the basis of Scripture, and

Whereas no points of controversy were raised that were not covered by the three points,

Therefore be it resolved that these three points are a settlement of the matters in controversy and that they constitute our rejection of all prior statements made in the course of the controversy in any way contradictory to the truth expressed in them.

And be it further resolved that we join in praising and thanking the Lord

to enter into fellowship discussions with them; the other, from the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, dated April 19, 1978, to participate in their CAL FOR LUTHERAN UNION. The same invitations sent to us were also addressed to all other Lutheran church bodies.

Your president declined the invitation from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in behalf of our Church of the Lutheran Confession. He did so because the unorthodox practices of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod prior to our leaving the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod have still not been corrected. Other errors in doctrine and practice have since permeated the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as the publicity they received in recent years showed, as their 1977 Proceedings reveal, e.g., having women serve as voting delegates at their convention. Since the invitation we received was also sent to all other Lutheran church bodies, and since we are not in fellowship with any of them, this procedure for establishing fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod seemed unwise. The invitation was therefore respectfully declined.

The invitation from the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches came recently. Receipt of it was acknowledged, but no answer given. The convention of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches is made up of congregations that protested the conservative trend that have become evident within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in recent years.

All correspondence with these church bodies will be given into the hands of the Committee on Doctrine.

Fraternal Life Insurance

Religious unionism, which forced us out of our former synodical fellowships, troubles us today in the form of a fraternalism sponsored by certain insurance companies, such as the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood. Many of us held policies with the Aid Association for Lutherans before it became objectionable from a unionistic standpoint. The Aid Association for Lutherans, which formerly served only Synodical Conference members, changed its program to serve all Lutherans. Since we are Scripturally separated from all Lutherans who are not members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, we do not wish to be united in a fraternal organization with them, or through it support any of their doctrinal errors. Holding policies with either of the above fraternal insurance companies forces us to violate this principle of separation. The only option open to us is to cash in our policies and disassociate ourselves from those companies.

When our convention dealt with this matter in 1976, it resolved that the members of our Church of the Lutheran Confession should study the matter of involvement in unionistic fraternal insurance companies on the basis of God's Word, and in an evangelical manner eliminate from our midst this unionistic leaven, so that by God's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus we all act in accordance with God's Word and speak the same thing. Many of our members have studied the matter and have disassociated themselves from the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood. We take heart for granted that those who still hold policies with either of these fraternal insurance companies are making the same study and will soon do the same. A house divided against itself cannot stand. We cannot consistently and with good conscience be members of a church body that upholds the Truth and at the same time undermine the Truth through the support of error in false teaching church bodies through unionistic fraternalism. Two memorials have come to this convention concerning this unionistic leaven. They remind us of our resolution of 1976, to eliminate it from our midst.

Our Church of the Lutheran Confession Pastoral Conference, which met July 12-14, 1977, reaffirmed the action taken by our 1976 convention and directed the president to send a copy of our 1976 convention report concerning fraternal life insurance companies to the president of the Aid Association for Lutherans. He did so on July 21, 1977. A reply was received from Mr. Henry Scheig, Aid Association for Lutherans president, dated November 15, 1977, in which he explained the legal requirements incumbent upon their company, and his regret that the leadership of the Church of the Lutheran Confession found the benefits of the Aid Association for Lutherans unacceptable.

A letter was received from Lutheran Brotherhood dated March 21, 1978, inviting us to join other Lutheran church bodies in a "Colloquium on the Congregation in Future Society." This was to be held in April of this year as a follow-up to their Advisory Consultation Program to which we were invited in October, 1975. That 1975 invitation was declined by us because of the unionism involved. This more recent invitation was also declined for the same reason.

St. Paul's Congregation, Green Garden, Michigan, withdrew from our Church of the Lutheran Confession in a dispute over fraternal life insurance. Those members who upheld the Scriptural teaching reorganized as Good Shepherd Congregation and have applied for membership with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Their pastor, the Reverend Jonathan Schaller, resigned after the congregation was established to make way for the congregation to become a part of the Calvary-Good Shepherd parish of Marquette.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Immanuel Lutheran College

The committees assigned to study the needs and priorities of expansion at Immanuel Lutheran College and the implications of further building on the present campus, as it relates to the possible separation of the high school from the college and seminary, brought their reports to the October 1977 Coordinating Council as directed. Their recommendation is that "in keeping with the best stewardship of both physical means and of our available manpower that we plan our expansion (building) program for the future on our present single campus at Eau Claire," and "we strongly believe it essential that a new boys' dormitory be built." On the basis of these findings the Coordinating Council authorized the president to appoint a committee to present plans, site and costs for a new men's dormitory. He asked the Building Committee that had functioned so well in the construction of the women's dormitory to serve again in preparing plans for a men's dormitory. This committee has met and prepared plans, costs, and is ready to suggest a site for the building of a men's dormitory. A publicity committee has also been appointed which has drawn up sketches for a poster and special offering envelopes. Everything is ready, should the Lord lead us to go ahead immediately with the construction of this much-needed building.

