

It is saddening that among those who are firmly united in a valid defense against the attacks of Satan on a specific issue there has arisen divisive dissension on how to carry out that defense against our common foe in the matter of discontinuing membership in the Aid Association for Lutherans and the Lutheran Brotherhood.

Without a dissenting vote the delegates of the 1976 CLC convention adopted this resolution: "Be it resolved that we encourage the 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." The delegates at subsequent CLC conventions in 1978, 1980, and 1982 have confirmed that assessment and the action called for in that resolution.

Satan is now causing dissension and division in the CLC based on the timing or speed of action in bringing the desired result of that resolution to its completion. Some congregations have taken prompt, vigorous action and by comparison feel that sister congregations are slow and remiss in taking the action which the speedier ones deem is necessary to achieve success. Others are of the opinion that a specific date should be set at which time all those who still hold membership in the AAL/LB should be denied participation in the Lord's Supper as a testimony that they are no longer in genuine fellowship with the CLC, regardless of what their personal problem might be in terminating such membership in the AAL/LB, even though they agree with the assessment and substance of the resolution and admit that they have been caught in a web of Satan by which they give him support in spreading his false and destructive doctrines through membership in the AAL or LB.

A truly God-pleasing, evangelical manner of action to solve our present serious problem requires prayerful effort from all of us.

As soon as we recognize that Satan has caught us in a clever trap to support his false teachings in any way, it should not require the setting of a fixed date or a threat of suspension from Holy Communion to spur us into action to break free through the power of God's Word and His promises to supply our every need. Unnecessary delay in action is damaging not only to ourselves but also to others who are using us as an example for their own action or lack of action.

On the other hand, if a brother or sister in faith really has a peculiar and difficult problem in breaking free because of a unique entanglement in which other relatives or a heavy financial commitment are involved, then let us rather offer help, if we can, instead of condemning the person without knowing what the complications are.

Satan has not used the same kind of snare on every person whom he has deceitfully entrapped through the AAL/LB process.

To use suspension from Communion or even excommunication on a person who is virtually crying for help to get out of Satan's snare of the AAL/LB because he presently does not have either the strength of faith or the financial means to endure the consequences of cashing in his policy, is not the proper spiritual therapy with which to help and strengthen that person. Manifest impenitence for sin on his part would be hard to demonstrate in such a situation. Likewise, to assert that such a person is no longer qualified for spiritual fellowship with us until he/she cashes in the AAL/LB policy, is equal to applying coercion or force in an attempt to strengthen a weak faith in the Lord, or to demand a financial solution to the problem without offering any kind of help toward such a solution.

If, however, a person defends membership in the AAL/LB after having been given the pertinent information and instruction on how such membership makes us partakers of supporting the false doctrines of Satan in heretical organizations, and is giving no indications of attempting to break loose therefrom, then such a person is manifesting a different spirit, is actually not in fellowship with us, should be suspended from the Communion Table, and should be further taught and warned of how disastrous this sin of mammon-worship and of defending and supporting error really is. If the other measures of Christian instruction and admonition for bringing him/her to manifest repentance end in failure, then the final means, namely excommunication, must be prayerfully applied in the hopes of thus achieving that end.

In conclusion, we must recognize: 1) We in the GLC are agreed on the principle that membership in the AAL/LB constitutes sinful unionism; 2) that most, if not all, of our members who took out such policies were caught in such membership under the faulty impression that they were only buying insurance with fellow Lutherans, not realizing that they thus became members of unionistic fraternal benefit societies that could change their rules and subsequently entangle their members into supporting falsely teaching religious institutions; 3) That rescuing them from this sinful entanglement is a matter of casuistry, in which the basic principle must be carried out in each individual case, many of which have widely differing complications, and need different modes of rescue and therapy, each having its own completion date within the confines of the basic principle.

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