



Columbia Union Conference

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Experience the Mission

OFFICIAL STATEMENT: AN APPEAL FROM THE COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 02, 2018 · by vmbarnard · in Columbia Union News

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An Appeal from the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee

The General Conference Administrative Committee's proposed new system of committees to assure compliance and uniformity within the global church will not result in the unity it seeks. We find this approach to be deeply troubling for it will bypass established policies, protocols and processes and reach beyond longstanding governance practices that have contributed to the amazing growth of our diverse, yet united world church family. The global implications of this process are truly a matter of grave concern. In its present form, it appears to centralize even more authority and control in the hands of a relatively small group.

This is precisely what our early leaders sought to avoid when they created unions with locally governing constituencies. They hoped this would enable our church to effectively establish and develop local approaches to fulfilling the Adventist mission. They prayed it would keep our church relevant and in touch with the unique ministry needs in each area of the world.

Contrary to the vision of those early leaders and the stated goal of our current world church leadership to unify the church, this effort to impose a new global compliance monitoring system would produce confusion, division and further distraction from our shared vision to advance Christ's mission and hasten His return.

When we consider how to measure compliance, and moreover loyalty, it is our prayer that we would test it according to the Bible, the very foundation of our faith and what primarily guides all that we stand for, say and do. Ellen White says, "In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, 'to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (see Matt. 28:20, NKJV).' The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. ... Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 826.1).

With deep conviction, we submit three appeals:

We appeal to those upon whose shoulders rest the weighty decisions of how to govern and address the needs and realities of a global family of faith, to do so in a way that promotes true biblical unity, healthy dialogue and respect for each and every member of the body of Christ.

We appeal to world church leaders that, rather than creating a compliance structure contrived to keep every member and entity in line, we develop avenues for dialogue, plant seeds of understanding and model Christ-like forbearance in how we treat one another.

We appeal to our brothers and sisters within our union, across our division and around the world, to [prayerfully](#) open hearts and minds to possibilities that will free us from this impasse and refocus 100 percent of our energies, efforts and resources on fulfilling the Great Commission.

Be it known that our greatest desire is that, as we truly put aside personal perspectives and earnestly seek to be compliant with the Word of God and the moving of the Holy Spirit in these last days, that we would find plausible solutions to draw us closer to each other and ever nearer to the return of our Lord.

*"The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinion, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. **Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christ-like forbearance**" (Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 24*, 1892).*