Two significant changes have taken place in our Immanuel Lutheran College faculty. Mr. Robert Rehm has been led by the Lord to accept the call to serve as professor in the education department, for which we are grateful. Professor C. M. Gullerud, who has served eight two-year terms as president of our school, has asked to be relieved of this responsible position. He will continue to teach as heretofore, but a new president will be chosen by the Call Committee for Educational

adopted at the 1976 convention, should be expanded to include areas that were not covered, and to further clarify the 1976 resolutions, so that they would be a more precise statement on the Third Use of the Law;

Therefore be it resolved that a special floor committee be appointed to study this matter and bring its recommendations to the convention.

St. Peter's Lutheran Congregation
Stambaugh, Michigan
Martin Heisel, President
Russell Spencer, Recording Secretary
E. H. Rutz, Secretary Pro Tem

B. Re Aid Association for Lutherans, Lutheran Brotherhood, Fraternal Organizations

1. 1. The Problem

Whereas the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) has declared itself in opposition to fraternal benefit societies that function as do the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and the Lutheran Brotherhood (LB); and

Whereas this is expressed in the 1976 convention resolution as follows: "Furthermore, be it resolved that we encourage constituents of the CLC to study the matter of involvement in unionistic fraternal insurance companies on the basis of God's Word, and in an evangelical manner eliminate from our midst this unionistic leaven, so that by God's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus we all act in accordance with God's Word and speak the same thing."; and

Whereas this resolution is lacking in precise definition and allows for contradictory teaching and practice in our midst (this is already evident) such as:

1. We would like to have you withdraw your membership in fraternal benefit societies, but the decision is yours depending on your spiritual maturity, and our fellowship-membership relationship remains unaffected.
2. We would like to have you withdraw your membership in fraternal benefit societies; that is a congregational membership requirement and our fellowship is involved; and

Whereas this resolution does not define how we are to "act in accordance with God's Word"; and

Whereas this resolution does not assure that we all "speak the same thing"; and

Whereas our confessional honesty and integrity is at stake. (If with our "lodge clause" we mean: "We would prefer that you do not belong to organizations that conflict with the Word of God, but the choice is yours," then let us openly say so. Or if with our fraternal benefit resolution we have an unstated reservation and mean: "Although we find certain fraternal benefit societies to be organizations in conflict with the Word of God, yet, because of extenuating circumstances, we do not consider them to come under the "lodge clause" of our congregational constitutions," then again we should openly say so.);

Therefore be it resolved that this convention define itself more exactly as to the teaching and practice the CLC is to follow in dealing with membership in fraternal benefit societies that function as do the AAL and LB.

II. The Solution

Whereas the words "eliminate from our midst this unionistic leaven" could not be said except it were true that certain fraternal benefit societies (AAL, LB) are operating with principles and practices that conflict with the Word of God; and

Whereas it is a requirement of the CLC that all congregational constitutions have this membership qualification: "9. hold no membership in secret orders or other organizations conflicting with the Word of God (Romans 16:17-18)." (model constitution, latest edition);

Therefore be it resolved that we formally and officially declare that what we in reality have already confessed together in these statements, with their implication for fellowship-membership in our congregations, be the teaching and practice to be followed in our CLC congregations.

G. Sydow

2. Whereas membership in a LODGE, AAL, or any unscriptural fraternal organization is a sin according to Scripture (Eph. 5:11-12) "Don't have anything to do with the works of darkness, from which no good can come. Instead show that they are wrong." (12) - "We're ashamed even to mention what such people do secretly." (Matt. 7:15) "Beware of false prophets. They come to you dressed like sheep, but in their hearts they're greedy wolves." (1 John 4:1) "Dear friends, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God. Many false prophets have gone out into the world." (Romans 16:17-18) "Now I beseech you brethren, MARK them....; and avoid them." For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;....." (1 Tim. 6:3-5) - (11 Cor. 6:14-18) - (Matt. 18:19).

Whereas the official statement adopted at the 1976 CLC convention..... (Proceedings 1976 p. 26) "Is not adequate."

Whereas "More definition is needed" because "it could allow for a possible variety of actions in our midst, which would be confusing to our people and detrimental to our public confessional image."

Whereas the official statement could allow for members to continue as members of an unscriptural fraternal organization (AAL - Lutheran Brotherhood - etc.).

Whereas the impression is given that we are dealing with "weak brethren" and not "persistent errorists."

Whereas the 1976 official statement does not "come to grips with the issue."

Whereas all unscriptural fraternal organizations identify themselves as false teaching organizations on the doctrine of CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, "promulgating this error in the name of Christianity in a manner more flagrant and blatant than WELS ever did."

Whereas it is a contradiction that our people hold membership both in the CLC and other self-styled CHURCH organizations; and

Whereas "We are making ourselves guilty of the same error for which we ought WELS;"

Therefore be it resolved that the CLC in convention follow the clear WORD OF GOD and eliminate from its midst all members who persist in holding membership in any self-identified unscriptural fraternal CHURCH organization. "Scripture directs the way when it tells us to purge out the leaven."

Norman A. Gurath

REPORT OF COMMITTEE #1: DOCTRINE

We acknowledge with thanksgiving to God the endeavor of the President and Board of Doctrine in their unwavering confession and defense of the Truth of Scripture as they carried out their duties during the past biennium.

I. The Three Points of Agreement

Whereas the President's Message and Report affirms that the following Three Points of Agreement, adopted at the 1976 convention, stand as a settlement of the controversy over the Third Use of the Law:

1. The law, which instructs us as to what works are God-pleasing, in no way whatever is a power or force for the doing of those works.
2. The law in its third use instructs the Christian, because of his flesh, as to what works are truly pleasing to the Lord, while simultaneously reproving the Christian for failing to do those works.
3. In all areas of discussion the monergism of grace by the power of the Holy Spirit was upheld in both the doctrines of justification and sanctification; and

Whereas questions have been raised about the meaning of certain terminology in these statements;

Therefore be it resolved that, while the use of the term "law" in points one and two is Scriptural and in accord with the usage of our Lutheran Confessions, it is to be understood in the sense of "the immutable will of God, according to which men are to conduct themselves in their lives." See Formula of Concord, Article VI, Thorough Declaration, section 15:

"But in order that, as far as possible, all misunderstanding may be prevented, and the distinction between the works of the Law and those of the Spirit be properly taught and preserved, it is to be noted with especial diligence that when we speak of good works which are in accordance with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works), then the word Law has only one sense, namely, the immutable will of God, according to which men are to conduct themselves in their lives."

sider the advisability of recommending that Part II be turned over to the Pastoral Conference for further study.

Fraternal Benefit Societies

Despite our previous correspondence with the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood, in which we informed them that we find their makeup and programs scripturally objectionable because of the unionism they promote, both of these companies have continued to invite us to participate in their activities. In April, 1979, the AAL offered us \$3,000 to be used toward planning a meaningful celebration of the anniversaries of the Augsburg Confession and of the Book of Concord. We respectfully declined their offer. In May, 1979, the AAL invited us to participate in a demographic and attitudinal *Study of Lutherans*, but presumed that we would not participate. If we chose not to participate, they said no response would be needed from us. No response was given. In March, 1980, Lutheran Brotherhood offered us \$1,367 to support the enhancement of theological education in the CLC, offering to match that commitment in each of the next two years. We respectfully declined their offer. The correspondence will be placed into the hands of the appropriate committee.

Since 1972 the matter of unionistic fraternal benefit societies has been before our church body in convention. The unionistic character of these organizations has been considered in our conferences and brought to the attention of our people through the *Lutheran Spokesman*. In 1976 it was resolved that all members of our CLC should study the matter of involvement in AAL or Lutheran Brotherhood on the basis of God's Word, and in an evangelical manner eliminate this unionistic leaven from our midst. Again at our last convention it was decided that we in obedience to instruction and admonition in the Word of God, "In an evangelical manner eliminate the leaven of unionistic fraternal benefit societies from our midst."

The process of leading all of our members out of these unionistic fraternal organizations, especially those who are weak Christians, may take more than the four years that have now passed. If pastors and Church Councils are instructing those still involved in the need for coming out and being separate, let us encourage and uphold their every effort. If pastors and Church Councils are doing nothing to remedy this problem, let them be admonished and informed that the problem will not go away by itself. Many of our members who formerly held policies with AAL or Lutheran Brotherhood quietly disposed of them. We commend them for taking the initiative to voluntarily remove themselves from the unionism that the Lord forbids.

Let us all be firm, yet patient in resolving this problem. It will be resolved. In larger congregations the time will take longer, as we all know. But let us all be at the work. Let our efforts reflect the confession we all make of Him who is the true Christ.

LCUSA Meetings

During the first three months of 1979 we sent an observer to meetings of the Lutheran Council in the USA which were held at Alexandria, Virginia. We did so with some reluctance, since that group is made up of Lutheran synods with whom we are not in fellowship. Since the Aid Association for Lutherans was sponsoring sixty per cent of the cost of the meetings, we made it clear to LCUSA in advance that we are not in fellowship with them and that we would pay all of our own expenses. Our desire was merely to observe. Since the subject matter of their meetings dealt with recent government regulations on church sponsored education, we felt that having a knowledge of what others are experiencing in this area of church life could be beneficial to us without involving ourselves in their activities. Pastor Paul Nolting was asked to represent us as our observer, since he lived near the site of the meetings. His report was published in the April 25-26 1979 report of the C

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followed in dealing with repentant or unrepentant polygamists.

- D. That we urge the members of the Board of Missions and others who may be involved in giving advice on this issue in the future to acquire as much information and insight into the problem as possible and to give the best answers they can in the light of God's Word and in agreement with what has been adopted by the CLC on these matters.

Fraternal Benefit Societies

Our church body continues to be involved with the problem of fraternal benefit societies. During the biennium three congregations and their pastors withdrew from our fellowship over this matter. Pastor Leonard Bernthal and the members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Missoula, MT, terminated their membership on May 23, 1981, since they could not accept the fact that insurance companies could be "unionistic" and that the CLC could say that it is not "in fellowship" with these companies. They consider this to be imprecise language. They would agree to say that some part of the AAL program is unionistic in character, but that this is not the same thing as saying the AAL organization itself is unionistic.

On November 9, 1981, Pastor Gilbert Sydow declared his withdrawal from the CLC; and the next day, St. Peter's congregation at Rochester, which he was serving as vacancy pastor, did the same.

On November 24, 1981, Faith congregation of Sanborn, MN, and its pastor, the Rev. Marvin Eibs, suspended their fellowship with the CLC.

The February, 1982, issue of The Lutheran Spokesman carried the following notice concerning their withdrawals:

"St. Peter's congregation of Rochester, Minnesota, and its pastor, the Rev. Gilbert Sydow, and Faith congregation of Sanborn, Minnesota, and its pastor, the Rev. Marvin Eibs, have withdrawn from membership in the Church of the Lutheran Confession because they disagree with the judgment offered by the praesidium concerning the evangelical manner to be used in counseling members who are involved with fraternal insurance membership."

The pertinent documents will be given into the hands of the Floor Committee on Doctrine.

(A meeting of the officers of the CLC with Pastors Sydow and Eibs was held on July 8, 1982, in an effort to restore unity between us. The effort was unsuccessful. A report of that meeting is included in the Proceedings in connection with the report of the Board of Doctrine, presented as information.)

Mehltretter Case

The call of Robert Mehltretter as a teacher in Immanuel Lutheran High School Mankato, was terminated by the congregation on November 11, 1980. Mr. Mehltretter appealed this action according to By-Law 6 of the CLC Constitution. A Commission of Review consisting of two pastors and one layman chosen by the Minnesota Conference visitor studied the documents involved in the case and issued their report on February 25, 1981. Mr. Mehltretter reacted favorably to the report. Immanuel congregation felt compelled to file an appeal to the commission report on July 13, 1981. A second Commission of Review was therefore chosen by the visitors of the West Central and Pacific Coast conferences according to By-Law 6, D, of the Constitution which says: "In the event that either party is not satisfied that the case has been dealt with in a just and scriptural manner by the commission of review, a

REPORT OF COMMITTEE #1: DOCTRINEConcerning Withdrawals from the CLC

We note with regret the withdrawal of three pastors and three congregations from the CLC over the matter of fraternal benefit societies (Cf. President's Report under "Fraternal Benefit Societies").

In response to the reason for withdrawal cited by Pastor Leonard Bernthal and the members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Missoula, Montana, namely, that they could not accept the fact that insurance companies could be "unionistic" and that the CLC could say that it is not "in fellowship" with these companies, considering such expressions to be imprecise, we wish to state the following: We believe that our convention resolutions of 1976 (Proceedings, p. 26) and 1978 (Proceedings, pp. 46-47) are sufficiently precise in speaking of fraternal benefit societies as unionistic and warning against having fellowship with them. These societies are involved in religious, church-related activities as an integral part of their organizational purpose, and they do this without the doctrinal agreement that is required for God-pleasing endeavors in the Lord's Kingdom. This, by definition, constitutes the sin of unionism.

With regard to the withdrawals of Pastor Gilbert Sydow, St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Rochester, Minnesota, Pastor Marvin Eibs, and Faith Lutheran Church of Sanborn, Minnesota, "because they disagree with the judgment offered by the praesidium concerning the evangelical manner to be used in counseling members who are involved with fraternal insurance membership" (Cf. President's Report), we wish to point out the following: It is false to assume that the official statements of the president become automatically the confessional position of the church body. The Constitution of the CLC (Article V, B, 1, a) and the right of petition by memorial provide opportunity at each convention for a review of and reaction to all of the actions of the praesidium during the preceding biennium. We regret that these former brethren did not avail themselves of these procedures, which are designed to uphold the confessional integrity of the church body and to promote good order and Christian love among the brethren.

Response to the Memorial from the Pastor and Two Laymen of Bethel, Spring, Texas

It is not the role of a church body to specify how cases of casuistry in the individual congregations are to be handled. Yet it is also true that the confessional unity of a church body can be disrupted if individual congregations and their pastors fail to follow Scriptural procedures in dealing with erring members. The memorial addressed to the convention by the pastor and two members of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spring, Texas, raises a question about the role of suspension from communion in dealing with a member who is continuing in some sinful activity. In reply we present the following Scriptural principles:

1) When a member of a Christian congregation is involved in a manifest, sinful practice that is in violation of the Words of Scripture, which are expressed in the public confessional position of the church, the pastor and congregation will, of course, impart to him the information, instruction, and admonition needed to bring him to repentance and rescue him from his error (Galatians 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.").

2) Inasmuch as the sin of this person involves an open contradiction of the church's confession, his participation in the Lord's Supper does come into question. For communing together is an eminent manifestation of confessional unity (I Corinthians 10:16-21 - "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of

the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." I Corinthians 11:26 - "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.").

3) It must be recognized, moreover, that the responsibility of the pastor and congregation extends beyond the spiritual welfare of this individual. (Acts 20:28 - "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Ephesians 4:3 - "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.") Inasmuch as his sin involves an open contradiction of the confessional position of the church, this sin carries with it the danger of causing offense and division within the flock and in the larger fellowship as well. Suspension from communion, when it is applied, not only reminds the individual of the danger of unworthy reception of the sacrament (I Cor. 11:27) and of the confessional breach involved in his continuing in this sinful practice, but also makes clear to any others who know of his sin that attempts are being made by the pastor and congregation to resolve the matter.

NOTE: The term "suspension from communion," as used above, is not to be identified with either excommunication or termination of membership effected by the congregation. It is, rather, an action effected by the pastor in his spiritual concern for the individual and the flock.

Response to Mehlretter Memorial

The memorial of Mr. Robert Mehlretter requests that the following statements from the "Report of the Visitors and Officers" (Jan., 1982) be repudiated by the convention as not in agreement with the Word of God:

- "I. We reaffirm that communing together is an expression of fellowship.
 - A. Holding an AAL/LB policy does not, in itself, automatically make the policy holder ineligible for communion.
 - B. The pastor will have to make the decision if a policy holder is to be suspended from communion because of a break in the basis for fellowship."

Our response is as follows:

- 1) We do not concur that the foregoing statements, in themselves, present a position contrary to Scripture and our public confession.
- 2) If anyone should teach that suspension from communion must be carried out automatically in cases of manifest sin, we would regard such teaching as a violation of the responsibility for individual soul care entrusted to the pastor in his call.
- 3) If anyone should construe these statements as implying that the pastor need not take the principles of church fellowship into account in exercising soul care, we would repudiate such a construction.

The memorial requests also that "the CLC gathered in convention ... follow the clear Word of God in dealing with members of AAL/LB, all of whom are, by virtue of membership, guilty of the sin of unionism." In response we reaffirm that the role of a church body is to enunciate Scriptural principle and not to deal in individual cases of casuistry within congregations. Our synodical position relative to fraternal benefit societies was clearly set forth in the conventions of 1976

16TH CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS 1984

An invitation was received from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to join in what is known as the "Lutheran Forum for Confessional Consultation." The purpose is described as an undertaking "to initiate a long-term process through which a consortium of Lutheran bodies may come to terms with contemporary doctrinal issues not treated in the Book of Concord of 1580." Churches from the USA, as well as overseas, have been invited. It is proposed that "each participating synod shall work within its own structure to produce confessional statements that serve its own interests and are acceptable to its own constituency. These statements will then be submitted to the other synods in the Forum for possible amendment and for eventual endorsement." Though invited, the CLC is not participating in the endeavor.

MARRIAGE AND POLYCAMY: With the adoption of the recommendation in 1982 of the Floor Committee on Doctrine (1982 Proc. p. 34) the matter of marriage and polygamy is no longer before us as such. However, the convention did express interest in "the report of the study assigned to the 1983 General Pastoral Conference entitled UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY WE INFER THAT A CERTAIN BEHAVIOR IS SINFUL?" Because of the press of other serious matters, and since the essayist desired to expand his work, the essay was not presented. It is on the agenda for the 1985 General Pastoral Conference.

FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES: As a confessional Lutheran church, the Church of the Lutheran Confession has expressed its conviction clearly regarding membership in unionistic fraternal benefit societies such as Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood. It has been our expressed intent to instruct our people faithfully so that by the Spirit of God they will be led to understanding, and to such strength that they will forsake such associations that involve them in unionistic endeavors.

Given the clarity with which we have spoken in previous convention resolutions, we believe that we need no longer consume convention time discussing the nature of AAL/LB or the appropriate response to it. However, our responsibility remains. It remains for each pastor and congregation to carry out the intent of our resolutions faithfully and without flagging. Each of us has a responsibility to the people we serve, to the colleague, and to the CLC at large, to address the matter of unionistic societies, particularly as it becomes apparent that there may still be people involved. Certainly there will be no one who will disagree, for none of us is willing to compromise the Truth of our God, or the confessional steadfastness that has been a mark of our church since its inception. On one hand, it behooves us as brethren to be faithful in our efforts in this area so that the Word of God is not violated and that our fellowship may be preserved as we have known and enjoyed it.

On the other hand, it behooves us all to assume that each brother is acting faithfully according to Scriptural principles, and the resolutions of our past conventions. We all must be on guard against passing judgments on anyone based on hearsay and rumor.

Of more recent concern, growing out of our vigilance and concern for purity of doctrine and practice, there has arisen the question as to what constitutes "evangelical practice." This concern, we believe, focuses on two areas:

1. How do we as faithful shepherds and congregations go about rescuing sheep committed to our care who have erred and become ensnared in the unionistic trap, or in some other sin (perhaps even unwittingly)? How do we imitate the patient, loving, soul-seeking example of our Savior in dealing with them while at the same time not becoming lax and indifferent over against the sin in which they are involved?
2. How shall our Christian brotherly love and concern manifest itself over against a brother or congregation concerning whose teaching and practice there appears to be reason for concern?

The answer to these questions, on the face of it, is obvious. We have already begun to address these questions. Yet the reality of difficult situations suggests that these questions should continue to be addressed and studied among us in a calm and brotherly fashion. Hopefully such study, important to the welfare of our Church and its witness, can be carried on apart from the charged atmosphere of some specific point of contention.

WITHDRAWAL - TERMINATION

Pastor Fred Archer withdrew his membership from the CLC, citing what he felt was evidence of a false spirit (legalism) among us of the CLC. In support of his conclusion and action he referred to the 1978 Convention resolution regarding fraternal benefit societies. Good Shepherd Church of Salisbury, NC which did not hold voting membership in the Church of the Lutheran Confession, but had stated confessional agreement with us, declared it is no longer in such agreement.

Pastor Martin Galstad and teacher Henry Hasse withdrew their membership from the Church of the Lutheran Confession, charging a spirit (legalism) in the Church of the Lutheran Confession with which they could not identify.

DENNE FEEL-THAT-IT-
 WAS-VERY-TOO-FAST
 TO-GET-TO-GETHER-
 WITH-THAT-CONFESSOR-
 RE: DENNE-TRUCK